

# The Coat of Arms

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# THE COAT OF ARMS

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# LETTERS FROM TREGARON – A STUDY IN HERALDIC PRACTICE IN ELIZABETHAN WALES

ROBERT J. COLLEY, Ph.D., F.S.A.

## Abstract

*This paper presents excerpts from four letters written by the unofficial herald deputy Thomas Jones to Garter William Dethick between 1588 and 1602. They shed new light on the way that the College of Arms managed its affairs in Wales during an important period for the codification of Welsh heraldry.*

## Introduction

In 2019 four hitherto unnoticed letters from Thomas Jones of Fountain Gate, Tregaron, an energetic promoter and compiler of Welsh pedigree rolls, to William Dethick, Garter King of Arms in London, were discovered in the library of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. The correspondence sheds light on the relationship between these two men and their approach to the granting of arms and crests in Elizabethan Wales, and the warm friendship which existed between them for some ten years, if not longer. The letters also elicit details of how and for how much, payments for the herald's services were made, and the practices regarding the confirmation of Welsh coats of arms which appear to have been accepted as a general convention. The discussion will begin by describing the manuscripts, and will then discuss the writer and the recipient of the letters, their subject-matter, and payment for the granting of crests, and will close the discussion by drawing conclusions.

## The Manuscripts of Caius College Library

The letters are included in different manuscripts which comprise miscellaneous documents collected by successive heralds and arms painters of the Knight family. The first of these was Edmund Knight, Norroy King of Arms, who died in 1593, leaving two sons – Thomas Knight, Chester Herald, who died soon after 1618<sup>1</sup>, and John Knight (II), the renowned painter-stainer of London.<sup>2</sup> At his death in 1618 the latter bequeathed ‘all my bowkes of armes and petegrees withe all outhur things that apartayne to my proffesion of payntinge’ to my son Thomas Knight, arms painter to the Heralds’ office<sup>3</sup>, from whom, in turn, his son William Knight, also an arms painter of London, acquired them. By *his* will of 1660, he ordered them to be sold for the benefit of his wife and children by his executor and brother, John Knight, the King’s serjeant-surgeon. They were then valued at £40, but one John Graves of St. Dunstan-in-the-West, arms painter and apprentice to William Knight, offered £90 for them. John Knight demanded £150, but they remained unsold, and at his death in 1680 he bequeathed them to Caius College

<sup>1</sup> Mark Noble, *History of the College of Arms* (London, 1805) pp. 172, 210.

<sup>2</sup> Edward Town, “A Biographical Dictionary of London Painters 1547 – 1625”, *Walpole Society*, vol. 76 (2014), pp. 124–5.

<sup>3</sup> *Duck v Myles and John Holland*, Caius College MS, Cur.Mil Boxes 13/36mm, 19/7c to 7, 20 June, 1639.



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where they remain today.<sup>4</sup> The letters are bound with other unrelated items, some glued in; the pagination of each manuscript is irregular and the folio numbers entered on each letter seem to bear no relation to other items in the collection. The manuscripts relevant to Thomas Jones are 573/280 (1588), 599/281 (1596) and 606/513 (1602). The letters appear to have been written by a scribe, and two are seemingly copies, while two are signed by Thomas Jones. In addition there is a pedigree noted ‘By me Thomas Jones of fowntaingate’, glued into 573/280.

### The writer of the letters

Thomas Jones of Fountain Gate (Porthffynnon), Tregaron in Ceredigion was born about 1532, the illegitimate son of Sion ap Dafydd ap Madog ap Hywel Moethe of Porthffynnon and Catrin, the illegitimate daughter of Maredudd ap Ieuan ap Robert. He was thus descended from an old family whose patriarchal ancestor was Gwaithfoed Fawr of Ceredigion.<sup>5</sup>

By 1559 he was known as Twm Sion Cati (after his parents).<sup>6</sup> Known in Welsh legend as a brigand in his youth, an *englyn* (a short poem) attributed to him in a manuscript written soon after his death boasts of his being able to drive cattle from Cornwall to Arwystli (in mid-Wales), to house break, and to distribute largesse. He is celebrated in folk lore as the Robin Hood of Wales. In 1559 however he was described as a ‘gentleman’ and was granted a pardon for *omnia escapia et cautiones*, but two years later appeared before Glamorgan grand sessions on suspicion of felony. Tradition records his prosperity in Brecon in early life – he later married the daughter of Sir John Price of Brecon – and in 1572 he was a buyer of land near Porthffynon (Fountain Gate), his ancestral home. In 1601 his local standing is indicated by his stewardship of the lordship of Caron, in which his estate was situated.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the *englyn* noted above, other sources suggest that he was a cattle drover. After he had visited his cousin John Dee, the astrologer and mathematician, in Manchester in August 1595, Dee wrote that he ‘rode towards Wales bak agayn the 13<sup>th</sup> day to mete the cattall coming’ and in September Dee wrote ‘seventeen hed of cattell from my kinsfolk in Wales by the courteous Griffith David (perhaps Thomas Jones’s son-in-law) nephew to Mr Thomas Griffith browght’ (his brother David Griffith may have been the father of Griffith David).<sup>8</sup> Food supplies in the form of cattle on the hoof are also recorded by Dee during the period.<sup>9</sup> At his death in 1609 Thomas Jones’s inventory records, among a substantial number of livestock, fifty-one kine valued at £38.<sup>10</sup>

In a *cywydd* (an alliterative Welsh poem) by the poet Sion Mowddwy in 1597, round about the time when the letters were written, he is portrayed as an old man, bald and white-bearded. As a cattle drover he would have driven cattle to the rich markets

<sup>4</sup> Deposition in the case *Re Percy’s Pedigree*, Caius College Cur.Mil. Boxes x/ii; x/23/12, Deponents Act Book, 1687–1702 4 June 1688 No 22 (Deponent John Graves b. 1643 apprentice to William Knight 1655–60).

