

FAMILY, LAND AND INHERITANCE IN LATE MEDIEVAL
WALES: A CASE STUDY OF LLANNERCH IN THE
LORDSHIP OF DYFFRYN CLWYD

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ABSTRACT

The presence or absence of a bond or attachment between a family and the land in its possession is an issue which has generated much debate in studies of the societies of late medieval England. But it is an issue which has remained relatively unexplored by students of medieval Wales. Using the rich documentary resources of the lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd and the voluminous and informative records of the commote of Llannerch in particular, this study explores the influences which promoted or discouraged the formation or persistence of such bonds. It argues that whereas in the conditions of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries familial attachment to land was compromised in several important respects, continuity of familial possession was, nevertheless, an important characteristic of Llannerch society. To what extent the experience of Llannerch was replicated in other regions of Wales is an issue which deserves further study. Was Llannerch and, indeed, the lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd, distinctive, or is it rather that its sources allow the issue to be confronted and analysed in far greater detail than is possible for other Welsh medieval societies?

I

The presence or absence of a strong bond between a family and the land in its possession is an issue which has been comprehensively studied by numerous historians of pre-industrial societies both in England and, more widely, in Europe, even if the influences and conditions which promoted or discouraged the existence of such ‘familial’ or ‘sentimental’ attachments are also matters of vigorous debate. By contrast, although investigators of English communities have sometimes speculated on the character of attitudes towards land in the societies of the north and the west, or pleaded for a thorough investigation of the topic in the ‘British-Celtic peripheries’, their colleagues working on Wales have on the whole been far more reluctant to engage in the debate.¹ Indeed, when the issue has been addressed at all, it has been approached, somewhat obliquely, in terms of a search for the reasons which underlay a retreat from the institutions and mentalities of a traditional ‘tribal society’, in a period, generally identified as the late Middle Ages, when family notions were believed to have lost their grip and profound changes both in attitudes and in landholding structures took place. Bereft of the ‘halo of the patriarchal shell’, it is claimed, the bonds which bound families to their

¹ From the substantial literature now available, the following studies provide discussions with reference to further reading: Jane Whittle, ‘Individualism and the family-land bond: a reassessment of land transfer patterns among the English peasantry c.1270–1580’, *Past and Present* (hereafter *PandP*), 160 (1998), 25–63; eadem, *The Development of Agrarian Capitalism: Land and Labour in Norfolk 1440–1580* (Oxford, 2000), esp. pp. 85–177; John Mullan and Richard Britnell, *Land and Family: Trends and Local Variations in the Peasant Land Market on the Winchester Bishopric Estates, 1263–1415* (Hatfield, 2010); and for the early modern period, R. W. Hoyle, ‘Debate: the land-family bond in England’, *PandP*, 146 (1995), 151–73, and Govind Sreenivasan, ‘Reply’, *ibid.*, 174–87; R. W. Hoyle, ‘Tenure and the land market in early modern England: or a late contribution to the Brenner debate’, *Economic History Review* (hereafter *EcHR*), 2nd ser., 43 (1990), 1–20; idem, ‘English individualism refuted – and reasserted: the land market of Earls Colne (Essex), 1550–1750’, *EcHR*, 56 (2003), 595–622; David R. Clarke, ‘The ‘land-family bond in East Sussex, c. 1580–1770’, *Continuity and Change*, 21 (2006), 341–69. Earlier versions of this paper were delivered at the Anglo-American Seminar on Medieval Economic History and at the Seminar on Medieval History at Bangor. I am most grateful to Phillipp Schofield for reading and commenting on the present version. It is also a pleasure to record a debt of gratitude to the late Rees Davies and to Andrew Barrell, Michael Brown and Oliver Padel in whose company I was privileged to study the court rolls of Dyffryn Clwyd.

lands gave way to contractual relations, individual and economic. The importance of kin and descent was losing its force and a strong individual consciousness of possession had triumphed over the familial and collective principles which underpinned traditional society.² Despite the persistence well into the Tudor period of the carapace and terminology of kindred structures, the terminal blow to the rationale of the inheritance framework of medieval Wales had, in truth, been delivered in the decisive years between the advent of plague in the mid-fourteenth century and the end of the Glyndŵr rebellion, six decades later. Out of the debris of medieval arrangements, it is frequently argued, the familiar pattern of landowner, tenant farmer and labourer and the tenurial trinity of freehold, copyhold and leasehold was emerging, and, by the fifteenth century, 'money was talking decidedly louder than blood'.³

In the search for the determinants of such far-reaching changes in attitudes towards land, as revealed in the writings of historians of Welsh medieval society, two dominant themes may be identified. Early pioneers in the study of the social and economic history of Wales, casting the issue in terms of the gradual disintegration of 'tribal' custom and drawing their evidence mainly from the northern regions of Wales, gave to the process of escheat or forfeiture a cardinal role in the silent forces which made for systemic change. Escheated lands, that is to say lands which, for a number of recognized reasons, had been returned to the lord or confiscated by him, it was argued, allowed the penetration of enterprising individuals, frequently entire strangers in blood, into the structures of tribalism. Consanguinity, the basis of old tribal economy, gave way to territorialism, regarded as 'the basis of feudal society'.⁴ Escheat, as

² Edward A. Lewis, 'The decay of tribalism in north Wales', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (hereafter *THSC*), 1902-3, 1-75, esp. 34; William Rees, *South Wales and the March 1284-1415* (Oxford, 1924), pp. 213-15, 267-8, 273-80.

³ Glanmor Williams, *Recovery, Reorientation and Reformation: Wales c.1415-1642* (Oxford, 1987), p. 102; R. R. Davies, *Lordship and Society in the March of Wales 1282-1400* (Oxford, 1978), esp. p. 436, arguing for a 'coup de grace' executed on kindred structures and inheritance customs.

⁴ Lewis, 'Decay of tribalism', is the standard text, although he also discusses the influence of 'the municipal element' in the context of the formation of borough lands; Rees, *South Wales and the March*, notes the importance of escheat but also stresses the role of alienation. For escheat in the lordships of Denbigh and Bromfield and Yale, see the excellent studies by D. Huw Owen, 'The lordship of Denbigh 1282-1425' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, 1967), 140-59;

E. A. Lewis, writing in 1902–3 correctly surmised, undoubtedly had the potential to be a corrosive solvent of any familial attachment to land. Forfeiture of land – death *contra pacem*, felony, failure of heirs, abandonment and failure to pay rent being prominent among the reasons why it took place – brought a considerable number of acres into the lord's hands, both in the crown lands and in many of the marcher lordships of the north-east from the end of the thirteenth century onwards. From a seigniorial perspective, escheat removed precious acres from the tenurial dinosaurs of traditional Welsh institutions like the *gwely* and *gafael* into a new world of leases, entry fines and reliefs, with the potential to enhance seigniorial profits from land. It also afforded the lords with the means to reward loyal followers and to attract new settlers to their lands. Across a broad span of north Wales a considerable quantity of land was redistributed in this way following the conquest of 1282 and the rebellion of 1294–5. In the ensuing decades the mortality occasioned by plague together with the desertion of holdings and forfeitures resulting from the Glyndŵr rebellion further augmented the stock of escheated lands.⁵

More recent investigators, however, availing themselves of the wealth of estate records increasingly exploited in the last half-century or so, have stressed, besides the role of escheat, the 'take off' of the land market and its role as an accelerant of the end of the traditional Welsh patterns of tenure based on kindred and hereditary right.⁶ The gathering

Michael Rogers, 'The Welsh marcher lordship of Bromfield and Yale, 1282–1485' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, 1992), 266–95. For Dyffryn Clwyd, see Diane M. Korngiebel, 'English colonial ethnic discrimination in the lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd: segregation and integration, 1282–c.1340', ante, 23 (2006–7), 1–25; and for the town of Ruthin, Matthew Stevens, 'Wealth, status and "race" in the Ruthin of Edward II', *Urban History*, 32 (2005), 17–32, and idem, *Urban Assimilation in Post-Conquest Wales: Ethnicity, Gender and Economy in Ruthin, 1282–1348* (Cardiff, 2010).

⁵ For the financial potential of escheat see Rogers, 'Bromfield and Yale', 135–6, and Owen, 'Lordship of Denbigh', 180–206. Strictly speaking there was a distinction between escheat and forfeiture, e.g. The Dyffryn Clwyd Court Roll Database, ESRC Data Archive Study Number 3679, Llan7/1406 (1417); cf. Owen, 'Lordship of Denbigh', 147–8. References to the Dyffryn Clwyd Database are made in the forms Llan1–7, E (rolls of the commote court of Llannerch 1294–1422), GC1–7 (rolls of the Great Court for the same period), followed by entry number and date. Other references to the court rolls are made to London, The National Archives, SC2/215/64–SC2/225/3 with membrane number. See also below n. 17

⁶ A. D. Carr, 'Wales: economy and society', in S. H. Rigby (ed.), *A Companion to*

momentum of the land market, which set in motion the creation of substantial estates as well as sizeable farmsteads, has been charted in numerous important studies of late medieval localities. Indeed, the vital role of the urban investor in initiating and accelerating the displacement of ancient rights in the soils of rural townships was already appreciated and appraised by Thomas Jones Pierce in a study published in 1942.⁷ In those jurisdictions, chiefly in the northern areas of Wales, where the lords imposed severe restrictions not only upon the alienation of bond land but also upon free land held in Welsh tenure, seigniorial regimes were confronted by repeated petitions by freemen that they might be allowed a free market in land, and royal administrators at length conceded that licences to alienate might be purchased, such licences, along with the multitude of surviving property deeds, testifying to the numerous transactions in land.⁸ Alternatively, the *prid* deed, a form of perpetual mortgage giving the gagee (the purchaser) a specified and renewable lease in the land, was also a crucial development in the land law of several regions of Wales in the late Middle Ages and one that was also, in some important respects, calculated to facilitate a market in land. Above all, the gradual erosion of Welsh tenure itself, replaced by the norms of tenure by English common law, with its concomitant freedom to alienate, also extended the Welsh tenant's capacity to participate in a market in land. Although both the tempo and the precise nature of the land market merit closer attention, there can be little doubt that the appetite and the capacity to buy and sell land existed in abundance in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Wales.⁹

Britain in the Later Middle Ages (Oxford, 2003), pp. 125–41, provides a good survey of the issues. The collection of essays in Laurent Feller and Chris Wickham (eds), *Le Marché de la terre au moyen âge* (Rome, 2005) provides a European context to the historiography of the land market in Wales, esp. François Menant, 'Comment le marché de la terre est devenu un thème de recherche pour les historiens du Moyen Âge', *ibid.*, pp. 195–216. I hope to discuss the issues in relation to Wales on another occasion.

⁷ Davies, *Lordship and Society*, pp. 402–36; T. Jones Pierce, *Medieval Welsh Society*, ed. J. Beverley Smith (Cardiff, 1972), pp. 195–227; R. R. Davies, 'Plague and revolt', in Ralph A. Griffiths, Tony Hopkins and Ray Howell (eds), *The Gwent County History, Volume 2: The Age of the Marcher Lords, c.1070–1536* (Cardiff, 2008), pp. 227–9; A. D. Carr, 'The making of the Mostyns: the genesis of a landed family', *THSC*, 1979, 137–59; *idem*, 'Gwilym ap Gruffydd and the rise of the Penrhyn estate', *ante*, 15 (1990), 1–20, are key studies.

⁸ J. Beverley Smith, 'Crown and community in the Principality of North Wales in the reign of Henry Tudor', *ante*, 3 (1966–7), 145–73.

⁹ I have discussed *prid* in 'The gage and the land market in late medieval Wales',

Yet, late medieval Wales has also presented an image of a society where the conjunction of lineage and land was very deeply ingrained. Fourteenth- and fifteenth-century poets celebrated and approved of ancient possession and inherited right in their poetic addresses not only to notable gentry families but also to prosperous freemen. The sense of loss and bereavement, so poignantly conveyed by the poets on the death of a patron was often assuaged by the knowledge that there were heirs to succeed both to his duties and lands. ‘Dau etifedd i feddu / Ar wŷr a thir Iorwerth Ddu’ (two sons to inherit the men and lands of Iorwerth Ddu) exclaimed the poet Hywel Cilan in his panegyric to the sons of Iorwerth ap Ieuan of Chirk, while the association of a landed endowment, many of twelfth- or thirteenth-century beginnings, with a line of descent, is often encountered in the poetic addresses of the late Middle Ages.¹⁰ The vocabulary of land tenure, recorded and retained by the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century surveyors of seigniorial estates, deployed terms such as ‘the lands of descendants’ (L. *progenies*, W. *wyrion*), ‘tenure by patrimony’ (W. *treftad*) or ‘by kin and descent’ (*per ach et edryd*), to describe what they found. Landowners such as Rhys ab Einion of Edwingsford could carefully distinguish between the lands acquired or purchased by *prid* (*pridie*) and those which were theirs by rightful inheritance by patrimony (*iawn etifeddiaeth o dref y dad*).¹¹

Equally impressive were the safeguards and advantages afforded the heirs and the kin by custom and law. Although there are no suggestions in the texts of Welsh law that the wider kindred exercised or claimed a formal, limiting role in the alienation of family land, there are, even so, several indications that their interests were not entirely passed over.¹² A persuasive case has been made for regarding some of the twelfth-century

EcHR, 2nd ser. 29 (1976), 537–50, and ‘*Tir Prid: deeds of gage of land in medieval Wales*’, *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* (hereafter *BBCS*), 27 (1976–8), 263–77, although I would now wish to modify some of my interpretations. See below, pp. 442–3.

