

A reconsideration of the siting, function and dating of Ewloe castle

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Ewloe castle, Flintshire, with its distinctive ‘Welsh’ apsidal tower, is justly celebrated as being one of the fortifications that can be associated with the state-building activities of the thirteenth-century princes of Gwynedd. But there are many aspects of Ewloe that remain mysterious. The date of its construction remains contentious, while the thinking behind its location and hence, perhaps, its intended function, are by no means clear. Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (d. 1282) of Gwynedd was clearly and closely associated with the castle in a document of 1311 recording a report to Edward II by Payn Tibetot, Justice of Chester. Tibetot’s report is usually reckoned to indicate that after his conquest of Gwynedd east of the Conwy (in late 1256) Llywelyn had built the castle, in a corner of the wood.¹ On 23 January the king ordered Tibetot to make a report on the circumstances in which Edward I had taken the manor of Ewloe into his hands, on the royal rights in the manor, and on its value; the report itself is undated, but refers to Tibetot’s searching of the records of his predecessors, and collecting information from the people of his bailiwick. A separate document, a Latin text of the findings of an inquisition about the descent of Ewloe, is dated Tuesday after the second Sunday in Lent. The year of the inquisition is illegible, but if we assume that it was 1311 the inquisition can be dated to 9 March, which would be perfectly reasonable given that an order issued at Berwick in late January would have taken some time to reach Tibetot, who would then have had to make arrangements to empanel the jurors of the inquisition. It seems to represent part of the information-gathering that Tibetot notes in his report, and its text is very close to that of the report itself. Both the findings of the inquisition and Tibetot’s report to the king are lent some credibility by their association of one Ithel ap Bleddyn with Ewloe in the time of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, an association that is borne out by record evidence, while the sequence of occupation of the ‘manor’ of Ewloe from the mid-twelfth century to the principate of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd is recalled in both documents with considerable accuracy.²

As to the castle itself, opinion as to its likely builder has fluctuated over time: some authorities have seen it as the work of a least two princes, while others—and this is perhaps the currently prevailing view—have pictured it as the work of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd alone.³ Thus Professor Beverley Smith has commented that ‘an attribution of the entire building to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd can probably be made with some confidence.’⁴ In contrast to most commentators, Smith suggests that a date in the mid-1260s rather than 1257 might make better sense, though this suggestion rests largely on an assumption that we should regard the castle as having a military function, an assumption that is, to put it mildly, debatable.⁵ While it is not the primary purpose of the present paper to focus on the initial date of building at Ewloe but rather to probe the reasons for the decision to construct it on a site that appears puzzling, it is hoped that the following discussion may shed some light on the problem of when the castle was built.

The location of Ewloe has been described very justly as ‘far from ideal’, ‘not an ideal one’ and ‘most extraordinary.’⁶ In 1928 Wilfrid J. Hemp noted that ‘owing to the natural fall of the ground the counterscarp opposite the Welsh Tower [i.e. the apsidal ‘D-tower’] is considerably higher than the scarp, and it has been further raised by an artificial bank of earth placed along its crest. The result is that the site is almost completely overlooked, the highest part of the bank being less than 20 feet below the top of the Welsh tower.’⁷ Elsewhere Hemp noted that attackers would ‘have found useful cover behind the bank crowning

the counterscarp.⁸ Though the argument from silence is always hazardous, it may well be significant that the chronicle and record sources do not suggest a struggle for possession of Ewloe in the war of 1277.⁹

