

A REVISIONIST'S LOOK AT THE SKYDMORE-GLYN DWR ALLIANCE.

By Warren Skidmore

On 15 June 1969 (two weeks before the investiture by the Queen of the present Prince of Wales) the *Sunday Observer* ran an article on Owain Glyn Dwr, the last of the true Welsh princes. It included a fine photograph of the Lucas-Scudamore family taken in their sitting room at Kentchurch Court. The caption to the illustration read "Above: John Lucas Scudamore is one of the few remaining descendants of Glendower...at home at Kentchurch Court, near the Welsh border in Herefordshire, where Glendower once sought sanctuary in Flight from the English." Alas, this tale is still believed today but it is based on several misapprehensions.

I first met Lieutenant Commander John Lucas-Scudamore in London on the 8th of November 1970, several months after an interesting trans-Atlantic correspondence. We had dinner at his club¹ and he picked me up at my hotel the following morning for the drive down to Kentchurch. Lady Patricia came in soon after with the news that Charles de Gaulle had just died in France. Jack and I talked about several things over a long weekend, among them the marriage of Sir John Skydmore of Kentchurch to Alice, a daughter of Glyn Dwr. It was my belief that while there is an abundance of documentary evidence to prove that this *second* marriage took place, it is generally overlooked that Alice Glyn Dwr was not the mother of Sir John's heir (and almost certainly not the mother of any of his younger children as well).

Jack Lucas-Scudamore accepted what tradition had said about his ancestry, but he told me he was a bit put out when a Welsh choir came and stood singing outside Kentchurch for an informal *eistoddfod*. It did not upset him to learn that the record showed that on two separate counts he could not be a descendant of the Sir John Skydmore of Glyn Dwr's day.

I do not propose in these notes to rewrite the political or military history of Owain Glyn Dwr's rebellion in Wales, subjects on which I have no expertise whatsoever. Instead I will look at three topics that have not been previously examined critically: *Glyn Dwr's posterity, his relationship with several members of the Skydmore family, and his death.*² I do pretend to know something about the vicissitudes of medieval families, and probably will tell Welsh readers here far more than they really want to know about the early Skydmores in Herefordshire.

OWAIN GLYN DWR'S POSTERITY

One of the best account of Glyn Dwr's children, generally overlooked, is the *Llyfr Baglan* which was based (for better or worse) on oral traditions set down shortly after 1600.³

¹ Brook's, on St. James Street. It was the leading club for Whigs sympathetic to the American cause in the 18th century, and of considerable interest to me, a descendant of an early Scudamore-Skydmore family (not related to Kentchurch) who was in Massachusetts by 1636.

² There is a new account of Glyn Dwr by Dr. Llinos Smith in the recent (2005) revision of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. There are several other useful biographies of Glyn Dwr. I have used the one by J. E. Lloyd, and am also most partial to the very readable one by my friend Ian Skidmore (lately of BBC Wales).

³ *Llyfr Baglan 1600-1607*, compiled by John Williams from ancient pedigrees and edited by Joseph Alfred Bradney (London, 1910), 189-90.

owen ap gru. vaghan lived in the tyme of king henrye the 4th , ma. morydd, da. to Sr d'd hanmer, knight, heigh Constable if England. She beareth a[rms], 2 lions passant gules. The said owen glindor had 6 sones, (viz.) gru., madock, meredith, Tho., John, and dauid, and diu'es daughters, (videlicet), Elizabeth, da. to the said Owen glindor, ma. Sr John Scudamor, esq., Joan, da. to Owen glindor, ma. the lord Graye of Rythyn; Ane, da. to the said Owen, ma. Sr. Richard Monyngton, knight. Jonett, da. to the said Owen, also ma. Sr. Jon.Croft, lo. of Crofte, knight, sone of hugh Crofte, knight, son of Sr. hugh Croft, knight, son of John Crofte, son of hugh, lord of Crofte.

To this account we can add a few details about Glyn Dwr's "little nest of princes" and something more on his daughters from historical fact. He had by a marriage about 1383 to Margaret, a daughter of Sir David Hanmer, six sons and three (or four) daughters as known.

1. Gruffydd, said to have been the eldest. He led a Welsh army against the castle near Usk in 1405 where he was captured and taken off to the Tower in London. He was confined in several prisons for six years and is said to have finally died there of the plague.⁴
2. Madog.
3. Maredudd, the only son known to have survived his father's insurrection. He was offered a generous pardon on 30 April 1417 but there is no evidence that it was accepted. He may have served later with Henry V in France thereafter, for he had a full pardon in April 1421 for all his offences "as on the testimony of the Holy Writ, the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father."⁵ He was clearly dead by 1430 when his sister Alice Skydmore and her husband made an effort to claim Glyn Dwr's estate.
4. David.
5. Thomas.
6. Sion.
1. Isabel, called the "ddw" (the black) because of her complexion. She is said to have married Adam ap Iorwerth.⁶
2. Joan. One mistake in the *Llyfr Baglan* (sometimes repeated) is that she married Reginald (1362?-1440), the third baron Grey of Ruthin in Denbighshire. This error resulted from the confusion of Lord Grey with Edmund Mortimer. Both men were captured by Glyn Dwr and both were held by him for exorbitant ransoms.⁷ Joan did, in fact, marry by 1397 Sir John Croft, lord of Croft Castle in Herefordshire.⁸ Croft is sometimes said to have been the captain of Mark Castle in Picardy for the king.⁹ The Herefordshire man did not generate very many records, but he was one of those

⁴ This according to a Welsh chronicle called "The History of Ywein Glyndwr," presumably by Robert Vaughan. It is printed (both the text and translation) by J. E. Lloyd in his *Owen Glendower* (Oxford, 1931) 149-54. See also the *Calendar of Close Rolls* (12 Henry IV) 12 March 1411.

⁵ *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (1416-22), 335.

⁶ *Heraldic Visitations of Wales and Part of the Marches*, by Lewys Dwywnn. Compiled from materials collected between 1586 and 1613, and transcribed and edited by Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick, Kt. (Llandoverly, 1864), 334.

⁷ Grey was captured in April 1402 and his ransom of 10,000 marks was eventually paid. It left Grey destitute for the rest of his life, but Glyn Dwr and his insurgents now had this unaccustomed wealth to promote the rebellion.

⁸ Her marriage to Sir John Croft, of Croft in Herefordshire, was accepted in the 15th century according to a note by Bradney in his edition of the *Llyfr Baglan*, possibly based on the *Harl. MSS.* 1969. See also *The House of Croft of Croft Castle* (Hereford, 1949) by Owen George Scudamore Croft (1880-1956).

