

BOWEN family, Llwyn-gwair, Pembrokeshire

The members of this family trace their descent up to Gwynfardd Dyfed (c. 1038). The first to adopt the family surname was probably EVAN BOWEN, Pentre Evan. Many members served as high sheriffs; throughout they have played their part in public affairs. JAMES BOWEN, sheriff in 1622, was at Llwyn-gwair when **Lewys Dwinn** made his 'visitation' of Pembrokeshire in 1591. James married Elenor, daughter of John Griffith, son of Sir William Griffith, Penrhyn, Caernarfonshire. **Thomas Nicholas** gives some details of the pedigree of the family in his *Annals of the...County Families of Wales*, 1872, see also similar works on ancient families of Wales, etc.

GEORGE BOWEN (1722 - 1810) comes into the pages of Methodist history because of his friendship with John Wesley, **David Jones** (Llan-gan), and others. He was the eldest son of James Bowen and Alice, daughter of Robert Rowe and married Easter, daughter of William Thomas, Pentowyn, Carmarthenshire, and they had six sons and six daughters. Anne, one of the daughters, became the wife of the **Rev. David Griffiths**, Nevern. Llwyn-gwair served as a stepping stone for John Wesley on his journeyings to and from Ireland (see Wesley, *Diaries*), whilst **David Jones** (Llan-gan) performed many missions in London on behalf of George Bowen - arranging financial matters and making inquiries about suitable schools to which Bowen's children might be sent. He was high sheriff of Pembrokeshire in 1803. Bowen played his part in the gathering together of troops to be used against the French who landed at Fishguard (1797). He was a good landlord; **Richard Fenton** and others state that it was on Llwyn-gwair estate that marl was first used in north Pembrokeshire in order to improve the land. Bowen urged his tenants to gather seaweed; it is reported that he used some machine wherewith to grind bones to be mixed with marl and seaweed. He died 16 June 1810 and was buried at Nevern.

JAMES BEVAN BOWEN (1828 - 1905) was sheriff in 1862 and represented the county in Parliament for some years. His eldest son, Sir GEORGE BOWEN (1858 - 1940), married Florence, only daughter of Frederick Corbyn, army surgeon in India; he was educated at Cheltenham and Magdalen College, Oxford; was prominent in the public life of Pembrokeshire - sheriff in 1914, chairman of the county council in 1927, etc.; and was created K.B.E. after the war of 1914-18, his services to agriculture, amongst others, having been very valuable. Like some of his predecessors at Llwyn-gwair he was closely associated with the affairs of the marcher lordship of Cemais; he was also a member of the Governing Body of the Church in Wales. He died 3 July 1940 and was buried at Nevern.

Author

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Sources

Llwyn-gwair muniments in N.L.W.

The journal of the Rev. John Wesley, enlarged from original mss., with notes from unpublished diaries, annotations, maps, and illustrations (1938)

The Times, 5 July 1940

D. J. Williams, *StorĀ'au'r Tir Glas* (Aberystwyth 1936)

W. R. Williams, *The parliamentary history of the principality of Wales, from the earliest times to the present day, 1541-1895*(Brecknock 1895)

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