

Discovering 'T. Leigh'

Tracking the elusive portrait painter through Stuart England and Wales¹

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1 *Robert Davies III of Gwysaney* by Thomas Leigh, 1643. Oil on canvas, 69 x 59 cm. National Museum Wales, Cardiff. With permission of Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales

2 *David, 1st Earl Barrymore* by Thomas Leigh, 1636. Oil on canvas, 88 x 81 cm. Current location unknown © Christie's Images Ltd 2008

In a 1941 edition of *The Oxford Journal*, Maurice Brockwell, then Curator of the Cook Collection at Doughty House in Richmond, Surrey, submitted the following appeal for information:

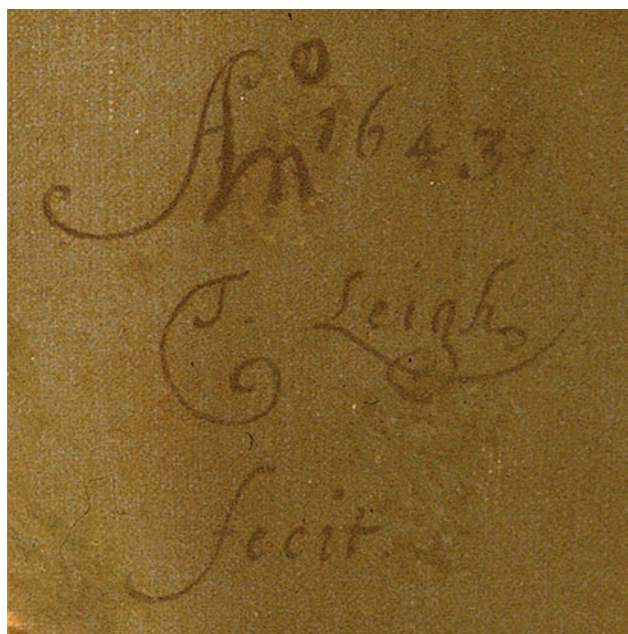
T. LEIGH, PORTRAIT-PAINTER, 1643. Information is sought regarding the obscure English portrait-painter T. Leigh, who signed, dated and suitably inscribed a very limited number of pictures – and all in 1643. It is strange that we still know nothing about his origin, place and date of birth, residence, marriage and death... Much research proves that the biographical facts regarding T. Leigh recited in the *Burlington Magazine*, 1916, xxix, p.374, and in Thieme Becker's *Allgemeines Lexikon* of 1928 are too scanty and not completely accurate. Was this portrait painter a native of Cheshire? If so, from which of the various ancient families of Leigh, or Legh, of Cheshire did he derive?²

Brockwell's interest in this 'obscure' painter seems to have been driven by a personal incentive. He owned a signed portrait of the Welsh sitter Robert Davies III of Gwysaney (Pl 1) which, having appeared at the inaugural 'Special Exhibition of National Portraits' at South Kensington in 1866, was the first work by Thomas Leigh ever to have been publicly exhibited. In correspondence with the National Museum of Wales³ he revealed that though he rarely purchased paintings, he had made an exception in this case due to a tenuous family link with the sitter himself.⁴ Brockwell embarked on a self-imposed task to find out about the painter of this portrait, 'T. Leigh'. But despite encouragement to publish his research from such renowned authorities on British portraiture as Ellis Waterhouse and John Steegman, nothing transpired. In a letter to Steegman, Waterhouse confided, 'I fear that

[Brockwell's] vast amount of data may not amount to much in fact,⁵ but both agreed that the little available information on Leigh was worth preserving nonetheless. Regrettably, Brockwell's original notes are lost to us today, and since then no real attempt has been made to further identify Leigh, until now.

Brockwell eventually sold the portrait of Robert Davies to the National Museum of Wales in 1948, thus bringing 'Thomas Leigh' to national attention as a painter of mid-17th century Welsh gentry.⁶ The Davies family claims descent from Madog ap Meredudd, Prince of Powys, and has ranked for centuries among the gentry of North Wales. Robert himself was four times High Sheriff of Flintshire; his worth was valued at £2,000 per annum at the Restoration.⁷ The Museum already owned another portrait by Leigh – that of Robert's wife, Ann, which had been acquired 17 years earlier. Both portraits had formerly hung at Ann's family estate, Llannerch Hall, near St Asaph in Denbighshire. The Llannerch collection also included a third Leigh portrait of Ann's sister Eleanor, the current location of which remains unknown.⁸

It is perhaps unsurprising that this Welsh family group of portraits by such a little-known painter piqued Steegman's curiosity. As Keeper of Art at the National Museum of Wales he was then working on his *Survey of Portraits in Welsh Houses*, during the course of which he had unearthed a further five works he attributed to Leigh: three at Gwysaney Hall, Flintshire; and two at Peniarth, Meirioneth.⁹ [See



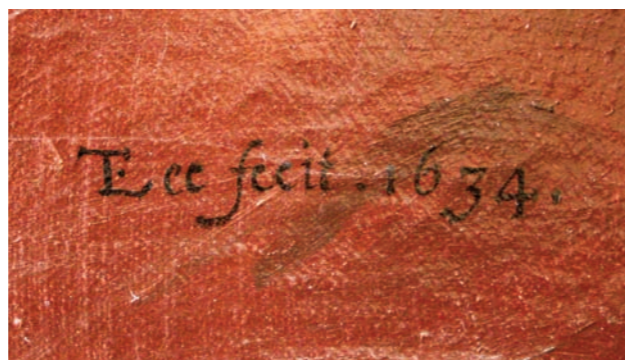
Appendix A, *Checklist of Portraits Attributed to 'Thomas Leigh'*.] The three Gwysaney portraits are almost identical duplicates of the Llannerch portraits of Robert Davies, his wife Ann and her sister Eleanor, suggesting that Leigh had followed the common practice of producing multiple copies for different members of the same family. Just why the Davies family commissioned these portraits at this particular time remains unclear, but they may signal a growing sense of familial pride and achievement. The marriage of Robert and Ann a decade earlier had been a significant affair, uniting the family estates of Gwysaney and Llannerch; and in 1643, the very year the portraits were painted, Robert's uncle and custodian, Thomas Davies, had newly been appointed lieutenant-colonel for Charles I and Constable of Hawarden Castle.¹⁰

