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## WELSHMEN IN THE ARMY OF EDWARD I DURING THE SCOTTISH CAMPAIGN OF 1296

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One of the most important features of the *People of Medieval Scotland*, common to prosopographical databases, is the ability not only to search, but also to browse the database by name. It was through this function that I noticed a significant number of Welsh names cropping up in our sources. Many of these Welsh names, some of them well-known figures in the landscape of thirteenth-century Welsh history, appear in the pact between Walter Comyn, earl of Menteith, and the magnates of his faction, on the one side, and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd on the other, on 18 March 1258; a familiar text from *Littere Wallie* printed in Rymer's *Foedera* ([PoMS, 4/42/2](#), *Foedera*, I, i, 370). Other instances include an instruction from Henry III to Llywellyn ap Gruffudd (prince of Wales), Owain ap Gruffudd, the king of Norway, and Alexander III, on 4 April 1253, to stop invading the lands of Magnus, king of the Isles ([PoMS, 1/26/9](#), *CDS*, i, no. 1917). Or there is the declaration of obedience by Thomas of Kirkcudbright, bishop elect of Whithorn, to the archbishop of York, done in the presence of the bishop of St Asaph in October 1294 ([PoMS, 2/12/35](#), *Reg. Romeyn*, ii, no. 1407). But by far the most interesting occurrence of Welsh names comes from a plea roll of Edward I's army from the campaign of 1296.

Between the middle of May and the end of August 1296, Edward I and his army rode unopposed through Scotland. This journey of more than three months' duration was the postlude to the defeat of the feudal host of Scotland at Dunbar on 27 April, and the surrender of Roxburgh castle by James the Stewart a week or so later. But it was also the prelude to the great parliament of Berwick on 28 August, when the English king formally received into his goodwill and faith the prelates, earls, barons, nobles and the civic communities which constituted the realm of Scotland. Edward's journey of summer 1296 has no parallel that I can think of in the history of the British Isles: and I am hard pressed to think of a parallel in the history of western Europe. The English king proceeded without hindrance until he reached the Moray Firth; on the way, the king of Scots, John Balliol, was deposed, ritually and ceremonially humiliated, and taken prisoner; and finally, at the end of the journey, nearly every person and community of significance in Scotland performed fealty once again, and the tenants-in-chief did homage.

The campaign of 1296 was a triumphant success, and the expedition developed into little more than a grand royal and military progress around the Scottish kingdom. Edward followed an eastern coastal route, via Edinburgh, Stirling, Perth, Forfar, Montrose, Kincardine, Aberdeen, Banff and Elgin, returning via a similar route, and taking in Kildrumny, Brechin, Arbroath, Dundee, and St Andrews, until he reached Berwick-upon-Tweed again on Wednesday 22 August.

As we follow the king on his tour of Scotland, the plea roll of his army allows us one perspective onto life in a late-thirteenth-century army, a view of the trouble-makers, and the kind of trouble they got into.

The document in question lives at The National Archives in Kew as part of the Exchequer series of Scottish Documents, E39. The shelf-mark is E39/93/15. It was printed in the Scottish History Society's eleventh Miscellany in 1990, edited by Cynthia Neville. It is made up of nine parchment membranes, and a contemporary note sewn to it reads, 'Roll of King

Edward, delivered in the Wardrobe at Tweedmouth by sir William de Beccles, clerk of the Earl Marshal’.

Now, all men who broke ranks, robbed, caused disturbances within the host, or committed any other offences while in battle array, were referred to the marshal and constable for punishment. Both the Earl Marshal, Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, and the Constable of England, Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford, were present on this campaign, and witnessed the performance of fealty by Scottish landholders. Also present was John Lovell, the deputy Marshal, who heard some of the cases. Two entries reveal that the jurors who were summoned to the sessions were men in the king’s immediate entourage (his court), and others from the army at large.