The siting of Ewloe, overlooked and in a tract of woodland, is the more surprising when we consider that many castles associated with the thirteenth-century princes of Gwynedd were built in showy, prominent positions, often on hill-tops or ridges: such was the case with Dolbadarn, Cricieth, Castell y Bere, Dolforwyn, Degannwy, Dinas Emrys, Carndochan, Castell Dinas Brân, and Bryn Amlwg, as well as Caergwrle, built by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's brother Dafydd.¹⁰ It would seem, therefore, that neither the domination of a surrounding landscape, such as might be achieved by a hill-top fortification, nor the inherent military strength of its site, will serve to explain the siting and purpose of Ewloe castle. One key to both may lie in the history—and the perceived significance—of the area in which the castle was located. Previous accounts of Ewloe have mentioned, more or less in passing, that it lay close to an episode in the war of 1157, when the ruler of Gwynedd was faced by a joint Anglo-Powysian onslaught.¹¹ The campaigns of 1157 involved several fronts, but the most notable for present purposes was an attack led by Henry II, aided by Madog ap Maredudd of Powys, along the coastal region of the Dee estuary.¹² This combined force was met by an energetic response from Owain Gwynedd, who constructed a fortified position to bar its way, possibly at Hen Blas. Henry's response was to divide his forces, sending the main body along the coastal route to attack Owain's position, while taking a smaller contingent in person along an inland route in an attempt to outflank Owain's forces.¹³ This last manoeuvre involved passing through a tract of woodland, and it was there that Henry's force was attacked by two of Owain Gwynedd's sons, Dafydd and Cyran. It appears that they or their father had spotted, or anticipated, Henry's outflanking tactic. In the ensuing fight the king himself was thought to have been killed, Henry of Essex, the constable of England, threw down the royal standard and fled, and several lords, including Eustace fitz John, constable of Chester, were cut down.¹⁴ Only with difficulty was Henry able to lead the survivors of his force to join the main army. Though Owain Gwynedd was forced to fall back, and ultimately to make peace on terms that involved significant loss of territory, the check suffered by Henry was reported with considerable glee by the Welsh chronicler at Llanbadarn Fawr.¹⁵

The location of the encounter in the woods was for long uncertain, but in a closely argued paper of 1967 Goronwy Edwards showed that the encounter had taken place in the commote of Coleshill.¹⁶ Edwards suggested that it was to the commote and not to the vill of Coleshill that Gerald of Wales was referring when he wrote that in 1188 he had passed southwards along the shore of the Dee estuary and had seen on his right the woodland of Coleshill, which Henry II had rashly entered and where his force had suffered such a mauling.¹⁷ The encounter with Dafydd and Cyran had taken place as the king advanced through what one text of *Brut y Tywysogion* identified as Koed Pennardlaoc, the wood of Hawarden.¹⁸ A possible weak point in Edwards's reconstruction of the geography of the encounter in the woods is suggested by his comment that 'if . . . it was intended by Gerald to convey that the fighting occurred in a wood that was situated within the *commote* of Coleshill, it would not be altogether wide of the mark'.¹⁹ The point here is that Hawarden, the location of the fight according to the Welsh chronicler, and Coleshill, the location according to Gerald, the Chester Annals, and Jocelyn of Brakelond, are distinct places. As Edwards pointed out, 'the area of the commote of Coleshill marched at its south-eastern end with the area of the vill of Hawarden at its north-western end.'²⁰ These locations are contiguous, but not overlapping. But Edwards himself supplied a satisfactory solution to this problem, when he noted that 'a running fight could easily spill over from the Hawarden side to the Coleshill side of the common boundary.'²¹ This is entirely credible.²² It is thus of considerable interest in the present context that Ewloe castle stands on the very border between Hawarden and Coleshill commote, 'in the dingle of the Wepre Brook, which divides that parish [*sc.* Hawarden] from Northop [*in* Coleshill]'.²³ Edwards marked an area less than a mile to the east of Ewloe, and just over a mile to the north-west of Hawarden castle, as the 'approximate site of

fighting' on the map accompanying his 1967 paper, but it seems probable that Ewloe Castle stands at precisely the place at which Henry's force would pass from Hawarden into Coleshill commote.²⁴

One further observation on the 1157 fight in the wood is in order. Dafydd and Cynan may be presumed to have sought a place for their ambush which would provide them with maximum advantage. Of course woodland would have offered them useful concealment. But for their attack to have the greatest chance of success they would surely have wanted to launch it at a point where their enemy was suffering significant difficulties in negotiating the terrain. This is precisely the characteristic of the ground in which Ewloe castle is set. It stands adjacent to the steep ravines where the Wepre Brook is joined by the smaller New Inn stream, and which would have lain across the path of Henry II's advancing force. The deeply incised brooks constituted the principal natural obstacle in the path of Henry's attempt to turn Owain Gwynedd's flank, and this was thus the most advantageous point from which Dafydd and Cynan could launch their attack.