When the final volume of Steegman's survey was published in 1962 no more than nine portraits had been publicly attributed to Leigh, eight of which were of Welsh subjects.¹¹ This disproportionate concentration of portraits in Wales has fostered speculation that Leigh may have been Welsh himself, or, more plausibly that he travelled to Wales to paint, as Gilbert Jackson and others may also have done before him.¹²

Like so many native painters of this period 'T. Leigh' has remained something of an anomaly. But as we know so little about painterly activities in provincial England and Wales, the compulsion to reconstruct his *oeuvre* remains strong. It grows even stronger as additional portraits may now be attributed to Leigh, expanding his known *oeuvre* to 13 in all, with an additional seven possible attributions [See Appendix A]. These new attributions include a three-quarter length portrait of David, 1st Earl Barrymore (Pl 2); and a portrait of the poet and playwright Sir Aston Cokayne whose only known likeness prior to this was a laurelled bust engraving, frontispiece to his *Chain of Golden Poems* of 1669.

When we turn to the question of Leigh's identity, Cheshire seems the most likely place to look. The Welsh sitters, the largest group and most securely attributed to 'Leigh', all resided in the northern tier of the Principality, in Caernarvonshire, Denbighshire and Flintshire, all of which were proximate to Chester, the largest urban centre in the area. Gwysaney, the Davies's principal seat, lies but a half day's ride away.

Additionally, Leighs were thick on the ground in Cheshire generally, and Thomas seems to have been the most popular



male forename of the clan. Nearly a score of 'Thomas Leighs' (or 'Lees') can be identified as having lived in Cheshire around this period.¹³ The various gentry branches of the Leigh family of Chester held a total of eight seats in that shire; lesser members, those of yeoman status, held seven more. These dauntingly myriad possibilities make it more likely that Thomas Leigh the painter came from one of these Cheshire branches, yet less likely that we will ever be able to identify which one.

A third good reason to place our painter in the Cheshire area lies in the status and role of Chester itself as diocesan seat, county town, and headquarters of the County Palatine. It was by far the most populous and affluent urban centre in its wide hinterland of North Wales, southern Lancashire, and Cheshire. In those years it hosted a large and prolific circle of painters—painter-stainers, arms painters, herald painters—all of them members of the active and politically powerful Guild of Painters, Glaziers, Embroiderers and Stationers of that city. At least three and possibly as many as six members of that Guild (Edward Bellen,¹⁴ John Souch,¹⁵ Thomas Pulford,¹⁶ and possibly the herald-painters Randle Holme, senior and junior,¹⁷ and the engraver Daniel King)¹⁸ are now known to have painted portraits in the period at hand. Many of them took on apprentices and journeymen, or indeed were employed by others of the circle.

In addition to its roles as an administrative, ecclesiastical and economic centre, Chester's ties with the regional gentry were also cemented by its position as the operational base of the Chester Herald and other officers of the College of Arms, whose responsibility it was to keep close tabs on the armigerous families in that hinterland. As deputy heralds for most of that area both Randle Holme and his son, Randle Holme II, were responsible for presiding over, or at least recording, all of those life's events which affected a family's armigerous status: births, deaths, marriages, and the transfer of property from one generation to another. In that capacity they knew, and were known by, virtually all the gentry over that wide area.¹⁹

Given all these factors as well as Leigh's documented activity amongst the gentry of those areas of North Wales which formed part of the Chester hinterland in the early 1640s, it seems likely that his name would appear in Chester records, and so – as we shall see – it does. Yet though Leigh does seem to be a Cheshire man, it is not in Cheshire that we first find him recorded and identified as a painter, but in the Middlesex Sessions records of 1613 and 1614.

In the first instance we find 'Thomas Lee of East Smithfield, painter' called up for 'for rescuing a prisoner from the bailiff of Whitechapel'; in the second he is bonded for good behaviour after a brawl with three others.²⁰ As the next reference to Leigh finds him in Chester in 1615, we may infer that Leigh had left his native shire at an early age, probably after completing an apprenticeship, to seek his fortune along with



3 Detail of signature on painting illustrated in Pl 1

4 Detail of monogrammed signature on *Thomas Heyton* by Thomas Leigh, 1634, illustrated in Pl 7. With permission of National Trust, Terice

5 *Eleanor Mutton of Gwysaney* by Thomas Leigh, 1643. Oil on canvas, 70 x 57 cm. Private collection; with permission of the owner

6 *Robert Aspley* by Thomas Leigh, c.1656. Oil on canvas, 193 x 121 cm. Middle Temple Library, London. By kind permission of the Masters of the Bench of the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple

many others in the great metropolis of London; and when he found himself tangled up in legal trouble, he presumably hastened back to the safety of his home shire and familiar turf. That return proved a wise decision. It set Leigh on the course which would establish his career; it also allowed his name to be recorded in several instances in the Chester records, where we can pick up his trail.