¹⁰ Islwyn Jones (ed.), *Gwaith Hywel Cilan* (Cardiff, 1963), p. 36, no. 21, lines 11–12; Iorwerth Ddu was the addressee’s grandfather.

¹¹ Paul Vinogradoff and Frank Morgan (eds), *Survey of the Honour of Denbigh, 1334* (London, 1914), pp. 80, 228, 261 (*wyrion*); J. W. Willis-Bund (ed.), *The Black Book of St. David’s* (London, 1902), p. 201 (*ach et edryd*); Llan1/2090 (1332); London, The National Archives, SC2/216/14, m. 22 (1333–4) (*treftad*); Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW), Edwingsford, 3227, 3228. All documentary references are to The National Archives unless otherwise stated.

¹² Cf. the Irish evidence discussed in T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 61–73.

charters granting land to Margam abbey as reflections of the 'pivotal role' assumed by the kindred in alienation and as documents which provide 'striking evidence of the attachment of kin to family land'. In mid-fifteenth-century Whittington, as was also the case in an earlier period in Oswestry, the validity of the claims of kinsmen over strangers or outsiders and the preference which should be given to kin by lineal or collateral descent as purchasers is sometimes recorded in formal judicial decisions.¹³ The protection extended to the heirs against the alienation of family lands is also clearly recorded in an early fourteenth-century law text associated with the south-west which declared that 'no one may release his land to another in opposition to his heirs, nor grant any part of it without an appointed period so that it may be redeemed by the heirs'. Only lawful necessity (*angen Cyfreithiol*), common benefit (*cydles*) or common agreement (*dyundeb*) might permit the alienation of family land and, in their absence, the heir or heirs might recover their patrimony.¹⁴ Clearest of all both in the law texts and in the archival sources of the late Middle Ages is the stringent control, exercised by many seigniorial regimes, of the sale of land held by Welsh tenure. The lawyers of the thirteenth-century princes of Gwynedd had already proclaimed that 'no one may sell or gage his land without his lord's permission, but he may lease it for a year if he wishes', and many fourteenth-century seigniorial regimes, including that of the crown, followed suit.¹⁵ In an undated ordinance, normally attributed to 1295, royal administrators declared that 'no Welshman should be permitted to create an estate (*statum facere*) in any lands or tenements unless it be for a term of four years, under penalty of forfeiture', provisions that were certainly also implemented in

¹³ Matthew Griffiths, 'Native society on the Anglo-Norman frontier: the evidence of the Margam charters', ante, 14 (1988–9), 179–216; NLW, Aston Hall 5853 (court roll of the lordship of Whittington (1421–2); London, British Library, Harleian MS 1970, fo. 82 (a later transcript of an Oswestry court roll for 1382). In the lordship of Denbigh kinsmen (*consanguinei*) were permitted to challenge the sale of land which had been proclaimed in court as escheat (NLW, Trovarth and Coedcoch, no. 33, an estreat of a court roll of the commote of Ceinmeirch, 1500–1).

¹⁴ Stephen J. Williams and J. Enoch Powell (eds), *Cyfreithiau Hywel Dda yn ôl Llyfr Blegywryd* (Cardiff, 1961), p. 77. See also below, n. 71.

¹⁵ Aled Rhys Wiliam (ed.), *Llyfr Iorwerth* (Cardiff, 1960), p. 58; Dafydd Jenkins (ed.), *Llyfr Colan* (Cardiff, 1963), p. 38; Henry Ellis (ed.), *Registrum Vulgariter Nuncupatum 'The Record of Caernarvon'* (London, 1838), p. 132; see also below, n. 23; *Calendar of Chancery Rolls, Various, 1277–1326* (London, 1912), p. 195; SC2/216/10, m. 20 (1329–30) (for similar claims).

several marcher lordships in the post-conquest period. Despite the transformations effected by means of escheat and the land market, it would seem that a trenchant and pervasive recognition of the ideal that land should be viewed as a heritage passed through the generations had by no means been consigned to oblivion in late medieval Wales. When, in the mid-fifteenth century, a 'poor bedeswoman' of Dyffryn Clwyd could assert that her husband's patrimony, endangered by the premature death of the sole male heir, 'came never out from the heir since the conquest [of 1282] save now', or another petitioner could claim that to put out a man from his true inheritance was 'contrary to all right, good conscience and truth', they were surely echoing a deep-rooted consciousness of a pride in family and name and the transmission of land in the blood.¹⁶

II

The surviving archival sources of late medieval Wales do not normally enable these contrasting assumptions to be put to the test by means of the rigorous statistical analysis familiar to students of English medieval societies. Nor, indeed, would historians of medieval Wales now wish to formulate the question in terms of the disintegration of the tenurial structures of 'tribalism' or of the displacement of its mentalities. Rather the aim of this study is to identify the role of hereditary right in the transmission of land, as it is revealed in one unusually rich and informative series of court rolls, namely those of the lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd in the north-east march of Wales. Until its acquisition by the crown in 1507 the lordship, almost uniquely among the marcher lordships of Wales, had remained, since the conquest of 1282, in the hands of a single family, the Greys (by the fifteenth century, earls of Kent), whose members, in person and through their officials, exercised a punctilious surveillance of the affairs of their lordship. Regular visitors to

¹⁶ SC2/223/2, mm. 6a, 6v (petition of the widow of Tudur ap Ieuan ab Einion of Llanynys, Colion, 1451-2); SC2/223/16, m. 7v (petition of John ap Gruffydd ap Dafydd Burgess of Dogfeiling, 1485-6). Cf. the petition presented by the community of Dyffryn Clwyd to the king regarding their ejection by Reginald Grey from their inheritances, printed in William Rees (ed.), *Calendar of Ancient Petitions Relating to Wales* (Cardiff, 1975), pp. 168-9; R. R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 90, 351, citing Rees, *Petitions*, pp. 182-3, recalling the expulsion of ancestors from their lands.

their marcher lordship (family members were also property owners in the lordship and in the town of Ruthin) and active participants in its judicial affairs, successive generations of Greys arbitrated in disputes between parties, endorsed their tenants' transactions in their own hand, adjudicated with their council on matters of custom and law, legislated on a wide range of issues, including matters relating to land, and, most significantly, held regular courts – some fifteen to seventeen *per annum* for each administrative unit for a period of over two hundred years can be documented – whose surviving records provide the basis for the discussion which follows.

For the purposes of the present enquiry, the court records of one of the lordship's constituent commotes, namely the commote of Llannerch, have been selected for analysis, materials which provide unique and invaluable evidence in a number of important respects.¹⁷ In the first place, all successions to land, free as well as unfree tenancies, were recorded before the steward in the courts of the lordship, thus affording not only an insight into the history of bond or customary tenements but also of those of the numerically more significant number of freeholders in the commote. Second, *all* transfers of land, whatever its tenure, were normally executed by means of an *ad opus* transfer, whereby the land was surrendered by the donor or seller in court to the use (*ad opus*) of the recipient or purchaser, the court record thus providing the evidence of title to land, although estreats of court rolls and deeds were, not infrequently, also retained by the parties. Third, from 1345 onwards, as a result of the promulgation of a substantial seigniorial statute, all *prid* transactions were recorded on the court roll, although the device itself and its use pre-dated the statute, and a licence fee (normally set at 10 per cent of the purchase price) paid to the lord, transfers by *prid* being the standard method of transferring free land held in Welsh tenure in the period. Transfers of land into escheat, together with lands granted out of escheat by the lord, were likewise recorded on the court roll, the details of successions and transfers by means of *ad opus* and *prid* transactions and by means of escheat taken together providing an unusually comprehensive record of the ways in which land might change hands.¹⁸

¹⁷ For the purposes of this study, analyses of the court rolls for the commote of Llannerch 1345–1422 have been based on the Dyffryn Clwyd Court Roll Database (above, n. 5) and those for the period 1422–1547 on my own transcripts of the rolls, SC2/221/13–225/3.

¹⁸ For the 'statute' see database Forties/344 (1345), recited in succeeding court

There are no indications that such devices as the death-bed transfer, of which English historians have written at some length, was known or utilized in this area nor that land in this period (with the exception of *prid* lands) was normally devisable by will.¹⁹ Finally, not only do the rolls provide a means of analysing the devolution of land over an extended period of time, but they also offer one of the best resources for the analysis of the character and structures of kinship relationships in late medieval Wales. The prolific use of the patronymic, extending commonly over three or four and occasionally over five generations, together with the survival in Dyffryn Clwyd of the four generation agnatic group as the functioning unit for the inheritance of land held by Welsh tenure, permits the reconstitution of family groups in the male line on a basis far more reliable and secure than those identified by surname alone. The role of kinsmen in a number of social and legal contexts, such as providing pledges or sureties and occasionally as recipients and contributors to payments of compensation for homicide (*galanas*), also suggests an enduring recognition of a wide range of kinsmen in Llannerch society.²⁰ Six rentals provide fixed points from which the commote's tenantry may be viewed. That of 1324 (an unsatisfactory document) and the rental of 1465 are available for study in printed form. Four unpublished rentals, that of 1483 (by far the most informative document), a rental of 1496–7 and two undated rentals which may tentatively be attributed respectively

rolls. For efforts of other marcher regimes to regulate *prid* transactions, see Smith, 'Gage and the land market', 545. For a seigniorial injunction that all land transactions should be registered and enrolled on the court roll, SC2/221/13, m. 25 (1437–8), partly legible; see also the second and more extensive of two commissions, enrolled in the town court, to Thomas Salesbury, steward of the lordship in 1441–2 (SC2/222/3, mm. 12, 14v) regarding the powers of the steward to demise land, and regarded as a key commission in NLW MS 1593E i, p. 57. Note that land exchanges were also recorded on the court rolls.

¹⁹ Lloyd Bonfield and L. R. Poos, 'The development of deathbed transfers in medieval English manor courts', in Zvi Razi and Richard Smith (eds), *Medieval Society and the Manor Court* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 117–43; Smith, 'Gage and the land market', 549, discusses the devisability of *prid* lands. See also below, p. 442.

²⁰ M. H. Brown, 'Kinship, land and law in fourteenth-century Wales: the kindred of Iorwerth ap Cadwgan', ante, 17 (1995), 493–515; A. D. M. Barrell et al., 'The Dyffryn Clwyd Court Roll Project, 1340–52 and 1389–99: a methodology and some preliminary findings', in Razi and Smith (eds), *Manor Court*, pp. 260–98, esp. pp. 283–9; R. R. Davies, 'The survival of the bloodfeud in medieval Wales', *History*, 54 (1969), 338–57; Llinos Beverley Smith, 'A contribution to the history of *galanas* in late-medieval Wales', *Studia Celtica*, 43 (2009), 87–94.

to the early and later years of the reign of Henry VIII, together with a number of surviving property deeds, and a small number of early sixteenth-century account rolls, complete the dossier of evidence provided by the records of Dyffryn Clwyd for the study of a rural community in late medieval Wales.²¹

Yet, for all the wealth of detail which the court rolls and the rentals provide, there are several shortcomings. Gaps in the sequence of rolls (the period from 1400 to 1411, when Glyndŵr and his supporters were active in the lordship, being an especially regrettable *lacuna*), and the poor condition and illegibility of some surviving rolls, preclude a thorough statistical analysis of the period in its entirety, while the completeness or reliability of the record cannot always be taken for granted. In the 1390s, for example, the small number of land successions recorded on the court rolls may, almost certainly, be explained by the fact that the commote's ringild was later held to account for concealing a number of payments of *ebediw* and *gobrestyn*, the dues paid on succession to land held under Welsh tenure; in the late 1460s the amount of business recorded on the court rolls, including transactions of land, is unusually and suspiciously small, while the land transfers of tenants who held lands in more than one commote might not always be recorded in the court rolls of Llannerch nor would their owners necessarily litigate in the courts of the commote alone.²² Moreover, the seigniorial court rolls

²¹ For the rentals, see R. Ian Jack, 'The lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd in 1324', *Transactions of the Denbighshire Historical Society* (hereafter *TDHS*), 17 (1968), 7–53 (hereafter Rental 1324); Melville Richards, 'The lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd in 1465', *TDHS*, 15 (1966), 15–54 (hereafter Rental 1465); SC12/24/1 (1483); SC12/229/95 (1496–7); NLW MS 9090 E (undated, later copy, probably largely early Henry VIII); NLW MS 1593E i (undated, probably c.1540, noting tenure and title, with annotations some of which may be associated with activities of Walter Blunt, the king's surveyor in the lordship: below, n. 90). References to other rentals are sometimes noted in the court rolls, e.g. SC2/221/13, m.19 (1432–3). The main collections of property deeds are NLW, Wynnstay (1952 Deposit), Bachymbyd, Kimmel, Trovarth and Coedcoch; Gwynedd Archives, Caernarfon Record Office, Rug Documents; Ruthin, Denbighshire Archives, Wynnstay Deeds and Documents, although deeds are also located in other collections. See also SC6/HENVIII/5025–5058 (1509–47) and DL29/10325 (1511–12) (account rolls) and E179/220/166 (lay subsidy roll 1543).

