



Laugharne Corporation

Founded AD1290

1. The Charter
2. The Portreeves

P R E F A C E

Very little has been written about Laugharne Corporation, possibly because it's difficult to know where to begin. We know that the town was given its Charter by Sir Guido de Brione, but there were at least six and possibly eight Norman knights with that name, and even when one is called "the elder" or another "the younger", that doesn't really solve the problem of deciding who did what & when.

It is now generally accepted that the Corporation was given its Charter in 1290, although forty years ago when E.V. Williams completed his historical research (which is republished on pp. 4-35) the date 1307 was more frequently mentioned.

My own theory, and it can only be a theory until evidence is found to either confirm or deny it, is that the Corporation may be even older.

It is an issue that can only be considered in a historical context, but just look at the clues.

The remains of prehistoric animals found at Coygan Cave, which was inhabited by ancient man, shows us that hunters & gatherers were living here when mammoths, red deer, hippopotami, rhinoceros, hyenas & tigers roamed the Western European landmass, ie. when Britain was physically part of Europe and there was neither a North Sea nor an English Channel.

The discovery of the Beaker grave at Orchard Park (1950) and the Beaker cemetery at Plashett (1875) tells us that there was a settled community here 6000 years ago, ie. four thousand years before the birth of Christ and 4500 years before the birth of Mohammed.

Similarly, the discovery of Roman baths beneath Island House, the remains of a Roman boat further up the River Taf near St. Clears (circa 1800), and a collection of 60 Roman coins in a bronze sacrificial censer at Coygan in 1800 or 1810 and the recent discovery (2006) of a large hoard of Roman coins on a local farm confirm this was still a settled community 2000 years ago, and must have remained so throughout the Dark Ages for there was an Anglo Saxon Church where St. Martin's now stands, an Anglo Saxon cemetery nearby, and many of the placenames mentioned in the Charter are, in fact, Anglo Saxon and neither Welsh nor Norman.

Richard Avent, who supervised the excavations at Laugharne Castle, and sometimes called in at the bookshop, told me that the remains of three previous castles, largely wooden-built, had been found on the site.

Could it be that Laugharne was already an established community before the Celts arrived in Wales or the Welsh language took root, maybe two or three thousand years before Hywel Dda laid down the first principles of Welsh law?

To return to my theory. The evidence suggests that Laugharne was at one time a fairly major port, probably until 20th January 1607 when a tsunami swept up the Bristol Channel and inundated the seaboard from Bristol down to Laugharne, with a 60-80ft wave sweeping up the Towy Valley, leaving cattle stranded on tree-tops, washing away bodies from Cardiff's cemetery, changing the shape of river beds, and leaving thousands dead.

Was Laugharne ever the same again? It seems unlikely.

Before the tsunami, Laugharne was a creek, apparently able to provide shelter for ships of up to 300-350 tons, and my theory is that the visiting sea (as Dylan Thomas called it) enabled ships to take shelter in a natural harbour, tucked behind the Castle, roughly where Water Street and Wogan Mews adjoin The Cors playing field, with the Castle protecting the harbour's entry.

And what does all this mean to the Corporation? Now, here's the rub – if Laugharne was a natural harbour, sheltered by the hills, with both a fresh water supply (River Corran) and the tidal waters of the Taf, an abundance of fish and a fertile landscape for cattle and root crops, and the ability to be self-sustaining, what was its importance?

We know that Laugharne was the sixth largest town in Wales in the 16th Century, with a population of over 2,000 before the tsunami, but was it militarily important in earlier centuries, when the Romans, the Celts, the Normans & the English all tried to conquer Wales, at one time or another?

Was there a reason, now lost to history until someone discovers some missing vellum document that may provide the key, why Sir Guido de Brione gave the town to its people? Why was he so grateful? What had the town done to earn such benevolence?

If Henry II visited Laugharne in 1172, which he most certainly did, what kind of castle was here then, a century or more before the present castle was built? Henry came here on his way back from Ireland. Did he arrive by sea? How was the town governed? Is this, perhaps, another clue to the date of the Charter, for there are suggestions that the 1290 Charter replaced a Charter of Privileges granted during the reign of King John (1199-1216), who was the youngest son of Henry II. What form did this Charter of Privileges take? And why were they granted?

All of this happened several centuries before the first books were printed by Caxton, but somewhere there will be, among the great mass of documents that have survived in the national archives, probably written on parchment in mediaeval Latin, some form of explanation, telling us where, when & why Laugharne was given these privileges.

Now, with so many national records being opened up to scrutiny through the wonders of Google, the chances of us finding the answers are stronger than they were forty-five years ago when E.V. Williams researched this pamphlet.

Ernest Vincent Williams MA., B.Litt., was much respected in Laugharne. He was a graduate of Jesus College, Oxford, a Latin scholar, Classics master at the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Carmarthen and Portreeve during the War (1942-43) He was also the organist at St Martin's Church for fifty years and a confirmed bachelor, although the town knew (as Laugharne always does) that he had a lady-friend. This prompted a few jokes, which caught the ear of Dylan Thomas who cast him among his characters in UNDER MILK WOOD – as Organ Morgan, with a wife who complains, “Organ Morgan, you haven't been listening to a word I said. It's organ organ all the time with you.”

Williams was neither a journalist nor a trained writer, so there's a lack of structure in THE CHARTER and THE PORTREEVES. Often, it's not clear whether he is quoting from a document or not. There are no footnotes & often no explanation of where his information came from. A few sentences are incomplete, and there is some inconsistency in spelling, both of placenames and people, with even the same word sometimes spelt differently within a paragraph. I have tried to tidy this up as best I can, breaking down paragraphs and making the lay-out easier on the eye, but have been careful not to lose any of the detail of what is, and will remain, an important study of the Corporation's history.

George Tremlett
Laugharne
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THE CHARTER

The Charter of Laugharne is undated, has no seal, but was granted in the reign of Edward I (1271-1307) to the burgesses by Sir Gwydo de Brione, the younger, who held the Lordship of Thalacarn. Sir Gwydo de Brione, the elder, a Norman marcher-lord, became established in South-west Wales, and, after siding with the Barons against Henry III, was later reconciled to him.

Tradition has it that the tomb bearing the de Brian coat-of-arms, in St. Martin's sanctuary, is his, and it is likely that he granted a Charter to the burgesses, and that, even in the reign of King John, Laugharne had a Charter. But there is no definite evidence of this.

Sir Guy, the elder, died in 1307, and his son, Sir Gwydo de Brione, the minor, succeeded him. He married Gwenllian, daughter of Gryffydd ap Lloyd. Later he became ill and his son held the lands.

In 1350 the famous Sir Guy de Brian K.G., Lord High Admiral of Edward III and Richard II, succeeded him. He probably built or rebuilt Laugharne Church. The north-east window in the nave, which contains the de Brian coat-of-arms and a youthful portrait of Edward III, was probably given to celebrate his being made a Knight of the Garter. (The Order was instituted in 1348). He also built the choir in Tewkesbury Abbey, where his tomb is.

The dates suggested for the Charter vary from 1281 to 1307, but it seems most likely that it was made in 1307, as it was then that Sir Gwydo de Brione, the minor, succeeded.

The Charter reads as follows –

To all the faithful in Christ, to whom this present writing shall come Gwydo de Brione, the younger (wishes) eternal salvation in the Lord. Let all of you know that we have granted to our beloved and faithful burgesses of Thalacarn, for us and for our heirs and for our successors, whoever they may be, all the good laws and customs that the burgesses of Carmarthen have up to now used and enjoyed in the time of King John, the grandfather (1) of the Lord Edward, the son of Henry, and their predecessors, kings of England; preserving the weights and measures that were in the time of Gwydo de Brione, the elder.(2)

We have also granted to the same men a free common in all our northern wood, that is to say, in the whole forest of Coydebech, (3) and all that common pasture in the marsh of Thalacarn which is called Menecors (4) along the marks and boundaries as it is perambulated, and also all that free common from the rivulet which is named Mackorellis (5) on proceeding upwards as far as Greensladeshead (6), and so towards the east over Eynons-down (7) by the way that leads to Brangweys (8) and from there to Corranshead (9) and so upwards to Horilake (10) and from there to the top of Tadhil (11), and so

downwards to Passenant's Lake (12) and so towards the east to the bounds between Moldhill (13) and that carrucate of land (14) that formerly belonged to Rice, the son of William, and downwards to the water of the Taf (15) and so to Heming's well (16) and from there upwards to Horestone (17) and so to Pensernes (18) and from there downwards to Blindwell (19) and so to Rochcomb (20) and so downwards to the ancient whirlpool of the Taf (21) and from there to Howelscroft (22) and so upwards to the Burch and Mere (23), and so downwards to the long rock (24) which is near our virgate (25) of Thalacarn.

Also we have granted to the same men one way sixteen feet in width (26) to drive their cattle from the common pasture aforesaid near Passenant's Lake to the water of the Taf.

Also we have granted to the same men one customary acre (27) in length and breadth for digging turfs where they suitably wish to choose in the Turbary (28) near Passenant's Lake.

We have also granted to our burgesses aforesaid (29) that they themselves for the transgression or forfeiture of their servants may not lose their own chattels and goods found in the hands of the servants or placed aside anywhere by the servants themselves within our land, as far as they will be able to prove that they are their own.

And that, if the aforesaid burgesses, or some among them, within our land have died testate or intestate, neither we nor our heirs shall cause their goods to be confiscated so that their heirs do not have the things themselves entirely, as far as it will be established that the aforesaid chattels were those of the said deceased, provided that then knowledge or confidence may be had concerning the aforesaid heirs.

Also we have granted to the same men that no one of them within our land be troubled for the debt of some neighbour, unless he be his debtor or his surety, and that the surety of any one should not be compelled to pay, provided the debtor has wherewith he can pay, and that all offences committed within their township be corrected according to the judgement of the same people, as has hitherto been accustomed to be done in the borough of Kymarden.

We have also granted to the same men, if anyone of them within his township shall have incurred forfeiture towards anyone, he may not be led within the gates of the castle, provided that then he can find good and safe sureties for his standing trial.

And that no one of them be compelled to provide his lord, or any bailiff of his, beyond twelve pence, unless he wishes to do it of his own good will, and that no inquisition of affairs of non-burgesses be made by the aforesaid burgesses, but by the freeholders of the country, nor of the burgesses by non-burgesses.

