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# Llywelyn's Hall at Conwy

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The existence within the walls of Edward I's town of Conwy of a building known as 'the Prince's Hall' or 'Llywelyn's Hall' is well documented and has been known to archaeologists and historians for many years. The very first of the detailed building accounts for Conwy, from November 1285 to September 1286, records the purchase of locks for each of three rooms 'in the hall called the Prince's Hall' (*in aula que dicitur Aula Principis*) and the hall is described as 'Llywelyn 's Hall' in a record of the cost of roofing in 1296 (*pro Aula Lewelini cooperienda*).[1] The hall is often noticed in the writings of A. J. Taylor, work which stands conspicuous among twentieth-century studies of the castle and town walls of Conwy. Taylor was firm in his opinion of the hall's origins: it was built within the precincts of the Cistercian abbey of Conwy by a prince of the dynasty of Gwynedd. He made a clear statement of his view in his comprehensive and well documented study of the building history of Conwy in 1963. 'There can indeed be little doubt', he wrote of the Prince's Hall or Llywelyn's Hall, 'that what had been the residence . . . of the last native princes of Wales was reserved by the king to provide accommodation in Conwy for the intended English successor', and he described in some detail the works known to have been completed on the hall during the years following the conquest.[2] Taylor conceded that the question as to whether the hall was built by Llywelyn ap Iorwerth (d. 1240) or Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (d. 1282) could not be decided, but the devotion of the earlier prince to the Cistercians of Aberconwy made it not unlikely that he was the hall's builder. The attribution of the hall to one of the princes is repeated in his later work on castle and town walls.[3] His view is finally conveyed in his elegant essay in 1983 when he says that 'a Welsh royal residence' in the form of the Prince's Hall was, along with the conventual buildings, a structure available for occupation by the king and queen and the household when royal forces took possession of Aberconwy in 1283.[4]

Taylor was not the first to attribute the building of the hall to one of the princes. Sidney Toy had in 1936 expressed the view that 'the Welsh prince undoubtedly had a house at Aberconwy, a hall in a position close to the tower known by the name of the Llywelyn Tower'.[5] On the other hand H. Harold Hughes rejected the notion that there were in or about the precincts any buildings other than those belonging to the abbey. There might have been a guest house which could have been used by the prince, but certainly not any building 'otherwise owned' than by the Cistercian community itself.[6] An appropriately circumspect reference to the hall was made by the investigators of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales in the *Inventory* for Caernarfonshire. It says no more than that it seemed likely that a timber building stood on the site before work commenced on the walls, a statement that, not venturing a view as to its origins, allows for two alternative interpretations.[7] Yet so authoritative and influential has Taylor's work remained that his conclusion has been generally endorsed.[8] This essay thus considers whether the Prince's Hall can in truth be taken to be a building raised by a prince of the dynasty of Gwynedd within the abbey precincts to meet his needs and, if the case for a pre-conquest construction is not securely sustainable, whether another explanation can be offered for the existence of a hall of that name. It will in fact be found that, placed in the broader context of the arrangements made by the king for the administrative and fiscal organisation of the newly conquered lands, the presence at Conwy of Llywelyn's Hall can be explained as a post-conquest development.

It would be well to begin by acknowledging that there is no firm evidence from the pre-conquest years of the existence of a prince's residence within the precincts of the abbey, or close by, and we thus need to

consider whether or not it is likely that a building attributable to the princes stood on the site. The Cistercian community at Aberconwy in the late thirteenth century certainly recognized Llywelyn ap Iorwerth as its main benefactor when they sought confirmation by Edward I of their right to possession of their lands and their claim to the jurisdiction that they exercised within their bounds. The charters presented to the king for confirmation were those of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth alone among the princes of the dynasty, though it is uncertain whether he had been the abbey's principal patron.[9] It is indeed possible that the abbey estates owed more to members of the dynasty other than Llywelyn, and especially to Rhodri ab Owain Gwynedd, during the years of the house's foundation and early growth.[10] Yet it is evident that the lands held by the monks in the late thirteenth century were theirs by the generosity of princes of the dynasty among whom Llywelyn ap Iorwerth was the representative figure. Doubts have reasonably been raised concerning the authenticity of the surviving texts, which date from no earlier than the reign of Edward I, reservations that have particular relevance to the jurisdictional rights that the monks asserted.[11] Yet the texts contain sufficient dependable substance concerning the abbey estates to establish without reasonable doubt that the years of foundation saw a close connection between the dynasty and the Cistercian Order that laid a basis for an enduring relationship.

Numerous indications of continuing association are reflected in the abbey's involvement in the triumphs and trauma of the princes' political fortunes in the thirteenth century. Llywelyn ap Iorwerth and his son Dafydd ap Llywelyn (d. 1246) were buried at Aberconwy, and a few years after the death of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn (d. 1244), the abbots of Aberconwy and Strata Florida secured Henry III's permission to remove his body from the Tower of London, where he had fallen to his death, for burial beside his kinsmen in the abbey.[12] It would on several grounds be easy to envisage Aberconwy as something of an *Eigenkloster* of the dynasty of Gwynedd. Yet it has to be acknowledged that not a single charter or letter in the name of any one of the thirteenth-century princes is known to have been dated at Aberconwy, even though documents are known to have been sealed at granges of the abbey such as Ardda, Hafod y Llan or Llanfair Rhyd Gastell.[13] But even so monks of Aberconwy are known to have been involved in the writing and conceivably with the custody of the princes' documents. This becomes particularly clear in the period of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, and during the years when Maredudd was abbot, notably when in 1278 the prince began to prepare the case which he brought before the king's justices claiming against Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn possession of the *cantref* of Arwystli. A key document in Llywelyn's case was a record of proceedings before his court at Dolforwyn in 1274 when Gruffudd had conceded possession of the *cantref* to him. In readiness for the impending action a transcript of the process at Dolforwyn was prepared and authenticated under the seals of Maredudd, abbot of Aberconwy, and Dafydd, dean of Arllechwedd.[14] Maredudd was concerned too in transactions concerning the inheritance of the prince's brother Rhodri ap Gruffudd, and he evidently had custody of the relevant documents.[15] It may be remembered that early in the thirteenth century Llywelyn ap Iorwerth had reason to allude to the fact that documents of especial importance to him were kept 'in the aumbries of the church', and it is perfectly conceivable that a Cistercian house might also have provided custody for the princes' archives, and possible also that monks of the Order had had responsibility for the writing of some of the documents they contained.[16] Aberconwy, situated in the commote of Arllechwedd Isaf, was in easy reach of Aber in Arllechwedd Uchaf which was undoubtedly an important court of the thirteenth-century princes. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that Aberconwy may have provided a secretariat for the princes of Gwynedd in the manner in which the monks of Margam performed a similar service for the Clare lords of Glamorgan in the early thirteenth century before they developed their own chancery.[17]

