

MYDDELTON MYDDLETON, MIDDLETON, of Gwaenynog, Denbigh, Chirk, and Ruthin, Denbighshire, London and Essex

The Denbighshire Myddeltons claimed descent from **Rhirid Flaidd**, lord of **Penllyn** (died 1207), but had adopted the English surname after the marriage of his descendant Rhirid ap David (c. 1393-4) to the daughter of Sir Alexander Myddelton of Myddelton, Salop. His great-grandson, DAVID MYDDELTON, was Receiver for North Wales under Edward IV and Richard III. David's eldest son settled at Gwaenynog; his 3rd son, FOULK MYDDELTON, became governor of Denbigh castle, and was succeeded there by his heir RICHARD MYDDELTON (c. 1508 - 1575), Member of Parliament for Denbigh 1542, of whose nine sons one followed him in the governorship, three migrated to London and one overseas, while his brother ROBERT MYDDELTON represented the borough in the 1547 parliament.

Sir THOMAS MYDDELTON (1550 - 1631), entrepreneur

The fourth son of the above Richard Myddelton. Apprenticed to a London grocer, he became a freeman of the Grocers' Company (1582), surveyor of the outports (c. 1580), and from c. 1595 was constantly employed on such public business as the valuation of prize cargoes, the raising of emergency military and naval supplies by means of his extensive credit, and expert advice on currency problems. The scope of his private transactions, and his deep underlying piety, come out clearly in his ledger for 1583-1603 (N.L.W., Chirk castle MSS.). He was an original shareholder in the East India Company, a partner in the chief buccaneering expeditions of the reign, and under James I in the New River enterprise of his brother Hugh (below) and in the Virginia Company, and a universal banker and moneylender, often in association with James I's Welsh goldsmith **John Williams**. He remained in close touch with Wales, interceding on behalf of his fellow-burgesses of Denbigh against the 'encroachments' of the **Salusbury's of Lleweni** in 1593, arbitrating in other local disputes in 1595, serving Merionethshire (where he had property) in parliament in 1597 and as lord lieutenant in 1599, and advising the government on the choice of sheriffs there in 1602 (Hist. MSS. Comm., *Cecil*, iv, 375-6, v. 379, xii, 482-3). He farmed his Denbighshire lands in association with Lincolnshire properties, and drew on them for supplies for Ireland during a crisis of Bagnall's campaign (1595); he advanced money (on mortgage or unsecured) to many of his neighbours in North Wales and to Welshmen of the South and in London, thereby often playing a decisive part in the evolution of the county families (N.L.W., *Journal*, i, 85-6; N.L.W., Plymouth deeds 822, 913-14, 916; U.C.N.W., Nannau-Hengwrt MSS. 189, 207, 229, 240, 273, 287, 339-40, 357; *Cal. Wynn Papers*, 1017; *Cal. Clenennau Letters and Papers*, letter 293, 453). He bought in 1595 (from lord St. John of Bletsloe) the castle and lordship of Chirk [for about £5,000], and in 1628-9 the Crown lordship of Arwystli and Cyfeiliog, which he later resold. [He was accused of extensive felling of timber and other depredations and extortions in the lordship of Chirk and encountered much local opposition as a 'usurer' stepping into a former Crown lordship.] After 1603, when (after long evading civic office) he was made alderman and sheriff of London (21 June) and a knight (26 July), his interests became more exclusively centred in the metropolitan area; he became lord mayor in 1613, acquired in 1615 an Essex manor as a country seat nearer than Chirk to his place of business in Tower Street, and other properties in the home counties in 1623, and represented the city in the three parliaments of 1624-6. Yet at the very end of his life he co-operated with **Rowland Heylyn** in financing the publication of the first portable Welsh Bible and other Welsh devotional works (1630). He died on 12 August 1631, leaving his Welsh estates to his eldest surviving son Thomas Myddelton and those in Essex to a younger son, TIMOTHY MYDDELTON, founder of another wealthy stock which played a considerable part in the public life of Essex. His strong Puritanism did not prevent him from sheltering and befriending his Roman Catholic brother WILLIAM MYDDELTON (sometimes confused with his cousin and namesake the bard **WILLIAM MIDDLETON**), who had settled in Flanders, with a Flemish wife, and became an associate of **Hugh Owen** of Plas-du, the Catholic conspirator. Another brother, ROBERT MYDDELTON, a city glover, was as Member of Parliament for Weymouth, an outspoken critic of commercial policy in James I's parliaments, but beyond the freemanship of Denbigh (1615) took no part in Welsh affairs, nor did his nephew RICHARD MYDDELTON, a fellow-freeman of the Grocers' Company and adventurer in the New River Company, who traded in skins in the Levant, served as consul under the Levant Company (c. 1651-3) [and traded in Welsh cloth in Portugal, Leghorn, and the Canaries c. 1622 (T. Mendenhall, *Shrewsbury, Drapers and the Welsh Wool Trade*, 1953, 64)]. Another nephew (possibly the one who endowed a 'lectureship' at Haverfordwest - see under **Dolben**) fell into the hands of the Spaniards on Drake's last voyage (1595-6).

