

**AN IRISHMAN IN WALES:  
DANIEL BEAUFORT'S JOURNALS FOR 1766 AND 1779**

by *Michael McGarvie*

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The author of these journals, Daniel Augustus Beaufort (1739-1821), was an Anglican clergyman by profession and calling but a geographer by instinct and habit. Even by Irish standards his background was unusual for, although brought up in Ireland, he was of English birth and French descent. Beaufort's father, Daniel Cornelius de Beaufort (1700-1788), was a refugee who became pastor of the Huguenot Church in Spitalfields in 1728, but joined the Church of England three years later. He married Esther Gougeon in 1738. The following year he was appointed Rector of East Barnet and remained there until 1743 when he went to Ireland with the Viceroy, Lord Harrington. Beaufort senior became Rector of Navan, Co. Meath in 1747, adding to that benefice the Rectory of Clonenagh in 1758. He held this living until his death.

Beaufort's son, Daniel Augustus, was at Trinity College Dublin where he took his B.A. in 1759. He followed his father into the Church, succeeding him in the Rectory of Navan in 1765 and remaining incumbent there for 53 years. In 1790 he became Vicar of Collon, Co. Louth. There he built a church and spent the remainder of his life. Sunday Schools, elementary education and the Royal Irish Academy were among his consuming interests. Beaufort, with others, suffered from the lack of a good map of Ireland so decided to produce one himself. He travelled the length and breadth of the Sister Kingdom to acquire accurate information for a memoir of the civil and ecclesiastical state of Ireland which was to accompany the map, eventually produced in 1792. He was also the author of *A Short Account of the Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome, divested of all Controversy*. Beaufort married Mary, daughter of William Waller, of Allanstown, Co. Meath, and had two sons, William Louis (1771-1849), who became a clergyman, and Francis (1774-1857), a rear-admiral and hydrographer.

The journals of Daniel Beaufort, now at Trinity College Dublin, are voluminous and their contents of wide general interest. For this special volume of *Transactions* in honour of our Patron, the Marquess of Anglesey, I have chosen to publish two short accounts from Trinity College Manuscript 4024 which I hope will be of particular interest to him. These deal with Beaufort's trips to Wales. During the first, in 1766, Beaufort was merely passing through North Wales on his way to Oxford. The purpose of his second journey which took him to West Wales in

1779 is not clear. On this occasion his whole family were with him including his wife and two sons as well as his father then aged 79. Beaufort made great efforts to find a house in what is now known as Dyfed, but without success as far as the journal goes, the narrative breaking off abruptly without explanation.

Beaufort was a product of the Age of Reason, a civilized man, modern in his outlook. Although he had an eye for dramatic scenery, Beaufort evidently regarded Gothic architecture as barbarous and comments, more often than not, with distaste on the many mediaeval buildings which he saw on his journeys. He returned from an excursion to Haddon 'Castle' which he dismissed as 'a Ruinous Seat of ye D. Rutland's', little pleased with his ride, but perhaps this opinion was due to the 'vile quadruped' on which he was mounted. Even Pembroke Castle does not appear to have impressed him much while Conway, one of the few ancient buildings about which he is complimentary, moved him more on account of the beauty of its situation than by its architectural merits. Nothing pleased him so much as the sight of a good classical mansion with up to date appointments, surrounded by its plantations and landscaped gardens. He liked Curraghmore especially but was disappointed by Chatsworth, the rooms of which were 'decorated and furnished old-fashioned'. Nothing quite matched Manchester 'a very handsome Town, has many fine streets, & besides two handsome modern churches'.

The first journal begins on the 25th May, 1766, when Beaufort sailed from an unnamed port, presumably Dublin, at 12 noon for Holyhead. It is entitled:

### Tour to England 1766

'May 26: Arrive at 8 at night at ye head, a bad passage. On board was ye Bp. of Clogher & at ye Head we meet the Reynolds & c.