We thus have a scenario in which the castle at Ewloe may be seen as a deliberately sited monument to what was perceived as a famous victory by Gwynedd forces over an army led by one of the most powerful English rulers of the central Middle Ages. Whether begun by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth in the years after his recovery from near-destruction by King John in 1211, or by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in the aftermath of his recovery for Gwynedd of the Perfeddwlad following a decade of English occupation, the castle appears to have been intended to announce, and to symbolise in stone the restoration by a ruler of Gwynedd of enduring control of a territory that had seen a most memorable feat of arms by his forebears. Whether Llywelyn ap Gruffudd was the initiator or the developer of the castle his association with Ewloe, so clearly expressed in Tibetot's report, points to his resolve to mark his emergence as a worthy successor to even the greatest of his lineage. Other castles of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in Gwynedd almost certainly had a monumental, referential significance beyond military, economic, residential and display functions: examples include Degannwy, on a site with historic associations that stretched back for many centuries, and Dinas Emrys, located in a place of legendary significance.²⁵ But the prominent sites of those castles were very different from the concealed location of Ewloe and the events and persons that they invoked were in the distant legendary past in contrast to Ewloe's reference to the well-attested historical events of 1157. The building of Ewloe may thus establish the potency of the events of that year in the historical consciousness of the dynasty of Gwynedd.

But even if we are able to envisage Ewloe as a form of commemorative marker, many questions relating to the castle remain unanswered. Ewloe does not appear, at first sight, to feature in any of the recorded places at which the court of the thirteenth-century princes of Gwynedd can be located.²⁶ A charter to Basingwerk abbey of Dafydd ap Llywelyn issued in 1240 was dated at Coleshill: this was probably issued at Hen Blas in the vill of Coleshill where Dafydd had been born in 1213.²⁷ A further document, an agreement between Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and the bishop of Bangor in December 1261, was also issued at Coleshill (*apud Conssyl*).²⁸ This is more difficult to locate. Llywelyn ap Gruffudd presumably did not feel any strong attachment to Hen Blas, and this may argue against an identification with the vill of Coleshill. But there are other possibilities within the commote of Coleshill, notably Llys Edwin, near Northop, as well as Ewloe itself. So Ewloe might have been the place at which the 1261 agreement was made, but there is by no means any certainty of this. Again, Ewloe may represent the site of the issue of a document dated from Tegeingl (*apud Tegegygl*) on 21 February 1277, though the military situation at that point was such that a location much further north is probable.²⁹ It should be remembered that castles often remained without a generally acknowledged name for some time after their construction: thus Dolforwyn was Bach yr Anelau, the new castle above the Severn, and near Abermiwl.³⁰ This point also raises the possibility, albeit faint, that the dating of a document at *Sehton* (Sychedyn/Soughton) less than three miles west of Ewloe may relate to the latter place.³¹ But on closer investigation two certain reference to Ewloe appears,

though not under that name. In November of 1259, English envoys were instructed to meet Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in order to settle issues relating to the truce between the prince and Henry III. The meeting was to be *apud Weperespol extra Cestriam* (at Wepre Pool, beyond Chester.) a further meeting was scheduled for Wepre in December 1260.³² Wepre is of course the name of one of the streams above which Ewloe castle stands, and today the name of the park giving access to the castle. The identification is put beyond doubt by an entry in Lhwyd's *Parochialia*, under Northop: *Avon Evlo alias Avon Gwepra*.³³