Once back by 1615, he was taken on as a journeyman by the recently widowed wife of Thomas Dewsbury, a long-time master painter and freeman of Chester.²¹ Widows could, of course, inherit their deceased husband's business as well as their guild membership. Indeed, they often helped run the family business even before the demise of their spouses. But it is doubtful that the Widow Dewsbury had mastered all the skills required by this demanding craft, and it is logical that she would have wanted an experienced journeyman to help her through this difficult adjustment. Leigh obviously qualified. This tells us that he must have received some sort of extended training when she hired him. And, as a member of the extended Leigh clan of Cheshire, it seems likely that he came recommended or was well known to Dewsbury.

Dewsbury did not keep Leigh on beyond the one year of the normal journeyman's contract, a common circumstance for local journeymen, but he was then taken on as a journeyman by another member of the Chester circle in 1618, and again in 1619.²² That new master was the young John Souch, who had just come to the end of his own apprenticeship with the elder Randle Holme in 1617. Though Souch had scraped together enough capital to set up and be accept-



ed as a brother of the Company this very same year, he would have wanted an experienced man around the shop to help him get started. And, being a Lancashire lad himself he would also have wanted someone who knew the Cheshire scene on which his patronage depended. Leigh amply fit the bill in both respects.

John Souch is known to us as an important regional portraitist, credited with some fifteen portraits of his own.²³ His sitters were the same sorts of people whom Leigh painted: the largely Catholic and eventually Royalist gentry of Cheshire and North Wales. The overlap in clientele is remarkable. Souch's portraits include a double portrait of Robert Davies III as a child with his mother Anne, the same Robert Davies that Leigh later painted as a young man (Pl 1). And in his double portrait of Sir Cecil and Dame Penelope Trafford, Souch was painting members of a family which had twice intermarried with the Leighs of Adlington, Cheshire. Margaret, daughter of Sir Edmund Trafford of Trafford, Lancashire, married Sir Vrian Leigh of Adlington,²⁴ and Mary, daughter of Sir Edmund Trafford of Osbarton would marry Thomas Leigh of Adlington, a Royalist Lieutenant and Sheriff of Cheshire in 1662.²⁵

Souch would most likely have been put in touch with those families by his former master and continued friend, Randle Holme the elder. Holme had signed the funeral certificates of many of them, including Sir Peter Legh/Leigh and Col. Thomas Legh/Leigh in his role as deputy herald.²⁶ But the highly probable family association between our Thomas Leigh and the two Leighs whom Souch later painted cannot be overlooked as a potential source of Souch's patronage.



In any event, Leigh disappears from the Chester records for a substantial period between 1619 and 1642. In the latter year the well-established Chester painter Edward Bellen signed Thomas Leigh on as a journeyman... *along with Leigh's son!* Though the son's forename is not recorded, the popularity of the name 'Thomas' among the extended Leigh clan and the signature 'Thomas Leigh' on paintings long after the elder Leigh could plausibly painted makes it highly probable that the younger Leigh was his father's namesake.

This striking discovery affirms that there were in fact *two* Thomas Leighs painting during this period: father and son, working in succession. As a journeyman would presumably have had to be past the age of apprenticeship, and thus in his early twenties, we may conclude that the Leigh who signed on with the Widow Dewsbury and John Souch in the 1610s must have been born prior to 1595. His son, who signed on in 1642, must have been born prior to 1620 or '22.

The idea that there may have been two Thomas Leighs is not entirely new. In 1916, when as little as three portraits were attributed to Leigh - those of Robert Davies, Eleanor Mutton (Pl 6), and an unknown lady called the Countess of Derby - JD Milner, then Director of the National Portrait Gallery, expressed doubts that all three were by the same hand. He claimed that the latter portrait bore too marked a difference in signature compared to the other two: while the former are both signed 'T. Leigh', in a confident flourish (Pl 3), the latter bears a more discreet, ligatured 'TLee' (see Pl 4 for similar example); and furthermore he claimed also to be able to detect a perceptible difference in style.²⁷ Ellis Waterhouse seems initially to have agreed with him. He deliberately omitted the portrait of the unknown lady in his short account of Leigh in *Painting in Britain* of 1953, though curiously he later seemed to change his mind, claiming that this too was 'probably by him'.²⁸ This latter view seems to have prevailed, and portraits bearing either signature have since been assigned to a single painter.

This affirmation now begs the question of which attributed works should be assigned to the father, and which to the son - a question fraught with difficulties. We cannot necessarily take the different forms of signature as evidence of separate



authorship, however tempting this may be. The group of portraits signed 'Tlee' or 'TL' are roughly a decade earlier in conception than those signed 'T. Leigh', and could be considered the product of father and son respectively. But we need only look at the example of Leigh's more prolific contemporary Cornelius Johnson, who signed his earlier works with the monogram 'CJ', and later changed to a fuller, scripted form of signature, to undermine this claim. Even the discrepancy in the spelling of Leigh/Lee cannot be taken as proof of separate identities since orthographical quirks in name-spelling were entirely common during this era.

We may of course attempt to differentiate the individual portraits based on visual evidence, as did Milner when he first encountered the handful of portraits attributed to Leigh. He was almost certain that the portrait of the unknown lady and the later portraits of Robert Davies (Pl 1) and Eleanor Mutton (Pl 5) were not by the same painter, stating that 'the style of this work [the unknown lady] and the drawing of the eyes show even more of [Cornelius] Johnson's influence than the two later examples'.²⁹ Comparisons between the portrait of David, 1st Earl Barrymore (Pl 2), one of the earliest dated portraits, and the posthumous portrait of Robert Ashley (Pl 6), the latest, show that they too appear visually irreconcilable. Unlike the other domestic portraits attributed to 'Leigh', these portraits are more formal: the subjects are solemn and stiff-collared in their official black robes. But next to the ruddy solidity of the Earl of Barrymore's portrait, the Ashley portrait appears somewhat flat and archaic, with its awkwardly tilted perspective reminiscent of John Souch.³⁰ It does seem likely that these were painted by two separate hands.