Also we have granted to the same our burgesses that they themselves choose twice in a year two competent burgesses to the office of our Portreeve (30), that is to say one in the next hundred-court after the feast of Saint Michael, the other in the next hundred-court

after Easter, by the common consent of the same men and not by our authority or that of someone, a bailiff of ours, to hold the hundred-court and to receive the attachments belonging to the hundred and to receive the rent from the township and the toll.

And that the said Portreeves pay the aforesaid rent and toll to us or to our aforesaid bailiff, appointed for this purpose, within the township of Thalacarn by Tally.

And that they should not have any other duty of buying or exchange, or any other service whatsoever that could harm them within the township or without (31).

We have also granted to the same men that the aforesaid burgesses be free from every kind of servitude and service of ploughing, harrowing, making hay, reaping, binding corn and of any kind of carting, of repairing the mill or its pond and from all other kinds of services that could tend to their slavery or their loss within the township and without (32).

And that they go not to the army except to guard their township, as the burgesses of Kymarden do. (33)

We wish also and grant that, if anyone in the open day, in the presence of his neighbours should buy anything, and afterwards that thing should be ill-spoken of, as if stolen, the buyer lose nothing except then that thing, but it shall be sworn on the oath of his neighbours that he did not know that he had bought that thing from a thief (34).

And, that this our grant and the confirmation of our present charter for us and for our heirs and for our successors or assigns, whoever they may be, should remain firm and unshaken for ever, we have strengthened this present charter with the impression of our seal, these men being witnesses (35), Galfrid de Caunville, Patrick de Cadure, William de Caunvill, Thomas de Roche, Roger Corbet, knights; John Laundry, Walter Malenfant, Mared ab Traharn, Thomas Bonegent, clerk, and others.

(The Notes can be found on pages 9 to 16).

THE CHARTER

(in Latin)

Omnibus Christi fidelibus, ad quos presens scriptum pervenerit, Gwydo de Brion minor salutem in domino sempiternam. Noverit universitas vestra nos concessisse dilectis et fidelibus burgensibus nostris de Thalacarn, pro nobis et heredibus nostris et quibuscumque successoribus nostris, omnes bonas leges et consuetudines, quibus burgenses de Karmardin tempore Johanni regis, avi domini Edwardi, filii Henrici et predecessorum suorum, regum Anglie, hactenus usi sunt et gavisī, salvīs ponderibus et mensuris, que fuerant tempore Gwydonis de Brion, senioris.

Concessimus etiam eisdem liberam communam in tota silva nostra boreali, videlicet in tota foresta de Coydebech et totam illam pasturam in marisco de Thalacarn que vocatur menecors per metas et bundas sic ut perambulata est et etiam totam liberam communam a rivulo qui dicitur Makorellis ascendendo usque ad Grenesladesheved et sic versus occidentem super Eynonhisdone per viam que ducit usque Brangweys et illinc usque Corranhisheved et sic ascendendo usque Horelake et ellinc usque ad caput de Tadyhull. Et sic descendo usque Passenanthislake et sic versus orientem usque ad metas inter Moldehulle et illam carrucatam terre que fuit Rici, filii Willi, descend usque ad aquam de Taf, et sic usque ad Hemingheswill et illinc ascendendo usque ad Horeston et sic usque ad Pensernes, et illinc descendendo usque ad Blindewelle et sic usque ad Rochcomb et sic descendendo usque ad antiquam gurgitem de Taf et illinc usque ad Howelhiscroft et sic ascendendo usque ad Burch et mere. Et sic descendendo ad longam petram que est juxta Virgultum nostrum de Thalacarn.

Concessimus etiam eisdem unam viam in latitudine sexdecem pedum ad agendum pecora sua de communi pastura superdicta iuxta Passanthislake usque ad aquam de Taf. Item concessimus eisdem unam acram more in longitudine et latitudine ad fodiendum glebas ubi convenienter egligere voluerint in turbario iuxta Passenanthislake.

Concessimus etiam predictis burgensibus nostris quod ipsi pro transgressione seu forisfactura servientium suorum catalla et bona sua in manibus eorum inventa ant alicubi locorum per ipsos servientes infra terram nostram deposita, quatenus sua esse probare potuerunt, non amittant. Et quod si dicti burgenses, vel eorum aliqui infra terram nostram testati decesserunt vel intestati, nos vel heredes nostri confiscari bona ipsorum non faciemus quin heredes integre ipsa habeant, quatenus dicta catalla dictorum defunctorum fuisse constiterit dum tum de dictis heredibus notitia aut fides habeatur.

Item concessimus eisdem quod nullus eorum infra nostram vexetur pro debito alicuius vicini sui, nisi fuerit debitor vel pleggius et quominus pleggius alicuius non cogatur solvere dum debitor habeat unde solvere possit, et quod omnes transgressione infra villam suam factae per eorundem considerationem emendentur sic in burgo de Kymarden

hactenus fieri consuevit. Concessimus et eisdem quod si aliquis eorum alicui infra villam suam forisfecerit, non ducatur infra portas castelli dum tum possit invenire bonos et salvos peggios de stando iuri. Et quod nullus eorum cogatur accomodare domino suo vel ballivo suo ultra duodecem denarios, nisi voluerit bona voluntate sua, et quod nulla inquisitio de rebus forinsecis fiat per predictos burgenses sed per libere tenentes patrie nec per forinsecos de burgensibus.

Concessimus etiam eisdem burgensibus nostris quod ipsi elegant bis in anno duos competentes burgenses ad perporturam nostram, videlicet in proximo hundredo post festum sancti Michang, unum, et in proximo hundredo post pascha alium per communem consensum eorundem, et non auctoritate nostra vel alicuius ballivi nostri ad tenendum hundredum et recipiendum atachiamta pertinenta ad hundredum et recipiendum redditum de villa et theolonium et quod dicti perporti liberent predictum redditum et theolonium nobis vel dicto ballivo nostro as hoc assignato infra villam de Thalach per talliam. Et quod non habeant aliquod aliud officium emptionis mutationis vel alterius cuiuscumque servitutis quod eis nocere possit infra villam et extra. Concessimus et eisdem quod dicti burgenses sint liberi ab omni servitute et servitio arandi, cratandi, fenum colligendi, metendi, blada ligandi et cuiuslibet generis carandi, molendinum vel eius stagnam emendandi et ab omnibus aliis servitiis que eis servitatem vel in dampnum possint redundare infra villam et extra, et quod non eant ad exercitum. nisi ad villam suam custodiendum sic burgenses de Kymarden faciunt.

Volumus etiam concedimus quod si aliquis claro die coran vicinis suis aliquam rem emerit et postea res illa fuerit calumpniata tamquam furtiva, emptor nihil amittat nisi tum rem illam sed iurabitur sacramento vicinorum suorum quod nescivit rem illam emisse de latrone.

Et ut hec nostra concessio et presentis carte nostre confirmatio pro nobis et heredibus nostris et quibuscunque successoribus nostris vel assignatis rata stabilis et inconcussa in perpetuum permaneat, presentem cartam sigilli nostri impressione corroboravimus, his testibus Galfrido de Caunvill, Patercio de Cadure, Willimo de Caunvill, Thom de Rupe, Rogero Corbet, militibus, Johannes Laundry, Waltero Malenfant, Mared ab Traharn, Thom. Bonegent clerico et aliis.

NOTES ON THE CHARTER

1. AVI = grandfather, John was the grandfather of Edward I. Mary Curtis omits the word, and wrongly translates: “King John, Lord Edward”, instead of King John, grandfather of Lord Edward. This mention of King John may have led many to postulate an earlier charter in his reign. In the SURVEY OF THE LORDSHIP OF LAUGHARNE (1592), made at Laugharne after Sir John Perrot’s death in the Tower of London, we read, “Syr Gwydo de Bryan, the younger, in King John’s days, gave the Charter.” This cannot be correct as King John died in 1216, and the charter was definitely given in the reign of Edward I (1272-1307), probably when Sir Gwydo de Brione, minor, succeeded to the lordship in 1307.
2. “Keeping the weights and measures of Sir Gwydo de Brion, senior”. THE HISTORY OF CARMARTHENSHIRE says that the Carmarthen standard of weights and measures was introduced at Laugharne in 1316. In Donn’s Court of the Hundred held at Laugharne in 1568 (a Latin account is in the Corporation muniments) we read that the jury resolved that the weights and measures should be of the same standard as that of Carmarthen, and that the bailiff of the town should see that all the weights had the seal of the lord of the manor. There is still (1963) in the Town Hall a brass standard that was purchased in 1735.
3. COYDEBECH (Welsh coed bach: little wood). This was appropriated by Sir John Perrot in 1574. It is the land behind the Church on the north east. Miss Margaret Davies, of Manchester University, in her essay on THE OPEN FIELDS OF LAUGHARNE, points out that the air-map of the district shows evidence of early strip-cultivation, which might indicate former possession by the burgesses.
4. MENE CORS (Welsh maen-y-cors – the marsh near the rock). The National Library wrongly transliterates “Menetors”. In later documents it is called MAIN CORSE or MAYNE CORS, and in the survey of 1592 Mayne Cross. The word “totam” suggests that all the Laugharne Marsh was included in the original gift, but we are told, in the Survey of 1592 that in 1574 Sir John Perrot took from the burgesses “one parcel of common marsh, Mayne Cross 300 acres by way of exchange, divers burgesses and inhabitants not assenting.” Sir John gave in exchange for Menecors (1) Corran Mead, which was later granted to the constables, as it is today; (2) Whitehill; (3) Hugdon; (4) Land at Roaches. This exchange is set forth in the extant Whitehill indentures 1658, 1705, 1747, 1785 which gave the terms of the original deed of 1580. However, it seems that Sir John also granted an annuity of £ 9. 6s. 8d. to the Portreeve to be used for the repair of streets and bridges. This sum was not paid when the lordship passed to the Crown on the attainder of Sir John. However, both James I and Charles II recognized the debt (See *Inspeximus* 10 James I and *Inspeximus* 15 Charles II, both in the safe) but refused to pay arrears. However, later, the rent was again unpaid. This left the Portreeve with only about seventeen pounds from the remaining part of Undercliff for his expenses in relieving the poor, buying shrouds for the dead, and

paying bills for major repairs. Between 1671-1700 Undercliff was taken from the Portreeve (probably in the year 1675). Later Whitehill and Hugdon were also divided, definitely before 1705 possibly at the same time as Undercliff. The rents for the shares were: Moor sixteen shares at 3s., Hugdon twenty shares at 2s.6d., Undercliff forty shares at 2s. In 1739 these token rents were reduced to 2s., 1s and 6d. They are the same today (1963).