⁹ *Patent Rolls* (1408-13), 479. The Sir John Croft, lately of Mark Castle in 1409, is called of Dalton, Lancashire.

sympathetic members of the local gentry known to have sheltered heretical Lollard priests.¹⁰

3. Alice (*not* Elizabeth). She married at some unknown date (but perhaps after 1423) Sir John Skydmore of Kentchurch in Herefordshire, of whom further.¹¹
4. Anne. She married Sir Richard Monnington, undoubtedly the man of this name (and rank) who had a mansion house at Alltyrynys in the extreme southern corner of Walterstone in Herefordshire on the boundary with Monmouthshire. They had a daughter who married John Sitsilt (Cecil) by whom she had two sons, John Sitsilt (who died before his father), and Thomas Sitsilt who succeeded to the house at *Allt-yr-ynys*. Thomas Sitsilt married Margaret, daughter and heir of Gilbert de Winston, and they were ancestors of William Cecil (1520-1598), Lord Burghley, the chief minister of Elizabeth I.¹²
4. Catherine. Curiously overlooked in the *Book of Baglan*, she married Edmund Mortimer (1376-1408), a younger brother of Roger Mortimer, the fourth earl of March. Edmund was captured on 22 June 1402 after the slaughter of English troops at Bryn Glas near the village of Pilleth in Radnorshire. He was treated generously by Glyn Dwr who hoped to make use of his brother's influence. Edmund despaired of ever being ransomed by his family or the king, went over to Glyn Dwr, and married his daughter Catherine during his captivity.
5. Margaret (Gwenllian), who may have been illegitimate. She married Philip ap Rhys of Cenarth in Gwrtheyrnion, Denbighshire.¹³

In 1408 Harlech Castle fell after a long siege by Gilbert Talbot, fifth baron Talbot of Goodrich Castle in Herefordshire, and his younger brother John Talbot (now Lord Furnival in the right of his wife). Glyn Dwr escaped, but his wife Margaret, his daughter Catherine (now the widow of Edmund Mortimer who had been killed in the siege of Harlech) and Catherine's two daughters, were captured and taken up to London. They were still there in the spring of 1415 when £30 was allowed for their expenses, but Catherine and her daughters died later in autumn and were buried inside St. Swithin's Church.¹⁴

On 8 November 1400 a carefully written grant was made to John Beaufort, first earl of Somerset (1371-1410), of all of the lands of "Owinus de Glendordy in North and South Wales, with all royalties, knights' fees, advowsons, franchises, liberties, customs, wards, marriages, reliefs, escheats, forfeitures, chaces, parks, warrens, wreck at sea"--and thus, in effect, all of Owain's known (or

¹⁰ Maureen Jurkowski, *The arrest of William Thorpe in Shrewsbury and the anti-Lollard statute of 1406*. *English Historical Review*, 75 (2002), 291. Other sympathizers noticed there included the two Sir Robert Whitneys, Sir John Oldcastle, Sir John Clanvowe, Thomas Clanvowe (and his wife Perine, a daughter of Sir Robert Whitney).

¹¹ That Sir John Skydmore is called *Scudamor* here points to a text corrected in the time of the Tudors when the Skydmores, the Bullens (transformed into Boleyns), and several other families had "frenchified" their surnames when it became fashionable to have Norman ancestors.

¹² These traditional pedigrees are recited in J. Duncumb's *Herefordshire* (8 vols., 1804-1915), II, 306-7, and also the *Llyfr Baglan*, 274, 276. There are at least four places named Monnington in Herefordshire. This Sir Richard Monnington had nothing to do with Monnington Straddle which is sometimes claimed to be the burial place of Glyn Dwr.

¹³ *Vincent's Wales*, 338. From a note found there at the College of Arms, according to Rush Meyrick's additions to Dwyenn.

¹⁴ A further £1 was appropriated for their burial. The Mortimers also had a son named Lionel (who disappears from view), no doubt named for his great-grandfather Lionel, duke of Clarence.

potential) possessions. This grant was fully implemented, and the earl handed on to his sons this right to Glyn Dwr's lands in Cynllaith, Glyn Ddyfrdwy, Iscoes and Gwynionydd.¹⁵

Parliament, when it assembled on 30 September 1402, enacted a series of statutes prohibiting public assemblies, the bearing of arms by the Welsh, the importation of victuals or armour, and the keeping of castles or the holding of office by Welshmen. Especial mention was made of those "of the amity or alliance of Owen ap Glendourdy, traitor to our sovereign lord and king" together with any Englishmen married to Welshwomen, were likewise denied office in Wales. The provisions of this act were to later ruin Sir John Skydmore's attempt to claim to Glyn Dwr's estate.

THE SKYDMORE CONNECTION

JOHN [JENKIN] SKYDMORE *alias* EWYAS (1342-1407?), of "The Fern" in Bodenham and Kentchurch and was a younger son of John Skydmore *alias* Ewyas of Abergavenny and Rowlstone by his wife Alice, a daughter and heiress of Sir Walter Bredwardine. Jenkin Skydmore, as a younger son, had (as usual) no great prospects, but a marriage to an heiress was always a good way for an ambitious young man to promote upward mobility.¹⁶ He married Alice (presumably a cousin in some degree), who is spoken of as the elder daughter and co-heiress of Sir Robert Ewyas who is called "hynaif Arglwdd Treser" [lord of Treser].¹⁷

He also found a patron soon after in Edmund Mortimer (1352-1381), the third earl of March. His service to Mortimer started in a small way. In 1370 he was sent with Robert Monk to Hamble (near the port at Southampton) to deliver £200, probably Mortimer money, to Sir Robert Aston. The money was for Aston's own wages and the wages of his retinue of men-at-arms and archers who were waiting there to cross the channel for the war in Normandy. For this trip Skydmore and Monk were to have £2 for their expenses.¹⁸

It may be taken as next to certain that John Skydmore was one of the retinue of 19 knights, 60 esquires, and 120 archers that Mortimer contracted for in March of 1372 to take part in a failed expedition to France. This was followed by still another humiliating defeat in 1374 in Brittany (where the earl was joined by Aston and his men), another venture which came to nothing. All of these misadventures left Mortimer very short of money.

Skydmore was rewarded by 1382 with the office as bailiff of the Mortimer fee at Radnor borough, and with the keeping of Comberwyne, Eardisley, and the immense Radnor Forest.¹⁹ The earl died at Cork in Ireland on 27 December 1381, and John Skydmore served on the jury which took the inquest

¹⁵ Alas, ten years later a jury sitting at Shrewsbury on 16 March 1410 stated in the inquest taken on the death of the earl of Somerset, that most of Glyn Dwr's lands had by then no annual value by reason of the rebellion and their devastation. (*Inquest post mortem*, Henry IV, folio 80). Glyn Dwr's residence at Sycharth in Cynllaith was described in admiring (if extravagant) detail by Iolo Goch as a half-timbered, tiled and "chimneyed" house, set on a motte, and with a chapel, bake-house and mill adjacent, as befitted a gentleman of his standing. It was destroyed by the English in May 1403.

¹⁶ His elder brother Richard Skydmore (dead 1409) inherited Rowlestone and Llancillo, but may have lived largely at Hereford where he served several terms as mayor.

¹⁷ Dwywn's *Heraldic Visitations*, 334. Alice and her younger sister Maud Ewyas, the wife of Walter Cecil, are said to have divided their father's estate at *Treser*. I have not been able to identify this place among the lands of the Kentchurch family, may be there with an English name.

¹⁸ *Issue of Thomas de Brantingham, bishop of Exeter* (1835), 492. Using the *retail price index* this would convert in 2005 to about £360.

