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## News Networks in Early Modern Wales\*

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The circulation of political news has been a core element in the post-revisionist scholarship of early modern England. Initially influenced by F.J. Levy's 1982 article on the manner in which information spread among the gentry, but more profoundly indebted to Richard Cust's 1986 essay, 'News and politics in early-seventeenth century England', scholars have dismantled the revisionist picture of provincial elites as relatively uninterested in and detached from developments at the political centre.<sup>1</sup> A deluge of scholarship in the past three decades has examined the ways in which news and information helped shape popular as well as elite politics in early modern England.<sup>2</sup> In all this work the place of Wales has remained unclear and largely uninterrogated. Historians of England are unfamiliar with the material in Welsh archives and are wary of including the principality in their studies.<sup>3</sup> Welsh scholars, on the other hand, have yet to consider the ways in which the country fits (or does not fit) into prevailing paradigms of early modern news circulation.

The present article addresses this neglect by examining the ways in which Welsh gentlemen accessed, consumed and interpreted political news. It argues that, in many respects, they followed the example of their English counterparts by obtaining epistolary reports, buying newsbooks and subscribing to scribal news services. They participated fully in the information revolution of the seventeenth century and were cognisant of political developments in England, Britain and Europe. However, the article also argues that their participation was shaped by matters of personal connection, culture and regional interest, all of which had distinctively Welsh dimensions. News was frequently obtained by 'countrymen' and relatives in London who forwarded material to gentlemen at home, often through carriers and middlemen considered reliable because known to both parties. News was part of a web of sociability and exchange which saw distinctively Welsh networks reaching out to and from the political centre. The members of these networks were important in interpreting and

authenticating news reports. This article thus argues that ‘news’ was not the singular, universalised and stable phenomenon presented in most scholarship, but rather was understood and interpreted partly through the dynamic of family and regional interests. Correspondents could emphasise matters of interest to the recipient, the locality, or to Wales more generally, and this gave a particularly Welsh ‘flavour’ to the information circulated. This dimension of provincial news has suffered in comparison with what is often seen as *real* news which concerned the Court and parliament, but it is argued here that such tailored reporting constituted a notable component of wider information flows in this period. The article also claims that the prevailing religious and political cultures of the principality influenced what news was welcomed there and what was looked on with greater scepticism and hostility. These prevailing cultures, it is argued, helped privilege the status of news which supported the position of king and Church, particularly after the civil wars of the 1640s and 1650s. This article therefore makes a claim for thinking about Welsh news as part of a particularist political culture within the British state and critiques aspects of recent scholarship which have tended to present news as an autonomous agent of change shaping provincial politics. It instead argues that news should be seen as part of a dialogue between provincial and central political cultures, and as something which at once influenced but was also influenced by the political perspectives of its recipients.<sup>4</sup>

## I

Welsh gentlemen participated in the emerging news cultures of early modern Britain in a similar manner to those in England, although with subtly different degrees of depth and intensity because of Wales’s comparative remoteness from the political centre. It is difficult, however, to ascertain the dynamics of political communication before the later sixteenth century. In this period our principal sources of correspondence are thin and relatively

uninformative on the ways in which political information moved in the principality. Of the voluminous correspondence of the Wynns of Gwydir, for example, only thirty letters pre-date Elizabeth I's reign. Similarly, the Maurice-Owen archive of Clennau and Porkington contains hundreds of letters, many of them full of news, but none survive from before the 1580s.<sup>5</sup> This is not to say, of course, that political news and information did not circulate among the Welsh gentry before this time. Letters were exchanged, proclamations circulated, soldiers mustered, taxes levied and ties maintained with central government. Yet the evidence we have of news circulating in Wales in the earlier sixteenth century is predominantly official in character, with little of the informal origins and private comment characteristic of news gathering from the late Elizabethan period onward. The sparse and scattered references to news in Welsh gentry collections and the state papers in this earlier period, then, are qualitatively different to the types of unsanctioned news circulation and news gathering which form the focus of this article.

From around the late 1580s, then, Welsh gentlemen increasingly received news reports as part of their private correspondence. For example, in a letter of 1591 Sir Richard Bulkeley of Anglesey informed his kinsman John Wynn of Caernarvonshire about news of continental wars, observing 'the new Pope is wholie Spanishe'.<sup>6</sup> Towards the end of the decade Bulkeley sent Wynn further reports about a rumoured Spanish Armada and passed on news entering England through the southern coastal ports.<sup>7</sup> Correspondents in south Wales also received information about national and international politics. Sir Edward Stradling of Glamorgan, for example, obtained a newsletter in September 1574 from his kinsman Oliver St John which discussed the queen's progress in the west and provided news about the Spanish navy.<sup>8</sup>

From the early seventeenth century there was a growing expectation on the part of Welsh gentlemen that friends and relations in the capital would furnish them with news. As

William Brynkir wrote from Gray's Inn to his cousin John Owen in north Wales, 'I know you expect newes', assuring him 'what newes I shall heere I will acquaynt you with it'.<sup>9</sup> This desire for news was particularly intense when parliament was in session and connections between centre and principality were especially strong. At these times Welsh gentlemen received news reports from multiple sources and weighed their respective reliability.<sup>10</sup> They also began to collect manuscript 'separates' of political material which increased in popularity and availability during the 1620s.<sup>11</sup> During the 1624 parliament, for example, the Wynn family obtained copies of materials such as the king's opening speech, Buckingham's 'Relation', the Archbishop of Canterbury's speech, copies of clauses in the petition against recusants and the king's answer to the petition.<sup>12</sup> Similar material can be found among the papers of the Mostyn family of Flintshire, the Herberts of Montgomeryshire, the Morgans and Williamses of Monmouthshire, the Griffith family of Caernarvonshire, and others, indicating that such interests were commonplace among the Welsh gentry.<sup>13</sup>

It was not only manuscript materials which were transmitted back to Wales, as the emerging culture of printed news and polemic also caught the discerning Welsh gentleman's eye. In May 1623, for example, Henry Wynn in London wrote back home to Gwydir sending his father 'the latest books of newes that is come forth of forraine proceedings'.<sup>14</sup> In south Wales also we find squires such as Sir Thomas Aubrey purchasing 'carrantose' or books of foreign news.<sup>15</sup> The enormous increase in the volume of printed news during the mid-seventeenth century saw the Welsh gentry buying or otherwise obtaining pamphlets and newsbooks as a matter of course. A typical example was a letter of November 1648 which Sir Philip Jones of Llanarth, Monmouthshire, wrote to his wife from London, referring her 'for nues ... to the books inclosed' in the packet he forwarded.<sup>16</sup> After the Restoration, gentlemen such as William Griffith of Caernarvonshire received regular editions of *The Votes of the House of Commons* and *The Flying Post*, while his compatriots like Robert Owen of

Brogynlyn and Thomas Mostyn of Gloddaith subscribed to the services of professional newsletter writers as well as receiving regular editions of the periodical press.<sup>17</sup> John Jones of Merioneth could write to his wife from Oswestry in 1690 that he did not have a clear picture of the disposition of parliamentary elections in Anglesey, Caernarvonshire or Cheshire, but added ‘the gazetts wil acquaint you how they are carried ... a great deal better then I can’.<sup>18</sup> Jones’s comments speak to the comparative isolation of some Welsh correspondents from events taking place even within the principality, but they also indicate their full integration into the printed news forms which emerged in the seventeenth century.