May 27th: Set out at 9 on horseback — call at Gwindy (12m) an excellent clean house kept by English — Anglesay a fruitful but entirely wild & unimproved Island — the glyn of Llangavenny between Gwindy & ye ferry is very romantick & beautiful. Dine at Bangor, where is a very anct. Cathedral. Very neat vicar's house, but a most wretched Ep[iscop]al Palace. The walk round the Churchyard pretty & affords a beautiful prospect all round, of the sea or the Rising hills, well planted & cover'd with a beautiful verdure. Over the sands & Penman Mawr to Conway, where we arrive late. Inn at Bangor bad; at Conway ye Bull's Head pretty good. Conway a very poor old Town, but the Castle of Conway is particularly worth notice. As one of the most remarkable & best ruined structures in Wales, beautifully situated on a very fine

deep :River (over which there is a bad ferry) & in the midst of a most Romantick & beauteous Vale surrounded by finely wooded hills, & farther off high craggy mountains, which terminate the prospect on all sides but the North, where they open & let in an Extensive view of the Sea. May 28th: The Road after ye ferry, pretty good to Penman Ross [Penmaenrhos], a very steep & ugly mountain over the sea, which has but lately been made passable for carriages by a very fine road. At Abergely, a small village, we turned off from the usual horse road which is by Budland Marsh to St. Asaph, & about half way pass through a very small vill: call'd St. George, in the Church yard of which are the two largest yews I ever saw. Thence we go by Kimmel Park, Mr. Wynne's, a very beautiful spot for verdure, situation, wood & extent. St. Asaph which is in Thlindshire [Flint—], is a small but pretty Town situate in the Vale of Clwyd, which runs from S.E. to N.W. through Denbigh sh: & is reckoned the finest part of N. Wales. It is indeed a beautiful plaine well water'd by the Clwyd, on each side of which gradual hills adorned with ancient oak woods & a few good seats arise & make a most pleasing landscape.

The Inn is good & clean, & the landlady has a pretty daughter who was fitted out most amazingly—from thence to Hollywell is a dreary ride over a large Heath, called the Mountain of Hollywell from which as we descend towards Holy Well, we can see Pargate & even Liverpool distinctly.

Holywell is a good Town & has an Excellent Inn (ye White horse). This place is famous for its well which is covered by a handsome gothick dome built by Henry 7th. Of the well there are fabulous Legends which make it much resorted to by the Papists, who abound here: sup here with the Bp. of Clogher.

May 29th. To Chester (17m) to breakfast. Oak boughs are in this country worn by all the Boys & c stand at every door on this day Oak Apple Day.

Oaks indeed are very thickly planted in Clumps & hedgerows on the sides of the small hills which are all along from Holywell to Chester & which vary the scene of an improved fine country & often give a good view of the Sea. Sr John Glyn has a very noble House at Hawarden 6m from Chester. All through Wales, we must not omit, that the Women & girls are exceedingly handsome, their complexion at least exquisite, to which the constant wear of a hat, no doubt greatly contributes.'

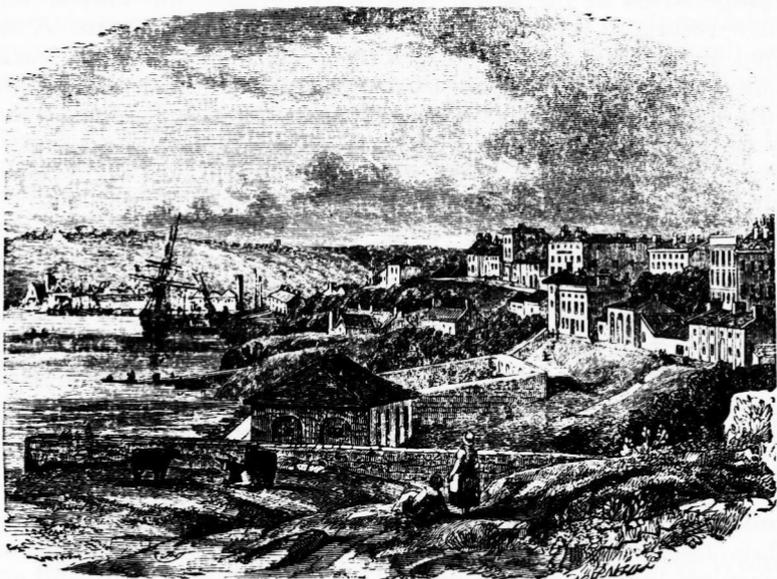
On this happy note we must leave Beaufort to continue his journey into England and rejoin him 13 years later when about to set out on a new expedition to the land of his birth. Beaufort's introduction to the journal illustrates in a drole way the hazards of travelling in the 18th century. He and his family arrived in