Abbot Maredudd, like the bishops of Bangor and St Asaph, served as the prince's envoy on important diplomatic missions, and it is certain that, more than simply the bearer of letters, he would have been well

informed on the matters at issue and may have been concerned with the production of the documents which embodied the prince's proposals to the king and he may have been a participant in negotiations with royal ministers.[18] Llywelyn ap Gruffudd certainly had clerks in attendance upon him, drawn from the Church and the monastic houses, but the functions of a chancellor, under whom they worked, were probably vested in a person of standing, and an abbot of Aberconwy would have been eminently well suited for the responsibilities of the office. A close connection between the prince's court and the abbey of Aberconwy can safely be adduced, but indications of an association of this nature do not by any means justify the conclusion that the princes had built and maintained their own hall within the abbey grounds to meet residential or secretarial needs. The princes' tombs may convey their enduring testimony to the concord of dynasty and Cistercian Order, but even the occasional presence at the abbey of ruling princes, implicitly making use of the facilities of a princes' hall, has so far been impossible to establish. All in all the existence, or the need, for a princes' residence cannot be demonstrated on the historical evidence, and the presence of Llywelyn's Hall has to be explained by an interpretation that takes account of instructive indications contained in the evidence of the immediate post-conquest years.

The question of the origin of Llywelyn's Hall needs to be approached by first appreciating that, taking account of what would undoubtedly have been its structure, a timber-framed building associated with a prince is likely to belong to what can be seen to be a whole genre of thirteenth-century halls of which we have good knowledge. They are represented in a multiplicity of halls which invariably formed the nucleus of the complex of buildings that constituted the princes' courts. They are well documented in Gwynedd, both west and east of the river Conwy, and in Powys Fadog, and a similar plethora of courts, normally one to each commote, may also be detected in Powys Wenwynwyn and Deheubarth.[19] The ubiquity of a court centred upon a prince's hall, set up to meet the needs of a peripatetic mode of princely governance, cannot be questioned. It remained a feature of the princes' rule to the very end, and the courts' functions were not supplanted by the stone castles that the princes built in some number during the thirteenth century. The position is well illustrated in the *cantref* of Meirionnydd. There in the early thirteenth century Llywelyn ap Iorwerth built Castell y Bere, and he built extensively and in a manner that revealed a fair measure of refinement which is reflected in the surviving carved stonework. The castle was built close to the boundary between the two constituent commotes of Tal-y-bont and Ystumanner, a situation ideal, it would seem, for a reorganisation of the fiscal arrangements of the *cantref* so that the dues of bond and free tenants would thereafter be concentrated upon the castle rather than the respective commote courts. But this was never done. An early post-conquest extent shows that preparations for the prince's coming to the commote courts at Tal-y-bont and Pennal remained an obligation of the tenants to the end of the prince's rule. It was there, not at Castell y Bere, that the prince was expected to reside during the course of his itinerary, and the prince's surviving documents are dated at the commote courts rather than the castle.[20]

The situation in Meirionnydd was replicated elsewhere. The construction of the stone castles was a charge upon the princes' treasury, and maintenance charges were never integrated into the fiscal obligations of the communities of the commotes in which they stood.[21] Dolwyddelan did not supplant the court of the commote of Nanconwy at Trefriw, nor did the building of Cricieth mean that Dolbenmaen was superseded as the centre of Eifionydd.[22] Documentary evidence is, of course, confined to the records of the king's government in the post-conquest period, and it is not always easy to be certain whether changes in the administrative order centred on the commote were brought about by the king or whether they had already been effected by the princes. We can be quite certain, however, that the building of stone castles was not a catalyst for change, and if the documentary record for Gwynedd is often uncertain in its meaning, analogy with Powys Fadog brings convincing confirmation of the continued integrity, even to the time of the conquest, of the commote organisation that had been a feature of princely rule. There

the thirteenth-century princes had built Castell Dinas Brân, a formidable stone fortification placed at a commanding position in the centre of their extensive lordship. But its building did not affect the key functions of the commote courts as the foci of the fiscal and administrative order of their lordship. The documentary record of the marcher successors of the princes of Powys Fadog, richer than that for Gwynedd, leaves no doubt on that score. At Llanarmon-yn-Iâl the obligation of the tenants to maintain the court is unequivocally registered in seigneurial surveys, the documents specifying in detail the buildings to be maintained. These were centred on the hall, its precise dimensions carefully noted in the survey, and similar arrangements were maintained at the centres of the other commotes.[23] Uncertainties in the documentary record for Gwynedd might lead to a mistaken assumption of princely intervention that the evidence for Powys Fadog may help to correct.

This study therefore attempts to differentiate, as far as the evidence allows, between those changes in the administrative order, centred on the commote, that may have been made by the princes and those which can safely attributed to Edward I in the early years following his appropriation of Gwynedd Uwch Conwy at the conquest. We shall find that the course of events bound up with the history of Llywelyn's Hall at Conwy provides some very instructive guidance. Some changes had certainly been made under the princes' rule, among them adjustments by which on occasion the fiscal charges upon two adjacent commotes within the same *cantref* were directed to a single court. In Anglesey the obligations of the tenants of the two commotes of Malltraeth and Llifon were concentrated on the court of Aberffraw in the *cantref* of that name, a merger explained perhaps by the exceptional importance of the historic court. In Arfon an intervention by a prince of the dynasty so as to concentrate the resources of the two commotes of Is Gwyrfai and Uwch Gwyrfai on the court of Caernarfon in Is Gwyrfai may be deduced from the early post-conquest records. They reveal that an estate at Baladeulyn in Uwch Gwyrfai was held by the descendants of Einion ap Caradog, a prominent minister of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd during his rise to power and himself one who belonged to the lineage of the princes of Gwynedd. He was a descendant of Owain Gwynedd, and his successors' estates included the manor which had formed the commote centre of Uwch Gwyrfai. Their attempt in the reign of Edward I to recover the possession that their lineage had once had of Baladeulyn conserves a memory of what was possibly an unique instance of a commote court granted to a member of the princes' ministerial corps.[24] For there is little doubt that the estate to which they laid claim had once been the centre of the commote of Uwch Gwyrfai. Its concession to Einion ap Caradog was a reflection of the exceptional bond formed between Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and his kinsman, one who had been an adherent of his father Gruffudd ap Llywelyn during the troubles within the dynasty after the death of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth and who became a powerful member of Llywelyn's entourage, being, for instance, one of the two ministers who negotiated the treaty of Montgomery of 1267 with the king's envoys. His enfeoffment with Baladeulyn was thus a signal recognition on the prince's part of the fidelity and devotion of one who had been a conspicuous participant in the course of events that led to a formal recognition by the king of England of the position of supreme authority that Llywelyn ap Gruffudd had secured in the lands of the princes.