The picture in early modern Wales thus resembles closely that painted of the news culture of English elites. Yet there were differences and nuances also which merit further investigation, and the remainder of the article discusses these while always remembering that these are differences in matters of degree rather than of kind.

## II

One aspect of early modern news culture which has only very recently received scholarly attention, but which is particularly relevant to Wales, is the nature of news as a commodity of kinship and sociability and a component in networks of friendship and family.<sup>19</sup> This sociable and familial dimension to news exchange was especially pertinent for early modern Wales where ties of family and lineage were particularly significant in fashioning Welsh conceptions of gentility.<sup>20</sup> The extended networks of Welsh elite families were partly sustained by exchange of correspondence, and increasingly this included the circulation and transmission of news. News did not flow in an unmediated fashion into Wales, then, but rather followed routes of family and friendship which helped impart a particular complexion to the information received.

Especially significant in the sourcing and transmission of news into the principality was the Welsh diaspora to London. This created a pool of well-informed correspondents and constituted a valuable informational resource for families in Wales. As Katharine Swett has shown, the ties that bound the substantial and growing number of London Welsh men and women to their homelands in this period were important, extensive and durable.<sup>21</sup> There developed, then, a series of Welsh networks which reached out from London and ramified through local society. Welsh gentlemen began to employ local men as agents in the capital to oversee their legal and commercial interests, and these men sent home news and gossip as part of their dispatches. The Caernarvonshire gentlemen Sir William Maurice, for example, employed William ap William as his London agent in the mid-1610s. Ap William discharged his master's business in the capital, but also kept him apprised of local gentlemen's legal business in London, and included news about Court appointments and foreign affairs in his dispatches.<sup>22</sup>

Individuals who left Wales for London made promises to kinsmen and friends that they would keep them supplied with news, a favour that was increasingly understood as a duty.<sup>23</sup> An interesting example in this regard is the lengthy London newsletter written by Rowland Whyte to Henry Rowlands, bishop of Bangor in October 1615. Whyte described how he met with a 'straunge alteracon' in the capital, and gave details of the scandal surrounding Thomas Overbury's poisoning which had gripped the city, as well as the manoeuvrings for the vacant bishopric of Chester.<sup>24</sup> Whyte was an Anglesey man, sometime servant of Sir Robert Sidney and postmaster of the Court, who retained close ties with his birthplace.<sup>25</sup> As postmaster, he seems to have facilitated the transmission of information between the capital and north Wales, with some gentlemen referring to the dispatch of letters 'by Mr Rowland White's man'.<sup>26</sup> It is likely that he provided his Anglesey relations with

excerpts, at least, of the extensive newsletters he communicated to Sir Robert Sidney, although, if so, these have not survived.<sup>27</sup>

Perhaps the best illustration of the ways in which news and information flowed from London into Wales through connections of family, friends and kinsmen can be found in the papers of the Wynns of Gwydir, Caernarvonshire. The *paterfamilias* of the Wynns from 1580 was John (later Sir John). He had provided his own father, Morus, with news as a law student in London,<sup>28</sup> but it is the voluminous correspondence of Sir John's sons that gives the best insight into the relationship between Welsh familial connections and London newsgathering in this period. Three of Wynn's sons lived in the capital during the 1610s and 1620s. The eldest, Richard, was a courtier; William was a lawyer who worked in the service of Lord Treasurer Cranfield, and then for the family friend, Lord Keeper John Williams; the youngest son, Henry, was another lawyer at the Inner Temple. All three sat as MPs during the 1620s and together they constituted a formidable information service for their family and kinsmen in north Wales.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, they could sometimes provide a welter of news and gossip channelling back to Caernarvonshire with some doubt as to who should take precedence. As William Wynn informed his father in March 1624,

if I should write unto yow parliament newes I might seeme to detracte from my bretheren Sir Richard & Harrie Wynn to whome it most properly belongeth to make those relationes (as beinge members of the howse [of Commons]) whoe (I am assured) will not bee wantinge to give yow the best intelligence in ample manner.<sup>30</sup>

The Wynn brothers kept their father informed about parliamentary business, Court gossip and developments on the continent. They did this as dutiful sons, but also as reliable and trustworthy sources in an informational world of rumour and hearsay which could be confusing and disorienting.<sup>31</sup> Trust and the ability to rely on a correspondent were crucial in validating news and discriminating among varying reports, and the greatest bond of trust was blood. The ties of family and kinship thus provided a crucial social dimension to the



circulation and authentication of news in Wales, and this was particularly important in a region distant from alternative and corroborating sources of information. The Wynn children portrayed their function as news correspondents as a familial duty, but also stressed their roles as judicious sifters and relators of information. They did not compromise the boundaries of family trust and pedal rumour as news without a health warning. Henry Wynn passed on the latest reports of the Spanish Match to his father, for example, but noted that much of what he had heard was in the form of rumour, ‘& other more perticuler proceedings should not be discov[e]red, but I heare this by relacon, how true I cannot tell’.<sup>32</sup> On another occasion he sent his father ‘a booke of newes which is the last that came forth,’ but warned him ‘the trueth of [it] I may not warrant’.<sup>33</sup> Ties of friendship and kinship were thus important in validating news reports, and this provides an inherently local dimension to the reception and consumption of news in this period. There was a sense that Wales was comparatively remote from the dense exchange of news and opinion which provided something of a verification system nearer London. Even in the Restoration period Welsh families needed dependable intelligencers who could provide a barometer of reliable reports.<sup>34</sup> Edward Lloyd of Llanforda, for example, wrote to his friend Roger Kynaston in March 1677 that he was ‘confounded rather than informed by ye various reports’ of a recent election, continuing, ‘I can not be satisfyd till I heare some certainty from you’.<sup>35</sup> The role of family and friends in providing a reliable filter through which news could be winnowed and interpreted was important for Sir John Wynn, of course, but also for the wider network of family members and kinsmen among whom such information had an afterlife.

The Wynn papers give an insight into the ways in which news entering Wales could become a commodity for affirming social bonds among the local gentry. For example, William Wynn sent his father a copy of James I’s opening speech to parliament in 1624, but also directed Sir John ‘to send Sir Roger Mostyn a present coppie therof’.<sup>36</sup> Sir John Wynn

himself was the recipient of such ‘second-hand’ information, as in June 1626, when Sir William Thomas wrote to him, conjecturing ‘that yow have not seene the cobby of the petition which Sir Thomas Williams [a local gentleman] delivered unto the Lo[rds] of the higher house ... I have therefore sent you a cobby hereinclosed’.<sup>37</sup> Thomas had previously written to Sir John requesting that he ‘lett me heare of all the newes yow have received from London ... and what newes I shall receave by my sonne ... I will send yow likewise’.<sup>38</sup>

Owen Wynn provided his family at Gwydir with London information throughout the 1620s, but also communicated news to other members of the county gentry including his uncle, Richard Griffith of Llanfair.<sup>39</sup> Similar processes of circulating among local friends and family news obtained from reliable family sources can be found among the gentry of Denbighshire, Flintshire and Carmarthenshire, Monmouthshire, and presumably throughout the other Welsh counties too.<sup>40</sup> This continued to be the case even after the civil wars when printed news became more readily available. In October 1684, for example, Humphrey Humphries of Boderwyd wrote to Thomas Mostyn at Gloddaith, who subscribed to several manuscript newsletters, noting ‘if you have any publick news they will be acceptable to this remote corner’.<sup>41</sup> One of Mostyn’s London agents who provided him with news and printed books alluded to this practice of sharing materials among the local gentry, writing in June 1680 that he had obtained a copy of a rare, and presumably incendiary, tract, and sent one to Caernarvonshire with the entreaty ‘to keepe it by you and not to suffer it to goe out of your owne hands though yow allow freyns the perusall of itt with you’.<sup>42</sup> A year later, Edward Lloyd of Llanforda wrote to a cousin, Mr Eyton, ‘I humbly beg yt if you have any [printed] addresses or pamphletts by yow yt are uselesse to you, pray send ym by ye carrier’.<sup>43</sup>

