Introductory Notes

It has to be emphasised that these are personal working notes and a very large number of inconsistencies and errors still need to be resolved. Since the beginning of its compilation the database has been supplemented by additional historical forms and re-edited many times to remove duplicated entries and errors. This process is ongoing. Time has not permitted expansion to relate individual names to key datasets such as tithe apportionments, the Ordnance Survey gazetteer and maps, Archif Melville Richards (Bangor University) and Archif Ken Lloyd Gruffydd. The database also has many gaps, particularly for north Wales and for Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire. I felt that since these last two counties already have lengthy place-name studies - down to field-names and house-names - there was little to be gained in extending the database to cover sources used in these studies. Perhaps that is a matter which should be tackled as a collective project. A few 'trespasses' have been during the course of preparing publications on Glamorgan, Carmarthenshire and Powys, and through searching through online schedules of records held in Glamorgan Archives and The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

1. For lead-spelling, I follow the common alphabet in use in most of Europe rather than the Welsh alphabet - treating digraphs such as *ch*, *dd*, *ll* as individual letters *c, h*, *d, d*, *l, l*, etc. Orthography has occasionally proved a problem. The current guidelines of the Welsh Language Commissioner, *List of Standardised Welsh Place-names* (2019) gov.wales/list-standarised-welsh-place-names, supplemented by articles by Manon Davies in Enwau Cymru bulletins 15 and 16, recommend spelling place-names as single words (with certain exceptions set out in the *List*). Topographical names containing several elements are generally spelt as separate words. Taken collectively, we use Bryn Mawr for the hill and Bryn-mawr for the town, Nant Ddu for a stream and Nant-ddu for a village. The most contentious matter is how we spell house-names and farm-names. Current advice is that house-names follow the rules on topographical names. That makes reasonable sense, for example, with Tŷ Mawr in a town or village and long-established names of country mansions but if this rule were to be applied to rural houses and farms it would mean amending the spelling of many thousands of names - Llwyn Celyn rather than Llwyncelyn and Fedw Ddu rather than Fedw-ddu as examples. That poses a significant problem in standardising place-name entries because it is not always clear when an historic form applies to a settlement, a house, land or a topographical feature. A more reasonable policy would be to treat house-names and farm-names as place-names because they are habitations and because topographical names are nearly always easily identified and separated. As a rough-and-ready rule I treat farm-names as place-names. There is nothing set in stone in this database, however, and future editing can resolve inconsistencies and amend spellings according to guidelines recommended by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

2. I have adopted current English forms as lead-forms with some minor adjustments such as 'Castell Caereinion' rather than 'Castle Caereinion' and 'Merthyr Tudful' rather than 'Merthyr Tydfil' where the variation is a relatively small. There is good reason for future amendment and cross-referencing from standard Welsh form such as 'Tresimwnt' to 'Bonvilston' in order to avoid the presumption that the English and anglicised forms are more authoritative. More contentiously I have attempted to standardise lead-forms - particularly field-names according to the most common form found in historical sources coupled with the lead-forms and common variants in Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru. Anyone consulting this will find entries for both 'Canol' and 'Cenol', for example and I prefer 'Coedcae' to the lead-form 'coetgae' in GPC; the first is the more common form in south and mid-Wales. From a personal point of view, this seems essential in order to make individual names accessible for reference and to limit cross-referencing. It has to be stressed, however, that the preferred standardised forms are not necessarily more legitimate than historical variants. In some cases, it seemed practical to make allowance for significant dialectal variations (see below).