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Rush Meyrick, *Heraldic Visitations of Wales* (Llandoverly, 1846), pp. 45–6.

<sup>6</sup> Sion is Welsh for John.

<sup>7</sup> Daniel Huws, ‘Thomas Jones [known as Twm Siôn Cati] (1532–1608/9)’, *New DNB*.

<sup>8</sup> P. Russell, ‘Divers Evidences Antient of Some Welsh Princes’ *Classiques Garnier* (2018), pp. 395–426 (398).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 397.

<sup>10</sup> Will and Inventory, NLW, DS/1609/20.

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in England: he knew the world. For other travellers he provided the safety of a convoy and in an age without banks he was often entrusted with large sums of money.<sup>11</sup> But it is as a genealogist that he is remembered here. He had spent some time collecting genealogies in Glamorgan, where he found time to admire the ladies of the ‘Fro’ (the Vale) – with the result that he quarrelled over one of them with Dafydd Benwyn of Llangeinwys, the Glamorgan bard.<sup>12</sup> It has long been known that in the reign of Queen Elizabeth the Welsh gentry took to the fashion of having their pedigrees recorded on rolls with painted coats of arms. Thomas Jones has been recognized as the foremost promoter of this fashion. Major Francis Jones, Wales Herald, described him as ‘one of the first (if not the first) Welsh genealogist to make out fully emblazoned pedigrees, and a pioneer’.<sup>13</sup> His contemporary Dr John David Rhys in his *Cambrobrytannicae Cymraecaeve Linguae Institutiones et Rudimenta* of 1592 said that ‘whoever professed himself to be a herald bard had to be thoroughly acquainted with the real descents and armorial bearings of the gentry of Wales’ and that ‘the most celebrated, accomplished and accurate is reckoned Tomas Sion alias Moetheu of Porth-y-Ffynon near Trev Garon; and when he is gone it will be a very doubtful chance that he will be able for a long time to leave behind him an equal’.<sup>14</sup> In addition he was later described as ‘industr(iou)s and scienced’ by William Dethick, Garter King of Arms<sup>15</sup>, but it has only recently come to be accepted that Thomas Jones himself had no part in the scribing or painting of these rolls. His reputation lay in his detailed knowledge of Welsh pedigrees and the heraldry associated with them rather than any skill as a scribe or arms painter. A single letter of his, now in the College of Arms, allows us to see that his handwriting was poor and his English shaky; he had not had formal schooling. Indeed recent discoveries show that all known original pedigree rolls attributed to him up to the year 1591 are in the hand of Richard Adams, arms painter of Ludlow.<sup>16</sup>

In later life he married as his second wife Joane (born 1542) the widow of Thomas Williams of Ystrad Ffin and daughter to Sir John Price of Brecon, and niece of the Countess of Essex.<sup>17</sup> According to John Dee’s mind, Thomas and Joane were a couple whilst her husband was still living. Their acquaintance, if not their dalliance, probably went back to the 1560s when he was in Brecon.<sup>18</sup> His antiquarian associates were George Owen of Henllys, Sir John Wyn of Gwydir and the deputy herald Lewys Dwnn. He claimed to have been acknowledged as a kinsman by Lord Burghley (also descended from Hywel Moethe).<sup>19</sup> Recent research has begun to suggest that there were informal channels of

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Huws, ‘Twm Sion Cati’, *Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, vol.45 (2009) pp. 39–45 (43).

<sup>12</sup> F. Jones, ‘An approach to Welsh Genealogy’ *Trans. Hon. Soc. of Cymmrodorion* (1948), p. 384, citing *Traddodiad Llenyddol Morgannwg*, p. 87.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 397.

<sup>14</sup> Meyrick, *op.cit.*, p. 45 n. 5 citing *Cambrobrytannicae Cymraecaeve Linguae Institutiones*

<sup>15</sup> W.A. Littledale, *Miscellaneous Grants of Arms I*, Harl.Soc. vol.76 (1925), pp. 121–2. The grant cited refers to him as ‘a Gent of Great Industry & Science’, see n.35 and 38.

<sup>16</sup> Discussions with Dr Daniel Huws 2019.

<sup>17</sup> The countess in question was Elizabeth wife of Thomas Cromwell, earl of Essex. Thomas Jones’s wife Joan married thirdly after his death Sir George Devereux, brother to Walter, Cromwell’s successor as Earl of Essex.

<sup>18</sup> Huws, *op. cit* p. 43.

<sup>19</sup> Huws, *DNB, op. cit.*

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influence and knowledge between Welshmen and the College of Arms – for example both Lewys Morgannwg, one of the best known bards of the mid-sixteenth century, and his associate Richard Thomlyns, scribe and arms painter of Denbigh, both served Sir Gilbert Dethick, Garter King of Arms;<sup>20</sup> and Dr Daniel Huws has suggested that Sir John Price was instrumental in getting Gruffudd Hiraethog (bard and pupil of Lewys Morgannwg) appointed deputy herald for Wales;<sup>21</sup> and as has been noted, he was an associate of Dafydd Benwyn who is known to have made a copy of one of Thomas Jones's pedigree rolls.

### The recipient of the letters

The four letters were written to William Dethick, Garter King of Arms. One includes his name in the salutation (606/513a): 'Right Worp<sup>ll</sup> Mr William Dethick'. One has his address on the verso (599/281): 'To the Ryte worship<sup>ll</sup> William Deathicke Alias Garter Esqre principall Kinge at Armes At his house Raght over Against Doctors Comons in London...' [Figure 1]; and from both internal and external evidence it is certain that two others are also written to him (573/280 and 606/513b).