Waterford on 11th August having experienced 'a horrid bad inn' at Knocktopher and a cruel disappointment at Mullinavat where they had been promised 'excellent Bacon & Eggs & good refreshment But worse never was seen, or so vile and dark a house & no attendance, nothing to eat or drink'. The Beauforts were compensated at the Royal Oak in Waterford, but only to have their feeling of renewed well-being snatched away again: 'A very civil Landlady, a good supper, & good Beds—But the packet sailed this day.' So began a frustrating wait of nearly three weeks, first because there was no boat, then, when the *Tyrone* arrived, because the winds were contrary. Beaufort says the streets of Waterford were 'the most dirty & stinking I ever yet saw' but among them were gardens like that of Mr. Usher 'which is an old-fashioned hanging one with very pretty terraces & fine Evergreens'. News that the combined fleets of France and Spain were cruising off Plymouth and that an American privateer *The Black Prince*, was attacking shipping and holding the vessels to ransom (this was during the American war of independence) caused apprehension among the waiting passengers: 'is it safe to go now, were the wind far?' Beaufort asked of his journal. On 26th August he had to go aboard the *Tyrone* to fetch clean linen and to rescue provisions which had been stowed on board in anticipation of sailing and which were now going bad. Beaufort took his two sons with him. They were both promptly sick. Two days later the 'Captain sent word to be ready at a minutes warning' but the *Tyrone* did not sail until 30th August and even then, as Beaufort notes, 'the sea was so rough that I could not stand the deck'. His wife and children were very ill during the voyage which was mercifully short. I must now let Beaufort speak for himself from the pages of the journal, a quarto volume with marbled covers and a spine of beetroot coloured leather. Beaufort's jottings record nothing much beyond Carmarthen so it is all the more unfortunate that the section is entitled:

### Journey to England 1779

August 31 1779. When we began to enter the Haven at Milford<sup>1</sup>—we landed at 10 at the village of *Haking* [Hakin] commonly called Hubberton, [Hubberston] in which parish it is—after a rough passage of 24 hours during which even my father was sick. . . There are near a 100 sail in this bay—just before our windows at *Shelleacan's Hotel* & the *Swallow* sloop of 16 guns—as we came in we met a 20 gun armed ship, the 3 *Brothers* going out. The Haven here is deep, wide & sheltered by bold & rocky hills on each side, not many trees to be seen, but a handsome house belonging to Mr. Campbell, *Lord Lyon*,<sup>2</sup> on the side of the Bay—which Bay runs much farther up into land to

Pembroke & c. This village is very small & ugly, consisting of one narrow winding street along a little creek, called here also a *pill*—the Hotel is built on a platform at the west end of the town under a huge rock & is tolerably good for lodging & accomodation. . .



Milford

September 1. Land about this village lets from £2 to £3 per acre, the greatest part of ye Town & neighbourhood belong to Sr. Will. Hamilton, Envoy at Naples. The Common Husbandry Barley, Clover, Wheat with manure on ye C. lay (sic)—or wheat, barley, oats, clover 3 years—The church and village of Hubberston, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile off. After dinner Mary & I & two boys set off for *Haverfordwest*, where we got at nine of a very dark rainy night—the Inn the *White Hart* very dirty & bad in every respect as far as appears this night. Note: everything as dear at Hubberton as in Ireland. The Angel the best inn. The town of Haverfordwest is said to contain 2000 houses, or 14,000 souls.

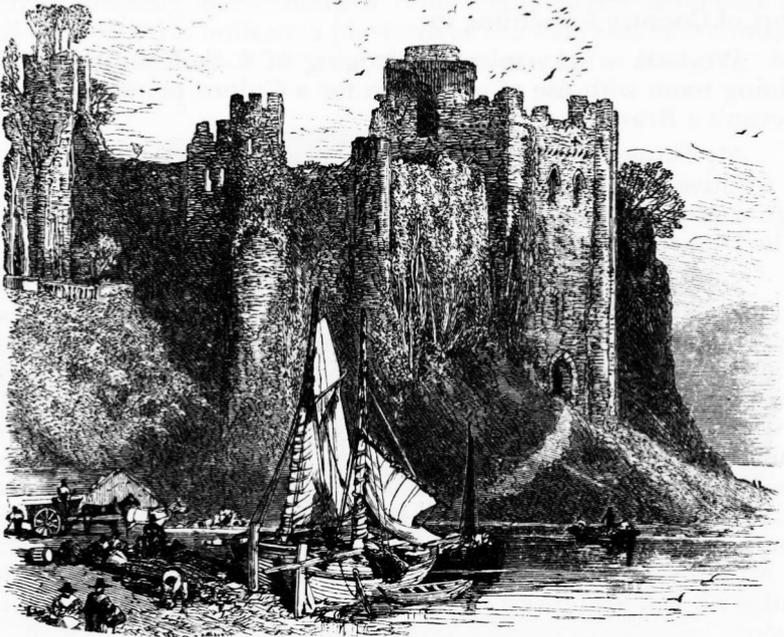
September 2. Walked up and down the steep streets of this ugly town,<sup>3</sup> which seems to be full as large as Kilkenny—3 Churches & some *Ruined* Castles & Monastery's—we had the worst breakfast I ever made, very bad crock butter, execrable tea & thin blue milk—Sure this cannot be the best Inn! The fuel used in this country everywhere is like that at Market Culm mixt up