The 1259 and 1260 references establish that Ewloe was used for high-level meetings, but it may be significant that no further meetings are recorded there. At some point, in or after 1256, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd overran Moldsdale and secured possession of Mold castle. We know that he had taken control of Gwynedd Is Conwy in 1256, and according to the Chester Annals his occupation of Moldsdale took place at the same period.³⁴ After the death of his ally de Montfort in August 1265, Llywelyn soon launched an attack on Hawarden and captured it; this was presumably the occasion of his capture of Robert de Monte Alto.³⁵ Though he released Robert under the terms of the Treaty of Montgomery, and restored the lordship of Hawarden to him, he did not abandon his conquest of Mold until he was driven into western Gwynedd in 1277.³⁶ It is particularly interesting that we have references to Llywelyn as *present* at Mold in 1269 and again in 1273×1274.³⁷ This in turn raises the possibility that after acquiring Mold and its castle, which had been refurbished by Henry III in the early 1240s, Llywelyn found that place more suitable than Ewloe as a location for his court. Mold (Yr Wyddgrug) was also a place with dynastic resonance for the rulers of Gwynedd, having been famously seized by Owain Gwynedd in 1146 and by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth in 1199.³⁸ As a location for high-level diplomatic meetings Ewloe appears to have been rapidly overtaken by Rhyd Chwima, the ford of Montgomery.³⁹ If we assume that the castle was begun or significantly refurbished by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd after 1256, then its subsequent life as a princely residence and as an imposing location in which to hold diplomatic meetings would appear to have been very brief.

It is possible, of course, that the castle may have been put to other uses—such as a place of confinement for ‘political’ prisoners, such as we see in the cases of Cricieth and Degannwy, but we have no evidence for this.⁴⁰ Again, post-Conquest records mention the existence of important resources in the vicinity of Ewloe including iron and lead mines, coal deposits and extensive woodland.⁴¹ It is quite possible that some at least of these resources were exploited under the thirteenth-century Welsh princes, and it is equally possible that the castle at Ewloe may have been used to control and protect such exploitation. But it may be questioned whether the possible need to control extraction and working of such material resources would have prompted or necessitated the construction of so elaborate a structure.

One record in the Welsh Rolls of Edward I may prompt caution in accepting too readily the identification of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd as the initial builder of Ewloe. In the course of the enquiry set up by the king into the use of Welsh law one of the witnesses called before the royal commissioners at Chester, Hamund de Culford, testified that ‘Roger the steward of Mohaut (i.e. Roger de Monte Alto, steward of Chester) demanded the land of Mohaut from Dafydd ap Llywelyn before John Lestrangle and other justices of the king at Wapir, and there derained his right by the descent of his ancestors by common writ and the common law that the king’s justices now use in Wales’.⁴² ‘Wapir’ is fairly clearly a rendering of Wepre—particularly if we note the rendering of the name as *Weper[espo]* in the 1259 record. Hamund de Culford’s testimony suggests that there was some reason why the plea, which had been carefully provided for in diplomatic exchanges in the early 1240s, should have been held at Wepre.⁴³ It may be that it was simply because Wepre was regarded as being on the boundary between Tegeingl and the lordship of Hawarden, which was associated with the lords of Mohaut.⁴⁴ The case in question had surely taken place in or before 1244, for between the spring of that year and his death in 1246 Dafydd was at war with Henry III. It appears from the testimony of Hamund de Culford and that of William de Haweldin, that similar pleas involving Llywelyn ap Gruffudd rather than his uncle, Dafydd ap Llywelyn, had been

