

## DEVEREUX of Lamphey, Pembrokeshire, Ystrad Ffin, Carmarthenshire, Vaynor and Nantaria, Montgomeryshire, Pencoyd, Brecknock, etc.

A Norman family, one branch of which settled in Herefordshire soon after the Conquest, and eventually acquired important interests in south and central Wales.

### WALTER DEVEREUX, 1st viscount Hereford (c. 1491 - 1559)

The eldest son of John, lord Ferrers, to whose title he succeeded in 1501, adding to it in 1550 that of viscount Hereford. He became a member of the Council of Wales in 1513; in 1525 steward of the household of Mary, Princess of Wales, and C. J. of South Wales; in 1526 chamberlain of South Wales and of the counties of Cardigan and Carmarthen. He was also high steward of Builth and steward of Old Carmarthen. In 1531 a large share of the confiscated estates of **Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd** (see under **Rice of Dynevor**) fell to Devereux, who thus 'assumed the leadership of West Wales' (*Laws, Little England*, 272), and his position there was safeguarded in the Act of Union (27 Henry VIII, c. 26 § 39). He was involved in disputes with **William Barlow**, bishop of S. Davids, in 1538, with **Henry Somerset** (see **Somerset family**), 2nd earl of Worcester over the stewardship of Arwystli and Cyfeiliog in the same year, with the boroughs of Haverfordwest (1536) and of New Carmarthen (1540), one result of this last quarrel being the amalgamation of the two Carmarthen's. He was also a commissioner for the coastal defence in South Wales in 1539. He is credited with the foundation of the grammar school at Carmarthen which from 1576 bore the title of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School.

### Sir RICHARD DEVEREUX (died 1547)

Son of Walter. He deputized for his father in many of his Welsh offices, became mayor of Carmarthen (1536), and M.P. for Carmarthenshire (1545), and in 1547 received from the Crown the episcopal manor of Lamphey, recently alienated to Henry VIII by bishop Barlow, and the principal Welsh seat of the Devereux for the next century.

### WALTER DEVEREUX, 1st Devereux earl of Essex and 2nd viscount Hereford (1540 - 1576)

Eldest son of Sir Richard (died 1547), was born at Carmarthen. By acquiring the stewardship of the dissolved monastic foundations of Whitland, Llanllŷr, and Carmarthen Priory, he consolidated the position of the family as 'nursing fathers of the ultra-Protestant party' in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire (*Laws, op. cit.*, 303). In 1559, on succeeding as viscount Hereford, he became steward and receiver of Builth, of Walscot, Wdygdada, and Elvet, and of the Welsh courts in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire, and about 1574 he was added to the Council of Wales, having previously tried to undermine the authority of the president (**Sir H. Sidney**), by challenging his choice of sheriffs (*Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, vi, 167-8). In 1572 he was made earl of Essex, and next year went on an expedition to Ireland, where he remained (with an interval of eight months at Lamphey, November 1575 - July 1576) until his death after returning to Ireland as earl marshal, 1576, when his remains were brought back for burial to his birthplace. The marriage of his daughter Dorothy to **Sir Thomas Perrot** (see **Perrot family**) healed an old feud between the two leading houses of Pembrokeshire and increased Devereux influence there; with her second marriage to Henry Percy, son of the earl of Northumberland, much Devereux property in Carmarthenshire passed into Percy hands, including the six 'Percy rectories' of south Carmarthenshire, notorious to Puritans of the next century for their fat incomes and neglected parishioners; Llan-y-bri, a chapel of ease pertaining to one of them, was later secured for a body of Independents through the offices of **William Evans** (died 1718).

### Sir GEORGE DEVEREUX (fl. 1580)

The 1st earl's brother, lived after his death and under the terms of his will at Lamphey till he moved to the family seat in Staffordshire, c. 1592. About five years later he became tenant at Llwyn-y-brain, near Llandoverly; but the belief (*Laws, op. cit.*, 303) that he used it to harbour Puritans seems to be based on the erroneous designation of **Rhys Prichard** as a Puritan. Chronically impecunious, he lived largely on the bounty of his nephew the 2nd earl (below), whom he attended on his expeditions to Rouen (1591-2) and Cadiz (1596), being one of the 'knights of Calés' dubbed by the young earl. He fell under suspicion of complicity in the Essex revolt of 1601, and his estates were confiscated; but he recovered his fortune by marrying (1610) Joan, daughter of **Sir John Price of Brecon** (died 1573?) and widow of **Thomas Jones** ('*Twm Sion Catti*,' c. 1530 - 1609), acquiring through her considerable property at Ystrad Ffin, Carmarthenshire. He served as sheriff for Carmarthenshire in 1581 and for Cardiganshire in 1587 (while at Lamphey), and again for Cardiganshire in 1611 (while at Ystrad Ffin).