with mud or clay into balls which make a strong fire, but emit a very sulphureous heavy smoke & seems a strong objection to this part of Country for settling in<sup>4</sup>.

We took a very tolerable lodging of 3 Bedchambers & a dining room with use of a Kitchen for a Guinea pr. week at one Bevan's a Brazier.

My Father, Strong, & Nancy came at 3 o'clock. Strong, who is a native of this town, has heard of a legacy left her some years ago of above £70 by a Uncle which she had never heard of before. The Dinner hour all over this Country is one o'clock.

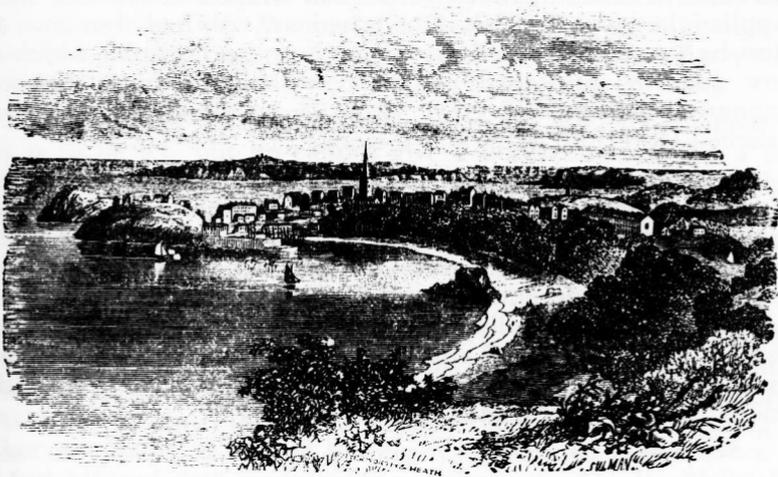
September 3: After breakfast I set out on a tour thro' the country to look for accomodation—first to Pembroke, 12 miles, by an indifferent Road, not very hilly, but must be deep in winter.<sup>5</sup> The country seems poor soil & in many places covered over with furze & interspersed with coalpits;—to the right and left a well planted country to be seen. At 9 miles from it is a ferry of a mile across a creek of Milford Haven & from thence 2 miles to Pembroke, very pretty road & by two handsome seats, Linian [Lanion] & Bush belonging to two Mr. Meyricks,<sup>6</sup> the 1st to be let but not furnished. At the ferry I fell in with a Mr. Morris, a Baker & Mr. Howel an attorneys clerk, both of Haverfordwest. With the latter I dined at the new inn—the former offered me very good & roomy lodgings in Pembroke for £40 a year, firing included. I went also to see Eisington, [Eastington] a seat of Mr. Meares, 6 miles west from Pembroke by an intricate road—a good old house on Nangle Bay, but not all habitable, some part new furnished & well, with a great many conveniences & good gardens. Mr. Webb in Pembroke who is to let it asks £40 year for it. It was quite dark when I returned to Pembroke accompanied by *Lewis* the host, who showed me the way. Pembroke is a pretty neat small town with a good many gentleman's houses, some very good one's, situated on a ridge between the Pills. At the point on an immense Rock, surrounded by sea, are the ruins of an immense old Castle of very ancient date which was taken by Cromwell, by the treachery of a man who showed him where to cut off their water which was convey'd in pipes from a hill on the other side of the water. Those *earthen* pipes may be seen in the bank at this day. The area between the surrounding Battlements & the center castle is as large as King John's [castle] at Trim. The center building much larger. One tower still preserves its circular vaulted roof at the top & marks of having contained 4 Stories. Under the castle at about 50 feet above the water is a large cave in the Rock, of difficult access, in which is a pretty good echo, but reckoned here remarkable & called the *Wogan*—it is about 40 feet diameter: & 20 to 30 high.



