

DAVIES-COOKE family, of Gwysaney, Flintshire, successors of the DAVIES family, of Llannerch, Denbighshire, and Gwysaney.

The family of Davies of Gwysaney is descended in direct line from Cynric Efell (fl. 1200), the elder of the twin sons of **Madog ap Maredudd**, prince of Powys, who, on the death of his father, succeeded to the lordship of Eglwys Egle, a division of the lordship of Bromfield, a part of Ruabon, and of Ystrad Alun Uwch Gwysaney (later known as Moldsdale). Cynric married Golle, daughter and heiress of Griffith ap Howel, fifth in descent from **Elstan Glodrydd**.

The patronymic Davies was first assumed by JOHN AP DAVID, who married Jane, widow of Richard Mostyn and daughter of Thomas Salisbury, of Leadbroke, Flintshire. They had three children - two sons, Robert and John, and a daughter, Catherine, who married Edward Morgan of Golden Grove, Flintshire. ROBERT DAVIES (?- 1600), who succeeded to the family estate, obtained on 20 April 1581 from the College of Heralds a confirmation of the family arms, and also the crest borne by his descendants. He married (1) Catherine, daughter of **George Ravenscroft** (of Bretton, Flintshire, and (2) Elizabeth, widow of John Haynes. By his first wife he had three sons, of whom the second, THOMAS DAVIES, became a lieutenant-colonel for Charles I and constable of Hawarden castle, 1643, was 'servant of King Henry I' and had command of a regiment under **Sir Charles Morgan**, lord-general of king Christian V of Denmark (1646 - 1699), a portrait of whom, painted by Cornelius Jonson, hangs at Gwysaney. Many interesting letters written by him from the Continent are still preserved at Gwysaney, and transcripts of these and of other letters to him are in the National Library of Wales. He was buried at Mold, 7 March 1655.

Robert Davies was succeeded by his eldest son, ROBERT DAVIES (1581 - 1633), who was born at Chester, and christened in St. John's church there on 29 July 1581. He served the office of high sheriff for Flintshire, of which county he was a magistrate and D.L. In 1626 he transferred to Jesus College, Oxford, the right of nomination to the advowson of S. Winefred's, Holywell, of which he was lay rector and patron. He married Anne, only daughter and heiress of John Haynes, receiver for queen Elizabeth of her revenues in Wales. Robert Davies died 27 January and was buried at Mold on 29 January 1633. Their only son

ROBERT DAVIES (1616 - 1666), a gentleman and soldier

He was born at Gwysaney on 19 February 1616. When he was but 15 years of age, he married, at the parish church of Gresford, Denbighshire, on 29 July 1631, Anne, daughter and co-heiress (with Eleanor, wife of Kenrick Eyton of Eyton, Denbighshire) of **Sir Peter Mutton**. Robert Davies had just turned 17 years of age when his father died, whereupon he was placed under the joint guardianship of his father-in-law, and of his uncle, colonel Thomas Davies. A staunch Royalist, he was besieged in his house at Gwysaney, 12 April 1645, by Sir William Brereton's forces. The front door which he put up in 1640 still bears the mark of the siege. He was imprisoned in 1658, in Chester castle whence he was released by an order signed by Cromwell, on 30 June, and which is still extant among the papers kept at Gwysaney. He was high sheriff for Flintshire, in 1644-5-6 and 1660, and his name appears among those deemed qualified to be made a Knight of the Royal Oak at the Restoration. He died 4 October 1666 and was buried at Mold. There were six sons and seven daughters of his marriage, of whom the oldest son, MUTTON DAVIES (1634 - 1684), soldier, inherited Llannerch Park from his mother, and there, in the reign of Charles II, made beautiful gardens after designs which he had seen during his travels as a soldier in France and the Low Countries. Unfortunately they were destroyed in the 18th century, but pictures of them still exist at Gwysaney. He, like his father, suffered for upholding the Royal cause, being imprisoned in Chester castle, whence he was released on parole for one month, as from 28 January 1659, by colonel Thomas Croxton, governor of the city. He married Elizabeth, only daughter of Sir Thomas Wilbraham of Woodhay, Cheshire, and was high sheriff for Flintshire in 1670 and M.P. for the county from 18 November 1678 to 4 March 1681. He died 29 October 1684 and was buried at Mold.