### ROBERT DEVEREUX, 2nd earl of Essex and 3rd viscount Hereford (1567 - 1601)

Son of the 1st earl, was born in Herefordshire but at 15 went to live at Lamphey, then in the occupation of his uncle Sir George (above), from whose household he took **Rhys Prichard**, as his chaplain and **Gelly Meyrick** (see **Meyrick family**) as his steward, factotum, and 'in Wales ...almost a viceroy' (D. Mathew, *The Celtic Peoples*, 1933, 341). In 1594 he sealed the Pembrokeshire Bond of Association for the defence of the queen; after that, despite his appointment as 'custos rotulorum' for the county, he had little direct contact with Wales; but **Meyrick** organized for him a following there among Devereux tenants, connections, and neighbours and those of the **Meyricks** in west Wales and Radnorshire, and among freelances and soldiers of fortune from North Wales, attracted by Essex's personal prowess (for lists, see Mathew, *op. cit.*, chapters xviii-xxii; *E.H.R.*, lix, 348-70). Many of these were picked for key posts in his expeditions to Rouen (1591-2), Cadiz (1596) - where Essex lost his brother Walter, who was brought home to Carmarthen for burial - Azores (1597), and Ireland (1599-1600); and some supported him to the death in his final bid for power (1601).

### ROBERT DEVEREUX, 3rd earl of Essex and 4th viscount Hereford (1591 - 1646)

Son of the 2nd earl, is not known to have resided on the Welsh estates of the family (despite their restoration in 1604, when the penalties of his father's attainder were wiped out), save for a brief spell in 1613, when he retired to Lamphey during negotiations for his divorce from the first lady Essex; but the connection with west Wales was maintained by his appointment as steward and keeper of the royal manors in Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, and Cardiganshire (1606), his membership of the Council of Wales (1617), and his nomination by Parliament as lord-lieutenant of Montgomeryshire (February 1642). Many old followers of his father remained loyal to the family: e.g. when he joined Sir Horace Vere's volunteer force to the Palatinate (1620) he had with him see **John Meyrick** (see **Meyrick family**) and **Rowland Laugharne**, both of whom rallied to him in the Civil War, but the North Wales families who had been in the 2nd earl's service mostly took the other side in his son's day.

With the 3rd earl's death in 1646 the earldom became extinct, but the Welsh connection persisted through the viscounty, which devolved on

### WALTER DEVEREUX, 5th viscount Hereford (1578 - c. 1657)

A younger grandson of the 1st viscount and cousin to the 1st earl of Essex, who was named by the Lords as lord-lieutenant of Monmouthshire in 1646 and a member of the Radnorshire militia committee in 1648.

### EDWARD DEVEREUX, 8th viscount Hereford (1675 - 1700)

Grandson of Walter Devereux, the 5th viscount Hereford. He held the stewardship of courts baron in Cardiganshire and Carmarthenshire; but after him the title passed to a Montgomeryshire branch, through a nephew of the 5th viscount, Sir GEORGE DEVEREUX (died 1665), who was 'recruiter' M.P. for Montgomery in the Long Parliament (6 April 1647), was suspended as a 'delinquent' the following May, but signed the Montgomeryshire declaration for Parliament on 20 May 1648. After the king's execution he remained in retirement till he began to sit on county committees in 1657 and accepted office as sheriff in 1648. He married Bridget, daughter and heiress of Arthur Price of Vaynor, Montgomeryshire. Their grandson PRICE DEVEREUX (1664 - 1740), 9th viscount Hereford, was Tory M.P. for Montgomery from 1691 till his succession to the title in 1700, and lord-lieutenant of the shire, 1711-14. His son PRICE DEVEREUX (1694 - 1748), 10th viscount Hereford, was M.P. for the shire till his succession in 1740, when he ranked as premier viscount of England. He voted against Walpole's Hessian mercenaries (1730), and his Excise Bill (1733), and for the repeal of the Septennial Act (1734). In 1719 he was sheriff of Brecknock, where he inherited the estate of the Morgans of Pencoyd near Hay. He married as his second wife (1740) a daughter of **William Price of Rhiwlas, Meirionnydd**. On his death the title passed to EDWARD DEVEREUX (c. 1710 - 1760), 11th viscount Hereford, descended from a younger son of George Devereux (died 1665) (above), and on the female side from the Vaughans of Nantaria and the Glvns of Maesmawr (both in Montgomeryshire), whose estates he inherited. He was born, married, and buried within the county, which remained the chief centre of the family's interests till the succession of GEORGE DEVEREUX (1744 - 1804), 13th viscount Hereford, who transferred them to Brecknock by marrying into a branch of the family settled there and making Pencoyd his chief Welsh seat. His successors have continued to take a prominent part in Brecknock politics.

## Author

**Emeritus Professor Arthur Herbert Dodd**, (1891 - 1975)

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