Family and kin networks thus shaped news distribution by providing channels through which letters and printed materials entered into and circulated within the principality. As the Wynn archive suggests, personal connection was important in adjudicating the reliability and

authority of news. Personal connection thus constituted an important facet of the news landscape in Wales, and, partly because of this, an element of cultural and perhaps linguistic particularity also subtly informed the transactions and translations of news. The vast majority of gentry correspondence in this period was in English although most gentlemen were bilingual.<sup>44</sup> The prevalence of English in the written record, however, hides a shadow world of communication in Welsh, for, as the Elizabethan George Owen observed, '[Welshmen] although they usuallye speacke the Welshe tongue, yet will they writte eche to other in Englishe, and not in the speache they usuallye talke'.<sup>45</sup> There were several ways in which the Welsh language intruded itself into news circulation. On occasion correspondents provided lines in Welsh to comment on recent news. For example, in April 1612 William Jones wrote to his cousin Sir William Maurice about reports that a match had been concluded between the ruling houses of France and Spain. He then inserted a line in Welsh from a local aphorism concerning the dangers of committing to an inconstant wife, apparently commenting on the news in a colloquial and intimate manner.<sup>46</sup>

A more striking example of Welsh interpolation into English language news was Owen Wynn's decision to communicate part of a February 1623 letter to his father in Welsh. This concerned Prince Charles's decision to travel to Spain to woo the Infanta in the company of, among others, Owen's brother Richard. While his comments were not controversial, it is nonetheless striking that he turned to Welsh to discuss '[y]r newydd mwya sydd y rowan ac nyd yddy rhwedl yma etto' ['the great news of the moment, and this story is not yet generally known'], although he did touch on the 'ofn mawr' ['great fear'] that 'neb dyhaldws, beth y daw hwn yddo yn y dywedd' ['nobody knows how these matters will conclude'.<sup>47</sup> Owen was certainly aware of the potential dangers of communicating such information, noting in a 1621 letter to his father that he had discussed 'that [which] may be lawfullie written. Other thinges noe doubt yow heare at home at the second hand how they

passee to and froe with lesse daunger then a man may write hence'.<sup>48</sup> Welsh recusants also adopted this safety strategy, with one Elizabethan report noting how they communicated part of their letters in Welsh to dupe the authorities.<sup>49</sup>

Welsh correspondents in London referred to the dangers of committing controversial news to paper and the need to rely on oral communication in some instances.<sup>50</sup> As personal discussion between sender and recipient was impractical, the choice of messenger or postal carrier to communicate news beyond the letter was an important consideration. Letter carriers played a significant but neglected role in the circulation of news in ways that involved questions of trust and, potentially, of language too.<sup>51</sup> In 1625, for example, Thomas Lloyd wrote from Dublin to Sir Henry Salusbury in Denbighshire, noting that the bearer was 'Jon ap Robert ... Sir Roger Moston's man', implying he was a reliable and discreet individual.<sup>52</sup> Sir William Thomas in Caernarvonshire requested information about the Spanish Match from Sir John Wynn in 1623, but warily advised him to employ a 'trustie messenger' for the purpose.<sup>53</sup> Writers preferred trusted hands to convey their information rather than anonymous and potentially suspect carriers. Often these were men from the lower social orders who would be more proficient in Welsh than English. Conveying news into and from the principality, as well as within it, thus took on culturally specific aspects in the personnel carrying the news. An intriguing indication of this is a letter of 1690 from William Dafydd to Sir Robert Owen which was *addressed* in Welsh: 'At yr howddgar farchog Syr Robert Owen oborkington yn sir Ymwithig' ['To the gentle knight, Sir Robert Owen of Porkington in Shropshire'].<sup>54</sup>

Some letters make it clear that the communication of news would be conducted beyond the text. In a letter of February 1621, for example, George Williams informed Sir William Maurice, 'for newes, I pay you hearken to this bearer, whoe will tell you all newes'.<sup>55</sup> Such incidental information places the circulation of news and communication of

information into a particularist Welsh milieu. We know that these correspondents and recipients spoke Welsh, and carriers and bearers would be familiar with the language as a matter of course. Thus, although impossible to chart in any detail, we may speculate that discussions of news between gentlemen, perhaps concerning sensitive political information, rumour and the like, were carried on in Welsh by proxies. It is certain that oral communication in Welsh remained overwhelmingly significant in most areas of Wales throughout the period, and the Welsh gentry and their news interests should not be placed outside these domains.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, facility in the Welsh language may have assisted in the communication of political information over and above that which remains visible in the written record.

### III

As it entered the principality news became part of the social currency of gentry interaction. However, this material had often already been shaped and selected by newsgatherers in London to accommodate and speak to particular interests within provincial society. Scholars have been disposed to consider 'news' as a rather singular category concerning foreign policy, parliamentary business and Court politics. As we shall see, even these elements could take on local dimensions, but it was also the case that news from London concerned not only matters of high politics but also the progress of local lawsuits, the activities of local men, and developments which might have an influence on the region's politics and economy. Early modern news was thus shaped partly for the local audiences it addressed; and this was especially the case with epistolary news. Rather than seeing news as concerned solely with matters of state, then, we should be mindful of the ways in which the boundaries between 'public' and 'private' news were often blurred. This blurring reflects the interpenetration of the local and the national in early modern news, and is rather at odds with

a scholarly tendency to focus on the dissemination of information from the centre into the provinces and the incorporation (we might say ‘subsuming’) of the localities into a national ‘public sphere’.

We can see the presence of local news in a London context in a letter of November 1604 written by Griffith Price to Sir John Salusbury of Denbighshire. Price informed Salusbury of his lawsuits’ progress in various courts, but also brought in a constellation of other local business. This included the delivery of Salusbury’s letter to fellow Denbighshire man Sir Thomas Myddleton, the fortunes of the Denbighshire lawyer Sir Euble Thelwall, and discussions with the Lord President of Wales about Fulke Lloyd and the choice of the county’s sheriff, a matter on which local man John Panton of Henllan had given advice.<sup>57</sup> Although this was a relation of London affairs, then, it was very much attuned to the ramifications of central business for local politics, and this mixture of national news and local interest can be seen as subtly modulating the information sent to Wales from the capital.