After the cessation of conflict the king tarried quite a while in Gwynedd. His unhurried journeying took him upon a visitation of each of the courts of Anglesey, and he viewed those of the mainland also, among them taking a close interest in Baladeulyn. His response to what he saw for himself would be determined by two different but related sets of considerations: one would be the policy he would adopt with regard to the direct exploitation of the *maerdref* associated with each court, the other by the completion under his rule of a process of commutation into monetary renders of the dues previously paid, certainly in part, in commodities and services. There is no doubt that the princes had made a partial commutation of their tenants' dues, a process that probably began under Llywelyn ap Iorwerth. The resulting availability of resources in cash was an advantage reflected, among much else, in the building

of the stone castles by the prince and his successors. But Edward's expeditious completion of the change to monetary charges would be a key influence in making the courts redundant.[25] This might not have immediate effect on the courts as a whole, nor was the abandonment of demesne cultivation made in immediate response to a single comprehensive edict. In certain instances, notably at Aber in Uwch Gwyrfai, a royal manor was maintained, with the cultivation of a demesne, for some years.[26] Alternatively, the king's strategic needs in the aftermath of conquest might require decisions that led to an early and radical change in the arrangements for the courts of some commotes. Some instructive instances of the contrasting royal responses, the gradual and the precipitate, may be cited.

In extensive Ardudwy the entire resources of the commote were concentrated by the princes on the court of Ystumgwern, some four miles south of the castle that the king built at Harlech.[27] The building of Harlech was accomplished without affecting the fiscal arrangements of the commote, but with time there was a gradual lessening of the functions of the princes' court. It came to a point in the early fourteenth century, more than twenty years after the king took possession, when the princes' hall at Ystumgwern could be disposed of. It was dismantled, its timbers carried the short distance to Harlech, and the entire structure re-erected on newly prepared stone foundations beneath the south wall of the inner ward. It was known thereafter, for many years, as the hall of Ystumgwern.[28] Proximity of old hall and new castle helps to explain the decision to undertake the transportation and reconstruction of the timbers. Other halls, at greater distance from the new castles, were allowed to decay and no record of their fate survives to equal the sheriff of Merioneth's specific description of the removal of the hall of the court of Ardudwy.

Two instances of more precipitate action in relation to the princes' halls may be cited: one lies in Arfon and relates to the building of Caernarfon castle, the other in Arllechwedd and reflects the link between the building of Conwy and the existence on the site, outside the castle but within the town walls, of Llywelyn's Hall. Taking the case of Arfon first, there can be no doubt, as has been intimated already, that during the period of the princes the resources of the whole *cantref* of Arfon—Is Gwyrfai and Uwch Gwyrfai—were concentrated on the princes' court at Caernarfon. This significant change has rather eluded the attention of commentators who have rather tended to lay their emphasis on another change in the fiscal organisation of Arfon attributed to the princes by which tenants' obligations were concentrated on the stone castle of Dolbadarn. A century ago J. E. Lloyd described Caernarfon as the ancient centre of the *cantref* of Arfon 'though in later times it was eclipsed in importance by Dolbadarn'. In envisaging the change as one that he could attribute to the princes he relied on the evidence of the extent of 1352 which showed the tenants of Is Gwyrfai 'joining in the maintenance of the manor of Dolbadarn'.[29] The evidence of the extent of 1352 has certainly offered a temptation to see the prince's hand at work in effecting change by which a commote, or a *cantref*, came to be asssociated with one of the thirteenth-century stone castles of their construction. It is a temptation to be resisted. Admittedly, post-conquest documents, and that of 1352 especially, indicate the existence at Dolbadarn of a royal manor, with a demesne worked by bond tenants. But it does not follow that the surveyors in 1352 described a situation derived from the period of the princes. There may well have been a demesne at Dolbadarn at an early date and another of some extent close by at Dinorwig, but these, like Llanbeblig, would have been subsidiary to a main court that continued to be Caernarfon. The creation of a royal manor at Dolbadarn was rather a response on the part of Edward I, made promptly upon the commencement of building at Caernarfon in the summer of 1283, to his need for a cleared site for the new castle. The chronology is difficult to establish with precision, and here as at Conwy study is made more difficult by the absence, for the new county of Caernarfon, of an extent comparable to those that have survived for Anglesey and Merioneth. The consequent lack of detailed information might inhibit firm conclusions. Yet, whereas the concentration of the fiscal resources of the two commotes of Is Gwyrfai and Uwch Gwyrfai at

Caernarfon was undoubtedly the work of the princes, and very probably that of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, the second change whereby a manor at Dolbadarn came to supplant the court at Caernarfon in its fiscal functions can be confidently attributed to Edward I.[30] He did so shortly after his appropriation of what was by then the site of an indigenous court that served the entire *cantref* of Arfon and was located at an earthwork castle of Norman origin on the banks of the Seiont. It is perhaps significant that the name Dolbadarn occurs in written documents for the very first time in the Wardrobe accounts of the activity of the king's soldiers in the vicinity of the castle in the days immediately following its occupation.[31]