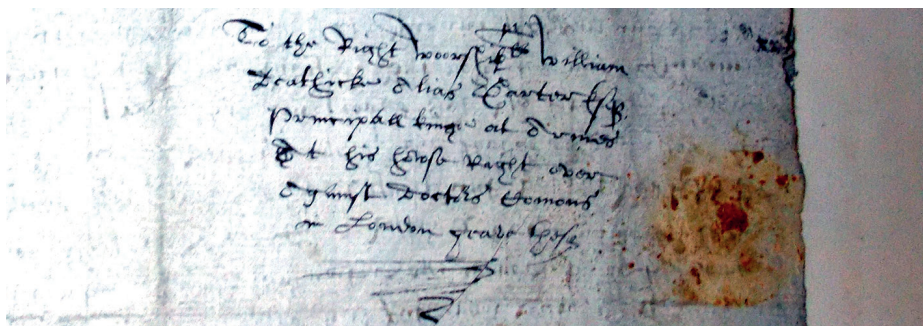


Figure 1: reverse of letter regarding David Lloyd of Pengwernolau showing William Dethick as the addressee. Caius College Ms 599/281 f. 2v. Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge.

Dethick was a complex and contradictory man. Even allowing something for the general violence and manner of the age and the fact that our information comes from those hostile to him, he was a man of violent temper. 'He beat and wounded his owld father S<sup>r</sup> Gilbert Derike ... in the open strete', 'he wounded his owne brother with his dagger in the Castle of Wyndesore at an Instalaccion', was involved in many 'owtrages and braules' such as striking with his dagger one Master Browne in Westminster Abbey 'after a funeral of great estate', and at the funeral of Sir Henry Sydney he beat the Minister in the Church at Penshurst.<sup>22</sup> He struck heralds and pursuivants at public ceremonies if they offended him, and he assaulted the wife of John Hart, Chester Herald, by rubbing hot ashes into her hair.<sup>23</sup> There were numerous other instances,

<sup>20</sup> R. Colley, 'The Pedigree Roll of Gawen Goodman 1584', *Denbighshire Historical Society Transactions*, vol.62 (2014), pp. 73–90.

<sup>21</sup> Discussions with Dr Daniel Huws 2019.

<sup>22</sup> Ralph Brooke, *Detections and Abusesse of William Dericke*. Folger Shakespeare Library Ms x.d. 313, 423.

<sup>23</sup> BL Lansdowne Ms. 18 f.5 ; Sir Anthony Wagner, *Heralds of England* (London, 1967), p. 201.





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men and women armed with swords, staves, pitchforks and pikes against Thomas Jones and his household in which he was almost killed, and they tried to hang his son. Later in the year he was wounded by the gleve of Morgan David, and on another occasion was saved by chance after the Vicar had approached him with a concealed dagger.<sup>25</sup> And yet, in strictly heraldic matters, Dethick seems, on the whole, to have enjoyed a good reputation, notwithstanding criticism levelled against him for granting arms to base persons. Camden, whose praise is weighty and was not lightly given, describes him as most zealous in all that belongs to the study of honour and nobility.<sup>26</sup> He was a lover and promoter of learning and one of a select number of antiquaries who entered into a society in 1593 meeting at his lodging – the forerunner of the Society of Antiquaries. Whilst it is true that he was accused of granting arms to base persons, this accusation ‘was an old one brought out of store whenever a stick was wanted to beat a King of Arms with’.<sup>27</sup> As everyone knew, one of the chief purposes of granting arms was to confirm the gentility of persons not yet formally established. A grant of arms provided social legitimisation for those at the lower elevations of the social pyramid who lacked the legal certification that came, for example, with knighthood or peerage. It is hardly surprising with the increasing number of aspirants from newly enriched families, if an element of venality crept in. The urge for enhanced social respectability and integration remained especially acute throughout the period.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, the request for a grant was often supported by the production of a pedigree, and in this sphere Dethick was also accused of producing doubtful genealogy; but, it might be argued that in some cases these may have been based on as much recorded evidence as could be mustered at that time. Like legal fictions they were designed to achieve a result which was widely accepted as more or less legitimate, but which could not be otherwise accurately or conclusively achieved – the line between fiction and bold assertion or conjecture may have been a faint one.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Dethick was not alone in being so accused – other eminent heralds were similarly criticized, as too was Thomas Jones (at least in the later opinion of Humfrey Wanley<sup>30</sup>); but it must also be admitted that the science and critical standards of genealogy were as yet still to be developed and refined.

### The subject matter of the letters

Three of the letters relate to the grant of a new crest and at the same time a confirmation of a paternal coat of arms. The fourth relates to evidences to support a confirmation

<sup>25</sup> Daniel Huws, ‘Twm Sion Cati’, in: *A Birthday Book for Brother Stone*, Ed. Rachel May & John Minford (Hong Kong, 2003), p. 43; and Huws *DNB*, *op.cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Camden, *Britannia* (London, 1600), p. 250: ‘Gulielmus Dethicus principalis Armorum Rex Garterii nomine notus, omnium quae ad honorem at nobilitatis rationem spectant studiosissimus’. Wagner *op. cit.* p. 204.

<sup>27</sup> Wagner, *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558–1641* (Oxford, 1965), p. 65; Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters and Publics in Provincial England 1540–1640* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 102–5.

<sup>29</sup> J.H. Baker, ‘Tudor Pedigree Rolls and their Uses,’ in Nigel Ramsay (ed.), *Heralds and Heraldry in Shakespeare’s England* (Donington, 2014), p. 149.

<sup>30</sup> Humfrey Wanley, commentary to Harl. Ms. 1500 in his catalogue of Harleian Manuscripts – ‘I have heard that this Jones of Fountayn –gatte was in his time a notable forger of Welsh pedigrees’. This has since been taken in a derogatory sense but could the term ‘forger’ have had its other meaning of a ‘creator’ or ‘maker’? I have seen the term used in its sense of ‘to form’ in sixteenth and early seventeenth century scripts.



