THE RISE OF WELSH HEREDITARY SURNAMES*

There are many features of the surnaming system of the Welsh which on the
surface appear puzzling. Why are so many Welsh surnames patronymic? Why do
they show such lack of variety? Why did the process of taking fixed surnames
come so late to Wales and go on for so long? Professor T. J. Morgan in the
recent book Welsh Surnames (written with the help of the present writer) has
examined the surnames of Welsh origin in Wales and the western half of England,
especially the Welsh Marches, together with the surnames of Welshmen who have
gone overseas, for example, to Ireland. The book consists mainly of a classi-
fication or dictionary of surnames, although that is preceded by an introduc-
tion which includes an analysis of the different types of surname. The
approach there is in the main descriptive, while the emphasis of this lecture
is on the historical development of surnames.[1]

The English and the French took fixed surnames during the later Middle
Ages and, in doing so, used a large variety of ways of naming, patronymics
being only one. During that period the Welsh people were familiar, to some
extent, with English and Norman-French customs and habits. They were familiar
in South Wales with Norman, Flemish and English conquerors, administrators and
settlers from about 1100 onwards, during the period when those incomers were
adopting fixed surnames. Yet they showed no desire to adopt such surnames
themselves. In Pembrokeshire, for example, colonized at least in parts soon
after 1100, one finds, besides the usual English surnames such as Young, Cole,
Browne and Hood, early forms of still-extant surnames that were based upon
local place-names such as Carew and Picton, and others like Palmerslake
and Ludshop (from the older form of the place-name that is now Lydstep), sur-
names which have not survived to the present century. In lowland or peninsular
Gower, also a colonized area, one finds at the end of the Middle Ages families
such as Crump of Sanctuary, Pigg of Whitewell, Baker of Underhill, Mansel of
Oxwich, and many others. In the Vale of Glamorgan, a coastal plain attracting
settlers from an early date, one finds many families with Norman-French sur-
names such as Awbrey of Llantrithyd, Turbervill and Gamage of Coity, St John
of Fonmon, Le Vele and Le Sore of St Fagan's, and so on.

Even the fastnesses of North Wales were conquered by 1282, boroughs were
founded and settled with colonists, and by the later Middle Ages one finds
families established such as Hampton of Henllys and Bulkeley of Baronhill
(Anglesey) and, further east in Denbigh, families such as Dryhurst and

Salesbury. Those are just a few examples of the large numbers of fixed sur-
names to be found amongst settlers in Wales before 1500, not merely gentry
with Norman-French names, but simple farmers and craftsmen, as well as the
royal administrators and members of the garrisons.

The Welsh withstood the custom of taking fixed surnames, although they
themselves appear to have used in everyday life a great variety of nicknames
exactly resembling the nicknames which gave rise to some English surnames.
English officials, confronted with native workers building royal castles or
working royal estates in the newly conquered territories, wrote down their
names exactly as they heard them: a good example is to be found in Ellis's
edition for the Record Commission in 1838 of The Record of Carnarvon, contain-
ing as it does many hundreds of native names from the early fourteenth century.
In many cases these natives had a baptismal name first and an epithet second,
e.g. Owain Benfras 'Owen Fathead', Thomas Grach 'Thomas Scab', Ieuan Landeg
'John Handsome', obviously mirroring common usage. Yet in most cases such
names remained merely nicknames, rarely if ever being converted into fixed
surnames.

During the later Middle Ages, Welsh people frequently went into England
to work and settle; the frequency of the surname Walsh, Welch, Welchman and
so on in England testifies to that. They also took part in the Anglo-Norman
conquests of Ireland. In the twelfth century, Strongbow used in his conquest
an army partly composed of Welshmen or Normans settled in Wales. It is thus
no surprise to find in Ireland during the later Middle Ages many fixed surnames
indicating a Welsh origin. One of the commonest Irish surnames is Walsh.
Less obvious are surnames from Welsh place-names, such as Roche, Nangle,
Prendergast,[2] Taaffe, Barry, Cogan, Kennifick, respectively from Roch, Angle,
Prendergast, the River Taf, Barry, Cogan and Kenfig, all of them along the
coasts of South Wales. Wogan, from the Welsh baptismal name Gwgawn, is prob-
ably from a slightly later Welsh settler. The point is that once Welshmen
were in another context, away from their native heath, they accepted fixed
surnames in the French or English fashion without compunction. At home it
was a different matter.