We can be quite certain that in the *cantref* of Arllechwedd too decisions on the fiscal arrangements of two of its three commotes—Arllechwedd Isaf and Arllechwedd Uchaf—were made by the king and his officers without delay. In this case, the instance of royal intervention that mainly concerns us, there are significant indicators of early change. Investigators of the origins and development of castle and town walls have had the great benefit of a richly informative documentary record and it has often proved possible, and particularly in the meticulous and inspired work of A. J. Taylor, to match the written record with the remains on the ground. Yet the archive is not complete. The documentary record, from the military appropriation of the site onwards, consists of two groups of records, and there is a hiatus between them. The first contains the records of the keeper of the Wardrobe and Household, the financial organisation that managed the king's campaign in the war of 1282–83, its main items being the extensive cavalry and infantry rolls and the 'necessaries' account that preserves a varied range of accounting information.[32] The latter is often useful in connection with buildings, such as the items of expenditure incurred at Dolwyddelan after its taking by the king's forces. The accounting record of the keeper of the Wardrobe provides a valuable record from the taking of Conwy in March 1283 to 16 November 1284, when the keeper, William de Louth, returned his rolls to the Exchequer and thereby closed the war account.[33]

The second group of records contain the important building accounts for Conwy, the first extending from November 1284 to November 1285 when a total expenditure of £3,313 1s 2d is recorded. The total indicates extensive building works, and these included a hall and the chambers of king and queen, but sadly there are no detailed returns.[34] It is only for the building record from November 1285 to September 1286 that we first have a 'particulars' account, and this provides detailed figures of costs, rather over half the total expenditure, amounting to £2,152 10s 3d.[35] Thus there is a gap in the detailed record between November 1284 (when the 'necessaries' roll ends) and November 1285 (when the 'particulars' roll begins).

This is unfortunate since the argument set out in this study suggests very strongly that Llywelyn's Hall at Conwy was raised, within the precincts of the abbey and inside the line along which the town walls would run, at this very time. The 'necessaries' roll shows that expenditure was incurred in the months following the royal forces' appropriation of Aberconwy by the provision of timber-framed buildings to meet without delay the accommodation needs of king and queen and royal Wardrobe. Royal expenditure was concentrated on Conwy from its occupation in the spring of 1283 onwards, for this was the hub of the king's entire operation in Gwynedd until the building of Caernarfon was suddenly launched in the summer of the same year. The acquisition of an already existing timber-framed hall from the neighbourhood of the new castle and its re-erection on its new site close to the new castle works would be a most welcome and speedy addition to the number of buildings available for the king's use.

We have seen that mention is made of the Prince's Hall in the first detailed accounts that run from November 1285 to September 1286.[36] It is suggested that, during the period when there is a break in the documentary record, and probably before the end of 1284, a hall of the princes was moved to a new location at Conwy from the site where it had previously stood, much in the manner that the hall of Ystumgwern was moved to Harlech, except that there were especially pressing needs which dictated the

early removal of the hall to Conwy. Little more than four miles upstream on the river Conwy from the new castle was the prince's court at Gronant that formed, as Colin Gresham suggested, the centre of the commote of Arllechwedd Isaf.[37] The commote court stood in the parish of Caerhun, close to the motte known as Bryn Castell, and near the crossing of the Conwy at Tal-y-cafn.[38] It was an important site, and early in the thirteenth century the poet Llywarch ap Llywelyn included a triumph at Gronant among the successive victories that carried Llywelyn ap Iorwerth to supremacy in Gwynedd Uwch Conwy.[39] A successful battle there would have been a vital inauguration of the campaign by which, crossing the river Conwy at Tal-y-cafn, he advanced from Perfeddwlad, where he had already established himself, to take possession of Uwch Conwy. An important routeway into Gwynedd Uwch Conwy ran from Tal-y-cafn through Bwlch y Ddeufaen to descend to the Menai Straits close to the court of Aber. There is no doubt of the importance of the court at Gronant in the period of the princes and, it is suggested, to the very end of that period.

It follows that it fell to Edward I not only to take possession of the hall but to make extensive changes to the court and demesne arrangements at Gronant. These are bound up with the decision to move the Cistercian community at Aberconwy to a new site at Maenan some seven miles upstream along the Conwy, and the chronology is certainly relevant. Construction of the castle at Conwy began in response to a king's order of 30 March 1283, and as early as September the king had taken possession of land at Maenan that, on the east bank of the river, was part of the lordship of Denbigh granted to Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln.[40] He did so in order that he might bestow it upon the monks of Aberconwy. By then the chapter-general of the Cistercian Order had given its consent to the resettlement of the monks on their new site.[41] Preparations for the move were evidently being made with the minimum of delay, and these included provision for the Welsh tenants displaced at Maenan. A way forward had been found by October 1284 when Maredudd Crach and his brother Gwrgenau were given what are described as the townships of Glyn and Gronant.[42] This meant that the *maerdref* associated with the court at Gronant would be, or had already been, abandoned and its demesne land made available for the tenants to be moved there in recompense for the land conceded to the monks. The court buildings were thus made redundant. They included the prince's hall and there can be no doubt that, as Gresham suggested, this was the hall that would stand at Conwy.[43] The dismantling of the hall may have been undertaken shortly after the concession of the land in Glyn and Gronant to the men from Maenan, at a date which would have followed the closing of the war account by the keeper of the Wardrobe in November 1284 and certainly well before the commencement of the first detailed building account for Conwy in November 1285. It would belong to that period of documentary hiatus that we have already noticed, excluding any possibility that we might have either the benefit of a Wardrobe account or the advantage of a sheriff's roll comparable to that which tells us of the removal of the hall of Ystumgwern to Harlech, or that which, as we shall see, eventually records the removal of Llywelyn's Hall to Caernarfon.[44] The removal of the hall and its reconstruction at Conwy closely parallels the case of Ystumgwern, but the circumstances of the move to Conwy are more akin to the swift decision by which the court at Caernarfon was brought to an end and its residual functions transferred to Dolbadarn. Gresham was of the view that the functions of the court of Gronant as the centre of Arllechwedd Isaf were transferred to the new castle at Conwy.[45] The evidence indicates rather a transfer to the court of Aber, bringing Arllechwedd Isaf and Arllechwedd Uchaf together to be administered from the court at Aber which Edward decided to maintain. The hall known as *Y Tŷ Hir* (The Long House) at Aber would feature as the focus of the court functions now extended to embrace two commotes.[46] It is admittedly just conceivable that the concentration of tenants' obligations at Aber had been done under the rule of Llywelyn, and that Edward found an already abandoned court with a redundant hall at Gronant ready for early removal.[47] But the circumstances bound up with the move of the Cistercian community to Maenan, and the chronology that can be reasonably

established, rather suggest that there was a strong impetus for change at Gronant at the end of 1284 and this, and a consequential association of Arllechweddd Isaf with Aber, was probably accomplished by Edward I at this time.

