NORTH WEST WALES DENDROCHRONOLOGY PROJECT

DATING OLD WELSH HOUSES - ANGLESEY

GRONANT

Llanfachraeth, Anglesey

SH 327 852

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SUMMARY OF HOUSE HISTORY

The history of Gronant, Llanfachraeth is in many ways the history of one family. The Gronant Bulkeleys were a cadet branch of the powerful Bulkeleys of Baron Hill, Beaumaris which was itself an offshoot of a large and influential family in Cheadle, Cheshire.

The first of the Gronant Bulkleys, Robert, was the grandson of William Buckeley, the Constable of Beaumaris Castle. He like many of his kindred was to emulate his grandfather by marrying into an established, and land owning, Welsh family. His wife, Sioned, the daughter of Morys ap Rhys of Plas-yn-Glyn Llanfwrog could trace her ancestry back to one of the major tribes of North Wales, that of Hwfa ap Cynddelw. The lands associated with Gronant were probably part of Sioned’s inheritance. The ‘dendro’ dating of the timbers in the older of the two Gronant properties to circa 1540 would suggest the construction of a ‘new’ house there during the early years of their marriage. A second house was built by their grandson, another Robert, circa 1618/19 as attested by other recent ‘dendro’ results. Both were substantial properties – as befitting a family of some status. There were wall paintings – more have just been discovered.

There were eleven generations of Gronant Bulkeleys spanning a period of more than 300 years. Whilst little is known of their activities during this period they were clearly an influential family. Two of them became High Sheriffs of Anglesey – the first Robert in 1557 and his g-g-g-g-grandson, another Robert, in 1734. They were also substantial landowners – owning farms in at least four parishes. There is however no extant documentation recording whether or not they may well have bought and sold other lands over the centuries so as to consolidate or extend their holdings.

The ‘last’ of the Bulkeleys sold Gronant in 1888. Since then ownership – both of the house(s) and especially the ‘lands of Gronant’ – has changed a number of times.
It has been possible to trace all the families and tenants who lived at Gronant, Llanfachraeth from the present day right back to the mid 16th Century. For over 300 years the house was in the ownership of one family - the Bulkeleys. They were an offshoot of the main Bulkeley Family of Baron Hill, Beaumaris. JE Griffith’s Pedigrees of Anglesey & Carnarvonshire Families shows the pedigrees of most of the “Bulkeley” families including, at page 121, that of the Gronant Bulkeleys.

Prior to their arrival in Llanfachraeth the two generations of ‘Anglesey Bulkeleys’ were:

**William Bulkeley**, of Cheadle, Constable of Beaumaris Castle 1440; died 1480; married Ellin, daughter of Gwilm ap Griffith of Penrhyn. (See Pedigrees p 42)

**Rowland Bulkeley**, Constable of Beaumaris Castle, 1492; will dated 1537; married Alice, daughter of Sir William Berkinshall, of co Lancaster; had nine children. (See Pedigrees p 42)

It was **Robert** one of the sons of Rowland Bulkeley who is to be found in the earliest records that can be related to Gronant. These date from 1544 / 45. The NWW Dendrochronology Project has successfully dated timbers at Gronant from this period.

**Circa 1540** LLANFACHRAETH, Gronant (SH 327 851) (a) South-east wing

**Felling date range:** circa 1540 (a) Axial beam 1538(23°C); Mantelbeam 1519(9);

A complex of unit-system type with the principal house in its present form of ‘Snowdonian’ type and the secondary house (‘kitchen’) of hearth-passage type. The secondary house has retained period features include a post-and-panel partition, wall paintings, and a diagonally-set chimney.

The more modernised principal house (which requires further investigation) was shown to be the earlier unit apparently belonging to the first generation of storeyed houses of Snowdonian type. A detailed survey (2010) commissioned by NWWDP is deposited in the NMRW. (Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory report 2010)

Listed chronologically below are several references found to eleven generations of Bulkeleys at Gronant. These are followed by references (including full census returns from 1841 through to 1911) to all the owners and tenants who succeeded them there.

**1544 Talybolion Hundred Subsidy Roll 35 Henry VII** Robert Bulkeley named (£30, 20/-)

[Note that all Subsidy Roll etc. references are in Bangor MS 12052]

Note also that the first reference which names the property does not occur until 1597.]

**1544/5** The will of Rowland Bulkeley made on the 16th February 1544/45.

The catalogue notes on this document (Bangor Archives, Baron Hill 7) written by the then archivist, Thomas Richards, suggests that the will’s contents ‘point to’ a prosperous merchant of London although all the witnesses (except one William Bulkeley, possibly the ancestor of the Porthamel branch, and his brother) have Welsh names viz: Christopher James, (Priest Curate, Beaumaris), Lewis ap Ieuan ap Rees; Richard ap Einion; Richard ap John ap Robert , alias Richard Tailor. The will was proved in London 28th March 1545/46

Amongst the bequests in the will are:

  * to my brother Robert a black furred gown and my satin robe

**1546 A Benevolence Roll 37 Henry VII** Robert Bulkeley 12/8

**1547 Talybolion Subsidy Roll 1 Edward vi** Robert Bulkeley (£9, 13/-)
1547/8 Robert Bulkeley. Release of a quitclaim of lands. (Bangor Archives, Baron Hill 1429)

Release & quit claim dated 10th March 1547/48 by Robert Bulkeley son of Roland Bulkeley Esq. to Sir Richard Bulkeley of his right & title to lands and tenements in the townships of Llandyfrydog, Llaneilian, Llanfechell and Cemlyn

Robert Bulkeley I of GRONANT (fl. c.1530-1557), was High Sheriff of Anglesey in 1557. At a date unknown – but perhaps in or shortly before 1540 – he married Sioned, daughter of Morys ap Rhys ap Hywel y Farf of Plas-yn-Glyn, Llanfwrog. (Griffith, Pedigrees, p. 108).

His brother Arthur Bulkeley, Bishop of Bangor, died in 1552. (Griffith, Pedigrees, p. 121).

Sioned was one of four recorded children of Morys ap Rhys of Llanfwrog and his wife Marsli ferch Gruffudd ap Madog Fychan ab Ieuan. Morys belonged to a cadet branch of the Treiorwerth family – itself part of the clan of Hwna ap Cynddelw, whose kindred held a large cluster of properties surrounding Gronant and which included the families of Lewis of Presaddfed, Williams of Llynnon, and Griffith of Penhesgin (Griffith, Pedigrees, pp. 5, 34, 108). Although there is no supporting documentary evidence, it seems probable to the verge of certainty that the lands which were to form the nucleus of the Gronant estate were Sioned’s marriage portion or inheritance; and this may have included a building or buildings, on the footprint of which the later house was constructed.

(Pers. Comm Dr David Williams)

Robert and Sioned had at least three children: i) Thomas Bulkeley, the heir; ii) Richard Bulkeley, Rector of Llanfachraeth (installed June 18, 1566; died 1605); and iii) Elin, wife successively of John Griffith (III) of Llanddyfnan and of Edward Wynn of Bodewryd (died 1 March 1596). (Griffith, Pedigrees, pp. 14, 108, 118)

How Gronant was acquired by the Llanfwrog family must remain a matter of conjecture, since there is no known documentary evidence from which to construct its early history. It may have been the marriage portion or inheritance of one of Sioned’s immediate female ancestors – perhaps her mother Marsli or her grandmother Catrin ferch Maredudd ap Rhys ap Ifan Llwyd, wife of Rhys ap Hywel Y Farf of Llanfwrog – about whom we know very little. Alternatively, it could originally have been part of Gafael Llwarch – kindred lands belonging to descendants of Llywarch ap Bran – and possibly brought to the Treiorwerth-Llanfwrog family by the marriage of Mallt ferch Gruffudd ap Dafydd Llwyd with Sioned’s great-great-grandfather Llywelyn ap Hywel of Treiorwerth in Bodedern (Griffith, Pedigrees, p. 34, 390). The nearby property of Trelywarch lies in the same parish of Llanfachraeth, which perhaps lends support to the conjecture that Gronant and other lands in the parish once formed part of Gafael Llwarch. (Pers. Comm Dr David Williams)

A reasonable hypothesis is that the 1540 dendro dates for the farmhouse beams represent the arrival of the first Bulkeley at Gronant. As he was High Sheriff in 1557, 1540 would be a quite acceptable date for Robert Bulkeley to build a new house at Gronant.

By June 1566 the Rev Richard Bulkeley, younger son of the Bulkeleys of Gronant, was inducted into the living at Llanfachraeth. He was educated for the church at Christchurch, Oxford & he was later chaplain to Bishop Theophilus Field at Llandaff. He purchased Dronwy from William Lewis of Presaddfed and founded a separate branch of the Bulkeleys at Dronwy. (Bangor, Penrhos Vols 1, 2 and notes in the Presaddfed Catalogue introduction, Bangor)). In 1560 Richard Bulkeley is made a deacon; in 1556 he appears as deacon in Llanfachraeth with his father Robert as one of his patrons (there was no bishop at the time). In 1567 Bishop Nicholas Robynson ordains him, but he is still described as a deacon. He is always referred to afterwards as the Rector of Llanfachraeth.

Two significant points emerge. One is that Robert Bulkeley was pushing hard to get his (younger) son a convenient situation in the church. The other is that Richard was old enough to be a deacon by 1560. This suggests that Robert Bulkeley was married and at Gronant certainly by 1540, if not a few years before. This strengthens the case for linking the 1540 dendrochronology date in the “farmhouse” with a building by Robert Bulkeley.

1563 Subsidy Roll 5 Eliz I Robert Bulkeley (20/-, 4/-)
1568, 16 Sept: Indenture between Robert Bulkeley, Gronant, (father), and Richard Bulkeley, parson of Llanfachraeth (son), straightening out money affairs in completion of articles of agreement previously drawn up. First witness is Parson Thomas Bulkeley, rector of Llanddeusant (1543-1570) who signs with a somewhat infirm hand. (Bangor University, Presaddfed 9)

1573 Subsidy Roll 15 Eliz 1 Robert Bulkeley (40/-, 5/4)

Pre 1584: death of Robert Bulkeley. (when Thomas Bulkeley of Gronant was administrator of his father estate)

1584, 25 Sept: Award by the 3rd Sir Richard Bulkeley upon certain matters at variance between two brothers: Thomas Bulkeley of Gronant and Richard Bulkeley of Dronwy, the Rector, as administrators of their father’s estate. (Bangor, Presaddfed 34)

1584. Nov. 21. Edward ap Hugh Gwyn, of Llanbeder, in the commote of Tyndaythwy, gent.; Thomas Bulkley, of Gronant, gent. LEASE of Kerrik Camog in Bodegri Rydd. Annual rent 40s., discharge of 2s. payable to Bishop of Bangor, two capons and a goose at Christmas. (NLW, Carreglwyd and Wynne-Bodewryd) D Longley

Thomas Bulkeley married Elizabeth, daughter of Owen ap John ap Rhys of Trefeillir. They had one son, Robert, and two daughters. (Pedigrees p 121,) (Also named as Elin & Sioned by Lewis Dwnn)

1586 Subsidy Roll 28 Eliz 1 Robert (sic) Bulkeley (£4, 10/8)

1597 Subsidy Roll 39 Eliz 1 Thomas Bulkeley de Gronant (40/-, 8/-)

NOTE : this is the first reference to Gronant in the Rolls

1598, Oct. 15 1 Thomas Buckley of Gronant, co. Anglesey, gent. 2 Hugh Rowland ap Ieuan of Caernethor, in the said county, gent. Grant of one tenement of land in the township of Caynethor, co. Anglesey. (NLW, Carreglwyd and Wynne-Bodewryd) D Longley

1599 Subsidy Roll 41 Eliz 1 Thomas Bulkeley de Gronant (40/-, 8/-)
1600 Subsidy Roll 40 Eliz 1 Thomas Bulkeley de Gronant (40/-, 8/-)

1606 Anglesey Freeholders Thomas Bulkeley of Gronant, Gent (Nat. Library of Wales Ms 9083)

1606, May 17 1 Thomas Bulkley of Gronant, in the commote of Talbolion, co. Anglesey, gent. 2 Llewelyn ap Thomas ap David Acquittance and Discharge of all title and claim in lands in Caernethor. (NLW, Carreglwyd and Wynne-Bodewryd) D Longley

1608, 2 Dec: Assignment of lease – in Bottan – part of His Majesty’s land. *Original lease from the Exchequer dated 9 Dec 1594. No witness to a previous assignment of the same premises, to all appearances to Thomas Bulkeley of Gronant, brother of the Rector, 10 Dec 1606. Thomas signs with a shaky hand. (Bangor, Presaddfed 123)

[*This document might indicate the land holding was held by the Gronant Bulkeleys. See also the 1680 will of Edward Bulkeley below.]

1608: Probable date of death of Thomas Bulkeley. (Pedigrees p 121 & Lewis Dwnn)

1608-1613: Earliest Gronant Pedigree

Lewys Dwnn (c.1550-1616), was appointed Deputy Herald to Queen Elizabeth the 1st in 1585 and his task was to travel around Wales recording family pedigrees. His work was published in two large volumes, Heraldic Visitations of Wales, by Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick in 1846. Page 93 of Vol. 2 contains the earliest known pedigree of the Gronant Bulkeleys - just three generations long. The wording is detailed below:
Robert Bwckley o Ronant married Sioned v: Morys ap Rhys ap Howel y varv. Ai mam oedd Marsli v: Gruf a ap Howel ap Madog vychan. Mam Morys ap Rhys oedd chwaer Mredydd ab Ivan ab Rhobert. Three children listed – Thomas, Risiart and Elin:

Thomas Bwckley o Ronant married Elsbeth v: Owen ap Sion ap Rhys o Drev: Veilir. Their children were

Robert Bwckley married (un-named ) v: Humph Meredydd o Glynnog; Elin married John Parri ap Sion and Sioned

The footnotes to this pedigree note that the first Robert Bwckley was Sheriff of Anglesey in 1557 and that Thomas’s wife was named Catherine.

There is also an enigmatic date - 1608 - attached to the name of Thomas Bwckley which has been taken by JE Griffith (Pedigrees) and others to refer to his date of death.

1613, 29 Sept: Release by Robert Bulkeley (II) of Gronant in trust to Humphrey Johnes and Edward Owen, of the capital messuage of Gronant, and a long list of tenements. (most interesting because almost all the holdings are called after their present or former undertenants); the uses of the trust are not specified but are declared to “be parte of the performance and accomplishment of certain covenants and agreements of equal date contained in a pair of indentures made between Bulkeley and Humphrey Meredith of Mynachdy Gwyn near Clynnog. Meredith was his father in law, and Humphrey Jones, later to become a Baron of the Exchequer, his brother in law; the whole transaction seems to be part of a marriage settlement with the usual provision for jointure and succession. (Bangor, Plas Coch 190)

c1613: Robert Bulkeley II married Catherine (1597-1666), daughter of Humphrey Meredydd & his first wife, of Mynachdy Gwyn. They had one named child, John.

