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Plays and Performing in Early Modern South Wales

The performance of plays and music in early modern south Wales and the patterns of survival for records of such performances differentiate the region both from the English counties across the border to the east and from the northern areas of Wales itself. While limited in number and scope, the surviving records of dramatic performance in south Wales prior to the middle of the seventeenth century provide enough evidence for us to draw some conclusions about performance traditions and circumstances in that region and about how those relate to similar concerns east of the border and, to a lesser extent, in north Wales. Many factors contributed to the differences among the regions, but this brief survey focuses on the influence of language, administrative practice, geography, and distribution of wealth. Linguistically, the divide between native Welsh-speakers (primarily in the north and the southern countryside) and English-speakers (primarily in the towns) influenced both the content of performance and the transmission of performance practice. Administratively, the disparity between a well-developed English document culture and an oral Welsh culture with a history of literary manuscript production and copying influenced the selective preservation of texts and documents. Geographically, rough terrain and difficult travel west of the Welsh border impeded easy touring by professional companies. Finally, the uneven distribution of wealth, which favoured the areas east of the border, meant that those troupes who did travel found little financial reward among the boroughs, manors, and villages of south Wales.

I intend, as far as the records will permit, to consider the following questions: Is there clear evidence for the linguistic content of performances in south Wales – that is, were they in English or in Welsh? Were performances given by both professional troupes and non-professionals? Did performances encompass both sacred and secular material? Does the surviving evidence clearly indicate the funding and patronage for performances?

Before turning to the records themselves, it is necessary to comment briefly on the nature of the Welsh records and their survival, for while Wales

eventually adopted the English system of administrative record-keeping, that adoption came relatively late in the country's history. As Michael Clanchy has observed, the administrative structure of English society at a relatively early date developed techniques for the preservation of written records, a development which affected not only all levels of administration but a good deal of private society as well.¹ The English from an early period tended to preserve written documents with some care, with the result that they often preserved legal and administrative documents long after their usefulness had faded. The particulars of English common law also promoted this zeal for the preservation of documents. Such preservationist zeal was especially evident in the laws of land or tenement tenure by copyhold, under which the retention of the document (deed or copy of court roll) was essential to establishing ownership.² It is precisely this wealth of documentary survival that has provided the material for projects such as *Records of Early English Drama*.

The situation for manuscript production and survival in Wales was quite different. Although joined to England by a border of some 130 miles, Wales had its own established linguistic and cultural traditions long before the systematic incursion of the Anglo-Norman marcher lords in the twelfth century and the final conquest of the native princedoms by Edward I in 1284. Because early Wales was primarily an oral culture, we must assume that record-keeping relied more on memory than on written documentation, though the extensive survival of native Welsh legal tracts (in both Welsh and Latin) provides an exception to this generalization. Aside from the legal materials, most of the manuscripts produced before the early modern period were literary texts, especially compilations of either poetry or prose texts, the latter including both secular narrative and religious prose.³ While manorial court records of the marcher lordships do survive from the Middle Ages in some abundance, most surviving court documents in Wales post-date the introduction of the English-controlled court of Great Sessions in 1541, after the Act of Union. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, Wales remained for all practical purposes a manuscript culture; but the copying and recopying of texts that occupied so many cultured Welshmen through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries focused primarily on literary and semi-literary texts.⁴ These antiquarian copyists generally neglected administrative documents, such as the financial records of municipalities or of the pre-Dissolution monasteries. Thus whole classes of documents that exist in many English repositories are entirely missing in Wales.

The documents surveyed below constitute an object lesson in the differences between documentary practice in England and south Wales. Of the four groups

of records surveyed, two, kept in a distinctly English manner, come from the municipal accounts of highly anglicized Welsh boroughs (Swansea and Haverfordwest). They are among the very few sets of borough accounts to survive from sixteenth-century Wales. These accounts, as well as the few sets of borough ordinances that survive, were clearly modelled on those of English towns, concerned primarily with guild and burgess rights and responsibilities. The other two records, though documenting events in Wales, derive from English administrative sources: on the one hand the court of Augmentations (dealing with the aftermath of the Dissolution of the monasteries), on the other, the court of Star Chamber. Here there may well be some indication of distinctive Welsh practice, since both records chronicle events in Welsh boroughs not mirrored in contemporary English towns. Among these various records is some limited evidence for professional performers, though the extent to which these performers may have travelled is unclear since the records refer only to a single location; there is also clear evidence for non-professional performers who undertook dramatic performance as a fund-raising tool for the parish.