HUGH MYDDELTON (1560 - 1631), entrepreneur

The youngest son of Richard Myddelton of Denbigh. He took a leading part in securing the borough's new charter (1596), serving under its terms as alderman and recorder and representing the borough in parliament (without distinction) from 1603-28. His first enterprise was in unsuccessful trials for coal in the vale of Clwyd, but his fame rests upon his New River project for improving London's water supply, which was financed (1609) out of his profits as a city goldsmith (the trade to which he had been apprenticed) and in other business enterprises, then in collaboration with the Crown (1613) and finally as an incorporated company, but without yielding any dividends in the founder's lifetime. In 1617 he took a lease of the Cardiganshire mines of the Mines Royal Company which he worked with some success against strong opposition, presenting silver cups from the produce to Denbigh and Ruthin corporations and a gold one to the head of his clan at Gwaenynog; but he declined the invitation (1625) of **Sir John Wynn** of Gwydir to undertake reclamation work on Traeth Mawr such as he had just unsuccessfully conducted (with great loss) in the Isle of Wight in association with **Sir Bevis Thelwall**, a fellow Denbighshire man (*Cal. Wynn Papers*, 1366-7). He was made a baronet (as 'Hugh Middleton of Ruthin, citizen and goldsmith of London') on 19 October 1622, and died at his London home (Cheapside) on 10 December 1631.

His heir,

Sir WILLIAM MYDDELTON 2nd bart. (died 1651),

claimed to have been a victim of the Laudian persecution and was a supporter of parliament in the Civil War, first in a civilian capacity and then by raising a regiment of foot which he led to the aid of his cousin Sir Thomas Myddelton (below) in his Welsh campaign of 1644; he also protected during the war the interests of the New River Company, of which he was a governor. In 1646 he held for a time the family governorship of Denbigh, was elected a common councillor there in 1647, and appointed a county assessment commissioner in 1647, but he was never a Welsh Member of Parliament (as stated in G.E.C., *Baronetage*, i, 209-10), nor was his son the ever-needy pensioner Sir HUGH MYDDELTON (3rd bart.), who was imprisoned in 1652 (when his relatives at Chirk bought him out), and again in 1659 for plotting on behalf of Charles II, and subsequently entered the service of the future James II. His son, another Sir HUGH MYDDELTON, was elected a common councillor of Denbigh in 1681, but the title became dormant with the death in 1723, in extreme squalor, of Sir Hugh Myddelton, the dissolute 6th bart., although it was not legally extinct till 1828. HENRY MYDDELTON (born 1607), a younger son of the 1st Sir Hugh and a shareholder in the New River Company, also fought for parliament although holding some lucrative crown offices, and was one of Charles I's guards at Holmby.