3. One other matter should also be borne in mind. Past practice - especially in Welsh-language publications - was to arrange place-names according to the Welsh alphabet A, B, C, Ch, D, Dd, E, F, Ff, etc as in Elwyn Davies's *Gazetteer* with the addition of non-Welsh letters such as K. This may seem to be straightforward at first sight until a reader looks more closely: Elwyn Davies in his *Gazetteer* has just two names 'Chwilog' and 'Chwitffordd' under the Welsh alphabetical letter Ch but Melville Richards in *Welsh Administrative and Territorial Units* places 'Chwilog' (and other place-names) at the end of C and 'Ddrudwy' at the end of D. These practices can be difficult to follow for non-Welsh speakers even at this level: in the *Gazetter* 'Llan-lwy' appears between 'Llaniwared' and 'Llanllawddog' because L- and Ll- are different letters in the Welsh alphabet. A non-Welsh speaker might have looked for 'Llan-lwy' before 'Llanllywenfel'. If we add lenition to the mix these problems grow rapidly in compiling any detailed place-name dictionaries and databases in English and arguably even in a Welsh language place-name dictionary. The fundamental problem is that the place-names of Wales are not uniformly Welsh.

4. Two further problems cannot be avoided. Some field-names in particular appear in historic sources in lenited, unlenited, colloquial and dialect forms, Many historic forms also reflect anglicisation or the opposite process of cymricisation. Lenition can be largely overcome by cross-referencing Wern to Gwern, for example, but we have to be constantly alert to the possibility that the same place might appear in one historical source as 'Wern' and in another as 'Gwern'. Dialect and legitimate variations pose the greatest problem. Canol/Cenol has been mentioned above and can be managed by cross-referencing but what practice do we follow with *gweirglodd* (lead form in GPC) which appears as *gweirlod*, *gworlod* and *gwyrlod* and lenited *weirlod*, *wyrlod* and *worlod* in historic sources? In this particular example, I have reduced the number of lead-forms to just two main variants *gweirglodd* (more common in north Wales) and *gwyrlod* (more common in south Wales); lenited forms *weirglodd* and *wyrlod* are cross-referenced. The difficulties are best illustrated by Dwy Erw 'two acres' which appears in historic sources as (Y) Ddwy Erw, Dwyer, Ddwyer, Dwyar, Ddwyar with a variety of clerical scribal guesses, sometimes even within a single document

5. Many field-names and topographical names cannot be identified any more precisely than by the name of their ecclesiastical parishes. Unless a name appears on an estate plan, in a tithe apportionment and plan, or a plan attached to sale particulars, it is often impossible to locate it. In an attempt to enable future identification of location I have relied upon documentary context, viz. by extracting individual names in conjunction with names found in the same source. This has, of course, demanded a great deal of duplication of names in the database and individual entries are much fuller than would normally be expected in, for example, a publication. Some of this duplication can be reduced as research proceeds.. Anyone using this database also has to bear in mind the possibility that some of the evidence under a particular entry may prove to relate to other locations in a parish. A large parish might contain several examples of, for example, Cae Mawr or Erw Goch. It is worth adding that the sequence of historic forms in original sources such as conveyances and surveys is very unlikely to be random and was usually unnecessary except when property was rearranged. The order of names generally reflects administrative method and convenience by drawing on evidence from existing documents and copying them into new documents in the same sequence. This is most obvious in charters of confirmation and cartularies but can also be found in runs of property conveyances. That may not always be apparent until a later stage in evidence gathering and analysis. Particular caution is required with later sources since these sometimes garble earlier historic names or omit them completely. This is especially evident during the process of anglicisation.

6. The notes have been compiled over a period of more than thirty-five years and were not intended to be a source of general reference. During this time I have lost full references during transcription or been unable to follow up incomplete references found in secondary publications. A number of archives repositories have listed or re-arranged collections since the database started and some have transferred holdings to other repositories. A number of have also changed their names notably Glamorgan Record which is now Glamorgan Archives. Some major collections have also shifted from one repository to another. Nearly all of the forms extracted by Melville Richards from the old Cardiff Library catalogues, for example, are taken from original deeds now held in Glamorgan Archives. Records of Quarter Sessions (apart from strays in non-official transfers) and parish registers once held in the NLW are now held in local repositories.