Records of professional travelling companies in Wales are very rare, primarily because the sort of documents in which records of payments to professional players would normally be kept seldom survive; borough accounts survive for no more than a small handful of towns, and no monastic accounts at all have come down to us. However, it seems likely that even if these sources did survive, we would nonetheless find that travelling companies rarely ventured west of the Welsh border. Of course, they had few incentives to do so. The principal reasons for touring were reputation, profit, patronage, and politics, and touring in Wales would have provided cold comfort in each of these areas. Although the incentives to tour were likely less affected by the urban plague outbreaks in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries than previously thought, compared to the English boroughs the poor Welsh towns would have offered few financial rewards.⁵ Although the surviving sources do not allow close comparison of the economics of Welsh towns with their English counterparts, it is clear in a general way from the things on which the civic authorities spent money that there was little enough of it. Neither the Welsh towns nor their guild merchants spent money on the sorts of elaborate annual feasts which were common in English towns (Leominster's annual hen feast is a typical example⁶), and where civic accounts do survive, as in Haverfordwest and Swansea, there is little evidence of the kinds of entertainment common in wealthy English towns like Chester or Hereford.⁷

In addition, travel in Wales was particularly difficult. Although an extensive system of small roads and drovers' tracks existed throughout the medieval

period, the mountainous interior was not at all hospitable for travellers with more than a horse. A wagon loaded with theatrical paraphernalia would have been particularly difficult to move overland; as Peter Greenfield points out, '[E]ase of travel ... had much to do with where the players went and what routes they followed'.⁸ Major roads did follow the coastline across both south and north Wales, running in south Wales from Bristol out to Pembrokeshire, and the remains of the old Roman road of Sarn Helen linked the south and north along the western coast, but even these roads were constantly in ill repair. In fact, throughout much of Wales and England, waterways made travel easier than did roadways prior to the eighteenth century. As Harold Carter notes, 'The roads, mainly the outline of the Roman system, were mostly tracks which were used by pack-horses, for the coach did not become significant until the 18th century'.⁹ The two boroughs in south Wales for which evidence of travelling companies of any kind survives – Swansea and Haverfordwest – are both more easily approached by water than by road. As Greenfield notes, 'The frequency with which players show up in the records of coastal towns also suggests that they were traveling by sea, especially where inland roads were less dependable than coastal waters, as along the Dorset and Devon coasts'.¹⁰

Although English evidence from before 1539 shows frequent monastic payments to travelling companies, both of players and of musicians,¹¹ the lack of extant Welsh monastic accounts means that we have no similarly rich record of travelling performers in Wales. While the absence of such records does not necessarily indicate an absence of practice, the likelihood that Welsh monasteries received frequent visits from professional players and musicians is slim. Most English monasteries that welcomed performers were Benedictine (and often quite wealthy), while most Welsh monasteries were Cistercian and much less likely to approve of such forms of entertainment. Even the Welsh Benedictine and Augustinian houses at places such as Abergavenny, Brecon, and Haverfordwest were, by English standards, extremely poor, and would have offered a meagre welcome for performers.¹²

The most important of the Welsh records of professional players to survive come from the account books of the common attorneys of the borough of Swansea for the first quarter of the seventeenth century. These records indicate a series of visits by 'stage players' that spans the years from 1618 to 1633–4 (see List 1).¹³ While they, regrettably, do not record payments to the players, they do depict successive outlays for the repair of window glass on the occasion of each visit by the players. Several questions arise from these entries, however, though I think it unlikely that we can answer any of them. First, is this the same group of players returning to Swansea on a regular basis? Second, if the

same players are returning, where do they come from and what draws them? Money does not seem to be an incentive, especially as they are paying for the broken windows at a rate that would leave them little profit. Finally, exactly what are they doing that causes the breakage of so many windows? These players are clearly involved in the performance of a play, since they are regularly called 'stage players'. Although the records do not indicate the professional status of these travelling players, they are most likely professional players from out of town and not a local group since their regular performance venue is the town hall, they do not appear every year, and stage plays were never a major part of Welsh culture.¹⁴