5. MAKORELLES - the land bordering on Mackerelle Lake at Roaches. The stream which flows from Roaches under Fern Hill, across the Grist to the Taf, probably gets its name from a Norman knight, cf. Passenant's Lake, Heming's Well. It is specifically stated in Corporation documents that nothing belonged to Roches but only the castle and the right to make a Duffe-house, that is a Dovecote or a Columbarium, and a fish pond, and that the land around, called "Mackerel Walls", belonged to the burgesses.
6. GREENSLADESHEVED = Greensladeshead, a hill on the south side of Fern Hill. Notice the Old English form "heved" for head and compare CORRANHISHEVED,
7. EYNONHISDONE = Eynonsdown. The N.E.D. says that done= a hill or an open expanse of elevated land, and probably is a word of Celtic origin brought from the Continent and not borrowed here, as it is usually confined to Saxon areas. Compare HALLDOWN. Mary Curtis says the name should be HEOLDOWN (Heol being the Welsh word for street) and means "road down". This combination seems very strange. It seems more probable that DOWN= elevated land and that HEOL=Howell. In the Survey of 1592 we find "Morris ap Howell" (or Hoell) holdeth one burgage at the further end of the town on the west side of the highway that leadeth to St Clears". In another Corporation record it is called OULDEOUEN.
8. BRANGWEYS = modern Branwast.
9. CORRANHISHEVED – source of Corran lake or brook near Llandawke. The Corran runs under Horsepool Bridge and New Bridge and comes out, as the Earth Lake, on the north side of Island House. The old name of Laugharne is ABERCORRAN (= at the mouth of the Corran). In the Corporation records we find THALACARN. Lewis, in his TOPOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY (1833) says, "The ancient British name Talycharn or Talycorran is supposed to have originated in its situation above the mouth of the Corran." This explanation does not seem probable. Giraldus Cambrensis, who toured Wales in 1188 in the train of Archbishop Baldwin, calls it TALACHAR=the conspicuous headland. Perhaps Thalacarn could have come from this. Kemp derives Thalacarn from Tal-y-lwch eirian = head of the beautiful lake, but this explanation does not find favour with Welsh philologists.
10. HORILAKE or HONILAKE. This is a well in the field opposite Halfpenny Furze. Kemp calls it HOWLAKE; Curtis, HORILAKE. The Sir Sackville Crowe agreement (made with the burgesses in the early 18th Century) in which certain disputed lands

are allotted to either side, calls it HONEY-WELL alias Halfpenny firs. An old lease (1674) reads, "Lands known by the names of hapeny furze, holy well, and merry moor." Howell calls it LORDLY LAKE and the common-walk LORDLY WELL. The original seems to be either HORILAKE=White Lake (compare Horeston) or HONEYLAKE. This then was taken by some to be HOLY-LAKE (cf. Cresswell for Christ's Well) and then LORDLY LAKE.

11. TADYHULL: Tadhill (1963). Notice the southern dialect form Hull and compare Moldehulle.
12. PASSENANTHISLAKE. This is the stream at the bottom of the Moor Hill, flowing from the land on the west-side of the road leading to St. Clears. Passenant was a Norman knight. In the Sackville Crowe agreement it is called Patient Lake. In the Common-walk map the hoisting place is called OATEN CAKE AND CHEESE.
13. MOLDEHULLE = Molden The Common Walk map calls it Moulden Green; the survey of 1592, Mould Hill; the Sackville Crow agreement, Moulding Green. It was given up to Sir Sackville Crowe, but even now (1963) it is perambulated three times at the Common Walk.
14. A carrucate of land is as much as could be tilled with one plough (eight oxen) in a year, that is about 80-120 acres. Possibly the farm indicated is SOLAND (Sowland).
15. TAF = river below Spring Meade, one of the oldest of the Corporation Lands of which leases are still extant, eg. 1711.
16. HEMINGHESWILL = Heming's Well. This is in the middle of the south hedge of the Whitehill. The Sackville Crowe agreement calls it Hemin's Marsh, and the Whitehill deed also mentions it.
17. HORESTON = White Stone field on the Common Walk route. The stone, part of an outcrop, is still there in the south-west corner of the field at Cross Inn.
18. PENSERNES is opposite the upper gate of Milton Bank. The word means "The head of the causeway", the causeway being the way down to Brixtarw.
19. BLINDEWELLE – Between Milton Bank and the Taf.
20. ROCHCOMBE – a field to the north of Delacorse.
21. Mary Curtis wrongly suggests "aquam" for "antiquam" and translates "to the water of the Taf" instead of "to the ancient whirlpool". The whirlpool is still in existence in the Taf under Gin Hill.
22. HOWELLSOFT – This is between Delacorse and Common Back. There is a piece of land there called KNOWLES PIECE. Has this anything to do with the old name

or might it have been called after William Lord Knollis who in 1613 held the Lordship of Tallaugharn (sic) before it was granted by Charles I to Sir Sackville Crowe in 1626? (See in the Corporation documents the translation of the Patent from the third year of Charles I made by Rev Walter Davies in 1792).

23. BURCH ET MERE. The technical term for the boundary of a town. Here it would mean the outer boundary, the gate of which was near the Church. It would run along the furlongs probably to Hill Cant. The Charter route would touch the outer boundary and then descend.
24. To the long rock, which is probably White-spot. The old Common Walk route used to come out here. This also, as the charter says is close to (sic).
25. Our VIRGATE, which does not mean a forest, as the Carmarthenshire History states, but was the usual name for a garden, or any portion of enclosed land. The survey of 1592 says with regard to the castle, "First there is the garden without the court wall of the castle." The court wall would go from The Gatehouse (The Mariners' Corner) along Hangman Street (since 1838 Victoria Street) and its eastern gate would be near THE COTTAGE. Outside that would be the virgate which would extend to White Spot.
26. This grant of a sixteen-foot way to the burgesses to drive their cattle from the commons to the Taf has certain implications -
 - (i) As the site is at Passenant's Lake (that is along the bottom of Moor Hill) it shows that the bulk of the original commons was in the north-west of Laugharne, that is Halfpenny Furze, Merry Moor, and the whole of the Moor on the left-hand side of the road leading to St. Clears, and Spring Meade.
 - (ii) It shows that the opinion that some hold that all the land within the charter boundary originally belonged to the Corporation is untenable. If the burgesses possessed all that land, why grant them a passage through their own land? It seems likely that certain lands out of the lordship were granted and links between these lands such as now we see between Warrior's Lane and Merry Moor, where the link encircles private property. This becomes evident when we examine the survey of 1592. The field, now called Portreeve's Field, Chipping Park (CHEAPING=market) then belonged to Sir John Perrot's estate. In 1613 it was in the hands of Sir Sackville Crowe. In 1787 it still belonged to the lordship then owned by Pennoyre Watkins. He left it to his son, the Rev. Thomas Watkins, Vicar of Laugharne, who handed it over to the Corporation in 1820 in exchange for the old Portreeve's Field, which was near Coygan.
- 27 & 28 This is a grant of Turbary, a place where the burgesses could dig turfs for their fires. This Turbary was near Passenant's Lake, that is at the bottom of Moor Hill. The land is of a very marshy nature. It is interesting to note that in October 1789 the Court granted ten pounds to assist the partners, that is to say

the shareholders, to carry on the colliery on the Moor. Even today one of the fields is called THE COAL-FIELD. The customary acre is mentioned in the survey of 1592 as being forty poles in length and sixteen in breadth, the pole being nine feet.

- 29 In this section we have the usual rights granted in mediaeval times in Charters (Compare the charter of Henry III to Carmarthen)
- (i) The burgesses should not lose their property because of the wrong-doings of their servants.
 - (ii) The burgesses should inherit goods without interference from the lord of the manor.
 - (iii) The burgesses should not be responsible for the debts of their neighbours, unless they become sureties, and only then if the debtor is unable to pay.
 - (iv) The burgesses should be tried and punished according to the customs at Carmarthen.
 - (v) The burgesses should have freedom from arrest, where bail could be found.
 - (vi) The burgesses should not be compelled to pay more than twelve pence alienation fee to his lord of the manor. (This was paid right on till the late 18th Century whenever freeholders were made. The list of Freeholders, mostly hereditary, was read out at the Big Court and May Court after the Burgesses' Roll. Later the money was paid to the Lady of the Manor, Lady Maude of Westmead, but after 1755 we find no further reference to alienation money but leases are granted for the small pieces of land, which are termed "waste lands".
 - (vii) The burgesses should have exemption from service on inquisitions concerning non-burgesses (who were called foreigners).
 - (viii) The affairs of burgesses should be considered only by freeholders and not by non-burgesses.
- 30 The burgesses were given the right to choose two Portreeves, (1) on Big Court Day, the first Monday after Michaelmas, (2) at the May Court, Low Monday. They were to be chosen by common consent and not on the direction of the Lord of the Manor or his bailiff. Were there two Portreeves in office at the same time? Some authorities say there were (i) the major reeve, later called the Mayor, (ii) the minor reeve, appointed six months later. The County History, quoting records, says that the "borough was administered by two reeves in 1437". However, in the Laugharne documents extant we find no trace of two reeves. In 1568 we have the Hundred Court presided over by John Donn, Portreeve; and several extant receipts of the early 17th Century are in the name of one Portreeve and the earliest meeting of the court recorded in the Corporation minute book (1711) is presided over by one Portreeve. The Portreeve, according to the Charter is to hold the hundred court, to receive the cases brought before the hundred court and to receive the toll and rent due and to pay them to the bailiff of the lord of the manor.

The account of John Donn's Court (1568) shows that these duties were all being

carried out by the Portreeve. An Inquisition of I Ed. IV (1461) mentions that the Hundred Court dealt with all manner of pleas (except the greater felonies which were tried at the shire court) and all infringements of the standards for measuring corn, wine and ale, but the County History says that the privilege of holding the town courts (ad tenendum hundreda) had been taken from the Portreeve before 1400, and that the Court was held by the Lord of Laugharne's steward. Donn's Hundred Court meeting shows that this is not true, as it was the Portreeve that presided, though the itinerant bailiff may have attended to receive the rent and toll from the Portreeve. Later the Portreeve received the toll.