What then was the native Welsh system of naming? Although nicknames
arising from places of origin, or describing bodily features, were extremely
common in colloquial use at all levels of society, it is clear that Welshmen
themselves considered that their patronymics were their only correct names.

A man would be known by his baptismal name and connect that by means of a
particle to his father's baptismal name, and by the same particle again to
his grandfather's name, and so on for perhaps six or even nine generations.
For example, a man baptised Rhys might be known as Rhys ap Gruffudd 'Rees the
son of Griffith': the ap being a variant of the medieval Welsh word map 'son
of'. If his father were Owain, he would be known as Rhys ab Owain, the ab
being a similar variant of mab 'son of', the form used before a vowel. In
full, he might well be called Rhys ap Gruffudd ap Bleddyn ap Cadwgan ab Owain
ap Heilyn ap Gruffudd ap Llywarch ap Tudur ab Iestyn ap Gwrgant, the terminal
link of the long chain of ap-names often being the name of some well-known
local chieftain in the district. A woman would be known by her baptismal
name, to which her father's name would be added preceded by the particle uch
or ach, variants of the Welsh ferch 'daughter of', thus, for instance, Lleucu
uch Gruffudd 'Lucy daughter of Griffith'.

A few variations were to be found in this system of naming. A child,
male or female, might be known by its mother's name if it were illegitimate
or perhaps if the mother were a widow; thus, one might have Gruffudd ap Gwladus
or Lleucu uch Angharad. Nicknames, as we have said, were in a separate cate-
gory and purely colloquial: but certain hypocoristic forms of names had been
used so long that they had acquired a certain respectability, thus, a Gruffudd
might also be known as Guto and Gutyn. Also, if there were two generations
of the same family with the same name, e.g. Gruffudd ap Gruffudd, the younger
would be known by an official alias as Gruffudd Fychan 'Griffith the lesser
or the younger'. Since there was no fixed surname in use amongst the menfolk,
a woman could obviously not take her husband's surname on marriage, and so a
married woman simply retained her own patronymic throughout her life.

Variety was given to this virtually completely-patronymic system of naming
by the Welsh use of a great variety of baptismal names. There were the ancient
native heroic names such as Cadwgan, Caradog, Llywarch, Llywelyn, Madog, Owain,
Rhydderch, Trahaearn, and so on. Added to these there were hypocoristic forms
of native names, which were by the late Middle Ages almost separate name-forms,
such as Llelo from Llywelyn, Guto and Gutyn from Gruffudd, Iolo and Iolyn from
Iorwerth, Bedo and Bedyn from Maredudd, Hwlyn from Hywel. Some of these native
names were very localized: Lleision was found mainly in west Glamorgan,
Brochfael largely in mid-Wales, Cona or Cwna largely in the north-eastern
corner of Wales (it is the name found in the place-name Connah's Quay near

Chester). Added to all these native names were Catholic names indicating devotion to saints, such as Gwasmeir 'servant of Mary', Gwasdewi 'servant of St David', Gwasmihangel 'servant of Michael'. Besides all those there were borrowed names: some, such as Edwart and Elystan (i.e. Æ(i)lstan < Æðelstan), copied from the Anglo-Saxons; others, such as Ffowc, Gwilym, Harry, Rhisiart and Rhosier, from the Normans; and yet others, such as Iago, Mathew, Phylip and many more, from the Bible. All in all, with such a variety of names, each person could be identified clearly.

But the identity of the individual was probably of little importance in such a society in comparison with his ability to prove his relationship to others, his ancestors, his cousins, his kin-group. Up to the end of the medieval period, a Welshman probably did not think of himself as the head of a small family - father, mother, children - but rather as part of the wider kin-group. Indeed, in many parts of Welsh-speaking Wales the word teulu 'family' is also used indiscriminately for any kinsfolk. A Welshman did not hold his land as an individual landowner or pay his taxes as an individual taxpayer. He farmed his land by virtue of his being a member of a kin-group descended from a gwely (literally 'bed') or descendants of a chieftain, and he paid his taxes often through a tribute owed by his district to the Norman lord. The native legal system was in a state of decay by the late Middle Ages, but, while it lasted, the Welshman assumed co-responsibility with his kinsfolk for the crimes of those kinsfolk, and if he were fined for a crime he expected them to take co-responsibility for his punishment. That is a gross over-simplification of a most complicated legal system, but it will serve to bring out an essential characteristic of Welsh native society in the later Middle Ages: that it was one where kinship was far more important than individualism, and where a man's position in society was defined by his relation to his ancestors and kinsfolk, not by his trade or residence. Thus it was that the patronymic system was the essential naming system of the Welsh.