If financial incentives were unlikely to provide a clear reason for these performers to stop in Swansea, why then would the city continue to be an appropriate venue for at least one travelling company for so many years? The most likely answer is transportation. One of the best roads in early seventeenth-century Wales, the London-to-St David's, east-west road, ran along the south coast from the Bristol Channel crossing to Pembrokeshire. Though it would have provided a route no easier to traverse than many in England, it was far better than the drovers' tracks that provided most of the routes through the Welsh interior. It seems also quite possible, however, that Swansea was an attractive stop on a water route. The evidence of the surviving port books indicates that although the bulk of Swansea's incoming sea-trade came from France, especially from Brittany, ships also arrived from London, Barnstaple, Ilfracombe, Southampton, Minehead, Plymouth, and Salcomb.¹⁵ Records do not survive for all of these boroughs, but players appeared in both Barnstaple and Plymouth with a frequency that Greenfield suggests may indicate arrival by sea rather than overland.¹⁶

The possibility of water travel is further supported by the only other surviving records of payment to travelling professional entertainers in south Wales, from the Haverfordwest mayor's accounts for 1597: 'Item bestowed vpon the Earle of Essex Musicians v s' and 'Item to the Earle of Essex secretarie for his paines x s'.¹⁷ These entries appear to record an unusual event. No other evidence suggests that either players or musicians under the patronage of the English aristocracy travelled in Wales, although Essex's players certainly did take a sea trip to Ireland on to their tour of Lancashire in 1588–9.¹⁸ Perhaps Devereux's musicians were in Haverfordwest visiting Carew Castle, a little to the south. Carew Castle was the seat of the Perrot family, whose head, Sir John Perrot, rumoured to be the illegitimate half-brother of the queen, had been Elizabeth's Lord Deputy in Ireland from 1583–4 to 1588.¹⁹ By 1597 the castle was in the hands of Sir John's son and heir, Thomas, to whom the family lands

had been restored after the attainder and death of his father in 1592.²⁰ That musicians would visit the Perrot household is not surprising since Sir John had been particularly interested in music; the inventory taken at his death lists an extraordinary collection of printed music and musical instruments, including 'ij shackbuttesin ij Cases v Cornettesin one Case A vjth parte violen viij hoboyes a flute and ij Recorders'.²¹ These instruments were among the property restored to Thomas Perrot in 1594–5.²² Despite the Perrot family's interest in music, however, the payment to Devereux's musicians (five shillings) is half that given on the same page of the Haverfordwest accounts to his secretary 'for his paines'.²³ It is likely that this latter payment suggests considerably greater favours to the town than merely providing the musicians. The nature of those favours is, unfortunately, not recorded.

Haverfordwest, like Swansea, was on the main east-west road from London to St David's but was far more easily approached by water. The western branch of the River Cleddau was navigable by ships as large as forty tons as far as Haverfordwest, and the town quay was a major trading centre, especially with Plymouth, Bristol, and Barnstaple, all of these regular stops for travelling players, as the Devon REED volume makes clear.²⁴ Although the Welsh Port Books provide extensive evidence of trading vessels coming to both Swansea and Haverfordwest from English ports along the Devon coast, their concern is with goods, not with passengers, though if players were travelling by water as far as Barnstaple, the possibility of their travelling on to a Welsh port is clear.²⁵

Haverfordwest is also the only south Welsh municipality for which records of civic musicians survive. The civic accounts for the period 1579–97 include regular payment for liveries for a company of waits. Livery accounts for the town's beadle at the same dates show clearly that the company included two musicians but do not indicate their instruments or duties. These livery payments do not continue past 1597; tax assessment rolls for 1647 and 1651 show three inhabitants of Haverfordwest listing their profession as 'musician', though evidence does not confirm that they were acting in any official civic capacity.²⁶

