

DILLWYN DILLWYN-LLEWELYN, (DILLWYN) VENABLES-LLEWELYN

This family seems to have originated from Dillwyn (or Dilwyn, but the name does not appear to be Welsh - see Ekwall, *Dictionary of English Place-names*), near Weobley, Herefordshire, but afterwards settled in Llangorse parish (Brecknock). After the death of a Jeffrey Dillwyn there (1677), some of his family used 'Jeffreys' as a surname and migrated to Brecon; this branch had apparently died out by 1800 ([Theophilus Jones](#), *History of the County of Brecknock*, 3rd ed., iii, 65 - but the statement there that the poet [Ieuan Deulwyn](#) was of this family cannot stand). Of the remainder, who retained their name, a WILLIAM DILLWYN, a Quaker, emigrated to Pennsylvania c. 1699 (*History of the County of Brecknock* 70). His son, JOHN DILLWYN, had a son WILLIAM DILLWYN (1743? - 1824), who returned from America, settling at Higham Hall, Walthamstow, and married (1777) Sarah Weston, of High Hall, Essex.

Their son was

LEWIS WESTON DILLWYN (1778 - 1855)

Born at Ipswich 21 August 1778, was in 1802 placed by his father in control of the 'Cambrian Pottery' at Swansea, to which he removed in 1803, living at first at Burrough Lodge and afterwards at Sketty Hall. In 1814, this pottery took over the designers and craftsmen of the Nantgarw potteries, and began to manufacture porcelain (see Williams, *Guide to the Collection of Welsh Porcelain at the National Museum of Wales*, with portrait of Dillwyn). But Dillwyn, though he experimented in improving the 'body' of the Swansea ware, was primarily a naturalist, and published works of considerable scale and importance on botany and conchology; he was elected F.R.S. as early as 1804 (see the *D.N.B.* article on him for a list of these works, and *The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1932-3, 69-70, for a list of his minor papers). Retiring from active concern in the pottery in 1817, he engaged in public life; he became high sheriff (Glamorgan) in 1818, and additional M.P. for the county in the Reform Parliament, 1832-7. At Swansea (of which he was mayor in 1839), he was one of the founders of the Royal Institution of South Wales; and he published in 1840 a small book on the history of the town. He died 31 August 1855. He had married (1807) Mary, daughter of John Llewelyn, of Pen-ll-e'r-gaer, Llanyfelach; the family of LLEWELYN, originally of Ynys-gerwn (Neath), had succeeded to the Pen-ll-e'r-gaer estates c. 1790, on the extinction of their cognates the Price family (Nicholas, *Hist. of Glamorgan*). The two sons of this marriage were:

(1) JOHN DILLWYN-LLEWELYN (1810 - 1882)

He took the surname of his maternal grandfather, and lived at Pen-ll-e'r-gaer; born 12 January 1810 (*The Cambrian*, 13 January 1810), he went to Oriel College, Oxford (1827), and was high sheriff of Glamorgan in 1835. He inherited to the full his father's scientific interests, and was elected F.R.S. in 1836; he collaborated with Wheatstone in his work on the electric telegraph, and with [Fox Talbot](#) (a connection by marriage) he made important improvements in photography; he was also a sedulous botanist. He died 24 August 1882. He had married Emma, daughter of Thomas Mansel Talbot of Margam (see articles [Mansel](#) and [Talbot](#)).

