


## MANSEL family, of Oxwich, Penrice, and Margam abbey, Glamorganshire

The history of the Mansel family is fairly well documented; the Penrice and Margam abbey muniments in the National Library of Wales extend to several thousand documents. *A History of Margam Abbey*, by Walter de Gray Birch (of the British Museum), was published in 1897. De Gray Birch also prepared the *Descriptive Catalogue of the Penrice and Margam Abbey Manuscripts* (privately printed, six volumes, 1893-1905); this catalogue has been supplemented by three volumes prepared by the National Library. In addition there are the three quarto volumes by C. A. Maunsell and E. P. Statham entitled *History of the Family of Maunsell (Mansell, Mansel) ...* (London, 1917-20); these deal fairly fully, not only with the main Margam (and Penrice) branch, but also with other branches. Details concerning the Mansel line and the more important members of the family are given concisely by [G. T. Clark](#) in his *Limbus Patrum Morganiae et Glamorganiae* (London, 1886); it has to be borne in mind, however, that [Clark](#) published his work before De Gray Birch and the authors of the *Maunsell ...* volumes wrote.

[G. T. Clark](#) starts the line with HENRY MANSEL, who is said to have settled in Gower in the reign of Edward I. Following him came RICHARD (ROBERT ?) MANSEL, RICHARD MANSEL, Sir HUGH MANSEL (who married Isabel, daughter and heiress of Sir John Penrice of Penrice castle in Gower), and PHILIP MANSEL, slain in the Wars of the Roses and attainted. Philip Mansel's wife was Mary, daughter of [Gruffudd ap Nicolas](#) of Newton; their son JENKIN MANSEL of Oxwich, 'The Valiant,' had the attainder reversed in 1485.

It was Sir RICE MANSEL (died 1559), of Penrice and Oxwich, son of Jenkin Mansel (of Oxwich), who purchased Margam abbey from the Crown (De Gray Birch, *Catalogue*). His son, Sir EDWARD MANSEL (died 1595), of Penrice, Oxwich, and Margam, married Jane Somerset, daughter of [Henry, 2nd earl of Worcester](#); among their children were THOMAS MANSEL (the heir), FRANCIS MANSEL (whence the Mansel family of Muddlescombe, Carmarthenshire - see catalogue of the [Muddlescombe Estate Records](#)  in N.L.W., and the article on [Francis Mansell](#)), and [Sir Robert Mansel](#), vice-admiral of England.

Sir Thomas Mansel (died 1631), baronet, who held the offices of sheriff and knight of the shire for Glamorgan and one of whose sons was ARTHUR MANSEL, father of [Bussy Mansel](#), was succeeded by his eldest son, Sir LEWIS MANSEL (died 1638), 2nd baronet, who matriculated at Oxford, 30 January 1600/1 and was admitted to Lincoln's Inn, 5 February 1603/4. Anthony Wood says that he gave £50 a year for several years towards the library of Jesus College, Oxford; he was first cousin to [Francis Mansell](#), principal of Jesus College, Oxford. Sir Lewis Mansel appears to have been succeeded, as 3rd baronet, by his son, HENRY MANSEL, who, however, died young, being succeeded by his brother, Sir EDWARD MANSEL (died aged 70, 17 November 1706), 4th baronet, who was probably one of the most influential persons in South Wales affairs during his period. The [duke of Beaufort](#) visited Margam during his 'Progress' (as Lord President of Wales) in 1684 ([T. Dineley](#), *Account of the Progress ...*), Sir Edward figures prominently in the Margam muniments in schedule where, e.g., there are references to his duties as vice-admiral of South Wales; see also the De Gray Birch *Catalogues*). One of his daughters, Martha, married [Thomas Morgan](#) of Tredegar - see [Morgan family](#) of Tredegar; the marriage and its after-effects caused the baronet much trouble because [Thomas Morgan](#) was reluctant to return from a tour on the continent of Europe. Sir Edward's heir, Sir THOMAS MANSEL (died 1723), baronet, was created 1st baron Mansel, 31 December 1711. Sir Thomas became prominent not only in South Wales affairs but in Parliamentary and Government circles also. He was Member of Parliament for Cardiff, 1689-98, and for Glamorgan from 1699 to 1711. *Archaeologia Britannica*, 1707, by [Edward Lhuys](#), is dedicated to him. From 1704 to 1709 and 1711 to 1712 he was Controller of the Household to queen Anne. He became one of the commissioners of the Treasury, 1710-1, and was one of the Tellers of the Exchequer, 1712-4, whilst, like his father before him, he was also vice-admiral of South Wales. He was intimate with dean Swift, who refers to him in his *Journal to Stella*; he was also on friendly terms with [Robert Harley](#), afterwards 1st earl of Oxford, with [Francis Gwyn](#), and with [Erasmus Lewis](#) - letters to Mansel from all three are in the Margam collection in N.L.W. (See also Hist. MSS. Comm., *Report on the Duke of Portland MSS.*)

The first baron Mansel was succeeded by his grandson, THOMAS MANSEL, 2nd baron Mansel, who, however, died in 1744 without an heir and was succeeded by two uncles in turn, viz., CHRISTOPHER MANSEL, 3rd baron Mansel, who, however, survived his nephew by only a few months, to be succeeded by his brother, BUSSY MANSEL, 4th baron Mansel (died 1750), whose second wife was Barbara, daughter of William, 2nd earl of Jersey. The eventual heir to the Margam property was MARY MANSEL, sister of the 3rd and 4th barons; she married [John Ivory Talbot](#), of Lacock abbey, Wiltshire, whence Mansel Talbot and Talbot.

For details as to the practical interest which certain members of the family took in the history and literature of their county (and country) see [G. J. Williams](#), *Traddodiad Llenyddol Morgannwg* (Cardiff, 1946); in particular consult the index to that work under Sir Edward Mansel (died 1585) and Sir Lewis Mansel (died 1636). The latter lent the 'Red Book of Hergest' (now Jesus College MS. 1) to [Dr. John Davies](#), Mallwyd, in 1634, whilst the former is credited with 'An Account of the cause of the Conquest of Glamorgan by Sir Robert Fitz Hamon and his twelve knights ...' (Llanover MSS. C. 27 and C. 74.; J. H. Matthews, *Cardiff Records*, iv).

### Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

## Sources

The main references have been included in the text

Glanmor Williams, 'Richard Mansell (1487-1559)' in *The Glamorgan Historian*, VI, 33-51

**Published date:** 1959

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