

DOLBEN (DOULBEN, DOULBIN, or DAULBIN) of Segrwyd, Denbighshire, etc.

This family, probably not of Welsh origin and appearing in early records as 'Doulben,' first settled in Denbighshire after **Henry VII's** grant of Segrwyd to **ROBERT DOLBEN** for his services against the Cornish rebels at Blackheath (1497). His grandson and namesake became recorder and steward of Denbigh, and others of the family entered trade there, supplying the borough with a succession of common councillors and civic officials.

DAVID DOLBEN (1581 - 1633), bishop of Bangor

Son of Robert Wyn Dolben (great-grandson of the first Robert Dolben above) and of Jane, daughter of Owen ap Reinallt of Glyn Llugwy. He entered S. John's College, Cambridge, in 1602, holding one of the scholarships founded by **Dr. John Gwyn** (died 1574), and graduated B.A. 1606, M.A. 1609, and D.D. 1626. Ordained by George Abbot, bishop of London, in 1607, he became successively vicar of Hackney (1619) and Llangernyw (1621), and prebendary of S. Asaph (1626), and was elected a capital Burgess of Denbigh in 1627. On the death of **Lewis Bayly**, he was elected to the vacant see of Bangor, receiving consecration at the hands of Abbot, now archbishop of Canterbury (March 1632), and resigning his living of Llangernyw. He was a firm administrator, refusing to let family influence stand in the way of ecclesiastical discipline, but he was taken ill in May 1633, resigned his other preferments, and in the following November died at Bangor House, the London residence of the bishops of Bangor in Shoe Lane, Holborn. He was buried in his old church of Hackney, where he is commemorated by a monumental inscription (text in **Browne Willis**, *Bangor*, 112). Anthony Wood describes him as 'learned,' but no work of his has survived save some undergraduate verses in memory of a fellow-student, Sir Edward Lewkner (died 1605), a connection of Sir Richard Lewkner the Welsh judge and Pembrokeshire magistrate (**Williams**, *Welsh Judges*, 33; Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, I, iii, 82). The bequest to his college of funds for the purchase of some 300 Hebrew books does, however, suggest scholarly tastes. **Williams** gives no authority for his statement (*Ancient and Modern Denbigh*, 206) that Dolben was 'an able Welsh scholar and preacher.' The claim that **Edmund Griffith**, dean of Bangor, was Dolben's own nominee for succession to the see was disputed in his day (*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*, 1633-4, 318).

The bishop left no children, but his brother **JOHN DOLBEN** (of Caeau Gwynion) became through his daughter Emma (married **Rev. Hugh Williams of Llantrisant**) the grandfather of **Sir William Williams the Speaker** (1634 - 1700). Another brother, **WILLIAM DOLBEN** (died 1643), after receiving a pardon from Charles I in 1625 for crimes of violence, was dismissed from the county bench and the aldermanship of Denbigh as a 'common barrator' in 1638, when complaints were also made of him to Laud by his vicar; but he was once more reinstated and served as sheriff in 1639 (N.L.W. Llewenny MSS. 3 (33, 48, 65, 146), 40 (4), **NLW MS 1600E** (250, 256)). William's eldest son **JOHN DOLBEN** (died 1662), who succeeded to the estate, was a lieutenant-colonel in Charles's army, helped to defend Denbigh castle, and was fined (at one-tenth) £107 by Parliament in 1647. In September 1659 he took part in Booth's rebellion and helped to hold Chirk castle for Charles II. Two other members of the family took part in the attempt to surprise Denbigh and Ruthin castles for the king in May and July, 1648, and another manufactured saltpetre for the county Royalist forces under authority of the local commissioners of array (*Cal. Cttee. for Compounding*, iii, 1718; *Camb. Quart. Mag.*, i, 72; Hist. MSS. Com., *Portland*, i, 475-6; *C.J.*, vii, 791). **JOHN DOLBEN** (died 1709), son of the Royalist colonel, was in 1684 one of a commission of ten on concealed Crown lands in Denbighshire (*Cal. Treasury Books*, vii, 1132). With him the direct male line died out, the estate passing through his daughter to her husband John Mostyn, great-grandson of **Sir Roger Mostyn** (died 1642 - see the article **Mostyn of Mostyn**) and pioneer of the broadcloth industry at Denbigh (1749- c. 1770).