¹⁹ This was in 6-7 Richard II (1382-4) but he probably served outside this period as well.

post mortem on his lands in Herefordshire early in the next year. On 5 March 1383 he was commissioned to keep the fishery on the river Usk and the mills thereon, and to hold them until Roger Mortimer (1375-1398), the heir of Edmund Mortimer, the "late earl of March, might take over."²⁰

John Skydmore was living by 28 November 1383 at *The Fern*, presumably the surviving place of the name in Bodenham, when he, Philip Ewyas (*alias* Skydmore, his cousin at Holme Lacy), Thomas Dansey of Webton, and others were commissioners in to collect the unpopular subsidy of half a fifteenth, and a tenth that had been granted to Richard II by parliament.

According to the *Llyfr Baglan* John [Jenkin] Skydmore is said to have acquired Kentchurch and Thruyton in Herefordshire from the Wroth family.²¹ He presumably had an accommodation there, for he was known as "of Kencherge" three years later on 8 August 1386. The older parts of his house, which happily still survives, date from this period. On 8 August 1387 Richard Skydmore, the mayor of Hereford, John Skydmore of Kentchurch and William Jouet had an order to arrest several men who had been paid to accompany Robert de Vere, marquess of Dublin, to Ireland but were not preparing to go.²²

In June of 1404, a large number of Welsh rebels attacked Archenfeld Hundred, and Kentchurch (which may already have been laid waste and deserted) can hardly have been spared because the Welsh certainly would have known its association with William Beauchamp (1343?-1411), Lord Bergavenny. This was the second time that Bergavenny's castles at both at Abergavenny and at Ewyas Harold (and the lands attached to them) had been besieged.²³ On 10 June 1404, Richard Kingeston, the Archdeacon of Hereford, wrote to the young prince Henry, who but a boy, still had been appointed Lieutenant of the Marches:

The Welsh rebels in great numbers have entered Archenfeld and there they have burned houses, killed the inhabitants, taken prisoners and ravaged the countryside to the great dishonour of our king and the unsupportable damage of the country. We have often advertised to the king that such mischief would befall us, we also

²⁰ *Fine Rolls* (1377-83), 356. John Skydmore (now called "of *Ferne*" served once again as a juror at the inquisition *post mortem* when Roger, earl of March, died as a young man in 1398. (Edmund Mortimer, a younger brother of this Roger, has already been noticed as the husband of Glyn Dwr's daughter.)

²¹ *Llyfr Baglan*, 140. The title deeds accumulated by Jenkin Skydmore and his descendants (who died out at Kentchurch in 1742 at the death of William Scudamore) were kept there in a chest or coffer. The house was later vacant for a long time, then let out to tenants, and eventually all the furnishings were sold by bailiffs to satisfy gambling debts. The chest was taken at that time to Castle Shane in Ireland where the deeds were used by the Irish maids as twists to start the fires in the morning. Castle Shane (in County Monaghan) was destroyed by fire in 1920, and was sold soon after by the family who returned earlier to Kentchurch after some time in France. A still larger collection of title deeds, much older in date, had been moved to Kentchurch by Colonel John Scudamore (1727-1796) from Rowlestone. Colonel Scudamore, was a direct descendant of Richard Skydmore (dead 1409), the heir of the senior family at Rowlestone, and the elder brother of Jenkin Skidmore (living 1407) of Kentchurch. He had Kentchurch by the terms of a settlement to restore a male at Kentchurch made by William Scudamore (1680-1742), who died insane and without issue. The ancient Rowlestone deeds were stored in a cupboard behind the fireplace in the tower. After the flood at Kentchurch on 9 May 1959 they were dried out and calendared by the National Library of Wales and have since been transferred to the Hereford Record Office. The typed calendar has been scanned by the kindness of Harry Manley, a grandson of John Lucas-Scudamore, and is included on the *Scudamore/Skidmore Family History* CD issued in 2006. See also *The Flood Disaster of Kentchurch Court*, by Hilary Alcock (1979), 1-9.

²² *Patent Rolls* (1385-9), 257. He may have used stone in part appropriated from the chapel at Corras which was deliberately taken down at about this time.

²³ A. J. Bannister, *The History of Ewias Harold* (Hereford, 1902), 79-81.

have certain information that within the next eight days the rebels are resolved to make an attack on the March of Wales, to its utter ruin, if speedy succour be not sent.

True it is indeed that we have no power to shelter us except that of Richard of York and his men, which is far too little to defend us; we implore you to consider this very perilous and pitiable case and to pray to our sovereign lord that he will come in his royal person or send some person with sufficient power to rescue us from the invasion of the said rebels. Otherwise we shall be utterly destroyed, which God forbid. Whoever comes will, as we are led to believe, have to engage in battle or will have a very severe struggle with the rebels. And for God's sake remember that honourable and valiant man the Lord of Abergavenny who is on the very point of destruction if he be not rescued. Written in haste at Hereford, June 10th.²⁴

The danger at Archenfeld worried the future hero of Agincourt, but he was helpless to defend it. In a letter to his father two weeks later he complained about the shortage of money. He had pawned his gold plate and his jewels to pay his troops, but he could not keep his men together without further pay or provisions. By midsummer the rebels were plundering and killing along the border, and the English defense crumbled as the unpaid soldiery drifted away.

However the routine business of the crown went on, particularly that of taxation. John Skidmore had abandoned the danger of living at Kentchurch earlier and had taken his household to The Fern. He was there by 19 November 1404 when he was named with Philip Ewyas (his brother) to collect the subsidy granted to the king by a reluctant parliament.²⁵

Early in 1405 Glyn Dwr sent his most formidable captain, Rhys Gethin ("The Fierce"), with 8000 men by way of Abergavenny to savage Archenfeld once more. But at Grosmont Castle (a mile or two south of Kentchurch and just across the valley of the Monnow River) the young prince was now waiting to win his first victory over the Welsh. After the battle he rode to Hereford and the same night despatched a letter to the king with the news of his success:

On Wednesday, the 11th of the present month of March [1405], your rebels of Overwent to the number of 8000 burnt your town of Grosmont. Presently went out from the Castle my well-beloved cousin the Lord Talbot, and the small body of my household, ...but in the power of God and by aid of the blessed Trinity vanquished all the said rebels, and slew of them some say 800, others 1000. Of prisoners none were taken except one, a great chief among them, whom I would have sent to you, but he cannot yet ride at ease. Written at Hereford the said Wednesday at night.

He was still at The Fern a year later when a charter signed at Wellington manor (which adjoins The Fern in Bodenham) called him John Skydemore, *the elder*.²⁶

On Monday, the Feast of St. Lucie, Virgin, 7 Henry IV (14 December 1405). Sir John Chaundos, Kt., was obligated to Thomas de la Hay, for one *destraint marchaunt* in £500 to be paid as the recognizance more clearly shows. It requires that the said

²⁴ Ian Skidmore, *Owain Glyndwr, Prince of Wales* (1978), 134.

²⁵ *Fine Rolls* (1399-1405), 398. Philip was renamed in 1406 and 1407, but John Skydemore "of The Verne" disappears. From other sources we know that Philip *Ewyas* was the *alias* here for Philip Skydemore, his cousin, of Holme Lacy. This Philip, and his sons, tended to use the Ewyas alias a bit longer than their kinsmen at Kentchurch.

²⁶ His eldest grandson had possessed The Fern before he was killed at Agincourt in 1415.