But considering the relatively small size of Leigh's existing *oeuvre*, along with the fact that he evidently made use of stock patterns (the faces of the Earl of Barrymore and Thomas Heyton (Pl 7) for example are virtually interchangeable) such visual comparisons may lead only to speculation. Further complications arise when we take into account the group of seven portraits painted in 1643, which appear to show evidence of more than one hand at work. The detail of the lace collar on the portrait of Ann Davies for example (Pl 8), appears stiff and schematic compared to the softly curled, scalloped edges of the collar in her sister Eleanor's portrait (Pl 5). We know that both Leighs were present in Chester in 1642, and this opens up the possibility that they may have collaborated on this group of portraits. However, only one Leigh is recorded as being present in 1643, the year of com-

7 *Thomas Heyton* by Thomas Leigh, 1634. Oil on canvas, 69 x 56 cm. With permission of the National Trust, Trerice

8 Costume detail of *Ann Davies of Guysaney*; Thomas Leigh; 1643. Oil on canvas, 68 x 58 cm. With permission of Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales

9 *An Unknown Gentleman* by Cornelius Johnson (1593-1661), 1634. Oil on canvas, 76 x 63 cm. Private collection, courtesy of the Weiss Gallery, London

pletion of the portraits. Thus they may even have been started by one Leigh and finished by the other.

After 1643, both Leighs disappear from the Chester minute books. This is perhaps unsurprising, for in 1642 Sir William Brereton's Parliamentary forces staged their first probes into Chester in the Civil War, and citizens were being warned to prepare for imminent assault; in 1645 the city endured a destructive siege, with many killed or wounded.³¹

The next archival references to 'Thomas Leigh' show him residing in James Street, London, between 1651 and 1666 for a modest annual rent of 6s 6d.³² James Street lies close to Covent Garden and the fashionable Piazza, an area renowned for its popularity with visual artists, and which was frequented by affluent and stylish potential patrons.

Given the lapse of thirty-seven years since the elder Leigh lived in London, we may assume that these later references pertain to his son. The younger Leigh seems to have kept company with a more refined set during his time in London than his father had done a generation earlier. The 1652 minutes of the Painter-Stainers' Company of London place him in the company of Tobias Flusshiers and Peter Lely, both resident in Covent Garden at that time.³³ By 1656 he catered, *inter alia*, to patrons associated with the Inns of Court, completing the posthumous portrait of Robert Ashley, a much-heralded denizen of the Middle Temple, who had died in 1641.³⁴ Though his later life remains obscure, it may be this Thomas Leigh or perhaps *his* son who took on apprentices in both 1684 and 1698 and whose death is recorded in London in 1698.³⁵

We may be not to be able to establish beyond doubt which Leigh painted which portrait, but that is not the only important question to address. Additional considerations emanate from the evidence of these two native-English painters pursuing their craft in provincial as well as metropolitan England, trying as they did so to assimilate the more refined styles and techniques spreading throughout the realm. Though they seem impervious to the influence of Van Dyck, we can see in most of their *oeuvre* the influence of other fashionable portraiture of the day, including the kind of naturalism propagated by Cornelius Johnson and the miniaturist Isaac Oliver.

Yet traces of older craft workshop traditions also remain, as though the painters could not rid themselves of those inherited conventions. The technical competency of these portraits is compromised by a lack of depth and a stilted sense of anatomy, particularly noticeable in the subjects' elongated faces and curiously sloped shoulders. Attempts at creating a naturalistic sense of space, with the illusory drapery and subtly nuanced backgrounds of the 1643 portraits for example, seem little more than perfunctory. Rather than suggesting depth, the drapery sits flatly on the picture plane itself, in a manner analogous in form to an inscription or heraldic device. This imbues the work with a certain unrefined rusticity, a quality typical of many native painters of this period.

The affinity between the Leighs' works and Johnson's seems especially noteworthy. As is the case with many of



Johnson's portraits, the extant Leigh works are predominantly of a head and shoulders format, set relatively low within the picture frame, occasionally within an oval *trompe l'oeil* as with the portraits of the unidentified couple Thomas (Pl 7) and Isabel Heyton. In addition, there are traces of more direct modelling or even copying: particular features of the Leigh portrait of Sir Aston Cokayne seem to have been taken directly from Johnson's 1634 portrait of an unknown gentleman (Pl 9), though the former corpus lacks Johnson's subtlety and sensitive handling of paint.³⁶ And while Johnson's work is often described as wistful and skilfully restrained, the Leighs' have been deemed rather less favourably as competent, but 'light and timid'.³⁷

JD Milner even proposed that Leigh's apparent change of signature in 1643 may correspond with Johnson's departure from England that same year. He suggested that 'Leigh, who might previously have been employed as an assistant to Johnson, was now emboldened by the master's departure from England to assert himself as an original portrait-painter'.³⁸ Current research has not uncovered any further evidence to support this claim, but it is enticing to consider that both Leighs appear in Chester after a long absence around the time that Johnson left London for the Continent in 1643.

The unravelling of the identities of the two Thomas Leighs, and the discovery of something about their lives, offers a rare insight into the career patterns of two itinerant native-English painters active outside the London metropolis. It adds to what we already know about such provincial centres of painting as Chester; and it suggests a much more geographically diversified presence of portrait painting at this time than traditional views will have recognised. Finally, it sheds further light on the native-English traditions of painting which must be considered, along with those traditions introduced from abroad, in the formation of a truly English School.