Their son

Sir JOHN TALBOT DILLWYN-LLEWELYN (1836 - 1927), Member of Parliament

was born 26 May 1836, was at Eton and Christ Church, and became an important public figure. He was high sheriff of Glamorgan in 1878, mayor of Swansea in 1891, and (after several unsuccessful attempts to enter Parliament) Conservative M.P. for Swansea, 1895-1900; he was created baronet in 1890. He took great interest in secondary education and was an active supporter of S. David's College, Lampeter, and of University College, Cardiff; and he was a member of the royal commission on land in Wales, 1896. He died 6 July 1927. He had married (1861) Caroline Hicks Beach. Their younger and only surviving son married the heiress of the VENABLES family, of Llysdinam (Newbridge, Radnorshire), and adopted the style VENABLES -LLEWELYN; on the Venables (a Cheshire family originally) see [Williams](#), *Hist. of Radnorshire* (2nd ed., 383-4). Lady Venables-Llewelyn was the daughter of Richard Lister Venable (1809 - 1894), vicar of Clyro, who figures in the diaries of [Francis Kilvert](#), and whose brother George Stovin Venable (1819 - 1888), classical scholar and writer in the *Saturday Review*, is in the *D.N.B.* - his fight with Thackeray the novelist, when they were both at school, will be remembered; he built the church at Newbridge, and was buried there. The father of the two brothers was RICHARD VENABLES, who died at the beginning of 1858, aged 84 (*Haul*, 1858, 60); he was vicar of Nantmel, archdeacon of Carmarthen from 1832 to 1858 (*West Wales Records*, v, 152), and for twenty-five years chairman of Radnorshire quarter sessions.

(2) LEWIS LLEWELYN DILLWYN (1814 - 1892)

Born 19 May 1814, was educated at Bath, married (1838) Elizabeth, daughter of the geologist Sir Henry de la Beche (his father's friend), and was himself something of a geologist; he lived at Hendrefoilan. While his brother, and still more his nephew, worthily represented the traditions of the squirearchy with which they were connected by marriage, Lewis Dillwyn reflected rather the industrial and commercial interests, and the political Radicalism, of his father and of his Quaker forebears. Prominent in railway and banking circles, he was even more important in the industrial development of Swansea (of which he was mayor in 1848); he was head of the firm of Dillwyn and Richards at the Landore spelter-works, and later on

was associated with Siemens in the Landore-Siemens Steel Company, of which he was chairman. From 1855 to 1885 he was M.P. for Swansea, and from 1885 to 1892 for the newly-formed Swansea Town division. Throughout this unusually long parliamentary career, he was a conspicuous Radical. In the Commons, he championed the cause of the Cardiganshire farmers evicted for their votes in the 1868 election, and of the Denbighshire tenantry who in 1886-7 agitated against tithe; in 1873 he moved an anti-clerical amendment to the Endowed Schools Act; in 1879 he censured recent exercises of the royal prerogative. From the first (1870) he supported the movement for Welsh Church Disestablishment, and from 1883 was himself the mover of almost annual resolutions calling for it; in 1887 it was Dillwyn and [Stuart Rendel](#) who affirmed the Welsh Liberal Party's support of Irish Home Rule. He died 19 June 1892; his only son Henry (1843-1890) and one of his daughters, Sarah (Essie, b. 1852) had predeceased him, but he left two daughters, Mary (Minnie 1839-1922) and [Amy](#) (1845-1935).

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

To the sources already mentioned add:

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

T. Gwynn Jones, *Cofiant Thomas Gee* (Denbigh 1913) consult index s.v. Dillwyn)

D. T. Williams, *The Economic Development of Swansea and of the Swansea District to 1921* (Cardiff? 1940)

Further Reading

Lewis Weston Dillwyn, *Materials for a fauna and flora of Swansea and the neighbourhood* (Swansea 1848)

Swansea Council: [Lewis Weston Dillwyn](#)

National Museum Wales: Mark Etheridge, [John Dillwyn Llewelyn - Welsh Pioneer Photographer](#)

Coflein: [Llansamlet Spelter Works](#)

Wikipedia Article: [William Dillwyn](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Lewis Weston Dillwyn](#)

Wikipedia Article: [John Dillwyn Llewelyn](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Sir John Dillwyn-Llewellyn, 1st Baronet](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Lewis Llewelyn Dillwyn](#)

Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q20738048](#)

Published date: 1959

Article Copyright: <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/> 

The Dictionary of Welsh Biography is provided by The National Library of Wales and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. It is free to use and does not receive grant support. A donation would help us maintain and improve the site so that we can continue to acknowledge Welsh men and women who have made notable contributions to life in Wales and beyond.

Find out more on our [sponsorship page](#).