Sir THOMAS MYDDELTON (1586 - 1666), parliamentary commander

The eldest surviving son of Sir Thomas the lord mayor (above). Educated at Queen's College, Oxford (matriculated 22 February 1605), and at Gray's Inn (1607), he married, in 1612, into the Yorkshire Saville's and settled at Chirk, taking his part in local government and in feuds with neighbours like the **Trevor family** of Brynkynallt and the **Edwardses of Chirkland**, which involved him in 1625 in a charge of riot at his house. He was knighted in 1617 (10 February), about the same time married, as his second wife, Mary Napier, the future sister-in-law of **Thomas Mytton**, and extended his North Wales estates by purchasing Ruthin castle (1632), and acquiring the stewardship of the lordship (20 October 1635). He entered parliament as member for Weymouth (1624), but on re-election there next year he changed to Denbighshire. Elected again for his county to the Long Parliament, he tried to moderate the zeal of his fellow-Puritans with a view to presenting a united front against the forces of Catholicism abroad, and sat on several committees dealing with finance and religion, but was not prominent in debates. In June 1642 he was sent to put the Militia Ordinance into force in Denbighshire, where he encountered strong opposition from the **Salusburies of Lleweni** and the **Trevors of Brynkynallt**, under whose influence the county declared for the king, bound Myddelton's tenants in an oath against him, and barred his access to Chirk castle, which was taken by **Robert Ellice** and held by **Sir Thomas Hanmer**, his steward Watkin Kyffin being sent a prisoner to Chester.

On 12 July 1643, parliament commissioned him as sergeant major general for North Wales under an ordinance (renewed and extended in 1644 and 1645) which empowered him to raise troops and to distrain on delinquents' estates for the expenses, and guaranteed the £5,000 he initially advanced, with any further sums he could raise on his personal credit. He was later allotted the confiscated property of metropolitan recusants and delinquents, including that of shareholders in his uncle's New River Company. These financial arrangements were put in force at the expense of local 'delinquents' immediately on the reduction of North Wales (document of 10 February 1646 in Brogyntyn unscheduled coll., N.L.W.); but Myddelton claimed to have been left £35,000 out of pocket. Meanwhile, after a successful border campaign (28 July to 7 November 1643) in collaboration with **Thomas Mytton** and Sir William Brereton, his first incursion into North Wales (via Holt Bridge) had been cut short by the resistance of **William Salusbury** at Denbigh and the landing of troops from Ireland on the Flintshire coast (18 November), his only lasting gains being a few Welsh recruits and the bullets made from the organ pipes at Wrexham, his headquarters; but after delays caused by recruiting and refitting (till May 1644) and by mutinies and the manoeuvres of Rupert (which kept him chafing on the border till August), he entered Montgomeryshire, came to terms with **Herbert of Cherbury** for the surrender of Montgomery castle, which he defended, in a major victory (17 September) surprised and took **lord Powis** in his castle (2 October), which he placed under Sir John Price, defeated at Machynlleth (27

November) an attempt to intercept reinforcements from South Wales (27 November), and won his first footing in Radnorshire (December), but failed to capture his own castles of Ruthin and Chirk or to gain a footing in Denbighshire. The Self-Denying Ordinance of 3 April 1645 recalled him to Westminster and transferred his command to **Mytton** (12 May), though he did not actually quit the field until June.