Appendix A Check-list of Portraits attributed to 'Thomas Leigh'

I Portraits signed 'T. Leigh'

1 Robert Davies III of Gwysaney (Pl 1), 1643. 69 x 59 cm. National Museum Wales, Cardiff, inv no. NMW A 20
Inscr: *Robert Davies Esqr of Gwysaney (1616-1666)*
Prov: By descent at Llannerch Hall; Foster, London, *Pictures Removed from Llannerch Park*, 24 June 1908 (lot 72); Maurice Brockwell by 1913; from whom purchased by National Museum Wales, 1948
Exh: 'First special exhibition of National Portraits', South Kensington, London, 1866; 'The Work of British-born Artists of the Seventeenth Century', BFAC, London, 1938; 'Paintings by British Artists from the National Museum', National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1971
• High Sheriff of Flintshire 1644-6 and 1660. A staunch Royalist, his name appears on the list of the Knights of the Royal Oak, but the order was never instituted. His marriage to Ann Davies in 1631 united the estates of Gwysaney and Llannerch. This portrait probably painted for Ann's family, the Muttons of Llannerch, along with no. 2 and no. 3. Identical versions of all three were also painted for the Davies family of Gwysaney (nos. 4, 5, 6).

2 Ann Davies (nee Mutton) of Gwysaney, 1643. 68 x 58 cm. National Museum Wales, Cardiff, inv no. NMW A 21
Inscr: *Mrs Mutton Davies of Llannerch*
Prov: By descent at Llannerch; Foster, London, 24 June 1908 (lot 123); purchased by Dyer on behalf of TH Davies-Colley; given by him to National Museum Wales, 1931
Exh: 'Art in Wales: a survey of four thousand years', Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea
• Eldest daughter and heiress of Sir Peter Mutton of Llannerch Park (Chief Justice North Wales) and Ellen Mutton. The inscription confuses her with a later member of the family. Leigh also painted a similar version for the Davies family of Gwysaney (no. 5). This version is worn, and has lost much of the hair and costume details.

3 Eleanor Mutton (later Eyton), 1643. 70 x 57 cm. Current location unknown
Prov: By descent at Llannerch; Foster, London, 24 June 1908 (lot 59, wrongly catalogued as wife of Peter Mutton); Christie's, London, 21 July 1913, lot 53 (as 'portrait of a lady'); collection Colonel Mulliner, 1916; Christie's, London, *Ancient and Modern Pictures 7 Drawings The Property of a Gentleman*, 27 April 1925 (lot 132) purchased by Albert Amor; sale Rasmussen, Copenhagen, 1 June 1949 (lot 64).
• Second daughter of Sir Peter and Ellen Mutton; sister to no. 2. Wearing a square-necked bodice fastened with ribbons and a necklace of rubies garnished with pearls. Painted for the Mutton family of Llannerch. Identical version produced for the Davieses of Gwysaney (no. 6).

4 Robert Davies III of Gwysaney, 1643. 76 x 58 cm. Private collection
Prov: By descent to present owner
Exhib: 'Portraits from Welsh Houses', National Museum Wales, Cardiff, 1948; Swansea, Glynn Vivian, 1964
• See no. 1 for sitter details. This version painted for the Davies family of Gwysaney, along with nos. 5 and 6. Almost identical to no. 1, though the paint appears warmer in tone.

5 Ann Davies (nee Mutton) of Gwysaney, 1643. 66 x 56 cm. Private collection
Inscr: *Ann Davies eldest Daughter and Co Heiress of Sir Peter Mytton Kt Chief Justice of N. Wales of Llannerch Park Co Denbig M.1631 Robert Davies Esqr of Gwysaney Co Flint D.1690*

Prov: By descent to present owner
• See no. 2 for sitter details. This version painted for the Davies family of Gwysaney. Similar in composition to no. 2 but here the details of the hair and costume are better preserved, the drapery differs in shape and colour, and the costume stomacher is laced with ribbons and bows which do not appear in no. 2. Some evidence of retouching beneath the upper varnish layer on the face; however the additional costume details appear to be original.

6 Eleanor Mutton (later Eyton) (Pl 5), 1643. 66 x 56 cm. Private collection
Prov: By descent to present owner
• See no. 3 for sitter details. This version painted for the Davies family of Gwysaney. Almost identical to the Llannerch version, except that this version is unsigned. It forms part of a family group of which the other two are signed (nos. 4, 5).

7 Margaret Lloyd (nee Sneyd) of Esclus, 1643. 56 x 69 cm. Private collection
Inscr: *MARGT WIFE OF SIR RICHD LLOYD, KNT., DAUR OF RALPH SNEYD, OF KEELE ESQ*
Prov: By descent to present owner
• Married Richard Lloyd of Esclus (no. 14) in 1632. Steegman suggests this is a companion portrait to no. 14 (*A Survey of Portraits in Welsh Houses*, vol I, Cardiff, 1957 p234, no. 4). The Sneyd family were related by marriage to the Randle Holmes of Chester (JP Earwaker, 'The Four Randle Holmes of Chester', *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, IV (1892), p114) which may explain the sitter's link with Chester's network of painters.

8 Robert Ashley (Pl 6), c1656. 193 x 121 cm. Middle Temple Library, London
Inscr: *Robertus Ashley Arm: Hujus Bibliothecae Fundator: AD 1641*
Prov: Middle Temple Library, London
• Senior barrister of the Inn and founder of the Middle Temple Library. Full-length portrait painted posthumously in memorial of his benefaction. Dressed in official robes, holding a scroll which probably represents his last will and testament; right foot pointing towards a skull. The signed receipt records that 'Tho. Leigh, 'Limner', received in total £11 for 'drawinge Mr Ashley's picture in the Library' (Middle Temple receipts MT2/TRB/no.14).