²² E/1786 (1397) although acquitted by jury; SC2/223/6–8 (1468–71). The rental of 1483 sometimes notes that land had been taken *sine aliqua capcione in curia* (SC12/24/1, fo. 96; SC2/218/3, m. 24; SC2/223/22, m. 3 (1495–6, enrolment of transfer of land in Llannerch in town court). Note also the absence of consistent

and the rentals commissioned by seigniorial officials provide detailed evidence only of those who held directly of the lord, although there is sufficient evidence to suggest the existence of sub-tenants, even if their numbers and their conditions of tenure are difficult to establish. Most serious of all are the challenges presented to any attempt to establish a comprehensive tenemental prosopography, the only entirely reliable means of showing a consistent and long-continuing connection of a family with a particular tenement or parcel of land.²³ These are, however, qualifications to a body of evidence which, in most respects, provides an exceptional insight into the landed structures of a medieval society. In so far as a study of Welsh social structures is concerned, it is unequalled both in the wealth of its detail and in its chronological span.

The commote of Llannerch, the basis of the present investigation, a commote consisting of some 9,000 acres divided among fourteen secular townships and forming two ecclesiastical parishes, lay to the south of the borough of Ruthin within easy proximity to the town. Although not the most valuable of the lordship's constituent units in terms of its rent yields, at the end of the fifteenth century seigniorial officials expected to receive an income of some £69 0s. 0d. from the commote's tenanted lands, with an additional income from court profits and the *firma* of forests, parks, demesne lands and mills.²⁴ There were, within

areal measurements when land was inherited or transferred, although detailed descriptions of natural features and boundaries are a particular feature of *prid* transactions; cf. the comments of Chris Wickham, 'Conclusion', in Feller and Wickham (eds), *Le Marché de la terre*, p. 640; see also below, p. 443.

²³ An early thirteenth-century law text suggests the importance of yearly leases (Wiliam (ed.), *Llyfr Iorwerth*, p. 58) and leasing arrangements feature occasionally in the court rolls, e.g. Llan1/ 1113 (1320). For leases more generally see Bas J. P. van Bavel and Phillipp R. Schofield (eds), *The Development of Leasehold in North-western Europe c. 1200–1600* (Turnhout, 2008), esp. the important introduction, pp. 11–31; Jane Whittle, 'Leasehold tenure in England c. 1300–1600: its form and incidence', in *ibid.*, pp. 139–55; Carr, 'Gwilym ap Gruffydd', esp. 14–15 (a rare glimpse of the terms and conditions of sub-tenants). The late fifteenth-century Thelwall rentals in NLW, Wynnstay MS 86, fos 92–100 appear to be the rents due from Ibulo Thelwall in Dyffryn Clwyd and reveal nothing of the terms on which his lands were rented to tenants. For a rare example from Dyffryn Clwyd, see NLW, Trovarth and Coed Coch, no. 804 (1497) (a 20-year lease in Dogfeiling). See also below, p. 452. Rent charges and reliefs have proved valuable in showing the continuity of particular holdings or lands within families; cf. Matthew Griffiths, 'Manor court records and the historian: Penmark, Fonmon, and Barry, 1570–1622', *Morgannwg*, 25 (1981), 60–1.

²⁴ The total for Llannerch given in the rental of 1483 (SC12/24/1, fo. 118) is £68

Llannerch's boundaries, some fertile arable lands and good meadow, most notably at Llysfasi (Llyslannerch), where a seigniorial demesne was located, but the terrain consisted predominantly of meadow, pasture and rough grazing land which supported a peasant economy based on sheep farming and stock rearing, supplemented by the domestic production of cloth and by seasonal labour. Besides the seigniorial demesnes, kept in hand in the early fourteenth century and subsequently leased *en bloc* to a farmer or farmers, and the seigniorial forests and parks, the commote also provided valuable landed endowments for the bishop of Bangor and for the small priory of St Peter's of Ruthin.²⁵ The bulk of the commote's acreage, however, was tenanted by Grey's free and unfree tenants, some 137 in 1324 (almost certainly an underestimate), 140 or so in 1483, 130 according to the early Henrician rental and 86 according to the later, assuming that the latter rental is complete.

For most of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and in the earlier decades of the sixteenth century, proprietors of modest estates, holding twenty acres or less (many holding considerably smaller acreages), dominated the landed structure of the commote, such endowments normally supplemented by access, under official surveillance, to common pastures and to the resources of the forests. Although at the end of the fifteenth century a number of substantial holdings of seventy acres or more can be identified, a careful examination reveals that many of these were already present well before 1400 (some, indeed, can be identified already in 1324) and there are few indications that the tenants of moderate holdings had as yet been entirely ousted by their more acquisitive neighbours or by major investors from outside.²⁶ A degree of

17s. 1½d. with the bulk (£56 11s. 11½d.) derived from land let at English tenure. Accounts of the reign of Henry VIII show a decrease in the rent charge, part attributed to concessions made by Henry VII in his charter (e.g. SC6/HENVIII/5046). Totals for Dogfeiling and Colion are not included in the rental but according to my rough calculations (calculated to the nearest pound) are £74 (Dogfeiling) with £44 (Aberchwilar) and £63 (Colion) (£54 in an early sixteenth-century rental of Colion, SC12/24/1, p. 196).

²⁵ A. D. M. Barrell, 'The clergy of a medieval marcher lordship: the evidence of the Dyffryn Clwyd Court Rolls', *TDHS*, 44 (1995), 5–25; André Q. Berry, 'The parks and forests of the lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd', *TDHS*, 43 (1994), 7–27. For demesne leases see e.g. Llan4/245–7 (1365) (leases to a number of bondmen and freemen); Llan5/1445 (1384) (lease to Dafydd ap Dafydd ap Heilyn); SC2/22315, m. 10v (1484–5) (lease to Tudur ap Elise ap Gruffydd ab Einion).

²⁶ Substantial estates included in the rental of 1483 but which are almost certainly of earlier origin are 64 acres 'late' of Amory Nanclwyd (SC12/24/1, fo. 113)

engrossment can already be seen in the rental of 1465, but it was in the years between the first and second Henrician rentals that the most significant changes in the size of holdings took place, as evidenced by the marked increase in the number of holdings of 20 acres or more by the end of the reign of Henry VIII, a decrease in the number of tenants holding directly from the lord and a concomitant rise in the number of tenements constituting an individual's landed estate. Most of the tenantry, even so, held their lands in one or in contiguous townships, the instances where land was held in townships at some distance apart reflecting, perhaps, a more ancient distribution of the commote's territorial resources.²⁷ But the commote was not entirely hermetically sealed from the rest of the lordship. By the fifteenth century, and even earlier, a number of Ruthin's burgesses were also owners of acres in Llannerch; conversely, Llannerch landowners were acquiring burgages and enjoying the privileges of the town while a few of the more prosperous families of the lordship were landowners in more than one commote.²⁸ There are signs that some of the commote's tenantry had experienced periods of considerable prosperity, undoubtedly aided by the thriving cloth industry for which the lordship and town of Ruthin were noted.²⁹ By the end of the fifteenth century Dyffryn Clwyd, including the commote of Llannerch, had been graced with a number of fine perpendicular churches, some rebuilt or refurbished at parishioners' expense, while the many well-built hall-houses of the region, several,

and 123 acres 'late' of Amory Marreys in the hands of Reginald Grey in 1483 (*ibid.*, fo. 106) and later of Thomas Middleton (SC2/224/4, mm. 11a, 11b). The subsidy assessment of 1543 confirms the predominance of tenants of modest wealth in both the parishes of Llanfair and Llanellidan (E179/220/166).

²⁷ Note e.g. the lands in Bacheirig and Ffynogion or Bacheirig, Caerfilo and Pwllcaloddr held by leading freemen associated with the township of Bacheirig in 1324 (Rental 1324, 31–2).

²⁸ A number can be identified in the Rental 1465 entered under the borough of Ruthin, e.g. John ap Gruffydd (Rental 1465, 19), Gruffydd ap Dafydd Winsley (*ibid.*, 22), Robin ap Ieuan ap Hywel (*ibid.*, 24), Jankyn Goch ap Cyn' (*ibid.*, 25). The celebrated Goodman family, represented in Dyffryn Clwyd in the early sixteenth century by Edward ap Thomas Edward *alias* Edward Goodman, described as 'mercerc of Ruthin' in 1522 (Denbighshire Archives, Wynnstay, DD/WY/6461) and active as purchaser of land in Llannerch in the 1520s and 1530s.

²⁹ The fortunes of the cloth industry are difficult to establish, even more so to relate to the issues discussed in this study; see R. Ian Jack, 'The cloth industry in medieval Ruthin', *TDHS*, 12 (1963), 10–25, who argues for a 'prosperous even expanding' industry in the late fifteenth century, *ibid.*, 22.

according to modern survey evidence, of fifteenth-century construction, likewise suggest the material well-being of at least some of the tenantry.³⁰ But the lordship was by no means immune to the economic stresses which afflicted many communities in England and Wales in the late Middle Ages, as the rolls of the late fourteenth century and those of the mid-fifteenth century amply reveal.

In contrast to the apparent continuities, for much of the period, in the number of tenants and the size of their holdings, the conditions of tenure and the modes of inheritance were of the utmost complexity and fluidity and, for the purposes of the present discussion, several significant developments deserve attention. In the first place, in the early fourteenth century the majority of the Greys' direct tenants enjoyed estates of inheritance. By the late fourteenth century and thereafter, by contrast, although many tenancies remained as estates of inheritance, seigniorial leases were being granted 'until (*quousque*) the right heir shall return' or 'until the right heir or anyone else shall offer an increase of rent', a consequence of a possibly considerable amount of escheated land, both bond land and free, which had accrued to the lord.³¹ The fate of such lands and the level of rent and entry fines which they could command are clearly sensitive barometers both of tenant demand for land and of seigniorial policy regarding the conditions of tenure. Equally significant was a second development, increasingly identifiable from the late fourteenth century onwards, namely the extension to the wider community of the conditions of English land tenure hitherto the preserve of privileged settler families of English extraction or of favoured Welsh tenants. The consequences were profound. Partibility among male heirs (collateral male heirs up to the second cousinhood being preferred to

³⁰ See e.g. SC2/224/1, mm. 9, 10 (1496–7), work on the parish church of Llanfair commissioned by the parishioners. Tŷ Coch in Llangynhafal (SJ129638), dendrodated to 1430 (a good example of a yeoman's dwelling) and Hengoed (1438) (SJ093585), references which I owe to the kindness of Richard Suggett. Among other examples are Hendre'rywydd Uchaf (SJ126636) c.1508 and Plas Uchaf, c.1500 (Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, SJ125527) associated with the Goodman family.