Such was the hold of the laws and traditions of this customary society, that a number of settlers coming into Wales with fixed surnames found that Welsh society around them rejected their fixed surnames and replaced them with ones based on patronymics. For example, in the lordship of Brecon, one William Boleyn or Bullen had a son who was called ap-William, from whom descended the families of Williams of Abercamlais and Penpont; and William Bois of Felin-newydd also gave rise to an ap-William, the forefather of another Williams

family. In the lordship of Kemes (Cemais) in north Pembrokeshire the Cole family took on the surname Young (possibly to represent the Welsh fychan 'younger'); and then one Mathias Young gave rise to a number of Mathias families. In the same area a family of settlers called Browne had children who were baptised Morgan, Mathias and Owen, from whom descended families surnamed Morgan, Mathias and Bowen respectively. In Glamorgan the de Winton family had presumably taken its surname from Winchester but during the late Middle Ages the family changed its surname to Wilkins because it was descended from one Wilcyn de Winton. In Monmouth one of the family of Peres or Perious was called John, and and from him his descendants took the name Jones in preference to Peres/Perious; and, in the same area, the Willey family turned into Jameses because they were descended from one James Willey. It is important to remember that the Welsh had lived for so long with a patronymic system that it had become second nature to them, and that even when their native legal system and system of land-holding were in decay, they long retained a prejudice or tradition in favour of patronymic naming, indeed, for centuries after such a system had ceased to reflect a social reality.

But, if such a powerful system existed, how and when did the Welsh come to adopt a system of fixed surnames? We have already mentioned Welshmen going into England and Ireland. They adopted fixed surnames and need not concern us more. In Wales itself the process stretched over several centuries during the later Middle Ages, especially in the fifteenth century, certain families took fixed surnames, especially if living on the borders of England or employed in English royal service; in the sixteenth century, the custom became well-nigh universal for gentry families; in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it was adopted by minor gentry and yeoman farmers and by townsmen, the peasantry eventually following suit in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

It is difficult to know where to begin, but it has been claimed that the Carreg family of Carreg near Aberdaron at the tip of the Lleyn peninsula in Caernarfonshire took Carreg as a fixed surname as early as 1396; they still resided there during the late nineteenth century. Owen Glendower (Owain Glyndŵr), who ruled Wales in the opening years of the fifteenth century and who had served in his youth at the English court, appears to have taken the name of his lordship, Glyndyfrdwy, as a fixed surname in the last years of the fourteenth century. At the height of the revolt of Glendower one finds, in 1406 on the burgess roll of Welshpool, the name of Ieuan ap Hywel of Gregynog [Tregynon near Newtown] written down as Evan Blayney. The surname Blayney appears to be

from blaenau 'headwaters, head of the valleys'. Evan was the ancestor of an extensive and influential gentry family of Blayney in Wales and Ireland, though it should be noted that for several generations his descendants were uncertain as to their fixed surname and sometimes took the name Lloyd (from llwyd 'grey, brown'). The most famous surname of the fifteenth century was surely Tudor, the fixed name being adopted early in the fifteenth century by Henry VII's grandfather, Owain ap Maredudd ap Tudur, of Penmynydd in Anglesey; and in his case he took his father's patronymic, thus avoiding giving England a Meredith dynasty.