In 1776 at the Carmarthen Autumn Sessions the Portreeve, W. Skyrme Esq., was summoned by Mr John Howells, a merchant, for damages respecting the corn taken by the Portreeve as toll. The Portreeve lost the case, had to pay 12s. damages and £51. 17s. lld. costs in addition to his own costs of £22. 11s 1d. , and so the case cost the Court £75. . Again in 1816 there was another dispute about toll with G.P.Watkins, Esq., the Lord of the Manor. Then the Portreeve decided to give up his claim to toll. In the Commissioners' report on Municipal Corporations (1834) we read, "The Corporation claims a right to the toll of corn brought to the town for sale. The toll, which was one bushel in the hundred, and of small annual amount, was taken by the Portreeve, but in consequence of disputes, the toll has been discontinued for about two years, and the Portreeve instead receives a salary (£10)." The New English Dictionary gives, "Tally-stick is a stick with transverse notches representing the amount of a debt or payment. The stick is then split, and each side retains one of the halves, the agreement or tallying of which constituted legal proof of the debt." The Corporation still possesses some of these tally-sticks.

31. Burgesses were to have exemption from the obligation of buying or selling, if to their disadvantage.
32. Burgesses should be exempt from menial tasks such as ploughing and reaping, and the repair of the mill and its pond.
33. Burgesses should be exempt from military service except in defence of their own town. Kemp wrongly reads neque for nisi, and so states that the burgesses are not bound to defend their town. Does the County History wrongly follow him when it states, "At Laugharne, the burgesses, qua burgesses, were not responsible for the defence of the borrow." (sic).
34. Kemp, Mary Curtis and others have mistranslated this passage and have given it a meaning contrary to law. The mistakes arose through reading (i) si for nisi, (ii) si for sed, (iii) iurabit for iurabitur, the ligature not being noticed.

It should read, "If any one, in the open day, in the presence of his neighbours should buy anything, and afterwards that thing should be ill-spoken of, as stolen, the buyer should lose nothing except then that thing, but it shall be sworn on oath of his

neighbours that he did not know that he had bought the thing from a thief.”

The usual interpretations (i) that the buyer shall lose nothing, if his neighbours shall swear they knew not that he bought it from a thief (translation by Curtis), (ii) The purchaser shall lose nothing, if he shall prove on oath before his neighbours that he was ignorant that he bought the same article from a thief (Kemp’s translation) suit neither the Latin nor the law. The Latin clearly means that the buyer must forfeit the article bought, but he would suffer no further penalty if he could get his neighbours to swear that he bought it in ignorance.

The legal issue was referred (1963) to Mr J.B.Morcom, M.A., Balliol College, Oxford, who is a Barrister-at-law of the Inner Temple and of Lincoln’s Inn. His explanation is as follows:

“The charter seems to be dealing with what we call a “sale in market-overt.” The rules of market-overt do not normally apply in Wales, but Laugharne could well have been an exception.

The old rule of market-overt was that if a person bought something in open market and it later turned out to be a stolen article, the buyer could not keep it if the thief was convicted.

The modern law is that, where the goods were stolen and the thief convicted, the stolen goods revert to the former owner despite the sale in market-overt, but if the goods were obtained by fraud not amounting to stealing (ie. a confidence trick) the goods stolen do not revert to the former owner. Though the above is the modern law of market-overt, there would have been many variations by local customs and charters, say before 1800, after which date most local customs became united in one common law.

Your translation, “The buyer should lose nothing except then that thing” is in accordance with the general principles of market-overt, and the whole paragraph would make good law (as well as good Latin) with the meaning, “If a buyer buys a stolen article, honestly believing the seller to be an honest seller, but the seller turns out to be a thief, the buyer will have to return the article to its rightful owner, but no proceedings will be taken against the buyer. The point of the oath of the neighbours, that the buyer was ignorant that he bought the article from a thief, is to protect the honest buyer, but not a receiver of stolen goods (ie. a fence). A receiver, of course, would not have the protection of the oath and could be prosecuted.”

35. Some are well-known. Geoffrey de Caunville held Llanstephan. Thomas de Rupe, Thomas Roche, belonged to the family that held Roche’s Castle. The Malenfants were connected with Kidwelly. (There was a John Malenfant, a clerk there in 1427). Mary Curtis translates Walter Malenfant, Mayor of Carmarthen, whereas the charter reads Walter Malenfant, Mared ab Trahan (two different people). Following her, Spurrell in his HISTORY OF CARMARTHEN, gives evidence of Carmarthen’s early

charter, the reference in the Laugharne Charter to the customs granted to Carmarthen. This is true, but it is quite incorrect to say, as he does later, that the charter was signed by Walter Malenfant, Mayor of Carmarthen. Mary Curtis's translation of Thomas Bonegent as Thomas B., Esq., is not a very happy one.

THE LATER HISTORY OF THE CHARTER

In 1717 in the Common Attorneys' accounts we read "for gooing to lowka for the carter with Mr. Morgan Davies our charge is 1s. 8d. William Skeel, William Rees.

In 1738, on October 6th, we read in the minute-book, "Whereas the Charter of Laugharne hath been lost for a considerable time past, and supposed to be clandestinely conveyed out of the common coffer belonging to this Corporation; and whereas Morgan Davies of Coombe in this county, Esq., did on the second day of this instant at the Court Leet, declare that he had the same Charter in his custody, we, whose names are hereunto subscribed, being Portreeve, Aldermen, Grand Jury, Common Attorneys and other principal burgesses, and each and every one of us respectively, doe hereby unanimously desire and request that John Adams of the County Borough of Carmarthen, gent., do demand the said Charter of the said Morgan Davies, and, on his delivery, to give him receipt for the same. But if he refuses, we do hereby desire, authorize and impower the said John Adams to compel the said Morgan Davies to restore the same." (NB. Morgan Davies was the father-in-law of Vice-Admiral John Laugharne).

Evidently, the Charter was recovered for on 20th October 1746, we read, "Ordered that the Charter be delivered to the Rev. Mr. Jones in order to be translated and that the sum of one pound one shilling be paid him by the Common Attorney for his trouble." This is probably the Rev. Griffith Jones, who was Curate of Laugharne in 1710 and who, even after becoming Rector of Llandowror in 1716, spent much time at the house of Madame Bevan near Market Street, Laugharne, where he died in 1761.

In May 1810 we read, "Ordered that Mr. Skyrme make serch (sic) for the Charter belonging to Laugharne."

In February 1812 we read, "Ordered that the sum of ten guineas be given as a present to the Rev. Mr. Williams of Lampeter for the translation of several documents and ten guineas to Mr. Thomas Thomas for expenses at Lampeter in attending on the Rev. Eleazer Williams for the translation of the Charter." (The Rev. Eliezer (sic) Williams was the son of Peter Williams, the famous Welsh commentator on the Bible, who was the son of Owen Williams of West Marsh. Owen Williams' grave and tombstone are by the transept-door of St. Martin's, Laugharne.

Today (1963) the Charter is still among the Corporation muniments.

NOTES ON PHOTOGRAPHS

1. ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH

Re-built, probably by Sir Guy de Brian, K.G., about 1350, though the main architectural features are 15th Century. It is cruciform and has a four square central tower. It has been said to show some Flemish features, though the main style of architecture is of the Perpendicular French. Originally the floor was at three ascending levels. Then these levels were done away with, but, at the restoration in the 19th Century, they were restored.

Things to note:

- 1a. Hagioscope (or Squint) in the South Transept.
- 1b. Stoup, 14th Century, in South Transept.
- 1c. Garter Window (1350) in Nave. Head of Edward III. De Brian Coat of Arms.
2. Celtic plaited cross (10th Century). Plaster cast in Welsh Museum.
3. Niches in reredos (14th Century). Figures 1902.
4. Low altar tomb in Sanctuary. Ogee work. Perhaps tomb of Sir Guy de Brian, senior.
5. Tomb of Sir John Powell who acquitted the Seven Bishops in 1688.
6. Organ, the gift of Admiral John Laugharne in 1819.
7. Tomb of George Owen, son of Michael Owen. Michael Owen, being a non-Juror, gave up his living for conscience sake,.
8. 14th Century effigy under Gothic Arch in North Transept.
9. Bones from Beaker Burial, brought from Orchard Park when discovered in 1950,
10. Mural tablet to Martin David, tutor to Edward VIII and George VI.
11. Tomb of Arthur Bevan, husband of Madam Bevan.
12. Carving brought from Oberammaugau in 1866 (Carved by one of the Lang family).
13. Painting placed in church about 1930. Probably by Hogarth's father-in-law, who painted several such panels in London.
14. Elizabethan Chalice and Cover 1559 (kept in safe). This is the earliest recorded Chalice and Cover in Carmarthenshire.
15. Cromwellian Dish 1650, bearing initials of William Thomas, Vicar of Laugharne and later Bishop of St. David's and Worcester, and of his wife, Blanche.
16. Ancient Cope of Red and Gold Brocade (recently mounted on blue linen), Italian Florentine of the 15th Century with some English work.
17. Pulpit Cloth and Altar Cloth in gold on red velvet 1729.
18. Six Bells cast by Rudhall of Gloucester at Laugharne in 1729 (All receipts for material and labour still extant).
19. In churchyard:
 - (i) Yew trees planted in 1729
 - (ii) Tombs mentioned by Coleridge in his visit in 1802
 - (iii) Grave of Owen Williams, Father of Peter Williams, the Welsh Commentator.
 - (iv) Grave of Dylan Thomas and his wife Caitlin.

20. In South Porch. The plain circular vessel found on a neighbouring farm was said to be originally the old font, but this is not true.

II. MARKET HOUSE - TOWN HALL

- 1568 Hundred Court under John Donn, Portreeve, held “apud le guild hall.”
1652 To the sawyer for sawynge timber towards the Market-House and for making the sawe-pitt - £l. 10s. 6d (Section on left).
1728 Bell made by Abraham Rudhall at Gloucester - £6. 7s. 0d. (receipt extant)
1736 Richard Banister “to make a sufficient Town Clock to be fixt in the Town Hall to goe with two Dyall Plates” - £10.
1747 For repairing market-house £26 (probably as shown in photo)
1774 Ordered that “a door be struck out under the clock in the tower for a jail.” (This jail is seen in the photo and was made after the old jail, which was on the east side of Market Street, was pulled down).
1786 Cupola on tower of Market House erected, and the Cock and Spindle.
1814 Two windows, six foot each, with Gothic bars, and iron gates of wrought iron 3d a foot constructed (Seen in photo).
1896 New Clock and Dial
1910 New Porch and new roof on jail.