The first feature to be noticed is that the pleas and commissions of gaol delivery happen where the king is. They follow his otherwise-known itinerary through Scotland. The first was at Roxburgh, 10 May 1296.<sup>1</sup>

**Pleas of the lord king’s army at Roxburgh, on the Thursday after the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, in the the 24th year of his reign [10 May 1296].**

71 [Ralph of Togston](#) was attached to answer [Llywelyn ab Ithel](#) on a plea of trespass. He complains that on the Tuesday after the feast of the Holy Trinity, Ralph unlawfully took a sword from him worth 4 s., and a mantle worth 2 s. 4 d., and he removed the sword and mantle, ‘to the grievous damage’ of Llywelyn, and ‘against the peace’ etc. Ralph ‘came and defended the force and injury’. He said that he bought the mantle in the king’s market at Roxburgh, and that that he did not acquire it with malice. He seeks inquest to be made. About the sword, he said that he seized no sword from Llywelyn, nor did he remove it, as he has charged. Ralph now requests that inquiry be made; and Llywelyn likewise. (The sheriff) is therefore instructed etc. Afterwards, Llywelyn presented himself, and Ralph did not come; therefore he and his sureties, namely [John fitz Richard of Ednam](#) and John his son are liable to amercement.

(Amercement of 2 s.)

We should suppose that Ralph came from Togston in Northumberland, but that he had local connections in Roxburghshire, for he was able to call upon John fitz Richard and his son, also John, of Ednam, near Kelso. Perhaps they were not such good friends with Ralph after their amercement for 2 shillings.

The next session constituted pleas of gaol delivery at Roxburgh, 17 May 1296

**Pleas of gaol delivery at Roxburgh on the Thursday in Whitsun week in the 24th year of the reign of King Edward [17 May 1296]**

97 [Richard of Gateshead](#) was attached to answer [Cynwrig ap Dafydd](#) on a plea of trespass. He complains that when on the Thursday after the Octave of Trinity he

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<sup>1</sup> In what follows, the numbers refer to Professor Neville’s edition, but the translations – which sometimes summarise – are my own, although there is inevitably a certain degree of overlap with the wording of Neville’s translations.

arrived on the king's road at the town of Roxburgh, Richard came and with a premeditated assault attacked him and wounded him in the head with a staff [or axe] to his grievous damage of £20, and against the peace. Richard came and defended the force and injury; he said that he did not come there, nor did he assault or wound Cynwrig, as he charged. He now requests that inquest be made; and Cynwrig likewise. Afterwards, Cynwrig let the suit fall; he is therefore liable to amercement.

(Amercement of 2 s.)

The army then moved on to Edinburgh, and there gaol deliveries and pleas of the king's army were heard on 12 June 1296.

**Gaol delivery at Edinburgh and pleas of the lord king's army there on the Tuesday after the feast of Saint Barnabas in the 24th year of King Edward's reign [12 June 1296].**

**108** A day is given between [Gruffudd Crakeyl](#) and his company, men of the earl of Hereford, plaintiffs on the one side, and [Warin of Staundon](#) and others of [Nicholas of Audley's](#) men, defendants on the other side, and is allowed until the next day, on the request of the parties. Afterwards they are licensed to agree. [Broyl de Turberville](#) put himself (on the country). The sureties for amercement are [Gruffudd ap Rhys](#) and [Hywel ab Einion](#), men of the earl of Hereford. (Amercement) is remitted at the instance of [Sir Gilbert de Bohun](#).

(On the request of the parties)

Staundon is in Herefordshire, and Audley in Staffordshire. Gilbert de Bohun was the brother of the earl of Hereford. The Turbervilles were a significant Marcher family in Glamorgan. Gruffudd ap Rhys was leader of the Welshmen of North Wales and fought in Gascony in 1297 (*Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1292–1301*, p. 335: Sandwich, 15 March 1297/8, safe conduct for 15 days for Welsh men of North Wales returning home from Flanders).

**109** [Cynwrig ap Madog](#) (and) [Iorwerth ab Owain](#) were charged at the king's suit for a homicide committed at Jedburgh, that they killed a Welshman, one of their company; they say that they are not guilty, and put themselves (on the country) for it. The jurors say upon their oath that they are not guilty. Therefore they are acquitted.

(Acquitted)

**111** [Therenard Barth](#) was charged by the lord king because he killed [Einion Fychan](#), a Welshman. He puts himself (on the country). The jurors say upon their oath that he killed Einion feloniously; and they say that he has no chattels.