A very full newsletter sent by one George Williams to Sir William Maurice of Clennau in Caernarvonshire in July 1622 provided the sorts of discussion of continental developments and Court politics which one encounters in many such letters. Williams, however, leavened this with news of particular interest in the country. He mentioned the recent death of Sir James Price of Ynysmaengwyn (Merioneth) and the conduct of Caernarvonshire suits in Star Chamber, one of which concerned the Griffith family of Cefnamlwch who had recently defeated the Wynns for the county seat in parliament.<sup>58</sup> Williams noted that one of the Griffiths had insulted local man Lord Keeper Williams, a patron, friend and kinsman of the Wynns.<sup>59</sup> Another letter sent to Maurice a year before from his kinsman Richard Anwyl discussed Maurice’s legal business in London but also added news about Williams’s elevation as Lord Keeper and the tribulations of the Bishop of Bangor who had been committed to the Fleet.<sup>60</sup> We can see this mixture of local and national

business in William Wynn's January 1622 letter to his father which discussed the establishing of a commission for Irish affairs, but made particular mention of two members from north Wales, Theodore Price, an Oxford cleric, and the lawyer Sir William Jones of Castellmarch.<sup>61</sup> As recent scholarship has reminded us, news of high politics was of considerable interest in the localities. However, we should remember that such high politics often had a local dimension. The political fortunes of Lord Keeper Williams in the turbulent waters of Court politics during the 1620s, for example, were a continual point of interest in the news reports sent back to Williams's kinsman and ally Sir John Wynn.<sup>62</sup>

We can see the ways in which national news was tinted with local colour in the reporting of parliamentary business. One of the earliest extant parliamentary reports sent to North Wales, for example, was an anonymous relation of April 1614 which gave particular prominence to Welsh measures in parliament, such as the bill concerning 'our Welshe cottons'.<sup>63</sup> The Wynn brothers kept an eye on parliamentary action over the Welsh cotton trade in the early 1620s, but also reported on initiatives to restrict importation of Irish cattle which was considered damaging to the Welsh economy. Sir Richard Wynn, for example, wrote to his father on 6 May 1621, 'thers this session of parlement ... [an] act for the barring of Eirish cattell which has bin comitted and wile undoubtedly passe the lower house, and I hope the hier, which concerns our country wonderfull much'.<sup>64</sup> In addition to more general news about high politics, then, Welsh newsmongers such as the Wynns tailored reports to their audiences, including information on parliamentary elections in neighbouring constituencies, the legal strategies of local allies and opponents, intrigues over the membership of the local commissions of the peace, and tactics for dealing with local taxes and levies.

Another important news topic for Welsh audiences was the Council in the Marches of Wales and the activities of its Lord President. News about changes in personnel or matters

concerning the authority and competency of the Council was important to the Welsh gentry. In January 1605, for example, John Wynn, jr. reported to his father a conversation he had in the capital with the Lord President of the Council, Edward, Lord Zouche. The discussion concerned payment of the recent privy seal loans in north Wales, but Sir John Wynn was also informed of the difficulties Zouche faced in retaining the Council's authority over the four English shires which were lobbying to leave its jurisdiction. Wynn jr. encouraged his father to read the relevant passages of the union legislation for himself and reported that many (wrongly as it turned out) believed Zouche would 'lose the jurisdiction of them', but promised 'I will write with the next how all things go'.<sup>65</sup> Initiatives at Westminster concerning the Council in the Marches of Wales were also reported back to Wales. The supersedeas bill before the 1624 parliament, for example, potentially hindered the transfer of suits from quarter sessions to the Council in the Marches, and so was mentioned by Henry Wynn as a measure that 'chiefly concerne[s] our countrey', adding that the proposal to add the Council of the Marches to the bill was 'propounded in the howse by some of our countreyemen'.<sup>66</sup>

Although there was a significant increase in the volume and availability of printed news and manuscript newsletters from the mid-seventeenth century, correspondents continued to tailor news to reflect local concerns and interests. Moreover, despite the comparative ease of access to news materials in this period, we should be wary of the tendency to privilege these forms over epistolary exchanges. As we have seen, one of the positives of epistolary news was the fact that its authors were known and reliable, and so the news they sent, corroborated, glossed and interpreted formed an important addition to the generic newspapers and manuscript newsletters which were also purchased. We can see this in the newsletters which Thomas Mostyn of Gloddaith received from William Piers in London in the 1670s. Piers was one among a number of Mostyn's London-based news providers, but in addition to



sending printed gazettes and newsletters, he also personalised his information to include local interests. So, for example, in November 1674 he informed Mostyn about developments in national and international politics but added, ‘all our countrymen here do condole with y[o]u in the country for the sudden & great losses of worthy S[i]r Richard Wynne’.<sup>67</sup> He later provided news of ‘yor uncle Capt[ain Henry] Buckley’ who had obtained ‘some great office in the house’, mentioned the activities of other family members in London, and counselled Mostyn on when a new election in Caernarvonshire was likely.<sup>68</sup> However, in May 1676 Piers informed Mostyn that he would ‘dare send yu noe more news for the future’ because some acquaintances had been imprisoned for dispersing a libel, and thereafter Mostyn’s news reports become more detached, less personal and lacking in the Welsh ‘angle’ that Piers had brought.<sup>69</sup>

There was something of a distinction, then, between the ‘publick’ news which was available generally in print and ‘private’ affairs.<sup>70</sup> The latter included inside and privileged information which could only safely be communicated between correspondents who had an established degree of trust and connection, and this often derived from the resources of family or local affinity. It was also the case that the more ‘private’ information allowed for the meeting of the national news with local information. The two were not entirely discrete forms, but had distinct valencies which, to a degree, mapped onto their generic types – print for ‘national’ information and manuscript newsletters and personal correspondence which, potentially, leavened this with material relevant to local audiences and concerns.

#### IV

If we need to remain cognisant of the mixing of local and national issues in the news circulating in early modern Wales, we should also remember that news did not flow only in one direction. While London and the south east of England constituted the core of a national

news culture, there was also a constituency of correspondents there who were interested in and thirsty for news about Wales. This dimension of local news flowing into the capital is often ignored by political historians or subsumed within the categories of domestic or family business.<sup>71</sup> However, when discussing the gentry we are dealing with a constituency whose social and familial concerns often blurred the line between domestic and political, private and public. Moreover, business at the centre operated partly upon knowledge of and information about the localities, so election news, parliamentary strategy, prospective litigation and the machinations of local office were all grist to the mill of statecraft as well as local politics. There was a more formal dimension to such transactions as when in 1677 Sir Edward Mansell of Glamorgan provided Secretary of State Joseph Williamson with a detailed account of the foremost personalities in the county and their political dispositions.<sup>72</sup> Reports about the activities of Catholics, local responses to taxation demands or information regarding the religious and political reliability of local officials were all part of this institutionalised locality-centre dialogue.<sup>73</sup> However, the movement of political news from Wales to the centre was also a constituent in more informal systems of information exchange. When writing to a servant of the Lord President of Wales in London in March 1640 about the death of Richard Bulkeley of Beaumaris, for example, Robert Eyton was not just passing on local tittle tattle, but informing the principality's senior legal and administrative officer that he 'hath lost a deputy lieutenant & a true servant'.<sup>74</sup> We would be interrogating only part of the dynamic of early modern news culture if we considered the London Welsh simply as providers of news to the provinces and not also as consumers of news coming from thence.