³¹ For the *quousque* lease, already in use in Dyffryn Clwyd in the early fourteenth century in relation to bond land, or when heirs had not yet laid claim to their inheritance, see e.g. Llan1/2050 (1331); Llan1/2526 (1334), but its development in the lordship requires further study; see below, p. 452. Cf. J. A. Tuck, 'Tenant farming and tenant farmers: the northern borders', in Edward Miller (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales: Volume III, 1348–1500* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 587–96 and sources cited there.

daughters, in the absence of lineal male heirs), the hallmark of Welsh tenure, was replaced, in such cases, by primogeniture; in the absence of lineal male heirs, heiresses supplanted the male collateral heirs of the Welsh inheritance system and dower rights were allowed; reliefs and entry fines, calculated on the number of acres and usually equal to the annual rent, took the place of the fixed fine at succession (*ebediw* or *gobrestyn*) paid by tenants by Welsh tenure, while land held in English tenure was normally alienable in contrast to the restrictions placed on the disposal of Welsh land. Although Welsh tenure was not obliterated at a stroke and tenants might continue to hold parts of their landed estates in either tenure, the possible implications of such changes for any assumed bond between a family and its land were far reaching indeed.³² One further development needs to be noted, that is the almost total disappearance of bond tenants in the commote, a process virtually, although not entirely, complete by the mid-fifteenth century. This study is therefore overwhelmingly concerned with the free tenants and tenements of the late Middle Ages, in all their social and economic gradations, a category for which many of the studies of English rural communities in the context of the land-family bond offer fewer insights than they do for land held by customary or copyhold tenure.³³

Many of the trends so far discussed only in broad outline can be identified more precisely through an analysis of the data which the court rolls provide for the period from 1345 to 1540. Despite the imperfections

³² For the English settlers, see A. D. M. Barrell and M. H. Brown, 'A settler community in post-conquest rural Wales: the English of Dyffryn Clwyd, 1294–1399', ante, 17 (1994–5), 332–55; Korngiebel, 'Colonial ethnic discrimination', 1–25; Stevens, above, n. 4, and below, pp. 440–1 and n. 42. There are numerous examples of tenants with some lands in Welsh and some in English tenure. Female heirs to Welsh tenures are encountered very occasionally (e.g. SC2/224/4, m. 10v (1507–8)). Transfer of dower land does not feature prominently, but for relatively rare exceptions see SC2/222/6, m. 28v (1459–60), SC2/224/9, m. 7 (1513–14). The writ of dower was available and used. For the abolition of 'gavelkynd or Welsh tenure' by Henry VII's charter in 1508, see *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1494–1509, pp. 586–7.

³³ See e.g. Llan5/1992 (1389) (petition presented by the bondmen of Llannerch noting the decline in their number because of the escheat of customary tenements or their transfer to free tenants). A marginal note in NLW MS 1593E i records Gruffydd Fychan ap Gruffydd, *nativus*, holding in Derwen 'in vylleynage' (ibid., p. 46). An important exception, dealing with free tenants in a period earlier than that of this study, is Phillipp R. Schofield, 'The market in free land on the estates of Bury St Edmunds, c. 1086–c.1300', in Feller and Wickham (eds), *Le Marché de la terre*, pp. 273–95.

and deficiencies of the records, they allow some estimates to be made of the ways in which land was transferred, the relative importance of inheritance and purchase, and also shed light on the periods when the discontinuities in the pattern of landholding seem especially significant. As is clearly revealed from the figures given in the Appendix, only rarely was inheritance the main agent of land transfer in Llannerch, the years of unusual mortality of 1349–50 and 1361–2, when transfers by inheritance stood at 78 per cent and 63 per cent respectively of all transfers, being exceptions to the trend. Indeed, only in 15 years out of a total of 94 years for which the data for Llannerch are complete, did transfers by inheritance attain the level of 50 per cent of land transfers, and were, almost invariably, substantially outnumbered by those made *ad opus*, by *prid*, into escheat or by grants out of escheat. Although the number of transfers *ad opus* and by *prid* vary considerably from year to year and few clear chronological trends can be identified, the second and third decades of the sixteenth century stand out as periods when an exceptionally high number of transfers, between 80 and 100 per cent of the total, were made in these ways. The *prid* deed, whose use in the commote can be documented as late as 1537–8, was likewise an agent through which land might change hands. Although strictly speaking a perpetual *vifgag*, redeemable by the *gagor* at specific intervals, land held in *prid* could be transferred to the *gag*ee as an estate in fee simple during the term of the covenant, thus effecting a permanent alienation of the land and examples of the conversion of an estate held in *prid* into an estate in fee simple do, occasionally, occur in the rolls. Small parcels – *quilllets* (*drylliau*), closes (*caeau*) – and occasionally entire tenements might change hands by means of *prid*, the device quite clearly a major means of effecting the transfer of land held by Welsh tenure in the commote.³⁴

Second in prominence in numerical terms, although one that often involved a greater acreage of land, was transfer by escheat. The effects of

³⁴ SC2/225/1, m. 8v (1537–8) is the latest example of its use in Llannerch that I have noticed, although there is a later example in Dogfeiling (SC2/225/2, m. 5 (1539–40)). For the conversion of an estate in *prid* into an estate in fee, see e.g. Llan5/11 (1376); SC2/221/13, m. 38; SC2/225/1, m. 8v; and Smith, ‘Gage and land market’, 544, n. 1. *Prid* land could remain in the hands of a *gag*ee for considerable periods of years, e.g. the tenement known as Dôl Einion leased in *prid* in 1482–3 (SC2/223/13, m. 11v) but remaining with the *gag*ee in 1507–8 (SC2/224/4, m. 10v).

escheat had already been witnessed during the aftermath of the conquest of 1282–3 and the rebellion of Madog ap Llywelyn in 1294–5, the main (although not the only) beneficiaries being the numerous English settlers whose landed endowments are clearly visible both in the survey of 1324 and in the court rolls.³⁵ But forfeitures or escheats continued to be noted in the court rolls in ensuing decades. Apart from forfeitures for failure of heirs within four degrees of consanguinity (in the case of Welsh tenures), or for felony or bastardy, which occur randomly throughout the period in question, several decades stand out as periods when the number of surrenders into escheat for ‘poverty’, for failure to pay rent or for abandonment seem especially acute and, moreover, were more likely to involve entire tenements and holdings than smaller parcels of land. Such was the case in the 1330s and 1340s when surrenders into escheat constituted a regular feature in the rolls, as was also the case in the last two decades of the fourteenth century when surrenders on account of poverty, or on account of departures from the commote, occur with considerable regularity. By the second and third decades of the fifteenth century the stock of escheated lands had increased quite considerably. Some of the escheats recorded in the court rolls in these years, it is true, referred to vacant tenements which had long been yielded up to the lord, some, so it was claimed, as many as forty years earlier.³⁶ Others were undoubtedly the result of the secession of tenants during the turbulence of the years when the Glyndŵr rebellion was at its height in the lordship.³⁷ Yet others resulted directly from the confiscation of the estates of identified rebels, for Glyndŵr had evidently commanded substantial support from the landowners of the commote, their names, some twenty or more, being recorded in the court rolls.³⁸

The development of seigniorial policy towards escheated land can be clearly traced in the court rolls. Although such lands had been converted to pasture or let at rent for cultivation in the years immediately following

³⁵ Above, n. 32; A. D. M. Barrell and R. R. Davies, ‘Land, lineage, and revolt in north-east Wales, 1243–1441: a case study’, *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 29 (1995), 27–51.

³⁶ There are many references to lands in escheat in the rolls of the period of plague, but many were later taken by the heirs. For a rare lease of escheated land for a term of years, see SC2/223/9, m. 10v (1474–5). There were at least 8 escheats in 1384–5 (Llan5) and 9 in the period from October to December 1390 (Database E) (years not included in Appendix).

³⁷ Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*, esp. pp. 266–8.

³⁸ Llan7/410 (1412); 1360 (1416); 1364 (1416).

the visitations of plague, by the end of the fourteenth century the lord and his officials were tending to favour their regrant to new tenants on a *quousque* lease, or, less frequently, as an estate in fee, normally granted if the land were claimed by the heir, or, albeit rarely, for the life of the grantee, or, an even rarer occurrence, an outright sale to a new tenant.³⁹ Existing tenants were often among the beneficiaries of the reconfiguration of landownership which ensued from the grant of escheated lands, but the advent of new men into the commote was also facilitated by the availability of escheated tenements. Between 1410 and 1418, for example, at least thirteen newcomers or *extranei*, mainly from neighbouring lordships, took up land in the commote, even if several failed to establish permanent roots, and newcomers continued to feature as takers of escheated land in the following decades.⁴⁰ Although opportunities for leasing escheated land had diminished by the turn of the sixteenth century, as the tempo of escheat slackened markedly in the period between *c.* 1485 and 1540 (very few or no escheats are recorded in the surviving rolls for the years between 1510 and 1540), the process of

³⁹ Database under 'Herbage' provides good evidence for the years 1359–61. Outright sale was more likely to occur when land was escheated because of a failure of heirs, although failure to pay rent (the writ *cessavit per biennium* operated in the lordship) also precipitated the sale of land; see e.g. Llan7/2278 (1421) (grant of land in fee), Llan7/2279 (1421) (purchase of land); SC2/222/5, m. 14 (1445–6) (purchase on account of failure of heirs in the third degree of consanguinity); SC2/223/9, m. 9 (1474–5) (purchase of land following failure to pay rent and the operation of *cessavit*). For a rare lease of escheated land for term of years see SC2/223/9, m. 10v (1474–5).

⁴⁰ *Extranei* are noted in Llan7 *passim* and later court rolls. Among identifiable 'new men' in the commote, Robert ap Gruffydd ab Adda, probably from the lordship of Chirk, acquired lands of John Spen in Llannerch in 1458 from Nicholas ap Gruffydd ap Rhys (SC2/222/6, mm. 9v, 25; SC2/223/1, m. 18); Thomas ap Ieuan ap Gruffydd *alias* Cyn' ap Ieuan ap Gruffydd de Yale (SC2/222/6, m. 30 (1452–3)) and Lewys Aled, who invested heavily in escheated lands in the commote (e.g. SC2/222/5, m. 5 (1442–3); SC12/24/1, fos 97, 114)), may have been active in the cloth trade (SC2/223/9, m. 10v (1474–5)) and held office. For his family connections see Cledwyn Fychan, 'Lewys Aled', *TDHS*, 26 (1977), 73–6, and *idem*, 'Tudur Aled: ailystyried ei gynfein', *National Library of Wales Journal* (hereafter *NLWJ*), 23 (1983), 45–74, although it is suggested there that his father [Dafydd] Mwyndeg may have migrated to the lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd (*ibid.*, 52–3). All three established long-standing families in the lordship; see below, n. 91. For valuable comparisons see Phillipp R. Schofield, 'Extranei and the market for customary land on a Westminster Abbey manor in the fifteenth century', *Agricultural History Review*, 49 (2001), 1–16.

escheat, by introducing new tenants to the land and by removing tenements from traditional forms of inheritance could, undoubtedly, undermine any familial attachment and encourage the development of a commercial attitude towards land.⁴¹

Three further arguments which also suggest the diminishing role of inheritance in the acquisition of land may be briefly addressed. First, from the evidence provided by the rental of 1483, a document which distinguishes between tenements acquired by inheritance and land acquired by other means, as many as 61 of the 140 tenants had no apparent familial connection with their lands, the court rolls revealing that the early decades of the fifteenth century formed an important hiatus in the tenurial history of many of the commote's holdings. It was in this period that several of the prominent Welsh dynasties of the fourteenth century apparently came to an end and when a number of settler families of English extraction, who had loomed large in the social and economic life of the commote in earlier decades, also disappear from the record.⁴² Second, as the survey of 1483 also reveals, out of the 140 or so recorded tenants (of whom 18 were women) at least eight had already secured a place on the property ladder while their fathers were alive. An especially vivid and revealing petition presented by Llywelyn ap Ieuan Wyn in 1458–9 neatly illustrates how sons and, albeit less frequently, daughters, were now quite clearly less dependent on the processes of inheritance to secure land. Describing himself as a 'young man late wedded and but little good hath as yet to begin the world with', he successfully asked for the escheated lands formerly of Alice de Colmin in the township of Euarth, just as Adda ap Gwilym Goch of the townships of Ardderchfa and Faenol had acquired his holdings several years before the death of his father in 1451.⁴³ Precisely how many of those who took up land in the commote had expectations of inheriting within the lordship or beyond it is impossible to judge. For some the decision to

⁴¹ SC2/224/5–SC2/225/3.

⁴² Barrell and Brown, 'Settler community', although a number of English families such as the Masons, Rowhills, Exmews, Butterleys and Winsleys survived for many decades. The association of tenement or field names with settler families is sometimes encountered, but requires further study.