[According to Griffith’s Pedigrees Page 206 for Mynachdy, Catherine outlived her husband. She then married Rowland Owen of Llanfwrog and was interred at Llansadwrn following her death, age 69, on 2 August 1666.]

The dendro dates for the ‘manor house’, 1618/19 indicate that it was probably built by Robert Bulkeley II, grandson of the first Gronant Bulkeley. This Robert made a very good marriage. His wife Catherine, daughter of Humphrey Meredydd of Monachdy Gwyn, Clynnog and Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Madryn, Madryn was thus the daughter of two substantial Caernarfonshire gentry families. The Gronant manor house has features unlike anything else in Anglesey. It is more like a Caernarfonshire house. It could therefore have been part of the marriage settlement of Robert and Catherine and the Caernarfonshire features were due to the influence and/or input of Catherine's parents. Catherine was 21 in 1618/19.
1623 no reference to Gronant but Dronwy Bulkeley listed (Taxation Roll 20 James 1)

1625 Robert Bulkeley (20/-, 4/-) (Subsidy Roll 22 James 1)

1628 Robert Bulkeley Gronant (20/-, 4/-) (Subsidy Roll 3 Charles 1)

1626: Llanfachraeth Church
The RCAHM Survey for Anglesey conducted in 1937 notes that “inside the church are three panels from a 17th century pew each with a coat of arms in relief (1) [Sable] a chevron between three bull’s heads [argent] (Bulkeley) dated 1626” – this panel is now to be found mounted on the wall to the left of the altar. It is inscribed Robert Bulkeley Esq. of Gronant 1626

c1628: Escheat lands in Bottan survey – shares held by Robert Bulkeley of Gronant, Robert Bulkeley of Dronwy and one other. (Bangor, Presaddfed 158/159)

1629 Subsidy Roll 4 Charles 1 Robert Bulkeley Gronant (20/-, 4/-)

1632 Subsidy Roll 7 Charles 1 Robert Bulkeley Gronant (20/-, 4/-)

1632-36:

1632 Oct 14 I sent to Gronant 3s 4d rent (p 82)

1633 May 21 burial of Edw son coz Rob(ert) Bul(keley) gro(nant). (p96)  
May 29 a.m. I went to Gronant with Mr Owen to comfort unckle Robt Bul(keley) for the death of his wife. (p96) ††

May 31 burial of of Robt Bulk(ley), gro(nant) ’s wife. (p96) ††

Dec 15 evening I was at gronant ye old woman being dead. (p110) *

Dec 18 burial of Robt Bul(keley), gro(nant), his mother. I dined at gro(nant) (p110)

1634 June 21 a.m. I & fr Jo Llo rid to Gronant to take my farewell of coz Thomas Bulkeley being bound for Oxford (p 122)

Aug 5 Llanfachraeth – where Robt Bulk(eley) showed a feoffment(p 125)

1636 Jan 6 a.m. I was at Gro(nant) (p 160)

(Notes from “The Diary of Bulkeley of Dronwy, Anglesey 1630-1636”; as transcribed in the 1937 Anglesey Antiquarian Society (AAS) Transactions)

Was Edward who died in 1633, a son of Robert Bulkeley not listed in Griffith’s Pedigrees p 121? †† Who was the wife of Robert Bulkeley of Gronant who died in May 1633, possibly after the birth of Edward, or after an infection killed both of them? †† She is not named in the diaries. Note that these references to the death of Robert Bulkeley II’s wife is at variance with the information given in Pedigrees P.206 which states that Catherine remarried following his death with Rowland Owen of Llanfwrog and was buried at Llansadwrn in August 1666

* Robert Bulkeley’s mother, Elizabeth vch Owen ap Rhys of Trefeilir, must have been a great age if she died in December 1633.

1642 Subsidy Roll 17 Charles 1 Robert Bulkeley Gronant (20/-, 4/-)

Robert Bulkeley II’s only son and heir John Bulkeley married Mary Parry, daughter of Edward Parry, D.D., Bishop of Killaloe in Ireland. Mary’s grandfather’s brother, John Parry of Madyn Dyswy, Amlwch, had married Ellin, daughter of Thomas Bulkeley, Gronant. (Pedigrees p 120)

John Bulkeley and Mary had 5 children:
Robert (died an infant); the heir, Edward; John, in Holy Orders, in Ireland; and two daughters who both married in Ireland. (Griffith, Pedigree p 121)

The only reference so far found that could be to John Bulkeley is that in the Hearth Tax (below)

1659/60, 17 Feb Draft letter from David Lloyd, Sybylltir, to Mr Bulkeley (of Gronant presumably) about a generous bid he has made to buy certain lands (Bangor, Presaddfed 190).
NO DATE: Penhesgin Llanfaethlu - the marriage of one Reynolds Bulkeley younger son of Gronant marrying one, Ann, of Penhesgin. Ann’s father, John Griffith of Penhesgin was living in 1608; her brother Hugh Griffith was born c1659. No date, but maybe late 1600s. (Griffith’s Pedigrees, p 5)

**Hearth Taxes**

Data for Talybolion, Llanfachraeth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mr John Bulkeley</th>
<th>Richard Bulkeley</th>
<th>Henery Bulkeley</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1662</td>
<td>2 none such</td>
<td>1 ret. one short</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1671</td>
<td>5 Mr Richard Bulkeley</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1673</td>
<td>4 Katherine Bulkeley</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE**: 1. No properties are named in Llanfachraeth
2. There are no Bulkeleys listed in Llanfigael, Llanfaethlu, Llanfwrog, Llanrhyddlad or Llandeusant
3. Mary Bulkeley could well be Mary vch Edward Parry the wife of John Bulkeley who, according to her son Edward’s will (see below) was living in 1678.

(Bangor MSS 12052 & MSS 13970 two copies of the same transcripts)

**Edward Bulkeley**, married Cecelia, daughter of Arthur Bulkeley, second son of William Bulkeley, of Brynddu. They had three children, Robert, the heir, John and Margaret. (Pedigrees p 32 (for Brynddu), 121)

Edward made his will on the 7th February 1678. He is described as “of Bottan” which suggests that he was not resident at either of the Gronant houses. He bequeaths the proceeds of his holdings in Llanfigael and Llandyfrydog and those from lands then in the possession of his aunt Ellin Bulkeley equally between his son John and daughter Margaret; similarly the proceeds / fees of holdings called Yr Ynys and Rhyd y Gole between John and Margaret following the death of his mother Mary. He appoints his wife Cecilia sole executrix and his kinsman Hugh Williams of Chwaen Isa and brother in law Thomas Bulkeley overseers and **guardianship of my son and heir Robert after he comes to fourteen years of age**. There is a short inventory, mainly livestock valued at £11-9-0 dated 25 August 1680. Probate was granted in 1680. (NLW : B/1680/7)

**Robert Bulkeley III** married Ellin, daughter of John Owen Wynn, of Ucheldre Uchaf, Llanfflewyn circa 1692. They had nine children. (dates below from Llanfachraeth Registers &Pedigrees p 94, 121)

- Cecily, (1693-1728) (bapt 1693 Feb 10,
- Robert, their heir (1694-post 1734)
- Margaret, baptised 1696 died young
- Arthur, baptised 1697 died young
- Edward, baptised 1698, died young
- Mary (1699-1701)
- 1699 Ellena filia de Roberti de Gronantii b 21 March, Bapt 21 May, Llanfachraeth register)
- Owen, baptised 1701; bapt 26 May, Llanfachraeth register); curate of Llandeusant in 1734.
- ?1702 Ann bapt Sept 10; dau of Robert Bulkeley & Elin his wife, Llanfachraeth register)
- John (1703-1739) bapt April 27, son of Robert Bulkeley of Gronant, Llanfachraeth register)

Robert Bulkeley III their father was buried 20 Feb 1704.

His wife Ellin died circa 1720-1.

Robert Bulkeley III made a will on the 15 February 1703. Lands in four parishes (Llanfachraeth, Llanfaethlu, Llanfigael and Llandyfrydog) to be divided equally between his younger children until such time as his heir (un-named !) reaches the age of 24. Wife Elin sole executrix. She and his cousin John Owen Presaddfed
appointed Guardians during heir’s minority. Also John Owen and John Owen Wynn appointed overseers. Inventory (value of stock etc. £152-14-9) and Probate dated 20 April 1705. [NLW : B/1705/5 WI]

1708: Richard Bulkeley, son of Robert Bulkeley of Gronant, Llanfachraeth, from Friars School, Bangor, was admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1731 he was appointed to the living of Llanfechell and for quarter of a century was Rector to his distant kinsman, the diarist of Brynudd. The diarist also records Richard’s burial on March 13 1757.

(H Ramage, Portrait of an Island, 1987pps 181-3: referenced to AL Cantab.sn & UWB Penrhos 2 Ms 152) (This is clearly at variance with information given in Pedigrees and the Registers quoted above.)

Robert Bulkeley IV (1694-post 1734) married (soon after the death of his mother) on 24 Sept 1721, Dorothy, daughter of Morris Lewis, of Trysglwyn, (xd 16 July 1694; buried 26 Jan 1731). They had Grace (in 1722); Anne (1726-1749) and Robert (1729). Robert Bulkeley IV was High Sheriff of Anglesey in 1734, a widower with three young children. (Pedigree p128)

1723 : Tai Croesion Papers [Bangor MS 13564]
JE Griffith states in his introduction that the most reliable authority I have met with respecting the Pedigrees of Anglesey and Carnarvonshire Families is the Tai Croesion MS, that is, the work of John Ellis, Tai Croesion, in the parish of Llechylched (Bryngwran). One volume of John Ellis’s work has survived and can be seen at the archive of the University of Wales at Bangor (Bangor MS 13564). [Other Tai Croesion papers are with JEG’s papers at the National Library Aberystwyth.]
The (damaged) Tai Croesion papers note Rob Bulkeley now living 1723 married Dorothy d. Morris Lewis Trysglwyn Only two children are shown Robert, born 1729/30 who married Margaret d. of Robert Hughes 6th son of Plas Coch and William (mort)

No date; approx 1740: Matter of right of way. A declaration (not in his own hand) by Robert Bulkeley of Gronant that it was by the squire of Dronwy’s permission, and by that only, he was allowed to pass (with horses or carriages or on foot) along Pont y siopwraig, part of the squire’s land, from Gronant to Pen-yr-argae. (Bangor, Presaddfed MS 472)
Could this be Robert Bulkeley IV?
There is no reference to his date of death.

Robert Bulkeley V on 7 May 1760 married Margaret, daughter of Robert Hughes, of Plas Coch, Rector of Llanidan. They had eight children.

i) Robert, their heir (1761-1826)
ii) Margaret buried 1762
iii) Margaret, baptised 1765
iv) William, buried 1765
v) Dorothy, baptised 1766
vi) John, (born 1768) in Holy Orders
vii) Grace, baptised 1770
viii) Richard, baptised 1772 (Pedigrees p 31, 121)

On the 2nd May 1785 Robert Bulkeley V made a will. It is almost solely concerned by dint of the powers conferred on him by his marriage settlement with transferring the sum of £300 equally between his younger children – Margaret, Dorothy, John, Grace and Richard. The money was to be charged to his Anglesey lands. His wife Margaret and his younger children are named as joint executors. His books are all bequeathed to Richard. There is no reference to his son and heir Robert. There is an inventory valued at £479-19-8. Probate granted 5th February 1790 [NLW B.1790/25]

1789 : Robert Bulkeley V was buried in Llanfachraeth Churchyard – Underneath lie the remains of Robert Bulkeley of Gronant Esq. A.M. who died J. 5 1789 aged 60
His wife Margaret - relict of the above named Robert Bulkeley of Gronant Esq she died on the 26th day of May 1820 in the 88 year of her age
Land Tax Assessments
Anglesey Archives: Llanfachraeth (WQT/30), Llanfigael (WQT/41), Llanfaethlu (WQT/33), Llanrhuddlad (WQT/60) Note: there is no indication from the LTAs that any land in Llanddeusant was owned/farmed by any of the Bulkeleys.

Llanfachraeth: Bulkeleys of Gronant also pay for Pen yr Argae and Bottan Bach (1744 – 1791)
Llanfaethlu: From 1744 Robert Bulkeley pays for Hafod Fawr and, from 1805 for Cefn Rhys and Penhesgyn (part ownership) until 1814.
Llanrhuddlad: Robert Bulkeley VII’s will of 1859 lists Rhydangharad, Glan y Gors and Tyddyn y Waen. Only the last is referred to in the 1788 LTA – other ‘Bulkeley’ owned properties could therefore be a different Bulkeley.

1780 May 27: Robert Bulkeley, junior, was a witness at the marriage of John Pritchard, of Hen Eglwys, and Jane Jones, of Llanfachraeth. (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

1790 he inherited & married 1. Jane Broadhead. (JEG’s Pedigrees lists seven children)
  i) Robert Bulkeley, died young, 1792.
  ii) Robert Bulkeley VII, xd 15 April 1796; died 1859.
    iii) John, xd 24 April 1798. Died young.
    iv) Elizabeth, xd 30 June 1799; (on 27 Dec 1826 married Edward Owen, Holyhead, bachelor)
    v) John, xd 11 Dec 1801. Died c 1851. married Ellen (Eleanor Parry, dau of Richard Parry & Mary of Twtfl farm, Holyhead (pers comm. H. Llew Williams see also Gwreiddiau Gwynedd Roots No. 61 2011 – Three Other Bulkeley Diaries & Anglesey Archives WM/2386 )
    vi) Jane, xd 18 Sept 1803; (on 7 Aug 1829 married Thomas Evans, Baptist minister at Pontyrarw chapel)
    vii) Richard, xd 8 June 1803; (died at Inverness 30 July 1890)
    viii) ? Plus Margaret (?pre1796 not in Llanfachraeth parish register, but aged 45 in 1841 census, Amlwch; on 27 August 1822 married Owen Jones, Bodhunod, Amlwch, bachelor) . She (and her husband) are listed amongst their children in the Thomas Elias Pedigrees – see below Bangor MS 10269 circa 1888
    ix) Theophilus James (Llanfachraeth Register: son of Robert Bulkeley of Dronwy, Esquire by Jane his wife, baptised 25 August 1809; died 19 March 1834 described as T J B Gronant [source Llanfachraeth Church Register])


Robert Bulkeley VI made a (long and complicated) will on the 15th November 1811 the main beneficiaries of which were first his wife Jane (Broadhead) Buckely and then his heir, his son Robert. This will had not been changed/amended nor codicil added following the death of Jane nor after his second marriage. On his demise on the 8th October 1826 Ann Buckely was forced to go the Consistory Court to obtain ‘renunciation of executorship of Robert Bulkeley’s will’. Administration was granted to her on the 27th July 1827. [NLW B/1827/59]

c. 1830 ?? Plas Cadnant Papers [Bangor MS 6841-7029]
Very large collection of papers which, inter alia, contain several pedigrees compiled / collected by one John Price an agent at Mona Mine, Amlwch and a local historian. Includes a Gronant Pedigree with one anomaly Robert IV being replaced by a (second) John.

c.1830 ?? Bangor MS 13829 – the ‘Precedent Book’ of Robert Price, a lawyer, of Llwydiarth Esgob probably compiled 1820-1830. A weighty tome which, as well as numerous legal precedents, Welsh literary and religious items contains some 50 pages of Pedigrees similar to the Tai Crehson and Plas Cadnant papers and like the latter finishes with RB VI and Jane Broadhead.