An illustrative example in this regard is Edward Lloyd of Tythyn and Grays Inn, who received reports in the late-seventeenth century about developments at home from his agent Thomas Williams of Broncoed near Mold in Flintshire.<sup>75</sup> In June 1679 Lloyd received letters informing him about the 'rumours flying' in the country concerning the recall of parliament,

reports that Sir George Jeffreys was to be made Chief Justice of Chester, a position with significant influence in Flintshire society, and suggestions that the town of Mold had been promised the lucrative prize of hosting of the local great sessions court.<sup>76</sup> In January 1681 Williams informed Lloyd that ‘wee are all biussie in these p[ar]tes rideing about to secure votes for a new ellecon as if the next parliament were assured of all the prosperous success imaginable’, and went on to provide a detailed disposition of the different candidates in Flintshire and Denbighshire.<sup>77</sup> Williams modestly described this as ‘country stories for yow’ and suggested Lloyd knew more of the matter than he did. This was, however, extremely unlikely as suggested by the time, effort and detail expended in his account. Indeed, Williams followed up this letter a fortnight later with a close discussion of the fallout from the Denbighshire election and reported too on other elections in north Wales and Cheshire.<sup>78</sup> Lloyd was also told that Williams and some neighbours would contribute to the passing of an act against the importation of Irish cattle in the forthcoming parliament.<sup>79</sup>

Study of the movement of news from Wales to London serves to modify dominant models of early modern information flows, which are rather blind to the reciprocities of metropolitan-provincial exchange.<sup>80</sup> The morphology of the news landscape in Wales is further complicated, however, by the need to incorporate what might be characterised a ‘secondary’ information core, Ludlow, the usual meeting place of the Council in the Marches of Wales. Ludlow drew the gaze of many Welsh gentlemen, albeit not with the intensity of the capital, but nonetheless as a place which generated and channelled news of national, regional and local interest. As we have seen, parliamentary measures relating to the Council in the Marches of Wales were subjects for Welsh correspondents. This reflected a wider concern among the Welsh gentry with the Council’s activities as a body which mediated central policy and had direct oversight of many aspects of Welsh administration. Moreover, as the venue of a major law court and an important site for the collection and onward travel of

post both into and out of Wales, Ludlow held a unique place in Welsh news culture. The competence of the Council in the Marches in law and administration ensured that Welsh gentlemen followed business there closely as well as in the central Westminster courts. Their attention frequently turned to Ludlow both as a venue for the local implementation of national policy and as place where their legal campaigns and those of their friends and opponents were conducted. In January 1623, for example, Robert Wynn attended the Council and sent back to Gwydir what amounts to a digest of Ludlow news, covering the disposition of legal business there, the activities of the Lord President and news about a number of Welsh gentlemen who were engaged in business in the town.<sup>81</sup> The disposition of the Lord President, the Council's changing composition, its relations with inferior legal and administrative bodies in Wales, and its role in choosing local officers such as sheriffs, were all grist to the Welsh gossip mill. In many ways discussion of the Council in the Marches reflected in miniature London news concerning government policy and business in the central law courts.

The Ludlow Council, as a meeting place for eminent gentry figures from England and Wales, and as a focus for four assize circuits, constituted something of an entrepôt and clearing house for news. This role is suggested by a conversation in a Marcher yeoman's house in 1630 which began 'What newes was at Ludlow?'.<sup>82</sup> Official posts were routed through the town and there was an established carrier and a fairly rapid and efficient route which moved letters between London and Ludlow, and from thence into Wales.<sup>83</sup> The Privy Council also sent election writs, subsidy books and proclamations via Ludlow, so gentry agents there obtained reports or copies of these and forwarded them on to interested parties.<sup>84</sup> Along with these official documents travelled more informal, though not unrelated, letters and news reports. John Eyton at Leeswood in Flintshire, for example, wrote to Sir William Maurice in November 1620 enclosing news from London about the travails of Attorney

General Yelverton who had fallen foul of the duke of Buckingham, but added ‘since [this], newes came to Ludloe by packett’ regarding Yelverton’s answer in Star Chamber, and ‘likewise news came there by packet signifieinge that a p[ar]liam[en]t begins the sixteenth of Januarii’.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, when Sir Roger Mostyn discussed election prospects in January 1624 he mentioned receipt of a letter from a judge at Ludlow, ‘the speech of a p[ar]liam[en]t beinge then very freshe’.<sup>86</sup> Ludlow thus operated as something of an intermediary nexus within the news networks of western Britain. It generated its own subgenus of political and legal news and gossip which was distinct from, but often related to, national developments. Its position within the communication systems of the Tudor and Stuart state also meant that official information was channelled through here for dissemination in Wales, but alongside this went the unsanctioned voices which glossed and interpreted this information for Welsh gentry consumers.

## V

This discussion of the Council in the Marches underlines the fact that, while Welsh gentry news culture broadly followed English models, there were nonetheless certain particularist dynamics at work here. This picture of subtle but significant differences can be extended to the cultures of reception and the effects of news in Wales. Recent studies of early modern news have emphasised its corrosive and deleterious effects on established hierarchies of government and the Church; news is seen to help delegitimise the status quo and offer alternative frameworks for interpreting politics and government to those offered by the Crown.<sup>87</sup> It is impossible, of course, to plot a causal relationship between the receipt of news and the actions taken thereon. Moreover, it is difficult to disentangle the connection between the effects news had in shaping political cultures and ways in which prevailing political cultures modified how news was received. I wish to conclude, however, by suggesting that

the conservative religious and political cultures characterising the milieu of most Welsh gentlemen in the seventeenth century informed the ways in which they interpreted news and, indeed, the kinds of news they sought out in the first place. Such judgements are difficult to make before the mid-seventeenth century crisis as previously gentry ‘consumers’ looked to get their hands on whatever they could rather indiscriminately. Things were different when the news market allowed a degree of choice based on political preference.

The crisis between king and parliament in the early 1640s was attended by a sharp increase in the volume of news circulated both in print and manuscript, but also in the epistolary commentary accompanying it. Such letters as made their way into Wales at this time often betrayed a deep disquiet about the spectre of political and religious radicalism, with anxieties about ‘fanaticks’ and the ‘Rowndheads’ balanced by loyalist declarations in support of King Charles and the Established Church.<sup>88</sup> Hugh Owen of Monmouthshire, for example, wrote worriedly in December 1641 that the ‘Howse of Commons fall fowle againe upon bishops and prelatz’, and mentioned the ‘confused lying printed bables’ dealing with the question of church reform and the Irish Rebellion. Indeed, he wondered whether the Irish could give a more accurate account than the sensational news pamphlets enthraling the English press.<sup>89</sup>

The representativeness of such comments on the news is impossible to calibrate with any certainty, of course, but it is telling that Sir Thomas Salusbury of Llewenni in Denbighshire, a man who had been receiving regular news reports from London since late 1640, resolved to raise a regiment for the king in 1642 partly because of his impressions about the

diverse inconveniences allreadie growne & like daily to more increase; since & by this goverment the multitude of schismes crouded, not crept, allreadie into the church, give us too iust a cause to feare what an Amsterdam or Pantheon of all religions wee are like to make in a little more time.<sup>90</sup>

There is no evidence that this was based on any significant rise in religious radicalism in north Wales, which suggests instead that his perspectives were a product of the sorts of news reports, and the correspondents' glosses thereon, he had received since the beginning of the Long Parliament.<sup>91</sup> Tellingly, Salusbury was instrumental in organising a loyalist petition to the king in the summer of 1642 which thanked Charles I for 'so full and cleare an accompt of your actions and intentions' in his propaganda, a type of news which *was* welcomed by Welsh gentry figures like Salusbury.<sup>92</sup> Even if Salusbury's account does not demonstrate a simple causal link between the nature of the news reports he received and his political actions, it is nevertheless suggestive of the kinds of conservative Welsh religious and political cultures into which such news reports were received, and through which such information was processed and understood.