LETTERS FROM TREGARON

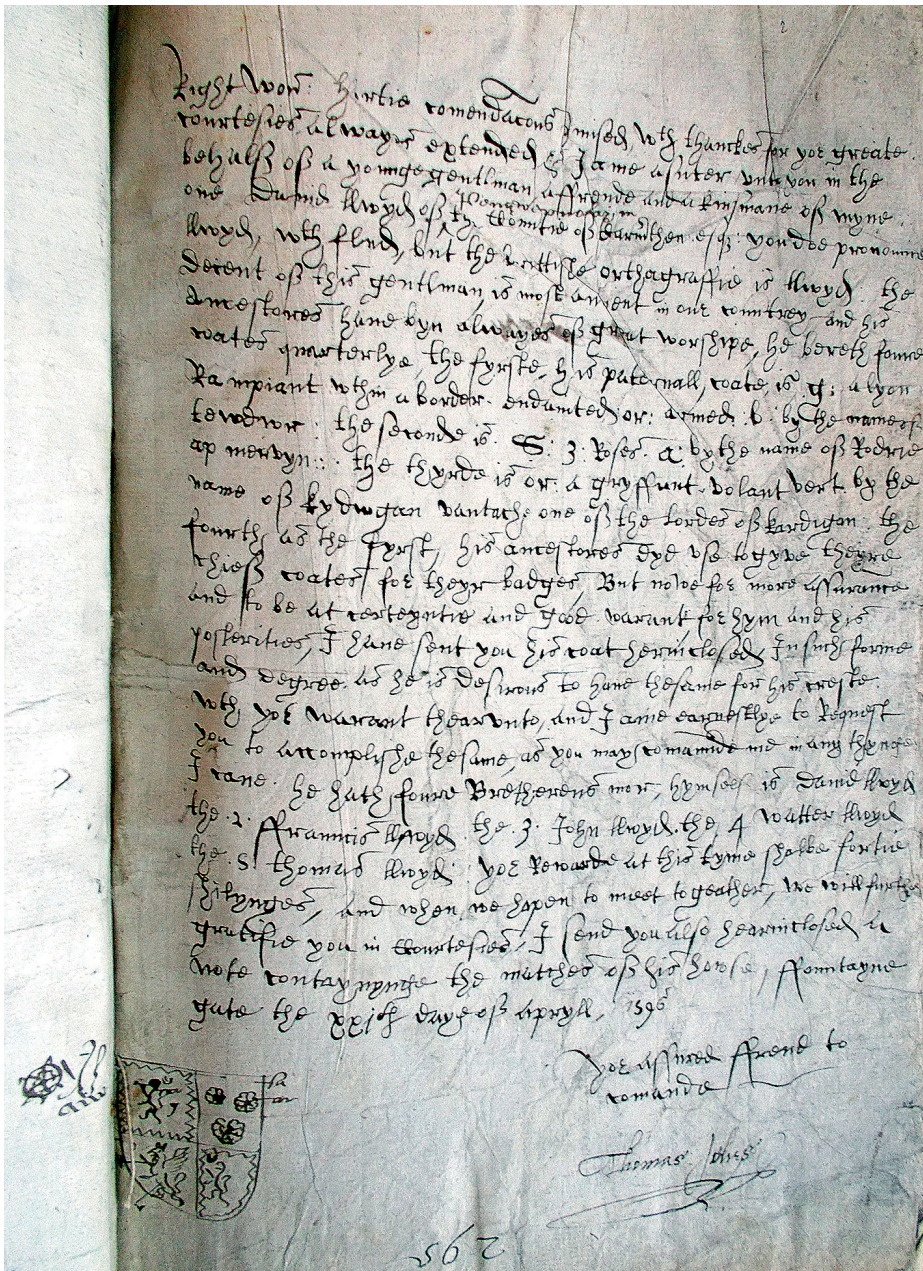


Figure 3: letter regarding David Lloyd of Pengwernolau, Caius College Ms 599/281 f. 2r. Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge.



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of a paternal, quartered coat together with the grant of a crest. In the case of Welsh arms, at this time, heralds seem to have been content to confirm the traditional coats attributed to patriarchs of centuries before, many of whom had lived in non-heraldic times, and some of whom were merely mythical figures. Was this done uncritically, or was it a recognition that these arms had, whatever their attribution, by now achieved an authority or authenticity of their own by systematic use?<sup>31</sup> For example, the preamble in many fifteenth and sixteenth century grants recognized ‘armes they and their ancestors have borne tyme out of minde’ or ‘by what they were due to them for ever neither can tongue expresse or the memory of man recollect’.<sup>32</sup>

In the present letters we see the coat of Gwaithfoed confirmed to Richard Pryse of Gogerddan at some time after 1588 [Figure 2]; the coats of Rhys ap Tewdwr, Rhodri ap Merfyn and Cadwgan Fantach confirmed to David Lloyd of Pengwernolau in 1598 (Dethick differencing the coat of Rhys ap Tewdwr by charging the border with torteaux) [Figure 3]; the coats of Rhys ap Tewdwr and Gwaithfoed confirmed to John Lloyd of Llanfair Clydogau after 1602; and that of Rhys ap Tewdwr to Walter Jones of London in 1602.

Thomas Jones, in these letters, sets out the ancient usage of these coats by each potential grantee, at times supplying a pedigree. In the case of Richard Pryse he asks that ‘he may be Licenced by yo<sup>u</sup> to beare in Crest or baidge some of his Auncient paternall Coate that his Auncientrie have born before... w<sup>th</sup>out corrupcon or difference (573/280); for David Lloyd he says ‘the Decent of this gentleman is most ancient in our countrey and his Ancestors haue bin alwayes of great worshipe. he bereth foure coates quarterlye’ (599/281); in the case of John Lloyd ‘That Coate he doth beare by his grandmother daughter & coheire to John Gwyn Esq<sup>r</sup> & paternally descended from Tewdwr.... – But his paternall coate is the coate of Gwaythvoed<sup>33</sup>’ (606/513) [Figure 4].