Although these few records suggest that travelling performers were a rarity in early Wales, other evidence indicates that cultured Welshmen took pleasure in attending performances of plays as a matter of course. Phillip Powell, a merchant of Brecon, kept a commonplace book and journal through the early years of the seventeenth century. In 1620 he noted that he had attended a play in Bristol, implying that play-going was for him a routine recreation. The mere fact of attending a play was not the point of the entry, but rather that at this performance the Vice in the play heckled the Welshmen in the audience with a scurrilous quatrain extemporized from the stage, and was in his turn heckled

by a Welsh apprentice from the audience with a verse in the same metre.²⁷ The presence of the apprentice at this performance shows clearly that even some Welshmen with a level of culture rather below that of the merchant Powell were accustomed to attending theatrical performances during travel to England. As well, the popularity of poetry among the Welsh, clearly demonstrable from the surviving collections of verse, would seem to lie behind the apprentice's adept improvisation.

Even though the survival of records in Wales is significantly more sporadic than in England, the extant documents suggest that professional companies, both dramatic and musical, travelled to Wales infrequently. The reasons are not far to seek: economically, Wales was significantly less prosperous than many parts of England. Though REED's collection of surviving tour evidence is not yet complete, I suspect that the finished survey will show that these prosperous areas of England attracted more professional companies on tour.²⁸ Geographically, Wales also presented great difficulties for travellers, especially those encumbered by the paraphernalia of touring a play. Both the quality of the roads and the mountainous terrain would make any touring company think twice about tackling them. One exception to this may have been the few wealthy private estates situated an easy journey from the border, such as the Myddleton's at Chirk Castle, Flintshire, or the Salusbury's at Lleweni, Denbighshire, both in north Wales. Although substantial private estates existed in south Wales as well, they were as a rule less easily approached from the border; many, in fact, would have been much easier of access by sea. Unfortunately, household account books for the relevant period do not survive in any great number and there is no evidence of such visits.²⁹

When we turn to parish drama, the situation is quite different. Although the records are equally sparse, they arouse the sense that we may be dealing with the tip of an iceberg – the meagre remains of a once-thriving tradition. The first record of importance belongs, not surprisingly, to the English administration at the period of the Act of Union. Upon the dissolution of Abergavenny priory, Breconshire in 1537, the court of Augmentations attempted to discover the true ownership of the peal of bells hung in the priory. The townspeople claimed the bells as their property, and several of their depositions survive. John ap Polle, aged fourscore years, deposed that the money to pay for the bells had come entirely from the parish, not from the priory, and that he and several others 'went aboute into the countrie wth games and playse to gather money to pay for the forsaide bell^es'.³⁰ His deposition is confirmed by Maredudd ap Polle, aged fourscore and eight years (and likely John's brother), who claimed that 'he neuer sawe no man pay any thyng for

the same bellesbut only the towne and the countrie that they gatte apou theym wth games and plays'.³¹

'Games and plays' is not, of course, an unambiguous phrase. However, unlike the verb 'to play', which might be used either in a dramatic context or in a gambling or gaming context, the noun 'play', especially in its plural form, less often appears in the latter context.³² The Abergavenny 'games and plays' most likely involved dramatic presentation of some sort, though the nature of the fund-raising plays remains hidden. They need not have been religious in nature; in fact, if the fund-raising techniques of south Wales replicated those of the English border counties, the subject of a fund-raising play or game would more likely have been Robin Hood. However, to date, I have found no evidence of Robin Hood traditions in Wales. Parish fund-raising, as we find east of the border, tended to follow tried and true paths.³³ Though local traditions may have varied widely, a successful means of raising money tended to be used again and again. Such was most likely also the case in Wales, which suggests that performances by groups such as the Abergavenny players were not an isolated occurrence.

