

Catrin of berain

However in the case of Catrin, she was the only child and therefore all the lands came down to her, until that is, she was to marry, then all the land went to her husband. Catrin's father however, was a shrewd man and made sure that any future husband of Catrin, if she was to outlive him, her lands were to revert back to her, or in turn to her eldest son. Her marriage to Sir John, Salisbury lasted only a few years, due to his premature death, and their eldest son was only a child.

Catrin did of course remarry with Sir Richard Clough, another man of status from Denbigh. Richard was the son of Richard Clough (senior) who had become extremely wealthy due to his business enterprise of glove making, which was the main industry in Denbigh at the time. Originally they were not from the aristocracy, but he sent both his sons, Richard and William to Chester to become members of the Cathedral Choir. All boys could progress from there to the Grammar School that was attached to the church. Once here they could get an exceptional education, as that of the nobility.

Richard Clough (senior) was an acutely clever man and as such had arranged for his son Richard to be indentured to Sir Thomas Gresham, another extremely successful London Business man. Born in London Gresham was one of two sons and two daughters of Sir Richard Gresham, a leading London merchant, who for some time held the office of Lord Mayor, and for his services as agent of Henry VIII in negotiating loans with foreign merchants received the honor of knighthood. Sir Thomas served an eight year apprenticeship with his uncle and soon became a financial wizard. He carried on a business as a Wool merchant in Antwerp, which was the financial hub of Europe at the time, and therefore travelled widely. He also acted in various matters as an agent for King Henry 8th.

Being indentured to such a successful business man offer Richard Clough a once in a lifetime opportunity in the world of commerce and finance. He moved there as a clerk to begin with but soon climbed the ladder of success due to his quick thinking brain and business acumen, becoming the chief executive for Sir Thomas Gresham. Although he became highly successful and very rich, he did however lack the one thing that could give him status, and that was land. By then he could afford to buy land. This he did in the vale of Clwyd and followed that by building two large houses, one at Plas Clough, on the outskirts of Denbigh and the other, Bach y Graig near Tremeirchion in 1575.

Bach y Graig was the first house built with bricks in North Wales. The bricks and tradesmen were imported from Antwerp, and because it went up so quick, it was rumored locally that the devil himself was partly involved. However by building two large country houses, being rich and also a land owner, he had elevated himself on the par with other land owning gentry.

With Sion (y Bodiau) Salisbury being Catrin's first husband and Richard Clough her second, there was also another link between the two men. Historians have discovered that Sir John Salisbury (Sion y Bodiau) had gone into some financial difficulties and had to borrow money from Richard. However, soon afterwards, Sir John Salisbury died a relatively young man, leaving Catrin as a young widow. A couple of years later Catrin accepted a proposal of marriage from Richard, and while many did argue at the time that money was the essential basis of the arrangement, but many scholars now argue that it was romance and that Richard was the love of her life.

The pattern of safeguarding the lands on the death of the head of the family, was again repeated with Richard Clough. He made a detailed will, that should he die before Catrin, she would be allowed to stay in his house, at Plas Clough for seven years, but if she remarried, she was to leave his house the same day. He wanted to prevent his two houses, the land and his wealth going to the hands of Thomas Salisbury, Catrin's son from her marriage to Sir John.

Richard had three children, prior to his marriage to Catherine. He had earlier married a girl from Flanders, when he was working there and had two daughters, but he also had an illegitimate son from another brief affair. Richard was determined to keep his two homes to his family, either to his two daughters, but if they were to marry, it would have to be to someone who would adopt the surname Clough, so as to keep the family name. If they were not to inherit the family name and property, it was to go to his brother William – if of course he outlived him. Pressure would be put on his brother to ensure that his illegitimate son was to inherit his estate. Unfortunately Richard died three years after his marriage to Catrin, but his inheritance plans went completely astray, that of course is another story.

Reverting back to the Salisbury's, there developed many branches of this family, and one such branch went to Bachymbyd, near Ruthin. They later extended to the Corwen area by occupying Plas Rhug. One very notable character of the Salisbury family here was a certain William Salisbury (yr hosanau gleision, the old blue socks, apparently because he wore pink socks). We have not the space here to expand in any detail of his life experiences, he served abroad and registered for matriculation at Oriel College, Oxford. When he returned to his home ground he found the Bachymbyd estate and Rhug had been almost abandoned, and William spent the next thirty years, living frugally and working tirelessly to safeguard the family lands and to bring the houses back to their former glory. It was he who commissioned Rhug Chapel, built 1637, the beautifully decorated small private church that can be visited to this day. As a Royalist and High Church individual, he ensured that there was an altar in the little church,

Having been rewarded by the King for his bravery and becoming the Constable of Denbigh castle, he is most famously remembered for defending the castle against Cromwellian forces for six months, only surrendering after receiving a letter from the king to say the war was over, and that it was pointless to suffer more loss of blood.

The country estates had become extremely important, with the Salisbury's having many thousands of acres, with other branches of the family adding to their total acreage. There were other important Land owning families like the Middleton's of Gwaenynog and Galch Hill in Denbigh; built by Richard Myddleton (c1508-75), Governor of Denbigh Castle. One of his nine sons being Sir Hugh Myddleton (1560-1631) he was an entrepreneur who served variously as Alderman, Recorder and MP for Denbigh. He is most famous for his New River project of 1609, for improving London's water supply. His other son Sir Thomas Myddleton was an extraordinary entrepreneur-businessman who was a founder member of the East India Company, universal banker and money lender and financier of buccaneering expeditions under King James. In 1595 he purchased Chirk Castle and its lands, thereby founding that branch of the Middleton's; in 1613 he was created Lord Mayor of London.