Robert Bulkeley VII on 23 Oct 1834 married Barbara, daughter of John Prichard, Sadler, who also ran the pub called variously Ty’n Llan, The Bull & Yr Hen Siop, Llanddeusant. (pers comm. J Rice Rowlands & H Llew Williams)
c1834 Robert Bulkeley lived at Ty Newydd, Llynnon;
c1835 they moved to Penyrargae.
They had ten children :

ii) John Prichard Lewis (baptised 17 July 1837-buried 2 Nov 40. He is buried with his grandparents in Llanfachraeth churchyard)
iv) Theophilus Jones Bulkeley (xd 21 June 1840 -?) He kept Mona Stores, Llanfachraeth, & had children.
v) Jane Broadhead Bulkeley (xd 23 Oct 1842 - ?) (? Had Fanny, of Bodwaren, Holyhead.)
vii) Catherine Broadhead Bulkeley (xd 5 Feb 1847-?) possibly went to America.
ix) John Pritchard Lewis Bulkeley (xd 15 June 1851-buried 14 Sept 1911) Farmed Penyrargae until 1894. (Married Grace who died 4 Nov 1924, aged 66 years)
x) Mary Broadhurst (xd 4 Sept 1853; married Owen Jones – Mary Broadhead Jones, Penygraig; buried 30 April 1897. Llanfachraeth Register varies in the form of her second name)

Robert Bulkeley Esq to John Edwards for Gronant 117 – 34 acres; nos 216-232 on plan (this is confusing)

In Llanfachraeth for 211 acres, 2 roods 19 perches. See nos 233-238 on plan, he paid £26 18s 1d
Census returns for 1841 Penyrargae: Robert Bulkeley 45 Independent
Barbra Bulkeley 25
Robert 5
Richard 2
Theophilus 1
Catherine Williams 20 F.S.
Margaret Owen 15 F.S.
Margaret Jones 15 F.S.
Margaret Jones 65 F.S.
Out House: Robert Jones 20 Ag. L.
Williams Hughes 15 Ag. L.
Edward Jones 10 Ag. L.
Thomas Williams 12 Ag. L.

Gronant: Hugh Edward 25 Farmer
Alice Edward 35
Mary Edward 35 F. servant
Detached: William Jones 30 Ag Lab
Robert Jones 20 Ag Lab
Richard Jones 14 Ag Lab

Census returns for 1851 Penyrargae Robert Bulkeley Esq 55 Gentleman Farmer 88 Acres Llanfachraeth
Barbara 38 Llanddeusant
Robert 15 Scholar Llanfachraeth
Richard 12 Scholar Llanfachraeth
Theophilus 10 Scholar Llanfachraeth
Jane 8 Scholar Llanfachraeth
Barbara 6 Scholar Llanfachraeth
Catherine 4 Llanfachraeth
Margaret 2 Llanfachraeth
Evan Parry 33 Farm Servant Llanrhyddlad
John Roberts 22 Farm Servant Llanfigael
Sarah Roberts 30 Maid Servant Llanfihangel
Catherine Williams 22 Maid Servant Llanrhyddlad
Ann Hughes 15 Maid Servant Carnarvonshire

Margaret Roberts 35 housekeeper Llanddeusant
Jane Roberts 18 dairy maid Amlwch
William Hughes 25 servant Llanrhyddlad
John Parry 18 servant Llanrhyddlad
Williams Jones 19 servant Llanrhyddlad
John Williams 16 servant Llanrhyddlad
John Parry 15 servant Llantrisant
Griffith Griffiths 14 servant Llanrhyddlad

1859: Robert Bulkeley VII, died 24 December, of Penyrargae, aged 63 (Memorial Inscription Llanfachraeth churchyard). His widow Barbara farmed at Penyrargae with her son John and then her grandson John until her death in 1894.
Robert Bulkeley VII: made a Will on 26th May 1859 Probate 4th June 1859 Effects £300 (no Leaseholds) – contains considerable land details
bequeaths Pen yr argia (sic) and Bottan Bach situate in Llanfachraith and LLanfigael to Barbara and on her
demise then to his eldest son Robert William Hughes Bulkeley
And to his eldest son devise all messuages etc.... called ...Gronant, Cefn Rees, Glan-y-gors and Tyddyn y
Waen......and Penheskyn and Rhydangharad....situate in the several parishes of Llanfachreth, Llanfaethlu,
Llanfigael and Llanrhyddlad .....and the messuages called Minffordd....in Llanfaethlu......subject to the
payment of all mortgages debts etc.  (H Llew Williams)

Robert William Hughes Bulkeley VIII (1836-1871)
He inherited the Gronant estate on his father’s death in 1859. Farmed Gronant for a while, but spent his
inheritance. He may have moved to Tanrallt in the mid 1860s Tradition notes that his younger sister Margaret
was his housekeeper at Gronant

Census returns: 1861

Penyrrargae Barbara Bulkeley  47 Farmer 90 acres Llanddeusant
Robert W H 26 Farmer’s son Llanfachraeth
Richard P 23 Farmer’s son Llanfachraeth
Theophilus 21 Farmer’s son Llanfachraeth
Jane 19 Farmer’s dau. Llanfachraeth
Barbra PL 17 Farmer’s dau. Llanfachraeth
Catherine B 15 Farmer’s dau. Llanfachraeth
Margaret D 12 Farmer’s dau. Llanfachraeth
John PL 10 Farmer’s son
Mary B 8 Farmer’s dau. Llanfachraeth
William Jones 14 Ag Labourer Llanfachraeth
Elinor Hughes 17 Housemaid Llanddeusant

Gronant: Griffith Jones head 44 farmer 281 acres Llanfflewyn
Catherine Jones wife 37 Aberffraw
John Jones son 16 scholar Llanbabo
Elinor Jones dau 14 scholar Llanbabo
Ann Jones dau 12 scholar Llanbabo
Richard Jones son 9 Llanfachraeth
Griffith Jones son 6 Llanfachraeth
Mary Jones 3 Llanfachraeth
William Jones son 4 months Llanfachraeth
Elinor Jones Visitor 10 Ag Lab’s dau. Llanfaethlu
Hugh Hughes 37 Carter Llanfechell
Owen Jones serv 24 Cattle man Llanfflewyn
Thomas Williams 15 Ag Lab Llanddeusant
Ann Jones serv 23 House Servant Ceidio

1863-66 Robert W H Bulkeley, Gronant, farmer, freehold land. (Lists of Wardens & men qualified to serve
as Jurors. Llanfachraeth parish (Anglesey Record Office)

1867 Robert Jones, Gronant, Farmer. Poor rate (Lists of Wardens & men qualified to serve as Jurors.
Llanfachraeth parish (Anglesey Record Office)

1871 census:

Penyrrargae : Barhra Bulkeley  68 Farmer 68 acres Anglesey
John 29 Son Anglesey
Margaret 19 Dau. Anglesey
Mary 17 Dau Anglesey
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Jones</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Grandson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Jones</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Ag Lab</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Jones</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ag Lab</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henary Williams</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ag Lab</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gronant:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert Jones</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Jones</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Williams</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Grandson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Williams</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Grandson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Robert</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Lodger, Ind. Minister</td>
<td>Carnarvonshire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Jones</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Ag Lab</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Williams</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ag Lab</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Roberts</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ag Lab</td>
<td></td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1871 R W H Bulkeley VIII died at Penyrargae, 5 September 1871 aged 35; (Memorial Inscription in Llanfachraeth Buried in the same grave as his father on the 11th September 1871).

“Information has not been obtained respecting the following: R W Hughes Bulkeley Esq, Gronant, Holyhead”. (T Nicholas, Annals & Antiquaries of the Counties & County Families of Wales, Vol I, 1872)

1872: **Margaret Bulkeley** (1849-1906) [who had, when 15-17 years old (c1865), been housekeeper for her older brother Robert William Hughes Bulkeley at Gronant], in January 1872 married Rice Rowlands, miller, Llanfachraeth. They had:

i) Elizabeth (1871-1959). Her mother had previously refused her permission to marry the miller

ii) Barbara Jane; (1872-1941)

iii) **Robert Bulkeley Rowlands**, (1876-1961) miller born at Tregele, near Cemaes (1873-c1877), then around 1877 to Machraeth View, Llanfachraeth; he married Jane Ellen (Jenny) Williams (1887 – 1982) in the 1920s. [SEE BELOW]

iv) Mary Catherine (1878-1963) born at Neuadd Wen, Llanfachraeth

v) Margaret Dorothy (1882-1890) (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

1874 Robert Jones, Gronant, Farmer, …… 50.64 (? Lists of Wardens & men qualified to serve as Jurors. Llanfachraeth parish (Anglesey Record Office)
1881 census:

**Penyrargae Barbra Bulkeley**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Farmer's Son</td>
<td>Llanfachraeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Jones</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>ditto</td>
<td>Llanfachraeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elin Pritchard</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Dairymaid</td>
<td>Llanfaelog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Jones</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Do.</td>
<td>Llandrygan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Price</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Do. Indoor</td>
<td>Llanfachraeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Williams</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Dom Servant</td>
<td>Llandonna</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gronant**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert Jones</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Farmer 293 acres</td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Williams</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Grandson</td>
<td>Llanbabo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Williams</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>Trefdraeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Jane</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>daughter</td>
<td>Llanfachraeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elin</td>
<td>4m daughter</td>
<td>Llanfachraeth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Fletcher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>House Maid</td>
<td>Llangristiolus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Rowlands</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>General servant</td>
<td>Gwalchmai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hughes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Do. indoors</td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Jones</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Do. indoors</td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Jones</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Do. indoors</td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Williams</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Do. indoors</td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Williams</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Do. indoors</td>
<td>Anglesey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1883-88 Robert Williams, Gronant, Farmer, occupier of farm 50.10. (Lists of Wardens & men qualified to serve as Jurors. Llanfachraeth parish (Anglesey Record Office)

“The name Robert Williams at Gronant certainly connects with what my mother told me. This family is later found at Bryngwrn – Bryn Glas. In my time it was farmed by R Pierce Williams, referred to as being a child at Gronant. He had a sister living at Gaerwen in a bungalow on the road past the Presbyterian chapel down to the station, immediately after passing the turning to another road on the right. (i.e. a little further down the road to the station). This house was (possibly still is) called Gronant. Mother also used to relate a story she had heard that one of the children of this Williams family fell down a rather deep well, in front of our house (manor). The mother went down, held on to the child’s clothing by her teeth, and climbed up to safety.

I heard a vague reference to someone at Gronant who had connection with Caernarfonshire (?) quarries. There were certainly slate gateposts on the Gronant road, and if I remember rightly, some slates as part of the fencing on the road, and good slate roofs on some of the buildings in the yard.”

(pers. comm The Revd J Rice Rowlands)

c. 1888 Bangor MS 16543 : A 300+ page volume containing an eclectic mix of Pedigrees of North Wales families compiled by Thomas Elias of Llanrwst circa 1888 including at Page 156 the Bulkeleys of Gronant. It commences with Robert Bulkeley Esq of Bottan 20 June 3 Eliz (i.e. 1561) purchaser of Gronant (!!!) and Thomas Bulkeley Eliz31 (i.e. 1589) – no indication of his sources. There are some interesting notes however:

- Robert Bulkeley had a licence for a new seat in Llanfachraeth Church 1626
- Robert Bulkeley wife of Dorothy was res (resident ?) in 1704. He succeeded to estates in Llanfachraeth, Llanfaethlu, Llanfugael and Llanrhuddlad
- Robt Wm Hughes Bulkely was Landlord of the Penrhos Arms LlanfairPG when he died
- RWHB son & heir b. 1836 who sold most of the property
- his brother Reh Bulkeley was at one time landlord of the Red Lion Inn Llanddwysant (sic)
- a dau. (married) Rt Owen Nant (myn?)ydd
- a dau married RD Williams Esq Sol. Carnarvon

Also Bangor MS 10269 by the same author Thomas Elias Llanrwst (1833-1901) Local genealogist and Antiquary – several pedigrees (some with sources) including Gronant copied from the Tai Croesion manuscript.
This document is more complete that the damaged original. It includes details of an additional generation viz: seven children of Robert Bulkeley VI and Jane Broadhead – Margaret (married Owen Jones Bodhynod); Robert; Eliz; John; Jane; Richard and Thomas.
Note that this list omitted two who died in infancy – Robert (1) and John (1).

1888
SALE of GRONANT ESTATE
Tuesday September 13th Advertisement in the Holyhead Mail & Anglesey Herald
Sale of Valuable Freehold Property by Messrs Dew & Son at the Bull Hotelo Llangefni Thursday 20 September at 2.00 in the afternoon. Freehold estate known as Gronant Estate containing 206:1:38 acres in pa. of Llanfaethlu and Llanfachraeth and the valuable tenements known as Cefn Rhys. Plans & Particulars shortly from J H Roberts Solicitors Caernarvon or the Auctioneers, Wellfield House Bangor.