Thomas grant to the said John Chaundos the recognizance (and to the male descendants of the said John) for the term of ten years following the date of this indenture, provided that the said Thomas de la Hay, *John Skydemore son of John Skydemore*, with Richard de la Mare, Thomas Burghope, William Brut vicar of Peterchurch, and Thomas Walshe of Eton, chaplain, their heirs and assigns, release to the said John Chaundos all their right and claim to the manor of Wellington, and the lands and tenements called *Addesore* in Wellington, etc.²⁷

John Leland, quoting “Skidmore of the Court,”²⁸ writes of him in his *Itinerary* that “Jenkin was a stout fellow and had all the rule of the country thereabouts” a claim certainly confirmed by this account and the immense number of times he is mentioned in the chancery rolls.²⁹ When he died is unknown, but he is last noticed on 6 July 1407 as John *Ewyas*, senior, when he granted certain lands at Kilforge, Herefordshire, which he had from his brother Richard Skydmore of Hereford city.³⁰ There was a serious attack of the plague in 1407 in the provinces (that inexplicably spared London) and it might have been this pestilence that carried John Skydmore away.³¹

John (Jenkin) Skydmore, the elder, left a large posterity. The main line at Kentchurch failed in 1742 but descendants out of earlier younger sons are found in Canada, Australia, and were in Illinois early in the 19th century.

1. John (Sir), his heir, of whom further.
2. Philip Skydmore *alias* Ewyas, of Mitchell Troy, Monmouthshire, which he held from the Mortimer family. He was Master Sergeant of Monmouth in 1393, and had custody of Carreg Cennen Castle in September 1401. He was joined there on 20 October 1401 by his brother John, who then replaced him on 9 November 1401 when Philip went over to Owen Glyn Dwr. Philip became one of his principal captains and was captured by the English who then saw him drawn, quartered and beheaded at Shrewsbury, in 1410.³² Adam of Usk in his chronicle notes that Philip

²⁷ Hereford Record Office (French), W 85/3 No. 3. *Addesore* is now Adzor Bank (480 476) in Wellington. Burghope is also a hamlet that gave its name to the principal family there in the 13th century. See also the *Patent Rolls* (1405-8), 246 for a charter dated 20 October 1406 dealing with the same matter, but which differs in certain important details. William Brut is said to have been the vicar of *Hopewolnyth* (Hope in Ullingwick) while Richard Carpenter was the vicar at Peterchurch. Ullingwick adjoins Bodenham which supports the identification of The Fern with the Kentchurch men.

²⁸ This was John Skydmore (1486-1571) of Holme Lacy.

²⁹ Leland (1506-1552) was the first library keeper to Henry VIII, and later styled “the king’s antiquary” in 1553. His *Itinerary* of England and Wales was edited for publication in 1906-7 by Lucy Toulmin Smith.

³⁰ Richard Skydmore, his elder brother and the frequent mayor of Hereford, was dead before 30 September 1409.

³¹ There were in 1399 at least six adult John Skydmore (and several infants of the name) in Herefordshire (most of them known sometimes as *alias* Ewyas). This John Skydmore, of Kentchurch, must be carefully distinguished from his nephew John Skydmore (died 1399), an active younger son of Richard Skidmore *alias* Ewyas of Rowlestone, the mayor of Hereford. That John found a patron in William Beauchamp (1343-1411), first baron Bergavenny, and was his steward at Abergavenny as early as 1393 where he had a house on Monk street, adjoining his brother Robert Skydmore. It was probably Lord Bergavenny who saw Skydmore introduced to service for Richard II. He had the farm of the alien priory of Bergavenny before 27 July 1384 when a commission was given to William Pettawe (then, or later, the prior), John Sargeant, and Lewis ap David to take the goods of the priory into the king’s hands since John *Ewyas*, the farmer there, “is bound to the king for 48 marks owed as arrears for his farm.” This debt was clearly paid, for John *Skydmore* had keeping of the priory renewed to him as late as 3 July 1398. He was named escheator of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire on 15 November 1389 and served to 20 October 1390. He was appointed again on 16 January 1399, but died unmarried in office on June 2nd leaving his eldest brother Thomas Skidmore of Rowlestone as his heir.

³² *The Chronicle of Adam Usk, 1377-1421* (Oxford, 1997). See also the Welsh chronicle (printed by J. E. Lloyd)

Skydmore's "head is still there set up beyond the bridge" in Shrewbury. He married (according to *Llyfr Baglan*) Anne Baskerville, and left a son Sir John Skydmore called "Sir John of the North" to distinguish him from his cousin at Kentchurch. This John Skydmore held a moiety of Troy in 1425 from Edmund (1391-1425), the fourth earl of March.³³ While some proof is yet to be found he is probably the John Skydmore who went with Sir John Cornwall of Fownhope, Herefordshire (created baron Fownhope in 1432), to Ampthill in Bedfordshire, where he had a general pardon (styled a *gentleman*) in 1439 with Cornwall and 44 others for insulting the justices at Bedford. Lord Fownhope's will is dated 10 December 1443. It left a legacy of £10 to John Skydmore who was a witness at its signing, and to which he testified on 5 January 1443/4.

3. Maurice Skydmore (Sir) of Howton, Herefordshire. William of Worcester says of him (and his brothers Sir John and Sir William) in his *Itineraries* that they were knights-in-arms in France.³⁴ On 19 April 1419 he granted his lands at Howton to his elder brother Sir John Skydmore. Howton was joined to Kentchurch and has descended in the same way until the present time. Maurice Skydmore was living at Wormbridge in Herefordshire as late as the start of Trinity term in 1425.
4. William Skydmore *alias* Ewyas of Thrupton, Herefordshire. He was the William Ewyas indicted for forcible entry at Thrupton in 1392, but was pardoned on 25 September 1397 when he did not appear to answer "touching trespasses whereof he was indicted." He served in France and was living as late as 24 July 1426. William of Worcester notes in his *Itineraries* that Sir William Skydmore "died in bed."
5. Jenkin Skydmore *alias* Vaughan, ancestor of the Vaughan family of Pontrilas, Herefordshire. This Jenkin, called Vaughan (*Siencyn Fychan* in Welsh), was called *Fychan* ("the little") to distinguish him from his father.³⁵ His representative (in the male line) in 1607 was William Vaughan, of London, according to *Llyfr Baglan*.
1. Janet. She married Llewellyn ap Gryffydd Fychan (Vaughan), a rebel of Cilycyn, Carmarthenshire. Adam of Usk says that Llewellyn was "a man of gentle birth and bountiful who yearly used 16 tuns of wine in his household." He was appointed beadle of Caeo at Michaelmas 1381. He joined the revolt of Owain Glyn Dwr and was repaid by his execution in the presence of Henry IV at Llandovery, Carmarthenshire, on 9 October 1401.
2. Sives (Joan). She is said to have married Roger Mortimer, "esquire."³⁶

SIR JOHN SKYDMORE, KT. (ca.1365-1435?) of Kentchurch, was the son and heir of Jenkin Skydmore. His father had clearly arranged his son's marriage to Margaret, a daughter and eventual heiress of Sir Thomas Bryt who held, with considerable other lands, the castle at Grove in New Radnor, Radnorshire.³⁷ This marriage was probably no doubt as early as 2 September 1394 when John Skidemore of Kentchurch was nominated as attorney to Sir Thomas Brut, Kt., who had gone to Ireland. He married secondly Alice, a daughter of Owain Glyn Dwr, traditionally (it has been said) in

where in 1409 it is recorded, "*MCCCCix I gwaethgwyr owain gyrch i yftlys fwddy mwythic ac yno i dalodd y faeffon Rf du a ffylpott yfgidmor ae yddaeth yr vn i lundain ar llall i amwythic i llusgaw ac iw chwartoriaw ac o hynny allan ni wnaeth owain gyrch mawr oni aeth mewn difant.*" Rhys the Black, noticed here, was Rhys ap Gruffydd of Cardigan. He was sent up to London for trial and execution, and his head was added to the trophies on London Bridge.