Other branches of the family remained prominent in local society and politics until the 18th century, some members holding minor office under the revived Council of Wales after the Restoration (*Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*, 1660-1 (104), 1667 (139); *Cal. Treas. Books*, iv, 751, vi, 534, vii, 543, ix, 1845), others playing their part in the civic life of Ruthin (**W. M. Myddelton**, *Chirk Castle Accounts, 1666-1753*; N.L.W. Brogyntyn MSS., letter 100); while **DAVID DOLBEN** (c. 1686 - c. 1749), son of Hugh Dolben of Llangynhafal, after education at Ruthin and at Magdalene, Cambridge, held several Denbighshire livings and became a canon of Bangor (**A. I. Pryce**, *Diocese of Bangor Through Three Centuries*, 18, 21, 27-8). But the most prominent members of the family after the bishop of Bangor's death sprang from a branch which had migrated to Pembrokeshire. The founder of this branch was **JOHN DOLBEN**, merchant, of Haverfordwest, whose precise relationship to the parent stock is uncertain, but who married Alice, daughter of **Richard Myddelton of Denbigh** and sister of **Sir Hugh Myddelton**. His son **WILLIAM DOLBEN** (1588 - 1631), successively vicar of Stackpool Elidyr, Pembrokeshire (1616), Lawrenny, Pembrokeshire (1620), rector of Llanynys, Denbighshire (1623), and of Stanwick and Benefield, Northamptonshire (1623), married Elizabeth, daughter of captain Hugh Williams of Wig, a soldier of fortune (*Acts of the Privy Council of England*, 1621-3, 368), and of Elizabeth, sister of **archbishop John Williams**. Through the influence of his wife's uncle (then bishop of Lincoln) he was made prebendary of Caistor (1629), and just before his death he is said to have been named for a Welsh bishopric, but this cannot have been Bangor (as suggested in *D.N.B.*), since the see was not vacant till a month after he died. His Puritan sympathies (exceptional in the family) appear in his bequest of £20 towards the 'lectures' established in 1630 at Haverfordwest under the will of his cousin **William Myddelton**, merchant, of London (*Report on Charities*, no. 28, 1834, 726; N.L.W. Haverfordwest MS. 390a). His two sons, John Dolben, archbishop of York, and Sir William Dolben, judge, together with many eminent descendants of the former, are the subjects of full-length articles in *D.N.B.*; the information which follows is concerned in the main with their Welsh connections.

JOHN DOLBEN (1625 - 1686), archbishop of York

Born at Stanwick and admitted king's scholar at Westminster on the nomination of his great-uncle **archbishop John Williams**, and in 1640 to Christ Church, Oxford, where his studies were interrupted by war service on the Royalist side (1642-6). He was accordingly deprived by the Parliamentary visitors (1648) and took refuge (c. 1653-5) at Gwydir, Llanrwst, where his mother's sister Grace and her husband **Sir Owen Wynn** employed him as agent and his kinsman **Sir Thomas Myddelton the Roundhead general** lent him money. Secretly ordained at Oxford in 1656, he obtained preferment after the Restoration, becoming dean of Westminster (1662), bishop of Rochester (1666), and archbishop of York (1683). He had a high reputation as preacher and administrator, but Anthony Wood (*Athen. Oxon.*, ii, 683) credits him with more of the 'boldness and confidence' than of the scholarship of his great-uncle and predecessor at Westminster and York, **John Williams**. Politically incorruptible, he was a pillar of the Anglican Toryism represented by Clarendon and Danby, and played a great part in the re-establishment of the Church after the troubles of the interregnum. He remained a lifelong correspondent of lady Grace Wynn, who with her neighbours invoked from time to time his intervention in local diocesan disputes or on behalf of local place-hunters; but the Welsh connection was not maintained by his descendants.

Sir WILLIAM DOLBEN (died 1696)

The archbishop's younger brother. He was admitted to the Inner Temple (1648), called to the Bar (1655), and became secretary to Edward Montagu, 2nd earl of Manchester, the former Roundhead general who became lord chamberlain after the Restoration. As such he was subject to many importunities from Welsh place-seekers, and he is said to have procured in the courts a decree for the restitution to his fellowship of **Michael Roberts** (died 1679), ex-principal of Jesus College, Oxford. In February 1676 he was elected (on the recommendation of the Crown) recorder of London, over the head of **Sir George Jeffreys**, and as king's sergeant (1677) he opened the Crown case against **Philip, 7th earl of Pembroke** on a charge of manslaughter (1678). Becoming puisne judge of King's Bench (October 1678), he was concerned in many important political trials, including those arising out of the 'popish plot,' in which he gained a high reputation for learning and integrity, but was deemed 'peevish' and arrogant. Politically he shared his brother's views, but he was primarily a lawyer, and it was legal doubts about the king's policy toward municipal corporations that cost him his judgeship (1683), to which he was restored after the revolution (1689). From his call to the Bar till his elevation to the bench he was legal agent in London to the **Gwydir family**, on terms of friendly correspondence with lady Grace Wynn, and jealous of any encroachments into this field on the part of his brother the archbishop. He served John Hackett as intermediary in his search for Welsh material for his projected life of his patroness's uncle, **archbishop John Williams** (1660).

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Images

George Perfect Harding, [John Dolben, Archbishop of York](#)

[John Dolben Archbishop of York, 1683 - obt. 1686, at 62](#)

R. Havell, [Emma Dolben](#)

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