III THE CASTLE

Very little is known of the early history of the castle. Most of the building is Tudor, but there are remnants of an earlier castle, probably of the 13th Century. However, most historians agree that Rhys ap Gruffydd established it and that in 1172 he entertained there Henry II on his return from Ireland. Some say that the name “King Street” commemorates this visit, but there is no reference to King Street in the early Corporation documents, the street being called “Uptown Street”. Llewellyn ap Iorwerth is said to have destroyed it.

By the early 13th Century the de Brians possessed it and, after the celebrated Sir Guy de Brian, K.G., it passed to his grand-daughter and to the Devereux, and later to the Percies. On the attainder of Thomas, Earl of Northumberland, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it was taken by the Crown. Later it was given to Sir John Perrott. He made great alterations in the building and adapted it as a Baronial Hall. On his attainder it passed again to the Crown.

King James I handed over the lordship to Sir Francis Bacon and others as trustees for his son Charles I. Later it was sold to Sir Sackville Crowe. In the Civil War the castle was garrisoned for the King by the Earl of Carbery, but in 1644 it was captured by Roland Laugarne for Parliament.

During this period Sir Sackville Crowe seems to have conveyed parts of the Lordship to Sir William Russell. As the Castle was in a ruined state, a new manor was built at

Broadway. Definitely we learn from the Church registers that in 1676 the Russells were at Broadway and the Crowes at Westmead, the latter being called the Squires in the Corporation records. Sir William sold the Castle to Sir John Powell, and his son Sir Thomas Powell, who lived at Broadway, left the Castle and estate to his daughter Mary, who sold it to Pennoyr Watkins. He, in his will, divided his estate, giving the main Broadway estate to his son G.P. Watkins; Great House, The Parsonage (The Glen), Shipping Park and Moir House to his son, the Rev. Thomas Watkins, Vicar of Laugharne, and the Castle to his grand-daughter, Elizabeth Ravenscroft (daughter of Colonel Ravenscroft). She married Colonel Richard T. Starke and they altered and enlarged the dwelling house at the side of the castle. The Castle stayed in the family's ownership until 2005 when it was sold after the death of Miss Ann Starke.

IV. CROSS ON GRIST

The base of the Cross is ancient. The upper part was added in 1911. A vague tradition says that there was a Monastery Christ Church on the Grist and that the cross was inside its walls. There is no evidence for this. In the early 19th Century funerals used to walk around it three times. The Cross is perambulated three times at the Common Walk.

The Rev. P. Gordon-Williams, M.A., the antiquary, says that the word "Grist" is not from the Mill or the alleged Christ Church, but is a term of heraldry and means a large step on a cross, e.g. 1807 "a cross on three grices".

However, the survey of 1592 mentions the Grist (or Greist) Mill, suggesting the pronunciation long "i". This would be natural as, though "i" was shortened before the consonant group "st" (e.g. twist), yet it remained long in names, e.g. "Christ."

THE PORTREEVES OF LAUGHARNE

A Survey of their position and their work up to the end of the 17th Century, based on documents extant in the muniments of the Laugharne Corporation.

(Inscribed to Alderman D.M. Bradshaw, B.A., Portreeve 1961-2)

EARLY HISTORY

The title Portreeve (O.E. port-gerefa) was given to the chief officer of a town. Some authorities have wrongly referred to the title, as if it meant the reeve of a sea-port town, through thinking that the word "Port" means a seaport, whereas it means a walled town or a market-town.

The office of Portreeve of Laugharne was instituted by the charter granted by Sir Gwydo

de Brione, the younger, to the burgesses. This charter is undated, has no seal, but it was granted in the reign of Edward the First, probably in 1307.

The section of the charter dealing with the Portreeve may be translated as follows –

Also we have granted to the same our burgesses that they themselves choose twice a year two competent burgesses to the office of our Portreeve, that is to say: one in the next hundred court after the feast of St. Michael; the other in the next hundred court after Easter, by the common consent of the same men, and not by our authority or that of someone, a bailiff of ours; to hold the hundred court; to receive the attachments belonging to the hundred; and to receive the rent from the township and the toll; and that the said Portreeves pay the aforesaid rent and toll to us or to our aforesaid bailiff, appointed for this purpose, within the township.

It is interesting to note that the Portreeve is to be chosen by the burgesses, and that neither the Lord of the Manor nor his bailiff is to use any influence in the election. This is a striking contrast to the position at Newport, Pembrokeshire, where the Lord of the Manor appoints the Mayor.

We see that the Portreeve is responsible for receiving the toll, and the rent from the town, and paying them to the Lord of the Manor or his bailiff.

PORTREEVES IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

Two original documents extant give us a vivid picture of the Portreeves of the 16th Century:

1. The Meeting of the Hundred Court of John Parrot on 1st October 1568 under John Donn as Portreeve.
2. A Book of Survey of the castle, lordship and manor of Tallaugharn, otherwise Laugharne, with its members, 1592.

The first document was known to earlier historians from a copy of the original. However, the original has recently been found. Both are in Latin and are headed

VILL A TALLAUGHARN

The hundred of John Parrot, knight, held at the Guild Hall of the same town, on Monday 1st October, 10 Elizabeth, before John Donn, Portreeve, according to the custom and liberties practiced there, the same, as long as one can remember.

The jury, seventeen men, after being sworn, say that the Portreeve must pay to the Lord of the Manor the annual rent of £9. 2s. 3d.

They point out that the Portreeves have always been accustomed to hold the hundred court every fifteenth day, to hear actions on sums involving under 40s (cases over that sum being sent to the County Court of Obligations), and to receive the amercements, fines and forfeits to be paid to the Lord of the Manor.

The jury decide that the Lord of the Manor should receive the toll of corn as well as of other things bought and sold there.

The jury say that the weights and measures are to be kept to the standard of that of Carmarthen; and are to be stamped with the seal of the Lord of the Manor.

In the above four cases the Jury are merely confirming the fact that the Portreeve is keeping to the conditions laid down in the Charter of Sir Gwydo de Brione.

They next say that the Lord of the Manor must have 12d. for every burgage or tenement that the freeholders in the town hold. This sum was paid right down to the middle of the 18th Century. The formula of the grant to freeholders was as follows:

1714 We present Thomas Phillips, Clericus (Vicar of Laugharne) to be a freeholder within the Town and Liberty of Laugharne and ought to pay twelve pence against Alinasion (Alienation = change of ownership) to the Lord of the Manor and two pence to the Recorder.

(The Crowe family of Westmead were then the Lords of the Manor, and later there was a Lady of the Manor, Lady Maude. She is buried in sanctuary of St. Martin's Church.

Though her tombstone – she died in 1779 – praises her “liberal hand and sympathizing heart”, she tried in 1758 to stop the Laugharne people from fishing in the open sea, but lost her case at the Quarter Sessions as it was ruled “the sea is as free as the air.”)

The next item on the agenda shed some light on the extent of the Portreeve’s powers. This was a Court Leet, held half-yearly, as opposed to the Court Baron, held every fortnight, and a Court Leet could deal with criminal cases, whereas the Court Baron dealt with civil suits within the lordship, especially in matters relating to land. It has been suggested that the Portreeve originally had power to deal with criminal cases. At any rate, in Donn’s Hundred Court it is stated –

1. There is no outlaw in this town.
2. There has not been anyone convicted for felony or murder for the last eighteen years.
3. There ought to be here a Collestrium (an instrument of torture in the form of a pillory). Latin Collum=neck; stringere=bind) and a Tumbrellium (a tip-cart used as a cucking-stool. O.F. tomler – fall), and the Common Attorneys have been ordered to provide them by the next Court.

From these three statements it seems likely that the Portreeve could give judgement on criminal cases of minor importance, leaving the greater felonies, murder, arson, rape etc., to the County Sessions, and could inflict punishments. In support of this is the name Hangman Street which occurs early in the records, and which was still the name of the street until 1838, when it was changed to Victoria Street in honour of Queen Victoria’s coronation. The scaffold was at the east end of the street.

However, Commissioner Austin 1834 writes, “The Portreeve has exercised the power of committing offenders, in the first instance, to the lock-up house belonging to the Corporation. (This lock-up was built in 1774, when the old jail, which was in Market Street, was pulled down). Afterwards, they are committed to the county jail by the warrant of a county magistrate. His power to act as a justice is questionable and proceedings were threatened in a recent instance, in which the Portreeve had committed a disorderly person for the night, with a view to further examination before a county magistrate.”

Donn has also left us his statement of accounts for one year. This shows that he is carrying out the Portreeve’s original duties. He pays the Porte-rent £9. 2s. 3d., his fines, amercements and forfeits 18s to the Lord of the Manor, after deducting 7s for the loss of Le Wester, Undercliff, which the Lord of the Manor had taken from him. Later, however, the Portreeve recovered this part, though the Lord of the Manor tried to prove it belonged to him. There are in the Corporation records in 1663 Counsels’ opinions given in favour of the Corporation by Thomas Carpenter and E. Jones of Lincoln’s Inn. The Portreeve used the rent of Undercliff (about £15-17) for his disbursements, chiefly to the poor.

The second document, A Survey of 1592 of the Lordship of Sir John Perrot, who was attainted for treason and died in the Tower, had a wonderful survival. When Broadway Mansion, the home of Sir Thomas Powell (the son of Sir John Powell, one of the judges that tried the Seven Bishops) was pulled down, the Library was transferred to an adjacent

barn. The Survey fell from the vehicle and was left unnoticed on a dunghill, until it was later rescued. It was then copied and now the original and the copy are at the Bank.

The survey is in English and, after giving a report of the castle and the names of those who hold burgages and pay 12d. to the Portreeve to make up the total of £9. 5s. 4d., it mentions that there is one Portreeve and that he has to pay to the Lord of the Manor the ameracements and dues from the Hundred Court.

It mentions that the freeholders are free from all services and that the Portreeve is to make a Bailiff or catchpoll to levy the free rent for the Lordship. The Portreeve has also to see to the one fair on St. Martin's Day, 11th November, and to pay the tolls to the Lord of the Manor.

THE PORTREEVES IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

At the attainder of Sir John Perrot, the Lordship passed to the crown and, later, James I claimed it for his son Charles, who was then Prince of Wales. There was, however, a charge on the Lordship of £9. 6s. 8d. (by virtue of the exchange of part of the commons called Menecors by Sir John Perrot) to be spent by the Portreeve in repairing the streets, highways and bridges of the town. This had not been paid, and so the Portreeve ceased paying the £9. 5s. 4d, the usual Porte-rent, to the Crown, and he was charged by the auditor with £27. 16s. arrears. A plea, however, was made to the Court of Exchequer in 1613. The arrears were cancelled and the Portreeve was discharged from his £9. 5s. 4d. yearly rent, while the Lordship was in the hands of the Crown. (This document, the *Inpeximus* of 10 James I, is in the Corporation records).

