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# Owain Glyndwr and his uprising – Interpretation Plan



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# Owain Glyndwr and his uprising interpretation plan *Final*

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# Executive summary

## Plan purpose

This interpretation plan aims to help guide and inform Cadw's Heritage Tourism project and expenditure under the WAG SCIF programme whose objectives are to **maximise the economic value** of heritage by **increasing the volume, length and value of heritage visits**. This plan recommends actions and initiatives which make sites associated with **Owain Glyndwr and his uprising** more intellectually accessible and enjoyable for both tourists and residents.

## Plan aims

The improved interpretation of the selected sites associated with Owain Glyndwr and his uprising should:

- help the local economy by developing tourism products and promoting nearby sites,
- enhance the conservation of these iconic sites and provide a rationale for their maintenance and improvement,
- strengthen a sense of identity and pride in Welsh heritage including Wales' links with the rest of the world – particularly amongst schoolchildren,
- help visitors from non-Welsh backgrounds to understand aspects of Welsh history and culture,
- help dispel myths about Owain Glyndwr and the uprising amongst Welsh visitors,
- promote/raise awareness of sources of further information and relevant groups and organisations.

## Considerations and parameters

Cadw should consider the following points as they develop projects and implement the plan.

- The Glyndwr story is only one episode in the history of some sites.
- There is a risk that local people may not feel a sense of 'ownership' over the material or items.
- Sites beyond north-east and mid Wales which played a role in the uprising may be ignored and visitors will not appreciate the pan-Wales nature of the uprising.
- Some sites could be damaged by too many visitors.
- There is a risk that the story of the uprising will be conveyed as being about heroes and conquerors and ignore the victims and the hardship which ensued.
- The plan may create a demand which may not be satisfied at some sites.

- The provision may be 'tacky' and inappropriate, in particular souvenirs and infrastructure.
- Some of the sites may become unofficial national 'shrines' which some people may find off-putting.

## **General recommendations**

Cadw should do the following in support of the recommended projects and initiatives at the selected sites.

### Research

- Organise a seminar of professional archaeologists and historians to **assess and review research results** at **all** of the selected sites and to agree overall **priorities regarding future excavations** and **historical research**.
- Invest in audience research to establish **attitudes towards Owain Glyndwr**, interest in, and knowledge of the story of the uprising amongst target audiences.

### Ownership and sustainability

- Establish a **cluster** or **group** to bring together representatives from each of the sites and main interests in the Glyndwr storyline.
- Appoint a **temporary part-time project officer** to negotiate partnerships, management and access arrangements.
- Undertake **thorough and timely consultation** with local institutions such as Community Councils and local access groups during the process of producing interpretation material.
- Consider financing the interpretation of **other aspects of the history of some sites** in addition to the one episode when events occurred relating to the Owain Glyndwr uprising.

### Standards

- Ensure all material complies with best practice regarding interpreting to visitors with **physical impairments and special needs** in order to comply with the requirements of the DDA.
- Appoint **one author each for Welsh and English** to produce texts at all sites.
- Commission an independent **academic expert to verify** all scripts and texts.
- Be consistent in referring to the main character as **Owain Glyndwr** in all interpretation material.

### Raising awareness

- Grant aid a **tour of contemporary bards** based on the recent Welsh medium show '**Syched am Sycharth**'.

- Commission a **theatre in education show** depicting the story of the Glyndwr uprising and finance a national tour around schools in Wales together with the production of education material.

### Marketing

These actions would ensure that the investment in the interpretation of these Owain Glyndwr sites reaps benefits and achieves some of the stated aims.

- Promote fully interpreted Owain Glyndwr sites to **tourism partnerships, County Council marketing departments** and **bus and rail companies** so that products become part of their on-going campaigns.
- Consider a **national marketing campaign** to attract visitors specifically to smaller heritage sites **in partnership** with Visit Wales and National Museums and Galleries of Wales.
- Stimulate co-operation with more established attractions locally in order to use them as points of **entry and marketing hubs**.
- Raise awareness of the Owain Glyndwr sites amongst **Tourist Information Centres**.
- Develop a **logo or emblem** based on the Owain Glyndwr/Princes of Gwynedd coat of arms to unite the various sites – to be used on brown signs directing visitors to sites and on interpretation items at the various sites.
- Negotiate a **page on the websites** of relevant organisations and local authorities displaying **an interactive map** highlighting the Glyndwr sites.
- Produce a **plaque or small panel** to be displayed at **towns and sites not selected** for this plan but which played a role in the history of the uprising.
- Produce a **trail leaflet** linking all the selected sites to include a **geocaching element**.
- Establish a programme of **local school visits** to key sites.
- Install **brown tourist destination signs** to direct and reassure visitors as they search for the selected sites.
- Jointly **market the main iconic sites** associated with Owain Glyndwr, Princes of Gwynedd, Princes of Deheubarth and Lords of the Marches under the title 'essential places every Welsh person must visit' or similar.

### **Selected sites**

We have selected **eight sites** to play a role in this interpretation plan, each of which has a well established association with Owain Glyndwr and were **central to his career**. They also fall into two geographical 'groups' or '**clusters**'.

#### Eastern cluster

- Village of Hanmer
- Sycharth
- Glyndyfrdwy

- Bryn Glas battlefield, Pilleth

#### Western cluster

- Machynlleth
- Pennal
- Aberystwyth Castle
- Harlech Castle

Visitors with a genuine interest in Owain Glyndwr can gain an appreciation of the **pan-Wales nature of the uprising** and its general effect on the towns and landscape of Wales either by:

- visiting the **Owain Glyndwr Centre at Machynlleth** or those planned for Harlech Castle or Corwen,
- visiting the dedicated **web page** with an interactive map of all relevant sites,
- reading one of the excellent **reference books** referred to in the interpretation provision.

Towns and sites not selected to be fully interpreted as part of this plan can also play a part by displaying one of the specially produced plaques or small panels which will refer visitors to the dedicated web page.

### **Proposed interpretation themes**

These **interpretation themes** focus on **Owain Glyndwr** and the **various facets of the uprising**. Each selected site will need to present a general introduction to Glyndwr and the uprising and then go further so that visitors leave with a **greater understanding** by conveying one or two of the most relevant themes.

- a. Owain Glyndwr's ancestry and status influenced his actions and ultimately his fate.
  - A feudal lord, descendant of Welsh royal lineage who lived in splendid mansions
  - Had an Anglo-Welsh heritage/background
  - Fulfilled the predictions of poets – 'Y Mab Darogan'
  - Was a family man, whose wife was key to his cause and who, together with his daughters suffered dreadful fates
- b. Owain Glyndwr's sense of injustice moved him to take up the flag on behalf of fellow Welsh people with similar grievances.
  - Led a rebellion against the social, economic and religious hardships in Wales at the time
  - Gathered key influential leaders around him to provide gravitas and status to his cause

- c. Owain Glyndwr's background, military experience and loyalty from fellow Welsh people made him a defiant leader.
  - Had served under the English crown.
  - Used astute tactics to defeat his enemy.
  - His cause split families and communities and wrought destruction to the landscape and buildings of Wales.
  - He was defiant in the face of overwhelming odds.
- d. Owain Glyndwr appealed to many corners of war-torn Wales and nearly brought it greater unity and representation.
  - His uprising touched on most parts of Wales which were ravaged as a result.
  - Following centuries of feudal dynastic rule he assembled representatives of various 'commotes' as a 'parliament'.
  - He had a vision of himself as head of state, the leader of a more modern nation.
- e. Owain Glyndwr and his advisers planned an independent Wales informed by the latest religious, social and educational developments in parts of Europe.
  - His rebellion matured into a vision for a state.
  - He sought the support of the king of France and the Pope at Avignon to realise his vision.
  - Became an international figure who sought alliances abroad in Europe.
- f. Although Owain Glyndwr's dream failed, he was never betrayed, but instead he faded into the legend books to re-emerge centuries later a national hero.

## Recommendations for Hanmer

Target audience - **prosperous early retired couples and working empty nesters**

- Professionally produce a bilingual full colour **leaflet** conveying proposed theme via R.S. Thomas' poems to be distributed at the church, shop and pub based on the current leaflet.
- Produce and install an **interpretation panel**, with input from local schoolchildren, on the green outside the church, introducing the story and encouraging people to visit the church.
- Undertake further research into **Glyndwr's origins** and earlier life.
- Finance a programme of **guided tours** around the village to include Glyndwr family associations by trained local guides.

- Maximise the marketing potential via the **Wrexham Open Church Network** – its website, touchscreen unit (following it being overhauled) and guidebook.

## Recommendations for Sycharth

Target audience - **prosperous early retired couples and working empty nesters** and **school groups**

- Install a **kiosk** (enhanced roofed panel) in proposed car park displaying rendition of **visual reconstruction** (© Spencer Smith) and robust **model** of the llys.
- Install a **listening post** (or bluetooth download) with extract of Iolo Goch poem in English and Welsh and modern poem by Myrddin ap Dafydd - 'Syched am Sycharth' near panel/kiosk.
- Ensure interpretation items are **designed** into the **planned car park** and access plan.
- Finance training for **local guides** by Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) staff as part of their outreach programme for tours by prior arrangement (Heritage Management Grant).
- Organise an initiative for **local schools** to visit with support of web-based material centred on 'homes' & 'princes of Wales'.
- Initiate a professionally led **community excavation** to be filmed by an independent Welsh language television company for S4C.
- Research paths in the vicinity of the site and encourage visitors to **walk to the site** via marketing material.
- Establish a group '**Friends of Sycharth**', following the excavation and training of local guides to act as a focus for visitor support, site management and further research.
- Consider the provision of toilets at a later stage, particularly if school groups visit the site.

## Recommendations for Glyndyfrdwy

Target audiences - **prosperous early retired couples, working empty nesters, school groups** and **young families**.

- Pr 1 - negotiate with Mr Blair, the landowner permanent **access** through fields **from Carrog station**, following his permission being granted for managed groups to walk here during an open weekend in September 2000.
- Pr 2 - continue with plans to seek permission for a potential **car park** on the hardstanding in the field to the east of the motte by the side of the straight stretch of the A5 and create a modest car park.
- Install **an interpretation kiosk** pictorially depicting Glyndwr's proclamation near the gate at the corner of the field with the **access route from Carrog**

**station** together with a **listening post** and a **kiosk only in the car park**, if this goes ahead (audio not appropriate so near the A5 due to traffic noise).

- The **listening post** should broadcast an excerpt of a specially scripted conversation between a group of people complaining about life in the lead up to the uprising.
- Install a **bluetooth transmitter near Carrog station** for visitors to download an enhanced version of the above conversation reflecting grievances leading up to Glyndwr's proclamation and a script of the proclamation itself.
- Install a **map panel** interpreting the layout of the site at the stile into the site from the west.
- Organise an annual event **re-enacting the proclamation**.
- **Remove** the current hand-written '**Glyndwr's Mount**' notice and encourage the use of the original site name via OS etc.
- **Remove** many of the **trees** currently obscuring the motte.
- Install a **flag** or stiff banner near the site as a means of identifying it as a Glyndwr site.
- Install a panel or two at **Llangollen TIC** drawing attention to the site and partially interpreting the theme.
- Train **local guides** to undertake a programme of guided walks to/and around the site building on the success of the 'Heather and Hillforts project' and linking in with Denbighshire Countryside Service.
- Pr 2 - if the proposed visitor centre at **Corwen** goes ahead, interpret part of the story here with an emphasis on comparing local legends and stories with the facts as we know them, and develop a comprehensive visitor package to include visits to Glyndyfrdwy itself thus using Corwen as another **hub/departure point** (similar to that proposed for Machynlleth) for the east Wales cluster.

## **Recommendations for Bryn Glas battlefield, Pilleth**

Target audience - **prosperous early retired couples and working empty nesters** and **school groups**

- **Waymark** Rights of Way and paths in the vicinity of the Church and to the battlefield following research.
- Install a **map panel** directing visitors to the Church and other associated features including the holy well, the battlefield, Wellingtonia trees, memorial to the fallen etc.
- Display the coat of arms on **small/modest flag** near current interpretation panel in car park to indicate that the site is linked to other Glyndwr sites.

- Produce a full colour bilingual **leaflet** (gatefolded A3) or **booklet** to be distributed at Church (Dr Charles Kightly possible author) to include a section on the general history of the Church.
- Install a **panel** near the fence of **Wellingtonia tree square** explaining the significance of the trees, with the permission of the landowner.
- Install a **panel display** either at the back of the Church (between current cabinet and wall of tower) or outside conveying proposed theme including:
  - the significance of the battle before and afterwards,
  - likely sequence of events during battle itself,
  - the role and fate of the Church,
  - the role of women etc
- **Explore potential further excavation** including bones discovered during drainage work on churchyard, potential skirmish site on ground below main battlefield and site of nearby medieval village.
- Install a **decent toilet** instead of current portaloo
- Financially support substantial in kind **maintenance and upkeep** work carried out on toilet and track etc.
- Finance **guided tours for school groups** by expert e.g. Charles Kightly.
- Establish **partnership with CPAT** to receive funds and manage projects on behalf of the 'Friends of Pilleth Church'.
- Install a '**foot-fall**' **counter** at Church entrance to monitor visitor numbers.

## **Recommendations for Owain Glyndwr Centre, Machynlleth**

Target audience: **Young families, young professional couples, retired and empty nesters.**

The following recommendations comprise a list of media appropriate for the above target audiences and the proposed themes. Professional exhibition designers should meld these into a cohesive visitor experience.

- Costumed staff to welcome visitors.
- Introductory film/AV outlining the following in context of proposed theme:
  - the uprising, associated notable events and their effect across Wales,
  - the first assembly & associated international diplomacy,
  - Glyndwr's disappearance,
  - the legendry figure and his rise as a national hero for modern Wales.
- Map panel encouraging visitors to visit other Glyndwr locations.

\*Please note that the Glyndwr National Trail is not relevant to the Glyndwr story and the sites selected for this plan despite it ending at Machynlleth!

- Leaflet guide and audio commentary (bluetooth and wifi download) interpreting features of the building, including the Urquhart murals, and enhancing the static display with appropriate passages and dialogue.
- Actors interacting with visitors as visiting poets (cler) dropping-by telling of Glyndwr's uprising across Wales.
- A feast scene with mannequins/speaking heads depicting conversation between representatives from across Wales – different dialects discussing the state of affairs in various parts, their frustrations, hopes and aspirations regarding Glyndwr and the uprising.
- Interactive map of Wales depicting events associated with the uprising across the country.
- Interactive computer game (touchscreen) debating different facets of Glyndwr culminating in 'what does Glyndwr mean to you?'
- A programme of events such as story-telling, medieval feasts and jousting.
- Public art installation outdoors behind centre created by artist in residence working with local schoolchildren.
- Further research into building features.
- Fly Glyndwr flag on roof throughout the year as a means of identifying it as a Glyndwr site.
- Eye-catching medieval style hanging outside building inviting people to come indoors.
- A 'foot-fall' counter at entrance to monitor visitor numbers.

## Recommendations for Pennal village

Target audience: **Retired couples and empty nesters** and **school groups**

- **Professional signs** telling visitors that the church is open and indicating the Owain Glyndwr & Princes of Gwynedd memorial garden.
- **Film on loop in Church** conveying theme – truly bilingual presentation (English and Welsh within same production) created by members of Urdd and scripted with local involvement.
- **Bluetooth audio presentation** of someone reading letter with a commentary on it.
- **Family friendly/school children leaflet** depicting letter, those who wrote it and conveying what it meant/means to Wales aimed at local visitors.
- **Interpretation panel** in church memorial garden explaining significance of those commemorated there.
- Amend **village sign** at entrance to reflect 'home of the Pennal letter'
- **Fly Glyndwr flag** on top of tower throughout the year as a means of identifying it as a Glyndwr site.

- Colourful **panel on village green** in centre interpreting letter in context of 'llys' of Princes of Gwynedd.
- **Mosaic** created by local schoolchildren under direction of professional artist on external wall of village toilet

## Recommendations for Aberystwyth Castle

Target audience: **Young families, retired couples and empty nesters**

- **Interpretation panels on main paths** into the castle - near entrance from town and at the entrance from the promenade.
- Panel looking out over sea on green near war memorial.
- A programme of **re-enactments** including Welsh language performances telling of the events surrounding breaking of the siege.
- **Audio/lighting** in one of the towers/underground room depicting the cut and thrust of the fighting etc.
- **Exhibition** in roofed tower room – the siege and Glyndwr's act of defiance including displaying the cannon balls and explaining their role.
- **Fly Glyndwr flag** on top of tower throughout the year as a means of identifying it as a Glyndwr site and attracting attention from town centre.
- **Fingerposts and brown signs** from town centre and station
- **Research cannon balls** alongside those at Harlech castle.