9 Aston Cokayne, c1635-40. 60 x 70 cm. Current location unknown
Prov: Perhaps Ashbourne Hall, Derbyshire or Pooley Hall, Warwickshire; in collection of GE Cokayne, 1910 (Derbyshire RO D5151/12/1/1); by descent to his son B Cokayne by 1914 (Northamptonshire RO C.1492); later Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School; misc. sale, Fidler Taylor Estate Agents, Ashbourne, 2004
• A Royalist and Catholic, Aston was the great grandson of Sir Thomas Cokayne, founder of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Ashbourne. A minor poet and playwright, Aston's works are of historical value due to the references they contain to his literary circle of acquaintances, including

Massinger, Jonson and Cotton. Portrait is believed to be signed based on verbal evidence, but has yet to be traced by current authors.

II Portraits signed 'Tlee' ('TL' in ligature)

10 Unknown Lady (called Countess Of Derby), 1634. 65 x 51 cm. Current location unknown
Prov: In collection of Mr Ratcliff, Topsham by 1916; Christie's, London, Anon sale, 3 July 1936 (lot 123) purchased by Brockbank; Sotheby's, London, Anon sale, 2 Nov 1977 (lot 112)
• Wearing a furred cape and linen and lace cap, stiffened into square ends, and a ring threaded around her neck, probably a token of affection or remembrance. In bad condition. On the back of a reproduction of the portrait, Waterhouse noted 'Dreadfully rubbed and a good deal repainted... In the idiom of Gilbert Jackson.' (Paul Mellon Centre Archive, file EKW 'Kneller + L misc').

11 Thomas Heyton (Pl 7), 1634. 69 x 56 cm. National Trust, Trefice House
Inscr: *Pulvis Arte Servatus / Artis non est Aeternare* ('The mortal man in preserved by Art / But it is not within the capability of Art to immortalise', trans Julie Reynolds, NMW)
Prov: Donated to the National Trust by Lady Spickernell post 1954 (F Gore 'Gore List', supplement to *Burlington Magazine*, April 1969, pp237-62)
• Sitter yet to be identified. Traces of the Heyton family found in Cumbria, Yorkshire, Shropshire and Nottinghamshire. Husband to no. 12. Head and shoulders in a feigned marble-effect oval.

12 Isabel Heyton, 1634. 69 x 56 cm. National Trust, Trefice House
Inscr: *Quel Eh'è dentro spettabile* (roughly translated 'That which is behind the visible')
Prov: As preceding
• Wife of preceding. In feigned oval, wearing large pearl-drop earrings and green shawl decorated with an elaborate floral motif in metal thread.

13 David, 1st Earl Barrymore (Pl 2), 1636. 88 x 81 cm. Current location unknown
Prov: Removed from The Old Priory, Woodchester, Gloucestershire; Christie's South Kensington, Smith-Barry sale, 17-19 Feb 2008 (lot 3, as English School)
• David Barry, 6th Viscount Barry, created 1st Earl of Barrymore 1627. In 1631 he married Alice Boyle, daughter of Richard, 1st Earl of Cork. Shown here half-length, holding a scroll in his right hand and an elbow-length leather glove in his left. Eighteenth-century frame wrongly inscribed '*T.Luigi, 1636*'. No further reference can be found to a painter called 'Luigi', and it is possible that an early owner Italianised the name Leigh in an attempt to add prestige to the work.

III Various uncertain attributions

14 Richard Lloyd of Esclus, c1643. 56 x 69 cm. Private collection
Inscr: *Nave, ferar magna, an parva ferar unus et idem*, ('Whether a great ship, or a small ship is plundered by me, it is one and the same', trans Julie Reynolds, NMW) and *Richard Lloyd of Esclus Esq*

Prov: By descent to present owner
• Attorney general for North Wales and governor of Holt Castle. Husband to no. 7. Attribution made by Steegman on comparison with 7, but although similar in date the portraits appear somewhat irreconcilable. Possibly the work of another native provincial painter.

15 The Brooke Children, nd. 112 x 158 cm. Private collection
Prov: Duke of Manchester, Kimbolton; sale, Kimbolton Castle, 18-21 July 1949 (lot 23)
• The two children of Robert, 4th Lord Brooke, with a dwarf servant. Attribution tentatively suggested by Christopher Foley, 'Neglected English Portraiture' *Antique Collector* (Dec 1983), pp 82-3. 1949 sale catalogue attributes it to Mignard. More likely to be by a foreign hand.

16 Unknown Lady (called Anne Wigley), c1640. Current location unknown
Inscr: *Aetat Sur 64*
Prov: Coll. A Powell, 1947
• A reproduction in the NPG Heinz archive (artist file Leigh) has '*prob. By T. Leigh*' written in pencil on the back, but the severe modelling of the face and hands are atypical.

17 Portrait of a Lady and Gentleman, nd. 92 x 113 cm. Current location unknown
Prov: Sotheby, London, 6 July 1983 (lot 221)
• Half length double portrait holding hands, landscape behind to the left. This displays more of a Van Dyck influence than any of the other works attributed to Leigh.

18 Mary (Fortescue), Countess of Shrewsbury, nd. 122 x 99 cm. Current location unknown
Prov: Coll. Lt-Col O Turville-Petre, 1937
Exhib: 'Coronation Exhibition of Portraits relating to the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland', Leicester Art Gallery, 1937
• Wife of John, 10th Earl Shrewsbury. Attribution suggested by Charles Kingsley Adams (Assistant Keeper, NPG) in 1937. Note scribbled alongside catalogue entry '*English deriving from VD, but more from a native tradition... by T. Leigh? CKA May 1937*' (exh cat., p21, no. 48). At that time only three other works by Leigh were known.