³³ *Calendarium Inquisitionum post mortem* (Record Commission, 1806) iv, 96. He also held it in 1433 from Anne Mortimer, the sister and heiress of the earl.

³⁴ *Itineraries [of] William Worcester*, ed. J. H. Harvey (Oxford, 1969).

³⁵ I am indebted to Dewi Bowen Williams of Caernarfon, Gwynedd for this information.

³⁶ Dwyenn, 334. This Roger Mortimer cannot be identified.

³⁷ His seat was at *Bryt's Court* in Herefordshire, which was held by the Skydmores held in 1490 and 1511. The name has now been corrupted to *Bridge Court* in Kingstone.

1415.³⁸ Marriage among the landed classes always involved the relative merits of money, land, influence, status, and only occasionally of sentiment. Clearly his first marriage must have been regarded as a great success, for the income from the Bryt lands maintained the family at Kentchurch in a satisfactory fashion for several generations. Alas, his second alliance with Glyn Dwr's daughter proved to be a serious miscalculation which Sir John should have anticipated, but clearly did not. The most important of his early patrons were the Talbots of Goodrich Castle. When Richard, fourth baron Talbot died, his estate fell into the hands of his heir Gilbert Talbot, a minor. King Richard II entrusted John Skydmore, the king's esquire, first with the custody of Goodrich Castle on 20 September 1396,³⁹ and then in 1398 with the whole of the Talbot's lands.⁴⁰ He was still serving as steward of Archenfeld in 1411, and he held Goodrich Castle as late as 1413. His most influential patron, however, proved to be Henry Bolingbroke (later Henry IV) who made him deputy steward of Brecon in 1393.

During the Glyn Dwr revolt his military talents were frequently exercised on behalf of the king. On 16 May 1401 John Skydmore was placed on a commission to resist the rebels invading the lordship of Abergavenny. Two weeks on 30 May 1401 he was named steward of Kidwelly, and the custody of Carreg Cennen Castle was transferred to him on 9 November 1401 from his brother Philip, who had deserted going over to Glyn Dwr. It would appear from this time forward that John Skydmore was a determined opponent of the Welsh. He was fighting in the Tywi valley in 1403 and in the same year was commissioned to receive contrite rebels from the middle and south Welsh marches.

On 4 July 1403 John Skydmore, "constable of Carreg Cennen Castle for the King," met with Owain at Dryslwyn Castle under an arranged truce. After their parley Owain refused to give a safe conduct to Margaret, the wife of John Skydmore, or her mother Joan Brut and their servants, from Carreg Cennen (which was then under siege) to their home in Herefordshire. On the following day Skydmore wrote to the receiver of Brecon that "all Kermerdynshire, Kedewely, Carnalthan and Yskenyn ben sworyn to Oweyn yesterday."

In 1404 he was retained by Sir Richard Arundel to serve in another expedition to South Wales. In February 1405 he was given the custody of Grosmont Castle, and noted as an esquire of the young prince Henry, later Henry V. In April 1405 the office of constable of Carmarthen in South Wales was granted to him "with the usual wages and fees." His fortunes changed abruptly later in August of the same year when charges of disloyalty were brought against him. The confession of John Oke accused Skydmore of having been a secret supporter of Glyn Dwr as early as 1400 and having received £6870

³⁸ This date seems very unlikely as John Skydmore was then in France with Henry V on the way to Agincourt. He remained in France after the war serving the crown at Harfleur and did not return to England until 1423 after the death of Henry V.

³⁹ *Patent Rolls* (1396-9), 28. On 26 March 1397 John Skydmore, the king's esquire, paid 40 shillings in the hamper to see this undated grant enrolled in the *Patent Rolls* (*ibid.*), 145. He was to have a yearly rent of 40sh from Talbot's lordship of Archenfeld and the castle of Goodrich, and a rent of 60sh from Talbot's lands and tenements in Orcop for life. If the young Gilbert should die, then he was to have the rent during the life of Gilbert's minor heir (presumably his younger brother John).

⁴⁰ Gilbert Talbot did not succeed to his barony until September 1403 [*Patent Rolls* (1401-5), 262]. He was a son of Ankaret, daughter and sole heir of Richard, baron Lestrangle of Blakemere, Shropshire. Ankaret married as her second husband Thomas Neville, baron Furnival, in 1401 in a *double contract* which married herself to Neville and her fourteen year old son John Talbot (1388-1453) to Maud, Neville's only child, then nine years old. When Neville died in 1407 John Talbot became Lord Furnival in the right of his wife Maud and was summoned as Lord Furnival to the next parliament sitting in 1409. He also later inherited the Talbot barony from an infant daughter of his brother Gilbert Talbot in February 1421, and was lastly (created) earl of Shrewsbury in 1442.

in gold and silver from 27 disaffected persons for the support of the Welsh uprising.⁴¹ His reputation was certainly damaged, but nothing came of these charges because Oke was hanged before Henry IV's order for a further interrogation of the prisoner was received.

Skydmore's presumptive Welsh sympathies must have been carefully concealed. He continued to reap rewards both in offices (he was named steward of Cantrefmawr at Michelmas 1407) and also had grants of the forfeited lands of the rebels. As John Skydmore, son of John Skydmore, he had a licence on 10 October 1406 to purchase a moiety of Wellington Manor in Herefordshire from John Chandos and his wife Phillipa, which he still held in 1429. He seems to have survived the accusations against him, and had been knighted (before 13 November 1408) for his services to the crown.

On 24 June 1411 John Skydmore, now the prince's knight, had a grant for life of the office of steward and "walscot" of the commotes of Whitdigada and Elvet in Carmarthenshire.⁴² However in 1413 there were several damning complaints against him as steward of Kidwelly. It was claimed that he levied a personal subsidy of £20 on the men of Kidwelly and had extorted gifts of animals from the poorer tenants. He was also accused of selling offices, pocketing the bribes, and of using the labor services due from the tenants of Kidwelly on his own lands. When the prince came to the throne as Henry V in 1413 Sir John was required to enter into a £4000 recognizance to guarantee his own security and good behavior. All of these complaints were clearly heard in the proper quarter and he was removed as steward of Kidwelly (despite a life-grant) in July 1415.

The rumors of his duplicity begun to surface and he left for France with the king soon after, wisely it would seem, taking with him with him four men at-arms and 12 archers.⁴³ The four gentlemen, whose names are unknown (one was probably his son John) who served as men-at-arms undertook to equip themselves with a full set of plate armor, a twelve foot lance, a sword with a blade more than twelve feet long, and a poleax to counter the plate armor of their opponents. They were also expected to have two sound horses, and each gentleman had also to find a number of archers, men of lesser birth, who had a armored jacket and helmet, a dagger, and most importantly, a six foot longbow, an armament with which the English were particularly skilled. The men-at-arms were to be paid two shillings a day while the archers were to have sixpence a day.