## Recommendations for Harlech Castle

Target audience: **Young families, retired couples and empty nesters and school groups**

- **An AV show** outlining the momentous events at the castle during Glyndwr's occupation to whet the appetite and prepare people for their visit if a new visitor centre goes ahead.
- A **son et lumière show** against the castle wall ruins based on imagined discussions between members of Glyndwr's family before and during the siege and alluding to their fates.
- Explore the possibility of **sculptures of silhouetted figures** (temporary in the first place and as vandal resistant as possible) placed around the castle depicting various characters who were present with Owain Glyndwr during his occupation and his assembly.
- A specially commissioned **audio file** as a bluetooth and wifi enabled download for mobile phones conveying the siege, its ending and the disappearance of Glyndwr into the legend books - what it was like to live in, serve in or defend the castle.

- **A panel** at the exit point highlighting other Glyndwr sites for people to visit and the pan-Wales extent of the uprising.
- Install **barrier free access** to the visitor reception and ground floor of the castle.
- Provide a free **map based leaflet** for all visitors based on existing 'Discovering Harlech Castle' currently used by school groups.
- Fly **Glyndwr flag** on top of tower throughout the year as a means of identifying it as a Glyndwr site.
- **Fingerpost and brown sign** from town centre
- **Research canon balls** alongside those at Aberystwyth Castle.

## 1.0 Purpose of plan

This interpretation plan aims to help guide and inform Cadw's Heritage Tourism project and expenditure under the WAG SCIF programme whose objectives are to **maximise the economic value** of heritage by **increasing the volume, length and value of heritage visits**. This plan recommends actions and initiatives which make sites associated with **Owain Glyndwr and his uprising** more intellectually accessible and enjoyable for both tourists and residents.

## 2.0 Background

### 2.1 Approach and methodology

Firstly we reviewed documents and initiatives relating to **tourism development** and assessed research carried out into present and potential **growth tourism sectors**. The culmination of this exercise is section 2.3 which outlines conclusions and relevant messages which influence the interpretation plan.

Our client Cadw provided us with a list of sites deemed relevant to this storyline which we used as a basis to devise a fuller list of candidate sites based on research into the history of Owain Glyndwr's career and his uprising. We undertook research into the significance of each site from relevant source material and then **an audit of these candidate sites** to an agreed framework based on the following headings:

- Site significance
- How easy is it for visitors to reach the site/location?
- What is the welcome like for visitors?
- How inherently appealing is the site/location?
- What is the geographical context or hinterland?
- Orientation and how easy is it to get around the site?
- Current interpretation provision

The findings of the audit helped us to **select sites** for the interpretation plan and to decide on appropriate approaches to interpretation at these sites. We assessed the

strengths and weaknesses of access to and at each site in addition to its inherent appeal in order to place any **interpretation proposals** within the context of the **whole visitor experience**.

We also worked through a series of steps with **stakeholders** in a **workshop** so that everyone contributed due to their interest and knowledge of a selected site or location, or of the Glyndwr story in general. The one full-day workshop achieved the following.

- Shared information about the work.
- Agreed additional aims for the interpretation plan.
- Gathered views on what should be conveyed to visitors about Owain Glyndwr.
- Identified hopes and concerns regarding the plan.
- Agreed draft themes for the selected sites.

Although our emphasis was to work via a **workshop** we also had **face to face discussions** with several individuals and groups. All in all the following contributed during the course of the commission and this plan reflects the range of views and ideas suggested during discussions.

- The Church of Pennal - Rev Geraint ap Iorwerth, Ann ap Iorwerth and church warden
- Trustees of Canolfan Owain Glyndwr, Machynlleth - Wyn Thomas et al
- The Friends of St Mary's Church, Pilleth – Judith Boobyer, Hilary Belden, Peter & Janet Hood & Joanna Griffiths
- The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales - David Browne
- Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust – Jeff Spencer
- Owain Glyndwr Society – John Lloyd James & Eirwyn Evans
- Denbighshire Historical Society - Kevin Mathias
- The Church of St Chad, Hanmer – Bill Barlow
- Ancient Monuments Inspectorate, Cadw - Dr Sian Rees
- Visit Wales - Dr Nigel Adams
- North Wales Tourism Partnership – Dewi Davies
- Mid Wales Tourism Partnership - Gwawr Roberts
- Ceredigion Museum - Michael Freeman, Curator
- Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust – Jeff Spencer
- Harlech Castle, Cadw - Miriam Jones, Custodian

- Amanda Peacock and Erich Karlow of plb consultancy

We also liaised with **Prof Ralph Griffiths of Swansea University**, the nominated expert regarding detailed aspects of the uprising.

Our research into tourism growth sectors influenced which **target audiences** we selected for each site in this plan. We attempted to outline their characteristics, behaviour and attitude and assessed a range of **potential methods and media** before deciding on the most appropriate ones for recommendation.

As a result we hope that this interpretation plan has **broad ownership**, is **grounded in reality** and is based on **common understanding** between **sites and locations**.

I, **Siân Shakespear** co-ordinated the team and was the contact between the team and Cadw, the client. I also led all meetings, discussions and workshops and devised the interpretation plan.

**Wyn Roberts** of **Aqua Marketing Ltd** worked on the marketing and interpretation aspects. He input his knowledge and expertise regarding tourism growth markets and target audiences and devised appropriate approaches to marketing.

**Dr David Gwyn** of **Govannon Consultancy** input his considerable knowledge of Welsh history and expertise in presenting heritage sites to visitors and collated information regarding site significance.

## 2.2 Owain Glyndwr

**Glyn Dŵr** [Glyndŵr], **Owain** [Owain ap Gruffudd Fychan, Owen Glendower] led the most serious challenge to English authority in Wales since the conquest of 1282–3.

He was born c.1359 to Gruffudd Fychan, and to Elen, daughter of Owain ap Thomas ap Llywelyn, both of Welsh princely stock, though also connected with English or Anglo-Welsh families of the border. Glyndwr married Margaret, daughter of Sir David Hanmer (*d.* 1387), king's serjeant and judge in king's bench, whose family had settled in Maelor Saesneg.

His career was typical of a young man of gentle birth - as apprentice-at-law and in military service. He served under Sir Gregory Sais at Berwick in 1384, in Scotland, and under Richard (III) Fitzalan at the blockade of Sluys in 1387.

By 1370-71 Glyndwr had succeeded to his father's estates, the lordship of Glyndyfrdwy, and a moiety of the commote of Cynllaith, a fertile lordship to the south of the Berwyn range and bordering the Tanat valley, and inherited his mother's estates in Cardiganshire. His residence at Sycharth in Cynllaith is described in detail by Iolo Goch.

For Glyndwr and his *uchelwyr* adherents, the rebellion represented a breach with traditions of service to the crown and marcher dynasties. It was prompted by a territorial dispute but underlying causes were the harsh fiscal policies of royal and marcher regimes, the few opportunities for advancement available to laymen and churchmen, and resentment of English settlers.

On 16 September 1400 an assembly at Glyndyfrdwy 'elevated ... Owain as their prince' and plundered Ruthin, later attacking Denbigh, Rhuddlan, Flint, Hawarden, Holt, Oswestry, and Welshpool. Glyndwr's lands in north and south Wales were declared forfeit in November 1400, together with those of his kinsmen. Conwy was taken by Welsh forces on 1 April 1401. Glyndwr's victory at Hyddgen in Ceredigion attracted

many to his standard, and he attacked Caernarfon Castle and town in November. English troops were slaughtered near the village of Pilleth in June 1402; Sir Edmund Mortimer was captured and persuaded to marry Glyndwr's daughter.

Royal forces under Prince Henry campaigned in Wales from March 1403, burning Glyndwr's houses at Sycharth and Glyndyfrdwy and defeating the rebellion of Henry Percy at Shrewsbury on 21 July, and reached Carmarthen by the end of September. French and Breton ships off Kidwelly on 3 October and off Caernarfon in the following month signalled the intervention of foreign powers on Glyndwr's side and anticipate an alliance with Charles VI of France. Glyndwr also sought alliances with the king of Scotland and the Gaelic lords of Ireland.

Though Glyndwr's role is not always clear, the rebellion reached its height between 1404 and 1406 with the capture of the two key coastal fortresses of Aberystwyth and Harlech, and ratification of a treaty with the French king. Parliaments were assembled at Machynlleth (1404) and Harlech (1405) and an agreement concluded with Edmund Mortimer and the Earl of Northumberland whereby Glyndwr took as his share a greatly extended Wales. A document dated at Pennal on 31 March, committing the Welsh to the Avignon pope and setting out proposals for the Welsh church and universities, suggests a vision of an emerging state

However, the tide was now turning against Glyndwr. Between 1406 and 1415 the rebellion petered out; Aberystwyth fell in 1409, Harlech the following year.

He is believed to have died c.1416; his refuge and burial place are unknown but he may have hidden with Herefordshire relatives. His posthumous reputation has been largely shaped by Shakespeare, who portrays him as a fierce warrior endowed with supernatural powers, but also as a cultured and dignified figure. Thomas Pennant depicts him as a national hero in his *Tours in Wales* (1778). Since the nineteenth century, liberals and nationalists have increasingly cherished him as a Welsh statesman of vision and imagination, the inspiration for a Welsh parliament, church and university. Other studies have depicted him as a hero of the common man.

Llinos Smith, 'Glyn Dŵr , Owain (c.1359–c.1416)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10816, accessed 18 May 2010]

The concluding paragraph of (now dated) *Dictionary of Welsh Biography (DWB)* is also worth quoting:

There is a tantalisingly elusive quality about Owain's career; it is impossible to do more than guess how the rising fits into the pattern of general social discontent which brought him the support of the ordinary folk of Wales making their last protest against alien institutions. The extent to which Owain was sensitive to this public feeling, or whether indeed he foresaw the consequences of his initial move, is unknown. On the other hand the programme unfolded after 1400. The assumption of the title 'Prince of Wales' and the royal arms of Gwynedd, the twin conception of a national parliament and an independent Welsh church, the trend of diplomatic relations and the exploitation of the struggle between crown and aristocracy in England, all suggest a premeditated plan of action based on a knowledge of political traditions derived from the days of the last Llywelyn. But we do not know how far such ideas were inspired by Owain himself, or alternatively how far his experience made him an instrument in the hands of others. He nevertheless remains in popular imagination the outstanding figure of Welsh history in the ages preceding the Methodist Revival.

### **2.2.1 Owain Glyndwr: other secondary sources**

The most comprehensive and accessible sources are Professor Sir Rees Davies' *The Revolt of Owain GlynDŵr* (Oxford University Press, 1995) and his *Owain Glyn Dŵr: Trwy Ras Duw, Tywysog Cymru (Y Lolfa 2002)*. The author, Chichele Professor of Medieval History in the University of Oxford, a fellow of All Souls' and President of the Royal Historical Society, was a native of Llandderfel, and a Welsh-speaker, one of the most eminent British and Welsh historians of his generation (*Independent* obituary, 23 May 2005).

### **2.2.2 Owain Glyndwr and Welsh society**

Owain Glyndwr was born to a Wales that had undergone the traumas of the Black Death, *y farwolaeth fawr*, and its many social dislocations, and to tensions between its small borough towns, which had money, economy and trading privileges, and the more traditional and conservative environment of the countryside. The ethnic mix of Wales was complicated, reflecting three centuries of immigration, much of it divided into Englishries and Welshries; patterns of government and law were predicated on separate administrations and different customs. Most English town-dwellers, or their ancestors, had arrived in the wake of military conquest, and remained concerned for their safety and security as well as worried by economic infiltration. The social tensions of this period often resulted in discriminatory laws being rigorously upheld, and the English crown taxed Wales heavily.

### **2.2.3 Owain Glyndwr and Welsh polity**

Owain Glyndwr lived long before the age of cultural nationalism as it is understood now. His strong sense of the possibilities of Welsh governmental and ecclesiastical independence is essentially political. His summoning of a parliament or assembly (a *cynulliad*) in Machynlleth and Harlech sought to fashion a consensus from among his notables. It does not in any way prefigure Welsh democracy so much as represent an attempt to apply to Wales the emergent parliamentary process of Westminster, with which he would have been familiar from his time in London, through the role of his father-in-law (auditor of petitions in parliament in the 1380s), from his military service with King Richard II and from his Shropshire neighbours (Davies 1995, 164).

### **2.2.4 Owain Glyndwr as warrior**

Owain Glyndwr is most commonly depicted, and imagined, as a warrior, as in the statues in Corwen and in Cardiff. As all sources make clear, he had military experience before the uprising, in the Scottish expedition in 1385 and in 1387. He showed skill and determination as a military leader during the uprising, and clearly rallied his forces at Aberystwyth when they were contemplating surrender to the besieging forces. Iolo Goch alludes in 'Moliant Owain Glyndŵr' to his military prowess (Johnston 43-4, 230).

### **2.2.5 Owain Glyndwr as diplomat**

It is clear from all accounts of Glyndwr that he was well aware of the need to maintain alliances with friendly powers as well as maintain military pressure on his enemies. He

created alliances both with English magnates such as Mortimer and with the son of the Earl of Northumberland as well as with the Scots and the French and the rival Pope established at Avignon.

### **2.2.6 Owain Glyndwr and Welsh education**

The Pennal letter which he wrote to King Charles of France alludes to a plan to create two universities in Wales, one in the north and one in the south, an ambition not realised until the late nineteenth century. These would have predated Aberdeen (1411), the first in Scotland, and would have been second only to Oxford and Cambridge in Britain. Few universities existed outside France, Italy and England by Glyndwr's time, though it was a time when new foundations were being contemplated. This is reflected in Glyndwr's enthusiasm for a Welsh university system, under the influence of his university-educated entourage (Davies 171-2), though the document reproduced in Ellis suggests that at an early stage of the revolt, Glyndwr identified some of the members of the University of Oxford who would be of most use to his cause (Ellis 1827, 8).

### **2.2.7 Owain Glyndwr and the Welsh language**

Owain Glyndwr spoke Welsh and English, and probably also French and Latin. His immediate milieu was probably largely Welsh-language, and it is probable also that his wife, Margaret Hanmer, was first-language Welsh, since as Davies points out, 'when the pope came to extend an ecclesiastical favour to Sir David's daughter, Owain's wife, he did so under her Welsh name, Marred ferch Dafydd' (Davies 137). Even so, fostering in Sir David's borderland household, followed by study and military service in London and with King Richard II's armies is likely to have made him entirely fluent in English and may have given him some knowledge of Anglo-Norman. In 1406 he requested that the pope should appoint to the cathedral churches of Wales 'prelates, dignitaries, and beneficed clergy and curates, who know our language.'

### **2.2.8 Owen Glendower as depicted by William Shakespeare**

Whilst Owain Glyndwr has remained an iconic figure to the people of Wales since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, many more people throughout the world will have heard of him as Owen Glendower, a consequence of the international status of William Shakespeare as dramatist.

Owen Glendower appears in *Henry IV part 1*, and is referred to briefly (when his death is announced) in *Henry IV part 2*. He may be equated with the 'Welsh captain' who believes King Richard to be dead in *Richard II*, and one of Glyndŵr's historical enemies, Sir Dafydd Gam, is referred to in *Henry V*, as 'Davy Gam, esquire', one of the 'English dead' of the battle of Agincourt (Act IV sc. 8,106).

In Act II sc. 1 of *Henry IV part 1*, Glendower and Hotspur grate on each other in a scene that dramatises the difference between the visionary and the bluff soldier, and in a way that promises ill for the tripartite indenture. Glendower's culture and refinement are made clear, and are made to contrast with Hotspur's un-courtier-like boorishness, though an audience might be invited to sympathise with Hostpur when he complains:

... sometime he angers me

With telling me of the mouldwarp and the ant,  
Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,  
And of a dragon and a finless fish,  
A clip-wing'd griffin and a moulted raven,  
A couching lion and a ramping cat,  
And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff  
As puts me from my faith ....

The strong characterization of Glendower does not appear to derive from Holinshed's *Chronicles*, Shakespeare's usual historical source. Holinshed refers briefly to his supposed ability to conjure bad weather, and the prophesy of the mouldwarp, the dragon, the lion and the wolf, but the emphasis Shakespeare places on Glendower's skill in music and poetry and his sense of his own vaticatory powers comes from elsewhere. It is possible that Shakespeare may have been told Welsh traditions about Glyndwr, possibly through his links with Sir John Salesbury of Llewenni in Dyffryn Clwyd, to whom he dedicated *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. Iolo Goch was born in Llewenni, where his father rented a small portion of the family's ancient patrimony and possessed a house (*DWB*).

## **2.3 The tourism environment and target markets**

### **2.3.1 Key strategic messages**

Strategic tourism documents revealed several key messages and target markets which enable us to position the Owain Glyndwr interpretation plan in line with local, regional, and national priorities.