⁴³ SC2/222/6, m. 25v (petition of Llywelyn ap Ieuan Wyn); SC2/221/13, mm. 19, 19v (1432–3) acquisition by Adda ap Gwilym Goch of lands in Ardderchfa; SC2/222/6, m. 5 (1451–2) succession to father's lands in Garthgynan; SC12/24/1, fo. 106, holdings in Ardderchfa and Faenol in 1483.

acquire land before the death of an ancestor may well have precipitated the rejection of a patrimonial estate when it became theirs to inherit. Finally, when a tenemental prosopography can be reconstructed, at least in part, the turnover of holdings among new, unrelated tenants is especially clear. The tenement of William Pill', identified in the survey of 1324 as land held by English tenure in the townships of Derwen and Euarth, was held by at least five unrelated tenants between his death in 1334 and 1442; the tenement known as Tir Flousyn, almost certainly to be identified as the land once of Ieuan Flousyn who held land in the 1340s, passed into the hands of at least three different and unrelated tenants in the first half of the fifteenth century, while Plas Watcyn in the township of Faenol, escheat by the felony of its heir in 1477, was transferred thrice in subsequent years to new tenants.⁴⁴ These are chance findings in the voluminous records, and, as we have already noted, it has not proved possible to undertake a systematic analysis of a significant number of named tenements and their devolution over time. But they confirm the impression of a society for which the dominant ethic was, indeed, that of supply and demand and where any notion of a 'familial attachment' to land was largely ignored.

The evidence presented so far suggests a society which paid scant regard to the importance of 'keeping land in the blood'. But the materials which support a contrary view need now to be examined in some detail. Of the tenants identified in the rental of 1483, over two-thirds, on the evidence of the survey itself or on closer inspection of information on successions provided by the court rolls, enjoyed a hereditary interest in at least part of their land, and, indeed, in a number of cases, familial continuity would persist into the ensuing decades. The later Henrician rental, despite the evidence it conveys that the link between several families and their land had come to an end in the preceding decades, nonetheless also shows a marked degree of familial continuity, nearly half of the tenants, at a conservative estimate, able legitimately to claim unbroken possession over several generations.⁴⁵ The generational depth of inheritance may be illustrated by a small but representative number of well-documented examples. The descendants of Dafydd Llwyd of

⁴⁴ Rental 1324, 37; Llan2/2178 (1349); Llan5/672 (1381); SC2/222/5, m. 3v (1442-3), tenement of Will' Pill; Llan2/610, 2105; SC2/222/6, m. 1 (1450-1), Tir Flousyn; SC2/223/14, m. 11v (1483-4); SC2/223/19, m. 9 (1491-2), Plas Watcyn.

⁴⁵ Based on an analysis of NLW MS 1393E i, pp. 33-62.

Bacheirig (*fl.*1324), numbered at least eleven adult and landholding males in 1483, and were represented also in the later Henrician survey, the importance of both lineal and collateral succession and the high degree of intra-familial land transfers being especially noteworthy in the history of this family.⁴⁶ Some of the lands of Jankyn Goch of Garthgynan, despite the apparent disappearance of his descendants in the sixteenth-century surveys, survived in his family through the female line, the holding of William Trevor in the right of his wife representing one of several examples where the continuity of family and land through inheritance by women can be securely documented.⁴⁷ Beyond the river Hespyn, in the townships of Ffynogion and Caerfilo, lay the inheritance of the descendants of Jankyn ap Bleddyn, whose two sons, Dafydd and Nicholas and their brothers, had partitioned their father's modest estate before 1450 and whose progeny are to be found on the same land almost a century later.⁴⁸ The tenement and 40 acres held by John ap Llywelyn ap Dafydd in Garthgynan were precisely those which his ancestor, Hywel de Rowhill, had acquired in 1397, while the long-standing connection of the Winsley family with some of their lands, a link whose beginnings may also be traced to the late fourteenth century, is evoked by the very name of their holding, known even in the reign of Elizabeth as Bryn Winsley.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Rental 1324, 31; SC12/24/1, fo. 89; NLW MS 1593E i, p. 34. For the genealogy, Peter C. Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies A.D. 300–1400* (Cardiff, 1974; hereafter *WGI*), II, p. 278 (Edwin 7); idem, *Welsh Genealogies A.D. 1400–1500* (Aberystwyth, 1983; hereafter *WGII*), IV, pp. 545–8 (Edwin 7); and Barrell, 'Clergy', 15–16. There are many examples of collateral inheritance among members of this family over several generations.

⁴⁷ NLW MS 1593E i, p. 33. The key court roll reference is SC2/224/15, m. 12v (1525–6) (surrender by Rhys ap Jankyn ap Llywelyn Fychan and his wife of land in Garthgynan to their daughter, Joanna, and her legitimate heirs by her husband, William Trevor).

⁴⁸ SC2/222/6, m. 5v (1451–2) (succession of Dafydd and Nicholas, sons of John ap Bleddyn to the lands of their two brothers) is a key reference, but transactions can be traced in succeeding court rolls and rentals. I have been unable to trace this family conclusively to a period before the early fifteenth century, and they may well have been of much earlier origin.

⁴⁹ E/1778 (1397) (grant by John le Sergeant of a messuage and 40 acres to Hywel de Rowhill of Ruthin, although the Rowhills were already landowners in Llannerch in 1324 (Rental 1324, 37; NLW MS 1593E i, p. 44 notes that the copy was given in 1397); SC2/225/12, m. 7 (1563–4) (Bryn Winsley held by Henry ap Morys ap Gruffydd ap Dafydd Winsley). Some of the lands held by Gruffydd ap Dafydd Winsley in 1483 and later by his son, Morys, had also been held by four or

Moreover, although the difficulty of linking a family with a particular tenement must be acknowledged, it has proved possible to do so in sufficient number as to suggest the importance of familial transmission over several generations, as some examples will illustrate. At least four generations of Exmews held the tenement once in the possession of Ieuan Fychan in Derwen-llannerch just as their kinsmen in Garthgynan, descendants in the female line of Amory Mason (*fl.c.*1390–1418), retained their hold of their ancestor's 33-acre holding over five generations.⁵⁰ Family continuity in the same holding can, likewise, be shown in the case of the descendants of Llywelyn Gethin (*fl.c.*1400), whose progeny, by the mid-sixteenth century also in the fifth generation, remained in possession of at least some of the lands acquired by their ancestor, just as the tenement of Llywelyn ab Einion ap Gwyn (d.1460–1) passed by hereditary right over four generations to his great-grandson, Rhys.⁵¹ Such instances, among many others, strongly suggest not only the survival of families or a generalized respect for the principles of inheritance, but a strong and persistent familial connection with a particular tenement or parcel of land.

These families are a small illustrative sample and one which could easily be augmented. Yet, they scarcely form a uniform group. They include families who held at least part of their inheritance in Welsh tenure, partitioning their lands over the generations between lineal and collateral heirs. But others were tenants by English tenure for whom impartibility was the norm.⁵² Within the group, as they emerge in the late

five generations of the family; see e.g. SC2/222/6, m. 30v (1460–1) and SC2/224/4, m. 2 (1506–7).

⁵⁰ NLW MS 1593E i, p. 54 notes that the lands were acquired in 1425–6 and 1427–8. The key references are SC2/223/16, m. 9 (succession of Thomas ap Nicholas Exmew); NLW MS 9090E, p. 58 (held by Dafydd ap John ap Thomas ap Nicholas [Exmew]); for the Mason lands see Llan7/1694 (1418) (inheritance by Thomas Mason); SC2/222/6, m. 27v (1459–60) inheritance by his daughter Janet, wife of John ap Edward Exmew; SC12/24/1, fo. 99 (some of the land leased in *prid* since 1452).

⁵¹ Llan7/295 (1411), SC2/225/5, m. 16 (1445–6), SC12/24/1, fo. 114, NLW MS 9090E, p. 63, NLW MS 1593E i, p. 59 (main references to Llywelyn Gethin and his descendants); SC2/222/6, m. 30v (1459–60), Rental 1465, 39, SC2/24/1, fo. 114, NLW MS 9090E, p. 63, SC2/224/22, m. 9 (1533–4) (main references to Llywelyn ab Einion ap Gwyn and his descendants). The inherited land was a messuage and 8½ acres.

⁵² There are no indications that copyholds for three lives were granted in Llannerch, in contrast to what has been found in sixteenth-century Glamorgan

fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century rentals, were several families akin to the 'dynastic families' described by historians of some English regions, whose landholding pedigree can, with confidence, be traced to the early fourteenth century and possibly even earlier.⁵³ But there were others whose time span of continuous ownership extended back only as far as the early fifteenth century, but who could, even so, claim uninterrupted possession over a century and more. A number of families held tenements whose ultimate origin in the family lay in escheat, while for others hereditary right over many generations provided the basis of their tenure. A broad spectrum of wealth and social position is also in evidence and, while many elite Welsh families are represented, privileged in terms of their status if not always by the possession of broad acres, there are among them also families, such as the descendants of Jankyn Goch of Garthgynan, who are more correctly described as prosperous yeomen while yet others correspond to the status of small peasant proprietors who formed the backbone of Llannerch society.⁵⁴

Nor was a tenacious adherence to family land the preserve of conservative backwoodsmen, clinging to the remnants of an outmoded and antiquated world. Although the township of Bacheirig, where the traditional practices of Welsh law are known to have flourished in the mid-fifteenth century, was the main base for the lands of the numerous descendants of the lineage of Dafydd Dinllaes, members of the family were prominent among the lordship's officials, profited from lucrative farms of seigniorial parks and the mills, and entered fully into the life of the borough by the purchase of urban property and by acquiring the privileges of the town.⁵⁵ Others, such as the Winsleys, the Exmews and

manors where they were an important element in maintaining stability (Griffiths, 'Manor court records', 60).

⁵³ For 'dynastic families', see Anne Mitson, 'The significance of kinship networks in the seventeenth century: south-west Nottinghamshire', in Charles Phythian-Adams (ed.), *Societies, Cultures and Kinship, 1580–1850* (Leicester, 1993), pp. 24–76.

⁵⁴ A descendant was described as 'yeoman' in an indictment for the murder of Nicholas Exmew, SC2/223/16, m. 10 (1485–6).

⁵⁵ For this lineage, see above, n. 46. The specimen plea of the Welsh plaint of *sarhad* in Aneurin Owen (ed.), *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Wales* (London, 1841), II, pp. 474–5, is located in Bacheirig. From among much evidence of the family's status in the commote and town over several generations, see Barrell, 'Clergy', 15; Llan7/849 (1414) (Ieuan ap Dafydd Ddu *de Ruthin*); SC2/223/10, m. 8 (1477–8) (John ap Dafydd ap Maredudd granted the farm of the park and demesne of Bathafarn); SC2/223/13, m. 2v (1481–2) (Gruffydd ap Dafydd ap Maredudd

the Rowhills were in origin urban families, often retaining their stake in the town, but whose attachment to their commotal estates was no different from that of their rural neighbours.⁵⁶ There is no clear single formula or common denominator which explains why families of such contrasting backgrounds, traditions and material standing were, nonetheless, united in their connection with family lands. They formed a solid core of stability within Llannerch over several decades, but it is the marked social diversity of the group that demands attention.

If, then, it is right to lay stress on the enduring connections of families with their lands, how may the numerical preponderance of transfers by *prid* and *ad opus* and the many transactions in escheated lands be explained? No one would seek to deny the existence of a market in land and the transfer of land between non-relatives in Llannerch from the mid-fourteenth century onwards. Even allowing for the under-enumeration of familial relationships in records of land transfers, a problem encountered even in a well documented archive such as the records of Llannerch, *inter vivos* transfers to kin (including pre-mortem transfers and entail provisions) accounted for only 25 per cent and 32 per cent of *ad opus* and *prid* transactions in, respectively, the years 1361–71 and 1393–9, although the percentage of such transactions had increased quite substantially by the early sixteenth century.⁵⁷ However, a number of caveats should be entered. If, for example, the focus is placed not on yearly or decennial statistics but on the behaviour of families over several generations, a very different perspective can be detected. A good illustrative, but by no means unrepresentative, example is provided by the descendants of Rhirid Ddu ap Gwyn ap Hywel who died in 1349, a lineage represented in 1540 by at least six descendants in the male line, thus affording an insight into the known land transactions of six or seven generations of the family. Taking all their known transactions together, some forty-two in all, thirteen constituted the acquisition of land by

allowed to purchase land in Ruthin and admitted into the franchise); he is addressed as mayor of Ruthin (*maer y dref*) in a *cywydd* by Tudur Aled (Bleddyn Owen Huws, *Detholiad o Gywyddau Gofyn a Diolch* (Caernarfon 1998), pp. 63–5, at line 21); SC2/221/5, m. 38 (1456–7) (Maredudd ap Ieuan Wyn, bailiff of Ruthin); SC2/224/7, m. 7 (1511–12) (John ap Gruffydd ap Ieuan Wyn ab Einion, bailiff of the commote).

⁵⁶ See above, p. 430 and n. 32.