(To be hanged, no chattels)

**113** [Dafydd ap Cynwrig](#) was attached at the suit of Henry of Lancaster. It is claimed that David took a horse from Henry on the Friday before the feast of Saint Barnabas the apostle, in a field at Edinburgh, against the peace of the lord king to the grievous damage of Henry of half a mark. Dafydd comes and defends

the force and injury, the damage etc. He says that he bought the horse at Carlisle at the time the Welshmen were on their way to Scotland. He requests that inquest be made on the matter; and Henry likewise. Therefore the matter is put to inquest.  
(Inquest)

This Henry of Lancaster appears to be the Henry of Lancaster who was grandson of Henry III. He was the third earl of Lancaster and third earl of Leicester (d.1345), second son of Edmund (Crouchback), earl of Lancaster (1245–1296), the youngest son of Henry III, and Blanche (d. 1302). If so, this is the earliest reference to him on military service, probably aged 16. We know that he served in the king's army in Flanders in 1297–8, and was knighted in 1301. Henry became lord of Monmouth upon his father's death in June 1296, and held Grosmont, Skenfrith, and Whitecastle, two Gloucestershire manors, and Monmouth. (Edmund had died only a week earlier than this this case, at Bayonne.)

Edinburgh, 8 June 1296

**Pleas of the lord King's army at Edinburgh on the Friday before the feast of Saint Barnabas the apostle in the 24th year of the reign of King Edward [8 June 1296].**

**138** [Ithel ap Kaclyn](#) of Whitchurch was attached to answer [Roger](#) the servant of [John of Swinburn](#) on a plea of trespass. Later they are licensed to agree. Ithel puts himself on the country. He makes a fine of 2 shillings.

(Amercement 2 s., paid)

Ithel was a Welshman of the Powys-Shropshire March. John of Swinburn was a tenant in chief of Edward I in Scotland, and performed homage and fealty at Berwick in August 1296.

**141** [Peter de Mompelers](#), [Robert the servant of Gilbert](#), Alan of Henton, [Eustace Mowere](#), [Gilbert Collier](#) and [Walter de Fernacles](#) appealed [Meurig ab Ieuan](#) the Welshman in respect of the death of William, of their company, and of the theft of a tunic and a sword. Peter and the others have not prosecuted; and one stood surety for the other; and they have not prosecuted; therefore they are to be seized.

With respect to the king's suit, Meurig says that he is a good and loyal man and is in no way guilty, and he puts himself on the country. The jurors say, upon their oath, that he is a good and loyal man and is no way guilty; therefore he is acquitted.

(Seized and acquitted)

**142** [William Fiddler](#) and [Matilda of Waketon](#) were attached to answer Meurig on a plea of trespass. He complains that on the Saturday before the quindene of Trinity, the aforesaid William came and shot at him with an arrow and wounded him badly, to Meurig's gave damage and against the peace.

William says that he neither shot at Meurig nor injured him as he accused. He asks for inquest to be made. And Meurig likewise. The jurors say, upon their oath, that William and Maud are not guilty but that if they did do this, they did it

in self-defence. Therefore it is considered that William and Maud are acquitted. Meurig is liable to amercement. His surety is [Sir John le Strange](#).

(Amercement 12 *d.*)

Sir John Le Strange, presumably son of Roger Le Strange, Lord Le Strange of Knockin, Shropshire, who was heavily involved in the Welsh wars.

**150** [John de Banet](#) was attached to answer [John de la Reil](#), constable of Sir [Walter de Beauchamp](#)'s Welshmen on a plea of trespass. And John de la Reil has not prosecuted; therefore he and his sureties for prosecuting are liable to amercement.

(Amercement 12 *d.*)

Sir Walter de Beauchamp was constable of Gloucester castle and steward of the king's household.

**151** [John Russel](#), [Madog Gen](#), [Mordach of Frodsham](#) and [Goronwy the Welshman](#) were attached to answer [Dafydd ap Thomas](#) and [Madog ap Goronwy](#) on a plea of trespass. They complain that on the Friday which was the feast of Saint Peter, John and the others came to Clunie, and assaulted them, and wounded them badly, to their grave damage etc., and against the peace. They bring suit upon it.

John and the others come and say that they did not come there, nor did they assault those men, as they are charged. They ask for inquest to be made. Dafydd and Madog have not prosecuted. Therefore they are liable to amercement.

(Amercement 2 *s.*)

Eleven days later, the scene is transported to Stirling, and so into Scotia proper.