scheduled for hearings at Griffin's Cross (probably Gresford) Hawarden and Rhyd Chwima.⁴⁵ It not always clear what accommodation was available at those places for legal proceedings, though Gresford was provided with an imposing church,⁴⁶ and Hawarden of course had a castle, while Rhyd Chwima was very close to the castle of Montgomery on the 'English' side while it is possible that on the 'Welsh' side the castle of Dolforwyn was built in part to provide accommodation for those involved in high-level diplomatic exchanges and legal hearings. Though the reference to Wepre as the site of legal proceedings in the early 1240s does not prove that there was a castle there at that date it surely raises the suspicion that there may have been some structure at Wepre that served as a suitable venue for such events. This, together with Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's apparent readiness to abandon Ewloe for Mold as a location for his court, may arguably strengthen the suggestion (for which see note 3 below) that Llywelyn ab Iorwerth may have begun the construction of the castle, which was then continued, and perhaps even thoroughly rebuilt, but not originated, by his grandson Llywelyn ap Gruffudd. Against this it is quite possible that the significance of Ewloe, probably very great in the context of 1256 and Llywelyn's first victorious foray beyond Gwynedd uwch Conwy, may have declined rapidly as the prince's conquests extended much more widely in the later 1250s and early 1260s. Locally it may have been supplanted by the more imposing site of Mold.

But at this point it is necessary to turn once more to the documents of 1311. It has in the past been too readily assumed that these clearly state that Llywelyn ap Gruffudd built the castle.⁴⁷ That assumption cannot be sustained. The relevant sections of the inquisition and of the report are as follows: Llywelyn ap Gruffudd '*ibidem affirmavit quoddam castrum*'; and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd '*en vne cornere de boys iafferma vn Chastel*'.⁴⁸

The important point here lies in the choice of verb to describe Llywelyn ap Gruffudd's action. The Latin *affirmare* and the Norman French *affermer* more readily suggest strengthening or restoring an existing structure or feature than construction *ab initio*.⁴⁹ Thus a perfectly reasonable translation of the Latin is that Llywelyn ap Gruffudd 'there restored [or strengthened] a certain castle' and of the Norman French is that the same prince 'there restored [or strengthened] a castle in a corner of the wood'. With the other evidence discussed above this strongly suggests that a fortified structure had stood on the site of Ewloe before Llywelyn ap Gruffudd acquired the area at some point after 1256. Features of the castle have been held to suggest an earlier structure—such as the 'shelf', projecting from the bank opposite the south-east angle of the upper ward, which Hemp suggested was a pier of an early bridge, constituting 'the only concrete evidence for the existence of an earlier castle', or at least distinct phases of construction, as in the fact that the lower ward curtain wall abuts that of the upper ward 'providing a clear indication that it was built as a second stage of the construction works.'⁵⁰ Architectural and archaeological analysis will help to resolve the issues raised here, but it is at least becoming clear that the cumulative evidence of record sources suggests that Llywelyn ap Gruffudd was not the first to build at Ewloe.

It is to be hoped that the present study will stimulate further investigation of this and of other native Welsh castles, and that it will also prompt reflection on the richness and variety of factors that might lie behind the construction of Welsh princely castles.⁵¹

NOTES

1. Tibetot's report, in Norman French, is given in full by Wilfrid J. Hemp, 'The castle of Ewloe and the Welsh castle plan', *Y Cymmrodor* 39 (1928), 18–9. The inquisition calendared by William Rees (ed.), *Calendar of Ancient Petitions relating to Wales* (Cardiff, 1975), pp. 92–3 is dated by him to 1316, but is surely to be dated to the period immediately before Tibetot's report to the king.