⁵⁷ Based on analysis of the court rolls for these periods, Llan3/1718–Llan4/1803, E/369–2698 chosen for the completeness of the evidence.

inheritance, twenty represent land acquired by purchase, by *prid* or by a *quousque* lease, one was an exchange of land and one a conversion of land acquired by *prid* into full proprietary right. Of all the family's known sale transactions, a total of only eight in a period of some two hundred years, six were transactions effected between family members and a seventh the release of *prid* land back to its original proprietor. It would seem that, in the balance of successions and purchases as against sales, inheritance both lineal and collateral and acquisition far outweigh alienation and, indeed, when land *was* sold, the transactions were overwhelmingly familial in character.⁵⁸ This is a pattern easily replicated by other examples of long standing lineages and one which suggests that the lure of aggregates should not be allowed to obscure the modes of behaviour of individual families in the late Middle Ages, and statistics, of themselves, do not tell us all that it is necessary to know about attitudes towards land.

Two further points merit some detailed attention. The first relates to the character of the *prid* device. *Prid*, as several studies and the court rolls of Dyffryn Clwyd bear ample witness, was most certainly a device which facilitated the alienation of land, and the conversion of an estate held in *prid* into an estate in fee, as we have seen, is well documented.⁵⁹ But *prid* was also a protean device whose use in contexts other than the alienation of land can also be demonstrated. Deemed, in legal parlance, a chattel interest, land held in *prid* was devisable in a testator's will, thus allowing its tenant far more control over its disposition than was the case with land held in fee, which was not normally devisable by will. A *prid* transaction could also be used to provide a widow with land, as is evidenced by the *prid* negotiated between an heir and his mother, while similarly land might be granted in *prid* to the donor's son-in-law, thus, in effect, granting an estate in land to a daughter at marriage.⁶⁰ Moreover,

⁵⁸ The genealogy in *WGI*, III, p. 629 and *WGII*, VII, p. 1206, under Llywelyn Eudorchog, can now be amplified and corrected from the court rolls. Two members of the family, Madog ap Rhirid Ddu and Madog ap Madog ap Cyn' are known supporters of Glyndŵr and forfeited their lands. Descendants who remained in possession, according to the late Henrician rental, were Lewis ap Dafydd ap Gruffydd, *clericus* (NLW MS 1593E i, p. 49); Thomas ap Thomas ap Ieuan ap Gruffydd (*ibid.*, p. 50); Robert ap Rhys ap Dafydd in the right of his wife, Joanna Aspull, granddaughter of John ap Hywel (*ibid.*, p. 37).

⁵⁹ See above, n. 34.

⁶⁰ For *prid* as chattel interest, see e.g. SC2/218/10, m. 13 (1361–2), and Smith, 'Gage and the land market', 549; NLW, Wynnstey (1952 Deposit) 105/345 (bequest

prid was only rarely deployed to transfer entire tenements or inheritances. Of a total of over 180 known *prid* transactions executed in the period 1345–1540 in the commote, more than 80 per cent were concerned with the transfer of parcels, acres and pieces (*pecciae*), with the transfer of entire tenements (*tyddyn*) a much rarer occurrence.⁶¹ Nor was *prid* land invariably lost to the seller (the gator) or his descendants. On the contrary, the punctilious arrangements prescribed for redemption, the occasional marginal entry on a court roll or on the dorse of the *prid* deed itself marking the fact that the *prid* money had been repaid, suggests very strongly that an unquantifiable number of *prid* transactions were not envisaged as permanent alienations, a point which is also underscored in a number of cases where the devolution of a tenement or a named parcel of land can be traced. For instance, the land known as Cae Gronw Fychan which had been given in *prid* some time before 1368 by Ieuan ap Gruffydd ap Dafydd had evidently been redeemed by 1414, for in that year his son Einion was able to *prid* the same land to Maredudd ap Llywelyn Chwith, just as Cae mab teiliwr, leased in *prid* by Gruffydd Moel in 1376, was thus leased a second time to a new gagee in 1393.⁶² Examples such as these show that, alongside the widespread use of *prid* as a device to evade the restrictions placed by several seigniorial regimes on the alienation of land, part of its appeal lay in the flexibility which it afforded many Welsh families to realize the cash potential of their lands without losing their grip on their patrimonial inheritance.

Just as the implications of *prid* deserve a careful and critical consideration, so too does the fate of land and tenements surrendered into escheat. Although the turnover of escheated lands among the commote's tenants and, indeed, among outsiders, was undoubtedly a cardinal feature of land transfers throughout the fifteenth century, it can

of mortgaged land and annexed schedule of the land, albeit not specifically described as *prid*). For *prid* made to son-in-law, SC2/219/9, m. 25 (1372–3), SC2/222/6 m. 19 (1450–1). For evidence beyond Dyffryn Clwyd see e.g. NLW, E. Francis Davies, 119 (Edeirnon) and NLW, Llanfair and Brynodyn M1 (1365–6). Note that *prid* transactions in Dyffryn Clwyd by the 1390s were made to the grantee, his heirs and executors. I hope to discuss these issues on another occasion.

⁶¹ Based on analysis of the court rolls for these years.

⁶² See statute, above, n. 18; Llan 7/1497 (1417) (redemption money offered but refused); SC2/224/9, m. 7 (1513–14) (release of land previously given in *prid* by father back to the son and bearing the marginal *relaxatio le pride*); SC2/224/18, m. 8v (1528–9). For Cae Gronw Fychan, see Llan4/1052 (1368) and Llan7/816 (1414); and for Cae mab teiliwr, Llan 5/20 (1376), E/183 (1393).

also be shown that the rights of the original tenant or his heirs were by no means invariably extinguished. The process of escheat, for example, required the proclamation of forfeited land in the commote court on three separate occasions, so that the heirs might be given an opportunity to lay claim, while the *quousque* lease specifically allowed the tenant himself or his heirs to reclaim the land, provided the costs incurred by the incumbent tenant were repaid, and a number of heirs took full advantage of the right to reclaim their patrimony in this way. Indeed, even without such a clause, the claim of an heir might be successfully pressed. When, for example, the tenement of Hywel de Rowhill in Garthgynan, described in 1414 as having been ‘in escheat for ten years’ for failure to pay rent, was granted to Adam le Marreys, it was given ‘in fee and inheritance for ever’, to be held ‘for ever by ancient services due and accustomed’. Yet, the lands were later recovered by Nicholas de Rowhill, Hywel’s son, and remained to his heirs for a century and more. The lands of Ieuan Llwyd ap John, who inherited a substantial estate of 73 acres in the villis of Ardderchfa and Faenol in 1433, had likewise passed out of the hands of his descendants by 1483, according to the evidence of the rental of that year, but early sixteenth-century court rolls, nonetheless, reveal the family’s resumed possession.⁶³

Such instances, by no means unique in our dossier of evidence, not only highlight the insights which a relatively complete series of court rolls can provide, but also caution against a too ready assumption of discontinuities in family tenure when the surviving evidence is exiguous. Nor did the forfeiture of rebel lands always generate the tenurial holocaust that might be assumed. The descendants of several of the tenants who had died with Glyndŵr and whose lands had been forfeited were able to recover their patrimonial estates in the ensuing years, just as a number of escheated tenements which had lain in the lord’s hands for several years were eventually taken up by the heirs.⁶⁴ Moreover, despite

⁶³ Llan7/777 (1414), Llan7/812 (1414) (Rowhill). For reclaim of land, expenses being paid, see e.g. E/754 (1394). Ieuan Llwyd ap John inherited in 1432–3 (SC2/221/13, m. 22) from John ap Wilym ap Hik’ (SC2/221/13, m. 22). For the lands in 1483, SC12/24/1, fo. 106, and for their resumption by the family in 1509–10, SC2/224/5, m. 7, SC2/224/9, m. 7 (1513–14). They remained in the family, according to the Henrician rentals (NLW MSS 9090E, p. 60, 1593E i, p. 41), although another descendant of Ieuan Llwyd was admitted in 1532–3 and surrendered the land to Margaret Salesbury (SC2/224/21, m. 8B). See also below, p. 450.

⁶⁴ Llan7/329 (1411); Llan7/1364 (1416), lands of Thomas ap Iorwerth ap

the undoubted upheavals in land tenure generated by the years of rebellion and its aftermath, it is important to look beyond the turmoil of the early fifteenth century and to note the numerous cases where the continuity of family tenure was firmly established by the descendants of newcomers into the commote in these years. Even escheated lands, in theory leased 'until the right heir should claim' or 'until a better lease can be found', can be shown to have remained within the same family over several generations and, in fact, if not in law, became almost indistinguishable from estates of inheritance.⁶⁵ Taken together, the evidence strongly suggests an enduring consciousness of the importance of hereditary right. Challenged and assailed by the economic malaise of the late fourteenth century, the trauma of the Glyndŵr rebellion and the ensuing years of depression, inheritance remained in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries an important and valued medium for the acquisition of land. It would seem that the connection between a family and its land remained strong.⁶⁶

III

If, then, our analysis of the court rolls is correct, a study which demonstrates not only the disjunctions but also important and enduring continuities in landownership in Llannerch, how may the contrasting experiences be explained? The notion of a 'sentimental attachment' between a family and its lands is, so we are told, one that is shared by many societies. The 'rewards of immortality' which accrued from the certainty of generational transmission of land is a value described in many ethnographies of peasant societies, while among the elite, as the literature of late medieval Wales illustrates in abundance, land could

Llywelyn Gethin; Llan7/410 (1412), land of Madog ap Madog ap Cyn' forfeited but evidently recovered before 1457–8 (SC2/222/5, m. 23v); in 1483, Ieuan ap Gruffydd ap Madog [ap Madog] ap Cyn' was holding hereditary lands in Pwllcaloddr and the land of Ieuan Toppan granted to his father in 1419 (SC12/24/1, fo. 94, paying the same rent 19½d.); Llan7/700 (1414), Llan7/799 (1414), Llan7/814 (1414) (recovery of land given into escheat).

⁶⁵ Cf. the comments of Schofield and van Bavel, *Development of Leasehold*, p. 24. See SC2/222/6, m. 21v (1456–7) (grant of escheated tenement to the grantee and his heirs *tam creata quam creanda nec non et assignatis suis*).

⁶⁶ For regional contrasts in the extent of familial connections with land after rebellion, see Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*, pp. 316–18.

often represent a shared identity that linked the generations.⁶⁷ At the same time, many economic and social studies of specific localities have questioned, either implicitly or explicitly, whether attitudes towards land were indeed rigid, immutable cultural values cherished *in vacuo*. On the contrary, they were, it is argued, conditioned by numerous complex and sometimes competing influences. For one thing, a land market, as it is now understood, was integral not inimical to the peasant economy, the cyclical consumption and labour needs of peasant families, the credit structures of rural society, especially where land was offered as a security for loans, and periods of economic distress often promoting a traffic in land.⁶⁸ Seigniorial financial pressures in the form of high rents, entry fines and reliefs might generate a measure of tenant impoverishment, thus precipitating the sale or mortgage of land; but seigniorial tenurial restrictions, by limiting or prohibiting the alienation of holdings might, equally, provide an inhibiting force.⁶⁹ Proximity to urban or market centres could also encourage a view of land as a commodity to be purchased or sold, while families who engaged in industrial activities may have displayed much more volatile landholding histories than did their agricultural counterparts. Finally, demographic decline, if it created an abundance of land, might also compromise the role of inheritance as a means of access to land while conversely, a growing population might result in an enhanced emphasis on inherited right, although it is also claimed that engrossment, by concentrating tenements in the hands of a few, could also reduce the supply of land quite independently of demographic change.⁷⁰ In short, attitudes towards land were markedly

⁶⁷ Phrase from Liam Kennedy, 'Farm succession in modern Ireland: elements of a theory of inheritance', *EcHR*, 44 (1991), 478. But for the view that gentry in some English regions may have been far more pragmatic in their attitudes towards land see Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401–1499* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 244–62.

⁶⁸ Phillipp R. Schofield, 'Dearth, debt and the local land market in a late thirteenth-century village community', *Agricultural History Review*, 45 (1997), 1–17; Chris Briggs, 'Manor court procedures, debt litigation levels, and rural credit provision in England, c.1290–1380', *Law and History Review*, 24 (2006), 519–58.

⁶⁹ The 'economic' case is very strenuously argued by Whittle, 'Individualism and the family-land bond'.

⁷⁰ Eadem, 'Tenure and landholding in England 1440–1580: a crucial period for the development of agrarian capitalism?', in Bas J. P. van Bavel and Peter Hoppenbrouwers (eds), *Landholding and Land Transfer in the North Sea Area* (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 237–8.

aligned to the major trends in society and economy and these rather than any abstract notions of emotional bonds were the main influences that determined the extent of familial commitment to land.

