

## BULKELEY family, Anglesey, etc.

One of the most powerful families in North Wales, with its chief Welsh seat at Baron Hill (and Pen-y-parc) by Beaumaris. At the height of its power it had lands in all six commotes of Anglesey, while it had important interests in the Creuddyn peninsula, in the town of Conway, in the eastern and western districts of Arllechwedd; it had much property on the Hirael foreshore in Bangor and in the town of Caernarvon; by the marriage in 1749 of the 6th viscount to Emma, daughter and heiress of Thomas Rowlands of Caerau, were added the Caerau estate in north-west Anglesey and the Plas-y-nant lands by Betws Garmon that stretched past Rhyd-ddu to the slopes and summit of Snowdon. In the course of years subsidiary families, younger branches, had grown up, quite important entities, in their own right; early in the 16th century the Bulkeleys of Porthamel, who came to an inglorious end when Francis Bulkeley shot himself at Plas Llangedfni in 1714, and the Bulkeleys of Gronant and Dronwy, the second being represented in later days by Sir John Bulkeley of Presaddfed, whose widow married the **Rev. John Elias**; later in the century branched out the Bulkeleys of Brynddu, of whom **William**, the diarist, was the most noteworthy. Then follow the Bulkeleys of Cremlyn, Cleifiog, Plas Goronwy, and Ty'n-y-caeau, more subsidiary still.

The family's ancient home was in north-east Cheshire. The exact date of the migration west is not known, nor is there proof that the first stopping-place was Beaumaris (certain happenings point to Conway). It is safe to say that the Bulkeleys were settled in Anglesey before 1450; two years before that one of them had married Alice, daughter of Bartholomew de Bolde, a citizen of Conway who had acquired much land on the left bank of the river, a solid nucleus to the Bulkeley lands in Arllechwedd Isaf.

Acquisition of farms in Caernarvonshire and Anglesey went on apace; the family gradually grew in importance, till one of them, RICHARD (died 1546 or early 1547), was knighted (about 1534), and his brother ARTHUR (died 1552) became bishop of Bangor. The greatest of these early knights was undoubtedly the third, RICHARD (died 1621), head of the family from 1572 to 1621, friend of queen Elizabeth and bitter antagonist to the earl of Leicester's schemes in Wales. For a generation after his death, the affairs of Baron Hill went under a cloud; the alleged poisoning of the 2nd knight (RICHARD, died 1645), the marriage of his widow to the alleged poisoner Sir Thomas Cheadle, the long-drawn and inconclusive trials at Great Sessions, followed by a number of deaths in the elder line that brought THOMAS (died 1659), younger son of the third Sir Richard, to be undoubted lord of Baron Hill (so unexpected at one time was this that Thomas had been sent across the Menai to supervise the Bulkeley lands in Arllechwedd, and had at one time thought of emigrating to Virginia). He was hardly in the saddle when the Civil War broke out, in which he was the natural leader of the king's men in the island of Anglesey; so well did he please the Cavaliers that early in 1644 he was created viscount Bulkeley of Cashel in Ireland. He was one of the chief forces behind the ill-starred Anglesey insurrection of 1648, and stood to lose more by the capitulation and the fine that followed than any of his fellow-islanders: to crown all, he lost his eldest son and heir early in 1650 by the duel on Lavan Sands, which eventually sent Richard Cheadle, son of the alleged poisoner, to the scaffold at Conway castle. The death of the eldest son and the decimation of the estate pointed rather urgently to a rich marriage for the second son (ROBERT, died 1659); he married a daughter of a London alderman, with a dowry of £7,000, niece of William Harvey, the distinguished medical scientist of 'circulation' fame, whose shaky signature appears at the foot of the marriage settlement of 1654. The 2nd viscount's grandson (RICHARD, 4th viscount, died 1724) was a vigorous personality, but such was the cumulation of offices in his own person that the squires of the western commotes broke out in revolt with **Owen Meyrick** of Bodorgan as their leader, who fought four county elections with the 4th viscount, failed in 1708 and 1710, won in 1715, lost again in 1722.

The Toryism of the 4th (died 1724), the 5th (RICHARD, died 1739), and the 6th (JAMES, died 1752) viscounts was so rank and high that they were suspected of being Jacobites, a suspicion strengthened by our finding busts of the two Pretenders and of Henry, cardinal York, in the Baron Hill inventory of 1822, and by discovering a secret docket of letters addressed to the head of the family detailing Jacobite fortunes in 1715. The 7th and last viscount - THOMAS JAMES WARREN BULKELEY - was raised to the peerage of the United Kingdom in 1784, but died without issue in 1822. With him the peerage became extinct, and the long line of Bulkeleys of Baron Hill, that had lasted in unbroken succession for wellnigh four centuries, was at last broken. Lord Bulkeley was to be followed by his nephew Richard (son of his half-brother Sir ROBERT WILLIAMS, 1764 - 1830), who received the king's special permission to assume the name of Sir RICHARD BULKELEY WILLIAMS BULKELEY in 1827; he was born 23 September 1801, and died 28 August 1875.

Some measure of the Bulkeley influence in Anglesey can be gauged by their having represented, in person or through their nominees, both county and boroughs in Parliament from the middle of the 16th to the middle of the 19th century. They pulled such weight in Caernarvonshire that when the 1st baron Penrhyn in 1796, backed by the whole influence of bishop John Warren, saw well to challenge the re-election of Sir Robert Williams (v.s.), the sitting member, the latter was easily victorious (690: 370). Sir Robert was to be re-elected for Caernarvonshire six times after this election of 1796.

### Author

**Thomas Richards**, (1878 - 1962)

### Sources

Angharad Llwyd, *A History of the Island of Mona, or Anglesey including an account of its natural productions, Druidical antiquities, lives of eminent men, the customs of the court of the ancient welsh princes, etc.*: being the prize essay to which was adjudged the first premium at the Royal Beaumaris Eisteddfod, held in the month of August,

1832 (Rhuthin 1833), 148-65

Ormerod (ed. Helsby), *History of the County Palatine City of Chester* (1882), iii, 621-8

*Bangor Manuscripts at University College North Wales Library, Bangor*, 1920-39

*Baron Hill MSS. at University College North Wales Library, Bangor*

J. E. Griffith, *Pedigrees of Anglesey and Carnarvonshire Families* (1914), 42-3

*Anglesey Antiquarian Society & Field Club Transactions*, 1940 (63-70), 1943 (23-34)

W. R. Williams, *The parliamentary history of the principality of Wales, from the earliest times to the present day, 1541-1895* (Brecknock 1895), 1-13 [Anglesey], 63 [Caernarfonshire]

### Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q20732675](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q20732675)

**Published date:** 1959

**Article Copyright:** <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/>



APA Citation



Richards, T., (1959). BULKELEY family, Anglesey, etc.. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Retrieved 11 Nov 2024, from <https://biography.wales/article/s-BULK-ELE-1400>

[Copy to Clipboard](#)

[Privacy & Cookies](#)  
[Copyright](#)  
[The Project](#)  
[Help](#)  
[Contact](#)



LLYFRGEL  
THE NATION