2. For Ithel ap Bleddyn's connection with Prince Llywelyn see David Stephenson, *Political Power in Medieval Gwynedd* (Cardiff, 2014), 216. The inquisition and Tibetot's report both give the sequence of Welsh rulers—from Owain Gwynedd to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd—correctly; they both neglect to mention that Llywelyn ab Iorwerth lost control of Gwynedd in Conwy for some years after 1210, but this can be disregarded as hardly relevant to the matter in hand. J. E. Lloyd, 'Ewloe', *Y Cymmrodor* 39 (1928), 2, n.1, noted that 'there is something wrong in the order of events, as detailed by Tibetot, for, while Roger [de Monte Alto] was made justice [of Chester] in 1257 (*Annales Cestrienses*, 74) Llywelyn had already won Tegeingl and Moldsdale in 1256'. The difficulty is removed if we assume that Llywelyn's seizure of Tegeingl was substantial but not complete in 1256, and that it was a year or two before he could add Ewloe—adjacent to Hawarden, which remained in de Monte Alto hands until the mid-1260s—to his conquests.
3. See Derek Renn and Richard Avent, *Flint Castle; Ewloe Castle* (Cadw; Welsh Historic Monuments, revised edn, 2001), 6. Hugh Brodie makes the case that we should consider once more the possibility that Llywelyn ab Iorwerth may have at least begun the work at Ewloe. Given that the castle is overlooked, he argues that Ewloe is best characterised as providing lordly accommodation with a level of security, rather than being designed to withstand serious assault. He suggests that a plausible context for the origin of such a structure is more likely to have been the period between 1221 and 1237 when Llywelyn was allied with Earl Ranulf of Chester and his heir John the Scot, rather than the period after 1257, when practical defensive needs are likely to have been a greater priority. Part of Ewloe's function may perhaps have been to serve as a lordly base at which to prepare for, or to hold, meetings with the earl. Such a scenario would see Llywelyn Fawr as building at minimum the D-shaped tower, with the possibility that Llywelyn ap Gruffudd may have extended or restored the castle, particularly after likely neglect in the interval between 1241 and 1256 (Brodie, pers. comm. 2015). This view is most attractive, but it perhaps raises the question as to why Llywelyn ab Iorwerth should have built at Ewloe rather than simply developing his existing residence at Hen Blas, for which see note 9 below.
4. J. Beverley Smith, *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Prince of Wales* (Cardiff, 1998), 172.
5. *Ibid.* 172–3.
6. Renn and Avent, *op. cit.* (note 3), 29 where it is pointed out that the castle is overlooked by the higher ground to the south; Smith, *op. cit.* (note 4), 173; David Cathcart King, 'The Stone Castles' in John Manley, Stephen Greuter and Fiona Gale (eds), *The Archaeology of Chwyd* (Mold, 1991), 177.
7. Hemp, *op. cit.* (n. 1), 11.
8. *Ibid.* 14.
9. J. E. Morris, *The Welsh Wars of Edward I* (Oxford, 1901), 119, could trace no evidence of serious fighting at or around Ewloe; instead he pictured Edward's regional commander, the earl of Warwick, driving the prince's forces 'well back from the immediate west of Chester' in the winter of 1276–77. Beverley Smith *op. cit.* (note 34), 601, notes that Ewloe 'cannot be shown to have impeded the advance of the king's army.' It is possible that Ewloe was occupied by a small force of six lances under Richard de Grey in the war of 1282: Morris *op. cit.* 161.
10. For a survey that remains useful see Richard Avent, *Cestyll y Tywysogion Gwynedd/Castles of the Princes of Gwynedd* (HMSO, 1983); for Dinas Brân as a probable joint effort between Llywelyn ap Gruffudd of Gwynedd and Gruffudd ap Madog of northern Powys see David Stephenson, 'Potens et Prudens: Gruffudd ap Madog, Lord of Bromfield 1236–1269', *Welsh History Review* 22 (2005), 427–8.
11. J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols (London, 3rd edn, 1939), 496–8.