He seems now to have been back in favor permanently. Because the king's treasury was exhausted, he became one of the king's men to whom Henry V pawned his plate and jewels in order to pay the wages of the expedition. Sir John Skydmore is listed as having a *hanseline* [jacket] belonging to the king, embroidered in gold and set with pearls, sapphires and rubies. It was not redeemed (and returned to the Royal treasury) until 17 February 1422.

The victory at Agincourt in 1415 was won by an English army that was hungry and exhausted from seventeen days of a forced march to the battlefield where Sir John's eldest son was killed "on the field." Sir John remained abroad for several years after the battle serving the king as the captain of Harfleur under Thomas Beaufort, first earl of Dorset (1377-1426).⁴⁴

⁴¹ The best account of Oke's confession is found in Ian Skidmore's *Owain Glyndwr*, 158-61. See also R. A. Griffith, "Some secret supporters of Owain Glyn Dwr," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 37 (1964), 77-100.

⁴² Patent Rolls (1422-9), 63.

⁴³ This is from "The Retinue of Henry V in his first voyage. 3 Henry V." (Sloane MSS 6400).

⁴⁴ Henry V entrusted Dorset to guard his greatest conquests in France at Harfleur, Rouen and Paris, and the king saw to it that his men were properly rewarded. Dorset was the youngest brother of John Beaufort, earl of Somerset, whose nephew Edmund was to prove so injurious to Skydmore when Sir John claimed Glyn Dwr's lands.

On 15 July 1419 John Skydmore, *chivaler* [knight], represented Joan, the widow of Lord Bergavenny, in a suit against Isabel, the widow of Thomas *Walweyn*, (and the executors of the will of her late husband) about the possession of the manor of Langeford in Herefordshire. The manor “shall have the keeping of it in the king’s name until All Saints next.” Joan Beauchamp (1375-1435) was a daughter of the earl of Arundel. She was called “a second Jezebel at Abergavenny” by Adam of Usk although she seems to have spent most of her widowhood on her enormous estates in the west midlands.

The Walwyn suit dragged on (as usual) and was not settled by All Saints 1419. On 22 May 1421 there is an unusual notice in the Signet Letters. Lady Bergavenny’s interest is not mentioned, but it seems to show that Henry V felt indebted in some small way to Sir John and pushed his request for a decision:

The wife of Thomas Walweyn has made a grievous complaint against John Skydmore, and the king has ordered both parties to be before him or his council so that he could settle the dispute. As he is departing hastily and wishes to be no further vexed by their business, he asks the chancellor to send for both parties to appear before him, and make an end to the matter, as the king will tell him by word of mouth tomorrow.⁴⁵

Skydmore was still guardian of the port of Harfleur at the time of the young king’s unexpected death of dysentery at Rouen on 31 August 1422. He returned to England soon after and was reinstated as steward of Kidwelly (but not for life) on 14 June 1423. He was sheriff of Carmarthen in 1424 and was son after named deputy-justiciar for South Wales.

Offices were piled on him, and on 2 August 1425 he was also given the stewardship of Monmouth and the Three Castles. In 1431 he was Steward of Cantref Selyf for Anne of Woodstock, the dowager countess of Stafford. He had served Herefordshire three times as sheriff (in 1407, 1409 and lastly in 1430), and was a Member of Parliament for the county first in 1397 (and on five other occasions through 1433). He was a justice on the bench in Herefordshire and had innumerable commissions there in his home county.

In 1430, shortly after the death of Glyn Dwr’s last son Maredud, Skydmore and his wife Alice made an effort to reclaim her father’s estates at Sycharth and Glyndyfrdwy from the Beauforts who had had the custody of them since 1400. This was not only unsuccessful but Edmund Beaufort (who was acting for his elder brother John who was a prisoner in France) threw Skydmore’s Welsh marriage in his face while he was sitting in parliament in 1433, “Skydmore being no longer eligible to hold the premises, he having married Alice, daughter and *heir* of Owen ap Glendourdy, the traitor.”⁴⁶ On 8 August 1433 Beaufort secured his dismissal as constable of Carmarthen Castle (to which he had been appointed by Prince Henry in 1405) and from all his other public offices.⁴⁷ Sir John retired to

⁴⁵ *Patent Rolls* (1416-22), 218. See also the *Calendar of Signet Letters of Henry IV and Henry V* (1399-1422), edited J. L. Kirby, 185.

⁴⁶ See also: “Anno 11, Henry VI [1432]. The Earl of Somerset [1403-1444] prisoner in France sheweth how the king gave, November 8th, 2 Henry IV [1400], to John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset [1373-1410] his father, in fee all the Manors and Hereditaments of Owen Glendower in North Wales, that John Scudamour, Knt., and Alice his wife, daughter of the of the said Owen, by colour of an old entail, brought their formdon for the manor of Glendwrde and Kennlleth; therefore prayeth, that they and all others be forebarred to bring any action for any Hereditaments aforesaid, otherwise than their petition in the King’s Bench, to be returnable; the which was granted. It is enacted that the statute made in 4 Henry IV [1402] that no Englishman should marry with any of the family of Owen Glendower, should be kept; and that all Letters Patent made to the contrary be void.”

⁴⁷ *Parliamentary Rolls*, III (1377-1411), 509. The long-forgotten statute of 1402 which forbade any Englishman

Kentchurch, a broken man, where he died two years later (before 14 December 1435). He left issue presumably all by his first wife,

1. John (Sir). His father testified on 11 January 1410 that he had fetched a light from the house of John Botiller at Pembridge when his son John (who had been born on 7 July 1387) was christened at the church of St. Ulcutus the Abbot.⁴⁸ As “Mr. John Skydmore” (which distinguished him from his father) he was engaged on 29 April 1415 by Henry V to serve as a man at arms “for one year during his visitation to the duchy of Guyenne or the kingdom of France” at two shillings by the day. His seal to this indenture with two surviving interlocking stirrups is the first known use of this familiar armorial device of the Wiltshire Skydmores in Herefordshire.⁴⁹ He was one of two recently created knights (Sir Richard Kyghley being the other) who were killed at the battle of Agincourt according to the chronicle of Adam of Usk. When Sir John died young and unmarried, his father had the grant of the administration on his estate (where the son is called *domicelli* of The Vern) on 21 October 1418.⁵⁰
2. John (Sir), born about 1390. He succeeded his elder brother as heir to their father, of whom further.⁵¹
3. Henry (Harry), of Kilpeck, Herefordshire. He married (before 16 June 1442) Agnes, daughter of Ievan ap Ivor of Kilpeck, and was captured at the battle of Mortimer’s Cross on 3 February 1461. He was beheaded at the market place at Hereford together with Owen Tudor and several other gentlemen on the following day.
4. Thomas, probably of Bryt Court in Kingstone, He was in France on 10 June 1435 as controller of the household for John, duke of Bedford, regent of France, when he was paid for his services in holding the muster at Vernon. On 26 September of the same year Thomas Skydmore, of London, gentleman, gave all his goods and chattles in London “and elsewhere in the realm” to John Cambridge, chaplain (and three other trustees) probably in an effort to see that his property in England was preserved while he was in France. He is last noticed on 25 November 1460 when he and Henry Dwnn had a grant of the administration on the goods of Walter John, the rector of Kingstone.
1. Anne. She married firstly Meredudd ap Maelgwn of Kerry, Montgomeryshire, and secondly Roger ap Meurig Sitsylt (Cecil).
2. Joan. She married Gryffudd Dwnn of Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire. In 1428 Dwnn was deputy to his Skydmore father-in-law as steward of Kidwelly and in 1431 served as his deputy as constable of Carmarthen Castle. He was buried at St. Mary’s Priory Church, Kidwelly, after 1443.

of the alliance of Glyn Dwr from holding any office was published. See also the *Parliamentary Rolls*, IV (1413-1437), 440, for Edmund Beaufort’s accusations. Beaufort was also successful in getting himself appointed to succeed Skydmore as Constable of Carmarthen, a final insult. Three of John Beaufort’s sons succeeded in sequence to his title; Henry (died 1418), John (died 1444), and finally this Edmund Beaufort (died 1455).

