

FRANCIS JONES
C.V.O., T.D., M.A., F.S.A.
WALES HERALD OF ARMS EXTRAORDINARY

Historic Carmarthenshire Homes
and their Families



CARMARTHENSIRE ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY
CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT, DYFED COUNTY COUNCIL

1987

TOR Y COED, Llangyndeyrn. 24052

Also called Tor-y-Coed fawr, one and a quarter miles north-east of Llangyndeyrn, and on the south side of the river Gwendreath Fach. In the vicinity were Tor-y-coed uchaf, -fach, -ganol, and -llipry, marked on Colby's Map 1831, all of which were, probably, part of the demesne of Tor-y-coed (fawr) in earlier days. The double-pile house stands on a slope, facing north-east, it had four large rooms and a wide central passage, on the ground floor, with extensive cellars below: the staircase rises at the end of the passage and is lighted by a long window in the rear of the house. The lawns lay to the front of the house, with gardens and orchards on the slope above. In part of the orchard, vines were grown, and the enclosure, still partly walled, is known as 'Winllan'. The outbuildings are large and

unusual. In the taxation of 1670 Lady Anne Vaughan was assessed at 12 hearths which indicates that Torycoed was then a very large house. A sale catalogue following the death in 1776 of the then owner, Lewis Rogers of Kidwelly, describes 'Terracoed Fawr' as a freehold mansion house with a dairy, cowhouse, malt house, brew house, barn, stables, hayhouse and pump adjoining, together with the tenement and lands of 156a 3r 7p, situated in Llangendeirne parish, and called Terracoedvaur, now in occupation of Benjamin Charles who holds by a lease for two lives, at the yearly reant of £72 clear of all taxes. The mansion is a good modern house fit for a gentleman's residence, and consists of three rooms and a kitchen on the ground floor, five rooms on the first floor, and three on the attic storey. The purchaser was a Mr Parry at £1,720. A sale catalogue of 1909 describes the property as Torcoed Fawr alias Terracoed-Fawr, 144a 1r 17p, a Caernarvon-slated dwelling house, two parlours, hall, kitchen, back garden, dairy, pantry, five bedrooms; the rooms are large, the building is substantially put together, 'a heavy outlay having been made a few years ago'; then follows details of the outbuildings; the tenant, Thomas Levy, paid a yearly rent of £130. The family there in the 16th century ended with an heiress,

Elizabeth, daughter of Harry ap Jenkin ap Gwilym Fychan of Tor-y-coed. She married Sir William Vaughan second son of Walter Vaughan of Golden Grove, who settled at his wife's house. He graduated at the University of Oxford and was given the degree of Doctor of Laws by the University of Vienna. Not long after his marriage to Elizabeth he suffered a traumatic experience — during a storm in January 1608 Tor-y-coed was struck by lightning, Elizabeth was killed and William himself 'miraculously escaped'. In 1616 he became High Sheriff, and shortly afterwards married Anne Christmas of Colchester by whom he had six children. A fluent writer in English and Latin of both prose and poetry he was author of numerous books, among them *The Golden Grove Moralised* (1600) which contains a section on estate management and farming, in which he advocated many improvements which showed him to be ahead of his age. He had somewhat rigid views about a farmer's wife 'which must not be too sumptuous and superflous in her attire or decked with frizzled hair, embroidery,

precious stones, gaudy raiment and gold put about her'. In 1617 he founded a colony which he named *Cambriol* in Newfoundland and persuaded farmers from Wales to emigrate, and gave Welsh names to farms and topographical features. He was knighted in 1628. He continued to write books up to the time of his death in August 1641. He directed that he was to be 'Buried without vaine pompe in the Church yard of Llangendeirne'. His son Edward Vaughan succeeded to Torycoed, became an ardent Royalist during the Civil War, and was knighted in 1643. He died in May 1658, and was followed by his son Richard Vaughan. Richard became High Sheriff in 1689, but thereafter lived mostly at his wife's home at Shenfield in Essex, and in July 1712 sold Tor-y-coed for £3789 to Rowland Lewis of Abercothi, Llanegwad, who then came to live there and was High Sheriff in 1719. Rowland Lewis died in 1731 and was buried at Llangyndeyrn. Thereafter it was owned by families of Rogers and Parry. In 1818 David Parry described as gentleman-farmer, was still living at Tor-y-coed, but left not long afterwards, and the property then became the home of farming families.

Grid Ref: SN 4800 1415.

Sources: Carms. R.O., John Francis s.c. 331; Haverfordwest Library, Francis Green Mss., vol. 1, 604; Francis Jones, 'Vaughans of Torycoed', *Trans. Cymmr.*, 1964-1966.