Many of these considerations are relevant to our understanding of the issues surrounding families and their lands in Llannerch. Although a thorough study of the land market lies beyond the scope of the present article, it is clear that some of the agencies already noted as features of the land market of other localities can be identified and illustrated from the commote's archival sources. It is rare to find in the court rolls a clear indication of the circumstances which surrounded a purchase or sale but it is apparent that a small number of *ad opus* surrenders were generated by 'poverty', even though the character of that 'poverty' is never made clear.⁷¹ In other cases it is evident that a 'life-cycle' sale is being undertaken, as tenants, towards the end of their lives, prepared for retirement by disposing of part or all of their land.⁷² In a more substantial number of cases, the seller and often the purchaser were townspeople, or at least men and women who owned property in the town, who may well have regarded their commotal lands as marketable assets; a number of *prid* transactions, both those to which townspeople were a party as well as those negotiated between tenants of property in the commote, can be interpreted as mortgages intended to realize the capital that their land could provide.⁷³ One further and prominent feature of the landmarket in Llannerch is the sale of a woman's inheritance, or of land inherited through a woman, sales of this kind occurring with remarkable frequency throughout the period under review.⁷⁴ However, it would be wrong to

⁷¹ See e.g. Llan5/1233 (1384) which suggests an *ad opus* surrender, but most surrenders 'for poverty' were into escheat. Surrenders for 'great necessity and poverty' (*pro magna necessitate et paupertate*) are not uncommonly found in property deeds, e.g. NLW, Wigfair, 20, 276 (the lands of the bishopric of St Asaph in Llangernyw, Denbs.), NLW, Bronwydd 977 (1488–9) (lands held in Welsh tenure in Maenclochog, Pemsb.)

⁷² E.g. Llywelyn ap Rhys ap Iolyn, who died in 1495–6 (SC2/223/22, m. 7v) had, before his death, disposed of some or all of his assets. (SC2/223/21, mm. 8, 8v).

⁷³ Townspeople were just as active as disposers of rural property as they were purchasers, e.g. Thomas Gerves, surrender of Euarth lands into escheat in 1422–3 (SC2/221/13, m. 1v), although descendants retained urban property. For *prid* by townsmen to raise cash, see transactions of Robin ap Ieuan ap Hywel (Rental 1465, 24); SC2/222/6, mm. 2, 6v (1451–2); SC2/222/3, m. 7v (1461–2), with remaining lands inherited by his first cousin and surrendered into escheat (SC2/223/10, m. 9 (1477–8)).

⁷⁴ See e.g. SC2/221/13, m. 20v (1432–3) (sale of land of Tangwystl ferch Dafydd

place too much emphasis on the land market as the prime mover among the forces which loosened the bond between a family and its lands. Despite the continued readiness of the Greys and their royal successors to allow and to profit from the sale of licences to *prid*, and the marked increase in the number of tenants holding by English tenure during the course of the period, it is not a precipitate ‘take off’, but, rather, the consistent but relatively modest number of purchases and sales which deserves the greater attention.⁷⁵

Far more important than the land market as a solvent of any familial attachment to land in Llannerch was the volume of escheated land available for the taking. Indeed, if evidence of the lord’s involvement in the link between families and their lands is to be sought, it is in the process of escheat rather than his influence on the land market that it will be found. By the fifteenth century a substantial proportion of the tenements and parcels noted in the rolls as *ad opus* transfers may well have been properties which had once been escheated land, and escheated land, whether acquired by purchase from the lord or taken at a *quousque* lease, formed an important component of the holdings of those who held multiple tenements.⁷⁶ As has been noted already, escheat and its consequences are clearly illustrated in the court rolls, the rentals and in the few surviving account rolls of the period. From the late fourteenth century onwards, the four generation agnatic group, which in the preceding decades had safeguarded family lands from the threat of escheat, for reasons which are not entirely understood, was in severe decline, upwards of twelve inheritances held by Welsh tenure falling to the lord as escheats in Llannerch alone ‘for lack of heirs within four degrees of consanguinity’ to the deceased.⁷⁷ The final decades of the fourteenth century were also years when many tenements were abandoned and returned to the lord as escheats, and habits of work which had taken landed tenants as well as landless labourers out of the lordship as harvest workers or seasonal labourers may well have

by her son); SC2/222/5, m. 27 (1459–60) (sale of land inherited by Tanno ferch Ieuan Llwyd, wife of Dicws ap Ieuan ap Dafydd Gethin). A number of female inheritances, however, remained in the family (above, pp. 438–9).

⁷⁵ Licences to *prid* are a feature of the court rolls of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

⁷⁶ SC12/24/1; among examples of escheat land surrendered in an *ad opus* transaction are SC2/222/5, m. 15v (1454–5); SC2/223/13, m. 10v (1482–3).

⁷⁷ Based on the court rolls for 1390–c.1490.

translated into permanent departures in these years. This was certainly the case with Cecily and Agnes Passaunt whose tenement was given up into escheat in 1384, although they, like many others, had been indicted over several years 'for leaving the lordship to work elsewhere in breach of the statute'.⁷⁸ The precipitous slump experienced in many pastoral societies both in England and Wales in the 1430s and the following decades, compounded by the disturbed aftermath of the Glyndŵr rebellion, may well have persuaded many others to 'fly out of the country'.⁷⁹ Further indications of the number of vacant tenements and the ensuing glut of land are given by the many references in the court rolls to a landscape scarred by tenements described as 'overgrown by woods and thorns' or 'barren' (*debilis*), while seigniorial officials, administering a rent roll that was severely depleted, and confronted by a tenantry traumatized by recent rebellion, were obliged to offer substantial reductions of rent (as much as 50 per cent in several cases) and to waive the payment of entry fines to secure new tenants.⁸⁰ Despite strenuous seigniorial efforts to retain a stable tenantry on the land – Margaret de Lytham, for instance, who claimed her ancestral acres in 1413, was offered a very considerable reduction in rent on condition that she and her heirs would remain on the land – and, despite the few green shoots of recovery indicated by the few reversions granted and the small increases in rent occasionally achieved, it is evident that such adverse trends could not be resisted.⁸¹ The dominant economic conditions in Llannerch, from the late fourteenth century to the early decades of the sixteenth, were ones of an oversupply of land and a diminished population, two features which could loosen even if they did not entirely undermine any attachment to family land in the period.

⁷⁸ See Llan 5 and E *passim*; GC5/268 (1379–80), Llan5/1263 (1384) (Passaunts).

⁷⁹ John Hatcher, 'The great slump of the mid-fifteenth century', in Richard Britnell and John Hatcher (eds), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 237–73; SC2/222/5, m. 22 (1447–8); SC2/223/13, m. 11v (1482–3) (departures out of the *patria*).

⁸⁰ Llan4/1909 (1372); Llan5, *passim*; E, *passim*; Llan7/1516 (1417) (barren (*debilis*) lands); SC2/222/5, m. 32v (1448–9) (land in Llanelidan parish 'overgrown with woods and thorns').

⁸¹ Llan7, *passim* (reductions of rent); Llan7/537 (1413) (Margaret de Lytham, died 1448, lands inherited by son Richard (SC2/222/5, m. 29) and then daughter Jane (SC2/223/5, m. 7v (1465–6)). Reversions: SC2/221/13, m. 14 (1428–9); SC2/223/7, mm. 8, 8v (1469–70); SC2/223/9, m. 7 (1474–5).

With such formidable forces ranged against the enduring importance of hereditary right, a contrary case would seem difficult if not impossible to establish. Yet, as we have argued there remained in Llannerch a numerically significant number of families, drawn from a broad social spectrum, who formed a stable and established presence among the landholders of the commote, and why this was so also requires explanation. Some of the influences which served to encourage a rapid turnover of tenants and the dilution of any family sentiment towards land were also ones which promoted a settled and rooted population of landowners. For one thing, rights of escheat, embraced with alacrity by the lords of the conquest, when new tenants were plentiful and settlers in ready supply, may have been far less attractive to their fifteenth-century successors, confronted by a shortage of tenants and a diminishing rent roll. Although there are no indications that the Greys in the fifteenth century relinquished their right to escheat (forfeitures for felony or for failing to secure a licence to *prid* are noted in the court rolls of the period),⁸² in practice, the even tenor of inherited right afforded the lord no less than his numerous *propriarii* a notable measure of ordered succession and continuous possession, especially important within a community lately risen in rebellion. In the political and economic conditions which prevailed in the fifteenth century, lordship and inheritance were not inimical but complementary forces and, in this respect, the interests of lord and free tenant coalesced. By the same token, many new tenants of escheated lands were able to take full advantage of the lower rents and subdued competition that prevailed in the fifteenth century, retaining their properties over many generations and even transmitting their lands to their descendants, the 'better lease' for which seigniorial officials had hoped proving difficult to obtain.⁸³ Moreover, while seasonal migration undoubtedly left many tenements permanently abandoned, it is also the case that the search for wage labour which took many tenants beyond the bounds of the lordship

⁸² See e.g. SC2/221/13, m. 23 (1432–3) (forfeiture of land given in *prid* without licence); SC2/223/4, m. 9v (1464–5); SC2/223/11, m. 10 (1478–9) (felony).

⁸³ E.g. surrender by John ap Madog Newydd in 1461–2 of land in Faenol acquired on a *quousque* lease in 1442–3 to son John and his wife (SC2/222/5, m. 4v and SC2/223/3, m. 8). Elizabethan surveyors of several lordships in the march of Wales attributed the decline of fifteenth-century revenues to administrative duplicity and especially to the authority wielded by stewards, but subdued demand must have been at least partly responsible.

could also help to sustain and make viable the smaller farmsteads of the commote, as was demonstrably the case in the locality several centuries later, when peasant proprietors regularly engaged in harvest work elsewhere before returning to the later harvests of their own lands.⁸⁴ Yet, while the state of the Llannerch economy was undoubtedly a potent influence upon attitudes towards land, it scarcely provides a full explanation of the persistence of bonds between families and their holdings. If we are right in our emphasis on the permanence not only of families but also their enduring connection with particular holdings, then some place must be given to the cultural imperatives at work within Llannerch society. The value attached to both ancestry and place is most clearly expressed in the poetry of the period, but the conjunction of lineage and land is also evident in the genealogical literature which identifies several Llannerch families not only with their line of descent but also with the land which they occupied.⁸⁵ ‘Social relationships and strictly economic relationships’, it has been well said, ‘worked together . . . and we need to deal with both at once’.⁸⁶ Nowhere is this advice more fitting and relevant than in a study of family and land in late medieval Wales.

IV

This detailed study of the documentary sources available for the commote of Llannerch has revealed a late medieval society where inheritance retained a prominent role in providing access to land and where the association of families with particular holdings, however it may be explained, remained strong. But how representative of other communities in Wales was Llannerch? Indeed, to what extent were conditions in Llannerch consonant with those of the remaining rural commotes of the lordship? Only a thorough analysis of the surviving sources for Colion and Dogfeiling can answer the question beyond reasonable doubt, although a preliminary study of Dogfeiling has

⁸⁴ Hugh Evans, *Cwm Eithin* (Liverpool, 1931), p. 13; trans. E. Morgan Humphreys, *The Gorse Glen* (Liverpool, 1948), p. 16.

⁸⁵ Lineages are very commonly associated with a township and sometimes with a holding, e.g. NLW, Peniarth 176, *passim*; NLW, Peniarth 135, p. 111 notes associations with Plas Einion in Llanfair.

⁸⁶ Wickham, ‘Conclusions’, p. 641.

suggested that the commote's experiences did not differ significantly from those of Llannerch.⁸⁷ Even so, there were a number of characteristics of the lordship of Dyffryn Clwyd in its entirety which would counsel caution before our conclusions can be applied with complete confidence to other communities in late medieval Wales. In the first place, it may well be that in Dyffryn Clwyd the memory or rather the 'mythology' of disinheritance had deepened a consciousness across a broad swathe of society that land was a heritage to be nurtured and passed on to posterity.⁸⁸ It was also the case that the bonds of kinship in Dyffryn Clwyd were of impressive strength and enduring importance, even if, as studies of other societies have shown, kinship solidarities do not always translate into durable bonds between families and their lands.⁸⁹ More clearly demonstrable from the documentary evidence of Llannerch are two further and significant features of the history of landownership in the commote and lordship. The first is the prominence of the *quousque* lease as a major instrument in the leasing of land, and one which, in the economic conditions which prevailed for most of the fifteenth century, could transmute an uncertain tenure into a tenure in perpetuity. Although not unique to the lordship, its use in Dyffryn Clwyd contrasted with lordships, such as Denbigh, where, by the fourth decade of the fifteenth century, if not earlier, leases for finite terms were employed.⁹⁰ Finally, Llannerch, if not the entire lordship, was distinctive

⁸⁷ A preliminary analysis of the court rolls and rentals of the commote of Dogfeiling has not revealed a marked contrast with Llannerch, although in Dogfeiling engrossments, especially those of the Salesbury family, may have been earlier and greater than has been identified in Llannerch. Dogfeiling and Colion, however, deserve a more thorough analysis than I have been able to undertake.