By the Restoration period the news market had matured to a point where individuals could discriminate more readily between news providers. The evidential traces we have of this suggest a distinctly conservative pro-Church and Crown news market in Wales. An illustrative example is the choice of news supplier made by Edward Lloyd of Llanforda who, in 1681, reached an arrangement with the newsmonger and astrologer John Gadbury. Gadbury was not a neutral choice; he was a well-known High Anglican Tory who claimed in 1689 that even 'the coelestial orbs disown all anti-monarchical, disloyal and rebellious principles'.<sup>93</sup> Lloyd wrote that he was looking forward to receiving a wide spectrum of news from Gadbury, 'not only of the loyall prerogative but also of ye effect of those virulent pens who stand up for democracy'.<sup>94</sup> The pejorative 'virulent', however, alerts us to the fact that his sympathies lay very much with Gadbury's Toryism. Although Gadbury forwarded a diverse selection of printed and manuscript news material to Lloyd, it is clear that this was a meeting of political minds. In March 1681, for example, Gadbury referred to a version of a speech by Charles II '[which] is a rare with us & hard to be got: but I know not for what

reason unless it be yt he hath spoke so honourably & like himself, which I perceive doth not relish among ye phanatiques who are equally abhorers of monarchy & popery'.<sup>95</sup> Gadbury was also a friend and associate of Sir Robert Owen of Clennau and Porkington, who likewise employed the Londoner to provide him with news. Owen mentioned particularly his interest in editions of Roger L'Estrange's loyalist newspaper *The Observer*, but also welcomed other newssheets which Gadbury 'thought ... worthy', a construction which suggests choice based on political aesthetics as much as informational value.<sup>96</sup>

The kind of partisan news cultures suggested by the cases of Owen and Lloyd seemed to apply to Wales more generally. In 1666 the Lord President of Wales, the earl of Carbery, approached Joseph Williamson, who disseminated official government intelligence via a manuscript newsletter system.<sup>97</sup> Carbery informed Williamson 'I should be glad to heare weekly from y[ou]rselfe, finding some of my neighboures in Southwales & some of my freinds in Northwales have y[ou]r letters constantly', suggesting that this was the preferred political register of news in many parts of the country.<sup>98</sup> In the early eighteenth century, meanwhile, Daniel Defoe observed that the newsletters of the influential Tory John Dyer were the only type of news read carefully in south Wales.<sup>99</sup>

## VI

It seems that Restoration Wales's political culture was receptive to royalist-Tory news forms. While not radically different from many parts of the country, such a conclusion nevertheless offers another facet to a regional information culture which was comfortably assimilated within the developing news landscape of early modern Britain, but which simultaneously demonstrated a degree of particularism and difference. It is not my intention to suggest that the information networks of the early modern Welsh gentry were radically dissimilar to those prevailing in other parts of the kingdom. I have, however, suggested that



we need to pay greater attention to elements which challenge the model propagated in much recent scholarship of a 'national' early modern news culture. So, for example, Barbara Shapiro has recently described a 'London-based but nationally radiating culture' of news and opinion, while Jason Peacey has argued for 'the emergence of something approaching a shared national culture of news and comment'.<sup>100</sup> While accurate in describing the quantitative and qualitative change in news across the early modern period, such conclusions need finessing and qualification if we are to recapture the diversity of local responses to the much-expanded world of news. If we understand news circulation and reception partly as a product of personal networks then we must integrate it more fully within regional gentry societies which were in dialogue with, but not subsumed by, metropolitan culture throughout this period.<sup>101</sup> In so doing, we highlight the potential significance of provincial social networks in communicating, calibrating and glossing the news. Moreover, we also become alert to the reciprocal flows by which provincial news was transmitted back to London to inform and influence understandings of policy at the centre. Wales had cultural particularities of language difference not found in England, and its example may develop our understanding of news cultures as they operated in linguistically distinct areas of Scotland, Ireland, and the nascent British empire. There are also connections to be made here with the research of scholars including Tim Thornton, Newton Key, Mark Stoyle and Ian Warren who have all argued for a degree of continued localist particularism in early modern England and the enduring vitality of provincial cultures despite the growing influence of a rapidly-expanding metropolitan centre.<sup>102</sup>

This article, then, modifies prevailing understandings of early modern news cultures which are often highly London-centric and treat the provinces as uniform spaces into which news and information were transmitted and upon which news acted in similar ways. Such models were elaborated in no small measure to challenge revisionist political accounts which

tended to emphasise the political isolation and quiescence of the provinces.<sup>103</sup> The circulation of political news was an important component in challenging this paradigm, but it has tended to produce a kind of counter-homogenisation whereby areas beyond the metropolis become integrated into a universalised political space. By contrast, this article argues that we need to place greater emphasis on the mechanics and implications of the social contexts of news and the *dialogue* between centre and locality in circulating and interpreting political information. Attention to socio-cultural networks such the early modern Welsh gentry community offers one way to explore how such dialogues operated and what their implications may have been.

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<sup>1</sup> F.J. Levy, 'How information spread among the gentry, 1550-1640', *Journal of British Studies*, 21/2 (1982), pp. 11-34; Richard Cust, 'News and politics in early-seventeenth century England', *Past and Present*, 112 (1986), pp. 60-90.

<sup>2</sup> The literature is enormous, but representative examples include Alastair Fox, 'Rumour, news and popular political opinion in Elizabethan and early Stuart England', *Historical Journal*, 40/3 (1997), pp. 597-620; Joad Raymond (ed.), *News, Newspapers and Society in Early Modern Britain* (London, 1999); idem (ed.), *News Networks in Seventeenth Century Britain and Europe* (Abingdon, 2006); Thomas Cogswell, "'Published by authority": newsbooks and the duke of Buckingham's expedition to the Ile de Ré', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 67/1 (2004), pp. 1-25; idem and Alastair Bellany, *The Murder of King James I* (New Haven and London, 2015); Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers: Propaganda during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum* (Aldershot, 2004); idem, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2013); Mark Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis, 1678-81* (Cambridge, 1994); idem, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain* (Oxford, 2005); David Randall, *Credibility in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Military News* (London, 2008); Brendan Dooley (ed.), *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, 2010); Barbara J. Shapiro, *Political Communication and Political Culture in England, 1558-1688* (Stanford, 2012); Nicole Greenspan, *Selling Cromwell's Wars: Media, Empire and Godly Warfare, 1650-1658* (London, 2012); Ian Cooper, 'Provincial news networks in late Elizabethan Devon', *Historical Research*, 87/237 (2014), pp. 404-422; David Coast, *News and Rumour in Jacobean England: Information, Court Politics and Diplomacy, 1618-1625* (Manchester,

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2014). This literature is intimately connected with another voluminous historiography on the ‘public sphere’ in early modern England, on which, see Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (eds), *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Richard Cust is something of an exception in this respect, drawing on the papers of the Wynns of Gwydir in his work.

<sup>4</sup> On this, see the comments in Grant Tapsell, *The Personal Rule of Charles II, 1681-1685* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 119-22 and Knights, *Politics and Opinion in Crisis*, pp. 233-4.

<sup>5</sup> J.G. Ballinger (ed.), *Calendar of the Wynn (of Gwydir) Papers, 1515-1690* (London, 1926); T. Jones Pierce (ed.), *Clenennau Letters and Papers in the Brogyntyn Collection* (Aberystwyth, 1947); National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW), Brogyntyn MSS, Clenennau correspondence, nos. 485-1089; NLW, MSS PEC1/1-9.