Mutton Davies was succeeded by his son, ROBERT DAVIES (1658 - 1710), antiquary and naturalist. A sound scholar, he was a keen collector of books and valuable manuscripts, many of which are now deposited in the N.L.W. Among them is the famous 'Book of Llan Dav,' which is fully described by **E. D. Jones** in *N.L.W. Jnl.*, iv, 123 et seq. Part of the collection was briefly described by John Cordy Jeaffreson in the *Appendix* (pp. 418-26) to the *Sixth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, Part i, 1877-8, and in the *Annual Report of the N.L.W.* for 1946-7. Robert Davies married Letitia, daughter of **Edward Vaughan** of Trawsgoed, Cardiganshire, and grand-daughter of **Sir John Vaughan**, Chief Justice of Common Pleas. He died 8 July 1710, and was buried at Mold. His widow married Peter Pennant of Bychton and Downing, Flintshire. The Llannerch and Gwysaney estates passed to his son, ROBERT DAVIES (1684 - 1728), born 2 September 1684, high sheriff of Flintshire. He married Anne, daughter of John Brockholes, of Cloughton Hall, Lancashire. Of this Robert Davies there are two portraits at Gwysaney. He died 22 May 1728, and was succeeded by his eldest son, ROBERT DAVIES (1710 - 1745), who married Letitia, daughter of Broughton Whitehall of Broughton. Their son and heir, JOHN DAVIES (1737 - 1785), who died unmarried, leased Llannerch Hall with its library for fifteen years from 13 November 1778 to **William Davies Shipley**, dean of St Asaph. A catalogue of the manuscripts in the Llannerch library, taken 21 June 1787, by T. Jeffreys, together with an abstract of the aforementioned lease, was printed by **Sir Thomas Phillipp**s at his Middle Hill press about 1840. John Davies was buried at Mold, 27 March 1785, being succeeded by his two surviving sisters and co-heirs, LETITIA and **MARY**. The former, who obtained Llannerch estate as her share of her brother's property, married Daniel Leo, of Bath, and, dying without issue on 11 December 1801, aged 67 years, devised her possessions to her cousin, Anne Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Peter Davies, and wife of the Rev. George Allanson. **Mary**, who succeeded to Gwysaney, married **Philip Puleston**, of Hafod-y-wern, Denbighshire, chamberlain of North Wales, by whom she had an only daughter, **FRANCES**, who married **BRYAN COOKE** of Owston, Yorkshire, colonel of the 3rd West York Militia, and M.P. for the borough of Malton. Colonel Cooke died 8 November 1820 and was succeeded by **PHILIP DAVIES COOKE** of Owston and Gwysaney, high sheriff of Flintshire in 1824.

Author

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Sources

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J. B. Burke, *A Genealogical History of the House of Gwysaney* (London 1847)

P. B. Davies-Cooke, *A Short History of Mold Parish Church* (Mold 1905)

The National Library of Wales Journal, iv, 123 et seq., v, 220-1, vii, 326-42

NLW Archives: **NLW MS 1551E: Letters, &c.**

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NLW Archives: **NLW MS 1588E: Pedigrees, letters, etc.**

NLW Archives: **NLW MS 1591D: Transcripts, etc.**

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NLW Archives: **NLW MS 1593Ei: A Survey of the Lordship of Ruthin**

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Archifau LIGC: NLW MS 17154B: Schedule of title deeds and papers belonging to the Gwysaney family

Mary Puleston, NLW MS 17136C: Letters concerning the Gwysaney estate

T. A. Glenn, *The family of Griffith of Garn and Plasnewydd in the County of Denbigh, as registered in the College of Arms from the beginning of the XIth Century* (London 1934), 100 et seq

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