Moving from north to south Wales, one finds a family of purely Welsh descent living at Gladestry and Hergest, on what later became the Radnor-Herefordshire border, taking the fixed surname de Clanvow in the early fourteenth century.[3] The Clanvows were followed at Hergest by another local Welsh family descended from a Rhosier ap Rhosier: the younger Rhosier was known as Rhosier Fychan, and this was anglicized as Roger Vaughan, the latter element of which had clearly come to be regarded as a surname before he was killed at Agincourt in 1415. From this man came many Vaughan lines, at Bredwardine, Tretower, Hergest and many other places along the southern English-Welsh borderlands. Among Vaughan's kinsfolk was Dafydd Gam 'David the Squint-eyed or One-eyed', who also died at Agincourt, and from whom descended families with the fixed surname of Games, e.g. Games of Newton, of Brecon. Another kinsman was Sir William ap Thomas of Raglan (Monmouth), who died in 1446; early in the fifteenth century (for reasons which are not clear) he adopted the fixed surname Herbert for his family, and his son was William Herbert, the first Earl of Pembroke. Soon afterwards his cousins adopted fixed surnames more closely based on the Welsh patronymic pattern: Proger, Powell, Evans, and even Jones. It is striking, however, that many of these earliest Welsh surnames are derived not from simple patronymics but from place-names such as Carreg or epithets such as Vaughan or Games. It is not surprising that families living along the border should adopt fixed surnames in the fifteenth century: e.g., Lewis ap Syr David of St Pierre, a residence at the junction of the Wye with the Severn, had a son Thomas ap Lewis who died at the battle of Banbury in 1469, and Thomas's son, around that period, took his grandfather's name as a fixed surname, Lewis. But one finds in the same period families far away from the border adopting fixed surnames: Williams of Cochwillan near Bangor, Philipps of Cilsant (and later of Picton), for example. Who the first Joneses in Wales were is a disputed question; but the Jones family of Treowen and Llanarth near Monmouth must have been amongst

the earliest; and ironically they were amongst the earliest to drop the Jones, for in 1848 they had royal permission to change it to Herbert of Llanarth.

All over Wales in the Tudor period the gentry took fixed surnames; and this is because of the considerable anglicization of this class, their close connexions with the English gentry and tendency to intermarry with them, and also because the native legal system, which had earlier sustained the sense of kinship-groups and thus a naming system based on kinship, was in decay and was abolished at the Act of Union in 1536. The Welsh gentleman gradually came to see himself less as the leader of a localized kin group and more as a member of a landowning class, with his less fortunate kinsmen transformed into his tenants. It has long been held that Bishop Rowland Lee, president of the Council of Wales on the eve of the Union of 1536, believed that the gentry should set an example to the Welsh by taking fixed surnames and that he put pressure upon the unwilling Rhisiart ap Hywel of Mostyn (the Tudor dynasty's influential Welsh relative) to take the fixed surname Mostyn. But several gentry families along the northern Welsh-English border had taken fixed surnames in that period, such as the Hanmers of Hanmer, or the Pennants of the shore of the Dee estuary, who appear to have taken their name from their residing at Bychton at the head of a dingle ('Pen y Nant') not far from Flint. English proximity and influence probably account for the place-name surnames of the Almers of Allmere, Eyrthiggs of Erddig, Hopes of Hope. But it could be that the example of the Mostyns influenced families further west to do the same, hence fixed place-name surnames such as Madryn, Bodwrda, Quellyn, Coytmore, Maysmore, Brunker, Bodvel, Penrhyn, Glynne, Trygarn, Saython, and others in north Wales. Such surnames are far less common in the south, even in anglicized Pembrokeshire. One highly unusual surname, probably adopted late in the fifteenth century, is that of Winston or Winstone, which appears to be a translation of the name of the family home Trewyn near Pandy on the Monmouth-Herefordshire border. It was a later marriage alliance which took Winston as a baptismal name into the Churchill family.

The great majority of Welsh gentry families did not take place-names as a basis for their fixed surnames but their own patronymics or, occasionally, Welsh epithets or nicknames. When a squire was the first in his area to take the name Mr Jones it had considerable cachet among a host of names such as Ap-this and Ap-that. The patronymic prejudice of the gentry set the tone for the lower orders to follow gradually in the course of the following centuries. Surnames from epithets were not very common: and of trade-names there were virtually none, two great rarities being Goyder (coedwr) 'woodman' and Saer 'craftsman'. Seys