The records also contain four examples of "a quietus", that is a cancellation of debts. Two of these are in English, copied in 1656 from the originals which were (i) when John Rogers was Portreeve in 1648; (ii) when Rice Phillips was Portreeve in 1649. The other two are in Latin and dated 1634 and 1643, the Portreeve being in each case a James Butler. The substance of these four documents is the same. They state, "John Rogers for 1648 doth owe £9. 5s. 4d., but the aforesaid Portreeve and the burgesses are discharged of this sum by the order of King James I and therefore the Portreeve has gone away quietus" (that is, quit of the debt).

The Portreeve, James Butler, who was granted a quietus in 1634 was a merchant, and in his will dated 1638 and proved in 1645, there is the following bequest – "I give to the Church of Laugharne one piece of plate being a chalice in pawn with me for 30s." It seems that this is the Elizabethan chalice the Church still possesses. The London hall mark of 1566 is on the cover. The stem is of the same workmanship as the cover, but the cup itself was restored in 1722 and 1727 by Sydwood, probably a local man, at a cost of £2. 7s. 7d. This is the earliest example of a chalice and cover in Carmarthenshire. The

maker's mark is a lamp, which is also found on the chalice and cover at St. Mary-le-Bow, London, bearing the date 1559.

In the Survey of 1592, at the head of the Jury is James Pretherch Esq. He also possesses several burgages of freeholdings in the town. Also Katherine Elliott is mentioned as holding several burgages. It seems probable that this is the James Prydderch of Hawkesbrooke Esq., who was Sheriff of Carmarthenshire in 1597. (We know that he was also a defendant in a lawsuit in 1610). Probably, he was the son of Katrin Eliot, who is mentioned in the Visitation of Wales made by Lewis Dwnn between 1586 and 1613. She is said to have been married Rys ap Rydderch. It seems she was sister to John Elliott of Narberth, Sheriff of Pembrokeshire in 1585. Her will is dated 3rd May 1585, proved 23rd February 1594, and says she is "of the town of Lagharne, widow". She wished to be buried in the chancel at Lagharne. Mary Curtis says she noticed her tomb. (The only tombs there are of later members of the family, 1799 and 1817), and mentions that Katherine Elliott's bequest was written on the boards (gold letters on black) that were in front of the west gallery, and are now (1963) in the Vestry. The inscription read – "Katherine Elliot, of the town of Lagharne, widow, whose will is dated 1585 Maye 3d., in which she desires to be buried in the chancel of Lagharne Church, left a sum of money to this Church and to the poor." Elliott was her maiden name. This particular board has been lost.

During the Civil War, and in the period up to the Restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, we find that the Portreeves are in full charge of the affairs at Lagharne. They seem not to be perturbed about the political situation, as at one time in 1648 (when Charles I was in prison, the year before he was executed) we still find the Portreeve using on a lease the heading, "Charles I, by the grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, defender of the Faith etc" while later his accounts mention "My Lord Cromwell."

The evidence for this period consists of a large number of statements of the money spent by the Portreeves and by the Common Attorneys. The Portreeves' Accounts extend from 1638 to the end of the century and beyond. In the years 1638-1647 the position at Lagharne seems to have been rather difficult, for in the 1660 account of John Perrot, the Portreeve, we find him paying William Drewett several sums of money that were given to the poor in that period.

A perusal of these accounts reveals how varied was the work of the Portreeves during this period.

In 1646 the Portreeve gives money to the poor at Christmas, Easter and Whitsunday. He pays for a new lock and chain for the jail (which was situated on the East side of Market Street, adjoining the Town Hall); gives money to people in their sickness and pays 3s. 6d. for a shroud for Mary Price.

As well as this he has duties connected with the military. He pays £1. 4s. to Colonel Buttler at Carmarthen for the town's protection. He allows Captain Wogan's troopers 1s, for horsemeat, pays 4s. for the quartering of Captain Wogan's troopers, 1s. for hay and

oats for Sergeant Caise. He himself spent 7s. to go to Colonel Powell at Harford to avoid, that is to keep out the soldiers. He pays 10s. to the Lieutenant and his officers on their going away and spent 4s. in going to Pembroke and Haverfordwest. He has some trouble about collecting the roof at Undercliff (his main income, £17) and has left us a list of "those which death owe moni" including Arthur Stafford, gent, who owes £1. 4s.

He has also left us a list of those he thinks fitted to sell beer, cows' meat and horse meat in the town of Laugharne. This list is countersigned by Richard Vaughan, who was probably the High Sheriff.

In 1650 the Portreeve, Thomas Bevan, pays money to distressed Irishmen fleeing from Ireland. He has 10s. expenses for going to Carmarthen to seek for money owing unto the town for Major Franklin's soldiers. He gives a messenger 3s. 4d. to go on the orders to Abermarlowe from Colonel Cromwell to Captain Evans' troops. Could Cromwell have called at Laugharne on his way back from Ireland? All the modern historians say "no", though tradition says "yes". Spurrell in his HISTORY OF CARMARTHEN writes, "Bloody Oliver Cromwell this year was at Carmarthen upon his way to Ireland." In 1650, Major Franklin's soldiers were at Laugharne, and James Grigery, "Oliver's Registrar", was in charge of town affairs. Could Oliver have called to see them?

The Portreeve pays 6d for a quarter of mutton for Griffy Eynon and George Griffy (Griffy was quite a common pronunciation in Laugharne twenty years ago) and gets 1s. for going a journey, 4s. 6d. was spent "in drinke when wee went about the common walke" (sic) and 4d in mending Dewes wayes stile. (This is Dewisway, and was a way over the field from the Church to the lane leading from Mapsland. Perhaps Cross Towy, the cross-road above Ants' Hill, was originally Cross Dewi, as it is on the road from the Pilgrims' Church to St. Davids, by way of Tavernspite (Latin, Taberna Hospitium).

In 1652 the Portreeve has to incur many expenses with regard to the prisoner Mr Elliot, who was a member of an old Laugharne family. In 1592 they had a house near the Castle. (Later members of the family are buried near the transept door of St. Martin's). The Portreeve paid to Colonel Jones' men that brought the prisoner to Laugharne 2s.; to Mrs. Bayly for candles "towards the watching of the prisoner" 2d. and to drinke to the constables and those that watched the prisoner by night 2s. 2d. and finally to Thomas Hardin for going to the High Constable to Mydrym touchinge Mr. Eliot the prisoner 1s.

One of the Portreeve's common attorneys was James Grigery, who in the Church register is styled "Oliver's Register" (sic). However, he does not seem to have caused much trouble. His accounts, as common attorney, shew much work done. He repairs the church gates, the cliff stile, Dewesway stile, the pound, gave 1s. 10d. in drink to "the souldiers who were preste that night they went to Llandowror". He stayed on in Laugharne after the Restoration and died there in 1675, probably of small pox.

The Portreeve this year also "paid to a lame soldier that came with a passé from my Lord Cromwell for free quarters, 8d."

He, still, has time to see to the poor; to make new stocks, and to build the market-house. This meant his going to St. Clears, Newton and Kyllsant about the timbers and his seeing to the landing of slates (called flat-stones) by boat from Pembrokeshire.

In 1653 William Gilbert, the Portreeve, has a very sad duty to perform. A stranger dies in August and the Portreeve pays 6d. for a grave for him and 4d. to the man that washed him.

Yet scholarship is rewarded in those days. The Portreeve pays Richard Palmer 6s. 6d. for drawing a survey of the rent roll. (The Palmers played a great part in the administration of Laugharne in the 16th and 17th centuries. They are mentioned in all the documents. Rice Palmer in 1663 is paid £1. for his “charges in coming to court”. Later, Owen Palmer was Recorder and Parish Clerk for over fifty years.

In 1655 John Rogers makes the usual payments to the sick and the distressed strangers. He pays 12s. for a “Tick of Frize” (that is a tick of frieze, or coarse woollen cloth) for Thomas Godsname. However, poor Tom did not enjoy it for long, as in the Church register we read Thomas David alias Tom a Godsname died on 24th January 1656.

He pays several sums for “house-rooms”, that is lodgings for poor people, but Alice Price has to sweep the streets towards the church five times to earn her 1s.

In 1660, the year of the Restoration of the Stuarts, the Portreeve, John Perrott, leads the rejoicing at the end of the “sequestrator’s tyranny”, as the Burial Register puts it. He pays Sir Sackville Crow, the Lord of the Manor, £2. 16s. 0d. for “an ox to roast at the celebrations.” The Perambulation (that is, The Common Walk) was celebrated in great style. He says, “Paid for one barrel of beer and tobacco on the perambulation 15s.” However, celebration is not the only expenditure. The affairs of the court have to be put in order.

He pays Mr. Palmer for drawing out a copy of the deed £1.0s.0d., and for a skin of parchment 1s. and he gives the feoffees 2s. and pays 10s. for making a copy of the Inquisition. The deed was probably the Whitehill deed of 1658, which is in the Corporation records, and which is the third Whitehill deed – the other two, now lost, being the 1612 deed and the original, the 1580. All these are concerned with the granting of Hugdon, Whitehill, Corran Meade and Roaches in exchange for Menecors. Thirty feoffees had to make the arrangement, and when these were reduced by death to less than four, a new agreement had to be made, and new feoffees appointed. It was customary to give beer to the old and the new feoffees. For this in 1660 the Portreeve charges 2s. (The Corporation possesses the deeds of 1658, 1705, 1747 and 1785, each deed giving an account of the former deeds). The Inquisition was probably the Survey of 1592 or the Inpeximus of 10 James I.

At the same time the Portreeve takes part in the drawing up of the original deed of the Warren charity, left in 1656 – a £2. 12s.0d. charge on the Black Horse Hotel, Bristol, for penny loaves each Sunday. The original document is missing, but we have the 1738 deed which gives us all the details of the original. One famous man is one of the signatories of

the original. He was William Thomas, Vicar of Laugharne, later Bishop of St. Davids and then translated to Worcester. He was deprived of the living in 1644 but was restored in 1660. However, he did not leave Laugharne but kept a school there until 1670, had a daughter, Bridgett, there in 1651, and a son, John, in 1654. It seems that, although he did not take part in the services of the church during the period of his sequestration he kept up his connections with the Portreeve and the Corporation and was still regarded by many as Vicar. According to the Warren deed, the Portreeve and Corporation and the Vicar were to select the recipients of the bread. (Later this task was given over to the Vicar and Churchwardens of St Martin's, and now (1963) the bread is distributed from there after Mattins on Sunday).