The main purpose of the letters, however, is to pray for the grant of a crest which was often lacking in the case of ancient arms. Most such grants, after confirming the arms, contain the words ‘And for as much as I finde no creast unto the same as commonly to all auncient Armes there belongeth none’<sup>34</sup> and in the grant of a crest to Walter Jones, Dethick says ‘for that there hath ben no ancient creast or cognisance appropriate unto his Predecessors<sup>35</sup>’. Thomas Jones states that ‘our Auncientries did use to geave the whole Coate in Baidge’ or ‘his ancestors dyd use to gyve theyre chief coates for theyr badges’ (573/280 and 599/281 respectively), that is, they bore as a crest

<sup>31</sup> Michael Powell Siddons, *The Development of Welsh Heraldry*, vol. I (Aberystwyth, 1991), p. 324.

<sup>32</sup> W. Paley Baildon, ‘Heralds’ College and Prescription’, *Ancestor*, vol. viii (1904), p. 125, citing *Tonge’s Visitation of Yorkshire*, Surtees Soc. vol. 41 (1863) App xxxviii and BL Harl. Ms. 1470, f. 153.

<sup>33</sup> This seems to clarify the uncertainty about the arms in Lewys Dwnn *Visitations of Wales*, ed. Samuel Rush Meyrick (Llandoverly, 1846), p. 164: Arfau Jankyn Lloyd Esquier (father of John Lloyd) of Llanvair Klydige Q1 3 llew blaidd y dwnn kynta Q2 Gwaithvoed ail Klothien Q3 Tewdwr Q4 Y blaidd val y Dwns.

<sup>34</sup> R. Colley, *The Grants of Arms of Robert Cooke 1567–93* (forthcoming) e.g., no 52 Thomas Smythe of Credenhill 1569 (NLW Ms Twiston Davies 4 No 9018 original patent); No 67 Edward Owen of Shrewsbury 1582 (*Genealogist* vol. xxii p. 154, *Misc. Gen. et Her.*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ser., vol. ii, p. 249).

<sup>35</sup> Willoughby.A. Littledale, *A Collection of Miscellaneous Grants*, Harl. Soc. vol. 76 part I (1925), p. 121. The original grant hangs framed in the hall at Chastleton House, Oxfordshire and it is from this that the actual words are taken, Littledale having used BL, Add Ms 5524, f.206 which is different in minor instances of words and spelling from the original patent.



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the same charge as in the shield. But from the letters we see the practice of differencing the device used in the coat to be used as a crest – in the case of Richard Pryse, he says ‘he is more desirous to geave the foresaid Lion in suche order as yo<sup>r</sup> wo<sup>r</sup> shall devise’ and the ‘*Lion Ramping Regardant Sable, armed gules*’ as a crest holds in his forepaws a *fleur-de-lys* or [Figure 5]; in the margin of the letter is a naively tricked drawing of the crest. For David Lloyd the *Lion rampant* or as a crest bears a *crescent sable* on his shoulder and holds in his forepaws a *Rose argent, seeded gules, leaved vert* – he says ‘I have sent you his coat hereinclosed in such forme and degree as he is desirous to have the same for his creste’ – a painted roundel accompanying the letter shows this crest [Figure 6]. For Walter Jones, the ‘*Lyon Rampant*’ or, as a crest becomes ‘a *demy lion rampant* or *armed and langued azure houlding a mollett gules*’; with regard to his descent from Hywel ap Rhys he explains ‘howell was the 3 son of the L<sup>d</sup> Rs Prince of South Wales there you must sett a molet till you come to the achievements all .... (the mullet was the cadency mark of the third son). The claws and tongue of another tincture is not a difference but simply heraldic artistic style. For Thomas Barrett of Pendyn (referred to in a memorandum) he takes a *lion rampant* or from one of the quartered coats, charges the beast with a *crescent gules*, holding in his forepaws an *escallop sable* taken from the paternal coat.<sup>36</sup> In the case of John Lloyd, he says ‘Yo<sup>r</sup> knowe that Mr Prise of Cardigan shire doth beare the same lion embracing a flower de luce; so is Mr Lloyd desirous to have som devise in his bearing of that Lion Contrary to that order as Mr Price doeth beare it.’ So, the *lion rampant regardant sable* becomes a *demi lion rampant regardant sable holding in his forepaws a bezant or annulet* or – the marginal trick is not sufficiently distinct to differentiate between the two. It is also interesting to speculate whether Thomas Jones had some connection with the grant of arms to Ryse Morris of London by Robert Cooke, Clarenceux King of Arms in 1587. Descended from Rhys ap Tewdwr he differenced the paternal coat by adding pellets (roundels sable) to the *indented border* or and one on the shoulder of the lion. The crest is the same as the coat – a *lion rampant* or but *differenced with a collar gules, holding in both forepaws a pellet*.<sup>37</sup> These seem to follow the practices recorded in the letters.