or Sayce (Sais 'Englishman') referred probably to the ability to speak English when that was a rare and desirable skill. Anwyl (annwyl 'dear') and Wynne or Gwynne (gwyn 'white; blessed') possibly referred to the father's favourite child, the apple of his eye. Adjectival surnames are usually based on the lenited form of the Welsh adjective because that was generally the one used for nicknames: thus, moel 'bald' gives rise sometimes to Moyle but more generally to Voyle; cethin 'swarthy' gives rise to Gethin(g); glandeg 'handsome' to Landeg or Landeck; bychan 'small, the younger' to Vaughan. Because it probably had a genealogical meaning as indicating the younger of two of the same name, Fychan gave rise to a large number of Vaughan surnames. It is not easy to explain, but it may be because of the great frequency of colour-surnames in English (Grey, Brown, Black and so on) that a few colour epithets became fairly common fixed surnames in Wales: thus, coch 'red' gives us Gough and other variants, while llwyd 'grey, brown' gives us a very large number of families called Lloyd or Floyd (the fl is an attempt to transcribe the Welsh ll). The Welsh were on the whole a dark-haired people and 'black' would not be a particularly distinguishing epithet, so du gives us only a few families with the surname Dee.

Such epithet-surnames are in all areas outnumbered by surnames coming from patronymics, usually formed from the father's baptismal name. In a few cases, such as Morgan, the name could be left as it was, though Welsh names usually had to be anglicized in spelling, Dafydd becoming David and Siôn becoming John. Where patronymic surnames were fixed early in the sixteenth century, as in Glamorgan or Pembrokeshire, the bald forms David and John are commonly found as surnames. But more often some affix was given to show that the name was used as a patronymic. Sometimes the Welsh ap or ab particle was retained in some vestigial form as a prefix. Thus ap Rhys would be anglicized as Price or Preece, ap Hywel as Powell, ab Owen as Bowen, and ab Einion as Beynon or Binyon. More usual by far was the practice, as in English, of suffixing an s, a genitive-ending, to show the connection of the bearer of that name to his father. Thus we have names like Owens, Howells, Griffiths, Evans, Gittins, Beddoes, and so on by the dozen. For an unknown reason the other common English device, of adding -son to the father's name, was used in Wales very rarely; though in sixteenth-century north Wales one Robin Norris gave rise to a Robinson family, this method can virtually be discounted in Wales.

The attempts to anglicize Welsh native names gave rise of course to innumerable variations which added greatly to the total stock of Welsh surnames. Rhydderch was almost impossible to anglicize satisfactorily, hence the many

approximations; Roderick, Rothera, Rotheroe, Ruddero and so on. Llywelyn had long been shortened for convenience to Llew, and this because of its vague resemblance to Lewis was sometimes anglicized as Lewis. Hywel was often shortened to Hyw and hence was sometimes anglicized as Hughes, Hughes being now a common surname in north-west Wales in an area where Howells is uncommon. Iorwerth was taken to be an equivalent name to Edward, and so, although in some parts it was anglicized as Yorath, in most parts it was simply 'translated' as Edwards. Many names went through this process of approximation, although it is nothing like as common in Wales as it is in Ireland or Gaelic Scotland.

During the later Middle Ages many native baptismal names were going out of fashion and being replaced by foreign borrowings such as Harri, Hwmffra, Rhisiart, Rheinallt, Robert, Rhosier, Watcyn, Hopcyn. The native equivalents of John had always been Ieuan, Ifan, Iwan and a few other variants; but towards the end of the Middle Ages, Siôn and Siencyn (borrowed from John and Jenkin respectively) became common. This general change meant that, when the fixed surname became a fashion and names had to be written down, it was a fairly simple matter to add -s to names like those just mentioned and produce surnames such as Harries, Humphreys, Richards, Reynolds, and so on. In some areas the custom was to retain the ap or ab in some vestigial form and in those cases it would produce surnames such as Parry, Bumphrey, Prichard or Pritchett, Preynold or Prinalt. It is not easy to explain why the surname should be Parry in one area and Penry in another, or why Rogers should appear in one part while Rosser and Prosser should arise in another.