Gronant was bought by Rhys Williams, miller. He had been tenant of Bodrual Mill, Caernarfon from the mid 1850s until he, his wife and eldest son William Rees Williams returned to Anglesey to live at Neuadd Wen, Llanfachraeth, leaving his younger son Rowland Williams (1854-1949) at Melin Bodrual. Both Rhys Williams and his two sons were involved in buying Gronant. Rhys Williams died on 30 September 1889. His widow Elizabeth lived at Neuadd Wen & then spent half her time living with each of her sons in their part of Gronant. (pers. comm The Revd J Rice Rowlands)

1. William Rees Williams (1852 – 1941) who married Elizabeth Ellen Jones
They lived in Gronant Uchaf, the smaller house and they had
i) Bessie Gwenllian (1887-1967) who married Owen Griffith Owen, Ty Hen, Valley & they had Owen Tudur Owen (1921 – living 2011), who lived at Gronant Manor for a short time c1953-55 after he married Eleanor / Nellan Davies & had a son in 1951;
ii) Rhys Williams, (1889-1974) Tair Meibion, Aber, Bangor;
iv) *Owen Prys Williams; (1893-1973) a bachelor who lived at Gronant all his life.
v) Rowland Williams (1896-1929) died at Gronant.

2. Rowland Williams (1854 -1949) who lived at Melin Bodrual, Caernarfonshire, ran a corn business & moved from Melin Bodural to Gronant (the larger “manor” half) in 1889.
He married Ann Williams, Trosgol, Betws Garmon, who had been a Ladies’ Companion in London. They had:
i) Rhys Williams (Nov 1884 – 1967) who emigrated to Canada in 1911, had a son Rowland Williams, now aged 91, who has a big family.
ii) Jenny Williams, (1887 – 1982); she married Robert Bulkeley Rowlands (1876-1961) & their son is the Rev John Rice Rowlands (1930 – living 2011)
1891 His wife Ann died after the birth of John R Williams. (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

1891 census:

Penyrargae: Barbara Bulkeley 77 Farmer Llandeusant
John Grandson 26 Farm Servant Llanfachraeth
Lizzie Owen 23 Dairymaid Ceidio
Ann Williams 15 House Serv, Llanfachraeth

Gronant: Wm Rhys Williams 38 Merchant & Farmer Holyhead
Elizabeth E. 28 Wife Llanfachraeth
Bessie Gwenllian 3 daughter Llanfachraeth
Rhys 1 son Llanfachraeth
John Owen 20 Farm Servant Llanfachraeth
Owen Jones 22 Farm Servant Llandeusant
Hannah Griffith 18 Gen Servant Dom. Bodedern
Gronant: Rowland Williams 36 Farmer Llandrygarn
Anne 34 Wife Llanwnda, Caern.
Rhys 6 son Llanrug Caern.
Jane Ellen 3 daughter Llanrug
William Jones 28 Farm Servant Llanfechell
John Bennett 20 Farm Servant Llanrhuddlad
Annie Williams 18 Gen Dom Servant Llanddeusant
Elizabeth Jones 16 Gen Dom Servant Bryngwran

1894: Barbara (Prichard) Bulkeley: died 14 August 1894. Will written 24th Feb 1894
Probate 29th Sept 1894 - no lands are referred to. Effects valued at £634 - but no inventory. Interred along
with her husband August 18th 1894. (H Llew Williams)

John P L Bulkely & family moved to live in Llanfachraeth village for a while before moving to Deri Fawr at
Llandyfrydog. (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

1901 Census
Gronant: Wm R Williams 48 Farmer & Corn Merchant Holyhead
(Lower) Elizabeth E. 38 Wife Llanfachraeth
Johnny R 9 son Llanfachraeth
Owen P. 7 son Llanfachraeth
Rowland 5 son Llanfachraeth
Elizabeth A. (Visitor) 20 Housekeeper Llandysilio Mont.

Gronant: Family Absent on Census Night
(Manor)

1911 census:
Gronant: (8 rooms) (MANOR)
Rowland Williams 56 Farmer, widower Llandrygan
Jane Ellen Williams 23 Daughter. Dairymaid Llanrug, C’fon
Maggie Williams 18 domestic servant Llandeusant

Gronant (11 rooms) (LOWER HOUSE)
William Rhys Williams 55 Farmer & corn merchant Holyhead
Elizabeth 57 Married 25 years; 6 children Llanfachraeth
Rhys Williams 21 Son. Agricultural worker Llanfachraeth
Owen Prys Williams 17 Son. Agricultural worker Llanfachraeth
Llywarch Williams 9 Son. Llanfachraeth

In 1924 Rowland Williams sells his half of Gronant (manor) to Robert Bulkeley Rowlands, miller & farmer
of Aber Alaw, Llanfachraeth. About this time milling was coming to an end and he concentrated on farming.
Separate deeds for each of the two houses may have been drawn up .

22 July 1924: Deed of partition

1924: Conveyance 9 August 1924 Mr Rowland Williams to Mr Robert Bulkeley Rowlands (Amidst current
owner’s papers)

By 1928: Bryn Aber, Llanfachraeth, was built and Robert Bulkeley Rowlands & his wife Jenny, parents of the
Revd J Rice Rowlands, moved there in Nov 1928. (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

1929 Rowland Williams married Mary (Minnie) Hughes, Amlwch. They farmed Gronant (Manor) until 1942,
moving then to Fron Heulog, Rhosybol. (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)
16 April 1937 Mortgage William Rhys Williams to Ivor Mervyn Williams (amidst current owner’s papers)

Pre 1941: photograph of the two brothers at Gronant: William Rhys Williams (1852-1941) and Rowland Williams (1854-1949).

pre1942 The Rev John Rice Rowlands visited Gronant (manor) to see his grandfather before he moved to Rhosybol in 1942. His grandfather ploughed Gronant & had stock. He also visited his Uncle William & Auntie Lizzie in the Gronant (lower house: Gronant Uchaf). (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

1946 March 6 Land charge / Official search re Gronant Uchaf, Llanfachraeth & Llanfaethlu parishes.
+William Rhys Williams, Gronant Uchaf, farmer (deceased)
+Elizabeth Ellen Williams, Gronant Uchaf, widow.
[NB these two are listed in the 1891, 1901 & 1911 census, at Gronant Uchaf (older lower house), Mr Williams until he died at Gronant in 1941 & then Mrs Williams, with their son Owen Prys Williams, until her death in 1950. (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

1946 March 20: Conveyance between Elizabeth Ellen Williams (Widow of William Rhys Williams) and Owen Prys Williams [Copy amidst current owner’s papers]
+ another conveyance: Tyddyn Bach, Llandeusant.


1950- 1952 R B Rowlands cash receipt rent forms John Bridge, Gronant
due May 13, 1950 £10-8s-0d half years rent
do. Nov 13, 1950 £10-8s-0d half year’s rent + rates to Mar 31, 1951 £7-11s-1d = £17-19s-1d
do. May 13, 1951 £10-8s-0d
do. Nov 13, 1951 £10-8s-0d Rates £8-10s-1d
do. May 13, 1952 £10-8s-0d
do. Nov 13, 1952 £10-8s-0d Rates £8-15s-0d
The above note refers to Mr John Bridge. He & his wife lived at Gronant (manor) for some years. It may be prior to 1950 as well, as this refers to one rent book only. They moved to a terraced house in Llanrhuddlad & lived there for some time. (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

1953 O Tudor Owen, second cousin to the Revd J Rice Rowlands, moved to Gronant (manor) which he rented with his family, and lived there for a few years. They were the last members of the family to live there. (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

1959 Robert Bulkeley Rowlands sold his portion to Hugh Thomas of Ty’n Llan, Llanddeusant. Conveyance dated 13 March 1959 (Consideration £4500) [Copy with current owner’s papers]

(documents from current owners)
1960 April 8: Conveyance Owen Prys Williams sold to Owen Arwyn Owen and Mair Owen his wife. (notes from owner’s file)

Owen Prys Williams sold his (lower house) portion to Owen Arwyn Owen of Penyrargae. This took place before Owen Prys Williams died in the 1970s. Arwyn Owen took over the land which adjoined his, but Owen Prys Williams retained his right to live in the Gronant house while he lived. (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

Hugh Thomas, [late of Tyn Llan, Llanddeusant made will 17 June 1965, died 19 Nov 1967, will proved 1968 March 28] appointed as his Executrixes:
i) Eleanor Evans, 7 Cross Street, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, wife of Glyn Evans &
i) Eirona Owen, Ty Newydd, Paradwys, Bodorgan, Anglesey, wife of John Owen,

They conveyed all 101 acres of farm … of Gronant, parishes of Llanfachraeth & Llanfaethlu, (formerly part
of a larger farm of the same name) to Nantanog Dairy Farms Ltd, Registered Office, Hafod y Llan, Nant
Gwynant, Caernarvonshire, for £16,700. [both land and house (manor)]

[Pyrs H O Williams was owner of Hafod y Llan farm, Nant Gwynant and much other land. Pers Comm Margaret
Dunn] (documents from current owners)

1968 Plan & Schedule with OS field numbers and names (documents from current owners)

1969 August 29   Official searches etc (documents from current owners)

1969 Nov 19   Legal Charges
1. Snowdon Farms Ltd
2. Nantanog Dairy Farms
3. Dafydd Maldwyn Williams & Bleddyn Rhys Williams
4. Pyrs Henry Owen Williams
5. The Agricultural Mortgage Corporation Ltd (documents from current owners)

1969 Nov 19   Legal Charges – £75,000 mortgage of  Nantanog Farm, Llanerchymedd; Sarn Fadog &
Bryngwyddon, Coedana and Gronant Farm, Llanfachraeth. (documents from current owners)

early 1970s: Owen Arwyn Owen sold his portion of Gronant (house) to Mr & Mrs Cornish, an elderly couple
with adult children, who did a lot of work on that portion of the house.
O Arwyn Owen retained the land. (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

22 November 1973 : Conveyance from Nantanog Dairy Farms Ltd to Owen Arwyn Owen
10 September 1974 : Two conveyances Owen Arwyn Owen and Mair Owen to Mr & Mrs Cornish (£17,500)
and Owen Arwyn Owen to Mr & Mrs Cornish (£500) for Gronant

Mr & Mrs Cornish then bought the other (manor) portion of Gronant from Prys H O Williams, but did not do
much to it. They lived there several years & it may have been sold after one of them died. (pers. comm. Rev
J Rice Rowlands)

1978 Oct: application for reconstruction; 1981 renewal of application.. ( notes from owner’s file)

25 July 1985 – death of Mrs Margaret Lydia Cornish

4 April 1986  Conveyance from Mr Cornish to Colin Harrington (£37,500) [With Owners papers]

Colin Harrington bought the whole of Gronant (both houses & the curtilage) from Mr Cornish. Later he bought
the land of 12 acres with the Water Mill on it. (Pers Comm present owners)

12 February 1987 : Conveyance Nantanog Dairy Farm Ltd to Colin Hetherington . Land adjacent to Gronant
(£13,500)

1986 June: visit of Peter Smith, RCAHMW. (notes from owner’s file)
1986 June 10: advice on house from SPAB. (notes from owner’s file)
1986 renewal of application. (notes from owner’s file)
1986 July: renewal of application - extension. (notes from owner’s file)
1986 August renewal of application - extension (notes from owner’s file)
1986 Experts survey, plans etc (notes from owner’s file)

1988 Survey of wall paintings by expert. (notes from owner’s file)
1988 Conservation work on wall paintings (from owner’s file)
2000 May 11: Survey for Cadw listings (notes from owner’s file)
2001 Dec: Cadw listing Grade II. (notes from owner’s file)
2003 searches. (notes from owner’s file)

2003 Sept 24

2003 Nov 3: conveyance from Nantanog to Fames Wilson & Catherine Cunnah. (documents from current owners)

2011: WHO owns the Gronant farmland now? O Arwyn Owen’s family?

a) Mr John Owen, Parlwr Farm, Llanfachraeth owns the outbuildings and some land by the house.
b) The field behind the tall boundary wall adjacent to the porch is owned by Penyrargae. Possibly by Mr Gethin Owen whose parents used to live at Gronant before it was sold to Mr & Mrs Cornish

Penyrargae may retain part of the land bought by O Arwyn Owen. Mr Gethin Owen is O Arwyn Owen’s grandson.
Mr John Owen, Parlwr is not related to O Arwyn Owen; he owns portions of land of both Gronants.
(pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

**GRONANT MILL**

Details to be found in Cadw listing description.

There was a small mill at Gronant. A waterwheel turned the machinery; the water came from a large pond – a small lake would perhaps be a better description. In Welsh it was referred to as “Y Llyn”. Water was ensured by a flood gate, which was then released to turn the water wheel. The two storeyed building, capped by a small tower, as far as I know is still there. It was in the Rev J Rice Rowland’s grandfather’s portion of Gronant. The Rev Rice Rowlands’ mother, Jenny Williams, (1887 - 1982), spoke of both her father and uncle being years ago in the corn trade & similar business as well as farming Gronant. This he thinks would be in the earlier years of their time at Gronant (after 1889).

William Rees Williams (1852-1941), she remembered, did business at Llangefini. On certain days he WALKED through Llynon woods to Llandeusant & then to Llanerchymedd, where he caught a train for Llangefini and returned by the same route and manner in the evening.

Rowland Williams (1854 -1949) her father, for a time had an office or premises at Valley. The Revd Rice Rowlands thinks he would travel by train to various places. He wrote letters to his son, by then in Canada, in late 1911, of being at Bangor & doing business at Llanrwst. He probably had connections from the time he had a reasonably thriving business at Melin Bodrual (pre 1889). This may have continued into the 1920s.

The existence of a small mill at Gronant suggests it was for a fairly large farm or small estate in earlier days, rather than to maintain a larger milling business. (pers. comm. Rev J Rice Rowlands)

Notes compiled at various times by: Ann Benwell; Michael Bowler; Margaret Bradbury; Margaret Dunn, David Bulkley and H. Llew Williams

Revised with comment by Dr David Williams. 30 April 2012
Revised with late 1660s undated comment from Griffith’s Pedigrees, p5. 2 May 2012
The following article originated as a paper presented to Cangen Ynys Môn/Anglesey Branch, Darganfod Hên Dai Cymreig/Discovering Old Welsh Houses on its visit to Gronant on 11th June 2018. It was subsequently expanded and first published in *Foundations* 11 (2019): 63‒84, the journal of the Foundation for Medieval Genealogy (FMG), whose permission to re-publish here is acknowledged with thanks.
ABSTRACT
The lands which came to form the nucleus of the Gronant estate of the Bulkeley family from the first half of the 16th century almost certainly had belonged to two important Welsh kindreds from at least the 12th century. Although there is no known documentary evidence about the history of the Gronant lands before the Bulkeleys, through the medium of the genealogies, and information from some 16th and early 17th century records, we can trace their probable ownership and transmission down to Sioned, wife of Robert Bulkeley I of Gronant.