12. It is clear that the attacking force was an Anglo-Powysian one: see R. Geraint Gruffydd, 'A Welsh poet falls at the Battle of Coleshill, 1157', *Flintshire Historical Society Journal* 36 (2003), 52–8.
13. Lloyd op. cit. (note 11), 497–8.
14. Ibid. 498.
15. For the construction of the Welsh chronicles in this period see David Stephenson 'Welsh Chronicles' Accounts of the mid-twelfth century', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 56 (2008), 45–57.
16. J. Goronwy Edwards, 'Henry II and the fight at Coleshill': some further reflections', *Welsh History Review* 3 (1967), 251–63. This paper was a response to D. J. Cathcart King, 'Henry II and the fight at Coleshill', *Welsh History Review* 2 (1965), 367–73.
17. Edwards op. cit. (note 16), 256–72.
18. Ibid. 258.
19. Ibid. 262.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. It has also to be said that we should not expect pin-point accuracy of geographical location in an area of woodland, just as we should not expect it from a chronicler writing in far-off Llanbadarn Fawr, or from a traveller passing close to the place but writing several decades after the event.
23. Henry Owen (ed.), *The Description of Penbrokeshire by George Owen of Henllys*, vol. 4, Cymmrodorion Record Series 1 (London, 1936), 561.
24. For the map see Edwards op. cit. (note 16), 252. It is interesting that there was apparently a tradition surviving into the nineteenth century that 'the fight at Coleshill' took place in 'the narrow defile of Coed-Eulo': see S. Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* (London, 1849), *sub* Hawarden.
25. For Degannwy see Lloyd op. cit. (note 11), vol. I, 240. On the traditions associated with Dinas Emrys see Rachel Bromwich (ed.), *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* (Cardiff, 3rd edn, 2006), lxxvi–lxxviii, 94–5, 99, 101, 417. See also Wendy Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester, 1982), 24
26. For brief discussion of some of the places at which Llywelyn ap Gruffudd can be shown to have resided see Beverley Smith op. cit. (note 4), 220–1.
27. Huw Pryce, *The Acts of Welsh Rulers 1120–1283* (Cardiff, 2005), no. 292. For discussion see David Stephenson and Craig Owen Jones, 'The birth-date of Dafydd II ap Llywelyn', *Flintshire Historical Society Journal* 39 (2012), 21–32 and references there cited.
28. See Pryce op. cit. (note 27), no. 347.
29. Ibid. no. 401 and see note 9 above.
30. Pryce op. cit. (note 27), nos 603–04; J. G. Edwards, *Littere Wallie* (Cardiff, 1940), 23, *idem*, *Calendar of Ancient Correspondence concerning Wales* (Cardiff, 1935), 86.
31. Pryce op. cit. (note 27), no. 389. Smith op. cit. (note 4), 173, 221, 226, implies an identification of Sychdyn as Ewloe.
32. For the 1259 meeting see *Close Rolls 1259–61*, 4–5, and for that of 1260, *ibid.* 131.
33. Edward Lhwyd, *Parochialia (Archaeologia Cambrensis Supplement, 1917)*, vol. 1, 88. The 1259 meeting is noticed by Smith op. cit. (note 4), 124, and the fact that 'on occasion meetings were held at Wepre or Gresford, on the Cheshire frontier' is noted *ibid.* 132, but Wepre/Weperespol is not there identified as Ewloe. A later reference to Ewloe as Wepre may be found in arrangements in 1297 for three Welshmen to lead forces from Rhos and Rhufoniog to Durham or Newcastle. The three included 'Kenewerduy (Cyfnerth Ddu or Cynwrig Ddu?) de Weper'; this may of