The last example of drama in early modern south Wales may have been either a parish drama or a private – and politically motivated – play. As usual, the evidence lies in the documents of the English administration, in this instance a group of documents deriving from a case brought before the court of Star Chamber in 1604.³⁴ Like many Star Chamber cases, it is immensely long and complex. A group of men led by one Phillip Bowen and his son, David Phillip Bowen, are charged with a lengthy series of offenses in Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, on the south coast, just west of Swansea. First, they did 'laye themselves in Ambushe & waite for one Morgan ap Ieuan' and did

in moste furious riottous rowtous feirce and vnlawfull manner laye vyolent handes vpon him the said Morgan ap Ieuan, whoe being not able to make any resistance or defence for himself against such an vnlawfull vnrewlie and Ryottous Multitud soe strongelye and vnlawfullie weaponed and appointed (as aforesaid) was by them the said Riottous Rowtous and vnrewelye multitud violentlie and ryottouslye striken from his horse down to the ground³⁵

Practically all the group's alleged offenses involve assault of some kind. They terrorize a local family, the offenses escalate, and a customs officer is murdered. The bill of complaint does not indicate whether the charges are being listed in chronological order, but it provides a clear sense of building up to a climax. And that climax is a bit of a surprise, for on Ascension Sunday 1604,

the said Phillip Bowen & all & euery the malefactours abouenamed his complices & adherentes making noe Conscience to prophane and abuse the said Temple of god & howse of prayer He the said Phillippe Bowen beinge Cheiftaine and Ringleader vnto all the reste coulde not be satisfied onelye wth Causinge a moste profaine and scurrulous stage playe to be acted and played vpon or aboute the twentieth Daye of Maye laste within the perishe Church of Llanelly aforesaid to the great Dishonor of god the prophayninge of his Temple the breache of your Maiesties lawes and the greuous offence of manye trewe christian protestantes and loyall Subiectes vnto Your Maiestie³⁶

In addition to extortion, assault, and murder, Bowen and his associates are also accused of recusancy.

The document raises more questions than it answers. Principally, of course, these concern the nature of the play that so offended Bowen's protestant neighbours. Surely, it was a religious play, or the sectarian note would not have been relevant. If we consider the changes made to the Chester plays during the last quarter of the sixteenth century in the hopes of appeasing the Church authorities, the play performed at Llanelli may very well have dealt with the life of the Virgin Mary, a topic that particularly offended protestant reformers. But a play requires a certain amount of preparation; what led to its performance in the Llanelli parish church? Was it performed with the permission of the vicar? If not, how was access gained? At the time of the play Llanelli was a very modest town of under sixty freeholders, distinguished primarily by the substantial size of the church, a cruciform stone building, the square of the crossing measuring twenty-six feet on each side.³⁷ Unfortunately, this document clarifies little more than that a religious – likely Catholic – play was performed in Llanelli in 1604.

At the outset I noted my desire to bring these records to bear on several questions. The first of these dealt with the linguistic content of performances in south Wales; whether, that is, there is any clear indication that performances were predominately in English or in Welsh. The bulk of the surviving records of performances derive from those areas most influenced by the English administrative system and its focus on record-keeping, the most highly anglicized areas of pre-industrial Wales. Haverfordwest was the principal market town of Pembrokeshire, since the late sixteenth century often known as 'little England beyond Wales';³⁸ Swansea and Llanelli, like most of the larger Welsh boroughs (and unlike the countryside) had large English-speaking populations. However, the documents do not confirm whether performances in these areas were given in English or Welsh, and the written evidence from other areas of the country is no more helpful. Likewise, the linguistic evidence of the

distribution of Welsh- and English-speakers in south Wales, while highly suggestive, is not conclusive. Even the countryside around which the Polle brothers took their fund-raising plays was in the vicinity of the Monmouthshire/Breconshire border, where performances in English would be at least as likely as performances in Welsh.³⁹ The linguistic situation for performance in south Wales would have been markedly different from that in north Wales, where surviving documents record performances in areas of Anglesey and Caernarvonshire where an English-speaking audience would have been an impossibility. Without the further discovery of performance records or texts to illuminate the issue, the language of performance in south Wales must remain an open question.

However, evidence does unequivocally confirm performances by both professional and non-professional groups in south Wales. Haverfordwest had liveried waits and was the site of a rare visit by professional musicians under aristocratic patronage. The players who regularly broke the windows of the town hall in Swansea were also likely professional, though this conclusion is less certain. They might have been associated with a guild or other municipal body; Swansea's records are too limited to make the distinction clear. On the other hand, there is no question that the Bowen family and the Polle brothers were non-professional. Despite slim evidence of the nature of performances in south Wales, the conclusion seems inescapable that the Llanelli play of 1604 was religious, given the offense it caused to the protestant community. The Swansea town hall plays may well have been secular, as the playing place would have been unusual for a religious play. About the content of the Abergavenny play(s), we can say nothing with certainty, since parishes around the country used both sacred and secular plays for fund-raising purposes.