⁴⁸ I have not been able to find any church in 1387 that was dedicated to this abbot. There is also some clerical error in this record which states that John Skydmore was “aged 68 and more.”

⁴⁹ British Library, *Harleian Charter 56 B 48*.

⁵⁰ It appears that this Sir John, *domicelli* (young man), had the possession of The Vern which belonged earlier to his grandfather Jenkin Skydmore. This administration presumably saw it properly settled on his father.

⁵¹ He may have been christened with the same name as his brother which sometimes happened to honor godfathers or grandfathers of the same name. It seems more likely that he took the name to preserve the sequence of heirs in his family named John.

SIR JOHN SKYDMORE, KT. (ca. 1390-1475), of Kentchurch Court, Bredwardine, Moccas and Thrupton, Herefordshire. He married Blanche, the daughter of John ap Harry (Parry) of Poston, Herefordshire, who survived him and had the execution of his will.

At the death of, Sir Thomas Brut, his maternal grandfather, the young John Skydmore came into a substantial estate as his presumptive sole heir. Sir Thomas Bryt had died holding the manor of “la Grove” hard by Radnor Castle in New Radnor in Radnorshire. He also had the manors of Chanstone (in Vowchurch), Tretire, and Westhide in Herefordshire. To these manors were added lands in Bredwardine, Woodbury (in Moccas), Dorstone (*alias* Dodyngton) and Eggleton. There were also yearly rents owed from two unidentified tenements named *Overbottcote* and *Netherbottcote*.

On 3 March 1422 a Robert Bryt of Wigsley in Thorney, Nottinghamshire (whose precise interest is unknown) put in his claim to a long list of the Bryt lands before the regency council. The parties to this dispute had appeared in person before the council (the effective rulers of England for the child later Henry VI), but the council was otherwise occupied and could not come to a final decision. The king’s esquire, John Merbury, was given the keeping of these lands, to receive all issues, and to keep them safely until they were delivered to those “to whom they shall pertain.”⁵² This led immediately to real difficulties for Sir John Skidmore over his son’s inheritance, and he posted a bond with Henry Street of Barsingham, Cambridgeshire and Thomas Cheyne of Chalfont, Buckinghamshire as his sureties in the sum of £100 to insure that Sir John Skidmore “would do no harm to Robert Bryt.”⁵³

The matter was left unsettled for several years, but by 1431 John Skydmore, *gentleman*, owed military service for several of the Bryt fees in Webtree Hundred.⁵⁴ On 28 April 1440 Skydmore agreed to pay Robert Brut of Nottinghamshire 48sh 8d twice a year during Brut’s life, and to let him peacefully possess the lands in Notts and Lincolnshire that had belonged to Sir Thomas Brut, Kt. He also agreed not to alienate those lands “of which he was seised in Herefordshire.” The Brut fees did descend to James Skydmores (1474?-1522) who was in possession of them in 1590, and later Richard Scudamore died on 26 January 1511 holding Thrupton manor and Britte Court in Kingstone.⁵⁵

John Talbot, formerly Lord Furnival, had a violent and quarrelsome reputation before he went to Ireland. When he returned with the king from France in 1421, he was incensed to find that he had been dispossessed of part of his lands in Archenfeld by John Abrahall, senior, of Gillow in Hentland. John Skidmore, esquire, of Kentchurch and his younger brothers had sided with Abrahall, possibly to the embarrassment of their father. Talbot brought Abrahall into court on 25 March 1422 where he claimed that John Abrahall, *senior*, of Gillow in Hentland, Richard Abrahall [his father], John Abrahall *junior* of Ivorstone in Foy, John Skidmore of Kentchurch, Maurice Skidmore of Wormbridge, esquires, George Skidmore of Holm Lacy, and unnamed others from Kilpeck, Corras, Ewyas Harold, and still

⁵² See the *Acts of Privy Council* (Rolls Series), II, 321 which shows that Sir Thomas Brut left a considerable estate. In 1431 John Skidmore, *Esquire*, was “cousin” [grandson] and heir of Thomas Brut, knight., and named the executor of his wife Joan Brut (*Close Rolls*.) The best account of the Brut estates is the one noticed here taken from the *Patent Rolls* (1408-13), 32.

⁵³ *Close Rolls* (1422-9), 133.

⁵⁴ *Feudal Aids*, II, 419. In 1431 he owed service for an eighth of a fee in Kingstone, [Brutescourt] a quarter fee in Thrupton, and he and Hugo Hergest held a fee at Chanstone. His kinsman George Skydmore had succeeded to his father’s quarter of a fee at Holme Lacy. The record of the hundreds in Herefordshire (other than Webtree) are lost.

⁵⁵ *Early Chancery Cases*, C.1/108/43-46. The descent of James Skydmore, the orator in the suit of 1590, is duly entered, and a nearly identical list of his lands is given with the addition of “Bryts Court in the county of Hereford.” Presumably this was where Sir Thomas Bryt (or his steward) kept a court to manage the business of his possessions. The suit shows that the young James Skydmore was heavily in debt, obligations that he may have inherited from his father, however Leland in his *Itinerary* says of this James Skydmore that he “wasted part of his lands.”

other parts of the Marches, had gathered together with 1000 men “armed with arrows and other arms in warlike fashion.” They came to Michelchurch and Gillow in Archenfeld for the purposes of committing treason and treachery, and lay in wait to murder and kill both John, now Lord Talbot, and his younger brother William.

On 18 July 1422 Talbot issued another indictment alleging that John Abrahall, Maurice Skidmore, and Thomas Skidmore of Rowleston, with 60 men arrayed for war broke into the house of Maurice Dawe (a Talbot supporter) and “murdered him with four lances valued at two shillings.” Meanwhile on the same day William Skidmore of *Euiasland* was involved in another murder and three abductions at Aconbury where the victims were carried off to Ewyas and imprisoned until they each agreed to pay a ransom of £20 for their release. Sir John Skydmore himself declined to get involved in this power struggle in Archenfeld, and eventually Lord Talbot’s interest prevailed.