In some cases the surnames produced were varied because the hypocoristic forms of the baptismal names varied from area to area. Clearly Dafydd and Siôn had become extremely common by the end of the Middle Ages, but Dafydd was also expressed as Dafi, Dai, Deio, Deicyn, Deicws, and even Deito. Hence the hypocoristic variations of Dafydd could produce surnames as different as David, Davis, Davies, Davey, Day, Dyos, Dakin(s), Dicus, Dickus, Dyto. The equivalents of John were also many and varied, some of them being: Ieuan, Ieun, Ienna, Ienn, Jenno, Jenna, Ifan, Jevan, Ianto, Iancyn, Siencyn, Siôn, Sionyn. These forms therefore gave rise to many and varied surnames, differing so much in sound from one another as almost to count as separate surnames: Jevon, Jevons, Jeevons, Jayne, Jane(s), Gennah, Genno, Jenns, Evan(s), Bevan, Jenkin(s), John, Jones, Shone, Upjohn, and others. Upjohn is an early form, generally found on the English border, and retains the ap in its entirety but transformed to look like a common type of English surname such as Upton, Upwood. Some of these variations of 'John'

belong to fairly limited areas: Jenn is characteristic of Radnorshire, and
Jayne/Jane of the Monmouth-Gloucestershire border, one assumes because in the
dialect of late medieval Radnorshire Ieuan was represented by Ienn, but by Ieun
in the Welsh dialect of east Monmouth in the same period. Those forms are not
known in modern Welsh dialects.

In the same period, the native baptismal names were being gradually replaced
by a fashion for borrowed names, biblical or royal ones in many cases. A few
native names such as Rhys and Griffith always remained popular, but they became
rarer, and by the late seventeenth century the antiquary and scientist Edward
Lhuyd was asking his correspondents to record whatever native baptismal names
they could because they were by then rare survivals - names such as Tegwared for
men or Tanglwys for women. There had been for many years a widespread process
of conventionalizing baptismal names, which appears to have been speeded up with
the coming of the Reformation and the recording of names in parish registers,
from 1538 onwards.[4] The conventionalizing of baptismal names was thus more or
less contemporaneous with the process of taking fixed surnames in Wales, from
the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

The taking of fixed surnames was a spreading fashion or custom which pro-
ceeded gradually from east to west through Wales, from lowland or coastal areas
inland, from lowlands through valleys into the hills, and from the towns out
into the hamlets. It was also a social process, affecting the gentry in the
fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the middling sorts in the seventeenth and
early eighteenth centuries, the peasants in the eighteenth and early nineteenth
centuries. In the fairly recently published catalogue of wills of Bangor, the
remotest of the Welsh dioceses,[5] the first volume of which covers the years 1635
to 1700, one may observe that there are 120 pages of fixed surnames, and 60 pages
of patronymic surnames (Ap-names or Ach-names): that is, one third of those rich
enough to leave a will were still using patronymics. In the borough of Conwy in
the same diocese, the Ap-names disappear between 1580 and 1600, but, after all,
it was a borough long accustomed to English soldiery, and to English travellers.
The diary of William Bulkeley of Brynddu covers the life of an Anglesey squire
in the mid-eighteenth century over several decades, and, while Bulkeley refers
to fellow squires by their surname and perhaps their manor house, such as
'Meyrick Bodorgan', those below that level are generally called by their patro-
nymics. Theophilus Jones in his history of Brecknockshire (1805, 1809) refers
to the gradual disappearance of patronymic names during the previous two centur-
ies. In the town of Brecon itself, not far from the English border, one finds

the grave in 1704 of one Elizabeth Morgan, wife of Lewis Price: that is, Brecon
women were at that date still retaining their maiden patronymic names. By 1805
this custom had almost disappeared, and it survived only in the remotest western-
most parts of the county.

The decline of the patronymic system was a slow and localized process, com-
plicated by the fact that for many generations between the dropping of the ap-
forms and the coming of modern fixed surnames, there was an intermediate stage
of using patronymics without ap. In other words, a man's name had two elements,
the second of which had all the appearance of a surname, say, William Robert or
John David, but would be in fact his own father's name. This process can be
plotted accurately only by following parish registers from generation to genera-
tion. It is clear from the biographies of Welshmen of the lower orders that
this unfixed surname was very common in the remoter parts of Wales in the eight-
eenth and early nineteenth centuries. For example, the Caernarfon schoolmaster
Evan Richards or Richardson (1759-1824) was the son of Rhisiart Morys Huw, from
north Cardiganshire. Evan's most famous pupil was the Methodist leader John
Elias of Anglesey (1774-1841), he being the son of Elias Jones, and Elias Jones
the son of another John Elias. They all thus had 'surnames' but these were still
fluid or unfixed in that period. Surnames had of course existed in a town like
Swansea since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, yet one finds that many fam-
ilies just beyond the town walls were settling their surnames only in the 1730s.
Two examples may suffice. One family seems to have alternated for some time
between the names Hopkin and Habakkuk, but in the early eighteenth century this
alternation ceased, and the descendants of Hopkin Habakkuk took the surname
Habakkuk. In the same district a family alternating between the names Jeremiah
and Lancelot went through the same process, and from the 1730s appear to have
stuck with the fixed surname Lancelott, the only further change being to curtail
this to Lott sometime in the early nineteenth century. It is also true that in
some cases a family might fix its surname for a few generations and then abruptly
change it for another: in the case of the family of Isaac Robert Morris of
Llanfrothen, Caernarfonshire, his children took the name Isaacs around 1700, but
around 1750 or 1760 the next generation, in some cases, decided to take the sur-
name Evans because they were the children of one Evan Isaacs.