#### **Welsh Tourism Strategy 2006 – 2013**

- Wales is very dependent on visitors travelling by private car
- Consumers are moving away from recognised "brands" and looking for more unique experiences
- Strategy looks at international tourism however since then a global recession has bitten
- Wales is considered a "Challenger Brand" building a "lighthouse" identity i.e. stands out from the crowd. The challenge will be to overcome negative and outdated perceptions of Wales
- Accessibility is one of 5 strategic challenges and the use of new technology is encouraged
- Germany and Holland are identified as key markets; and the strong Euro should further encourage this market to visit the UK (and then Wales)
- France is also considered a key market which has strong links with Owain Glyndwr
- Strategies are:

- Distinctive branding
  - Higher quality
  - Easier access
  - Better skills
  - Stronger partnerships
- “Wales is a ‘challenger brand’ and the brand positioning of Wales should be based on assets that are best in class, distinctively and uniquely Welsh”

### **Cultural tourism 2006**

- Cultural tourism is a key component of “Wales” product
- Aim to improve the quality of the tourism product and those associated with delivery of product
- Public sector (Visit Wales, formerly Wales Tourist Board) act as an enabler by providing advice and market Wales as a tourism destination
- A Winning Wales – Welsh Assembly Government National Economic Development Strategy recognises the need for Wales to be a country which has a distinctive and creative culture with bilingualism a growing reality. This strategy sets the target of increasing tourism expenditure by an average of at least 6% per annum over the 10-year life of the strategy
- UK market is divided into those whose main motivation is cultural tourism, so called niche markets, and those who undertake cultural visits whilst on holiday
- The most popular activity is visiting heritage sites (castles, churches, historic houses, ancient monuments) followed by visiting artistic or heritage exhibits (museums and galleries etc.) The least popular activity is watching the performing arts, though this may be a reflection of the lack of opportunity
- Overseas market sees the heritage and cultural tourism offer within the UK as the attraction to visit the country
- Cultural tourism is seen as a growth market

### **Tourism Partnership North Wales Business Plan 2009/10**

- ‘North Wales Giants’ is a key driver for cultural and heritage tourism – Owain Glyndwr is part of North Wales Giants promotion (currently undertaken by Cambrensis)
- Key priority is strengthening the unique sense of place by celebrating the unique culture of the area, as well as the geographical features
- Broadly speaking the key target segments for North Wales are Active Explorers (Young professionals), Family Explorers (Under 45 year old family orientated market) and Independent Explorers (Over 45 year old couples market)

## **Tourism Partnership Mid Wales Business Plan 2009/10**

- Same key messages and target markets as TPNW
- Food is also a key priority in Mid Wales and could be linked to the Owain Glyndwr story

## **Cultural Tourism Action Plan 2008 – 2011**

- Croeso i Gymru – creating a “Sense of Place” in Wales with tourism businesses and communities becoming involved
- Croeso Cynnes & Croeso Cynnes Cymreig training packages
- Community support and involvement stressed as part of Cadw convergence bid, and community interpretation programmes in regeneration areas
- Looking at online directory and information portal for Wales’ cultural heritage
- Cadw to look at linking with major event organisers whilst Wales’ cultural heritage is to be promoted at cultural events with high number of visitors
- Bilingual signage
- Research should be undertaken on tourists perception on Wales’ cultural tourism products compared to other UK areas

## **Review of cultural tourism Wales – 2008**

- Cultural tourism experience in Wales is weak in comparison with its international competitors, even though Wales has aspirations to be internationally recognised
- Wales benefits from nearly a quarter of the total UK annual spend on cultural activities (£120m / £465)
- Wales has relatively few cultural icons, making it even more important to maximise the impact of those icons that do exist and harnessing the collective power of the multiplicity of other tangible and intangible aspects of the cultural heritage of Wales
- Over the past five years (from 2008), there has been considerable investment in the cultural infrastructure in Wales. Funding has come from the Millennium Commission, the National Lottery and from the Welsh Assembly Government, as well as European Development Funds
- Over the next ten years the availability of funding from these traditional sources to support cultural tourism initiatives is likely to decline due to the impact of the Olympics and changes in European Funding structures. Consequently the further development of the cultural tourism product will depend upon securing funding from other sources and greater collaboration between the sectors

- Resources should be found to support marketing within Visit Wales in order to identify and promote the existing cultural tourism product and to encourage the development and enhancement of other products
- Training is needed to bring the culture and tourism sectors in Wales together. The lack of understanding and appreciation of each other's needs and challenges is currently contributing towards an underachievement
- Promotion is confused. The lack of cohesive marketing means that visitors are bombarded with a plethora of information leaflets and information which dilutes the impact and undermines Wales' attractiveness as a cultural destination. Relatively strict brand guidelines exist for all Wales marketing, and each tourism partnership and marketing area has its own guidelines which the Owain Glyndwr project should adhere to.
- The web environment is similarly complicated with much duplication of information across web sites or glaring gaps in details. In general, the majority of the images and the positioning of Wales centre on landscape and outdoor activities.
- There is still a great deal of work to be done in developing the product to make it more marketable for the tourist and local visitor. It is important that this work is undertaken within the cultural sector and in partnership with others. Improving the product by better interpretation; providing cultural activities which will appeal to the tourist and recognising the importance of the tourism market to provide income and support for the cultural product is also essential.
- Currently the development and marketing of the cultural tourism product is undertaken almost exclusively by Visit Wales. It is essential that this work is also embraced and supported by the cultural sector which needs to be encouraged and supported to be more commercial and competitive when appropriate – Cadw is actively now supporting this too.
- There is a lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities of the different organisations involved in cultural tourism. There is a need for better partnership working at all levels in Wales.
- There is much work to be done in bringing together the cultural and tourism sectors of Wales for mutual benefit. The role of the Cultural Tourism Partnership has been re-examined in order to assess its effectiveness.
- In the increasingly competitive international tourism marketplace the battles will be won on the basis of value, quality, but above all destination **distinctiveness**. Success in tourism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is all about being different, celebrating cultural difference and achieving 'standout'.

The key messages across all documents can be summarised as follows:

- **Quality** e.g. accommodation, visitor experience.
- **Distinctive branding** – "Challenger" brand
- **Easier access** – physical infrastructure and sensory

- **Better skills** – soft skills and sharing knowledge
- **Stronger partnerships** to create the “Sense of Place”

There is also a strong emphasis on partnership and this will be critical to effectively promote the Owain Glyndwr story since the offer needs to be part of existing tourism products to appeal to the cultural tourist, as well as the activity tourist looking for a cultural fix.

### 2.3.2 Target markets

According to North Wales and Mid Wales Tourism Partnerships, the target territories are principally within a 2 hours catchment, on the basis that 80% of short break and day visitors travel under 2 hours to their destination. Only 30% of visitors are those who purely come for cultural experiences and the remainder casually or accidentally participate in such experiences.

The dominant visitor sourcing areas to North Wales are the North West of England (37%) and West Midlands (27%). Within the overseas markets to North Wales (15% of visitors), the dominant percentage is from the USA and other English speaking regions, followed by Visit Wales’s primary European markets of Ireland, Germany, Holland and France. These markets have lost ground in recent years, but opportunities to take advantage of the expansion of low cost air services to Liverpool and Manchester airports will be taken.

We can divide the market into the following segments:

#### Market Segment

**1. Prosperous early retired couples** - this is a growing market sector with forecast growth of 18% to 2011, in the 45-59 and 60-76 age groups. The main holiday is 2 weeks, normally off-peak but they also take several short-breaks.

**2. Prosperous working empty nesters** - predominantly fall in the 45-59 age group, which is forecast to grow 18%. Because of robust finances they take several short breaks alongside main holidays. UK main destination for the short breaks because of ease of convenience.

**3. Young professional couples/groups** - ABC 1 no children, well educated aged 25-40 with high disposable income of £20,000 plus. They are likely to be status conscious and seek holidays which are aspirational. The majority will only consider the UK for short breaks linked to activities or visiting friends or relatives. This group is forecast to decline 8.4% in the 30-44 age group by 2011.

**4. Young better off families** – more likely to take UK holidays than those with school age children, the projected decline in the 15-29 and 30-44 age group would suggest that this group is likely to decline slightly over the next 10 years.

**5. Older better off families** – generally take main holidays abroad but top up with short breaks often in the UK and tend to be 4 plus days. They tend to use traditional holiday destinations in the UK. Timing is constrained by school holidays taken during peak times

**6. Middle lower income families** - these are the loyal visitors to Wales, and whilst a declining market will remain important because of their volume. Choice of holidays

is often constrained by affordability, holidays limited usually to the UK, they still aspire to go abroad for a main holiday. Holiday usually dominated by the main season period.

## **7. Older less well off couples/groups**

## **8. Special Interest Niche markets of Walking, Adventure, Golf and Cultural Tourism**

## **9. Business Tourism**

### **3.0 Plan aims**

The improved interpretation of the selected sites associated with Owain Glyndwr and his uprising should:

- help the local economy by developing tourism products and promoting nearby sites,
- enhance the conservation of these iconic sites and provide a rationale for their maintenance and improvement,
- strengthen a sense of identity and pride in Welsh heritage including Wales' links with the rest of the world – particularly amongst schoolchildren,
- help visitors from non-Welsh backgrounds to understand aspects of Welsh history and culture,
- help dispel myths about Owain Glyndwr and the uprising amongst Welsh visitors,
- promote/raise awareness of sources of further information and relevant groups and organisations.

### **4.0 Considerations and parameters**

Whilst developing this plan we have taken the following points into consideration and Cadw should be mindful of the following concerns, expressed by the range of stakeholders and consultees, during the process of producing interpretation material at the selected sites.

- The Glyndwr story is only one episode in the history of some of the selected sites.
- There is a risk that local people may not feel a sense of 'ownership' over the material or items.
- There is a risk that sites beyond north-east and mid Wales which played a role in the uprising may be ignored and visitors will not appreciate the pan-Wales nature of the uprising.
- Some sites could be damaged by too many visitors.

- There is a danger that the story of the uprising will be conveyed as being about heroes and conquerors and ignore the victims and the hardship which ensued.
- The plan may create a demand which may not be satisfied at some sites.
- The provision may be 'tacky' and inappropriate, in particular souvenirs and infrastructure.
- Some of the sites may become unofficial national 'shrines' which some people may find off-putting.

## 5.0 General recommendations

Cadw should do the following in support of the recommended projects and initiatives at the selected sites.

### Research

- Organise a seminar of professional archaeologists and historians to **assess and review research results** at **all** of the selected sites and to agree overall **priorities regarding future excavations** and **historical research**. Most of the sites are ripe for further excavation and research, which are vital to provide tangible evidence and information, to attract public interest and involvement and to answer specific questions.
- Invest in audience research to establish **attitudes towards Owain Glyndwr**, interest in and knowledge of the story of the uprising amongst target audiences. In order for any interpretation provision to be effective it has to be audience specific. Researching attitudes towards this most enigmatic of Welsh historical characters will help define the approach to the content.

### Ownership and sustainability

- Establish a **cluster or group** to bring together representatives from each of the sites and main interests in the Glyndwr storyline. The one workshop we held in the process of developing this plan brought representatives from the various selected sites together and helped each to understand the other and start to create a cohesive plan. Regular meetings could bring great benefits to the development of the tourist product, site marketing, interpretation and conservation.
- Appoint a **temporary part-time project officer** to negotiate partnerships, management and access arrangements. Whilst we developed this plan we became aware of the substantial amount of liaison, negotiation and management which is required in order to develop these sites as effective visitor destinations.
- Undertake **thorough and timely consultation** with local institutions such as Community Councils and local access groups during the process of producing interpretation material. In order to avoid problems and enable local people themselves to become ambassadors and interpreters it is good practice for local people to have a sense of ownership over any interpretation, particularly in rural communities.

- Consider financing the interpretation of **other aspects of the history of some sites** in addition to the one episode when events occurred relating to the Owain Glyndwr uprising. Certain sites wish visitors to go away with an appreciation of the whole history and not only the Owain Glyndwr episode relating to their site.

### Standards

- Ensure all material complies with best practice regarding interpreting to visitors with **physical impairments and special needs** in order to comply with the requirements of the DDA and to embrace the social model of disability which asserts that it is society that disables people through social, environmental and attitudinal barriers rather than the impairment or condition itself.
- Appoint **one author each for Welsh and English** to produce texts at all sites. Each language should be scripted separately to convey the proposed interpretation themes but a consistent style and voice in each would add cohesion, ensure standards and communicate effectively.
- Commission an independent **academic expert to verify** all scripts and texts. Much mystery surrounds Owain Glyndwr as a character and the events associated with the uprising and it is easy for us today to fill these gaps with notions which aren't grounded in fact. Verification by an independent expert would ensure authentic interpretation.
- Be consistent in referring to the main character as **Owain Glyndwr** in all interpretation material since this is Cadw's houstyle.

### Raising awareness

- Grant aid a **tour of contemporary bards** based on the recent Welsh medium show '**Syched am Sycharth**'. Poets and minstrels played an essential role in spreading news and raising awareness in different parts of Wales during the days of Owain Glyndwr and this would be an appropriate means of celebrating the events of the uprising today. 600 years after Glyndwr raised his flag a company of noted Welsh bards/performers took a show called 'Syched am Sycharth' around certain pubs in North Wales and it would be beneficial to see this show being resurrected and further performed to a wider audience.
- Commission a **theatre in education show** depicting the story of the Glyndwr uprising and finance a national tour around schools in Wales together with the production of education material. Raising awareness of the story of the uprising amongst schoolchildren would encourage links with and visits to the selected sites, promote interest and knowledge and help deliver part of the National Curriculum.

### Marketing

These actions would ensure that the investment in the interpretation of these Owain Glyndwr sites reaps benefits and achieves some of the stated aims.

- Promote fully interpreted Owain Glyndwr sites to **tourism partnerships, County Council marketing departments** and **bus and rail companies** so that products become part of their on-going campaigns.

- Consider a **national marketing campaign** to attract visitors specifically to smaller heritage sites **in partnership** with Visit Wales and National Museums and Galleries of Wales.
- Stimulate co-operation with more established attractions locally in order to use them as points of **entry and marketing hubs**.
- Raise awareness of these Owain Glyndwr sites amongst **Tourist Information Centres**.
- Develop a **logo or emblem** based on the Owain Glyndwr/Princes of Gwynedd coat of arms to unite the various sites – to be used on brown signs directing visitors to sites and on interpretation items at the various sites.
- Negotiate a **page on the websites** of the following organisations displaying **an interactive map** highlighting the various selected Glyndwr sites with a brief description of the significance of each, what there is to see there together with directions. This map should also refer to other 'more minor' Glyndwr towns or sites not selected as part of this plan but which played a role during the uprising.
  - Powys Council tourism section,
  - Ceredigion Council tourism section,
  - Mid Wales Tourism Partnership (link with on-going campaigns such as 'food'),
  - Tourism Partnership North Wales (link with on-going campaigns such as 'North Wales giants')
  - Enjoy Medieval Denbighshire,
  - Borderlands
  - Snowdonia - Mountains and Coast (work with Harlech tourism association within SMC marketing area)
- Produce a **plaque or small panel** to be displayed at **towns and sites not selected** for this plan but which played a role in the history of the uprising. Many towns and sites have verifiable associations with the uprising but we have not selected them to play a role in this plan as fully interpreted sites. A plaque or small panel displayed at these places would ensure a broader 'ownership' over the story and would mean that visitors could appreciate the pan-Wales nature of the uprising. These items should refer visitors to the above **web page** displaying an interactive map of all sites.
- Produce a **trail leaflet** linking all the selected sites to include a **geocaching element**. A relatively simple leaflet could highlight all eight sites to follow a chronological sequence of events in Owain Glyndwr's life and career. It must be borne in mind that although families are not the main target audience at several of the selected sites a geocaching element to the leaflet could entice them to visit the sites as part of this trail.
- Establish a programme of **local school visits** to key sites. Once the interpretation and access infrastructure are in place Cadw should encourage local schools to visit by providing specially for them in line with appropriate programmes of study in the National Curriculum – 'homes' and 'the Princes of Wales'. Indeed the educational pack on Owain Glyndwr developed by Gwynedd Council archives service could be adapted to suit the current national curriculum.

- Install **brown tourist destination signs** to direct and reassure visitors as they search for the selected sites.
- Jointly **market the main iconic sites** associated with Owain Glyndwr, Princes of Gwynedd, Princes of Deheubarth and Lords of the Marches under the title 'essential places every Welsh person must visit' or similar.

## 6.0 The selected sites and relationship with each other

We have selected **eight sites** to play a role in this interpretation plan. Each has a well established association with Owain Glyndwr and the events associated with his uprising - indeed they were all **central to his career**. They also fall into two geographical 'groups' or '**clusters**' so that people can be referred and travel from one to another, within the same day if they wish. We believe that this is the way to get the **best out of the investment** in interpretation and **fits in with visitor behaviour** – there is a limit to the distances which visitors will travel from one site to another and how thinly the money can be spread! However we recognise that these sites will operate independently of each other within a very local cluster of destinations, only some of which may have a heritage focus, and none of which will have an association with Owain Glyndwr.