References to work at Llywelyn's Hall or the Prince's Hall recur in the building accounts of Conwy during the years that followed, several cited by Arnold Taylor in 1963.[48] We need to be aware of the precise nature of the work for which payment is recorded, for what is revealed differs a great deal from what would be our instinctive expectation of work upon a timber-framed building that had presumably been raised upon stone foundations. The very last episode in the history of the Hall of Llywelyn of which we have record tells of the removal in 1316 of the entire building from the stone foundations on which it had stood at Conwy and its transportation and re-erection in Caernarfon castle.[49] It is to the dismantling of a wholly timber building that the record points. We envisage therefore an undertaking closely comparable to that which saw the taking down of the hall of Ystumgwern and its raising anew on prepared stone foundations at Harlech.[50] It follows that we would have reason to expect to find that work on Llywelyn's Hall between about 1284 and 1316 would have been given to the care and restoration of timber work, but this is not what we find in the accounts. Rather they tell essentially of work in stone: the bringing to the site of stone and its use in construction; wages are paid in far greater measure to *cementarii* than *carpentarii*. The masons, moreover, were at times engaged on new building rather than maintenance of existing buildings, so while work is said in the accounts to relate to Llywelyn's Hall it is clear that it was being done to buildings other than the hall per se. The name 'Llywelyn's Hall' had evidently become a means of reference to a small complex of buildings associated with the timber hall. The point was made by Taylor in successive editions of the guide to Conwy where he writes of a building, possibly a chamber to which reference is made in a document of 1286, as one which 'belonged to an important group of buildings known collectively, at least as early as 1302, as Llywelyn's Hall'. Thus in that year work, engaging 27 masons and 11 carpenters, was done for the improvement of the tower, known as Llywelyn's Tower, adjoining the hall.[51] Another substantial record, though entitled '*operaciones Aule Lewelini*', shows that in 1306 work began upon a chapel, evidently a new building. It is a record of building work in stone and the wages of masons comprised much the greater part of the labour costs '*pro muris capelle incipiendis*'.[52] Taylor noticed the inauguration of this new building of a chapel, and a further entry that the full cost of the building came to £48 13s 11d.[53] It seems, however, that what he saw was a summary entry in the chamberlain's account roll, to which he refers, and that he had not seen the further instructive detail drawn from two other Exchequer accounts which subsequently came to be embodied in the chamberlain's roll. Stonework predominates in the detailed building account: the carrying of stone from the quarry or the river bank to the Hall of Llywelyn, and once more the payment of quarrymen and masons to a far greater degree than carpenters. There can be no doubt that this expenditure was incurred by work on the chapel, to which reference is made in the detailed record, and that it had no bearing upon Llywelyn's Hall itself.

The predominance of stonework in the building accounts is thus relevant to our reading of the archaeological report on an excavation of Llywelyn's Hall undertaken in 1984. Its emphasis is necessarily laid upon archaeological interpretation of the stonework revealed by excavation, and, inappropriately in relation to what we know with certainty of the prince's hall as a timber-framed structure to the very end of its existence at Conwy, it is an entirely stone building that is represented in the illustrative cutaway reconstruction. Clearly, we need to be quite sure that the remains of building work revealed by excavation were in fact those of Llywelyn's Hall proper and not of the stone-built chapel of which we have authentic written record. It is certainly in relation to the chapel, rather than the prince's hall, that the archaeology and the written record best match one another.[54] At the same time, setting the reconstruction aside, we need to consider whether the stonework revealed by archaeology

was indeed that of the low foundation walls on which the timber-framed hall would have stood.[55] This is quite crucial, for it is clear that the directions given in 1316 for the removal of the hall, and the account of the work that followed, indicate that the original timber building still retained its pristine character and that its wholly timber structure could be separated in its entirety from the adjacent stone buildings. As yet, archaeological work may have been unable to locate with certainty the stonework which would have provided the foundations for the timber structure of Llywelyn's Hall, so we have nothing from Conwy that we can at present set beside the foundations provided for the hall of Ystumgwern at Harlech, or the original building foundations revealed so instructively at Rhosyr.[56] Building work of which we have record just before and after 1300, let alone subsequent building in an urban setting over later centuries, has denied the archaeologist that opportunity.

Our historical investigation necessarily ends with the implementation of the instruction given in 1316 for the dismantling of 'the old hall of Llywelyn' and its removal in its entirety to Caernarfon. In this respect Llywelyn's Hall at Conwy fared better than the hall of Aberffraw, for what was removed from the renowned court in 1317 was not an entire hall but 198 pieces of timber salvaged from the hall and other court buildings and taken to Caernarfon with no indication of the use to which they would be put.[57] By contrast Llywelyn's Hall, given birth at the will of a Welsh prince to stand at his court of Gronant, was given by the edict of an English king a first reincarnation at his castle of Conwy, a second at Caernarfon. The reconstructed building may not perhaps have been afforded a position quite as prominent as that given the hall of Ystumgwern in the inner ward at Harlech but, used for the storage of victuals, it was still accommodated within the castle ward. It deserves notice that the timbers of the 'Prince's Hall' were considered worth removing in their entirety and reconstructing, an instructive instance of the willingness of the king of England to reuse old timbers with perhaps an implicit acknowledgement of the quality of the workmanship by which it had first been raised. It fell to a carpenter called John le Mere 'to dismantle all the timbers of the Hall of Llywelyn in the town of Conwy and rebuild them in the castle of Caernarfon'. The precise details of the decision to removal the hall, with the costs duly noted—including the transportation of the timbers to the quay at Conwy, their taking by sea to the quay at Caernarfon, and thence to the castle—ensure that the very last documentary record of Llywelyn's Hall gives us a fuller account than anything else that we have of its history.[58] But enough survives to provide, in the context of our understanding of royal policy in the early years after the conquest, a memoir of a timber-framed hall of a Welsh prince that bridges two historical eras and one which belongs to a genre of timber construction whose time span was to extend for several generations still to come and become a treasured part of our built heritage

## NOTES

1. The National Archives (TNA), E101/485/28 (14 April 1286), printed in A. J. Taylor, *Studies in Castles and Castle-building* (London, 1985), 145–54, cited from p. 148; E101/486/9 (1296). Further references to unprinted sources are to documents in The National Archives. Early references are to 'the prince's hall' with 'Llywelyn's hall' first used, among surviving documents, in 1296. The change was thus made a good five years before Edward of Caernarfon's creation as prince of Wales, but the account in which it first appears, E101/486/9, describes work done between 1294–95 and Easter 1301, so the account would not have been finalised until after the making of a new prince of Wales (in February 1301) prompted the adoption of the name 'Llywelyn's hall'. I am grateful to Dr Jeremy Ashbee for alerting me to the precise timing of the change, and more generally for his great kindness in reading a first version of this paper and

offering perceptive and encouraging comment. I make further reference to Dr Ashbee's kind letter below, n. 55.