The correspondence between Thomas Jones and Dethick is evidence of a careful and considered approach to the granting of both arms and crest. It also evinces an assertiveness on the part of the former in his heraldic dealings with the latter, who, conversely, seems to have had a large degree of confidence in him. The letter relating to Walter Jones resulted in an unusual sequel, for in the patent confirming arms and granting a crest in 1602 [Figures 7 and 8], Dethick actually includes in the patent itself the following words relating to the quartering allowed to Walter Jones –

‘As appeareth by his pedigree and discent made and collected out of sundry evidences by Thomas Jones of Tregaron a Gent of Great Industry & Science in y<sup>e</sup> antiquities & genealogies of y<sup>e</sup> worshipful gent in his Ma<sup>ties</sup> Principalitie of Wales ...’<sup>38</sup>

which appears to be contemporaneous with the pedigree roll on paper produced by Thomas Jones for Walter Jones of Chastleton in 1601 ‘perused and allowed by William

<sup>36</sup> Siddons, *Welsh Heraldry* op cit vol.II, (Aberystwyth,1993), p. 17.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid* vol. IV (Aberystwyth, 2006) p. 183; Colley, op.cit, No. 252 (Cooke’s Gifts. CA, Ms. B.EDN 23v; Queen’s College Oxford, Ms 146, 241 vi; CA Ms F13 f.20v; Society of Antiquaries, Ms 385, f. 44).

<sup>38</sup> Littledale, op.cit. pp. 121–2, but *vide* f. 35 *supra*.



## LETTERS FROM TREGARON

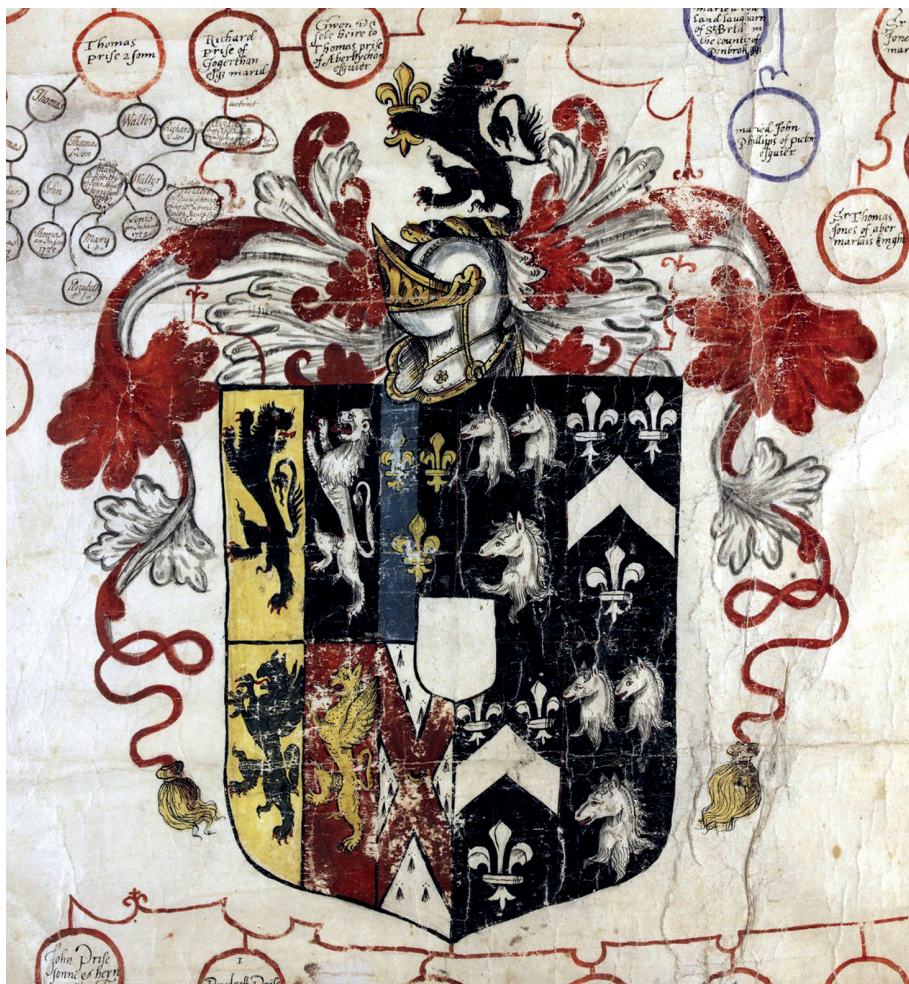


Figure 5: achievement of Richard Pryse of Gogerddan in the pedigree roll drawn up by Thomas Jones 1590. © National Library of Wales, Roll 226. For blazon see the appendix.

Dethicke garter principall Kinge of Armes'.<sup>39</sup> He had earlier sent the pedigree to Dethick showing his entitlement to bear the coat of Rhys ap Tewdwr. In the letter he blazons the coat using the language of fantastical symbolism rather than the normal heraldic terminology, which was advocated at the time by, for example, Sir John Ferne, in which the names of the planets were used for the heraldic tinctures – Mars for gules, the Sun for or and Jupiter for azure. He says: 'he did beare *Mars a Lyon Rampand within a border indent Sol armed love.*' This practice was favoured by contemporary scholars

<sup>39</sup> Michael Powell Siddons, *Welsh Pedigree Rolls*, NLW 1996, p. 42 no. 199 formerly at Chastleton House and at that time in Oxfordshire County Archives.



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Figure 6: the painted crest of David Lloyd of Pengwernolau, Caius College Ms 599/281 f.1. Courtesy of the Master and Fellows of Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge.

for blazoning the arms of sovereign princes.<sup>40</sup> The purpose of this letter regarding the arms of Walter Jones was to show that Gilbert Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, through his descent from ‘Gwladys d: & coeh : to howell ap Rs ap Tewdwr’<sup>41</sup> bore the same coat but with a different border. He states ‘The L<sup>d</sup> Talbotes ever synce hath borne the coate of Tewdwr but the Talbotts beare yt engrailed & the offsprings of Tewdwr Indented.’

This is set out in the patent by Dethick who goes on to say ‘I have thought good to acquaint the right honourable Gilbert Earle of Shrewsbury in this behalf... and by his Lordships consent to exemplifie the same (to Walter Jones)’. The deference demonstrated here probably arose from the fact that Gilbert Talbot was the son of George, earl of Shrewsbury, who had been Earl Marshal and as such would have presided over the College of Arms at the time of the quarrelsome jurisdictional troubles which involved *inter alia* William Dethick. It is evident from these letters that both Thomas Jones and

<sup>40</sup> William Newton, *A Display of Heraldry* (London, 1846), p. 21.