- course indicate a man from the township of Wepre rather than one associated with the castle. See *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1281–92*, 133 for a reference to townships, of which Wepre is one, within the bounds of woodland extending from Flint in the north ‘as far as Ewelawe’.
34. For Llywelyn’s seizure of Moldsdale see R. C. Christie (ed.), *Annales Cestrienses, Chronicle of the Abbey of St Werburgh at Chester*, Lancashire and Cheshire Records Society, 14 (1886), 72–3, where the prince is pictured *in manu forti Englfeld et vallem Moaldie occupans* (occupying Englefield and Moldsdale by force). In mid-1265 Robert de Monte Alto was confirmed in possession of Hawarden castle by the government controlled by Simon de Montfort, while Mold castle was not mentioned, indicating that Llywelyn was still in occupation of it: *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1258–66*, 488.
 35. Ibid. 489 establishes that Llywelyn was besieging Hawarden in early September 1265.
 36. Pryce op. cit. (note 27), no. 363 for the release of Robert de Monte Alto. For the appointment of Cynwrig Sais as royal custodian in October 1277 see *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1272–81*, 232
 37. Pryce op. cit. (note 27), nos 369, 377.
 38. For the argument that the Gwyddgrug captured by Owain Gwynedd’s forces in 1146 is to be identified as a southern castle rather than Mold see J. Beverley Smith, ‘Castell Gwyddgrug’, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 26 (1974–76), 74–7; and for a refutation of this view see Stephenson ‘Welsh Chronicles’ Accounts of the mid-twelfth century’; for the capture of Mold by Llywelyn in 1199 see Christie op. cit. (note 34), 44. On this last reference see discussion in Stephenson, *Political Power in Medieval Gwynedd*, xlv–xlv. The refortification of Mold under Henry III in the early 1240s, after a period when it had been held as a conquest by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth and before it was returned to the possession of the de Monte Alto family, is noticed in *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1232–47*, 269.
 39. See Smith op. cit. (note 4), 132, and detailed discussion by John Davies, ‘Rhyd Chwima – The Ford at Montgomery – Aque Vadum de Mungumeri’, *Montgomeryshire Collections* 94 (2006), 23–36.
 40. For imprisonment at Cricieth see John Williams ab Ithel (ed.), *Annales Cambriae* (London, Rolls Series, 1860), 97, and at Degannwy see Christie op. cit. (note 34), 54–5.
 41. See for examples Arthur Jones (ed.), *Flintshire Ministers’ Accounts 1301–1328*, Flintshire Historical Society (1913), 45 (iron and wood from Ewloe); D. L. Evans (ed.), *Flintshire Ministers’ Accounts 1328–1353*, Flintshire Historical Society Record Series no. 2 (1929), 59 (coal, wood and lead from Ewloe). An extent of the manor of Ewloe in 1295 reveals the existence of an iron mine at that date, as well as four hundred and eighty acres of arable in demesne, water mills and extensive woodland: see *The Cheshire Sheaf*, 3rd ser., 9 (June 1912), 56.
 42. *Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls 1277–1326* (Welsh Rolls), 192.
 43. For provisions for such a plea see *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1232–47*, 292 (when it was to be held at Mold), 426.
 44. The long association of the de Monte Alto lords with Hawarden is revealed in *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem II, 1272–91*, 161–2, no. 284, and *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous I, 1219–1307*, 315, no. 1028.
 45. *Calendar of Various Chancery Rolls*, 192–3. For the identification of Griffin’s Cross as Gresford see Pryce op. cit. (note 27), 549 and references there cited.
 46. For Gresford see the ‘Historic Settlement Survey by Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust’, available at <www.cpat.org.uk/ycom/wrexham/gresford.pdf>.
 47. See Lloyd op. cit. (note 2) ‘Ewloe’, p. 2; Hemp op. cit. (note 1), 9; Renn and Avent op. cit. (note 3), 6.

48. The text of the inquisition is in The National Archives, SC 8/62/3095; for the text of Tibetot's report see note 1 above.
49. This is apparent, for example in the use of *affermer* in a roughly contemporary Marcher romance: E. J. Hathaway, P. T. Ricketts, C. A. Robson and A. D. Wilshere (eds), *Fouke le fitz Waryn* (Oxford, Blackwell, for the Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1975), 5.1–2: 'le roy Bran fitz Donwal fist referre la cité, redresser les murs, e afermer les grantz fosses', where the meaning is certainly 'restore' or 'strengthen'.
50. Hemp op. cit. (note 1), p. 11; Renn and Avent op. cit. (note 3), 35.
51. I have benefited greatly from discussions of Ewloe with Hugh Brodie, to whom my thanks are due. Errors of fact or interpretation in this paper remain my responsibility.