Introduction
Gronant, an ancient house and estate in the parish of Llanfachraeth, Ynys Môn (Anglesey), was in the ownership of the Bulkeley family for over three hundred years, from the first half of the 16th century to 1888. The house, which is comprised of three distinct units, two of which are unique to the island, very probably occupies an earlier homestead site. Substantial renovations of this important Grade II* listed property, archaeological investigations, and dendro-chronology surveys have been carried out since the 1980s.

The origins of the early estate can be traced back in large part to holdings of former kindred land and former crown land in the neighbouring parishes of Llanfachraeth and Llanfaethlu, to which were later added lands and farms in the parishes of Llanfigael and Llanrhuddlad. Gronant, with its farm and mill, continued as the centre of the entire estate, and remained the Bulkeleys' principal dwelling until the 1830s when they removed to their farm at Pen–yr–Argae in Llanfachraeth.

1 Contact details: c/o fmg@fmg.ac. The author, a descendant of Robert Bulkeley of Gronant, is an independent researcher with interests in Welsh, English and Swiss genealogy, and some American families with historic British antecedents.

2 Gronant, “gravel brook” or “pebble brook”.

3 Such a homestead may have been a small cruck-framed open–hall house with a fire in the centre of the floor, and with an attached byre for cattle. The walls would have been built of timber and stones, rubble filled, the floor would have been rammed earth, and the roof would have consisted of wooden spars upon which sat turves.


5 There has been a small domestic mill on the farmstead from probably as far back as the second half of the 16th century, though the first known record evidence of it is in 1613. A masonry dam impounded a large mill pond ("Y Llyn"), and a channel brought water through a sluice to operate a breastshot or a very small overshot wheel. The granary was located on the upper floor. The present building was in use until the 1920s, and was restored from a derelict condition in the 1990s (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. NPRN 31065. Gronant Mill and Granary). It is shown, with pond and sluice, on the 1898 and 1924 Ordnance Survey maps of Anglesey.
Fig 1. Arms of Bulkeley of Gronant

The armorial bearings of Bulkeley of Gronant are those of the Beaumaris family, undifferenced. This is confirmed by a wood panel in Llanfachraeth church taken from a former 17th century pew: a chevron between three bulls' heads, inscribed "Robert Bulkeley Esq. of Gronant, 1626". 

Robert Bulkeley I of Gronant

The history of Gronant proper starts with Robert Bulkeley (c.1493?–c.1582?), first of that name, who was High Sheriff of Anglesey for the year 1556–7.

He was the third son of Rowland Bulkeley of Beaumaris, who had succeeded his father William Bulkeley the Elder as Deputy Constable of Beaumaris Castle by 1490, and who was appointed Constable on 4 July 1502, succeeding Sir Richard Croft who had been appointed in 1495. Rowland Bulkeley did not hold the office for long. Sir Richard Pole, half-cousin of King Henry VII, was appointed in 1503, but died in 1504; and then Sir Roland de Velville (or Vielleville), the king’s putative bastard, in 1509. Velville, who was William Bulkeley the Elder's nephew by marriage, was mostly resident at Beaumaris until his death in 1535. Rowland Bulkeley presumably resumed the deputy’s office. He died in 1537 aged about seventy-six.

6 Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire, An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments of Anglesey, 65.
7 PRO, List of Sheriffs for England and Wales, 236. Appointed on 13 November 1556.
9 Dwnn, Heraldic Visitations, 2: 92, 93, 133–4; Breese, Kalendars of Gwynedd, 122; Griffith, Pedigrees, 42, 105, 121; Nicholas, Annals and Antiquities, 2: 39; Carr, Medieval Anglesey, 181–3, 218–20, 255–6, 258; Jones, "The Bulkeleys of Beaumaris, 1440–1547", 1–7; Bartrim, Welsh Genealogies, WG2 Bulkeley 2, p. 289; Dictionary of Welsh Biography; Thomas Richards, "Bulkeley family, Anglesey, etc.". Rowland Bulkeley was the fourth son and eventual heir of William Bulkeley the Elder (1418–1484/90) of Cheadle, Cheshire and Beaumaris, Serjeant-at-Arms in Anglesey and North Wales 1448–1490, Deputy Constable of Beaumaris Castle c.1453–1490, Alderman of Beaumaris 1473–1489. Breese, op. cit., followed by Griffith, Pedigrees, 42, records William Bulkeley as Constable of Beaumaris c.1440, following Richard Walstede, appointed for life on 20 January 1418, and gives two sources: Lodge’s Peerage of Ireland, 5: 18, “who in the reign of Henry VI being constable of Beaumaris in the Isle of Anglesey”, and Williams, Observations, 172, “Constable of the Castle of Beaumaris in the reign of Henry the Sixth”. These are hardly sufficient authorities, and no primary source of the alleged appointment has been found. William Bulkeley seems to have arrived
Robert’s eldest brother was the wealthy and influential Sir Richard Bulkeley of Beaumaris, first of that name, chief agent of Thomas Cromwell in North Wales, who was appointed joint Constable of Beaumaris Castle for life on 14 June 1536, and who died on 26 January 1546/7.10 His next younger brother was Arthur Bulkeley, Bishop of Bangor from 1541 until his death on 14 March 1553.11 Arthur is generally considered to have been born about 1495, so we may perhaps date Robert’s birth to between 1490 and 1494, say c.1493.

By the early 1530s Robert Bulkeley was living in the free township of Botan, the most northerly of the three townships in the parish of Llanfachraeth. Botan bordered the townships of Carneddor12 (Llanfaethlu) to the north, Dronwy (Llanfachraeth) to the south, Bodwigan (Llanddeusant) to the east, and Trelywarch (Llanfwrog) to the west. He may have settled first at Pen–yr–Argae, a farm neighbouring Gronant to the south. In October 1541 he was buying land at Tre Ifan in Llanfair–yn–Neubwll, and he also acquired land at Treflesg in the same place.13 In 1543 he is mentioned in the Talybolion Hundred Subsidy Roll, a taxation record.14 His name is found in court records of the period. In c.1545 he was involved in a dispute with his neighbour Rhisiart ap Rhisiart over crown land in Carneddor township. Between 1547 and 1553 he and his younger brother Thomas Bulkeley, Rector of Llanddeusant, were defendants in an action brought by William Lewis of Presaddfed for forcibly ejecting Lewis from pasture, probably in Llanfechell; and between 1558 and 1579 he sued Gwilym ap Gwilym and others over land and claims in the townships of Carneddor, Cemlyn, and Caerdegog.15 He was one of
the magistrates commissioned in 1574 to raise men from Anglesey for local military
service in the Trained Bands.  

Robert Bulkeley cut and trimmed with the prevailing religious winds of the time. He personally beneficed Robert ap Siôn ap Hywel as a Catholic deacon, and then priest, in 1556/7. When the Elizabethan era dawned, he, being one of the patrons of the living, was quick to advance his own son, Richard, as Protestant rector of Llanfachraeth in 1566. He was alive on 30 March 1578 when he beneficed Owen Fowke as a deacon, and is named in 1581; but had died before 25 September 1584 when Thomas and Richard were administrators of his estate. He probably died in 1582, but there is no extant parochial record of his burial.

Land Ownership in Medieval Anglesey

Before exploring the history of the Gronant lands, it will be useful to have some understanding of how land was owned and transmitted in medieval Wales.

Up to the 15th century much of Wales which was still in the hands of the native population was governed by the ancient *Cyfraith Hywel* (Law of Hywel Dda), the North Wales version of which was known as the Venedotian Code. This law continued in use until the union of Wales with England enacted in *Y Deddfau Cyfreithiau yng Nghymru 1535 a 1542* (Laws in Wales Acts 1535 and 1542). The basic unit of administration was the *tref*, a township comprising associated individual settlements. In theory, one hundred *trefi* made up a *cantref*, and half or a third of a *cantref* was a *cwmwd* (commote), although in practice the actual numbers varied.

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16 PRO, *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Elizabeth*, 459. 1573–1574. vol. 150, no. 12. 14 March 1573/4. London. Instructions for execution of the commission to all the justices of the peace in every shire for the general musters and training of all persons able for the war; *ibid.*, 486. 1574, vol. 103, no. 19. 5 September, Anglesey. Report of the sheriff and justices of Anglesey concerning the musters on Anglesey. Signed by Robert Bulkeley. The muster for Talybolion was 58 men, and for Llifon 54.

17 Pryce, *Diocese of Bangor in the Sixteenth Century*, 50. Robert ap Siôn ap Hywel ordained deacon on 19 December 1556 and priest on 13 March 1556/7, according to the Roman Rite, in Bangor Cathedral by William Glynn, Bishop of Bangor. Both titles: Robert Bulkeley of Gronant, Armi[ger]. Since his stipend was guaranteed by Robert Bulkeley, he very likely served as Bulkeley’s chaplain, whilst probably also acting as curate to William Roberts, the pluralist rector of Llanfachraeth, who had been appointed on 23 January 1541/2 by Bishop Arthur Bulkeley. Roberts, Bulkeley and Glynn belonged to a gentry clique which sought to control church benefices on Anglesey, and had all commenced their clerical careers during the episcopate of Bishop Thomas Skevington (1509–1533).

18 The rectory of Llanfachraeth was in the patronage of the bishop of Bangor. The registers of the period indicate that a considerable number of benefices had become vested in lay persons. These grants of presentation were usually obtained by offering the bishop a financial inducement. Though the names of the alienating bishops are not recorded, it is almost certain that a grant to present to Llanfachraeth had been obtained by Robert Bulkeley from Bishop Meyrick. No doubt he had had to bring in others with him to share the cost, and probably because he did not totally control the parish.

19 Pryce, *Diocese of Bangor in the Sixteenth Century*, 59. Owen Fowke ordained deacon according to the Anglican Rite on 30 March 1578 in Bangor Cathedral by Nicholas Robinson, Bishop of Bangor. Title: Robert Bulkeley of Gronant, Armi[ger].

20 Bangor University Archives. Bangor Mss. BMSS 13969.

21 Bangor University Archives. Presaddfed Mss. PRES 34. 25 September 1584. Award by Sir Richard Bulkeley upon certain matters at variance between the brothers Thomas Bulkeley of Gronant and Richard Bulkeley of Dronwy as joint administrators of their father’s estate.


23 See Longley, *Medieval Settlement on Anglesey*, 3–12, for a detailed description and comprehensive analysis of medieval administrative units, legal terms, units of settlement, land measurement, etc. on Anglesey.
Land was divided into *gwelyau* (beds) and *gafaelion* (holdings), both communal agnatic landholding groups originating in the 12th century. *Gwely* usually referred to a unit of land possessed, transmitted and shared by the whole, or a part, of a common lineage. On Anglesey the term *gafael* came to lose the implied kin-group associations and implications that *gwely* carried. *Tir gwelyog* was the hereditary land held by the *cenedl* (kindred), the descendants of a common ancestor to the ninth degree of descent. Each kindred had its own *pencenedl* (chieftain), who occupied the principal *tyddyn* (homestead), a smallholding comprising a house and four acres. Four acres was the basic unit of proprietorship within the *gwely*, although this could vary. Within each kindred there were often lesser kindreds to the fourth degree of descent, each forming a separate *gwely* under the name of their particular great-grandfather. Rights in any *gwely* descended by partible inheritance among all and only male descendants. A woman was not allowed to inherit land, although there were some exceptions; but she was entitled to a *gwaddol* (marriage portion), which she took with her on marriage. As long as any one of the sons of the ancestor was alive there was no division of the land among grandsons; and until all the sons and grandsons had died, no final division among the great-grandsons. So, the original *gwely* remained the external unit and held together until the final division *per capita* between second cousins had taken place.24

Whoever was the head of the *gwely* was a landed person, a chief of household, and thus considered to be *uchelwyr*.25 Every chief of a *cenedl* and every chief of a *gwely* was a privileged person, with certain land occupied by himself and his family, as well as large grazing rights over sometimes several and distant districts.26

On the death of a *priodawr* (landowner) his immovable estate (land) passed as *cytir* (joint tenancy) to his sons. Then the youngest son partitioned the land equally, and each brother took his share.27 So, as the generations proceeded, the original right of one could become the right of many. Free townships, such as we will be discussing, often became minutely subdivided into *gafaelion*, arable blocks held in common by each clan within the kindred; which often resulted in the rise of new homesteads scattered about or beyond the *gafaelion*.

After the subjugation of Wales by King Edward I of England (1277–1283), most of the conquered territory was retained as a royal fief. Former princely lands were confiscated as English crown lands, much of which would be granted to the heir to the English throne, or formed into Marcher lordships as a means of controlling the native population and rewarding the king’s followers. This opened a long era of opportunity for English adventurers; including the seriously rapacious Bulkeleys from Cheshire, who gained dominant positions in the English boroughs and

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25 Uchelwriaeth (nobility or gentility) is a qualitative concept depicted in traditional Welsh verse as being essentially kindred–based and governed rigidly by the attributes of military leadership. Those who were descendants of ancient clan chieftains or of royal dynasties regarded themselves as superior; while incoming migrant families like the Bulkeleys with a non-Welsh ancestry gradually established themselves through marriage and social connections within the network of the Welsh kindred system. Whatever their origins, the Welsh and pseudo-Welsh gentry based their *uchelwriaeth* on lineage, privilege by virtue of social advancement, and an adherence to a strict moral code of conduct. Many *uchelwyr* were in fact very modest freeholders hardly above the status of yeomen, but it was their ancestry and the quality of their lifestyle that made them leaders within their communities (Jones, *Conflict, Continuity and Change in Wales c.1500–1603*, 1, 4, 11–15, 21–24, 26, 33).


surrounding districts of Conwy, Caernarfon and Beaumaris, and acquired many lands and farms throughout Caernarvonshire and Anglesey.