When William Thomas on 19th July 1681 made, as Bishop of St Davids, his Triennial Visitation, he, after inspecting the Terrier, or statement of the Vicar's income, writes, "Having been vicar of Laugharne above thirty years, I attest this to be a true and just terrier.

Triennial Visitation 19th July 1681
William St. Davids

His signature is witnessed by William Drewett, who was Portreeve then and who is buried in the North Transept.

When William Thomas left Laugharne he handed over his living to his son-in-law, Dr. George Owen, who resigned it to his brother, Michael Owen, who being a non-juror "gave up his living for conscience sake" (see tablet in the chancel of St. Martin's), but remained at Laugharne until his death in 1707. It is natural to suppose that this family helped the cause of education among the people of Laugharne. This is borne out by the fact that Michael Owen was one of the few clergy in Carmarthenshire that sent reports about education in their parishes in the late 17th Century to Gouge, and Laugharne received bibles (top of the county) for the instruction of children, though Michael Owen later became a non-juror.

In this educational work they were assisted by the Powells. Sir John, the judge, his son Thomas Powell, who founded a Grammar School at Carmarthen, and his wife Elizabeth, who were all devoted to good causes.

In 1707 Thomas Philipps was appointed Vicar. He was a son of Alderman John Philipps of Carmarthen. (See the family tombstone in St. Peter's, Carmarthen. It reads Anne, wife of John Philipps, had as her third son Thomas, now Vicar of Laugharne." Some later historians have stated that he was the son of Sir John Phillips, Bart., of Picton Castle. This is untrue, but both he and Sir John Phillips were corresponding members of the S.P.C.K. and they had already founded a S.P.C.K. school in Laugharne, when Griffith Jones came as Curate in 1709 and also helped in the school. In the same year the Vicar writes, "A Welsh sermon has been introduced every Sunday afternoon to take off the complaints of the Methodists for want of instruction in the Welsh language."

Griffith Jones was well supported by his churchwardens, the Bevans, one of whom, Arthur, was M.P. for Carmarthen and husband of Madam Bridget Bevan, whose father John Vaughan of Derllys was also a member of the S.P.C.K. The Portreeve, Henry Howell, also supported the movement, and we read in the Corporation accounts, "Paid Mr. Griffith Jones for teaching the poor children for one year £1. 10s. (1711), and again, "Ordered that the Charter of this Corporation be delivered to the Rev. Mr. Jones to be translated into English and that the sum of one pound one shilling be paid him by the Common Attorney for his trouble." Furthermore Griffith Jones no doubt met his future wife in Laugharne as she, Margaret, was the half-sister of John Phillips, Bart.

From these facts, it is clear that Griffith Jones, though he might have met opposition in other places, had full support at Laugharne in the work that he continued with great success at Llandowor, to which living he was presented by Sir John Philipps, the patron. Madam Bevan gave him "very material help" and, when he died at her house behind Market Street, Laugharne, she carried on his work. Mary Curtis writes, "It was in great degree owing to him that the Bible has been found in the Welsh cottage". Madam Bevan after his days also distributed the bibles. A note by the Vicar, Mr. Sandford, in the Laugharne register says "Twelve bibles were given to 12 persons whose names are in Mr. Sandford's white book. They were distributed by Mrs Bevan. After her death no book was returned to Mr Sandford."

The Portreeve still in 1661 gives money to the poor, to distressed seamen of Bristol, who lost their bark at Milford, and 2s. "to a man which came from Cunstable to Cunstable to be directed on his journey." He has Henry Bayly as witness to the payment and adds, "This man was Chiney (Chinese?)". He also sends in an account for "sinking a coal pitt" but nothing further is heard of this. He gives a man 2s. for returning the warrant for the pole-money to Mydrim (Poll-money was a tax on every poll, ie. head. Pepys in Charles the Second's reign says that the assessment was Duke £100, Esquire £10., private person 12d.)

In 1662 Richard Bevan, to carry out his ancient duty as Portreeve, buys for 10d. a "dish to rayte the Towle of the market, being a just quart by the standard." He pays heavy legal charges of £3.10s. to Doctor Thomas at London and he himself pays £1.15s. "for drink at Carmarthen with several councellors with the charge of the burgesses." (There was a dispute at this time with the Lord of the Manor over part of the Undercliff.. There are counsel's opinions in the records).

He pays William Drewet 4s. 10d. for setting up the whipping post and for looking to the travelling and the diet of the two prisoners Elizabeth Wat and Margaret Wat. He pays Jane Hammond £2.10s. for making bread to fulfill the Warren bequest.

In 1663 the Portreeve, Rice Palmer, incurs £1. expenses in attending the Sessions (probably in his official capacity).

In 1666 the Portreeve, John Rogers, repairs the Pound. (This was situated at the joining of Duncan Street, formerly Court Lane, with the Corran Lake). It existed to the end of

the 19th Century, and even in the first part of the 20th Century children would talk of “running round the pond” (corruption of pound) when they went down Newbridge, crossed along this side of the stream and returned up Duncan Street to the school.

He was in a celebrating mood and we read “Paid the Ringers in beere 3s 6d and the Drummer 2s. 4d.” The Drummer was a feature in ancient Laugharne celebrations. He always performed at the Common Walk. By 1789, the Portreeve’s taste in music had improved and we read “ordered that two guineas be taken out of the Town Chest to assist John Nicholas to buy a harp.” Was he the forerunner of that passion for instrumental music in Laugharne that reached its height in the Williams Brothers, the famous sons of Frederic Williams, a prominent member of Laugharne Corporation in 1881?

In 1667, Abraham Fowler, Portreeve, spends 3s. for beer in Squire Crowe’s company (probably Sir Sackville Crowe, Lord of the Manor) and 9s. 7d. for making a suit for Dickie Dash.

In 1670, John Rogers, the younger, pays 2s for a strike for the town. (A strike was a measure, used often to measure the toll). He also pays 1s. for two men watching the Fayre Day, that is, to keep guard on 11th November, St. Martin’s Day. Later in 1857 we have an item, “Paid Mr. Pepler (the Globe Hotel) for cake and ale (for the fair 11th November) 16s. At his Petty Sessions he spends 5s. 6d. on beer and tobacco. He shows his charitable spirit by providing sixteen years of flanen to the poore, at a cost of 6s. and, when Jenkin John’s child was boundinge for Barbados, he gives him 6d. and charges it to the Court.

There are no records for the next twenty years but we have a full account of Anselm Butler’s Portreeveship in 1699. (He is buried in the North Transept, Anselm Butler, mariner and Alderman, 5th July 1703).

There is one item of expenditure that is very interesting. It reads, “Paid Arthur Beavens towards the pattin £2. 18s. 7d.” Has this any connection with the Church? The Bevans were church wardens and it looks as if the Court is giving a subscription towards the church plate.

The only plate, as far as we can ascertain, that the church possessed at this time were (i) the Chalice with the cover (mentioned previously) and the beautiful dish bearing the hall mark of 1650. This dish seems to have been made for secular use and bears a maker’s mark seen only on the St. Ishmael’s (Ferryside) Chalice (ie. a bird holding a branch in its beak, all in a plain heraldic shield). It has on it’s the letters –

T
W*B

The Rev. John Thomas, a former Vicar of Laugharne, said that the letters referred to William Thomas (Bishop of St. Davids and Vicar of Laugharne) and his wife Blanche, the daughter of Peter Samyne a Dutch merchant. The Rev. J.T. Evans in his book THE CHURCH PLATE OF CARMARTHENSHIRE says it was a gift by the Bishop in 1650.

However 1650 does not seem the correct date, as William Thomas was ejected from the living at Laugharne in 1644 and was not restored until 1660. Though he lived in Laugharne during that period, it is not likely that he gave the dish then, but sometime after his restoration in 1660. Again, as the dish seems to be made for secular use, and has his name and that of his wife on it (if the initials are correctly interpreted) perhaps he did not present it himself. He died in 1689. Could it be that the dish was later purchased for the Church from the Owen family, his successors and relations and that the £2. 18s. 7d. given by the Portreeve, Anselm Butler, to Arthur Bevan was the subscription of the Corporation towards it?

Anselm Butler also pays for “the fouer staffs for the constables 12s” He buys 20 strikes of Runcoals (The term “runcoal” for coal straight from the colliery was still used thirty years ago and is known now) for the poor at Christmas for 10s. He pays to build a new Portreeve’s Seat in the Church, £1. 7s. 4d. for labour and £1. 1s. 4d. for sixteen deal boards.

(The Portreeve’s Seat is the second seat on the East-side of the nave. It is directly under the Corporation window. When this window was restored by the Corporation, the upper portions of the original glass were left. At the top is the head of Edward III (1327-77). The lower lights contain, on the left, the coat of arms of de Brian (Three nails of the Cross in pale blue on a yellow background). On the right, the royal coat of arms, in the form used in the 14th Century. The glass from the lower part of the window represented St. George, and the window probably celebrates the making of Sir Guy de Brian a Knight of the Garter in 1349. This Sir Guy was the Lord High Admiral under Edward III and Richard II. He built the choir in Tewkesbury Abbey, where he is buried, and probably restored Laugharne Church in 1350.

In the Corporation accounts we find expenditure for cleaning the Portreeve’s Seat, e.g. 1713, “Payde Joyce James for cleaning ye seat in church 6d.” It is likely, then, that the present day Portreeve’s Sunday had its origin very far back.

The Portreeve still takes interest in the market. He pays to the “watch at the ffaier” 3s., gives the market mesners (they are the middlemen or sellers under a superior lord) 6s. and he pays for the post and the bull-ring 8s. 6d. He gives 6d. to two “shipwreck’d seemen” and finally pays John Woodcock 6s. for “caringe the mattoch in the coman worke” (21 miles).

There is no mention of a Portreeve’s salary during the period, nor did he have any of the toll as he did later. He derived the bulk of his income from the rent of Undercliff, that is the Lees. It brought him in about £14. a year. It was rented to various well-to-do tenants. Later, when Undercliff was divided among Partners (that is shareholders) as were the Moor and Hugdon (about 1675), the Portreeve lost this large rent, but the expenses of the Court were met from the token rents of the partners on Moor, Hugdon and Undercliff and from the rents of the larger farms (Merry Moor, Spring Mead, Halfpenny Furze, etc) and the rents of the liberties within the Township.

