

SALUSBURY, SALISBURY, SALESBURY family, of Lleweni and Bachygraig

There is considerable uncertainty about the origin of the Salusburies. Leaving aside both a legendary descent from the 11th century ducal house of Bavaria (with an assumed derivation of Salusbury from Salzburg) and a less high-flown but equally hypothetical derivation from Salesbury in Lancashire, there remains some evidence, slight but not easily disposed of, that the family had a Herefordshire origin. They were established at Lleweni in the Vale of Clwyd before 1334, though no Salusbury appears among the original burgesses of near-by Denbigh, listed in its original charter (before 1290). The belief that a 'Sir' John Salusbury founded the house of White Friars at Denbigh and was buried there in 1289 is based upon several misconceptions, and has no foundation in fact.

In the course of time the Salusburies became entirely Welsh, and had meanwhile built up a considerable estate centred upon Lleweni. The five sons of Thomas Salusbury, killed at the battle of Barnet (1471) were all men of substance. FFOWC SALUSBURY, his second son, had become dean of S. Asaph before 1505 and held the appointment until his death in 1543. Three others had acquired estates of their own: Henry Salusbury at Llanrhaeadr, Robert Salusbury at Plas Isa, Llanrwst, and John Salusbury at Bachymbyd. The eldest son and heir was THOMAS SALUSBURY (died 1505), who fought at the battle of Blackheath (1497) and was, in consequence, knighted by **Henry VII** - the first of a stream of honours and officers which the family earned by their support of the Tudor dynasty. Thomas was succeeded by his son Sir ROGER SALUSBURY (died 1530). The latter's eldest surviving son, JOHN SALUSBURY, was made a Knight of the Carpet by Edward VI at his coronation, and married Jane, daughter of David Myddleton of Chester (a member of the **Gwenynog family**); he was sheriff of Denbighshire in 1542 and in 1575, chamberlain of North Wales, and Member of Parliament for his county 1547-52, in 1553, 1554, and in 1554-5. In the dispute between the earl of Leicester and the squires of North Wales he was careful to keep on the right side of the earl. This Sir John must be clearly distinguished from his uncle, JOHN SALUSBURY, fourth son of Sir Thomas Salusbury; unfortunately, in the past, activities, and even the pseudonym, of the uncle have generally been attributed to the nephew. John Salusbury the uncle (nicknamed 'Siôn y Bodiau,' i.e. 'John of the Thumbs,' presumably because of a deformity) achieved an outstanding position in Denbighshire during his nephew's nonage as an indefatigable agent of Henry VIII, in whose household he served as sewer of the chamber and squire of the body; he was steward of the lordship of Denbigh, constable of Denbigh castle, and first chamberlain of the newly-formed county of Denbigh, being also sheriff in 1541, Member of Parliament (whether for county or borough is unknown) in 1539, and knight of the shire in 1542. As a leader of the English force in Ireland in 1534-5 this John Salusbury was a member of the Council of Ireland.

Sir John Salusbury's eldest son and heir, another JOHN SALUSBURY, predeceased him by twelve years in 1566; he was the first husband of the celebrated **Katheryn of Berain**, daughter of Tudur ap Robert of Berain, and had been Member of Parliament for the borough of Denbigh in 1554. John left two sons, **THOMAS SALUSBURY, the elder**, who was executed for treason in 1586, and JOHN SALUSBURY (1567 - 1612), who inherited the estate. John was admitted to Jesus College, Oxford, on 24 November 1581, at the age of 14, and in November 1586 married Ursula Stanley, illegitimate daughter of Henry, earl of Derby. His elder brother's disgrace had thrown the family into eclipse and made John the target of numerous local enemies, among them the junior branch of the family, the **Salusburies** of Rug, whose growing estates around Ruthin were making them serious rivals to the parent house for leadership in Denbighshire. John fought a duel at Chester in March 1593 with one of the hangers-on of the Rug house, captain Owen Salusbury of Holt (grandson of 'John of the Thumbs') and had to take to flight in order to avoid arrest. **Siôn Tudur** refers to this quarrel in a *cywydd* written on this occasion, in which he deploras the family differences between the Salusburies of Lleweni and of Rug (**Llanstephan MS 124** (628)). Two years later, in March 1594/5, John entered the Middle Temple to study law, and for the next ten years he spent much of his time in London. He served the queen as squire of the body, to which post he was appointed in 1595. In June 1601 he was dubbed knight by Elizabeth herself, no doubt as a reward for his part in suppressing the Essex revolt. Six months later, on 16 December, he was elected Member of Parliament for Denbighshire - the initial attempt at an election in October having been abandoned when Sir John and his party had come within an ace of fighting a pitched battle at Wrexham with his enemies, **Sir Richard Trevor** of Trefalun, Sir John Lloyd of Llanrhaeadr, and **captain John Salusbury** of Rug. Sir John was something of a poet; he wrote in English, and in the manner of his time, a number of sonnets and love lyrics which have little literary merit but throw light on the works of Shakespeare and other contemporary poets (see Carleton Brown, *Poems by Sir John Salusbury and Robert Chester*). He does not appear to have returned to London after Elizabeth's death, and his later years were clouded by the persistent attempts of his enemies to discredit him in the eyes of the new king and his court.

Sir John died 24 July 1612 leaving Lleweni to his son HENRY SALUSBURY (1589 - 1632), who, like his father, became a student at the Middle Temple (in November 1607), and was created a baronet in November 1619. On his death at the end of July 1632 Henry was succeeded by his son, **Sir Thomas Salusbury** (1612 - 1643), the poet and 2nd baronet, and he, in 1643, by his son THOMAS SALUSBURY (1634 - 57/8), who died unmarried on 23 March 1657/8. The estates were inherited by his brother, JOHN SALUSBURY (died 1684), 4th and last baronet, who was Member of Parliament for Denbigh borough 1661-81. When he died without issue on 23 May 1684 the estate passed to his sister Hester (died 1710), wife of **Sir Robert Cotton** of Combermere. His great-great-grandson, Sir Robert Salusbury Cotton, sold Lleweni to the hon. Thomas Fitzmaurice, brother of the 1st marquess of Lansdowne, c. 1775. Sir Thomas Cotton's third daughter, Hester Maria, married John Salusbury of Bachygraig (1710 - 1762), governor of Nova Scotia and a descendant of Roger Salusbury (son of Sir John Salusbury, the chamberlain of North Wales), who had married Ann, daughter and heiress of **Sir Richard Clough** of Bachygraig. The celebrated **Hester Lynch Piozzi** (1741 - 1821) was the daughter of Hester Maria and John Salusbury.

Authors

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