It seems likely that the process was accompanied by much uncertainty as to
what a surname really was. Married women appear to have been unwilling to forgo
their own patronymics, and indeed society all around them still referred to them
throughout their lives by those patronymics. Each child was therefore free to

settle as he chose upon either his father's or his mother's patronymic, or a combination of both. There are many examples of two brothers taking different surnames, and also of the taking of double-surnames which superficially resemble the hyphenated surnames of English gentry. Welsh double-surnames such as Lloyd-Jones or Parry-Williams or, most famous, Lloyd-George are often merely combinations of the patronymics of both parents; David Lloyd-George was the son of a Mr George and a Miss Lloyd. The Welsh poet and scholar W. J. Gruffydd was born in 1878 in Bethel, Caernarfonshire, his father and grandfather being both called John Griffith. His father's brother, being the son of the elder John Griffith, simply decided to take a patronymic surname and became a Jones, and that was around 1850. Colleagues and friends of the present writer who come from the same area have confirmed that it is within living memory, that is, the time of a great-grandfather, that their own families have fixed upon their twentieth-century surname.

Yet in another part of the same county of Caernarfonshire we have had occasion to mention the fixed surname Carreg emerging, it is claimed, as early as 1396. The same kind of time-lag could occur elsewhere: for example, the Vaughan family of Bredwardine on the Herefordshire border appear to have fixed on their name around 1400, yet only a few miles away one Arnold ab Arnold of the Hendre was born in the year 1740, and was still living at Dorstone in 1807; thus there was a gap of at least four centuries between the gentry and the peasant adoption of the fixed surname.

The timing of this process must be considered together with that of the gradual simplification of baptismal names, for this combination of factors had important consequences for the Welsh. In place of the great profusion of names, often of native origin, that one finds during the Middle Ages, one finds by the sixteenth century a very large number of people with simple conventional names such as Siôn ap Dafydd, Thomas ap Thomas, Phylip ap Gwilym, and so on. Gone to a great extent are names like Cynddelw, Ednyfed, Gwalchmai, Llywarch, or, for women, Meddefys, Perweir, Tanglwys, and others. Where the fixing of surnames occurred fairly early, before the mid-sixteenth century, as in the Welsh-English borderlands or in Pembrokeshire, the still existing great variety of baptismal names produced a great variety of surnames. The southern, colonized, part of Pembrokeshire had of course long been accustomed to fixed surnames on the English pattern, but even in many of the 'Welsh' parts of that county one finds surviving patronymic surnames based on baptismal names such as Gwion, Devonald (Dyfnallt), Wogan (Gwgawn), Meyler (Meilir), Treharne (Trahaearn), Gwyther (Gwythyr, from

Victorius). The Warren family of Tre-wern, Newport, were descended from one Gwaring or Warren ap Dafydd Foel, their unusual Welsh surname preserving a medieval baptismal name which disappeared in the sixteenth century. In areas such as Monmouth, long familiarity with English surnames meant that there was less prejudice against taking epithets as fixed surnames, such as Gething (cethin 'swarthy') or Dew (tew 'stout'). For example, the recusant Augustine Baker was from a purely Welsh family who took the surname Baker because they were bakers in Abergavenny.