From the 14th century, social changes advanced the break up of the tribal clans and the emergence of a Welsh gentry class within the framework of an English–governed Wales. Kindred patrimonies, with their equality of status, declined in favour of individual ownership. Inheritance and tenurial changes, and greater freedom in the disposal of land, facilitated the development of freehold estates, and landowners gained wealth through military or administrative service or marriage. The *gwely* and the *gafael* began to disappear after the revolt of Owain Glyndŵr (1400–1415), as the move towards more beneficial English land tenure accelerated; and chieftainly homesteads gradually developed into mansions and single family–owned estates.28

Since there was no right under Welsh law to alienate free land vested in the kindred, ways were devised during the 13th and 14th centuries to circumvent the prohibition. This led to a flourishing land market in Anglesey, and the gradual concentration of proprietorship. One method, both illegal and impossible, was use of the English conveyance of land in fee. This could be dispensed by the purchase of a licence from the authorities to acquire lands in fee. Many licence holders were members of the island’s leading kindreds, and the money raised was an important addition to the royal coffers. Another way was by leasing escheated hereditary land from the crown.29 As a means of strengthening title, it was not unusual to re–convey lands in fee which had already been conveyed by the Welsh conveyance of *tir prid*.30

Certainly, by Robert Bulkeley’s time the Gronant lands would have been held under English tenure. He would not have accepted Welsh tenure for even part of his lands, which would have put at risk his sole proprietorship and that of his successors. From the 15th century the process of selling off crown lands on Anglesey had begun, so that by the 16th century much had been acquired by the leading men on the island, who were influential with the royal authorities, and keen to consolidate and develop their own farms and holdings into freehold estates. By the 16th century the enclosure and subdivision of the open fields with banks had begun.31 This was the background to the early formation of the Gronant estate and, as we shall see, Robert Bulkeley was quick to take advantage of any new opportunities to increase and consolidate his land holdings.

The marriage portion

The strategy of the early Bulkeleys was to establish their family dominance on Anglesey through land purchase, crown leases (particularly of escheated land), the acquisition of former monastic property, marriage, and offices. Regarded as outsiders by the Welsh gentry, they made a series of marriages which increased their local influence and allowed them entrée to the ranks of the *uchelwyr*; one such being the marriage of Constable Rowland Bulkeley’s sister and Robert’s aunt, Joan, with Huw Lewys ap Llywelyn (*fl.* c.1470–c.1520) of Presaddfed in Bodedern.32

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30 *Tir prid* was a conveyance whereby a gage of the land was usually for an initial term of four years, renewable indefinitely for further four–year periods until it was redeemed, although in fact it never was. The money raised on the security of the land was, in effect, the purchase price.
Huw was a cousin of Robert Bulkeley’s father–in–law and, as will become apparent, the history of the Gronant lands was bound up with the history of the Presaddfed family and its cadet branches of Treiorwerth and Llanfwrog. So, it is likely that the Constable took advantage of the connection already established with Presaddfed to arrange a marriage for his son, which would bring Robert land and anchor him securely within the kindred of this prominent Welsh family.

This is borne out by the genealogies, which tell us that Robert’s wife was Sioned (Joan or Jonet), daughter of Morys ap Rhys of Plas–y–Glyn in Llanfwrog in the Commote of Talybolion; the earliest known pedigree being that recorded by Lewys Dwnn, deputy herald–at–arms in Wales from 1585 to 1592. Morys was a descendant of the Treiorwerth family, a cadet branch of Presaddfed, and a cousin of Huw Lewys. They also show that Llanfwrog, which by then almost certainly included the Gronant lands, had previously been held by Morys’ father Rhys in the 15th century. Despite there being no known supporting documentary evidence, it seems probable to the verge of certainty that lands which were to form the nucleus of the later Gronant estate were Sioned’s marriage portion.

We do not know when Robert Bulkeley and Sioned married. He seems to have been of the same generation as her father and, therefore, perhaps much older than she. Although the genealogies only record the marriage with Sioned, it may be that she was his second wife, or that he married her later in life. If we assume that this was the only marriage, then a date between say 1518 and 1523, possibly a little earlier, seems likely. But if it was a second marriage, then we should perhaps assume that it took place closer to between say 1530 and 1535. There is no evidence either way. Sioned survived her husband and on her death left property and animals worth £48, all to be divided equally between her sons Thomas and Richard.

How the Gronant lands were acquired by Sioned’s family is a matter of conjecture, since there is no known documentary evidence from which to construct their early ownership. However, the genealogies show two interesting marriages in the generations preceding Sioned, and these may provide clues as to how the Gronant lands could have come to her ancestors. Some can perhaps be traced back to the late 13th century and the marriage of Sioned’s ancestor Iorwerth ap Gruffudd of Presaddfed; and perhaps some, possibly even the whole, back to the early 15th century and the marriage of Sioned’s great–great–grandfather Llywelyn ap Hywel of Treiorwerth. Unfortunately, we cannot be absolutely precise. Another property which may have come to the Presaddfed family as early as the 13th century was Dronwy (Llanfachraeth), which was purchased in the mid–16th century by Robert.

33 Dwnn, Heraldic Visitations, 2: 93, 134; Griffith, Pedigrees, 34, 105, 121.
34 Griffith, Pedigrees, 5, 34, 95, 108, 121. Huw Lewys of Presaddfed, husband of Joan Bulkeley, Robert’s aunt, and Rhys ap Hywel y Farf of Llanfwrog, Sioned’s grandfather, were second cousins, both great-grandsons of Hywel ab Iorwerth Ddu of Presaddfed.
35 It has been said that the couple had eleven children, but only five are certainly known: Thomas, the heir, Richard, Edward, Edmund, and Elin (Griffith, Pedigrees, 1, 14, 105, 118, 121). The only one whom we can date with reasonable certainty is Richard Bulkeley of Dronwy, Rector of Llanfachraeth. He was ordained deacon in 1560 and must, therefore, have been aged at least twenty–three (unless dispensed), thus placing his birth c.1137 or earlier.
36 Bangor University Archives. Penrhos Mss. PENRH Catalogue p. ii, MS 26 (Letter, 24 January 1624). There is no extant parochial record of her burial.
Bulkeley’s son Richard Bulkeley (d.1605),\textsuperscript{37} Rector of Llanfachraeth, from their cousin William Lewis of Presaddfed.\textsuperscript{38}

To better understand how these lands may have been transmitted, we must review Sioned’s ancestry as recorded in the genealogies. She was descended from two distinguished Anglesey nobles of the 12th century. In the paternal line from Hwfa ap Cynddelw, whose kindred had free tenure of a large cluster of properties surrounding Gronant, in a frame stretching from Presaddfed and Treiorwerth in the south to Penhesgyn in the north, and from Llynon in the east to Llanfwrog in the west. In the maternal line twice from Llywarch ap Brân, whose kindred had free tenure of lands in the townships of Porthamel (Llanidan) and, more importantly, Trelywarch (Llanfwrog).

\textbf{Hwfa ap Cynddelw, Lord of Llifon}

Hwfa ap Cynddelw (fl. c.1130–1170) is described in the genealogies as the founder of the First Noble Tribe of North Wales, and to have been lord of the Commote of Llifon. He was a contemporary of Owain I Gwynedd ap Gruffudd (d.1170), Prince of Gwynedd from 1137, and is said to have been Owain’s \textit{distain} (steward, seneschal). Hwfa’s principal residence is said to have been Presaddfed in Bodedern.\textsuperscript{39}

In effect the whole of Llifon was based on a \textit{maenol} or federal estate\textsuperscript{40} centered on the principal \textit{tyddyn} (homestead) and \textit{llys} (court) at Presaddfed, which was held entirely by Hwfa and his descendants in free tenure. Llifon\textsuperscript{41} was unique in that there was no \textit{maerdref} (demesne township) of the prince in the commote. By the 16th century, descendants of Hwfa were found in the parishes of Llanbadrig, Caergybi (Holyhead), Llanfwrog, Llantrisant, Rhodogeidio, Llanallgo, Llaneugrad, Llanbadrig, Caergybi (Holyhead), Llanfwrog, Llantrisant, Rhodogeidio, Llanallgo, Llaneugrad,

\textsuperscript{37} Richard Bulkeley was ordained deacon, without title, according to the Anglican Rite on 5 May 1560 in Bangor Cathedral by Rowland Meyrick, Bishop of Bangor (Pryce, \textit{Diocese of Bangor in the Sixteenth Century}, 52). There is no evidence that he received a university education. Meyrick was a member of the Bodorgan family and a serious pluralist, who had once been accused of malpractices and “shamless whoredom”, and it is highly likely that nepotism and simony was involved. His sister Alice was married to Thomas Bulkeley of Beaumaris, nephew of Robert Bulkeley of Gronant (Griffith, \textit{Pedigrees}, 126). Richard Bulkeley may have served as curate to William Roberts, pluralist rector of Llanfachraeth, until the latter's death. He was then presented to the living by his father and other lay patrons, and instituted as rector of Llanfachraeth on 18 June 1566 (Pryce, \textit{Diocese}, 19), although only in deacon's orders. The see was then vacant following the death of Bishop Meyrick on 24 January 1565/6; the spiritualities having been taken into Archbishop Parker's hands on 28 February 1565/6 (Le Neve, \textit{Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae}, 1: 105). He was ordained priest according to the Anglican Rite on 6 July 1567 in Bangor Cathedral by Nicholas Robinson, Bishop of Bangor (Pryce, \textit{Diocese}, 52). An entry in Archbishop Grindal's register shows that "Dom. Richardus Bulkeley" was rector of Llanfachraeth on 18 July 1567 (Lambeth Palace Library, Archbishops' Registers. Reg. Grindal 1, fol. 144–284. Commissions, institutions, licences, etc. 1575–1582. \textit{Liber Cleri}. Visitations of Bangor Clergy listed for the Deaneries of Tal-y-bolin and Malttraeth. 1576); which living he held until his death in 1605. Bulkeley took a concubine and fathered at least two illegitimate sons, and spent his life gathering rents and fees, and building up his Dronwy estate. His character is perhaps best summed up by Dr. Thomas Richards, then Librarian of the University College of North Wales, writing in 1946 in the introduction to the Presaddfed catalogue, p. iv: "... of such easy morals as to be unlikely to be the torch–bearer of a religious revival".

\textsuperscript{38} William Lewis was M.P. for Anglesey in 1553 and 1555, and High Sheriff of Anglesey in 1548–9, 1557–8 and 1571–2. He was the great–grandson of Joan Bulkeley, Robert's aunt.


\textsuperscript{40} A territorial and administrative unit consisting of one or more number of townships.

\textsuperscript{41} See Richards, \textit{An Atlas of Anglesey}, 37, for a map of medieval Llifon and its townships, hamlets and parishes.
Bodedern, Llanfair–yng–Neubwll, Llechylched, Llanddyfnan, Llanfaelog, and Trefdraeth.\textsuperscript{42}

Very probably the endowments given by Owain Gwynedd were made in augmentation of an estate of earlier origin.\textsuperscript{43} These endowments included the large free township of Conysiog (Llanfaelog) in Commote Llifon, with its dependent hamlets of Bodedern, Llechylched, Deubwll, Llechcynfawry, Yr Arw, Trefangharad, Tregadrod, Bodfeddan and Treriffri, which in 1284 belonged to Hwfa’s kindred and was valued at £13. 5s. In 1352 the township then comprised the nine hamlets, four churches, and several mills, and was valued at £14. 17s. There were five free gwelyau of Hwfa’s kindred in the township, the eponyms of which were the names of his five sons. One of these was Gwely Mathwsalem ap Hwfa. Mathwsalem is said to have been Sioned’s nine x great–grandfather. His real name seems to have been forgotten, but he was long afterwards remembered as a "Methusaleh". Commote Llifon was dominated by his descendants, and the leading families which emerged from his line were those of Presaddfed, Chwaen, Bodychen and Treiorwerth. The kindred of Hwfa also shared the prrioritaiy right to present to all twelve prebends of the collegiate church of Caergybi with the kindred of Llywarch ap Brân;\textsuperscript{44} which rights and interests “must reflect a pattern of social, tenurial and ecclesiastical organisation that prevailed before the twelfth–century reform of the Welsh church”.\textsuperscript{45}

Llywarch ap Brân, Lord of Menai

Llywarch ap Brân (fl. c.1137) is described in the genealogies as the founder of the Second Noble Tribe of North Wales and lord of the Commote of Menai\textsuperscript{46}; his pedigree being taken back to Rhodri Mawr, King of Wales. He was the brother–in–law of Owain Gwynedd, their wives being sisters. Like Hwfa ap Cynddelw, he is said to have been distain to Owain, and to have lived at Tref Llywarch in Llanfwrog.\textsuperscript{47}

His estate was similar to that of Hwfa, a maenol or federal estate based on the free townships of Porthamel (Llanidan) in Commote Menai, with seven dependent hamlets of Llanedwen, Bodlew, Bodowyr, Myfyrian, Berw Uchaf, Cefnpoeth and Trescawen, and Trefywrch in Commote Talybolion, with eight dependent hamlets scattered over a wide area, which included Caergybi, Llanfwrog, Llanfachraeth, Llanfaethlu, and Bodwigan. The “Extent of Anglesey” (1352) records that four free gwelyau were named for his sons, Iorwerth, Cadwgan, Madog, and Bleddyn. Commote Menai was dominated by Llywarch’s descendants for several generations; and they were also influential in Commote Talybolion — there were gwelyau of Iorwerth ap Llywarch, Cadwgan ap Llywarch, and Madog ap Llywarch

\textsuperscript{42} Dwnn, Heraldic Visitations, 2: 197, 200, 259; Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire, Inventory, p. clxxxv.

\textsuperscript{43} Smith, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, 266.

\textsuperscript{44} Griffith, Pedigrees, 5, 390; Carr, “The extent of Anglesey, 1352”, 179; Carr, Medieval Anglesey, 29, 145, 152, 153, 154, 215, 248; Carr, “Jones Pierce Revisited”, 130.

\textsuperscript{45} Carr, Medieval Anglesey, 154.

\textsuperscript{46} See Richards, An Atlas of Anglesey, 38, for a map of medieval Talybolion and its townships, hamlets and parishes.

\textsuperscript{47} Dwnn, Heraldic Visitations, 2: 22, 139; Griffith, Pedigrees, 390; Pennant, History, 290; Bartrum, Welsh Genealogies, WG1 Llywarch 1, p. 592; Wolcott, Llowarch ap Bran (Problem #1. The ancestry of Llowarch).
in Trelywarch — where they shared proprietary rights of presentation to the church of Caergybi with the kindred of Hwfa ap Cynddelw. 48

The Presaddfed Family

The first transmission of Gronant lands, which then formed part of Gwely Cadwgan ap Llywarch, may have occurred when Penhesgyn was brought to the Presaddfed family by the marriage of Iorwerth ap Gruffudd.