7. I have chosen to use the ecclesiastical parish as a general locator. Melville Richards preferred to use the civil parish as defined in 1896 apparently because these are clearly defined on Ordnance Survey second - and later - edition maps and plans. The civil parish first appears in Wales during the sixteenth century and was the primary unit for gathering and adminstering Poor Rates and Highway Rates. This makes little sense since individual places are rarely identified by civil parish in, for example, property conveyances and wills. Civil parishes moreover did not necessarily correspond with historic parishes and were generally smaller, often based on a particular ancient township or group of townships. When they are mentioned in earlier records, they tend to be those which overlapped county boundaries such as Llandysilio (Llandysilio-yn-Nyfed) which possessed two civil parishes Llandysilio West in co. Carmarthen and Llandysilio East in co. Pembroke. Llanymynech was composed of two civil parishes Carreghofa, co. Montgomery (earlier co. Denbigh) and Llanymynech (based on the townships of Treprenal and Llwydtidmon) in co. Salop.

8. Melville Richards's reluctance to use historic parishes as locators is understandable because they were not immutable administrative divisions. Parishes recorded in medieval sources were often larger than those recorded in later sources; some possessing up to six or more subordinate churches or chapels. Many of these gradually acquired parochial status and a few might be merged. One additional complexity is that an ecclesiastical building might be described as both a church and a chapel in a run of conveyances or surveys. These developments are most obvious and identifiable after the establishment of new boroughs in the Middle Ages served by their own churches. This often led to the creation of new ecclesiastical divisions carved out of older ones - Caerffili from Eglwysilan, Montgomery from Chirbury, Aberystwyth from Llanbadarn Fawr, Flint from Holywell, and Beaumaris (Biwmares) from Llan-faes as examples. A particular field described in one source as located in Michaelston-super-Afan (Llanfihangel Ynys Afan) may be described as lying in Aberafan in another. The precise point at which an ecclesiastical building acquires the status of parish church or a chapelry becomes a parish is often imprecise. Contradictory descriptions are commonplace and some documents simply state the location of a place without specifying whether this was a parish or chapelry. A few examples should suffice. Worthenbury, co. Flint, originated as a chapelry of Bangor Is-coed which overlapped the boundary of Flintshire and Denbighshire and their predecessors. Richards states that it acquired parochial status in 1689 but there are references to it as a parish in 1575 and 1661. Similarly, Garthbeibio, co. Montgomery, is first recorded as a chapelry of Llanymawddwy, co. Merioneth, but it was a parish in 1401 and was enlarged in 1863 through the transfer of parts of Llangadfan parish. Llanwynno, co. Glamorgan, is described in 1648 as a parish but a chapel in 1745. Earlier records show that it originated as a chapelry of the large parish of Ystradyfodwg. A small number of new parishes such as Abbeycwmhir were carved out of pre-existing parishes, often at the behest of prominent local landowners. Inaccuracies or vagueness in drafting original documents compounds the problem. It is not unusual to find examples of house-names, and field-names allotted to two or more parishes.

10. Older printed sources and archives schedules use a variety of methods for dating. Specific years can be fixed by (English) regnal years. Documents which do not provide specific dates can often be dated by context and will appear in the database in the form, for example, 1550 x 1580, specifying the earliest likely date (1550) and latest likely date (1580) by century. Failing that, forms may be allotted a particular century. or by documentary context. The use of collective dates such as '1245-1290' is confined to several instances of a particular historical form recorded over that run of years I have also adopted New Style dates for documents dating between 1 January and 24 March rather than the widespread double-dating used in edited documents and some original documents before 1752 when the beginning of the year was shifted from 25 March to 1 January. Many historical place-names which appear in sources such as monastic cartularies and poetry are especially difficult with regard to dating since they frequently lack clear dating evidence. In these cases, I have adopted the proposed date with the date or approximate date of the manuscript source. The same policy is adopted for monastic chronicles.