2. R. A. Brown, H. M. Colvin and A. J. Taylor, *The History of the King's Works, The Middles Ages* (London, 1963), vol. 1, 353.
3. A. J. Taylor, 'The walls of Conway', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 119 (1970), 5 ('the pre-Edwardian' hall); *idem*, *Conway Castle and Town Walls* (HMSO, London, 1953), 42–3 ('presumably dating from before the English conquest'); *idem*, *Conwy Castle and Town Walls* (Cadw: Cardiff, 1986) and later editions (expressing the same conclusion in identical phraseology in, for example, the 4th edn 1998, 56–7). For his uncertainty as to which Welsh prince may have been the builder, with an inclination to Llywelyn the Great, see Brown *et al*. op. cit. (note 2), 353, n. 8. The prince's hall as one of a group of buildings known as 'Llywelyn 's Hall' is noticed below, n. 51.
4. *Idem*, *Four Great Castles* (Gwasg Gregynog, Newtown, 1983), p. 33. In conversation with Dr Taylor during the Chateau Gaillard conference in south Wales I broached the explanation of the origin of the hall at Conwy put forward in this study and I greatly appreciated his generous encouragement to set out a view that differed from his own. What follows is a long delayed response to his kindness and a token of my respect for his invaluable scholarly contribution.
5. S. Toy, 'The town and castle of Conway', *Archaeologia* 86 (1936), 164, 175.
6. H. Harold Hughes, 'The Edwardian castle and town defences at Conway', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 93 (1938), 76–7.
7. *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Caernarvonshire, I, East* (HMSO: Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire, 1956), no. 184 (p. 57), the entry also discussing the adjacent tower known as Llywelyn's Tower, for which, below, n. 51; further reference to Llywelyn's Hall, ibid., vol. 3 (1964), cxliii.
8. See, for instance, the citation of Taylor's view in M. A Mason 'Llywelyn's Hall, Conwy', *Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society* 56 (1995), 13, though the author also refers to the view preferred by Harold Hughes that the building was the abbey guest house, and regards it as plausible.
9. H. Pryce (ed.), *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283* (Cardiff, 2005), nos 218–19 (pp. 348–68), with full discusssion by the editor.
10. Valuable study of the abbey lands in Colin A. Gresham, 'The Aberconway charter', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 94 (1939), 123–62; *idem*, 'The Aberconwy charter: further consideration', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 30 (1982–3), 311–47.
11. C. Insley, 'Fact and fiction in thirteenth-century Gwynedd: the Aberconwy charters', *Studia Celtica* 33 (1999), 235–50.
12. T. Jones (ed.), *Brut y Tywysogyon, Peniarth MS 20 Version* (Cardiff, 1952), 105, 107, 108; *idem*, *Brut y Tywysogyon, Red Book of Hergest Version* (Cardiff, 1955), 236–7, 238–41, 242–3.
13. For the granges, J. B. Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Prince of Wales* (Cardiff, 1998), 220–1; the full range of place-dates of the princes' acts can be found in Pryce (ed.) op. cit. (note 9), *passim*.
14. Smith op. cit. (note 13), 322, 370–1, 379, 470–7; text of the document dated at Ardda, Pryce (ed.) op. cit. (note 9), no. 603 (pp. 796–8); J. G. Edwards (ed.), *Littere Wallie* (Cardiff, 1940), 108–10.
15. Smith op. cit. (note 13), 322, with the addition of references to Pryce (ed.) op. cit. (note 9), nos 458–9 (pp. 657–9).
16. Pryce (ed.) op. cit. (note 9), no. 235 (pp. 392–3), Llywelyn's letter to Philip Augustus, 1212.
17. R. B. Patterson, *The Scriptorium of Margam Abbey and the Scribes of Early Angevin Glamorgan: Secretarial Administration in a Welsh Marcher Barony c. 1150– c. 1225* (Woodbridge, 2002), 20–79.