<sup>41</sup> Whilst the heraldry is accurate, the descent differs somewhat from modern genealogies.



Figure 7: the achievement of Walter Jones in the grant of arms by William Dethick of 1602 National Trust at Chastleton House. Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Trust. For blazon see the appendix.

## THE COAT OF ARMS

Dethick took great care in differencing the several crests requested, at the same time as allowing the ancient paternal coats to be confirmed.

### Payment for granting crests

The letters give a telling insight into the payments for the grant of a crest. In the letter in 606/513 (1602) Thomas Jones says 'I know yo<sup>r</sup> Rewarde for Crestes vnder yo<sup>r</sup> warrant is somtymes x<sup>li</sup> of a frend v<sup>h</sup> as I have payed you for Mr Barretts crest. Yo<sup>a</sup> shall have but xl<sup>s</sup> of him (John Lloyd) at my Request & overboldnes allwayes'. In letter 599/281 (1596) he says 'yo<sup>r</sup> Rewarde at this tyme shalbe fortie shilynges and when we happen to meet together we will further gratifie you in courtesies.' In letter 573/280 (1588) he says 'and hit shall gratifie yo<sup>a</sup> for the same this being bould vpon yo<sup>a</sup> according to my old custome in the behalf of my frends' thereby implying that the payments in respect of his friends are less, as set out in the letter regarding John Lloyd. In letter 606/513 (1602) he gives an idea of what the 'Courtesies' might be – 'If God will grant us Life and health till the next somer after Trinitie terme I would you durst be so bold as to appoint me a meting at my Coz Jones and there to Trye our manhood who cann best eate fatte venison'. Venison was given for reward as a sign of gentility: eating venison was an acceptable gift between gentlemen. Since the permission to hunt for game came from the Queen, to enjoy venison together was a mark of social status and a gesture of esteem. Such meals of venison and other game were lavish and forbidden to the general population. In a ballad of an earlier time the prestige associated with this meat is evident:

Anone before our kynge was set  
The fatte venison  
The good whyte brede the good rede wyne  
And thereto the fyne ale and brown<sup>42</sup>

The fact that Dethick enjoys this long standing relationship with Thomas Jones over many years has perhaps another dimension. The College of Arms had to find a pragmatic way of dealing with matters which arose at some distance from London. The appointment of deputy heralds to some extent regularized matters which lay beyond its control – such agents were particularly necessary in the instances discussed here, which required a knowledge of the Welsh language. Although in the pedigree roll made for Johan and Maude fflywelin in 1608 Thomas Jones describes himself as 'principalle heraulde for all Wales'<sup>43</sup> and the pedigree of Gwyllym of Llanfair Cilgedin in Monmouthshire is noted as 'approved by Mr Lewis Dun and Mr Thomas Jones of fountayne gate, heraulds att armes' there is no record of him ever having been appointed deputy herald or indeed holding any other official office<sup>44</sup>, though Lewys Dwnn had

<sup>42</sup> See Barbara A. Hanawalt, 'Ballads and Bandits: Fourteenth Century Outlaws and the Robin Hood Poems', in: *Robin Hood, An Anthology of Scholarship and Criticism* ed. Stephen Knight (Cambridge, 1999) pp. 262–284; B.A. Hanawalt 'Men's Games, King's Deer. Poaching in Medieval England', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, vol. 18 (1988).

<sup>43</sup> NLW Roll 17.

<sup>44</sup> BL Harl. Ms 3538 f.3.



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Figure 8: letters patent granting arms to Walter Jones by William Dethick of 1602 National Trust at Chastleton House. Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Trust.

been so appointed; but since it was the College's policy to limit the number of people undertaking the work of heralds, there was no official vacancy for Thomas Jones to fill, though he did assist Dwnn. The production of pedigree rolls, however, benefitted both Jones and Dethick by providing the former with the lucrative business of pedigree making for potential grantees of arms and the latter with pedigrees that might support such grants, for which Dethick could charge a substantial fee. The business generated by Jones at a local level was a fruitful source of money for both and so it seems that Dethick was prepared to concede part of his fees for granting crests to Jones to keep him happy and assure the future conduit of business to London. This accounts, perhaps, for the confident and assertive manner in which Jones himself appears to set the level of Dethick's fees for granting crests.