⁸⁸ R. R. Davies, 'Colonial Wales', *PandP*, 65 (1974), 12.

⁸⁹ Cf. Robert A. Dodgshon, *From Chiefs to Landlords: Social and Economic Change in the Western Highlands and Islands c.1493–1820* (Edinburgh, 1998), p. 47; idem, "Pretense of blude" and "place of their dwelling"; the nature of highland clans, 1500–1745", in R. A. Houston and I. D. Whyte (eds), *Scottish Society 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 169–98, esp. pp. 182–3.

⁹⁰ For the *quousque* lease in Bromfield and Yale and Chirk, see respectively Rogers, 'Bromfield and Yale', 266–7 (referring to demesne); L. O. W. Smith, 'The lordships of Chirk and Oswestry, 1282–1415' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of London, 1970), 353–4; for leases in Denbigh, Owen, 'Lordship of Denbigh', esp. 257–64 (based on the Rental of 1437), although it is possible that lessees retained a familial connection with the land. For later developments in Denbigh, S. L. Adams, 'The Composition of 1564 and the Earl of Leicester's tenurial reformation in the lordship of Denbigh', *BBCS*, 26 (1974–6), 479–513, esp. 487–8. It is possible that leases were more common, and granted outside the courts in Dyffryn Clwyd, after

in the survival well into the sixteenth century of relatively small landed proprietors whose lands had not yet been subsumed into the estates of acquisitive indigenous families or by men from outside. Although the better lands of Llannerch were by no means unattractive to newcomers in the middle decades of the fifteenth century, such glimmerings of a heightened demand for land that is reflected in the advent of tenants such as Lewys Aled or Thomas ap Ieuan ap Gruffydd were not repeated for several decades thereafter. Llannerch lands, it is true, formed component parts of landed estates whose nuclei lay in other commotes of Dyffryn Clwyd, but the programmes of deliberate, sustained and permanent acquisition that transformed the tenurial landscapes of parts of the Conwy valley or of southern Merioneth were not as significant in Llannerch, nor was the commote a region of substantial and productive demesnes whose leases provided the basis for the consolidations achieved by emergent and wealthier peasant families in some of the richer manors of the south-east.⁹¹ Although the embryonic presence of larger landed estates can be identified by the mid-sixteenth century, it is the relatively late date of their development in Llannerch which is the more deserving of attention.⁹²

c.1538 when Walter Blunt was licensed to let lands in the lordship of Ruthin as well as the earldom of March (*Letters and Papers Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII*, xiii, pt 2 (1538), no. 734 (11), and Adams, 'Composition', 488), but activities in Ruthin were resisted by the steward, Robert Salesbury (E. A. Lewis and J. Conway Davies (eds), *Records of the Courts of Augmentations relating to Wales and Monmouthshire* (Cardiff, 1954), p. 71.

⁹¹ Cf. Angus J. L. Winchester, 'Wordsworth's "Pure Commonwealth": yeomen dynasties in the English Lake District c.1450–1750', *Armit Library Journal*, 1 (1998), 86–114. For Lewys Aled and Thomas ap Ieuan ap Gruffydd, see above, n. 40. It is significant that, although several of Lewys Aled's acquisitions are recorded in the rolls of the later fifteenth century, his landed estate in Llannerch as recorded in 1483 was almost precisely that of 1443–4: T. Jones Pierce, 'The Gafael in Bangor Manuscript 1939', *Medieval Welsh Society*, pp. 195–227 (Conwy valley); D. Huw Owen and J. Beverley Smith, 'Government and society 1283–1536', in J. Beverley Smith and Llinos Beverley Smith (eds), *History of Merioneth, Volume II: The Middle Ages* (Cardiff, 2001), pp. 110–115 (southern Merioneth); for some of the lordships and manors of the south-east, see R. R. Davies, 'The lordship of Ogmores', in T. B. Pugh (ed.), *Glamorgan County History, Volume III: The Middle Ages* (Cardiff, 1971), pp. 285–311; Senghennydd may provide a better analogy with Dyffryn Clwyd, J. Beverley Smith, 'The lordship of Senghennydd', in *ibid.*, pp. 311–31. Substantial amalgamations could, of course, result from opportune marriages, see e.g. Owen, 'Lordship of Denbigh', 273 and above, n. 7.

⁹² See e.g. NLW MS 1593E i, p. 34 (Gruffydd Lloyd ap John ap David, c.81

Yet, while acknowledging fully the many distinguishing features which we have identified in the commote, it seems unnecessary to dismiss the experience of Llannerch as wholly untypical of a wider Welsh rural society. For it may well be that what is distinctive to Llannerch, and, indeed, to the other commotes of Dyffryn Clwyd, is not the singularity of its landholding narrative but rather the uniqueness of its sources. In Dyffryn Clwyd the court rolls provide a well-nigh comprehensive portrayal of a tenantry of small or modest holdings of land, registering a wide range of land transactions before the steward. Through the prism of the court rolls they are presented to the investigator not only or indeed mainly as participants in a market in land, but as landed proprietors for whom succession to family holdings and a continuity of familial possession, as this study has attempted to show, was a central concern. By contrast, over wide areas of Wales, the estate collections upon which we depend for our understanding of changing patterns of landholding, and which have hitherto loomed large in modern analyses of late medieval rural society, reveal little more than transitory glimpses of this essential bedrock of Welsh medieval communities, portraying them rather as expropriated elements selling out to acquisitive gentry or prosperous yeomen, either to depart the land altogether or to succumb to a status of leaseholders.⁹³ With little to set beside the estate papers, ours may be a limited and perhaps a distorted estimate of the changes at work in society. The evidence presented in the court rolls of Dyffryn Clwyd may provide some corrective and suggest new avenues of enquiry for the investigator of a decisive, but still poorly understood, period of Welsh social history.

acres); *ibid.*, p. 38 (Hywel ap Gruffydd ap Dafydd ap Hywel, *c.*100 acres); *ibid.*, p. 47 (John ap Gruffydd ap Twna, *c.*57 acres).

⁹³ See e.g. the important studies cited above, n. 7.

APPENDIX: LAND TRANSFERS IN THE COMMOTE OF LLANNERCH 1345-1540

Year	No. of Courts	Inheritance			Surrenders			Into Escheat	From Escheat	Other	Total of all Transactions	% Inheritance	
		E	W	B	T	Ad Opus	P						T
1345-6	16	2		1	3	3		3	1		4	13	23.07
1347-8	15	3	2	5	8	1	4	5		1	1	15	53.30
1348-9	17	18	18	7	43	4	3	7	21			78	55.10
1349-50	16	9	14	2	25	6	1	7				32	78.00
1350-1	16	2	4	2	8	1	4	5	1	4	7	25	32.00
1355-6	16	1			1	4	2	6		2	3	13	7.69
1357-8	15	3	2		5	2	2	4				9	55.55
1359-60	16	1	2	1	4	3	1	4		2	1	12	33.33
1361-2	16	7	14	3	24	1	3	4	7	1	1	37	64.86
1362-3	17	2			2	2	3	5	2	2	1	12	16.66
1363-4	16	1	1	1	3	1	2	3	1	3		10	33.33
1364-5	16	1	5		6	6	1	7	4	5	1	23	26.00
1365-6	17	1	2	2	5	1	3	4		2	5	17	29.40
1366-7	16		2	1	3	6	2	8		2	1	16	18.70
1367-8	16	3	2		5	8	2	10		2		17	29.41
1368-9	16	2	1	1	4	2	4	6	2		1	15	26.66
1370-1	16			2	2	5	1	6				8	25.00
1372-3	16				1	5	2	7		1	2	11	9.09
1374-5	15	1	2	3	6	1	4	5		2	1	14	42.85
1375-6	16	2	1		3	4	4	8		2		13	23.07
1376-7	15	1		1	2	5	5	10				12	16.66
1379-80	16	3	1		4	3	2	5				9	44.44
1380-1	16	3		1	4	10	2	12	2	1	2	21	19.04

Year	No. of Courts	Inheritance			Surrenders			Into Escheat		From Escheat		Other	Total of all Transactions	% Inheritance
		E	W	B	T	Ad Opus	P	T	Q	Fee				
1383-4	16				0	2	4	6	2	1	8		17	0.00
1393-4	15	2	1		3	3	2	5	3	1	1		13	23.07
1394-5	13	1			1	7	1	8	1	1	2	1	14	7.14
1395-6	15			1	1	6	4	10			3		14	7.14
1396-7	17	2	3	1	6	3	1	4					10	60.00
1397-8	16	7			7	2	2	2	2		1		12	58.30
1398-9	17	5			5	5	5	5			2		12	41.60
1410-11	16	3			3	1		1			7		11	27.27
1411-12	16	4	5		9						3	2	16	56.25
1412-13	17	1			1						5	1	7	14.28
1413-14	15	2	1		3						18	14	43	6.97
1414-15	16	2	1		3	2	1	3			7	4	19	15.78
1415-16	17				0	2	1	3	2	5	2		12	0.00
1416-17	16				0	1	1	2	1	13	3	1	20	0.00
1417-18	17	2	1		3	1		1	2	6	1		13	23.07
1418-19	16				0	1		1	1	7	1	1	11	0.00
1419-20	14				0				8	4	1	1	14	0.00
1420-1	17	2	1		3	1		1	2	2	1		9	33.33
1421-2	16	1	2		3		1	1	2	1	2		9	33.33
1442-3	17	2	2		4	1	1	2	1	8	1	1	17	23.50
1443-4	17	1	1		2	2	1	3	3			1	9	22.20
1444-5	17	1	1	1	3	1	1	2		1	1		7	42.85
1445-6	17		1		1	3	2	5		1	1		8	12.50
1446-7	17	2	1		3	1	2	3					6	50.00
1447-8	17	1			1	1	1	2		1	1	2	7	14.28

1450-1	17	5	1		6	2	1	3	3		3		15	40.00
1451-2	17	2	2		4	1	5	6	2	2			14	28.57
1452-3	17	2			2	3	1	4	7		4		17	11.76
1453-4	17	1	2		3	3	4	7	3	1	2		16	18.75
1457-8	16	1	1		2		1	1		1			4	50.00
1458-9	17	1	1		1	2	1	3	1	1			6	16.66
1459-60	17	1			1	5	1	6	4	2	1		10	10.00
1460-1	17	2			2	4		4			1		7	28.57
1461-2	17	1	1		2	5	5	10	2				14	14.28
1464-5	17	2	4		6	1	1	2		3	2		13	46.15
1468-9	17		1		1			0			1		2	50.00
1469-70	17	1	1		1	1	1	2					5	20.00
1474-5	17	1			1		1	1		3	1	1	7	14.28
1477-8	17	1	1		1	1	1	2	3	2	2		10	10.00
1478-9	17	2	1		3	1	1	2	8	3	6	2	24	12.50
1480-1	17		1	1	2	1		1					3	66.66
1482-3	17				0	2	3	5		1			6	0.00
1484-5	15	3	1		4	3	4	7		1	1	3	16	25.00
1485-6	9	2			2	3	2	5			2		9	22.22
1489-90	17	1			1	1	1	2		1	1		5	20.00
1490-1	17	1	2		3	2		2				2	7	42.85
1491-2	17	2			2	1	2	3					5	40.00
1495-6	17	2	1		3	1	1	2	1				6	50.00
1496-7	17	1	2		3	3		3			1	1	8	37.50
1504-5	15	9			9	4	2	6			1		16	56.25
1506-7	15	2			2	5	2	7		2	1		12	16.66
1507-8	15	2	1		3	3	2	5		1			9	33.33
1509-10	16	4			4	3	1	4					8	50.00
1510-11	15	3			3	3	2	5		1			9	33.33

Year	No. of Courts	Inheritance			Surrenders			Into Escheat	From Escheat		Other	Total of all Transactions	% Inheritance
		E	W	B	T	Ad Opus	P		T	Q			
1511-12	12	4			4	6	1	7				11	36.36
1513-14	14	5			5	8	2	10		1	2	18	27.77
1516-17	15	2			2	7	4	11		1		14	14.28
1518-19	14	1			1	8	2	10				11	9.09
1526-7	16	4			4	23	1	24			1	28	14.28
1531-2	11	3			3	3	1	4				7	42.85
1532-3	15	2			2	14		14				16	12.50
1533-4	15				0	11		11				11	0.00
1537-8	14	1			1	12	2	14				15	6.66
1539-40	12				0	7		7			1	8	0.00

Key

E = English tenure

W = Welsh tenure

B = Bond tenure

P = Prid

Q = Quousque lease

T = Total