<sup>6</sup> NLW, MS 9051E/126.

<sup>7</sup> NLW, MSS 9052E/202, 205.

<sup>8</sup> J.M. Traherne (ed.), *The Stradling Correspondence* (London, 1840), pp. 124-5.

<sup>9</sup> NLW, Brogyntyn MSS, Clenennau correspondence, no. 522.

<sup>10</sup> NLW, Chirk Castle MS E.4184; NLW, Lleweni MSS, correspondence, nos. 165, 171.

<sup>11</sup> Noah Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation and the Invention of Politics in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> NLW, MSS 9059E/1192, 1198, 1207, 1216.

<sup>13</sup> University of Bangor Archives (hereafter UBA), Mostyn MS 9087; University of London Library, MS 285; University of Kansas, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, Special Collections MS E205; NLW, Tredegar Park MSS Box 105/23, 129-30, 139-44; NLW, MSS 16,999D-17,000D, 17,005D, 17,009D-17,010D, 17,014D; NLW, Carreglwyd MSS I/112-13, 242, 453, 546, 651, 663, 665, 671, 675, 677, 683, 689, 752, 935, 1834; II/67, 317; NLW,

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Powis Castle MSS, 1959 deposit, uncatalogued; Cardiff Central Library, MS 5.50, fos. 41-3; Cardiff Central Library, MS. 4.56, pp. 21-4.

<sup>14</sup> NLW, MSS 9058E/1093, 1107. See also NLW, MSS 9057E/902; 9059E/1164, 1169; NLW, Lleweni MSS, correspondence, no. 97.

<sup>15</sup> Lloyd Bowen (ed.), *Family and Society in Early Stuart Glamorgan: The Household Accounts of Sir Thomas Aubrey of Llantrithyd, c.1565-1641* (Llandybie, 2006), pp. 102-3.

<sup>16</sup> NLW, Llanarth MS A44.

<sup>17</sup> NLW, Carreglwyd MS I/340; NLW, Brogyntyn MSS PQN 1/16, PQN 2/1 PQN 3/1-2; UBA, Mostyn MSS 9088-97.

<sup>18</sup> NLW, MS 11,449D, no. 27.

<sup>19</sup> Lindsay O'Neill, *The Opened Letter: Networking in the Early Modern British World* (Philadelphia, 2015).

<sup>20</sup> John Gwynfor Jones, *Concepts of Order and Gentility in Wales, 1540-1640* (Cardiff, 1992); idem, *The Welsh Gentry, 1536-1640* (Cardiff, 1998).

<sup>21</sup> Katharine W. Swett, "'Born on my land': identity, community and faith among the Welsh in early modern London", in Muriel C. McClendon, Joseph P. Ward and Michael MacDonald (eds), *Protestant Identities: Religion, Society, and Self-Fashioning in Post-Reformation England* (Stanford, 1999), pp. 250-62.

<sup>22</sup> NLW, Brogyntyn MSS, Clennau correspondence, nos. 272, 300, 315, 330, 452.

<sup>23</sup> NLW, MS 9054E/607.

<sup>24</sup> NLW, Brogyntyn MSS, Clennau correspondence, no. 314.

<sup>25</sup> Lewys Dwnn, *Heraldic Visitations of Wales*, ed. S.R. Meyrick (2 vols, Llandovery, 1846), II, pp. 186-7; Hatfield House, Cecil MS 77/18; NLW, Peniarth Estate MSS DE4-6; The National Archives (hereafter TNA), SP38/6, 7; E112/114/59, E112/147/106;

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E134/7JasI/Mich.30, E134/7JasI/Hil.11; E178/5055; Historical Manuscripts Commission, *D'Lisle and Dudley MSS*, I, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup> Anglesey Archives, David Hughes Charity MSS, Box 16, no. 63; NLW, MS 9052E/326.

<sup>27</sup> M.G. Brennan, N.J. Kinnamon and M.P. Hannay (eds), *The Letters (1595-1608) of Rowland Whyte* (Philadelphia, 2013).

<sup>28</sup> NLW, Add. MS 464E/80.

<sup>29</sup> For valuable accounts of these men, see their biographies by Simon Healey in Andrew Thrush and J.P. Ferris (eds), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1604-1629* (6 vols., Cambridge, 2010), VI, pp. 882-87, 946-8.

<sup>30</sup> NLW, MS 9059E/1204.

<sup>31</sup> Coast, *News and Rumour in Jacobean England*.

<sup>32</sup> NLW, MS 9058E/1107. On the problems of passing on rumour as news without personal verification, see also NLW, Llewini MSS, correspondence, no. 165; NLW, Chirk Castle MSS E.6110-11; NLW, Carreglwyd MS II/110.

<sup>33</sup> NLW, MS 9059E/1220.

<sup>34</sup> UBA, Mostyn MS 9067, no. 27.

<sup>35</sup> NLW, Sweeney Hall MS A3, fo. 19v.

<sup>36</sup> NLW, MS 9059E/1194. For these two men's sharing of news, see NLW, MSS 9055E/734, 9059E/1187, 9060E/1272, 1324, 1349, 1373, Add. MS 466E/1223.

<sup>37</sup> NLW, MS 9061E/1420. This material was concerned with the attempted parliamentary impeachment of the Bishop of Bangor by Wynn's enemies, and so had a direct relevance for him.

<sup>38</sup> NLW, MS 9060E/1341.

<sup>39</sup> NLW, Llanfair-Brynodol MS C.31.

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<sup>40</sup> NLW, MS 9061E/1397; NLW, Chirk Castle MSS E.6110, F.12,837; NLW, Lleweni MSS, correspondence, no. 181; NLW, MS 1572C, p. 126; NLW, Tredegar Park MSS 105/23, 139-44; Carmarthenshire Archives, Dynevor MS 154/1.

<sup>41</sup> UBA, Mostyn MS 9068, no. 58.

<sup>42</sup> UBA, Mostyn MS 9090, fo. 27.

<sup>43</sup> NLW, Sweeney Hall MS A7, fo. 53v. Cf. NLW, Brogyntyn MSS, Clennau correspondence, no. 736.

<sup>44</sup> For some rare correspondence in Welsh from this period, see NLW, Boderwyd MS 42; NLW, Brogyntyn MSS, Clennau correspondence, no. 1088; David Jenkins, 'Llythyr Syr Peter Mutton (1565-1637)', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 5/3 (1948), pp. 220-1.

<sup>45</sup> George Owen, *The Description of Penbrokeshire*, ed. Henry Owen (4 vols., London, 1892-1936), I, p. 36.

<sup>46</sup> NLW, Brogyntyn MSS, Clennau correspondence, no. 266. For the verse from which the line is taken, see *Yr Haul*, 259 (1878), p. 272.

<sup>47</sup> NLW, MS 9058E/1070.

<sup>48</sup> NLW, MS 9057E/954. See also his comments in NLW, MSS 9061E/1389, 1391.

<sup>49</sup> TNA, SP12/123, fo. 16v; A.H. Dodd, 'Two Welsh Catholic émigrés discuss the accession of James I', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 8/2 (1937), pp. 344-58.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, NLW, 'Transcripts of some Gwysaney papers', p. 55; NLW MSS 9057E/988, 9060E/1423; NLW, Chirk Castle MS E.6104.

<sup>51</sup> For a recent discussion which has given bearers more of a profile in these exchanges, see O'Neill, *The Opened Letter*.