### Eastern cluster

- Village of Hanmer
- Sycharth
- Glyndyfrdwy
- Bryn Glas battlefield, Pilleth

### Western cluster

- Machynlleth
- Pennal
- Aberystwyth Castle
- Harlech Castle

Visitors with a genuine interest in Owain Glyndwr will be able to gain an appreciation of the **pan-Wales nature of the uprising** and its general effect on the towns and landscape of Wales either by:

- visiting the **Owain Glyndwr Centre at Machynlleth** or those planned for Harlech Castle or Corwen,
- visiting the dedicated **web page** with an interactive map of all relevant sites,
- reading one of the excellent **reference books** referred to in the interpretation provision.

Towns and sites not selected to be fully interpreted as part of this plan can also play a part by displaying one of the specially produced plaques or small panels which will refer visitors to the dedicated web page. Such places may include Rhuthun, Denbigh, Llanymddyfri, Caernarfon, the castles at Cydweli, Coity, Montgomery, New Radnor, 26

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Conwy, Carmarthen, Brecon and the monasteries at Strata Florida, Llanfaes and Llantarnam, and the town of Bangor where the Tripartite Indenture was signed, amongst others.

## 7.0 Proposed interpretation themes

These **interpretation themes** focus on **Owain Glyndwr** and the **various facets of the uprising**. Since each selected site will operate independently of the other each will need to present a general introduction to Glyndwr and the uprising but the interpretation should go further so that visitors leave with a **greater understanding** and even a **sense of 'awe'**. In order for this to happen, and for visitors to have a memorable experience, the interpretation provision should convey the proposed interpretation theme or themes for each site as detailed in section 9.0. People tend to remember themes and forget facts and these themes are based on the following principles adopted by Cadw that:

- history happened here
- I lived here

It must be borne in mind that the themes can be conveyed in a variety of ways including a **personalised approach from the standpoint of his supporters, opponents, family** etc.

- a. Owain Glyndwr's ancestry and status influenced his actions and ultimately his fate.
  - A feudal lord, descendant of Welsh royal lineage who lived in splendid mansions
  - Had an Anglo-Welsh heritage/background
  - Fulfilled the predictions of poets – 'Y Mab Darogan'
  - Was a family man, whose wife was key to his cause and who, together with his daughters suffered dreadful fates
- b. Owain Glyndwr's sense of injustice moved him to take up the flag on behalf of fellow Welsh people with similar grievances.
  - Led a rebellion against the social, economic and religious hardships in Wales at the time
  - Gathered key influential leaders around him to provide gravitas and status to his cause
- c. Owain Glyndwr's background, military experience and loyalty from fellow Welsh people made him a defiant leader.
  - Had served under the English crown
  - Used astute tactics to defeat his enemy.
  - His cause split families and communities and wrought destruction to the landscape and buildings of Wales.

- He was defiant in the face of overwhelming odds.
- d. Owain Glyndwr appealed to many corners of war-torn Wales and nearly brought it greater unity and representation.
- His uprising touched on most parts of Wales which were ravaged as a result
  - Following centuries of feudal dynastic rule he assembled representatives of various 'commotes' as a 'parliament'.
  - He had a vision of himself as head of state, the leader of a more modern nation.
- e. Owain Glyndwr and his advisers planned an independent Wales informed by the latest religious, social and educational developments in parts of Europe.
- His rebellion matured into a vision for a state.
  - He sought the support of the king of France and the Pope at Avignon to realise his vision.
  - Became an international figure who sought alliances abroad in Europe.
- f. Although Owain Glyndwr's dream failed, he was never betrayed, but instead he faded into the legend books to re-emerge centuries later a national hero.

## 8.0 Target markets, characteristics and preferred media

### 8.1 Target markets

Following our research into growth tourism sectors (see section 2.32) we identified **three main target markets** which are particularly relevant to the areas within which the selected sites sit and which we believe could be attracted to some of the sites or already visit, in the case of Harlech Castle. We then attempted to describe the characteristics of these market segments in order to 'step into the shoes' of a typical visitor so that the choice of recommended interpretation media for each site was informed by these 'pen-pictures'. Our assumptions regarding preferred media are based on our knowledge of individuals whose behaviour we are familiar with rather than on any empirical research.

Market segment	Characteristics	Assumed preferred media
<p><b>1. Prosperous early retired couples and working empty nesters</b></p> <p>English subset</p> <p>Welsh subset</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tend to take several breaks out of main season</li> <li>• Main holiday focus can be cultural although can be motivated by a mixture of walking and cultural activities.</li> <li>• Seeking an enriching and engaging experience, which has substance.</li> <li>• Have high expectations because they are experienced visitors.</li> <li>• Despite affluence can be budget aware</li> <li>• Time rich and prepared to devote some effort</li> <li>• Independent and not crowd seeking – perhaps even shun crowds.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have some background based on English history but know little of Welsh history</li> <li>• May perceive Glyndwr as anti-English and are turned off by him</li> <li>• May know of some myths</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have some prior knowledge and think they know a lot but may be mis-informed.</li> <li>• See Glyndwr as an icon and martyr</li> <li>• Want to learn more and have a special memorable experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation on panels</li> <li>• Interpretation on kiosk</li> <li>• Re-enactments</li> <li>• Exhibition including AV/film</li> <li>• Guided tours/walks</li> <li>• Booklet</li> </ul>

Market segment	Characteristics	Assumed preferred media
<p><b>2. Young professional couples or groups</b></p> <p>English subset</p> <p>Wesh subset</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit any time of the year – particularly out of season</li> <li>• Seeking a cultural experience as a wet weather or rest day alternative to activity</li> <li>• Seeking a novel experience crammed into a busy schedule</li> <li>• Tend to be status conscious</li> <li>• Are time rich but devote short attention to experience</li> <li>• Any one experience has to compete with others</li> <li>• Have a lot of disposable income</li> <li>• May devote some time to planning and research prior to visit.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively ignorant but thirsty for knowledge</li> <li>• May be attracted by hero figure and heroic feats</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sketchy knowledge and may be mis-informed.</li> <li>• Want a special experience they can talk about with friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile phone tour/commentary</li> <li>• Hand held device - audio and/or visual – must be pretty smart.</li> <li>• Themed events e.g. medieval banquets</li> <li>• Sound and lighting</li> <li>• Soundposts/audio commentary</li> <li>• Downloadable MP3/MP4 files from web or bluetooth transmitter</li> </ul>

Market segment	Characteristics	Assumed preferred media
<b>3. Young better off families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit in season</li> <li>• Looking for entertainment and ways to fill day by keeping children occupied</li> <li>• Not so concerned about standard of experience</li> <li>• Interests of parents can be important and experience needs to appeal to all members</li> <li>• Time poor with short attention spans but will stay under the right conditions</li> <li>• Budget aware and seeking value for money</li> <li>• Want to accomplish something and get a taste of place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretation panels - quirky</li> <li>• Interpretation kiosk - quirky</li> <li>• Hand held device - limited - perhaps a geocaching trail</li> <li>• Costumed/ in role tours</li> <li>• Re-enactments</li> <li>• Themed events e.g. medieval fairs</li> <li>• Sound and lighting (if not too realistic)</li> <li>• Exhibition including AV/film - must be quirky &amp; entertaining</li> <li>• Public art</li> <li>• Soundposts/audio commentary</li> <li>• Downloadable MP3/MP4 files from web if have access via laptop</li> <li>• Bluetooth download although difficult to share with children.</li> <li>• Leaflet - specific for families</li> </ul>

## 8.2 Target audiences for sites

We have focussed on one or more of the above **target audiences at each site**, depending on the nature of the site and the area within which it sits, since some sites will naturally appeal more to some audiences than others. This selection has depended on whether there is another attraction or experience which appeals to a particular market segment nearby and is based on the characteristics described above. However it must be borne in mind that visitors local to a site or location may fall within any one of the target audiences.

## 8.3 Recommended media for sites

**Interpretation panels and/or kiosks** are a traditional means of interpretation and can vary greatly, frequently seeming to be rather boring but when executed well they can communicate effectively to the broadest range of audiences 24 hrs a day, 365 days a year. Since many of the selected sites are remote then panels and/or kiosks must play a role but the challenge is to make them lively, engaging and relevant. Listening posts can add an interesting audio dimension to the static visual panel and may have a role to play at some of the sites. Although there is a limit to the amount of time any visitor is prepared to stand and listen (currently estimated at 2 minutes max) if the audio file contains a **specialty scripted dialogue between several characters** then this may enhance the experience substantially. Mobile phone commentary downloads from the web, bluetooth downloads and satellite enabled smart phone applications are all exciting audio/visual developments which are in theory applicable at many of the selected sites. However these are not prominent in our site recommendations since we are not convinced that as high a proportion of the target audience of **prosperous early retired couples and working empty nesters** would:

- own the type of phones to receive such technology,
- carry them with them during their visit,
- have them switched on,
- have them charged,
- would find a signal at many of the sites

as amongst other target audiences.

However once scripted and recorded the audio files and commentaries could be available via several of these technologies in due course. Static computer interactives such as touchscreen are suitable for many indoor circumstances and can appeal to a cross-section of audiences but need some maintenance input. We also recommend other interpretive media, based on our analysis of audience characteristics and the nature of the site or location. If implemented all these contribute to developing a product which make sites more intellectually accessible and enjoyable for both tourists and residents.

## 9.0 The sites and recommendations

### 9.1 Hanmer

#### 9.1.1 Site significance

Owain Glyndwr was married in the church of St Chad, Hanmer (perhaps in 1383) to Margaret (Marred ferch Dafydd), daughter of David Hanmer of Maelor. The church was badly damaged by fire in 1463. The present church is partly the work of the early



eighteenth century, with some Victorian and some earlier material. A Medieval churchyard cross south-east of the church at SJ 4547 3971 may be the only tangible relic of the Glyndwr period. The Rev. RS Thomas was curate of Hanmer from 1940-1942; his poetry reflects and celebrates the Glyndwr uprising.

#### 9.1.2 Interpretation and access audit

##### Strengths

This highly attractive village is easy to locate being just off the A539 to Whitchurch, with the church tower an obvious feature visible from this bypass. It is a relatively short easy car journey from Wrexham and Oswestry and has an open, welcoming ambience. It would also be possible to arrive via public transport from nearby mainline train stations. The church is central, easy to find and there are no problems with parking nearby. Since the church is part of the Wrexham



Hanmer Church

Open Church Network it is open all the time and already has material relating to Owain Glyndwr's marriage to Margaret Hanmer inside. This gives the impression that the church is proud of its connections with Glyndwr. Indeed, since the name of the village is the name of the family he married, it is easy to convey the connections and the village could easily be visited by those on a pilgrimage visiting Sycharth and Glyndyfrdwy. The village sees its association with Owain Glyndwr as its Unique Selling Point and poems written by R.S. Thomas, whilst he was vicar at Hanmer, provide a valuable means of interpreting this inspirational character. The interpretation material inside the church consists of one in a series of nicely designed panels located at different points around the church, one in a series of predominantly monocolour, monoligual leaflets and a brief exposition in a frame leaning against a chair next to the Glyndwr coat of arms. All leaflets are displayed prominently and neatly at a visitors welcome desk near the main door.

### Weaknesses

The only brown signs to Hanmer from the A525 and A495 display 'tour/taith', which refer to the Open Church Network Discovery Trail with its guidebook available at participating churches and Wrexham Tourist Office, but no signs direct people to Hanmer as a visitor destination in itself. Neither is there anything referring to the Owain Glyndwr association at the village entrance or as you travel through the village. Currently visitors have to venture up the path to the church and search for information inside, since nothing on the roadside outside invites or encourages people to visit. Being located near the border with England the village is on the periphery of Wales and is not perceived as being particularly Welsh – the ambience is that of the borderlands. Unfortunately the present church is not the one which stood during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and no visible remains or artefacts provide evidence of Glyndwr's marriage and time at Hanmer. The current interpretation material is based on words alone, is very factual and is not eye-catching. Once inside the church visitors have to search for the items and if they stumble across them they are relatively difficult to read due to low light levels in dark corners and tightly packed small typeface. The Open Church Network has a touchscreen unit located at the back of the church but it is currently switched off since having it running effectively for periods of time has proved difficult.



Panel inside the church

### **9.1.3 Recommendations**

Target audience - **prosperous early retired couples and working empty nesters**

- Professionally produce a bilingual full colour **leaflet** conveying proposed theme via R.S. Thomas' poems to be distributed at the church, shop and pub based on the current leaflet.
- Produce and install an **interpretation panel**, with input from local schoolchildren, on the green outside the church introducing the story and encouraging people to visit the church.

- Undertake further research into **Glyndwr's origins** and earlier life.
- Finance a programme of **guided tours** around the village to include Glyn Dŵr family associations by trained local guides.
- Maximise the marketing potential via the **Wrexham Open Church Network** – its website, touchscreen unit (following it being overhauled) and guidebook.

#### 9.1.4 Proposed interpretation theme

Owain Glyndwr's ancestry and status influenced his actions and ultimately his fate.

- A feudal lord, descendant of Welsh royal lineage who lived in splendid mansions
- Had an Anglo-Welsh heritage/background
- Fulfilled the predictions of poets – 'Y Mab Darogan'
- Was a family man, whose wife was key to his cause and who, together with his daughters suffered dreadful fates

## 9.2 Sycharth

### 9.2.1 Site significance

Sycharth has traditionally been described as one of Owain Glyndwr's two principal courts, along with Glyndyfrdwy. It is situated at SJ 2053 2587 in the community of Llansilin and the county of Powys, 0.3km from the present English border. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (De020 [POW]).

Sycharth is based around a motte-and-bailey castle, suggesting a Norman military presence here at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The motte is circular with a level summit and a slight central depression. To the south-west is a kidney-shaped bailey; at its foot, and again to the south-west is Bryn Derw, a farm-house which may contain some 18<sup>th</sup> century fabric. To the west the Afon Cynllaith flows past the site. Ridge-and-furrow cultivation is evident in the fields adjacent to the site. Sycharth is the subject of a praise-poem by Iolo Goch written before the beginning of the revolt (see appendix 2). The poem not only refers to Glyndwr's generosity as host in the traditional manner but also identifies the Anglo-Norman and continental European inspiration for the architecture; he refers to a 'Tower of St Patrick's', which Johnston suggests is St Patrick's cathedral, Dublin, Minot's tower of c. 1370, a 'Cloister of Westminster', and 'splendid shops full of fine merchandise/Full and fair, like London's Cheapside' (Johnston 233-6).



Prince Hal (the future Henry V) describes how he and his forces arrived at 'Saghern', which he describes as well built (*bien edifie*) before burning down 'the whole place and several other houses near it belonging to his tenants' (*einz nous fismes ardre toute la place, et plusieurs autres maisons la entour de ses tenantz*) (Ellis 1827, 11-12). Prince Hal, who had had ample opportunity to see well-constructed buildings, was clearly impressed by the

standard of workmanship, and this description of the burning suggests that it was a complex of some size with what were evidently dependent houses nearby.

Part of Sycharth was excavated in 1962-3 by Douglas Hague of the RCAHMS and Cynthia Warhurst. Excavations were confined to a quarter of the summit of the motte and two cuttings on the bailey. The first revealed the remains of a hall, its long axis north-east to south-west, described as about 17' 6" (6.7m) across, not wide enough for an aisled hall. Remains of a smaller adjacent building were also identified. Slates, iron nails, window glass, a silver penny of c. 1350-60 and lead were discovered. In addition, a possible sleeper for a gate-house was discovered on the bailey (Hague and Warhurst 1966). Geophysical work was carried out on two areas, one to the west of the motte, the other to the south, in 1998-2003 suggested the presence of a structure, perhaps a collapsed building, and possible banks and ditches to the west. It was suggested that a field-name recorded on the tithe of 1841, *cae pentre* ('village field'), may indicate the site of a *maerdref* (Smith 2003).

## 9.2.2 Interpretation and access audit

### Strengths

This substantial motte and bailey site is visible from the B4580 leading from Llansilin and can be well appreciated from here. It is within easy travelling distance from Oswestry and Welshpool and the main borders artery road A483. Although only earthworks remain, they are impressive and with some help they can be deciphered and broadly understood. There is a special ambience to Sycharth due to its remote rural location and Iolo Goch's contemporary poem goes a long way to bring the site and the environs to life. Several footpaths lead to the site and these offer walking opportunities although it is easy to gain access from the nearby road. The current permitted open access arrangements mean that visitors can wander freely across the site and the planned car park will provide a focus for visitor welcome and introduction. Currently visitors encounter one interpretation panel hanging on a fence near the stile into the site which clearly and succinctly outlines its history and displays an extract from the Iolo Goch poem. It also contains a visual reconstruction of a similar motte and bailey by Douglas Hague and an aerial photo of the site together with images of

the tokens/seal found at Harlech Castle. Sycharth is an easy drive away from its sister site Glyndyfrdwy and a little to the south of the village of Hanmer.