18. Smith op. cit. (note 13), 322–3.
19. For the princes' courts and demesne lands, ibid., 219–31; archaeological study of those of Gwynedd Uwch Conwy, N. Johnstone, 'An investigation into the location of the royal courts of thirteenth-century Gwynedd', in N. Edwards (ed.), *Landscape and Settlement in Medieval Wales* (Oxford, 1997), 55–69; *idem*, '*Llys* and *Maerdref*: the royal courts of the princes of Gwynedd', *Studia Celtica* 34 (2000), 167–210.
20. Smith op. cit. (note 13), 227–8; J. B. Smith, 'The age of the princes', in J. B. Smith and Llinos Smith (eds), *History of Merioneth,* vol. 2, *The Middle Ages* (Cardiff, 2001), 30–33.
21. It would be good to bear in mind, in view of other readings of the texts, that the references in the lawbooks to bond tenants' obligations to fulfil customary works on the king's *castra* or *cestyll,* when taken together in Latin and Welsh texts, can be seen to refer not to building work on the princes' stone castles or their maintenance but to the preparation of encampments, that is to provide for the princes' needs when they were '*in castris*' (Smith op. cit. (note 13), 252 and n. 290).
22. D. Longley, 'The royal courts of the Welsh princes in Gwynedd, AD 400–1283', in N. Edwards (ed.), *Landscape and Settlement*, 52, takes another view of Dolbadarn and Cricieth, suggesting that the castles used the resources and took on many of the functions of the *maerdrefi* that provided the demesnes of the courts; cf. *idem*, 'Gwynedd before and after the conquest', in Diane M. Williams and John R. Kenyon (eds), *The Impact of the Edwardian Castles in Wales* (Oxford, 2010), 21. J. E. Lloyd, 'Medieval Eifionydd', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 6th ser., 5 (1905), 296–9, cites the instances in which princes were held captive in Cricieth as an indication that the castle had 'acquired military importance succeeding Dolbenmaen'. But he presents no evidence whatsoever that Cricieth had secured the functions fulfilled by the court of Dolbenmaen. Lloyd is cited in C. A. Gresham, 'The township of Dolbenmaen', *Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society* 17 (1956), 24, to convey that Dolbenmaen 'must have been the administrative centre of Eifionydd until Edward created the borough of Cricieth', but *idem*, *Eifionydd* (Cardiff, 1973), 372, has Dolbenmaen as a princely residence until Llywelyn ap Iorwerth 'built his castle at Cricieth in the first half of the thirteenth century'. There are contradictions here, and, of more relevance in the present context, the case for pre-conquest change is entirely unsubstantiated.
23. T. P. Ellis (ed.), *The First Extent of Bromfield and Yale, A.D. 1315* (London, 1924), 78–9, 86–7, 92–3 for Llanarmon-yn-Iâl, naming a hall and other buildings 'each house . . . 64 feet in length and in breadth as is best fitting'; similar arrangements are found at the other courts of Bromfield and Yale and in the lordship of Chirk: G. P. Jones (ed.), *The Extent of Chirkland (1391–1393*) (Liverpool, 1933), *passim.*
24. For Einion ap Caradog and his son Tudur ab Einion, David Stephenson, *The Governance of Gwynedd* (Cardiff, 1984), 117–19; Smith op. cit. (note 13), 44–5, 178–80. For the location of Baladeulyn in Arfon Uwch Gwyrfai, Johnstone 2000 op. cit. (note 19), 175–6, and for a petition of 1305 claiming that Tudur ab Einion had held Baladeulyn, H. Ellis (ed.), *Registrum Vulgariter Nuncupatum "The Record of Caernarvon"* (London, 1838), 220, this text specifying the court whereas later petitions in W. Rees (ed.), *Calendar of Ancient Petitions relating to Wales* (Cardiff, 1975), 339, 454, do not include Baladeulyn among the lands claimed.
25. Commutation is discussed in Stephenson op. cit. (note 24), *Governance of Gwynedd*, 64–9; Smith op. cit. (note 13), 241–6 with reference to the important work of T. Jones Pierce, *Medieval Welsh Society* (Cardiff, 1972), 103–25; D. Huw Owen, '*Treth and ardreth*: some aspects of commutation in north Wales in the thirteenth century' *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 25 (1972–4), 446–53; and the dissertations of Llinos Smith and Michael Rogers cited in Smith op. cit. (note 13), 242 n. 252.

26. Smith op. cit. (note 13), 233–5, with citation of source material; for Aber see also below, n. 46.
27. For Ystumgwern as the focus for the fiscal obligations of the tenants of the whole of Ardudwy, Smith op. cit. (note 13), 228–9; Smith and Smith (eds) op. cit. (note 20), 33–7. It has been said that Prysor constituted a centre for Uwch Artro, but the evidence points rather to the concentration of the resources of the whole commote on Ystumgwern, with Prysor a subsidiary demesne in a single integrated economy.
28. A record of the removal of the hall is preserved in an account of the sheriff of Merioneth, SC6/1231/3: '*in prostracione aule domini principis apud Estingerne et in reedificacione eiusdem infra castrum de Hardelev*'. The first membrane of the account, cited by W. W. E. Wynne in a contribution to *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 4th ser., 6 (1875), 22–3, is damaged and, lacking a superscription, gives no date; internal evidence and collation with other accounts indicates the financial year 1305-6. The hall, 18 foot by 37 foot, was placed against the south wall of the inner ward where the stone foundations survive (Smith and Smith op. cit. (note 20), 33–4, 394); a survey of 1343 shows that it was still known then as the hall of Ystumgwern (C. R. Peers, 'Harlech Castle', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* 1921–2, 77.)
29. J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales* (London, 1911), vol. 1, 235. For Longley's attribution of the switch of court functions to Dolbadarn and Cricieth, above, n. 22.
30. For services at Dolbadarn in 1352, Ellis (ed.) op. cit. (note 24), 17–22; in the extent, Llanbeblig contributed *ad opus manerii de Dolbadern*, part of the post-conquest rearrangements of obligations previously due, with those of Dinorwig and other *tir cyfrif* townships, to Caernarfon. For this argument in broader context, Smith op. cit. (note 13), 229–31. For pre-conquest Caernarfon, K. Williams-Jones, 'Caernarvon', in R. A. Griffiths (ed.), *Boroughs of Mediaeval Wales* (Cardiff, 1978), 73–5; for letters dated at Caernarfon by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Smith op. cit. (note 13), 230 and n. 204. Texts of charters and a letter issued by Dafydd ap Gruffudd and Gruffudd ap Maredudd during the princes' last stand in Snowdonia in May 1283 were dated at Llanberis, probably indicating Dolbadarn (Pryce (ed.) op. cit. (note 9), nos. 78, 456, 457 (pp. 213–4, 655–7); *Littere Wallie,* pp. 74, 77, 133)
31. E101/4/1, mm. 16, 17; E101/351/9, m. 10. For these accounts see the next note.
32. These have been prepared for publication in full text in R. F. Walker and Susan J. Davies (eds), *Edward I and his Armies in Wales: Wardrobe and Household Records 1282–84*, Historical Introduction by J. B. Smith. For Taylor's use of these accounts, such as E101/351/9, see Brown *et al*. op. cit. (note 2), 340 among numerous references.
33. Even by November 1284 as much as £5,819 14s 0d had been accounted by William de Louth, the keeper of the Wardrobe for works on the castle of Conwy (E372/130, rot. 5d; Brown *et al*. op. cit. (note 2), 341). For the enrolment in the Exchequer of the keeper's final account see E 372/136, rot. 31. The financial management of the war by the king's Wardrobe is discussed by the present writer in the introduction to *Edward I and his Armies in Wales,* along with a detailed account of the campaign which notes the financial disbursements made.
34. Brown *et al*. op. cit. (note 2), 342–4 (E372/131, rot. 26).
35. Ibid., 344 (E372/136, rot. 28; E101/485/28); text of E101/485/28 in Arnold Taylor, 'The Conwy particulars accounts for Nov. 1285– Sept. 1286', *Studies in Castles and Castle-building* (London, 1985), 145–54.
36. Above, note 1.
37. C. A. Gresham, 'The commotal centre of Arllechwedd Isaf ', *Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society* 40 (1979), 12–13.