19 Letitia Davies (nee Vaughan), nd. Current location unknown
Prov: Llannerch Hall; Foster, London, 24 June 1908 (lot 98)
• Wife of Robert Davies III of Llannerch (d 1710). Previously at Llannerch along with nos. 1, 2 and 3. Recorded in 1908 sale catalogue as by T. Leigh, but the sitter is of a later generation. Likely that either the sitter has been wrongly identified or that the attribution to Leigh is incorrect.

20 Mary Cokayne (nee Kniveton), c1635-40. Current location unknown
Prov: In possession of B Cokayne, 1914
• Wife of no. 7. Wearing Van Dyck imitation classical drapery and pearls. Attribution tentatively suggested on evidence of no. 7. Known only through a sepia photograph (Northamptonshire RO C.1491).

- 1 We would like to thank Oliver Fairclough, Keeper of Art, National Museum Cardiff, Ann Sumner, Director, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham; and Catherine MacLeod, National Portrait Gallery, for their help and encouragement; and the Research Requirements Board at National Museum of Wales and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding.
- 2 Maurice Brockwell, 'T. Leigh, Portrait-Painter, 1643', *Notes and Queries*, no. 181 (August 1941), p119.
- 3 Now called Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum Wales. Hereafter NMW or the National Museum of Wales.
- 4 Brockwell was the godson and family acquaintance of Philip Bryan Davies-Cooke, a descendent of Robert Davies III. See NMW 'AP&P file: Brockwell', letters from Maurice Brockwell to John Steegman, 11 June 1948 and 4 Jan 1952.
- 5 *Ibid.*, letters from Waterhouse to Steegman, 14 July 1948; Steegman to Brockwell, 16 Nov 1951, 3 Jan 1952; Steegman to Charles Kingsley Adams (NPG), 28 Aug 1952.
- 6 Object file NMW A 20.
- 7 John Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical History of the House of Guysaney*, London, 1847, p43. See also GA Usher *Guysaney and Ouston: a history of the family of Davies-Cooke of Guysaney, Flintshire, and Ouston, West Riding of Yorkshire*, Denbigh, 1964.
- 8 Sale Foster, London, *Sale Catalogue of the collection of Portraits of the Early British School and other pictures Removed from Llannerch Park*, June 24 1908. The catalogue lists four Leigh portraits – Robert Davies (lot 72), Ann (lot 123), Eleanor (lot 59 – wrongly catalogued as Lady Ellen Mutton), and Letitia Vaughan (lot 98). The latter portrait also remains untraced, but as the sitter is of a later generation the attribution to Leigh is questionable.
- 9 John Steegman *A Survey of Portraits in Welsh Houses*, 2 vols, Cardiff, 1957-62.
- 10 David Jenkins, 'Davies-Cooke family of Gwysaney, Flints.' *Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940*, London, 1959, p162.
- 11 Portraits at Gwysaney: *Robert Davies*, Steegman, op cit, p164, no. 12; *Ann Davies*, *ibid.*, no. 11; *Eleanor Mutton*, *ibid.*, no. 8. Portraits at Peniarth: *Lady Margaret Lloyd of Esclus*, *ibid.*, p235, no. 4; *Sir Richard Lloyd of Esclus*, *ibid.*, no. 4. Portraits identified elsewhere: *Robert Davies* (Llannerch version), JD Milner, 'Two English Portrait Painters' *Burlington Magazine*, XXIX (December 1916) p374; *Eleanor Mutton* (Llannerch version), *ibid.*; *Unknown lady called Countess of Derby*, *ibid.*; *Ann Davies* (Llannerch version), Ellis Waterhouse *Painting in Britain*, London and New Haven, 1953, p79. Waterhouse also suggests that the portrait of Robert Ashley may be attributed to Leigh here, but reserves judgement.
- 12 Christopher Foley, 'Neglected English Portraiture', *Antique Collector*, 54:12 (Dec 1983), p82; Ellis Waterhouse 'Portraits from Welsh Houses – The Exhibition at the National Museum of Wales', *Burlington Magazine*, XC (July 1948), p204; Gwynn Jones, *Art in Wales: A survey of four thousand years to AD 1850*, Swansea, 1964, p72; Peter Lord, *The Visual Culture of Wales: Imaging the Nation*, Cardiff, 2000, p35.
- 13 George J Armitage and John P Rylands, eds, *Pedigrees Made in the Visitation of Cheshire, 1613*, The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1909, pp142, 144-145, 148, 152; John Paul Rylands, ed, *Cheshire and Lancashire Funeral Certificates, A.D. 1600 to 1678*, The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1882, pp124-126; JP Earwaker, ed, *An Index to Wills and Inventories at Chester*, The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 2 vols, 1879 and 1891, II (1891), p138; Thomas Malbon, *Memorials of the Civil War in Cheshire and the Adjacent Counties*, The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, vol 48 (1889), pp241-2; George Ormerod, *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, 2nd edn, 3 vols, London, 1882, I, pp449, 451-464, 494-99, 581; III, pp659-664, 671-77, 892; Arthur Adams, ed, *Cheshire Visitation Pedigrees, 1663*, Harleian Society, London, 1941, p63; JP Earwaker, ed, *East Cheshire Past and Present or, a History of the Hundred of Macclesfield in the County Palatine of Chester*, 2 vols., London, 1877 and 1880, II, p244; William F Irvine, ed, *Marriage Licenses Granted within the Archdeaconry of Chester in the Diocese of Chester*, The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1909, *vide* Leigh, Thomas; William F Irvine, ed, *A Collection of Lancashire and Cheshire Wills Not Now to be Found in any Probate Inventory, 1301-1752*, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1896, pp 103-04, 123-26.