In areas more remote from English influence or example, the fixing of surnames took place at a later date, and in a period when the conventionalizing of baptismal names had gone so far, perhaps with a faint prejudice against complicated Welsh native names, that large numbers of children were christened with names drawn from a very small store: John, David, Thomas, Robert, William, and a few others, with Evan in place of John being some small concession to Welshness. The children with such conventional names then grew up; they were then the parents at the stage at which their families fixed upon a surname, and thus we find hosts of people with the surnames Jones, Davies, Thomas, Roberts, Williams, Evans, and so on. In the early nineteenth century the baptismal name John had become so common, the surname Jones too, that John Jones was considered by bewildered administrators as a 'perpetual incognito', and of course was as much of a joke as had been in the seventeenth century the traditional Welsh names with their lists of ap- patronymics going back to Aeneas or Noah.

One feature which cut across this tendency towards uniformity or stultifying dullness of names in Wales was the spread of Old Testament names from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, presumably because of Puritan influence. Samuel, Daniel, Elias, Isaac, Jacob, Abraham all became quite common baptismal names; and, since the surnames in many areas were still not fixed in the period of Puritanical influence, many families took such Old Testament names as surnames. In Monmouthshire, for example, there are considerable numbers of families called Jeremiah. In Cardiganshire, where surnaming took place very late, one finds, in addition to those biblical names mentioned, names such as Levi, Shadrach, Jehu and Benjamin. The late-eighteenth-century hymn-writer Azariah Shadrach even named his son Eliakim. This feature helps to underline the essentially patronymic character of Welsh surnames, for, although such names are Hebrew, as surnames they are of course Welsh.

They are, however, merely oases in a desert of Joneses. If one takes the

electoral rolls of the present day one can see, for example, in the Peris ward of Llanberis, Caernarfonshire, that of the 1421 voters a total of 271 are called Jones, approximately one in five. This proportion would hold true of many areas running down the western half of Wales in the parts where surnaming came late. But it is interesting that in the mid-nineteenth century, when so many Welshmen seemed to be, as it were, intent on 'keeping up with the Joneses' by taking Jones as surname, there were moves afoot to vary or change this tendency: thus, the preacher and publicist James Jones became J. Kilsby-Jones, the Wilkins family changed back to de Winton, Jones of Llanarth became Herbert, and middle-class Welshmen, especially ministers and bards, began to seek to distinguish themselves by adding a middle name, as in John Ceiriog Hughes, Howell Elvet Lewis. In the late eighteenth century, writers such as Edward Williams 'Iolo Morganwg' named his son Taliesin and William Owen Pughe named his son Aneurin, thus acting as pioneers of a movement which would grow apace in the late nineteenth century to vary the naming pattern, sometimes by revival of ancient names, at other times by invention of new ones, as, for instance, with the woman's name Dilys. Very few patriots went as far as Sir Owen M. Edwards in naming his son Ifan ab Owen Edwards; but during the twentieth century a not inconsiderable number of Welshmen and women have rejected the surname entirely and gone back to a patronymic system, generally adding a father's baptismal name to their own, producing such names as Nia Wyn, or Derec Elfed, or Hywel Ceiriog, Siân Ceri, and so on, as if to remind people that the relationship of the Welsh with surnames has always been an awkward and uneasy one.

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NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

*This is a revised version of the paper given on 5 April 1986 at the XVIIIth Annual Conference of the Council for Name Studies held at the University of Exeter.

1. It has been thought appropriate to retain the form of the lecture here. References have in most cases been omitted because they are available in full in T. J. Morgan and P. Morgan, Welsh Surnames (Cardiff, 1985; pb reprint, 1986).

2. The ultimate origin of the place-name Prendergast is unknown or disputed; it also appears on the Scottish border. It has long been claimed that the de Prendergasts involved in the early conquest of Ireland came from Prendergast in the outskirts of Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. The surname also existed in this area as Prengest.

3. de Clanvow is a mysterious surname; it has been associated by some authorities with a possible variant version Llanvow, which might refer to Vowchurch in the Golden Valley. Mr John Freeman suggests that it might more reasonably be taken as an Anglicization of the Welsh name Llanfocha indicating the place now St Maughan's, near Monmouth, which is not far from the area associated with the de Clanvow family.

4. See C. T. Williams and J. Watts-Williams, Parish Registers of Wales (Aberystwyth, 1986), passim.

5. Nia Henson, ed., Bangor Probate Records, I: 1635-1700 (Aberystwyth, 1980).