In the generations between Mathwsalem ap Hwfa and his great–grandson Gruffudd ab Iorwerth, the only information we have from the genealogies is that they were settled at Presaddfed, and took wives from royal and noble families. Mathwsalem is said to have married a cousin, Annest, Owain Gwynedd’s sister and the daughter of Gruffudd II ap Cynan, King of Gwynedd (1081–1137) by his wife Angharad, daughter of Owain ab Edwyn, Lord of Tegeingl (Englefield, part of Flintshire). Mathwsalem’s mother is said to be Ceinfryd, a daughter of Ednowain Bendew (”Thick-Head”) (fl. c.1079), Lord of Tegeingl and founder of the Thirteenth Noble Tribe of North Wales, whose granddaughter Morfudd was Angharad’s mother. 49

Their son Maredudd was thus descended from the royal houses of Gwynedd and Deheubarth. He is said to have married Angharad, daughter of Llywarch Hwlwrch ap Gwrydr Gôch, Lord of Rhôs, whose descendant Tangwystl was the concubine of Llywelyn II ab Iorwerth, Prince of Gwynedd (1194–1240), and thus the paternal grandmother of Llywelyn III ap Gruffudd, Prince of Wales (1258–1282). 50 Lastly, Maredudd’s son Iorwerth is said to have married Gwenhwyfar, daughter of Ieuaf ap Cynfrig Efell, Lord of Eglwys Egle, a son of Madog II ap Maredudd, last King of Powys (1132–1160). 51

Although most of the poetry composed for Hwfa’s descendants has been lost, enough survives to show that they were patrons of note in Anglesey throughout the Middle Ages; and the descendants of Gruffudd’s great–great–grandson Hwllyn ap Hywel of Presaddfed, in particular, inspired more surviving poetry than any other 15th–century Anglesey family. 52

Gruffudd ab Iorwerth (fl. 1277–1308?) was one of those Welsh nobiles who defected from Prince Llywelyn ap Gruffudd to King Edward I in the summer of 1277. There is no evidence that he ever enjoyed the prince’s favour, and he probably reckoned the English king might be a better source of advancement. He led contingents of the royal forces in Snowdonia seeking the fugitive Prince Dafydd ap Gruffudd and was later engaged in the search for Dafydd’s eldest son, Llywelyn. His name appears in documents between 1277 and 1284. He is said to have been living in 1308. Despite his rejection of the native cause, Gruffudd was held in sufficient regard for the poet Bleddyn Farredd (fl. c.1258–1284) to compose an elegy at his death. His wife was Gwenllian, daughter of Rhirid Flaidd (“the Wolf”) ap


49 Griffith, Pedigrees, 5; cf. Bartrum, Welsh Genealogies, WG1 Ednywain Bendew 1, p. 262, and Hwfa 1, p. 555, where Ceinfryd is the wife of Cynddelw and mother of Hwfa, but no wife is recorded for Hwfa or Mathwsalem; Nicholas, Annals and Antiquities, 2: 438; Pennant, History, 308–9.

50 Griffith, Pedigrees, 5; cf. Bartrum, Welsh Genealogies, WG1 Hwfa 1, p. 555, who does not record a wife for Maredudd.

51 Bartrum, Welsh Genealogies, WG1 Hwfa 5, p. 519, and Bleddyn ap Cynfyn 13, p. 40.

52 Carr, Medieval Anglesey, 222–3; Griffith, Pedigrees, 5; Bartrum, Welsh Genealogies, WG1 Hwfa 5, p. 519.
Gwrgeneu (fl. 1160), Lord of Penllyn in Powys. Iorwerth, Hywel, Llywelyn, and Gruffudd Fychan.

Iorwerth ap Gruffudd (fl. 1284–1327) succeeded his father at Presaddfed, and also had Penhesgyn (Llanfaethlu), now represented by Penhesgyn Farm, which lies close to Gronant. He led men from Anglesey on military service against the Scots in the campaigns of King Edward II, is cited between 1284 and 1294, in 1307, and also in 1316; and was imprisoned with his brother Hywel in Caernarfon Castle in 1327. They seem to have been involved in a plot to rescue the deposed King Edward II from Berkeley Castle. His seven sons were praised in a poem of reconciliation by Gruffudd Gryg (fl. c.1340–1380), about the middle of the 14th century. Iorwerth’s brother Llywelyn submitted a petition to King Edward II in 1318–19, in which he said that his father and ancestors had had pencenhedlaeth over the heirs of the lineage of Hwfa, and which he now claimed. His youth and lack of power had prevented him from claiming the pencenhedlaeth until now. This suggests that Iorwerth was not the eldest son.

Iorwerth married Gwladus, daughter and heiress of Hywel y Goeg (“the Empty”, “Vain”), a younger son of the kindred that were later to become Hughes of Porthamel Issa (otherwise Plas Côch) in Llanidan. It is highly likely that Penhesgyn and some of the later Gronant lands formed Gwladus’ marriage portion. Hywel was a great-grandson of Llywarch ap Brân. He can be dated to 1215. His father, Iorwerth ap Cadwgan, can be dated to 1185. He held Porthamel Issa in direct line from Llywarch; and he also held kindred lands of Gwely Cadwgan ap Llywarch in the free township of Trelywarch, which included lands in Llanfwrog, Llanfachraeth and Llanfaethlu.

Iorwerth ap Gruffudd was succeeded at Presaddfed, Penhesgyn and Treiorwerth by his eldest son Iorwerth Ddu (“the Black”) (d. before 1391), whose wife was Gwenllian, daughter and heiress of Maredudd Benhir of Aberalaw (Llanfachraeth), a direct descendant of Owain Gwynedd. This appears to be the first mention of Treiorwerth as a separate holding, and it seems likely that it was the original homestead of Iorwerth ap Gruffudd, or perhaps of Iorwerth Ddu himself before he received Presaddfed. Although a layman, Iorwerth Ddu was one of the prebendaries of the collegiate church of Caergybi, which advowson was in the gift of the kindred of Hwfa ap Cynddelw. He is named in January 1336/7, and was dead by 1391. Among his descendants were the gentry families of Lewis of Presaddfed, Cemlyn, and Llysduelas; Griffith and Wynn of Treiorwerth; and Griffith of Penhesgyn.
According to the genealogies, Hywel ab Iorwerth Ddu (fl. 1371–c.1405?) had Presaddfed, Penhesgyn, Treiorwerth and Aberalaw. His wife was Angharad, daughter of Hywel ap Cynwrig Fychan of Llannefydd, Denbighshire. Hywel was one of a large group of descendants of Llywarch ap Brân and Hwfa ap Cynddelw who in 1371 claimed the right to present to all twelve prebends of the collegiate church of Caergybi. Between 1372 and 1375 he was rhaglaw (bailiff) of Llifon, and in 1381/2 he farmed the townships of Cleifiog and Llanllibio in the commote. There is no mention of him in connection with the Glyndŵr revolt (1400–1415), although he was alive.

Hywel’s eldest son Hwlcyn (d. after 1408?) had Presaddfed and Bodeon as his inheritance. His wife Eurddyled ferch Dafydd ab Iorwerth was yet another descendant of Llywarch ap Brân. He was rhingyll (beadle) of Talybolion between 1392 and 1395, and again in 1397–8, and also farmed the townships of Cleifiog and Llanllibio. He witnessed a deed in 1408, and died in rebellion during the Glyndŵr revolt, probably sometime after 1408. A panegyric cywydd to Hwlcyn ap Hywel (“Cad ddirwy keidw ddwyrodd”) has been ascribed to the Anglesey poet Rhisierdyn, in which a pilgrimage by Hwlcyn to Jerusalem is mentioned. His grandson was Huw Lewys ap Llywelyn of Presaddfed (fl. 1470–c.1520), husband of Robert Bulkeley’s aunt, Joan, “an alliance of two rising families which marked the acceptance of the Bulkeleys into the ranks of the Anglesey uchelwyr”. Huw was an important and wealthy man. He was rhaglaw of Commote Malltraeth in 1471–2, and in 1480–1 he farmed the raglotries of Malltraeth, Llifon and Talybolion.

The Treiorwerth Family

The second transmission of Gronant lands (or possibly the transmission of the whole), which then formed part of Gwely Madog ap Llywarch, probably occurred when Llanfwrog was brought to the Treiorwerth family by the marriage of Llywelyn ap Hywel.

Llywelyn ap Hywel (fl. 1396–1409), younger brother of Hwlcyn, and Sioned’s great–great–grandfather, had Treiorwerth in Bodedern. He was among the leading rebels during the Glyndŵr revolt, but made his peace with the crown in 1406, paying a substantial fine of £3. 6s. 8d. On 8 September 1406 he was appointed to a commission to conduct an inquiry in the borough of Newborough (Niwbwrch). He

59 Dwnn, Heraldic Visitations, 2: 228, and Griffith, Pedigrees, 204; Bartrum, Welsh Genealogies, WG1 Marchweithian 2, p. 147. Cynwrig Fychan, a man of considerable standing in Denbighshire, and a descendant of Marchweithian (fl. c.1020), lord of the Commote of Is–Aled in Rhufoniog, was living in 1294 and 1344. He held the lands of Carwedd Fynydd and Berain (Llannefydd) and others in Henllan (Lleweni), Denbighshire. Ancestor of Price of Plas Iolyn (Ysbytty Ifan), Price of Rhiwlas (Llanfor), and Vaughan of Pant Glas (Ysbytty Ifan).

60 It became largely a sinecure office under the English crown, as the role of the rhingyll increased in importance.

61 The farmer paid a lump sum for the right to collect the perquisites of an office, and found ways to make a personal profit.

62 Ellis, Record of Caernarvon, 246–8; Carr, Medieval Anglesey, 145, 215, 228, 278; Griffith, Pedigrees, 5, 34; Bartrum, Welsh Genealogies, WG1 Hwfa 8, p. 522.

63 The rhingyll accounted for the royal revenue and paid it over. There were many opportunities for him to make more personal profit by way of additional fees to oil the wheels of administration and justice.

64 Bangor University Archives. Penrhyn Mss. PENRH 394; National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion. Llanfair and Brynodol Mss. LLADOL. 13; Carr, Medieval Anglesey, 215, 223; Griffith, Pedigrees, 5, 95; Wiliam, “Y tradodiad barddol”, 50–3; Dictionary of Welsh Biography, David Myrddin Lloyd, “Rhisierdyn”.

65 Carr, Medieval Anglesey, 228.

66 Carr, Medieval Anglesey, 21.
farmed several townships in Llifon and Talybolion between 1396 and 1409. His wife was Mallt, daughter of (Rhys) ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed, a direct descendant of Madog, third son of Llywarch ap Brân. In the genealogies Mallt is not described as the heiress of her father or family, but it is reasonable to assume that her marriage portion included lands in *Gwely Madog ap Llywarch* in the free township of Treywarch, and that these included Llanfwrog and some, or all, of the Gronant lands in Llanfachraeth.

Hywel y Farf (“the Bearded”) (fl. c.1400–c.1450), Llywelyn’s son, held Treiorwerth. He was Sioned’s great-grandfather. He is not described as “of Llanfwrog” in the genealogies, but almost certainly held Llanfwrog and the Gronant lands in Llanfachraeth. His wife was Mallt ferch Rhys ab Ifan of Chwilog in Llanystumdwy, Gwynedd. They had four sons: Gruffudd of Treiorwerth, Lewys of Caerelen in Llanfihangel–yn–Nhowyn, Rhys of Llanfwrog, and Iorwerth of Llechylched in Bryngwran. He is said to have been Esquire of the Body, or personal attendant, to King Henry VI (1422–1461), but I have found no evidence of it; and it seems more likely that if he was in the royal service then it was that of King Henry V (1413–1422). Although there is no indication that Hywel had joined the Glyndŵr revolt (1400–1415), since his father had been a prominent rebel it seems likely that Hywel had followed Llywelyn’s lead, and had also made his peace with the crown in 1406. After the rebellion, several Welshmen secured positions at the English court. Hywel may have been among them, or he may have been one of the many Welshmen who fought with Henry V in France between 1415 and 1422 in the ongoing Hundred Years’ War. By 1424–5 he was in Anglesey as *rhingyll* of Llifon.

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71 Griffith, *Pedigrees*, 390, followed by Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies*, WG1 Hwfa 8, p. 522, neither of whom give a source. Esquires in Ordinary of the King’s Body were important members of the royal household. They were to be “attendant upon the king’s person, to array and unarray him, and to watch day and night” to be ready to help the King because “no man else [is] to set hands on the king” (Lerer, *Courtly Letters*, 107–8). It was considered a great honour to be granted the position, and because of the intimate and frequent access it gave to the king, it could become a position of considerable influence. The post may gradually have become rotational and more honorific, attached to office. There are instances of constables of castles and stewards of royal lands and lordships also being esquires of the body, whilst absent from court. By c.1518 the post had been amalgamated with that of Knight of the Body to form the new post of Gentleman of the Privy Chamber.

72 Welshmen were not denizens (citizens), as Englishmen were. Presumably if Hywel was in such an intimate appointment in the royal service he would have been granted denizenship, though there is no known record of it. If he was a servant of Henry VI, then it would seem he was of an older generation than Owain Tudor of Penmynydd, “The Rose of Mona”, who had fought at Agincourt in 1415, served in France in 1421, joined the household of the widowed Queen Catherine of Valois c.1423, and married her c.1429–30 after she had left the court.
The Llanfwrog Family

The Gronant lands then passed to the Llanfwrog family, a cadet branch of Treiorwerth, and eventually to Robert Bulkeley.