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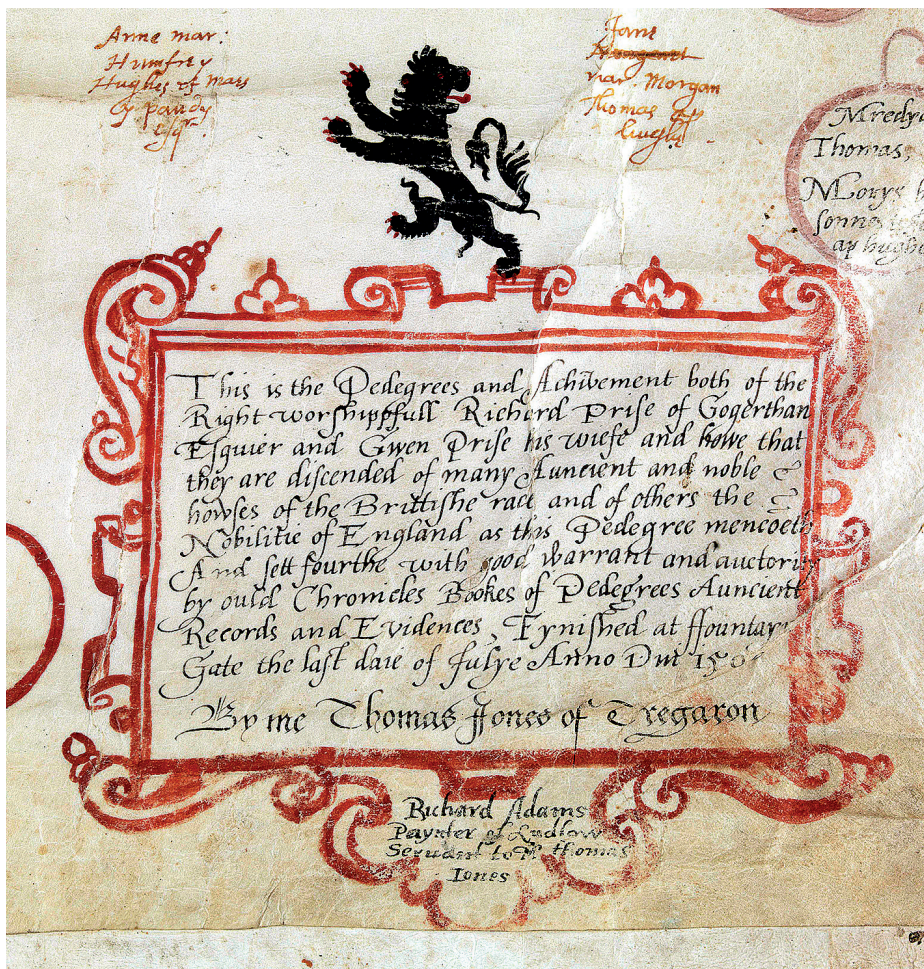


Figure 9: title cartouche from the pedigree roll of Richard Pryse showing the characteristic design and red paint employed by Richard Adams. © National Library of Wales, NLW Roll 226.

### Conclusion

These episodes reveal how the College of Arms relied on local heraldic and genealogical practitioners in areas where the heralds could not effectively operate, due either to the need to understand the Welsh language or to have access to the ancient manuscripts held in private libraries. Thomas Jones possessed both such requirements, which were enhanced by his extensive network of friends and relations. How Thomas Jones came to be involved in his work on pedigree rolls and grants of arms is uncertain but it is likely that he saw the chance of creating a niche market among the Welsh gentry who were eager to display their standing and connections through the production of attractive and impressive pedigree rolls and grants of arms.

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The relationship between Jones and Dethick is also evidence of a gradual shift from one paradigm to another in the practice of Welsh genealogy. Welsh bards such as Gruffudd Hiraethog and Lewys Morgannwg had assisted the College of Arms for some time. The bardic order from which they were drawn was jealous of its role as the traditional custodian of genealogical knowledge in Wales. The activities of bards who worked with the heralds may have been acceptable to the bardic order simply because they were bards themselves, and products of the bardic system. Thomas Jones was neither bard nor poet and operated outside this circle, even employing an English arms painter, Richard Adams of Ludlow, to execute his pedigrees rather than maintaining a purely Welsh tradition [Figure 9]. The geography of genealogical expertise in Wales was undergoing a change. The growing demand for the more visible and outward displays of privilege and status which pedigree rolls satisfied meant that the older reliance on bards who eulogized their patrons in verse, incorporating their heraldry in poetry, was gradually waning.

Whilst a grant of arms may have been the certification of gentility, the pedigree roll had a wider purpose. It exhibited the relationship between people of power and influence and those who aspired to it. The nuanced and intricate web of interconnection between descendants of a common ancestor, now largely lost, was fully understood by the participants in the quest for social advancement and promotion.<sup>45</sup>

## APPENDIX of BLAZONS

### Figure 5. Richard Pryse

- Q1 *Or a lion rampant regardant sable armed and langued gules* (Gwaithfoed)
- Q2 *Sable a lion rampant argent* (Teithwalch)
- Q3 *Per pale azure and sable three fleurs de lys or* (Ynyr Gwent)
- Q4 *Or a gryphon segreant vert* (Elffyn ap Gwyddno)
- Q5 *Gules a gryphon or* (Maredudd ap Llywelyn)
- Q6 *Ermine a saltire gules* (Osbrwn Wyddel)

Impaling for Gwen daughter and sole heiress of Tomos ap Rhys ap Morus

Q1 and 4 *Sable three nag's heads erased argent* (Blayne)

Q2 and 3 *Sable a chevron between three fleurs de lys argent* (Gollwyn ap Tangno)

Crest: On a wreath or and sable. *A lion rampant regardant sable armed and langued gules holding in his fore-paws a fleur de lys or mantled gules double argent.*

<sup>45</sup> I am grateful to the following for their help in the preparation of this article : Dr Daniel Huws, Dr Maredudd ap Huw, Mr Robert Yorke at the College of Arms, Dr Nigel Ramsay, Mr Thomas Lloyd, Wales Herald Extraordinary, Mr Emyr Evans at the National Library of Wales, the Master and Fellows of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, the National Trust at Chastleton House, Dr Ben Guy for photographing the letters, and to Angela James for patiently typing my manuscript draft.

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### Figure 7. Walter Jones

- Q1 *Gules a lion rampant or armed and langued azure within a bordure indented and a mullet in dexter chief of the second (Rhys ap Tewdwr)*
- Q2 *Or a lion rampant gules (Rhiwallon ap Cynfyn)*
- Q3 *Gules a garb or thereon a crow sable (Vaughan of Tyle Glas)*
- Q4 *Paly of six or and azure on a fess gules three mullets or (Clanvow)*
- Q5 *Gules two bars paly argent and sable (Barre)*
- Q6 *Argent a stag trippant sable (Jones of Monmouth)*
- Q7 Blank
- Q8 As Q1

*Crest: on a wreath or and gules a demi-lion rampant or armed and langued azure holding in his fore-paws a mullet gules, mantled gules doubled argent.*