### Weaknesses

This is a remote location which requires some persistence on behalf of drivers to get to. Visitors have to travel along narrow, twisting country roads currently without the aid of any brown signs and have to depend on considerable map reading skills. The welcome is low-key, if negligible and one has to have the courage of one's convictions to access the site on foot from the road. Once reached, the single interpretation panel reassures visitors they have arrived at the right place but it is difficult to read at such a low level and does not do justice to the site in terms of its importance nor to its one time grandeur. Generally there is a lack of presence and site presentation. The lack of obvious remains above ground poses some challenges to the untrained eye for appreciating its structure and magnificence properly. Parking near the site is currently difficult.



### 9.2.3

#### **Recommendations**

Target audience - **prosperous early retired couples and working empty nesters** and **school groups**

- Install a **kiosk** (enhanced roofed panel) in proposed car park displaying rendition of **visual reconstruction** (Spencer Smith) and robust **model** of the Ilys.
- Install a **listening post** (or bluetooth download) with extract of Iolo Goch poem in English and Welsh and modern poem by Myrddin ap Dafydd - 'Syched am Sycharth' near panel/kiosk.
- Ensure interpretation items are **designed** into the **planned car park** and access plan.
- Finance training for **local guides** by CPAT staff as part of their outreach programme for tours by prior arrangement (Heritage Management Grant).
- Organise an initiative for **local schools** to visit with support of web-based material centred on 'homes' & 'princes of Wales'.
- Initiate a professionally led **community excavation** to be filmed by an independent Welsh language television company for S4C.

- Research paths in the vicinity of the site and encourage visitors to **walk to the site** via marketing material.
- Establish a group '**Friends of Sycharth**', particularly after the excavation and the training of local guides to act as a focus for visitor support, site management and further research.
- Consider the provision of toilets at a later stage, particularly if school groups visit the site.

#### 9.2.4 Proposed interpretation theme

Owain Glyndwr's ancestry and status influenced his actions and ultimately his fate.

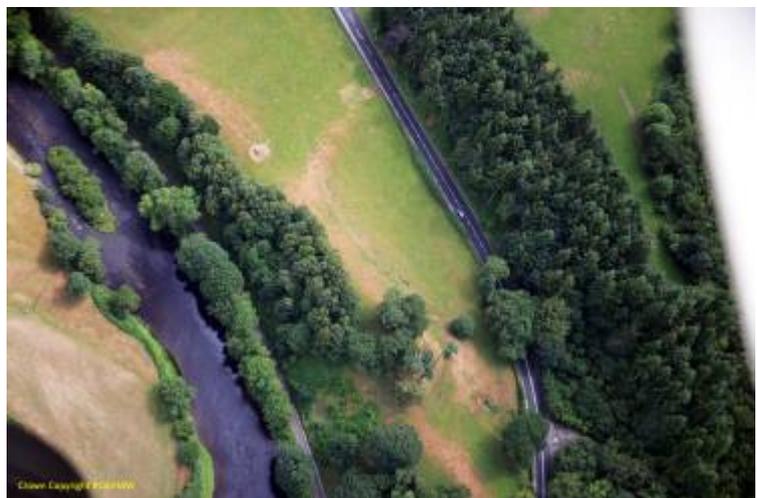
- A feudal lord, descendant of Welsh royal lineage who lived in splendid mansions
- Had an Anglo-Welsh heritage/background
- Fulfilled the predictions of poets – 'Y Mab Darogan'
- Was a family man, whose wife was key to his cause and who, together with his daughters suffered dreadful fates

### 9.3 Glyndyfrdwy

#### 9.3.1 Site significance

Glyndyfrdwy, where Owain Glyndwr proclaimed himself Prince of Wales, is a motte and moated site. The motte is situated at SJ 1253 4313, the moat at SJ 1275 4308, in Corwen Community, and the county of Denbighshire. The whole area is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (ME017 [DEN]). The motte is 6.5m high, 36m in diameter at the base and 12m diameter at the summit, and the moat remains partly water-filled. The site lies between the main A5 road and the Llangollen Railway, and is in private hands, though with public access; so far no programme of archaeological investigation has been undertaken here (CPAT Historic Environment Record).

The presence of a motte indicates a Norman military presence here in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and the creation of a moat on a scale to enclose a dwelling suggests familiarity with the pattern of moated houses common further to the east, such as in the Maelor Saesneg, where they date from the 12-14<sup>th</sup> centuries (Cadw/ICOMOS *Register* 2001, 18). Prince Hal describes how he and his forces arrived at



'Glyndourdy' and burnt 'a fine lodge in his park ... and laid waste all the country around' after burning Sycharth:

Et puis nous enalames droit a son autre place de Glyndourdy, pour lui querer illoques, et la nous fismes ardre un beau logge en son parc, et toute la pais la entour (Ellis 1827, 11).

Again it is remarkable that Prince Hal should have been impressed by the 'fine lodge'. Pennant and Bingley clearly associate Iolo Goch's poem with Glyndyfrdwy, not Sycharth. Pennant remarks that many of the evident remains had been lost to ploughing between the first and second editions of his *Tours*, published in 1778 and 1784 respectively (Pennant 329; Bingley 432).

On the sixteenth of September 1400 Owain Glyndwr proclaimed himself Prince of Wales at Glyndyfrdwy in the company of some of his closest family, a number of friends from Sycharth and Wrexham, the Dean of St Asaph and his prophet or seer together with ordinary folk from the area totalling some three hundred people all together. From here Owain and his supporters went on a destructive campaign torching Ruthin, Denbigh, Rhuddlan, Fflint, Holt, Oswestry and Welshpool – this was the beginning of his national revolt against the English crown.



### **9.3.2 Interpretation and access audit**

#### Strengths

This imposing motte and separate moat site lies immediately between the A5 main arterial route in and out of North Wales and the Llangollen Steam Railway. It is easily accessible from the tourist destination of Llangollen and the market town of Corwen. Currently visitors can access the site either by parking near Carrog station and walking along a pavement on the A5 or by parking in an informal parking area opposite and crossing the road to the stile. Once on top of the motte its dramatic and strategic location in relation to the river Dee can be easily appreciated and the views in winter when the trees are not in leaf add to the appeal. The site is clearly identified as 'Glyndwr's Mount' at the stile and an interpretation panel at the bottom of the motte's slopes conveys some of the site's importance and explains the layout of the site. It is within easy travelling distance of its sister site Sycharth and the village of Hanmer. The current permitted open access arrangements mean that visitors can wander freely across the site. The proposed car park, if it goes ahead, will provide a focus for visitor welcome, orientation and interpretation although permitted access along riverside fields from Carrog station could do the same whilst also encouraging

visitors to use sustainable transport and make a day trip from Llangollen, thus helping the local economy. Nearby Corwen, with its eye-catching sculpture and various panels and leaflets could also encourage visits to Glyndyfrdwy itself although a fully equipped visitor centre could go a long way to introducing Glyndwr as a real historical character.

### Weaknesses

The speed and flow of traffic along the A5 makes it very difficult to stop near or at the site and the corner near the motte adds considerably to the dangers. Currently many thousands of people pass this site without knowing anything of its history or significance and the trees which obscure much of the motte makes it difficult for passers by even to notice it. The site is not signed for road users and the hand-written notice at the stile provides an informal, insignificant welcome which does little to convey the status of the site. The site name 'Glyn Dŵr's Mount' probably reflects an English Victorian influence which sits uncomfortably with its spirit, known originally and today by Welsh people as Glyndyfrdwy. The moat site, which is where Glyn Dŵr's mansion probably stood is relatively difficult to understand and appreciate due to the lack of clearly visible earthworks – only a damp hollow lies there. Uncertainties regarding the actual site of Glyndwr's proclamation lead to a certain lack of focus regarding site relevance to visitors. The many mature trees growing out of the motte obscure views into the site and outwards from the top and do little to help visitors appreciate the site's strategic location and what it was like pre-Victorian times. The single interpretation panel reassures visitors they have arrived but does not do justice to the events associated with the site and their context nor to the one time grandeur of the mansion. Generally there is a lack of presence and excitement to a visit to Glyndyfrdwy. Although it is difficult to visit nearby Corwen without gaining some awareness of Owain Glyndwr, the references to him on various panels and in leaflets are obscure (more about legend than fact), lack focus and do little to encourage visits to Glyndyfrdwy itself. Currently Corwen does not act as a hub or introductory departure point but rather as a nebulous experience in relation to Glyndwr.

### **9.3.4 Recommendations**

Target audiences - **prosperous early retired couples, working empty nesters, school groups and young families.**

- Pr 1 - negotiate with Mr Blair, the landowner permanent **access** through fields **from Carrog station**, following his permission being granted for managed groups to walk here during an open weekend in September 2000.
- Pr 2 - continue with plans to seek permission for a potential **car park** on the hardstanding in the field to the east of the motte by the side of the straight stretch of the A5 and create a modest car park.
- Install **an interpretation kiosk** pictorially depicting Glyndwr's proclamation near the gate at the corner of the field with the **access route from Carrog station** together with a **listening post** and a **kiosk only in the car park**, if this goes ahead (audio not appropriate so near the A5 due to traffic noise).
- The **listening post** should broadcast an excerpt of a specially scripted conversation between a group of people complaining about life in the lead up to the uprising.

- Install a **bluetooth transmitter near Carrog station** for visitors to download an enhanced version of the above conversation reflecting grievances leading up to Glyndwr's proclamation and a script of the proclamation itself.
- Install a **map panel** interpreting the layout of the site at the stile into the site from the west.
- Organise an annual event **re-enacting the proclamation**.
- **Remove** the current hand-written '**Glyndwr's Mount**' notice and encourage the use of the original site name via OS etc.
- **Remove** many of the **trees** currently obscuring the motte.
- Install a **flag** or just the coat of arms near the site.
- Install a panel or two at **Llangollen TIC** drawing attention to the site and partially interpreting the theme.
- Train **local guides** to undertake a programme of guided walks to/and around the site building on the success of the 'Heather and Hillforts project' and linking in with Denbighshire Countryside Service .
- Pr 2 - if the proposed visitor centre at **Corwen** goes ahead, interpret part of the story here with an emphasis on comparing local legends and stories with the facts as we know them, and develop a comprehensive visitor package to include visits to Glyndyfrdwy itself thus using Corwen as another **hub/departure point** (similar to that proposed for Machynlleth) for the east Wales cluster.

### 9.3.5 Proposed interpretation themes

1. Owain Glyndwr's ancestry and status influenced his actions and ultimately his fate.
  - A feudal lord, descendant of Welsh royal lineage who lived in splendid mansions
  - Had an Anglo-Welsh heritage/background
  - Fulfilled the predictions of poets – 'Y Mab Darogan'
  - Was a family man, whose wife was key to his cause and who, together with his daughters suffered dreadful fates
2. Owain Glyndwr's sense of injustice moved him to take up the flag on behalf of fellow Welsh people with similar grievances.
  - Led a rebellion against the social, economic and religious hardships in Wales at the time
  - Gathered key influential leaders around him to provide gravitas and status to his cause

## 9.4 Bryn Glas battlefield, Pilleth

### 9.4.1 Site significance

The following summarises the report on the site of the battle of Pilleth prepared as part of the *Welsh Battlefields Project Pilot Study -Historical Research* of November 2009.



The precise site of the battle is uncertain, though the *Project Pilot Study* concludes that the principal conflict, where Mortimer's forces advanced against Glyndwr's position, took place on the slopes of Bryn Glas, an extensive area lying to the E, W, and S of St Mary's church, its southern edge approximately defined by the present B4356 while its eastern boundary was represented by the manorial complex of Pilleth Court. However, subsequent fighting could

have spread out over a much broader area (particularly following the rout of the English forces) and consequently could have covered much of the floodplain area to the S and SW of Pilleth, extending along the northern bank of the River Lugg.

Another possible site is suggested by a statement in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century English prose *Brut*, which locates the battle at 'Black Hill', which might possibly be identified with the eponymous hill lying to the NW of Bryn Glas. While there appears to be no other documentary or place name evidence to associate 'Black Hill' with the battle of Pilleth, it is certainly not impossible that the fighting could have extended northwards into this area.

The battle is described in several contemporary and near-contemporary sources which differ in content and level of detail, although they appear to agree broadly on the principal details of the engagement and its aftermath. Accounts describe how when Mortimer's men and the tenants of Maelienydd met with Mortimer, they advanced on Glyndwr's forces occupying a hilltop position, but that the contingent of troops from Maelienydd suddenly defected to Glyndwr's cause, which immediately turned the tide of the battle, and Mortimer was captured. The chroniclers describe how 'the corpses were left lying under the horses' hooves, weltering in their own blood, as burial was forbidden for a long time afterwards', and how Welsh women mutilated the corpses, perhaps from the testimony of survivors of the English army. Estimates of the English slain vary from 200 to 1100, and it is difficult to estimate the respective size of the Welsh and English armies, since sources speak variously of 'a small force' of Welshmen (*cum paucis*) or of a 'horde' or 'rabble' (*turba*) and also of 'a great host from Gwynedd, Powys and the South', and that Mortimer's force consisted of 'almost all the militia of the adjacent counties (to Wales).'



There is evidence for at least two burial sites associated with the battle, one within the churchyard itself and another further up the hillside. A local antiquarian, in a paper published in 1847, makes particular reference to the exceptional number of corpses buried in the churchyard. Further up the hillside to the W of the church, another burial site is marked by a square patch of six Wellingtonia fir trees which were apparently planted by the late Sir Richard Green-Price to mark the location where human bones, presumed to represent the remains of

persons slain during the battle, were apparently identified.

Rees Davies observes that 'the battle of Bryn Glas or Pilleth was the one of the most momentous of the revolt' (Rees 1995, 107), a victory over a substantial English county levy in a pitched battle, leading to the capture or death of several prominent Marcher lords, and leaving the border towns of Hereford, Leominster and Ludlow exposed.

## **9.4.2 Interpretation and access audit**

### Strengths

The Church of St Mary's Pilleth and what is believed to be the main battlefield on the slopes of Bryn Glas is accessed via a relatively short stretch of decent track from the B4356 between Presteigne and Monaughty to the south-west of Knighton - an easy road to drive. There is a good sized car park with a robust surface near the Church together with a relatively recent full-colour panel interpreting the battle. The battlefield is signed from the main road along the track with brand new brown signs displaying an *i* for information. The church is open all the time and contains some articles and papers about the battle arranged in an informal way for visitors to read there. The church has been recently renovated via a Heritage Lottery Grant to a simple, relatively bare state and as a result is highly atmospheric (no electricity). Substantial sections of the church stood at the time of the battle (majority of the tower) and the building probably played a role during the battle prior to being burnt by Glyndwr! The churchyard contains a recent memorial to the fallen of the battle and a memorial service is held each year on the anniversary of the battle. The square of land containing a group of Wellingtonia Trees, which marks the location of piles of bones believed to be the remains of many of those killed in the battle, can be easily seen from a distance as people travel from Pembridge to the east. The steep slopes of Bryn Glas itself, where much of the fighting happened, can be accessed via a footpath leading from the car park through the churchyard. The interpretation panel at the car park contains a full-colour depiction of the men fighting and conveys the general events of the battle in a lively, engaging way. The location of the battle which opened

the way for Glyndwr's advance into south Wales, so near England provides opportunities to convey the uprising in the context of the borderlands. The recently completed report on battlefields by 'Border Archaeology' provides a lot of exciting meaty information. The presence of the church on the battlefield brings the horror of the fighting into sharp focus and stimulates reflection on the victims of the conflict. Overall the church, churchyard, the slopes of Bryn Glas and low lying ground below provide a second to none low-key experience based on the exceptional aura most visitors will feel once they appreciate something of the battle. It is estimated that at least 500 people visit the church per year. A group of local interested people, 'The Friends of Pilleth Church,' spearheaded the restoration of the Church and are keen to influence and shape any access or interpretation provision at the Church and have a deal of knowledge.

### Weaknesses



The access track turns at an awkward angle from the main B4356 between Presteigne and Monaughty and can be difficult to negotiate. The track itself is not officially adopted and is currently maintained through the goodwill of a local landowner involved with the Church of St Mary's Pilleth. Neither is it suitable for coaches or buses due to the lack of passing places. Although the newly installed brown signs help visitors locate the battlefield the *i* they display raise expectations which are not currently met. There is

nothing to indicate that the church is open and there are no waymarks or anything to help visitors find their way from the car park to the battlefield on the slopes of Bryn Glas. Furthermore the OS map confuses the situation by indicating that the battlefield is on the lowground on the valley bottom. Pilleth is a good distance from the other border sites associated with Glyndwr and does not sit easily within a cluster of sites for people to visit in a day. People have to use considerable nouse and imagination to understand the battle and its significance and the current limited interpretation does little to convey the context of the battle and the events before, during and afterwards. Whilst the constantly open church provides opportunities to house interpretation, it has no electricity, has a tranquil, somber atmosphere and the 'Friends of Pilleth Church' do not wish it to be swamped by this one episode in its life. Although constituted and with a bank account, the 'Friends of Pilleth Church' does not have the capacity to manage major projects.

