

ARNOLD family, of Llanthony and Llanvihangel Crucorney, Monmouth

The founder of the fortunes of this old Monmouthshire family, descended from Gwilym ap Meurig but adopting the surname Arnold at an early stage, was Sir NICHOLAS ARNOLD (1507? - 1580), a gentleman pensioner of Henry VIII who, in consequence of his work for Thomas Cromwell at the Dissolution (18 June 1546) acquired Llanthony abbey (living, however, on his Gloucestershire estates), became a rabid Protestant, and was made chief justice of Ireland in 1564. His career is covered in *D.N.B. Supplement*, 75.

JOHN ARNOLD

Sir Nicholas Arnold's second son (wrongly called Thomas in *The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1942, 21), inherited Llanthony (the Gloucestershire estates passing to the children of a former marriage), but later leased it to the Hopton family (retaining the baronial rights), and bought the manor of Llanvihangel Crucorney as his seat. Educated at Middle Temple (1584), he was active in the Parliament of 1597 (sitting for Monmouthshire), and was on the skirts of the Essex conspiracy of 1601.

NICHOLAS ARNOLD (died 1665)

John Arnold's eldest son, sat for the county in the 1626 Parliament and was sheriff in 1633, but he was more active as horse-breeder than as politician, and no evidence can be found of the later allegation that he fought for Oliver Cromwell and was rewarded with lands. (Hist. MSS. Com., *Dartmouth*, iii, 282).

JOHN ARNOLD (born 1634), Whig politician

The eldest son of Nicholas Arnold, succeeded him as sheriff in 1669. He led the Whig and ultra-Protestant faction in Monmouthshire against the Tory and moderate Protestant **marquis of Worcester** (later **1st duke of Beaufort**), who as president of Wales had Arnold removed from the commission of the peace early in 1678. Arnold retorted by opposing **Worcester's** attempt to enclose Wentland forest and sending to the Speaker of the House of Commons a letter denouncing the activities of local recusants, on which he was questioned and thanked at the bar of the House (27 March 1678). The charges were examined by a committee presided over by **Sir John Trevor** (1637 - 1717), which produced a full report resulting in the dispersal of the Jesuit house at Cwm, Herefordshire, and the executions of Frs. **David Lewis**, **Philip Evans**, **John Lloyd**, and others. Although a conforming Anglican, he worked in association with prominent local Dissenters like **Samuel Jones**, with whom he was later alleged to have been engaged in seditious designs.

In September 1679 he unsuccessfully contested Monmouth borough against **Worcester's** heir, but unseated him on petition (26 November 1680) on the ground of the exclusion of the out-boroughs. Meanwhile (April 1680) an alleged Catholic-inspired attempt on his life (now believed to be a fabrication, although John Giles of Usk was convicted and punished for it) made him a popular hero alongside Shaftesbury, Oates, **Bedloe**, and other leaders of the country party, and he became prominent in exclusionist circles both at home and at Westminster, where he was re-elected for Monmouth in 1681. But his star waned with the Tory reaction of 1682, and in November 1683 **Beaufort** secured a King's Bench verdict against him of scandalum magnatum, which he vainly tried to avert by further accusations against papists.

In default of paying £10,000 damages he was in prison for several years, losing the seat he had obtained on the Middlesex and Westminster benches. He was again returned for Monmouth in the Convention Parliament (January 1689), but chose Southwark when he was elected for both in the following month. He failed to get the judicial verdict quashed, but recovered his seat on the Westminster and Middlesex benches (3 April 1690), maintaining his association with Oates, his coffee-house intrigues and his advanced political sentiments; but although he sat once more for Monmouth from 1695-8 he had no further influence in the House. After his death Llanthony and Llanvihangel were sold by his heir NICHOLAS ARNOLD (born 1669) to the Harley s of Brampton Bryan.

Author

Emeritus Professor Arthur Herbert Dodd, (1891 - 1975)

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