Finally, evidence allows us to draw only limited conclusions concerning the funding and patronage for performances. Clearly, boroughs supported some performances, though this support may well have been indirect. Haverfordwest paid for the making of their waits' livery, but records include no entries of money paid to them for performing. Such an absence of evidence does not necessarily indicate the waits went unpaid or never performed. Rather, the lack of direct payments in the surviving accounts may well reflect a system of support similar to that employed in many English towns, which supported their official civic musicians by giving them a monopoly over performing for civic and guild feasts rather than by paying them a salary.⁴⁰

The principal differences between the situations faced by performers (dramatic or musical) in Wales and in England were economic and logistic. Although the Polle brothers may well have performed for rural audiences,

performance was primarily an urban phenomenon, and Welsh boroughs were much poorer than their English neighbours. The only Welsh borough for which we can ascertain a number of waits is Haverfordwest, where the complement of two performers can be deduced from the amount paid for their livery; small groups of waits were hardly uncommon in England (Liverpool had only one, probably a bagpipe player), but they were balanced by the substantial ensembles of towns like York or Norwich.⁴¹ Although our sources are limited, it is unlikely that any Welsh borough could support such a large group. Travelling players who did venture into Wales (and the evidence for such travel is clearer in the north than the south) were hampered by the difficult terrain and the dubious quality of the roads.

The existence in multiple manuscripts (at least one from south Wales) of two biblical plays in Welsh – a Nativity Play and a Passion Play – strongly implies the existence of a performing tradition.⁴² The fact that these plays are utterly unlike those surviving from English boroughs like Chester but rather are comparable (on a much smaller scale) to the Cornish *Ordinalia* would suggest that these plays do not represent an imported English tradition. On the other hand, the surviving documentary evidence is insufficient to show clearly that the performance of plays was a part of the native Welsh tradition. Perhaps that is because the fullest records from the early modern period survive in the most anglicized areas of Wales, those portions of the country most influenced by English administrative practice

Notes

- 1 Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 2nd ed (Oxford, 1993), especially chapters 2 and 5.
- 2 Sir Frederick Pollack and Frederic W. Maitland, *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I*, 2nd ed, reissued, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1968), 1.375.
- 3 For a survey of the surviving manuscript material through the fourteenth century, see Daniel Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Cardiff, 2000). The court poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has recently been edited in the series *Cyffres Beirdd y Tywysogion*, 7 vols (Cardiff, 1991–6), under the general editorship of Geraint Gruffydd.
- 4 For the most part, such antiquarian copyists as John Jones of Gellylyfdy (c1583–1658?), Lewis Morris (1701–65), and Edward Williams ('Iolo Morgannwg', 1747–1826) concentrated on copying the poetry of earlier periods,