After the young John Skydmore served in France in 1429, he had further letters of protection on 23 March 1436 and 16 February 1440 when he went again to France for the crown. He was an elector in Herefordshire in 1442, and a Member of Parliament for Herefordshire in 1443 (and for several terms thereafter). He was a retainer of Humphrey, duke of Buckingham in 1443, for which he was pardoned on 15 July 1446. He was appointed steward of Brecon in 1445, and the receiver there in 1449. John Skydmore is first mentioned as a knight on 13 June 1445, and had thereafter a number of commissions to levy taxes and raise loans in Herefordshire. The tenants at Brecon regarded cattle-stealing as a privilege; but when their “grete roberies and pillages” reached the ear of the duke himself, he reminded Sir John that he had done nothing to discipline the worst offenders. Things did not improve, and Scudamore was dismissed about October 1451 to be replaced by a Welshman.

He went again to Aquitaine in France in the retinue of John Talbot (his old accuser), who was now the earl of Shrewsbury. Skydmore was one of the very few who escaped the slaughter there at the Battle of Castillon on 17 July 1453. The sixty-six year old Shrewsbury (“the English Achilles”) and most of his army were killed along with his heir viscount Lisle. This proved to be the final battle in what became known as the Hundred Years’ War.

A steadfast Lancastrian, he was summoned in April 1455 to a meeting of the great council to represent Herefordshire. He had a commission in 1460 to confiscate the lands in Herefordshire which were held by Richard, duke of York, and Richard, earl of Warwick, and had been forfeited by their rebellion. He was at the battle of Mortimer’s Cross on 3 February 1461 with 30 of his servants, but managed once again to escape to hold Pembroke Castle after the defeat of the Lancastrian army there. He was among those excluded from the general pardon offered in Wales on 12 August 1461 by Edward IV, but was promised that his life and lands would be spared when he surrendered the castle on 30 September. His life was saved, but his lands and livelihood were taken from him on 4 November 1461 and granted to Sir Richard Herbert of Coldbrook, Monmouthshire soon after. Sir John managed eventually to get his attainder removed, and his lands were restored to him on 6 October 1472. He died previous to 3 May 1475 when a writ of *diem clausit extremum* was ordered taken on his estate. He had issue,

1. John. He married Ellen, daughter of Sir Robert Whitney, a known Lollard. He died before his father leaving an only daughter Janet, who married Llewellyn ap Gruffydd Vychan of Carmarthenshire.
2. James, his heir, of Kentchurch. He contracted on 14 January 1441 to serve Sir James Ormond in Normandy for one year, supplying six mounted archers and wearing the livery of the duke of York, for which he was to receive 12 shillings a day (and his archers 6 shillings).⁵⁶ James Skydmore married Margaret, daughter of Gruffydd ap

⁵⁶ James Skidmore was enrolled “as a man of arms with vj.[6] archers in his company, all on horsbak and wele

Nicholas of Newton, Carmarthenshire. He was living in 1454 when his father-in-law was arrested and charged at Hereford for “greatly grieving” the king’s subjects, but Gruffydd was promptly rescued by the local influence exerted by Sir John Skydmore on his behalf. Sir John was slain “for his service to Henry VI” at the manor house at *Kingchurch* [Kentchurch] according to William of Worcester. He died during the lifetime of his father, leaving a son Thomas (died 1489) as his heir at Kentchurch.

3. Henry. He had the manor and advowson of Moccas, Herefordshire, settled on him by his father’s will. He married Elizabeth (who married secondly Hugh Vaughan), daughter of John Chabnor, and died without legitimate issue on 14 October 1489 while he was serving as sheriff of Herefordshire. His heir was his grandnephew James Skydmore, then aged 19 and more, but Richard Skydmore called “the younger” of Ploughfield, Herefordshire (an illegitimate son), also put in his claim to Moccas.
4. Richard. He was ancestor to the family at Thruxton, Herefordshire.
1. Elizabeth. She married John Pye of Saddlebow, Much Dewchurch, Herefordshire who was retained by Henry VI to serve in the wars in France.
2. Margaret. She married John ap Iorwerth ap Gronw of Trellek, Monmouthshire.
3. Jane. She married Hugh Powell of Tre-Fadog in Garway, Herefordshire.
4. Blanche.
5. Joyce.

GLYN DWR’S DEATH

Glyn Dwr went into hiding in the mountains by 1411, and his son Maredudd took over the command of the faltering revolt. The new king, Henry V, was getting ready for Agincourt. He sent Gilbert, Lord Talbot, on 5 July 1415 to meet with Glyn Dwr and offer him and the other rebels a royal pardon if they were so minded. Nothing came of this offer. It was repeated on 24 February 1416, this time to his son Maredudd, and the implication is certain that Glyn Dwr was now dead. Adam of Usk, the only contemporary writer, did not know when or where the Prince died or was buried. However an early Welsh memorandum, incapable of proof, gives a precise date (St. Matthew’s Day, 21st September) in 1415 for his death which may very well be correct..

John Cowper Powys (1872-1963) wrote a long novel in two volumes based on the life of Glyn Dwr.⁵⁷ His account of the old prince’s death *of cancer*, with Lord Talbot in attendance, may be closer to the truth than the more pleasing tale which has Glyn Dwr dying peacefully at the home of one of his daughters in Herefordshire.⁵⁸ According to the Powys novel,

chosen men, and likely personnes wele and suffisantly armed, horsed and arrayed ev’ry man after his degree; that is to say, that the seid James Skidmore have hennis complete wt basnet or salade, with viser, spere, axe, swerd and dagger; And that all the seid archers specially to have good jakks of defense, salades, swerds and sheves of xl arwes [40 arrows] atte least.” James Skidmoe was to have full suit of armour (a harness), with an open faced helmet (a basnet) or a helmet with a tail to protect his neck (a salade). His archers were each to have a sleeveless jacket of quilted leather with a padded or metal breastplate (a jack).

⁵⁷ *Owen Glendower: an historical novel* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1940), 918-9.

⁵⁸ J. E. Lloyd in his *Owen Glendower* (pages 144-5) repeats several of these legendary locations. Glyn Dwr is sometimes said (in error) to have been buried at Monnington Straddle. This was not then a possession of the Skydmores. An issue of the newsletter of the *Cymdeithas Owain Glyndwr* (August 2000) announced an unveiling of a monument at Monnington Straddle on 16 September 2000 to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the start of Glyn Dwr’s campaign.

Glyn Dwr now began a series of detailed instructions. He told his friend he wished his body to be taken to Mynydd-y-Gaer and there burnt. "If you can't get a blaze hot enough to do it in twelve hours, Broch, there'll be the spine and the shanks and the skull and hands left; but the flesh will be off them. They'll be just bones. And I want you to break *these* in pieces with your axe, and strew them - *little* pieces mind!--round the walls of the Gaer. But I want you to keep back a handful, say a half-a dozen bits; and of bone remember, not cinders. Have you caught the drift of what I'm saying?"

I'd like you to take a bone or two - just a few, Broch! - and go down to Corwen where there's that cross in the centre of the Druid mill-stone. Go on some dark night, Broch. Give yourself plenty of time. But take a spade with you and a mattock. Dig a hole - no bigger than a rabbit's - *under the stone*. Dig till you're below the pillar of the cross; and there leave what you've got in your hand. And then back with the earth-mould and stamp it down!"⁵⁹

and what was to happen to his body ended then in a spasm of pain according to Powys.

⁵⁹ Ian Skidmore, who has seen this stone, tells me that it is a huge jagged piece from a meteorite.