### 9.4.3 Recommendations

Target audience - **prosperous early retired couples and working empty nesters** and **school groups**

- **Waymark** Rights of Way and paths in the vicinity of the Church and to the battlefield following research.
- Install a **map panel** directing visitors to the Church and other associated features including the holy well, the battlefield, Wellingtonia trees, memorial to the fallen etc.
- Display the coat of arms on **small/modest flag** or panel near current interpretation panel in car park to indicate that the site is linked to other named Glyndwr sites.
- Produce a full colour bilingual **leaflet** (gatefolded A3) or **booklet** to be distributed at Church (Dr Charles Kightly possible author) to include a section on the general history of the Church.
- Install a **panel** near the fence of **Wellingtonia tree square** explaining the significance of the trees etc with the permission of the landowner.
- Install a **panel display** either at the back of the Church (between current cabinet and wall of tower) or outside conveying proposed theme including:
  - the significance of the battle before and afterwards,
  - likely sequence of events during battle itself,
  - the role and fate of the Church,
  - the role of women etc
- **Explore potential further excavation** including bones discovered during drainage work on churchyard, potential skirmish site on ground below main battlefield and site of nearby medieval village.
- Install **decent toilet** instead of current portaloo
- Financially support substantial in kind **maintenance and upkeep** work carried out on toilet and track etc.
- Finance **guided tours for school groups** by expert e.g. Charles Kightly.
- Establish **partnership with CPAT** to receive funds and manage projects on behalf of the 'Friends of Pilleth Church'.
- Install a '**foot-fall**' **counter** at Church entrance to monitor visitor numbers.

### 9.4.4 Proposed interpretation theme

Owain Glyndwr's background, military experience and loyalty from fellow Welsh people made him a defiant leader.

- Had served under the English crown.
- Used astute tactics to defeat his enemy.

- His cause split families and communities and wrought destruction to the landscape and buildings of Wales.
- He was defiant in the face of overwhelming odds.

## 9.5 Canolfan Owain Glyndwr, Machynlleth

### 9.5.1 Site significance

The chronicler Adam of Usk records that Owain Glyndwr held an assembly in Machynlleth, where a building on Heol Maengwyn has been identified as its location. Pennant states that he assembled 'the estates of Wales' there but does not mention a building (Pennant 359). In 1798 Bingley was shown 'An ancient building, constructed of the thin shaly stone of this country, and now converted into stables ... pointed out to me as that in which Owen Glyndwr summoned the chieftains of Wales in the year 1402.' (Bingley 352). Professor Davies was dismissive of the claims of this building:

Machynlleth was certainly the site of one of his two known parliaments, and the claim to have identified the building in which this assembly was held is understandable, but without historical warrant (Davies 1995, 339).



Since then, dendrochronology has confirmed that the present structure is two generations later than Glyndwr's parliament – 1460 (Miles and Suggett 2004), though this does not preclude there having been an earlier building on the site.

Machynlleth itself was already a market town of some importance, though not apparently a borough, a Welsh foundation of the late 13<sup>th</sup> century. Heol Maengwyn is attested in 1597 but is likely to be much older (Soulsby 180-181).

The building now known as the Parliament House was purchased in 1906 by David Davies of

Llandinam, Liberal MP for Montgomeryshire, and was opened as a social centre in 1912. Whatever its links with Glyndwr in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it is a testament to the durability of his ideals, as understood by later generations. Davies was the grandson of David Davies the industrialist ('Davies the Ocean', 1818-1890), and was heir both to his energy and enterprise as well as to the radical and populist traditions of late Victorian Wales. This was the period of great commercial prosperity and limitless optimism, when a strong romantic and cultural nationalism had largely succeeded the more explicitly political demands of 'Cymru Fydd'. The Owain Glyndwr murals were painted during the early 1910's by a Scottish artist, Murray Urquhart, who depicted 'Glyndwr leading on a crowd of his soldiers, most of them roughly dressed as peasants – 'the leader and hero of the common people' (Lord 2000, 336-337). There seems to

be some basis for the tradition that as depicted, Owain Glyndwr is Davies himself, suggesting the arrival of a new Welsh elite, the natural leaders of the new nation.

Whilst the claims of the Parliament House to be the site of the Machynlleth assembly called by Glyndwr are therefore incapable of verification, and the 15<sup>th</sup> century building is undoubtedly post-Glyndwr, it does represent the continuing force of the Glyndwr tradition and the way in which it was considered to be fulfilling itself in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when some of the demands of the uprising, such as religious autonomy and a university system, had been, or were about to be, met.

## 9.5.2 Interpretation and access audit

### Strengths

This medieval stone building is located along Stryd Maengwyn, the main street running through the centre of Machynlleth. The very appearance of the building indicates its age and the entrance door is easily accessed directly from the pavement. The ground floor can be negotiated by people in wheelchairs or those infirm on their feet. The 2,000 visitors a year are met by a volunteer receptionist and they pay a low entrance fee. The inside of the building projects an ancient, genuine ambience and contains several interesting features including the Urquhart mural depicting the battle



of Hyddgen on the slopes of Hyddgen. The building's associations with David Davies of Llandinam and the renaissance in Welsh national affairs provides added significance. Machynlleth is located within a strongly Welsh part of Wales and is recognised as a cultural tourist destination. It has excellent train and bus connections and is within easy travelling distance of the other Glyndwr destinations of Pennal and Aberystwyth Castle, and is not too far south of Harlech Castle. The volunteer staff are keen and knowledgeable and the use of period mannequins bring some life to the upper floor. Some interesting quotations are displayed and the display case containing the

Pennal letter provides gravitas and potential to the interpretation. The building has recently received some investment to improve lighting and heat levels. This building is the only dedicated indoor facility which could interpret the exciting, thought provoking, nationally important story of Owain Glyndwr's uprising and act as a hub to other Glyndwr locations or attractions.

## Weaknesses

The building fades into the long line of streetside buildings due to its greyish colour and there's little to attract people's attention. The dependency on volunteers could make regular opening hours difficult and the interior which can be generally dark and cold is not always welcoming and doesn't encourage them to linger. The fact that the building did not host Glyndwr's first assembly, since it post-dates this event, considerably weakens its established focus as 'Y Senedd-dy' / 'Parliament House'. It is evident that the building and accompanying interpretation is suffering from a severe lack of investment – the material is poor in a host of respects – age, legibility, attractiveness, ability to engage and communicate at a range of levels and age, focus, story and message. Much of the available space has been filled with a range of relatively disjointed displays which have some sort of association with Owain Glyndwr or Machynlleth. The upper floor is out of reach of those with mobility problems and some of the low light levels can make it difficult for visitors to either notice features such as the Urquhart murals or to read material. Currently this centre does not provide a comprehensive visitor experience and it is sobering to consider that nearby Celtica closed as a visitor attraction several years ago due to low visitor flow.

### **9.5.3 Recommendations**

Target audience: **Young families, young professional couples, retired and empty nesters.**

The following recommendations comprise a list of media appropriate for the above target audiences and the proposed themes. Professional exhibition designers should meld these into a cohesive visitor experience.

- Costumed staff to welcome visitors.
- Introductory film/AV outlining the following in context of proposed theme:
  - the uprising, associated notable events and their effect across Wales,
  - the first assembly & associated international diplomacy,
  - Glyn Dŵr's disappearance,
  - the legendry figure and his rise as a national hero for modern Wales.
- Map panel encouraging visitors to visit other Glyndwr locations.
  - \* Please note that the Glyndwr National Trail is not relevant to the Glyndwr story and the sites selected for this plan despite it ending at Machynlleth!
- Leaflet guide and audio commentary (bluetooth and wifi download) interpreting features of the building, including the Urquhart murals, and enhancing the static display with appropriate passages and dialogue.
- Actors interacting with visitors as visiting poets (cler) dropping-by telling of Glyndwr's uprising across Wales.
- A feast scene with mannequins/speaking heads depicting conversation between representatives from across Wales – different dialects discussing the state of affairs in various parts, their frustrations, hopes and aspirations regarding Glyndwr and the uprising.
- Interactive map of Wales depicting events associated with the uprising across the country.

- Interactive computer game (touchscreen) debating different facets of Glyndwr culminating in 'what does Glyndwr mean to you?'
- A programme of events such as story-telling, medieval feasts and jousting.
- Public art installation outdoors behind centre created by artist in residence working with local schoolchildren.
- Further research into building features
- Fly Glyndwr flag on roof throughout the year as a means of identifying it as a Glyndwr site.
- Eye-catching medieval style hanging outside building inviting people to come indoors.
- A 'foot-fall' counter at entrance to monitor visitor numbers.

#### **9.5.4 Proposed interpretation themes**

1. Owain Glyndwr appealed to many corners of war-torn Wales and nearly brought it greater unity and representation.
  - His uprising touched on most parts of Wales which were ravaged as a result
  - Following centuries of feudal dynastic rule he assembled representatives of various communities as a 'parliament'.
  - He had a vision of him as head of state, the leader of a more modern nation.
2. Although Owain Glyndwr's dream failed, he was never betrayed, but instead he faded into the legend books to re-emerge centuries later a national hero.

## **9.6 Pennal**

### **9.6.1 Site significance**

The letter written by Owain Glyndwr to King Charles of France is given 'at Pennal', without any further indication of a court or chancery. It describes itself as having been written as the consequence of deliberations amongst a council called by Owain Glyndwr of 'the nobles of our race, the prelates of our Principality and others called for this purpose' (see below). There seems to be no reason to doubt that the location is Pennal in the southern part of Gwynedd, now a small village near the northern banks

of the Afon Dyfi. A Roman fort is situated 600m to the south-east of the centre of the village, and it is possible that the immediate area formed an alternative crossing point of the Dyfi, less risky than the ferry which operated at its mouth. Pennal is therefore located at a fulcrum point in west Wales.

Prior to the Edwardian conquest, Pennal had been one of the *llysoedd* (courts) of the princes of Gwynedd. There were 21 of these in Gwynedd (including Anglesey), of which at least eleven were associated with a motte (earthwork castle), including Pennal. The Welsh law-books specify up to ten buildings associated with a *llys*, which include a hall, a chamber, a kitchen, a stable, a granary or barn, a kiln, a kennel and a privy, but it is probable that by no means all *llysoedd* were equipped with all these buildings. There was little need for them after the conquest, and in most cases the buildings were dismantled or allowed to fall into ruin. It is therefore not clear whether there was any structure capable of accommodating Owain Glyndwr and his retinue in 1406.



The *llys* was associated with a *maerdref*, where the princely tenants lived. The law books specify how officers of the princely retinue were to be accommodated on their circuit, and that the head of the household was to be accommodated in the largest and most central house in the settlement, whilst the steward was expected to reside in the lodgings nearest to the court. This suggests the existence of a nucleated settlement – a village – and it is likely that the present village of Pennal has evolved from a community of bondmen associated with the *llys*.

Towards the end of the period of Gwynedd's independence, if not earlier, *llysoedd* were provided with a royal chapel, some of which became parish churches as territorial parishes developed. This seems to be the case at Pennal (Johnstone 1997).

It is therefore probable that Glyndwr and his retinue made their way to Pennal because it was royal land, associated with the pre-Edwardian dynasty of Gwynedd, part of the Welsh royal inheritance which Glyndwr claimed, and because of its convenient location near a crossing of one of the major rivers of west Wales. It has been suggested (by Professor Ralph Griffiths to the authors of the present report) that the convenience of a river crossing was a more important factor than the survival of royal land as a locale for any meeting, much as the sealing of Magna Carta took place at Runnymede, not at Windsor. However, it is also possible that the focus of his residence was the area adjacent to the surviving motte, Domen Las, but it is not clear

whether any buildings survived to accommodate them. It may be that some sort of temporary pavilion was erected. Again, it is probable that a village was already in existence and it is therefore possible that some of its buildings were pressed into service to accommodate the royal party. It is likely that the royal party would have attended mass at the church, and it seems certain that this was a structure which stood on or immediately adjacent to the present church, though there is no reference to the church itself in the Pennal letter (G. ab Iorwerth).

Cefn Caer is a five-bay post-Medieval hall-house of 1525-6; it was floored in 1658-60, and rewindowed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is located within the Roman fort of Pennal, and lies (as noted) some 600m south-east of the centre of the village. The house was historically a centre of bardic patronage. Tours of the house are offered by the owner, Mr Elfyn Rowlands, who displays a replica sword of state and crown. Mr Rowlands' leaflets state 'This house would have been used by Owain Glyndwr when the Pennal Policy was drawn up/Byddai'r tŷ hwn wedi cael ei ddefnyddio gan Owain Glyndŵr pan luniwyd Polisi Pennal'. This is questionable. Nothing has been seen which explicitly connects Owain Glyndwr with the Cefn Caer site. Whilst it is by no means beyond the bounds of possibility that he or his retinue would have needed to make use of a high-status dwelling on the Cefn Caer site (but predating the present house) if there were no suitable buildings remaining at the *llys* site or in the village (see above), there is no evidence even of a long-standing tradition that he did so. Cefn Caer is nevertheless an extremely attractive dwelling with much to say about the evolving role of the Welsh *uchelwyr* in the post-Glyndŵr years, and is located within a rich historic landscape.

Pennal, its motte and *llys*, its church and its village settlement are therefore associated with the writing of the single most important document of the uprising, the Pennal letter, though the precise location at which it was written cannot be determined.

## **9.6.2 Interpretation and access audit**

### Strengths

This pleasant Welsh village lies on the main A493 road between Machynlleth and Tywyn and is neatly arranged around the circular churchyard or 'llan' of the Church of St Peter in Chains or St Peter ad Vincula. It is proud of its associations with the writing of the Pennal letter, one of the most significant documents in the history of the Welsh nation. The church is open 365 days a year and has signs clearly stating this. A modern, stylish 'memorial garden' to Owain Glyndwr, his family, advisers and commanders which also celebrates the royal 'llys' of the Princes of Gwynedd occupies part of the churchyard. There is also reference to the 'royal llys' at the entrance into the church and inside hangs a painting by Aneurin Jones of the 1406 'assembly' depicting the scene of the writing of the Pennal letter and a full colour leaflet interpreting 'the Court of Princes' which explains something of the letter. The ground floor of the church can be negotiated by people in wheelchairs or those infirm on their feet. The church and nearby Cefn Caer medieval farm house each have a facsimile copy of the Pennal letter in a display case and both establishments offer guided tours via prior-arrangement. Cefn Caer medieval farm house also provides medieval banquets accompanied by Welsh harp playing etc. Pennal is located within a strongly Welsh part of Wales and is within easy travelling distance of the other Glyndwr destinations of the Owain Glyndwr Centre Machynlleth and Aberystwyth Castle, and is not too far south of Harlech Castle.

## Weaknesses

There is little to signify the village's associations with this important document as visitors enter or explore the village. The 'story' of the Pennal letter and the Glyndwr association is currently presented by two establishments, namely the church of St Peter in Chains and Cefn Caer medieval farmhouse which vie for attention and compete over 'ownership' of the story. The village does not act as a cohesive visitor destination and parts of it occasionally has an uneasy relationship with the Owain Glyndwr Centre Machynlleth thus this cluster of attractions does not currently operate easily together. The memorial garden contains little interpretation for visitors not familiar with the characters commemorated nor the significance of the Owain Glyndwr association. The title 'memorial garden' in itself does little to prepare visitors for what it is. The current interpretation leaflet does not communicate easily with those not familiar with the writing of the Pennal letter and can be confusing by its use of titles such as 'Court of Princes', 'A great Synod', 'Merlin's prophecies', 'A house of lords', 'the court of Pendragon'.

### **9.6.3 Recommendations**

Target audience: **Retired couples and empty nesters** and **school groups**

- **Professional signs** telling visitors that the church is open and indicating the Owain Glyndwr and Princes of Gwynedd memorial garden.
- **Film on loop in Church** conveying theme – truly bilingual presentation (English and Welsh within same production) created by members of Urdd and scripted with local involvement.
- **Bluetooth audio presentation** of someone reading letter with a commentary on it.
- **Family friendly leaflet** depicting letter, those who wrote it and conveying what it meant/means to Wales particularly appropriate for school groups and local visitors.
- **Interpretation panel** in church memorial garden explaining significance of those commemorated there.
- Amend **village sign** at entrance to reflect 'home of the Pennal letter'
- **Fly Glyndwr flag** on top of tower throughout the year as a means of identifying it as a Glyndwr site.
- Colourful **panel on village green** in centre interpreting letter in context of 'llys' of Princes of Gwynedd.
- **Mosaic** created by local schoolchildren under direction of professional artist on external wall of village toilet

### **9.6.4 Proposed interpretation theme**

Owain Glyndwr and his advisers planned an independent Wales informed by the latest religious, social and educational developments in parts of Europe.