- 14 Bellen or Bellin apprenticed with Randle Holme the elder from approximately 1624, was admitted to the Chester Guild in 1634, and remained active there until his death in 1650. The Heinz Archive of the National Portrait Gallery records one portrait, 'An Unknown Gentleman' signed by him. Its current location remains unknown. Chester Record Office MS ZG 17/2, the Minute Book of the Chester Painters, etc, Guild, unpaginated.
- 15 Souch (1593 or '94-1645) also apprenticed with Randle Holme the elder of Chester; he, too, served as a long-standing member of the Chester Guild. Witt Library, Courtauld Institute, *vide* Souch, John; Julian Treuherz, 'New Light on John Souch of Chester', *Burlington Magazine* CXXXIX (May 1997), pp299-307; Brian Stewart and Mervyn Cutton, eds, *Dictionary of Portrait Painters in Britain up to 1920*, Woodbridge, 1997, p432; Chester Record Office MS ZG 17/1 and 2, unpaginated; *ODNB*, *vide* 'Souch, John'.
- 16 Stewart and Cutton, op cit, p432; JHE Bennett, ed, *Rolls of the Freemen of Chester*, The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, vol 51 (1906), p158; the Revd Canon Blomefield, 'Puritanism in Chester in 1637, an Account of the Reception of William Prynne by Certain Inhabitants of the City of Chester', *Journal of the Archeological and Historic Society of Chester*, vol 3 (1885), pp 281-87; Chester Record Office MS ZG 17/2, unpaginated.
- 17 *ODNB*, *vide* 'Holme, Randle, sen', which also includes refers to his son and namesake. See also Robert Tittler and Anne Thackray, 'Print Collecting in Provincial England Prior to 1650; the Randle Holme Album', *The British Art Journal*, vol IX, no. 2, (Autumn, 2008), pp3-11.
- 18 *ODNB*, *vide* 'King, Daniel'.
- 19 GD Squibb, 'The Deputy Heralds of Chester', *Journal of the Chester Archaeological and Historic Society*, vol 56 (1969), pp27-30; Rylands, ed, *Visitations of Chester, 1580*, Harleian Society, vol 18, 1882, p260; Armitage and Rylands, *Visitation of Cheshire, 1613*, p1; Rylands, *Cheshire and Lancashire Funeral Certificates, passim*; Robert Tittler, 'Regional Portraiture and the Heraldic Connection in Tudor and Early Stuart England', *The British Art Journal*, vol X:2 (Summer, 2009) pp. 3-10.
- 20 W LeHardy, ed, *County of Middlesex, Calendar to the Sessions Records*, new series, vol I, 1612-1614 (1935), pp117-154, *vide* 30 May, 11 James I [A.D. 1613]; *ibid.*, *vide* 29 March, 12 James I.
- 21 Chester Record Office MS ZG 17/1, unpaginated, *vide* 1615.
- 22 Op cit, *vide* 1618 and 1619.
- 23 Treuherz, loc cit; and Steegman, op cit, vol I, p139; *ODNB*, *vide* 'Souch'.
- 24 Armitage and Rylands, op cit, p144; Rylands, *Cheshire and Lancashire Funeral Monuments*, p124; Ormerod, op cit, vol III, pp660-62; JP Earwaker, *East Chester*, vol. II, p244.
- 25 Ormerod, op cit, vol III, p660.
- 26 Rylands, *Funeral Certificates*, pp123-25.
- 1627 Milner, op cit, p364.
- 28 Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, p79; Waterhouse, 'Portraits from Welsh Houses', n1; Waterhouse, *The Dictionary of 16th & 17th Century British Painters* Woodbridge, 1988, p169.
- 29 Milner, op cit, p364.
- 30 John Souch, *Sir Thomas Aston at the Deathbed of his Wife*, Manchester City Art Gallery, inv no. 1927.150.
- 31 RH Morris, *The Siege of Chester* (1924); John Barratt, *The Great Siege of Chester* (London, 2003), pp27-50.
- 32 Westminster City Archives, 'St Paul's Covent Garden Rate Books', *vide* 1650-1666.
- 33 Guildhall Library MS 5667/2 'Court Minutes of the Painter-Stainers' Company', unpaginated, *vide* July 30 1652; Margaret Whinney and Oliver Millar *English Art 1625-1714*, ed TSR Boase, Oxford, 1957, p80, n3; Oliver Millar, *Sir Peter Lely*, London, 1978, pp 14 and 28.
- 34 Middle Temple Library MS 'Catalogue of Paintings and Engravings in the Possession of the Hon. Society of the Middle Temple', compiled by Bruce Williamson, 1931; Stuart Adams 'Robert Ashley: barrister and bibliophile', *Trinity: The Middle Templar*, 2005, p39. The signed receipt MT2/TRB/no.14 records that on May 9 1656 'Tho. Leigh, Limner' received in total £11 for 'drawing Mr Ashley's picture in the Library'.
- 35 Richard Ellis bound to the painter Thomas Leigh for seven years, Guildhall Library MS 5669/1, *vide* March 3 1684; William Fisher bound to Thomas Leigh for seven years; *ibid.*, *vide* 3 Aug 1698; the Revd William H Hunt, ed, *Register of St Paul's Cathedral, BURLIALS vol.4 1653-1752*, Publications of the Harleian Society, 36 vols, 1908, *vide* Register 36.
- 36 Anon, *Illustrious Company Early Portraits 1545-1720* Weiss Gallery, London, 1998, no. 17.
- 37 Whinney and Millar, op cit, p80
- 38 Milner, op cit, p364.