He continued to co-operate with the dominant Puritan faction, showing, according to **archbishop John Williams**, much ruthlessness in ejecting Welsh ministers who refused the Covenant (which he had taken on 22 September 1643), even when there was no one to replace them. He was again entrusted with the defences of North Wales (16 June 1648) in the second Civil War, though the actual campaigning was done by **Mytton**. But he opposed the king's trial and was expelled from the House in 'Pride's Purge' (December 1648), retiring to Chirk. Rumours, in March 1651, of his dealings with Charles II through the earl of Derby, led parliament to put a garrison into his castle, and it was not withdrawn till he had given heavy sureties of his loyalty to the Commonwealth [16 May 1651 to 25 March 1656]. This deterred him from accepting Charles's invitation from Stoke (17 August) to join him on his march down the border (Whitelock, *Memorials*, iii, 335). [He signed the North Wales petition against the Propagation in July 1652 (*Cal. Wynn Papers*, 1988), and helped to support the ejected minister of Wrexham, but defended Chirk for the Protectorate when plots were rife in the spring of 1655 (Thurloe *State Papers*, iii, 209, 298)]. After going for a time into hiding in England, he lived a country gentleman's life at Chirk, developing the coal on his estate and attending an occasional horse race or cock fight, but on 7 August 1659, he joined Sir George Booth in raising Cheshire and North Wales, proclaimed Charles II at Wrexham (*C.J.*, vii, 753; cf. *Cal. S. P. Dom.*, 1659-60, 162), was declared a traitor (9 August), shared in Booth's defeat by Lambert near Nantwich (18 August), but evaded capture and was condemned to sequestration. Before the order could be made effective, he had been recalled to Westminster with the expelled members of the Rump (21 February 1660) and on 27 February the vote for his sequestration was suspended; but the dismantling of his castle had been carried far enough to make it uninhabitable till 1672, the family living meanwhile at Cefn-y-wern. Restored to the militia commission for his county in March 1660, and elected to represent it in the Convention Parliament next month, he again proclaimed Charles II at Wrexham (12 May) and opposed the promotion of **John Glynn**e as one who had accepted office under the regicides (*Cal. Wynn Papers*, 2240). Successive attempts to buy the lordship of Ruthin from the Crown were foiled by the opposition of the freeholders in September 1660 and the plan was not realised till 1677. He died at Cefn-y-wern on 22 January 1667. He counted himself Welsh, though he probably could not speak the language. Although he co-operated with 'sectaries' he was himself a loyal Anglican, and his ritualistic practices were often a source of suspicion to his colleagues (Richard Baxter, *Penitent Confession*, 1691, 30; Myddelton, *Chirk Castle Accts*, 1605-69, x; N.L.W., Wynnstay MSS. (unscheduled coll.)).

Sir THOMAS MYDDELTON 1st bart. (c. 1624 - 1663)

Son of the above, left Oxford (matriculated at Oriel, 20 March 1640) in time to serve as 'liaison' between the Commons and his father's campaigning quarters on the Welsh border. In 1646 he was made governor of Chirk castle (7 March), deputy lieutenant of Denbighshire (2 July) and Member of Parliament for Flint in place of the disabled royalist member, **Sir John Salusbury** of Bachegraig. He was a county commissioner with his father for taxes in 1647 and under the 'North Wales Association' in 21 August 1648 but shared his exclusion from Westminster the following December. In Booth's rebellion he held Chirk castle for Charles II even after Booth's defeat in the field, till 24 August 1659, when he was given two months to quit the country unless previously pardoned by parliament. He and three brothers who were with him in the castle petitioned the restored Rump on 5 October, but no decision had been made before the Rump gave way to the Convention, in which he represented Montgomery, defeating **Charles Lloyd** of Leighton and was one of the seven members appointed to raise £50,000 to send to Charles II at Paris (26 April); at the same time he commanded the militia for east Denbighshire, Montgomeryshire, and Merioneth. His services were rewarded with a baronetcy (4 July 1660), and he was elected for Denbighshire in the Cavalier Parliament against some opposition from the west under the father of **Robert Price** of Giler (*Cal. Wynn Papers*, 2294). He married as his second wife the sister of **Sir John Trevor** of Brynkynallt (1637 - 1717). He died during the session, but from 1679 to 1715 the county representation was monopolised by his family, excepting in 1681, when the Tory, **Sir John Trevor** 1637 - 1717), defeated the Whig RICHARD MYDDELTON (later 3rd bart.), whose elder brother Sir THOMAS (2nd bart.) challenged **Trevor** to a duel for calling their grand-father a traitor (N.L.W., Chirk Castle MS. E53, 558; Cust, *Chronicles of Erthig*, i, 51); and for most of the 18th century they represented the borough. During this period they also developed their coal mines at Black Park and their iron forge at Pont-y-blew. The baronetcy became extinct with the death, in 1718, of Sir WILLIAM MYDDELTON, 4th bart. (aet. 24), the estate passing successively to Robert (died 1733) and John (died 1747), two sons of a younger brother of the 1st bart. (John having reverted to the family's earlier role of city merchant), and on the death of John's grandson Richard (1796) to the latter's eldest sister Charlotte and so to her great-great-grandson, the present owner.

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Images

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