- His rebellion matured into a vision for a state.

- He sought the support of the king of France and the Pope at Avignon to realise his vision.
- He became an international figure who sought alliances abroad in parts of Europe.

## 9.7 Aberystwyth Castle

### 9.7.1 Site significance



Aberystwyth was taken by Owain Glyndwr's forces in 1404. They were besieged by forces under the command of the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York and the Earl of Warwick in 1407, whose artillery failed to make much impression on those besieged, though a cannonball fatally wounded William Gwyn ap Rhys Llwyd of Cydweli. Glyndwr had a long standing relationship with Henry IV and a personal rivalry ensued between him and Prince Hal. After several months of siege, the defenders resolved to surrender

the castle on 1 November (following negotiations by the Chancellor of the University of Oxford), but when the proposal was put to Glyndwr, he threatened to execute the Welsh commander, took possession and directed the defence himself. However Glyndwr's lack of sea power proved fatal and the castle finally fell to the besiegers at an uncertain date in the autumn of 1408 or early 1409, after their supplies had run out. From this point onwards, Glyndwr was effectively no more than a guerrilla leader (Davies). Certain detailed references are list below.

The Admiral of the Fleet was ordered to equip 3-4 vessels to supply the king's castles in Wales with corn and wine etc, April, 1404

The Admiral of the north was ordered to equip 5 vessels with men at arms and archers at Bristol and to covey victuals and stores to various castles in Wales. April, 1404  
Morris, T.E. - Incidents during the sieges of Harlech and Aberystwyth Castles, Arch Camb, (1925), 390-2

On the 12th January, 1405, Owain Glyndwr sealed his treaty with the French 'in our castle in Llanpadarn' - Mathews, T., (1910), Welsh Records in Paris, (Carmarthen), p. 39

John Smith, deputy constable of Aberystwyth Castle in 1406, had a pipe of wine and another of honey for Aberystwyth castle, but it wasn't paid for until 1409-10 - Griffiths, R.A., (1972), The Principality of Wales, p. 175, 420

Prince Henry (Henry V) attacked the castle with siege engines and cannon. This was one of the **first times cannon were used in Britain**. The English failed to take the castle and Henry complained that he had to pawn his jewels in order to support the expenses of the siege - Griffiths, R.A., (1972), The Principality of Wales, p. 236, Morris, T.E., Incidents during the sieges of Harlech and Aberystwyth Castles, Arch Camb, (1925), 390-2

600 men at arms and 1,800 archers were ordered out by the English and nearly £7,000 provided for wages. The stores were collected at Hereford and wood was dispatched from Bristol. The king's 4.5 ton gun was sent down with nearly 600 pounds of powder, 1,000 pounds of saltpetre and 300 pounds of sulphur. This may have been the gun called 'The Messenger' which exploded when it was fired. Morgan, John, ( ) A Short History of the Castle of Aberystwyth, p. 22, quoting Wyle, History of Henry IV

In 1415, Gerard Strong was allowed not to have to pay for the metal of a brass cannon, weighing 2 tons that burst at the siege of Aberystwyth Castle [presumably not the same cannon as the king's 4.5 ton gun]. - Morgan, John, A Short History of the Castle of Aberystwyth, p. 11

William Gwyn ap Rhys Llwyd defended Aberystwyth for Glyn Dwr - Davies, R.R., Conquest, Coexistence and Change: Wales 1063-1415, UWP, 1987, 451

A small garrison was kept permanently at Aberystwyth castle. 10 lists of the soldiers and their wages have survived - Min Acc, 1288/2 (and Min Acc, 1223/5, m.10-11) - Griffiths, R.A., (1972), The Principality of Wales, p. 43

Aberystwyth Castle was garrisoned by a few soldiers during the 15th century (typically one man at arms and 12 archers). After the Castle was regained by the English from Owain Glyndwr, it was not kept in good repair. A man at arms might mean one swordsman and three archers. - Owen, E., (1900-22), A Catalogue of manuscripts relating to Wales in the British Museum, 4 vols

The occupants of the Castle surrendered to Prince Henry on the 12th September, 1408 Maredudd ab Owain (Rhys Ddu's son in law) was handed over as a hostage at the siege with Thomas ap Rhydderch. Rhys ap Gruffydd ap Llywelyn ab Ieuan (or Jankyn) was one of the Welsh leaders who garrisoned Aberystwyth castle at the end of the siege. Maredudd ab Owain ap Gruffydd ab Einion also supported Glyndwr and had to pay £300 pledge for hostages who had been taken to secure the surrender of Aberystwyth castle. John ap Rhys ap Dafydd was one of the hostages and had to pay a fine for his release - Griffiths, Gentlemen and Rebels, p 57, 59 Griffiths, R.A., (1972), The Principality of Wales, p. 273, 274, 306, 326-7 Foedera, IV, i, 120

Prince Henry (king from 1413) was lenient with the Welsh rebels. He may have thought that this would be better than punishment, but he needed them to fight with him in his wars, particularly in France against the Lollards (and at Agincourt?) - Griffiths, Gentlemen and Rebels, p. 59

## **9.7.2 Interpretation and access audit**

### Strengths

The castle is within easy walking distance of the centre of Aberystwyth, within a stone's throw of the seafront university buildings and stands on a route along the promenade. It has a pleasant, open and welcoming ambience which people frequently stumble across as they wander along the front or walk to and fro between locations. The paths have a good tarmac surface which are suitable for those who are infirm on their feet or in wheelchairs. The remains of the walls, defences and tower create a romantic ruin in a prominent setting and it is easy to discern some of the events associated with the castle in addition to its strategic coastal location. Battles, fighting and sieges are all events which naturally appeal to a good proportion of visitors and contemporary accounts of canon use and warfare add meat to the story. The existence of canon balls, which may have been used during the siege, provide 'concrete' evidence and a tangible link with this episode in the castle's history. Aberystwyth is an exceedingly Welsh town and is already recognised as a cultural tourist destination. It has excellent train and bus connections and is within easy travelling distance of the other Glyndwr destinations of Pennal and Machynlleth, and is

not too far south of Harlech Castle to travel in a day. The recently created mosaics under the castle, opposite the promenade, provide colourful insights into the castle's history including the Owain Glyndwr occupation and siege. Although unstaffed, the curator and staff at the nearby Ceredigion Museum are keen to improve the interpretation of the Castle.

### Weaknesses

The castle is not always clearly signposted from the town centre nor the train station and, if travelling in a car, visitors can find it difficult to negotiate the one way system and find space to park nearby. The ruins are not very visible since they 'hide' a little behind the university buildings etc. Although the open ambience goes some way to making visitors feel welcome, there is nothing to inform people of where they have arrived and the significance of the ruins. Since people tend to wander freely in and out en route from one place to another, it is not perceived as a heritage destination and can attract anti-social behaviour including vandalism. As a result the castle is probably taken for granted by many local people and is on the periphery as a visitor attraction compared with the National Library, the Arts Centre, the museum and the shops. The one interpretation panel is dated, relatively illegible due to the surface having deteriorated, does not convey a coherent story or message, is in a poor location, is generally unattractive and non eye-catching. The mosaics are out of the way and difficult to find and the castle does not provide a visitor experience beyond the ruins themselves. Certain interpretation provision may be prone to vandalism and may need to be locked at night – safely displaying the canon balls on site may pose some challenges. The occupation by Owain Glyndwr, the subsequent siege and the saga associated with his eventual fateful defeat is only one episode in the castle's history.

### **9.7.3 Recommendations**

Target audience: **Young families, retired couples and empty nesters**

- **Interpretation panels on main paths** into the castle - near entrance from town and at the entrance from the promenade.
- Panel looking out over sea on green near war memorial.
- A programme of **re-enactments** including Welsh language performances telling of the events surrounding breaking of the siege.
- **Audio/lighting** in one of the towers/underground room depicting the cut and thrust of the fighting etc.
- **Exhibition** in roofed tower room – the siege and Glyn Dŵr's act of defiance including displaying the cannon balls and explaining their role.
- **Fly Glyndwr flag** on top of tower throughout the year as a means of identifying it as a Glyndwr site.
- **Fingerposts and brown signs** from town centre and train station
- **Research cannon balls** alongside those at Harlech castle.

### **9.7.4 Proposed interpretation themes**

1. Owain Glyndwr's background, military experience and loyalty from fellow Welsh people made him a defiant leader.

- Had served under the English crown
  - Used astute tactics to defeat his enemy.
  - His cause split families and communities and wrought destruction to the landscape and buildings of Wales.
  - He was defiant in the face of overwhelming odds.
2. Although Owain Glyndwr's dream failed, he was never betrayed, but instead he faded into the legend books to re-emerge centuries later a national hero.

## 9.8 Harlech Castle

### 9.8.1 Site significance

Harlech was taken by Owain Glyndwr's forces in 1404, and in August 1405 he held his second parliament there, a fit setting for one who had proclaimed himself prince of Wales. During his occupation he installed his court or *llys* and his family at Harlech and 'ruled' Wales from here. As at Aberystwyth, the besiegers under the leadership of Prince Hal used artillery, though to little effect. The castle finally fell to the besiegers at an uncertain date in the autumn of 1408 or early 1409 (Davies).

### 9.8.2 Interpretation and access audit

#### Strengths

The castle at Harlech is an established visitor destination due to the size and remarkable state of the ruins, its spectacular position on a rock overlooking the sea and its location in the centre of Harlech town. It forms the focus for the town and is regarded as was one of the greatest of Edward 1<sup>st</sup>'s castles. Harlech is located within a strongly Welsh part of Wales. It has excellent train and bus connections and is not too far north of the other Glyndwr destinations of Machynlleth, Pennal and Aberystwyth Castle. Visitors are greeted at the desk in the small reception building where they pay an entrance fee and can buy a smart and comprehensive guidebook. Harlech Castle was experienced by some 92,000 visitors last year who particularly enjoyed the views, the grandeur of the remains and the opportunity to let off steam, relax and interact with other members of their group in the open air, according to comments in the visitors book. The water gate and associated stairway between the castle and the sea when its level was higher than today, is an aspect of the castle which visitors find particularly interesting (pers comm M.Jones). The audio-guides, which were available until recently, were mostly used by 'serious' visitors from the retired couples and empty nesters target market. The re-enactments which occur within the castle walls during the summer months are popular, particularly with families. The interpretation panels which dot the castle walls convey some of the castle's history particularly its architecture and the function of various rooms and features. For those who come across the colourful and comprehensive panel exhibition they can read a thorough interpretation of aspects of the castle's history including Glyndwr's life, his rise and fall and events at the castle associated with his uprising. The Welsh is '*graenus*' and is easy to read and the colourful reconstruction paintings (artist R.Jones), images of artefacts and plentiful quotations help bring the story to life. The overall design of the exhibition is attractive and appropriate to the subject and setting. Furthermore, if the aspiration to build a visitor centre at Harlech Castle goes ahead there are substantial

opportunities to do justice to the Glyndwr episode in the life of the castle and for it to operate as a hub/departure point for other Glyndwr sites.

### Weaknesses

Despite its prominent position there are no obvious brown signs informing visitors of where to turn in the centre of the town to get to the car park – one has to guess relative to the position of the castle in the town. It appears that the reception building is not accessible for visitors in wheelchairs or those who are infirm on their feet. Little attempt is made to prepare people for their visit and to build up a sense of anticipation or excitement for what lies ahead. Since the audio-guides are no longer available then the interpretation is static, visual and only for visitors minded to make an effort to read. Only a proportion of visitors purchase the comprehensive guidebook which is not appropriate to be read during a visit and so visitors are left to wander and discover or miss-out by chance. The interpretation panels, placed at certain points on the walls do little to orientate or guide visitors around the ruins or to bring the castle to life in any way e.g by conveying what it was like to live in, serve in or defend the castle. Neither do they build up into a single story or message regarding the castle. The panel exhibition is not signed in any way and so visitors stumble across it - the same is true for the cannonballs believed to have been used to break the siege at the end of Glyndwr's occupation, which lie on the floor of one of the towers. The layout of the exhibition does not encourage a particular flow and so visitors do not know where to start or how to move around it. The panels are in a low position with key text and images at such a low level as to make them difficult to see or read. The content is not arranged in any sort of hierarchy and so it is difficult to pick up the main messages or gist without laboriously reading all the text, much of which is in a small typeface. The role of the castle, events there and key characters associated with its history are not evident – in short the exhibition does not convey a sense of place nor what is special about the castle but rather outlines a general history of the important periods in its life. Despite the vast numbers of people who visit Harlech Castle it is difficult to see how it can effectively operate as a hub/departure point for other Glyndwr sites without substantial investment in an enhanced visitor centre fit for the 'llys of Owain Glyndwr'!

### **9.8.3 Recommendations**

Target audience: **Young families, retired couples and empty nesters and school groups**

- **An AV show** outlining the momentous events at the castle during Glyndwr's occupation to whet the appetite and prepare people for their visit if a new visitor centre goes ahead.
- A **son et lumière show** against the castle wall ruins based on imagined discussions between members of Glyndwr's family before and during the siege and alluding to their fates.
- Explore the possibility of **sculptures of silhouetted figures** (temporary in the first place and as vandal resistant as possible) placed around the castle depicting various characters who were present with Owain Glyndwr during his occupation and his assembly.
- A specially commissioned **audio file** as a bluetooth and wifi enabled download for mobile phones conveying the siege, its ending and the disappearance of Glyndwr into the legend books - what it was like to live in, serve in or defend the castle.

- **A panel** at the exit point highlighting other Glyndwr sites for people to visit and the pan-Wales extent of the uprising.
- Install **barrier free access** to the visitor reception and ground floor of the castle.
- Provide a free **map based leaflet** for all visitors based on existing 'Discovering Harlech Castle' currently used by school groups.
- Fly **Glyndwr flag** on top of tower throughout the year as a means of identifying it as a Glyndwr site.
- **Fingerpost and brown sign** from town centre
- **Research canon balls** alongside those at Aberystwyth Castle.

#### 9.8.4 Proposed interpretation themes

1. Owain Glyndwr appealed to many corners of war-torn Wales and nearly brought it greater unity and representation.
  - His uprising touched on most parts of Wales which were ravaged as a result
  - Following centuries of feudal dynastic rule he assembled representatives of various communities as a 'parliament'.
  - He had a vision of him as head of state, the leader of a more modern nation.
2. Although Owain Glyndwr's dream failed, he was never betrayed, but instead he faded into the legend books to re-emerge centuries later a national hero.

## **APPENDIX 1: TEXT OF THE PENNAL LETTER**

This English translation is taken from Matthews 1910.

Most serene prince, you have deemed it worthy on the humble recommendation sent, to learn how my nation, for many years now elapsed, has been oppressed by the fury of the barbarous Saxons; whence because they had the government over us, and indeed, on account of the fact itself, it seemed reasonable with them to trample upon us. But now, most serene prince, you have in many ways, from your innate goodness, informed me and my subjects very clearly and graciously concerning the recognition of the true Vicar of Christ. I, in truth, rejoice with a full heart on account of that information of your excellency, and because, inasmuch from this information, I understood that the Lord Benedict, the supreme pontifex intends to work for the promotion of an union in the Church of God with all his possible strength. Confident indeed in his right, and intending to agree with you as indeed as far as it is possible for me, I recognize him as the true Vicar of Christ, on my own behalf, and on behalf of my subjects by these letters patent, foreseeing them by the bearer of their communications in your majesty's presence. And because, most excellent prince, the metropolitan church of St. David was, as it appears, violently compelled by the barbarous fury of those reigning in this country, to obey the church of Canterbury, ad de facto still remains in the subject of this subjection. Many other disabilities are known to have been suffered by the Church of Wales through these barbarians, which for the greater part are set forth full in the letter patent accompanying. I pray and sincerely beseech your majesty to have these letters sent to my lord, the supreme pontifex, that as you deemed worthy to raise us out of darkness into light, similarly you will wish to extirpate and remove violence and oppression from the church and from my subjects, as you are well able to. And may the Son of the Glorious Virgin long preserve your majesty in the promised prosperity.

Dated at Pennal the last day of March (1406)

Yours avowedly

Owen, Prince of Wales.

Endorsement: To the most serene and most illustrious prince, lord Charles, by the grace of God, King of France.