38. *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Caernarvonshire, I, East* (HMSO: Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire, 1956), no. 114 (p. 27); the motte stood close by the Roman fort of Canovium (ibid., no. 166, p. 34).
39. Elin M. Jones (ed.), *Gwaith Llywarch ap Llywelyn 'Prydydd y Moch'* (Cardiff, 1991), no. 23.168.
40. 'Calendar of Welsh Rolls', *Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls* (London, 1912), p. 275. For the removal of the Cistercian community to Maenan, Rhys W. Hays, *The History of the Abbey of Aberconway 1186–1537* (Cardiff, 1963), 61–6.
41. *Littere Wallie*, pp. 202–3; no precise date, but the document was given at the time of the general chapter, 1283, and probably in September.
42. 'Calendar of Welsh Rolls', *Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls* (London, 1912), p. 290 (22 October 1284); similarly Gruffudd ap Iorwerth was granted Rhosmawr in compensation for land ceded at Maenan (ibid.).
43. Gresham 1979 op. cit. (note 37), 15.
44. Above, note 28; below, notes 49, 58.
45. Gresham 1979 op. cit. (note 37), 15.
46. Smith op. cit. (note 13), 233–5 for fuller discussion with citation of sources. For the charges upon the tenants of Arllechwedd Isaf with regard to the court at Aber, see especially E101/485/49 and the evidence of 1352 in Ellis (ed.) op. cit. (note 24), 3–9.
47. Longley 2010 op. cit. (note 22), 21, conveys that the *maerdref* of Arllechwedd Isaf, that at Gronant, 'had been rendered redundant by the time of the conquest' and the dues of the court of Isaf transferred to Aber. The present argument takes particular account of the placing of tenants from Maenan at Gronant, with a ceasing of the *maerdref* at that point creating the tenurial position described in the extent of 1352 (Ellis (ed.) op. cit. (note 24), 9), when the descendants of Maredudd Crach were holding the lands. The tenures are specifically said to be derived from the decision of Edward I at the time when provision was made for the abbey of Aberconwy, giving free tenure to bond land previously held in four *gafaelion*. The sheriff's account for 1303–4 records a sum of 9s. from the rent of free tenants in Glyn and Gronant who held in exchange for Maenan (*Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 7 (1933–5) 143). The rent is said to be *extra extentam*, that is additional to the fiscal charges embodied in the extent made at an early date after the conquest, and for which the sheriff accounts by a composite sum for the whole county.
48. Brown *et al*. op. cit. (note 2), 353–4.
49. *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1313–18,* 267 (16 February 1316) for the order; below, note 58 for its execution.
50. Above, note 28.
51. Brown *et al*. op. cit. (note 2), 353, citing E101/486/23. For the guidebook to Conwy in its successive editions, above note 3, here quoted from the 1998 edition, p. 56. Taylor tells, as we have seen, of a group of buildings, including Llywelyn's Tower, known from at least 1302 as Llywelyn's Hall 'and therefore presumably dating from before the English conquest'. This does not, however, accord with his several discussions of building works which are, as the accounts show, of post-conquest date, and interpretation of these structures carries greater clarity and conviction if the notion of a pre-conquest prince's hall is set aside.
52 . Brown *et al*. op. cit. (note 2), 353, nn. 13–14, citing E101/486/23 and SC6/1170/4.
53. Ibid., 353, n. 15, citing SC6/1211/2. In what is now listed in the National Archives' list of accounts as SC6/1211/2A there is, in addition to the summary entry recording the total cost, which was probably Taylor's source, considerable further detail of the building costs. Taylor does not appear to have used this material in 1963. For a full record of the building work on the chapel,

the material now embodied in SC6/1211/2A has to be taken in conjunction with that in the accounts cited in the previous note.

54. Mason 1995 op. cit. (note 8), 11–35, a report based on an excavation by R. B. White in 1984. The report follows Taylor in accepting that the original construction was pre-conquest, and this influences the archaeological phasing that is suggested. More pertinent is the fact that the investigation appears to be concerned with the interpretation of stonework which cannot, from the evidence of its dismantling and removal in 1316, be related to Llywelyn's Hall. The cutaway reconstruction (fig. 4a) depicts a stone building that was one of the group of buildings known as 'Llywelyn's Hall' and, among them, one more likely to be the chapel, for which we have a good building record, than the timber-framed hall of a Welsh prince. In the course of an earlier excavation reported in L. A. S. Butler and D. H. Evans, 'The Old Vicarage, Conway: excavations, 1963–4', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 128 (1979), 40–103, Llywelyn's Hall was not the main object of the investigation but, noticed among 'other sites' subject to exploratory trenches in 1973, the comments offered have to be considered in the light of the realisation that the princes' hall was one of perhaps several buildings that came to be known by the name of 'Llywelyn 's Hall'. The identification (p. 62) of Llywelyn's Hall as a building 85 feet in length is not substantiated, and it needs to be noticed that Taylor 1998 op. cit. (note 3), 56, refers to a building of that length which was not the prince's hall itself but another building, undoubtedly stone-built, of the group that came to be referred to, certainly by 1302, as Llywelyn's Hall. Unfortunately, Taylor adds that the name suggests a building 'dating from before the conquest', a possibility made exceedingly unlikely by the post-conquest building work that he himself describes. Llywelyn's Hall is also noticed, but without offering specific archaeological information, in R. S Kelly, 'Excavation on two sites in Conway, 1975', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 128 (1979), 104–18.

55. Dr Jeremy Ashbee's letter, above, note 1, among several helpful comments, suggests that further thought might be given to the documentary record that begins in 1286 with E101/485/28 and how it might be related to the material evidence. I am very happy to leave the resolution of the intricate issues that remain to his knowledge of both the archaeology and the historical record of Conwy castle and its environs.

56. N. Johnstone, 'Cae Llys, Rhosyr: a court of the princes of Gwynedd', *Studia Celtica* 33 (1999), 251–95, with particular reference to the discussion of the Hall (building A), pp. 254–60, 270.

57. For Aberffraw, see Brown *et al*. op. cit. (note 2), 386, n. 6.

58. Brown *et al*. op. cit. (note 2), 354, citing SC6/1211/7.