Stirling, 19 June 1296

**Gaol delivery at Stirling on the Tuesday before the feast of Saint John Baptist in the 24th year of the reign of King Edward [19 June 1296].**

**117** [Iorwerth the Welshman](#)<sup>2</sup> is attached at the suit of [Ralph fitz Ralph](#) for the death of a man. His sureties for prosecuting are [William Athelston](#) and [Roger Hayward](#).

Clunie, 28 June 1296

**Gaol delivery at Clunie on the Thursday, the vigil of the apostles Peter and Paul, in the 24th year of the reign of King Edward [28 June 1296].**

**119** [Iorwerth the Welshman](#) is attached for the death of [William fitz John](#). And being charged upon this at the lord king's suit, he says that he is not guilty of

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<sup>2</sup> *Yereward Walt* in Neville's edition, but this is the same man as *Yereword Wallensis* in no. 119.

William's death. He puts himself upon the country. And the jurors say, upon their oath, that Iorwerth is not guilty of William's death. He is therefore acquitted.

(Acquitted)

This appears to be the same case as no. 117.

**121** [Ralph of Ireland](#) was attached to answer [John Lovell](#) on a plea that when John came to Edinburgh to settle the dispute between the Welsh and the English, Ralph came and wounded John's destrier under him, to his damage etc. Ralph comes and defends the force and injury etc. He asks for inquiry to be made; John likewise. The jurors say, upon their oath, that Ralph wounded John's destrier as he charged him. Therefore Ralph is condemned to prison etc.

(To prison)

John Lovell was deputy marshal in King Edward's army.

**Gaol delivery at Aberdeen on the Wednesday next before the feast of Saint Margaret the virgin, in the 24th year of the reign of King Edward [18 July 1296]**

**129** [Henry Woodward](#), [William Carter](#), [William de Berneston](#), [Henry le Tene](#), and [John Organ](#), were attached for the death of a Welshman killed in Roxburgh, namely one of the earl of Hereford's company. Those charged over this matter say in the presence of the steward that they are not guilty of the Welshman's death. And they put themselves on the country concerning this. The jurors say, upon their oath, that Henry and the others are not guilty of the death of the Welshman and are therefore acquitted.

(Acquitted)

By 10 July, the army is making its way along the east coast, and has reached Montrose.

**Pleas of the lord king's army at Montrose on the Tuesday after the feast of Saint Thomas the martyr, in the 24th year of the reign of King Edward [10 July 1296].**

**159** [William Park](#) was attached to answer [Dafydd Whanwhan](#) on a plea respecting a mule. The sureties for prosecuting are [Llywelyn Foel](#) and [Geoffrey Messenger](#). William presented himself. And Dafydd has let the suit fall. And Dafydd and his pledges are liable to amercement.

(Amercement of 12 *d.*)

A fortnight after the pleas at Montrose, on 28 July 1296, the king and his army have reached their northern limit at Elgin in Moray, before the return journey to Berwick.

**Gaol delivery at Elgin on the Saturday after the feast of Saint James the apostle in the 24th year of the reign of King Edward [28 July 1296].**

132 [Ieuan of Gelli-gaer](#) was attached for the death of a boy named [John](#). Being charged with this at the suit of the king he says that he is not guilty of John's death; and he puts himself on the country. The jurors say, upon their oath, that Ieuan is not guilty of the death of the aforesaid John. Therefore he is acquitted.

(Acquitted)

So far as the Welshmen involved in these pleas and gaol deliveries go, the proceedings came to nothing. None of the defendants was found to be culpable, and the worst that happened was that a number of them were amerced for not pursuing a suit. The one sentence of hanging was handed down for the murder of a Welshman, Einion Fychan, by an Englishman. And the sentence of imprisonment was imposed upon an Irishman who wounded the deputy marshal's horse. Yet we see a range of charges and sometimes some amusing defences.

I have not been able to identify many of the Welshmen involved; only Gruffudd ap Rhys crops up elsewhere as leader of the Welshmen of North Wales in the Gascony campaign the following year. Yet, from their epithets, and their associates, we can surmise that those mentioned were drawn from the Marches and south Wales, in line with J. E. Morris's interpretation of the other evidence.

As I have already said, this is not a newly discovered text, and perhaps I am not the only one to have noticed the number of Welshmen contained in it. But so far as I can see, it has been overlooked in the historiography of Welsh armies. As a more general principle, I suspect that there remains much more still to be discovered about the Welsh in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in The National Archives at Kew.

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