- though Jones did copy (while in prison) a series of complaints about the Council in the Marches of Wales in its judicial capacity (MS Cardiff 3.25).
- 5 Peter Thomson, *Shakespeare's Theatre* (London, 1992), 7; Peter Greenfield, 'Touring', John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (eds), *New History of Early English Drama* (New York, 1997), 252–61.
 - 6 David N. Klausner (ed), *Herefordshire/Worcestershire*, REED (Toronto, 1990), 8.
 - 7 Klausner (ed), *Herefordshire/Worcestershire*, 145.
 - 8 Greenfield, 'Touring', 261; see also Richard J. Colyer, *The Welsh Cattle Drovers: Agriculture and the Welsh Cattle Trade before and during the Nineteenth Century* (Cardiff, 1976), in which the maps on pages 131–6 provide an outline of known cattle tracks.
 - 9 Harold Carter, *The Towns of Wales: A Study in Urban Geography* (Cardiff, 1965), 30.
 - 10 Greenfield, 'Touring', 261–2.
 - 11 See, for example, the extensive range of performers hired by Prior William More of Worcester between 1518 and 1535; Klausner (ed), *Herefordshire/Worcestershire*, 459–530.
 - 12 At the Dissolution, the Benedictine houses at Abergavenny and Brecon were valued at an annual income of £129 and £112, and housed five and six monks respectively. They would have been comparable to small English houses like that of Totnes, Devon, in sharp contrast to the large Benedictine abbeys like Glastonbury, valued at £3311 and housing fifty-six monks, or even medium-sized houses like Pershore, with a value of £643 and twenty-five residents. David Knowles and R. Neville Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales* (London, 1971), 58, 60, 66, and 73.
 - 13 University College of Swansea Library: Swansea Corporation Archives C1, 2, 5–6, 40, 45–6, 51, 71, 79, 88, 137, and 155. There are also payments to glasiars that are not directly connected to the appearances of the players but may well indicate their presence. The payments to the players at Swansea may have appeared in other civic accounts that have not survived, perhaps those of another official, such as the mayor, or the players may have been paid directly by the audience.
 - 14 R. A. Griffith, 'The Prospects of the Welsh Drama', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1912–13), 129–39, suggested that the Welsh are so inherently dramatic that theatre is unnecessary.
 - 15 E. A. Lewis, *The Welsh Port Books (1550–1603)*, Cymmrodorion Records Series 12 (London, 1927), 25–6 and 75. The port books do not show extensive trade with Bristol, but this may simply be a characteristic of their limited survival.
 - 16 Greenfield, 'Touring', 261–2.
 - 17 Pembrokeshire Record Office: Haverfordwest Records 13 and 2–3.

- 18 Alan J. Fletcher, *Drama, Performance, and Polity in Pre-Cromwellian Ireland* (Toronto, 2000), 251–2.
- 19 Perrot's supposed paternity (illegitimate son of Henry VIII) has been clearly disproved, but it was a common rumour in the late sixteenth century and was presumably advantageous to Perrot's position at court, so he is unlikely to have denied it. R. K. Turvey, 'Sir John Perrot, Henry VIII's Bastard? The Destruction of a Myth', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1992), 79–94.
- 20 In 1592 Sir John was accused of treasonable practices by an Irish priest of dubious reputation and was confined to the Tower. It seems to have been privately recognized, likely as well by the queen herself, that the charges were false, but Perrot had many enemies and was convicted. He died in the Tower before any further action could be taken. Although the charges were never formally disproved, Sir John's son Thomas was reinstated as his heir. The documents concerning Sir John Perrot's case can, for the most part, be found in the Northumberland Collection, Alnwick Castle, Letter-book 6.
- 21 NA, PRO: E178/3355, mb 10.
- 22 Alnwick Castle: Syon MS Y III 1, box 2, envelope 4.
- 23 Pembrokeshire Record Office: Haverfordwest Records 13 and 2–3.
- 24 John Wasson (ed), *Devon*, REED (Toronto, 1986), 30–51 and 212–77.
- 25 Lewis, *Welsh Port Books*, 98–9, 127–9, 131, 137, 154–5, 157, and 226–7.
- 26 Brian Howells, *Early Modern Pembrokeshire*, Pembrokeshire County History, vol 3 (Haverfordwest, 1987), 22.
- 27 Mark Pilkinton (ed), *Bristol*, REED (Toronto, 1997), 215; David Klausner, 'The Improvising Vice in Renaissance England', T. J. McGee (ed), *Improvisation in the Arts* (Kalamazoo, 2003), 9–10.
- 28 Research on touring companies, their routes, and patrons has been intense; the most recent work to discuss these findings in broad terms is Peter Greenfield's chapter 'Touring', in the *New History of Early English Drama*. Discussions of individual companies are found in works like S. E. MacLean and S. McMillin, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge, 1998). For more on travelling players in the southwest, see, in this collection, Sally-Beth MacLean, 'At the End of the Road: An Overview of Southwestern Touring Circuits (17–32, above)', and Gloria Betcher, 'Minstrels, Morris Dancers, and Players: Tracing the Routes of Travelling Performers in Early Modern Cornwall' (33–56, above).
- 29 David N. Klausner, 'Family Entertainments Among the Salusburys of Lleweni, Denbighshire and their Circle, 1595–1641', *Welsh Music History/Hanes Cerdoriaeth Cymru* 5 (forthcoming).
- 30 NA, PRO: E 315/47 f 18.

