

MEYRICK or MERRICK family, of Hascard, Fleet, and Bush, Pembrokeshire, and Wigmore, Worcestershire

The Pembrokeshire branch of the **Meyricks** of Bodorgan, Anglesey arose through the marriage of Rowland Meyrick, bishop of Bangor, to Catherine, daughter of Owen Barrett of Gelliswic, Pembrokeshire.

Their eldest son, Sir GELLY (GILLY, GILLIES or GULLIAM) MEYRICK (1556? - 1601), was named after the maternal estate, and on his father's death (when he was c. 9 years old) was sent to be brought up on his mother's manor of Hascard, near Lamphey, Pembrokeshire, where he entered the service of **Sir George Devereux**. From c. 1583 he served in the Low Countries, attending his patron's nephew, the **2nd earl of Essex**, at Flushing in 1585, and subsequently serving in Leicester's forces. On his return he became steward of **Essex's** household (c. 1587), and represented Carmarthenshire in the 1588 Parliament. He followed **Essex** to Portugal (1589) and Normandy (1591), and on the death, in 1595, of his kinsman **Sir Roger Williams** - hitherto **Essex's** right-hand man - he became all-powerful with the earl, to whom his complete devotion was proverbial, and at whose suit the queen gave him extensive lands, including Wigmore castle, which became his principal seat. **Essex** knighted him (as Sir William or Gellian) on the Cadiz expedition (1596), and in 1597 he followed his lord to the Azores and again sat (probably for Carmarthenshire) in Parliament, where he had by now achieved some prominence. His last campaign was with **Essex** in Ireland (1599-1600). After a brief spell of disfavour (July 1600), he was employed, in January 1601, in rallying to the earl's cause the Devereux clientele in South Wales, the Welsh swordsmen who had served with him abroad, and his own connections in Radnorshire (where he had married c. 1584, the daughter of Ieuan Lewis of Gladestry, widow of John Gwynn of Llanelwedd, who brought him both estates), and in Carmarthenshire (where his daughter Margaret was the wife of **Sir John Vaughan** of Golden Grove, later 1st earl of Carbery, as well as his brother Francis (below)). He was responsible for billeting the earl's followers in London, for bribing the Globe players to play 'Richard the Second' on the eve of the revolt (6 February), and for the defence of Essex House (8 February) against the forces of the Government. On 13 March 1601 he was executed for treason. His son, Roland Meyrick, and his daughter, **lady Vaughan**, were restored in blood and name by James I (24 May 1606).

Sir FRANCIS MEYRICK (kt. 5 August 1599, died 29 July 1660)

Of Fleet, Monkton, younger brother of Sir Gelly, was with him in Ireland (commanding the west Wales contingents), and also took a minor part in the rising but escaped punishment. Sir Francis's third son, Sir JOHN MEYRICK (died 1659), soldier, was knighted in 1614 (13 June), accompanied the **3rd earl of Essex** to Flanders in 1620, and subsequently fought in the Low Countries (1624), in Spain (1625), and under Gustavus Adolphus in the Thirty Years' War, where he was wounded before Maastricht (17 August 1632). He sat for Newcastle-under-Lyme in the Short and Long Parliaments, where he was frequently consulted on military questions. He commanded a regiment in the Bishops' Wars of 1639-40 (in which his brother GELLY MEYRICK, knighted 26 March 1639, as Sir Gillan, was an ensign), and was recommended by the Commons for a commission in Ireland as soon as the Irish rebellion broke out in October 1641. During the Civil War he became adjutant-general of **Essex's** army and later general of the ordnance, and he served as assessment commissioner for Pembrokeshire in 1647; but he disapproved of the execution of the king and went into retirement during the Interregnum, dying in 1659. His portrait, formerly at Bush (the home of his descendants till 1837), is now at the family seat of Slebech. Two of his grandsons held legal office in North Wales: JOHN MEYRICK of Bush (born 1674), educated at Jesus College, Oxford, and the Middle Temple, who, after representing Pembroke (1702-8) and Cardigan (1710-2) in Parliament, became puisne judge of the Anglesey circuit from 1712-4, and FRANCIS MEYRICK, Registrar of North Wales. The family is still active in Pembrokeshire public life.

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