<sup>52</sup> NLW, Lleweni MSS, correspondence, no. 122.

<sup>53</sup> NLW, MS 9058E/1112.

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<sup>54</sup> NLW, Brogyntyn MS EAC5/1/2. Cf. NLW Brogyntyn MS PEC 1/2/30, a letter of 1668 addressed to ‘Drenewidd’ rather than ‘Newtown’ in Montgomeryshire.

<sup>55</sup> NLW, Brogyntyn MSS, Clennau correspondence, no. 406.

<sup>56</sup> Lloyd Bowen, ‘Language, information and political culture in early modern Wales’, *Past & Present*, 228 (2015), pp. 125-58.

<sup>57</sup> NLW, Lleweni MSS, correspondence, no. 33.

<sup>58</sup> TNA, STAC 8/31/3; NLW, MSS 9057E/943-45, 948, 970, 975, 988, 998, 9058E/1003, 1008, 1025, 1027; Add. MS 466E/1024.

<sup>59</sup> NLW, Brogyntyn MSS, Clennau correspondence, no. 414.

<sup>60</sup> NLW, Brogyntyn MSS, Clennau correspondence, no. 411.

<sup>61</sup> NLW, MS 9058E/1003. Cf. NLW, MS 9058E/1056; Add. MS 466E/1052.

<sup>62</sup> For example, NLW, MS 9057E/939, 960-2, 966, 989; Cardiff Central Library, MS 4.58, fo. 17. Interestingly, William Wynn wrote that Williams’ elevation to the Lord Keepership was an occasion ‘whereof ... all our nation ... hath cause to rejoice’, although he qualified this somewhat, ‘especially his friends and kinsmen’: NLW, MS 9057E/966.

<sup>63</sup> NLW, MS 9055E/651.

<sup>64</sup> NLW, MS 9058E/1096A.

<sup>65</sup> NLW, MS 9052E/335.

<sup>66</sup> NLW, MS 9059E/1209.

<sup>67</sup> UBA, Mostyn MS 9088, fo. 116. Sir Richard Wynn was the fourth baronet of Gwydir who died on 30 October.

<sup>68</sup> UBA, Mostyn MS 9088, fos. 134, 145, 152. This was probably reference to Henry Bulkeley’s acquisition of the reversion of the Mastership of the Household: *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1675-6*, p. 112.

<sup>69</sup> UBA, Mostyn MS 9089, fo. 8.



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<sup>70</sup> UBA, Mostyn MS 9067, no. 13.

<sup>71</sup> It garners some discussion in D.R. Hainsworth, *Stewards, Lords and People: The Estate Steward and His World in Later Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1992), ch. 7.

<sup>72</sup> Philip Jenkins, 'The Glamorgan gentry in 1677', *National Library of Wales Journal*, 25/1 (1987), pp. 53-70.

<sup>73</sup> Bowen, *Politics of the Principality*, chs. 3-4.

<sup>74</sup> NLW, MS 1595E, fo. 333.

<sup>75</sup> NLW, MSS 12,405E-12,406E.

<sup>76</sup> NLW, MS 12,406E, nos. 14, 16, 21.

<sup>77</sup> NLW, MS 12,406E, no. 45.

<sup>78</sup> NLW, MS 12,406E, no. 49.

<sup>79</sup> NLW, MS 12,406E, no. 45.

<sup>80</sup> For example, Shapiro, *Political Communication*, p. 292.

<sup>81</sup> NLW, MS 9058E/1065.

<sup>82</sup> Herefordshire Archives and Records, HD4/2/13, unfoliated (*Hollorow c. Wood*).

<sup>83</sup> Shropshire Archives, MS 212/364/44; TNA, SP12/143, fo. 91.

<sup>84</sup> Ralph Flenley (ed.), *A Calendar of the Register of the Council in the Marches of Wales, [1535], 1569-1591* (London, 1916), passim; NLW, MS 339F, pp. 158-9; British Library, MS 2882, fo. 80; Shropshire Archives, MSS 212/364/53, 57, 59.

<sup>85</sup> NLW, Brogyntyn MSS, Clenennau correspondence, no. 397.

<sup>86</sup> NLW, MS9059E/1187.

<sup>87</sup> See, for example, Alastair Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603-1660* (Cambridge, 2002); Bellany and Cogswell, *Murder of King James I*.

<sup>88</sup> Bowen, *Politics of the Principality*, pp. 235-61.

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<sup>89</sup> NLW, Carreglwyd MS II/110.

<sup>90</sup> NLW, MS 5390D, pp. 251-2.

<sup>91</sup> The newsletters can be found in NLW, Lleweni MSS, correspondence, nos. 165-93, passim.

<sup>92</sup> NLW, Lleweni MSS, correspondence, no. 194; NLW, MS 1595E, fo. 228, MS 9063E/1711; Shropshire Archives, MS 212/364/77; R. Williams (ed.), 'An account of the civil war in north Wales', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, 1 (1846), p. 33; *Two Petitions Presented to the Kings Most Excellent Majestie at Yorke, the First of August 1642* (York, 1642), p. 4.

<sup>93</sup> Patrick Curry, 'John Gadbury', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>94</sup> NLW, Sweeney Hall MS A7, fo. 2.

<sup>95</sup> NLW, Sweeney Hall MS A7, fo. 84.

<sup>96</sup> NLW, Brogyntyn PQN 3/2/2. The classmark NLW, PQN 3/2 contains Gadbury's newsletters to Owen between 1680 and 1697. See also John Gadbury, *Ephemeris, or a Diary ... for ... 1689* (London, 1689), sigs. A1v-A2; NLW, Brogyntyn MSS, Clenennau correspondence, nos. 819, 1077.

<sup>97</sup> Alan Marshall, *Intelligence and Espionage in the Reign of Charles II, 1660-1685* (Cambridge, 1994).

<sup>98</sup> TNA, SP29/166/17. Cf. NLW, MS9067E/2414.

<sup>99</sup> Alex W. Barber, "'It is not easy what to say of our condition, much less to write it": the continued importance of scribal news in the early 18th century', *Parliamentary History*, 32/2 (2013), p. 299.

<sup>100</sup> Shapiro, *Political Communication*, p. 294; Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*, p. 31.

<sup>101</sup> Ian Warren, 'London's cultural impact on the English gentry: the case of Worcestershire, c.1580-1680', *Midland History*, 33/2 (2008), pp. 156-78.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.; Tim Thornton, *Cheshire and the Tudor State, 1480-1560* (Woodbridge, 2000); Mark Stoye, *West Britons: Cornish Identities and the Early Modern British State* (Exeter, 2002); Newton Key, 'The localism of the county feast in late Stuart political culture', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 58.2 (1995), pp. 211-37.

<sup>103</sup> In addition to the works cited in fn. 2, the scholarship of Clive Holmes and Ann Hughes was important in integrating the political cultures of the provinces more fully within national contexts: Clive Holmes, 'The county community in Stuart historiography', *Journal of British Studies*, 19/2 (1980), pp. 54-73; idem, 'Centre and locality in civil-war England', in John Adamson (ed.), *The English Civil War: Conflict and Contexts, 1640-1649* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 153-74; Ann Hughes, *Politics, Society and Civil War in Warwickshire, 1620-1660* (Cambridge, 1987); idem, 'Warwickshire on the eve of the civil war: a county community?', *Midland History*, 7 (1982), pp. 42-72.