Rhys (fl. c.1440–c.1490) was Hywel y Farf’s second son, and Sioned’s grandfather. His wife was Catrin, daughter of Maredudd ap Rhys ab Ifan Llwyd. Rhys is the first of the family to be noted in the genealogies as “of Llanfwrog”, or “of Plas-γ–Glyn in Llanfwrog”, and would have held the Gronant lands. The hamlet of Llanfwrog was then a chapelry, the curacy of which was attached to the rectory of Llanfaethlu, in which parish it lay.\(^73\)

**Fig 2. Outline pedigree of the Llanfwrog Family**

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Hwfa ap Cynddelw (fl. c.1130–1170), Lord of Lifon
  = Ceinfryd ferch Ednowain Bendew ap Neiniad, Lord of Tegeingl

Mathwsalem ap Hwfa of Presaddfed
  = Annest ferch Gruffudd ap Cynan, King of Gwynedd

Maredudd ap Mathwsalem of Presaddfed
  = Angharad ferch Llywarch Hwiwrch ap Gwyrdr Goch, Lord of Rhôs

Iorwerth ap Maredudd of Presaddfed
  = Gwenhwyrfar ferch leuaf ap Cynfrig Efell ap Madog ap Maredudd, King of Powys

Gruffudd ab Iorwerth (fl. 1277–1308?) of Presaddfed
  = Gwenllian ferch Rhirid Flaidd ap Gwrgeneu, Lord of Penllyn

Iorwerth ap Gruffudd (fl. 1284–1327) of Presaddfed
  = Gwladus ferch Hywel y Goeg ab Iorwerth

Iorwerth Ddu ab Iorwerth (fl. 1336) (d. before 1391) of Presaddfed, Penhesgyn and Treiorwerth
  = Gwenllian ferch Maredudd Benhir ap Maredudd of Aberalaw

Hywel ab Iorwerth Ddu (fl. 1371–c.1405?) of Presaddfed, Penhesgyn, Treiorwerth and Aberalaw
  = Angharad ferch Hywel ap Cynfrig Fychan

Llywelyn ap Hywel (fl. 1396–1409) of Treiorwerth
  = Malt ferch (Rhys) ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed

Hywel y Farf ap Llywelyn (fl. c.1400–c.1450) of Treiorwerth
  = Malt ferch Rhys ab Ifan

Rhys ap Hywel y Farf (fl. c.1440–c.1490) of Llanfwrog
  = Catrin ferch Maredudd ap Rhys

Morys ap Rhys (fl. c.1480–c.1520) of Llanfwrog
  = Marsli ferch Gruffudd ap Madog Fychan

Sioned
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Morys (fl. c.1480–c.1520) was the third son of Rhys, and Sioned’s father. His wife was Marsli, daughter of Gruffudd ap Hywel ap Madog Fychan. Morys is described as “of Llanfwrog”, which would have included the Gronant lands. His eldest son Rhisiart inherited Plas-γ–Glyn, which was eventually conveyed to the Glynnes of

Glynllifon by the marriage of his granddaughter Catrin ferch Siôn ap Rhisiart with Thomas Glynne, High Sheriff of Anglesey in 1584–5.\(^{74}\)

**The origins and early development of the Gronant Estate**

The extent of Robert Bulkeley's original Gronant estate is unknown. The evidence, such as it is, points to the greater part being former kindred land in the township of Botan (Llanfachraeth), which was later augmented by the enclosure of crown land in the neighbouring township of Carneddor (Llanfaethlu). The ultimate result was an estate which lay in both parishes, straddling the boundary of parish and township alike. The first known reference to the property as “Gronant” is probably in 1579, where it is shown on Saxton's map of Anglesey, which he surveyed in 1577.\(^{75}\)

**Fig 3. Gronant**

The present house at Gronant (Fig. 3) is comprised of three units and lies within the parish of Llanfachraeth, as it always has. The first, and oldest, was built by Robert Bulkeley I in the first half of the 16th century. The second was built in the first quarter of the 17th century by Robert's grandson, Robert Bulkeley II. They are linked by a third unit, a 19th century extension. The curious thing about the


\(^{75}\) Christopher Saxton, *Atlas of the Counties of England and Wales*, 1579. Another early view can be found in John Speed's *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain*, 1611.
first two units is that both are types of houses not otherwise found on the island: one being a "hearth–passage" house,\(^{76}\) the other a "Snowdonian" house.\(^{77}\)

An interesting feature of the site is the abutment of the rear courtyard and the northern wall of the first unit to the parish boundary. The origin of these abutments becomes clear from information provided c.1545 by Robert Bulkeley's neighbour, Rhisiart ap Rhisiart, who had a twenty-one year crown lease of the vill of Carneddor from 14 July 1532.\(^{78}\)

Rhisiart alleged that Bulkeley had erected a house with a courtyard and orchard, which had been constructed partly on his own land in Botan and partly across the northern parish boundary of Llanfachraeth on adjacent crown land in Carneddor, leased by Rhisiart. The whole site had been walled about. Bulkeley was also accused of having stolen stones from the Carneddor land. In addition, other pieces of crown land in Carneddor leased by Rhisiart had also been enclosed by Bulkeley with his own adjacent land in Botan. Rhisiart took his complaint to the Court of Augmentations.\(^{79}\)

The dispute may have arisen as far back as 1532; but by the time Rhisiart had got the matter into court, the house had been built and the crown land enclosed. A warrant was drafted for a commission to investigate the matter, but left undated; which suggests that the investigation did not proceed. This was almost certainly due to the influence of Robert's brother, Sir Richard; and the action seems to have been circumvented by late 1546.\(^{80}\) Nothing more is heard of the matter, and Rhisiart was probably dead by early 1551–2.\(^{81}\) No record has been found of a lease

\(^{76}\) A sub–medieval stone–built storeyed house with a cross passage between the main hall on one side and a parlour on the other. It lies on a north–south alignment. Though largely rebuilt in the 1980s from its derelict condition, it retains original internal detail, including the remains of its post–and–panel partition, a diagonally–set chimney, moulded ceiling beams, chamfered lintels, and examples of colourful wall paintings of floral and geometric designs in an upper chamber. One passage doorway retains its original frame, partly repaired, of wooden posts either side supporting a Tudor arched lintel.

\(^{77}\) A sub–medieval stone–built storeyed house of direct entry "Snowdonian" type with two lateral chimney stacks set against the end gables, much modified in the 19th century as a conventional farmhouse. It lies on an approximate east–west axis.

\(^{78}\) Lewis and Davies, Records of the Court of Augmentations, 191.

\(^{79}\) TNA. Court of Augmentations and Court of General Surveyors. Miscellanea. E 314/67/49. 27 August 1545–1548. Complainant: Richarde ap Richarde. Defendant: Robert Bulkeley of Botan, gent. Complainant holds by lease of King Henry VIII under the seal of the Exchequer of Caernarfon the vill of Carneddor with its appurtenances in the commote of Talybolion, part of the principality of Wales, at an annual rent of £5, and being bound in 200 marks to keep the said lands. The defendant "has entered a parcel of said lands and has enclosed not only into his Court about the situation of his house and orchard for the enlarging of the same, which he has now builded, but also has enclosed divers other parcels of the King's lands to others of his own lands adjoining; has also taken stones from King's ground in occupation of the compl[ainant]". Warrant for commission. n.d.; Lewis and Davies, Records of the Court of Augmentations, 7 (no. 27/8).

\(^{80}\) Despite his association with Thomas Cromwell, who fell from power in 1540, Sir Richard Bulkeley remained on good terms with Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford and later Duke of Somerset, with whom he shared the office of chancellor and chamberlain of North Wales, and with John Dudley, Viscount Lisle and afterwards Earl of Warwick and Duke of Northumberland. Since he died in late 1546 or early 1547, it is likely that the matter of Robert's incursion into the Carneddor land had been resolved by then. A release and quitclaim by Robert Bulkeley dated 10 March 1547/8 of his right to lands and tenements in the townships of Llandyfrydog, Llanelliach and Llanfechell and Cemlyn in favour of his nephew, the second Sir Richard Bulkeley, suggests this may have been the quid pro quo (Bangor University Archives. Baron Hill Mss. 1319–1996. BHILL 1429).

\(^{81}\) Lewis and Davies, Records of the Court of Augmentations, 180–1 (no. 6/1/17), 30 February [sic] 1551/2. Lease to Richard Bethell of the vill of Carneddor and its appurtenances, previously held by Richard Richard under letters patent of Henry VIII for a term of 21 years.
or sale, and it seems that Robert Bulkeley simply subsumed the Carneddor land into his estate.

He is always described as "of Botan", as are some of his descendants. A picture seems to emerge of his having secured land in Botan township through his marriage with Sioned, and probably some by purchase or crown leases. His homestead may then have been at Pen–yr–Argae which, together with Botan Bach and Botan Fawr, remained with the Bulkeleys into the early 20th century. Some later deed evidence confirms the presence of Gafael Llywarch land in Botan, including land belonging to Gwely Cadwgan ap Llywarch, and escheated land belonging to Gwely Maredudd ap Llywelwyn, historically derived from Gafael Llywarch. Records also show that Robert Bulkeley's cousin William Lewis of Presaddfed and a certain William Bulkeley (probably Robert's elder brother) both had interests in crown leases of similar escheated gwely land in Botan. The town mill, Melin Botan, seems to have been in the vicinity of Pen–yr–Argae, and originally formed part of Gwely Maredudd.

Robert Bulkeley's holding included a block of land ranging north from Pen–yr–Argae to the boundary between Botan and Carneddor townships where — probably after 1532, but certainly before c.1545 — he built a new house, now known as Gronant, against that boundary, and probably on the footprint of an earlier homestead. Why did he choose this site? Almost certainly on account of the availability of nearby crown land into which he could intrude without too much difficulty, a plentiful supply of building materials and fresh water, and the opportunity to dam the stream, the גרוננט, which flows from the Carneddor side southwards to form part of the parish boundary. When dammed it would provide a mill pond, which would drive a mill. He would then not be dependent on the town mill or the other private mills in Botan for milling his corn.

By 1613, in the time of his grandson Robert Bulkeley II, there is evidence of a mill and mill pond in one of the Carneddor tyddynod which Robert Bulkeley I had enclosed some eighty years before. He married Catherine Meredith of Mynachdy and held lands in Caernarvonshire, Merionethshire and Montgomeryshire.

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*Author's Note.* William Bulkeley is perhaps to be identified with William Bulkeley who had held several crown leases, including one for a parcel of land in the neighbouring vill of Llanfachraeth, which was cancelled in favour of a new lessee (*Ibid.*, 178. n.d., c.1550?); and who, in turn, is perhaps to be identified with Robert Bulkeley's elder brother William Bulkeley of Plas Llangefni, who was High Sheriff of Anglesey in 1544–5, held lands throughout Anglesey, and died in 1549 (*Griffith, Pedigrees*, 12, 42). Sir Humphrey Gilbert, soldier, navigator, explorer, and discoverer of Newfoundland, was steward and lord of the manor of Nefyn, and held lands in Caernarvonshire, Merionethshire and Montgomeryshire.
estate was drawn up in connection with their marriage settlement. This included the capital messuage of Gronant, a tenement, and five tydynod in the township of Botan (Llanfachraeth); three tydynod and a mill just across the boundary in the township of Carneddor (Llanfaethlu); one tyddy in Llanddeusant; six tydynod in Llanfigael; two tydynod in Cornwylan (Llanrhyddlad); and, rather curiously, "one fielde being by the p[ar]sonage of llanderodocke" (Llandyfrydog). Of particular interest is the reference to a "tythyn llowarch" in Botan (tyddyn Llywarch), which proves that the Gronant estate still included historic kindred land.

Robert Bulkeley VII (d.1859) and his family left Gronant and removed to Pen–yr–Argae c.1835, being the last Bulkeleys to have lived at Gronant. In 1888 Gronant with its immediate lands was sold, being then described as "206: 1: 38 acres in pa. of Llanfaethlu and Llanfachraeth". The plan attached to the sale catalogue is an important piece of evidence, as it shows that the nucleus of Robert Bulkeley I's estate had survived intact for over three hundred years. The outline of the original enclosure of Gronant, straddling the parish and township boundary on a north–south axis, can be clearly identified from a 1924 map, together with details of the mill, mill pond, sluice, and farm buildings to the west; which can also be seen on Google Earth aerial views, showing evidence of surrounding open–field strip cultivation.

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85 Catherine was the daughter of Humphrey Meredith (d. 1627–8) of Mynachdy Gwyn, High Sheriff of Caernarvonshire in 1614–15. Mynachdy Gwyn is a "Snowdonian" type house, and there can be little doubt that it inspired the like house at Gronant. The Merediths were descended from Cadwgan ap Llywarch Brân, like Robert's grandmother Sioned, and had an interest in Gwely Cadwgan ap Llywarch in the township of Trelywarch (Llanfwrog). Dwnn, Heraldic Visitations, 2: 234, followed by Griffith, Pedigrees, 206, gives the pedigree as Humphrey Meredydd ap Maredudd ap Tomos ap Gruffudd ab Ieuan ap Hywel ap Tudur; and a vacant plot in that gwely is described as escheat land from Maredudd ap Llewelyn. The evidence points to Tudur having been appended to Maredudd ap Llewelyn in error. Tudur ap Hywel ap Tudur was actually descended from Iorwerth ap Llywarch and, according to the 1352 Extent, he was an owner of land in Ysgeifiog, Commote Menai, which was part of Gwely Maredudd ab Iorwerth. Humphrey Meredith was, therefore, almost certainly a descendant of Cadwgan ap Llywarch, not of Iorwerth ap Llywarch, and Wolcott suggests that the correct pedigree, with approximate floruits, looks like this: Tudur (1330) ap Hywel (1300) ap Tudur (1270) ap Gruffudd Llywd (1240) ap Llywelyn (1210) ap Gruffudd (1180) ap Cadwgan (1150) ap Llywrach (1120) ap Brân; and Maredudd (1305), Hywel's nephew, who died without issue when his land escheated to the crown, ap Llywelyn (1275) ap Gruffudd Llywd (1240), etc.

86 The mansion house together with its yard, outbuildings, and immediate land, including garden and orchard.


88 Anglesey Archives, Llangefni, Anglesey. WF/190. 1888. Sale Catalogue and Plan of the Gronant Estate. Sale by auction on 20 September 1888 at Llangefni (see Fig 4).

89 1924 Ordnance Survey County Series, XX.1 Scale 1: 1500.
Fig 4. Sale Plan of the Gronant Estate, 1888

PLAN OF GRONANT.
Lots 1 to 5 inclusive.

Scale of Chains.

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Conclusion

The kindred of Hwfa ap Cynddelw were established and important landowners in Commote Lifon by the end of the 12th century, with their principal homestead at Presaddfed in Bodedern.

During the course of the next three hundred years Hwfa’s descendants acquired additional lands by marriage, purchase, and crown leases, particularly Gafael Llywarch lands in neighbouring Commote Talybolion, where they established a substantial block of land holdings. They shared proprietorial rights in the collegiate church of Caergybi with the kindred of Llywarch ap Brân, and held high office in Talybolion and Lifon. By the end of the 15th century they were significant landowners in the parishes of Bodedern, Llanfachraeth, Llanfaethlu and Llanfrawg. Their estates of Presaddfed, Penhesgyn, Treiorwerth, Aberalaw and Llanfrawg were originally homesteads which developed out of kindred lands in Gafael Hwfa and Gafael Llywarch, and were later held under English tenure laws.

The lands which came to form the nucleus of the Gronant Estate, originally part of Gafael Llywarch in Llanfachraeth and Llanfrawg, almost certainly had been absorbed within the Plas–y–Glyn estate in Llanfrawg by the time of Rhys ap Hywel in the mid–15th century. By c.1532 some had passed to Robert Bulkeley I as the marriage portion of his wife, Sioned ferch Morys ap Rhys of Llanfrawg. These were augmented by Bulkeley’s encroachment into neighbouring crown land in Llanfaethlu, some of which land he enclosed to his new house, courtyard and orchard at Gronant before c.1545. Some of the land held by his grandson, Robert Bulkeley II, in 1613 can be identified as originally part of Gafael Llywarch in Llanfachraeth, and some as former crown land in Llanfaethlu.

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Bibliography