- 31 NA, PRO: E 315/47 f 18.
- 32 On the ambiguities of the word 'play', see Lawrence Clopper, *Drama, Play, and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods* (Chicago, 2001), 12–15.
- 33 See the various essays in Alexandra F. Johnston and Wim Hüsken (eds), *English Parish Drama, Ludus 1* (Amsterdam and Atlanta, 1996).
- 34 NA, PRO: STAC 8/287/22, item 7.
- 35 NA, PRO: STAC 8/287/22, item 7.
- 36 NA, PRO: STAC 8/287/22, item 7.
- 37 Although the church in which the play was performed was renovated extensively in 1907, the renovation was done over the fabric of the medieval church so the original size of the building is still clearly visible. The Duchy of Lancaster's survey of 1609 listed fifty-nine freeholders. Llanelli's medieval records are very sparse, and there is no sign of a borough charter. It remained a small village until the Industrial Revolution. Ian Soulsby, *The Towns of Medieval Wales* (Chichester, 1983), 164–6.
- 38 The origin of the phrase is unknown, though it appears as early as William Camden's *Britannia* (London, 1607).
- 39 The most recent estimates place the balance between English- and Welsh-speakers in such heavily anglicized boroughs as Haverfordwest at about half and half, though the Welsh-speakers would clearly have been concentrated at the poorer end of the economic scale. See Geraint Jenkins, Richard Suggett, and Eryn M. White, 'The Welsh Language in Early Modern Wales', Geraint Jenkins (ed), *The Welsh Language before the Industrial Revolution*, (Cardiff, 1997), 45–122. The chapter also includes a language-usage map of Wales in about 1750, which would not have differed markedly from the previous two centuries (49).
- 40 Among the towns whose waits likely derived their income from such a system are Hereford, Liverpool, Manchester, Shrewsbury, and Worcester.
- 41 The payments for livery for the Haverfordwest waits are often followed by a payment for similar livery for 'Long Will', the town's beadle. Costs for the waits' liveries are generally about double that of the beadle's. On the Liverpool, York, and Norwich waits, see Walter L. Woodfill, *Musicians in English Society* (Princeton, 1953).
- 42 Gwenan Jones, *A Study of Three Welsh Religious Plays* (Bala, 1939).

**List 1: Payments for the Repair of Windows in the Swansea
Town Hall, 1618-34 (University College of Swansea Library:
Swansea Corporation Archives, C1)**

1617-18:

p 2	<i>Receved</i> of the players towardes the mending of the window <i>which</i> was broken	0 vjd
	<i>Receved</i> of the players towardes mending of the windowes broken	js 0
p 5	<i>Item</i> paid for mending the window in the hall & drawing downe of ye bell & setting vp	iijs 0
	<i>Item</i> for thomas the smyth for a bare of Iron ffor the Lower window & for Iron & his worke about the bell	vjs viijd
	<i>Item</i> paid for Lead	0 iiijd
p 6	<i>Item</i> paid the glasier for mending of the towne hall window	js ijd

1621-2:

p 40	Resevid of the stadg players towardes the hall windows	js
p 46	Paied the glassier for the mendinge of the halls windowe	iijd
p 46	paid the glasier for mending the hall windowe	4d

1622-3:

p 51	<i>Receved</i> of to stagplayers towards the mending of the windose	xijd
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1624-5:

p 71	<i>Receved</i> of the stagplayers the viij ^t of Ianuary towardes the mending of the windowes	vid
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1626-7:

p 79	<i>Receved</i> of the stage players toward Reparinge of the hall windoes	0 0 8d
p 88	payd to the glasier for mendinge of the halle windoes	0 6s 6d

1631-2:

p 137 *Receaved* of the statplaiers for breackinge of 6 quarells of the
hale wyddow vjd

1633-4:

p 155 *Received* of the stadge players the 24^o of ⁸ber towardes
mendinge of the glasse windowes js