To the most illustrious prince, the lord Charles, by the grace of God, King of the French, Owen by the same grace, sends the reverence due to such a prince with honour. Be it known to your excellency that we have received from you the articles following, brought to us by Hugh Eddowyer, of the Order of Predicants, and Morris Kery, our friends and envoys, on the eighth day of March, A.D. 1406, the form and tenor of which follow:

In the first place they express the cordial greeting on the part of our lord the king, and of his present letter to our said lord the prince. In this manner, our lord the king greatly desires to know of his good state and the happy issue of their negotiations. He requests Owen, that he will write as often as an opportunity offers, as he will receive

great pleasure, and he will inform him, at length, concerning the good state of the said lord, the king, of the queen, their children, and of the other lords, the princes of the royal family, how my lord the king, and the other princes of the royal family have and intend to have sincere love, cordial friendship, zeal for his honour, the prosperity and well-being of the state of the said prince, and in this the said lord, the prince, can place the most secure faith.

They also explain to the same lord, the prince, how our lord, the king, who esteems him with sincerity and love, greatly desires that, as they are bound and united in temporal matters, so also will they be united in spiritual things, and they may be able to walk to the house of the Lord together. My lord, the king, also requests the same lord, the prince, that he wishes him to consider, with a favourable disposition, the rights of my lord, the pope, Benedict XII, the supreme pontiff of the universal church, that he may himself learn and cause all his subjects to be informed. Because my lord the king, holds that it shall be to be health of his soul and of the souls of his subjects, to the security and strength of his state, and that their covenants shall be laid in a stronger and more powerful foundation in the advantage of faith and in the love of Christ. Again, even as all faithful Christians are held to keep themselves well informed concerning the truth of schisms. Princes, however, are so held even more than others, because their opinion can keep many in error, especially their subjects, who must conform with the opinion of their superiors. It is, also, event o their advantage, on account of their duty, to keep themselves informed in all things, that such a schism may be entirely removed and that the Church may have unity in God. Because he, who is the true Vicar of Christ, should be known and acknowledged by all the faithful in Christ, while he, who is an intruder, and know to have by nefarious means usurped the holy apostolic see, shall be expelled and cast aside, by all the faithfully, as anti-Christ. To this purpose they should bind themselves to strive, to their utmost, according to the decrees of the holy fathers. To which purpose the said lord, the king, has striven, not without great burdens and expense, and will strive unweariedly.

Following the advice of our council, we have called together the nobles of our race, the prelates of our Principality and others called for this purpose, and, at length, after diligent examination and discussion of the foregoing articles and their contents being thoroughly made by the prelates and the clergy, it is agreed and determined that we, trusting in the rights of the lord Benedict, the holy Roman and supreme pontiff of the universal church, especially because he sought the peace and unity of the church, and as we understood daily seeks it, considering the hard service of the adversary of the same Benedict, tearing the seamless coat of Christ, and on account of the sincere love which we specially bear towards your excellency, we have determined that the said lord Benedict shall be recognized as the true Victor of Christ in our lands, by us and our subjects, and we recognize him by these letters.

Whereas, most illustrious prince, the underwritten articles especially concern our state and the reformation and usefulness of the Church of Wales, we humbly pray your royal majesty that you will graciously consider it worthy to advance their object, even in the court of the said lord Benedict:

First, that all ecclesiastic censures against us, our subjects, or our land, by the aforesaid lord Benedict or Clement his predecessor, at present existing, the same shall by the said Benedict be removed.

Again, that he shall confirm and ratify the orders, collations, titles of prelates, dispensations, notorial documents, and all things whatsoever, from the time of Gregory XI, from which, any danger to the souls, or prejudice to us, or our subjects may occur, or may be engendered.

Again, that the Church of St. David's shall be restored to its original dignity, which from the time of St. David, archbishop and confessor, was a metropolitan church, and after his death twenty-four archbishops succeeded him in the same place, as their names are continued in the chronicles and ancient books of the church of Menevia, and we cause these to be stated as the chief evidence, namely, Eliud, Ceneu, Morfael, Mynyw, Haerwnen, Elwaed, Gwrnwen, Llewddwyd, Gwrwyst, Gwgawn, Glydâwg, Aman, Elias, Maeslyswyd, Sadwrnwen, Cadell, Alaethwy, Novis, Sadwrnwen, Drochwel, Asser, Arthwael, David II, and Samson; and that as a metropolitan church it had an ought to have the undermentioned suffragan churches, namely, Exeter, Bath, Hereford, Worcester, Leicester, which see is now translated to the churches of Coventry and Lichfield, St. Asaph, Bangor and Llandaff. For being crushed by the fury of the barbarous Saxons, who usurped to themselves the land of Wales, they trampled upon the aforesaid church of St. David's, and made her a handmaid to the church of Canterbury.

Again, the same lord Benedict shall provide for the metropolitan church of St. David's and the other cathedral churches of our principality, prelates, dignitaries, and beneficed clergy and curates, who know our language.

Again, that the lord Benedict shall revoke and annul all incorporations, unions, annexions, appropriations of parochial churches of our principality made so far, by any authority whatsoever with English monasteries and colleges. That the true patrons of these churches shall have the power to present to the ordinaries of those places suitable persons to the same or appoint others.

Again, that the said lord Benedict shall concede to use and to our heirs, the princes of Wales, that our chapels, &c., shall be free, and shall rejoice in the privileges, exemptions, and immunities in which they rejoiced in the times of our forefathers the princes of Wales.

Again, that we shall have two universities or places of general study, namely, one in North Wales and the other in south Wales, in cities, towns, or places to be hereafter decided and determined by our ambassadors and nuncios for that purpose.

Again, that the lord Benedict shall brand as heretics and cause to be tortured in the usual manner, Henry of Lancaster, the intruder of the kingdom of England, and the usurper of the crown of the same kingdom, and his adherents, in that of their own free will they have burnt or have caused to be burnt so many cathedrals, convents, and parish churches; that they have savagely hung, beheaded, and quartered

archbishops, bishops, prelates, priests, religious men, as madmen or beggars, or caused the same to be done.

Again, that the same lord Benedict shall grant to us, our heirs, subjects, and adherents, of whatsoever nation they may be, who wage war against the aforesaid intruder and usurper, as long as they hold the orthodox faith, full remission of all our sins, and that the remission shall continue as long as the wars between us, our heirs, and our subjects, and the aforesaid Henry, his heirs, and subjects shall endure.

In testimony whereof we make these our letters patent. Given at Pennal on the thirty-first day of March, A.D. 1406, and in the sixth year of our rule.

Endorsement: The letter by which Owen, Prince of Wales, reduces himself, his lands, and his dominions to the obedience of our lord the Pope Benedict XIII.

## APPENDIX 2: IOLO GOCH'S POEM 'LLYS OWAIN GLYNDWR'

An oft-quoted source is a poem known as 'Llys Owain Glyndwr', one of three poems written by the bard Iolo Goch in praise of Owain, which names the *llys* as Sycharth.

The poem exists in 24 manuscripts, of which Dr Dafydd Johnston believes British Library 23 and British Library 24, both from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, to be the most reliable.

### Llys Owain Glyndwr

Translation:

Llys barwn, lle syberwyd,	Baron's palace, place of generosity,
Lle daw beirdd aml, lle da byd;	Where the bards come often, a good place
Gwawr Bowys fawr, beues Faig,	Lady of great Powys, land of Maig,
Gofuned gwiw ofynaig.	A place of great promise.
Llyna'r modd a'r llun y mae	Behold the way in which it appears
Mewn eurgylch dwfr mewn argae:	Within a ring of bright water within a moat:
(Pand da'r llys?) pont ar y llyn,	(Is it not a good llys?), a bridge on the lake,
Ac unporth lle'r ai ganpyn;	And one gate where the multitudes go;
Cyplau sydd, gwaith cwplws ŷnt,	The roof-beams joined,
Cwpledig pob cwpl ydynt;	Each one together;
Clochdy Padrig, Ffrengig ffrwyth,	Tower of St Patrick's (cathedral), excellent work,
Clostr Westmustr, clostir esmwyth;	Cloister of Westminster, a pleasant cloister;
Cynglynrhwym pob congl unrhyw,	The arches springing from every corner,
Cangell aur, cyngan oll yw;	A golden chancel, all complete.
Cynglynion yn fronfron fry,	Connected side by side,
Dordor megis deardy,	Side by side like houses of earth,
A phob un fal llun llyngwlm	And each one the same type of tight knot
Sydd yn ei gilydd yn gwlm;	All tightly together;
Tai nawplad fold deunawplas,	The nine chambers in one plas,
Tai pren glân mewn top bryn	Fine timber houses on a green hill;

glas;

Ar bedwar piler eres

Mae'i lys ef i nef yn nes;

Ar ben pob piler pren praff

Llofft ar dalgrofft adeilgraff,

A'r pedair llofft o hoffter,

Yn gydgwplws lle cwsgr clêr;

Aeth y pedair disgleirlofft,

Nyth lwyth teg iawn, yn wyth  
loft;

To teils ar bob tŷ talwg,

A simnai lle magai'r fwg.

Naw neuadd gyfladd gyflun,

A naw gwardrob ar bob un,

Siopau glân glwys cynnwys cain,

Siop lawndeg fal Siêp Lundain;

Croes eglwys gylchlwys galchliw,

Capelau â gwydrau gwiw;

Popty llawn popthu i'r llys,

Perllan, gwinllan ger gwenllys;

Melin deg ar ddifreg ddŵr,

A'i golomendy gloyw maendwr;

Pysgodlyn, cudduglyn cau,

A fo rhaid i fwrw rhwydau;

Amlaf lle, nid yr ymliw,

Penhwyaid a gwyniaid gwiw,

A'i dir bwrdd a'i adar byw,

With four wondrous timber posts

His llys is near the heavens;

On each stout timber post

A lofty bedchamber cunningly built,

And the four bedchambers pleasantly

Under the same beams, where the bards  
sleep;

The four high chambers form,

Quarters for a fine tribe, eight rooms;

A slated roof on every tall (frowning) tower,

And a chimney that draws the smoke.

Nine halls of the same shape and size,

And nine dressing-chambers for the use of  
each one.

Like splendid shops full of fine merchandise,

Full and fair, like London's Cheapside;

A church cross limewashed all over,

Chapels with windows of stained glass;

A full oven serves the llys,

An orchard, a vineyard near the white court;

A fair mill on a constant stream

And his shining dove-cot, a stone tower;

A fish-pond, well sheltered,

On which to throw the nets;

Well stocked, with no doubt,

With herrings and whiteheads as is seemly,

His bord-land and his living birds,

Peunod, crehyrod hoywryw;	Peacocks, cranes of the best breed;
Dolydd glân gwyran a gwair,	Fair green hay-meadows,
Ydau mewn caeau cywair,	Corn in orderly fields,
Parc cwning ein pôr cenedl,	The rabbit-warren of the lord of our nation,
Erydr a meirch hydr, mawr chwedl;	Tackle and horses of renown
Gerllaw'r llys, gorlliwio'r llall,	By the llys, complementing each other,
Y pawr ceirw mewn parc arall;	The deer-pasture in another enclosure;
Ei gaith a wna bob gwaith gwiw,	His servants carry out every fit task,
Cyfreidiau cyfar ydiw,	Ploughing together,
Dwyn blaendrwyth cwrw Amwythig,	Quaffing the best Oswestry ale,
Gwirodau bragodau brig,	The best drink and braggets,
Pob llyn, bara gwyn a gwin,	Every drink, white bread and wine,
A'i gig, a'i dân i'w gegin;	And his meat, and his fire for the kitchen.
Pebyll y beirdd, pawb lle bo,	Shelter for the bards, withersoever they come,
Pe beunydd, caiff pawb yno;	Every day, all may have there;
Tecaf llys bren, pen heb bai,	Fairest timber llys, blameless lord,
O'r deyrnas, nawdd Duw arnai;	Of the kingdom, God's blessing on it;
A gwraig orau o'r gwragedd,	And the best of wives,
Gwyn fy myd o'i gwin a'i medd!	Blessed am I in her wine and mead!
Merch eglur llin marchoglyw,	A fine lady of knightly line,
Urddol hael anional yw;	Most generous by nature;
A'i blant a ddeuant bob ddau,	Her children come in two by two,
Nythaid teg o benaethau.	A beautiful nest of chieftains.
Anfynych iawn fu yno	Very seldom was there
Weled na chlicied na chlo,	A clicket or lock to be seen,
Na phorthoriaeth ni wnaeth neb,	Nor surly porter,

Ni bydd eisiau, budd oseb,	Nor will there be need, thanks to him,
Na gwall na newyn, na gwarth,	No want or hunger or shame,
Na syched fyth yn Sycharth.	Or thirst will ever be in Sycharth.
Gorau Cymro, tro trylew	The best of Welshmen, most strong
Piau'r wlad, lin Pywer Lew,	Holds this land, of the line of Pywer Lew,
Gŵr meingryf, gorau mangre,	A man of strong countenance, the best place,
A phiau'r llys; hoff yw'r lle.	Holds the llys; a fair place it is.

The name Sycharth for the Llansilin site is evidenced unambiguously in 1382 as 'Sycharth Ughglan' in Cynllaith Owain (Anon 1849). As 'Saghern', Glyndŵr's 'principal mansion', it is referred to by Prince Henry (Hal) in a letter to the Keepers of the Marches of Wales:

... per quoy nous prismes nos gens et alames a une place du dit Oweyn, bien edifie, que feu son principale mansion appelle Saghern ...

Finding no-one there, they burnt the whole place, together with some of Glyndŵr's tenants' houses nearby, before marching to 'Glyndourdy' (Ellis 1827, 11).

Iolo Goch mentions both Sycharth and Glyndyfrdwy by name in other poems and was clearly familiar with both. The poems are 'Achau Owain Glyndŵr' l. 8 l. 92, 'Moliant Owain Glyndwr l. 16 and 'Ymddiddan yr Enaid â'r Corff' l. 104 (Johnston 1988).

As noted, Pennant in 1784 considered that it referred to Glyndyfrdwy. It is not clear where Pennant read the poem. The earliest identification of the poem with the site appears to be a letter from the cartographer John Evans of Llwyn y Groes to his patron Sir Watkin Williams Wynn of Wynnstay (1749-1789), the owner of the site, in 1786, preserved among the Gwallter Mechain and Crosswood mss in NLW.

We rode on to Sychart ... We then visited the house, which stands pleasantly upon a round green knoll, and corresponds exactly with the site of Owen Glyndŵr's Habitation, as described in a poem by a British Bard of the time called Iolo Goch, previous to his high advancement in life and residence at Glyndwrdy. The name of this place was called Sychart, and had a park on high ground adjoining; this is exactly the case, and what still confirms the opinion is a high castellet just above the house, surrounded by a deep ditch, and a high mound similar to that at subsequent place of residence. The court fro the manor of Cynlleth Owen ... was kept in the parlour of this house till within these few year. The roof is now in ruins, and the spars and timbers exposed by the weather (Anon, 1923, 398).

Sir Watkin may have had every reason to identify the historic Sycharth as his property; as a Tory, at odds with the Whigs, not least as represented by the

Myddeltons of Chirk Castle, he was anxious to promote Welsh subject matter as symbol of resistance to the oligarchy (Lord 122-3). In 1772 Sir Watkin began his patronage of the bibulous Evan Evans (Ieuan Fardd), who made this theme explicit in his poem, 'The Love of Our Country', published in 1772, which traces the spirit of Welsh independence from pre-Roman times to the accession of the Tudors:

The great Glyndwr no longer could contain,  
But, like a furious lion, burst the chain,  
None could resist his force: like timorous deer  
The coward English fled, aghast with fear

But vain their efforts, Owain still pursu'd  
And vengeance cry'd aloud to Heaven for blood;  
Such be the fate of violence and wrong,  
God is too just to suffer tyrants long.

(Evans 1772, 24-5)

It is not clear whether Evans was aware of the Iolo Goch poem identified as 'Llys Owain Glyndwr' or of his other poems in praise of Glyndŵr. He did not include any of them in a volume he published some years earlier, *Some Specimens of the Poetry of the Antient Welsh Bards*, dedicated to Sir Roger Mostyn, but did refer to Iolo Goch's praise of Owain and to Owain's own generosity to the bards.

Regum Angliae iusticiarii post Eduardum in Cambria ejus exemplum fecuti, Bardos legibus iniquis obnoxios ubique sustulerunt; unde fit ut admodum fint rari ab eo tempore uique ad annum 1400, quo, Anglorum excusso servitutis jugo, sub OWENI GLYNDWR auspiciis, se in libertatem priscam vindicarunt Cambri. Hoc ævo multi claruere Bardi, inter quos Jolo Goch Oweni magnificentiam et victorias ad sydera tulit. Fuit enim Owenus Bardorum fautor et Mæcenas, et eos undiquaque ad aulam liberalitate provocabat (Evans 1764, 89-90).

Sir Watkin's death in 1789 might have discouraged further speculation. The poem does not appear to have been published until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The identification of the site with the poem is made by George Borrow in *Wild Wales* (Borrow 1862, 125, 328-335).

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