About this time the Portreeve was given a field near Coygan (Probably the field known originally as “Under Gines”). It is often mentioned in previous records but not after this date. It is directly below a field that today is known as Chains (pronounced ai, as long I in fight) situated below Kingaddle. The field under Gines was known later as The Portreeve’s Field and the Portreeve retained possession of it until in 1820 the Rev. Thomas Watkins, Vicar of Laugharne and younger son of Pennoyre Watkins, owner of the Broadway Estate, exchanged it for the field now known as The Portreeve’s Field which is on the south west corner of Cross Towy.

The Portreeve formerly took the toll of corn brought into the town for sale, which was one bushel in the hundred, and of small annual amount. But in the later part of the 18th Century trouble arose over this toll. In October 1766 the Court decided to “have council’s opinion on what right people have to buy corn at St. Clears” and later in 1776 there was real trouble. Mr John Howell, a merchant, brought an action for trespass against the Portreeve, William Skyrme, Esq., respecting “the corn taken by the Portreeve as Toll.” The Corporation lost the case and had to pay 12s. damages, Mr Howell’s costs of £52. 9s. 11d. and its own costs of £22. 11s. 1d. The minute reads thus –

4th November “ordered that the Common Attorneys do pay £52. 9s. 11d being the costs of an action brought against the said William Skyrme Esq. for in defending the rights of the Corporation touching the sale that came from St. Clears”.

The Portreeve and Grand Jury took this defeat badly and made the next person to be presented as a burgess swear that “in case I shall hereafter hold any farm without the limits of this Corporation, and in case I shall bring any corn into the same, I will pay the Toll for all such corn.” Nevertheless, it seems that the Portreeve soon gave up his toll, as Commissioner C. Austin writes in 1834, “In consequence of some dispute the toll has been discontinued for about two years and the Portreeve receives a salary in lieu of his former privileges He has now a salary of £10. a year, and the grass of a field of three-and-a-half acres, worth about £10 to £12. From this he gives an annual dinner to about 50 or 60 of the burgesses on the fifteenth day after the Big Court.”

Today (1963) the salary has been increased to £20. The dinner has been discontinued, but the Breakfast, on the Sunday morning after Big Court, is a far bigger function than it was formerly. Well over a hundred guests are invited, and speeches are made. In the old breakfast only the Aldermen, officials and jury were invited together with men who held leading positions in the town, probably about thirty. Only two speeches were made – the Junior Alderman’s thanks to the Portreeve, and the Portreeve’s reply.

Today (1963), although Laugharne has the usual government representatives, County Councillor, District Councillor and Parish Councillors, yet still the Portreeve maintains his position as head of the town and presides at most public meetings and functions.

LIST OF PORTREEVES

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1568 John Donn
 1574 John ap Richard
 1612 Rice Palmer
 1634 James Butler (1)
 1638 William Drewett (1)
 1643 James Buttler (2)
 1647 William White
 1648 John Rogers (1)
 1649 Rice Phillips
 1650 Thomas Bevan
 1651 Thomas Brown
 1652 Richard Parfitt
 1653/4 William Gilbert
 1655 John Rogers (2)
 1656 Henry Bailiffe
 1657 James Palmer
 1658/9/60 John Perrott
 1661 Thomas Sare
 1662 Richard Bevan
 1663 Arthur Stafford
 1665 William Drewett (2)
 1666 John Rogers
 1667 Abraham Fowler
 1668 Thomas Hayes
 1669 Anselm Butler
 1670 John Rogers, the younger
 1671 Richard Browne
 1699 Anselm Butler
 1700 Sir Thomas Powell, Bart.
 1701 William Langston
 1702 John Rowe
 1703 Zacharias Bevan
 1704 Arthur Bevan
 1705 Phillip Phillips
 1706 John Bevan
 1707 James Bevan
 1708 Samuel Hughes
 1709 William Langston
 1710 Thomas Rees
 1711 Henry Howell
 1712 Rees Thomas
 1713 David Harry
 1714 Benjamin Bevan
 1715 William Rogers
 1716 William Walter
 1717 George Bevan
 1718 John Rowe
 1719 Richard Reynolds
 1720 Richard Reynolds
 1721 John Rogers
 1722 George Rees
 1723 Thomas Skeel
 1724 Richard Jack
 1725 John Rowe
 1726 James Palmer
 1727 John Hughes
 1728 William Walter
 1729 Daniel Rees
 1730 Thomas Jones</p> | <p>1731 Richard Langston – refused to take the oath. Rawleigh Mansel took his place.
 1732 Rawleigh Mansell and David Rees
 1733 John Howells
 1734 Edward Edward
 1735 Thomas Palmer
 1736 John Laugharne
 1737 Anselm Jack
 1738 David Hughes
 1739 Peter Howell
 1740 James Sheel, Junior
 1741 Lewis Evan
 1742 William Skyrme
 1743 Howell Gwynne
 1744 Richard Row
 1745 William Rogers
 1746 David Shewen
 1747 David William
 1748 Thomas Bevan
 1749 Thomas Evans
 1750 Rowland Edwardes
 1751 Rev. William Harries
 1752 Howell Gwynne
 1753 William Skyrme
 1754 Lewis Evan
 1755 Daniel Shewen
 1756 John Ravenscroft
 1757 John Palmer
 1758 Sir Edward Vaughan Mansel
 1759 Thomas Beynon
 1760 William Griffith
 1761 Thomas Laugharne
 1762 John Morgan
 1763 Henry Treharne
 1764 Thomas Evans
 1765 John Howell
 1766 Henry Howell
 1767 John Gittins
 1768 Richard Athoe
 1769 Anselm Beynon
 1770 David Rees
 1771 Richard Davies
 1772 Pennoyre Watkins
 1773 William Griffith
 1774 Rev. Sandford
 1775 William Skyrme
 1776 John Morse
 1777/8/9 Richard Davies
 1780 William Griffith
 1781 William Laugharne
 1782 William Woods
 1783 Edward Lewis
 1784 Richard Rowe
 1785 William Griffith
 1786 Richard Davies
 1787 Joseph Skeel
 1788 Francis Jones
 1789 Richard Davies
 1790 William Owen</p> |
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1791 Rowland Edwardes
 1792 Thomas Perrot
 1793 Henry Treharne
 1794 Richard Morris
 1795 Samuel Richards
 1796 Peter Newton Walters
 1797 Thomas Jones
 1798/9 John Hughes
 1800 Mark Howell
 1801/2 William Skyrme
 1803 Richard Davies
 1804/5 Evan Brown
 1806/7/8 John Thomas
 1809/10/11 John James
 1812/13/14 John Hugh
 1815 William Williams
 1816 William Howell Thomas
 1817 William Skyrme
 1818/19 John Hayle Shickle
 1820/21 Rev. George Parry
 1822 John Hayle Shickle
 1823 Seth Lewis
 1824 Thomas Edwards
 1825 John Frederic Brown
 1826/27 John Hayle Shickle
 1828 (M) John David
 1829 Timothy Powell
 1830 John Hawkins
 1831 Joshua Thomas
 1832 Thomas Escott
 1833/34 Rev. George Parry
 1835 W. Sackville Hamilton
 1836 Dennis Fairchild
 1837 Henry Hamilton
 1838 Henry Ramsay Prothero
 1839/40 John David
 1841 Thomas Hugh
 1842 James George
 1843 Seth Philip Lewis
 1844/45 Thomas Edwards Tucker
 1846 William Morgan Thomas
 1847 (M) Thomas E. Tucker
 1847 Charles W. Montgomery
 1848 Esau Edmunds
 1849/50 Richard Brookes
 1851 Richard Morris
 1852/53 Rev. Jasper Nicolls Harrison
 1854/55 James Pepler
 1856 John Powell
 1857 John Evans
 1858 Thomas Woods
 1859 John Roberts
 1860/61 Esau Edmunds
 1862 Samuel Sinclair David
 1863 John Saer
 1864 John Howell
 1865 John Evans
 1866/67 John Wilkins
 1868/69/70 John Hugh
 1871 Evan Parry
 1872/73 John Lewis
 1874/5 Thomas David
 1867/77 John David
 1878 Samuel Sinclair David and W. Frederic
 Weinholt
 1879/80 Samuel Sinclair David
 1881-1885 Evan David
 1886/87/88 Benjamin R. Thomas
 1889/90 Thomas Richards
 1891/92/93 Thomas Lewis
 1894/95/96 Maurice Williams (last elected by
 Jury only)
 1897/98 David Thomas (first elected by all
 Burgesses)
 1899/1900 John Henry Thomas
 1901/1902 William David
 1903/04 James Richards
 1905/06 John Jones
 1907/08 Rev. John Thomas
 1909/10/11 William Henry Dempster
 1912-1916 William E. Edwards
 1917/18 Albert William Thomas
 1919/20 William Clarke Griffith
 1921/22/23 William Richard Rees
 1924/25/26 Benjamin Tucker
 1927/28/29 Hubert R. Griffith
 1930/31 Thomas R. Edmunds
 1932/33 John Wilkin Davies
 1934/35/36 Tudor F.H. Williams
 1937/38 Rev. Sydney B. Williams
 1939/40/41 Robert H. Tyler
 1942/43 Ernest V. Williams
 1944/45 John Morgan
 1946/47/48 T. Fleming Williams
 1949/50 D. Johnny Lewis
 1951/52 David Harries
 1953/4 D. Clifford Roberts
 1955/56 Cornelius J. Edwards
 1957/58 John Morgan
 1959/60 William F. Williams
 1961/62 Douglas M. Bradshaw
 1963/65 Ralph A. Tucker
 1965/67 Rev. Victor Jones
 1967/69 Dr. J.H.T. Rees
 1969/70 O.J. Williams
 1970/71 Douglas M. Bradshaw
 1971/73 E. Davies
 1973/75 D.J. Bryan
 1975/77 C.W. Roberts
 1977/79 H.D.C. Griffith
 1979/81 W.S. Lewis
 1981/83 D.R. Harries
 1983/85 D.J. Bryan
 1985/87 W.G. Williams
 1987/89 R.T. Thomas
 1989/91 W. Bernard Marchant
 1991/93 Keith R. Pearce
 1993/95 D. Cecil Davies
 1995/97 Sidney W.D. Evans
 1997/99 Capt. Beryn C.M. Lewis
 1999/2001 Sq. Ldr. Leslie V. Davies DFM
 2001/2003 Colin D. Webb
 2003/2005 S. R. Davies
 2005/2007 Sidney W.D. Evans