Pembroke Castle

September 4: After breakfast 10 miles to Tenby, a most solitary road & very indifferent along the ridge of a hill, affording where the hedges allow it, a view of the sea to the right over about a mile or two of open country, & a well planted one to the left. Tenby is situated on a semicircular Rock of Immense height with great old walls & gates to the north west end. The Streets are crooked, narrow & unpleasant — the view a vast sheet of water on one side, on the other a bay with sometimes a good deal of small Craft. This could be no desirable place to live in surely & yet it has [been] represented to us as a delightful retreat. I heard of no house here, so after dinner, I went on 21 miles to St. Clair's, a small village with a good inn on the London Road. In my way, went to see *Kilgetty*, a small seat of Lord Milford's which I am told is to be let. They were not sure at the house, which would do well enough, but it is situated in a mountain facing Coalpits & a mile from the sea. The gentleman who lived there before had it & 3 ct. of culm for £40 a year & some land besides. The Road is thro' a dreary country (tho' the hills about *Kilgetty* are romantick) till you pass Tavern spite on the great road & then the

great vale opens itself to view which reaches beyond Brecknock. All the fuel here Culm, of stone coal mixt up with a fifth yellow clay or mud & and soe made up into wet balls when used. 1 ct. of culm is 60 barrels or 12 carts & a Barrel is (as I hear 5 Bushells) so that 1 ct. is more than 9 ton & costs 50s at the pits.



Tenby from the North

September 5, Sunday: The morning being very wet I took a chaise to Caermarthen, where I breakfasted & went to Church. The Innkeeper could give me no information of any house in Caermarthen or the neighbourhood. I called on Miss Bloom, sister to a Gentleman I had seen at Hubberton & Pembroke, who was very civil to me. I drank tea with her having dined at the Inn with several Gentlemen where I heard of *Pentland*, a Place of Mrs. Davis's 9 miles from Caermarthen. I waited on Mrs. Davis who told me the house was not half furnished & she asked 25 guineas a year for it. Caermarthen seems a pretty town much better built than Haverford West, but the shops being all shut on a Sunday I could not make any judgment of its business & c. The Church is very large & well filled. The evening was fine & I returned to St. Clairs—a most beautiful country 9 miles along a vale well wooded & affording a variety of charming prospects. Met there a Mr. Scurlogh [sic—Scurlock?]. Best at Carmarthen the *Greyhound*.

September 6: Went with Mr. Cole, the Landlord of the new Blue Boar, to meet Mr. Philips, a clergyman, who had a house to let called *Whitland*, 7 miles from St. Clairs. He seems a pretty gentleman, but his house is much out of repair & has no furniture

but 3 beds. It is situated in a charming spot of that beautiful vale. But the front is against a hill & to the north, and a farm house at the back hides all the prospect. The road, too, is bad enough, & from hence to Narbarth 6 miles very bad & watery. He asked indeed but £30 for House & 20 Acres of Land. I go on to Narbarth & dine there—a very small Market town, but well supplied they say. The Cross Roads here are very bad even now, & must be worse in winter. Here we get into the Turnpike which is very good & pleasant, 10 miles to Haverfordwest. About Cannarton Bridge are great woods & a romantick Scenery. Reached Haverford West at 5 o'clock.

September 7: Went to see Bob Crawford, who had called on us, and is in obscurity here with his wife & mother. He mentioned Camrose, 4 miles off, belonging to Mr. Bowen & we went directly to see it. The Road pretty good—the House 4 Rooms on a floor, very good & very decently furnished—Garden much out of order & situated in a pretty village at one end. Called on Bowen on our way home at Lamston [Lambston]; he will not let Camrose for less than 7 years, but has another place to dispose of, Westfield, belonging to his niece, Miss Bowen.

September 8: Father, wife & I in a Chaise to see Westfield—the House good & very well furnished, but situate by the high road & in a very lonesome place, Garden in bad order too—7 miles from Haverfordwest, 4 from Pembroke & not more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile from a Pill.

Ride towards *Wiston*, a place of which the owner, Mr. Wogan, is lately dead & which is supposed to be let—5 miles from hence on a hill. The road excellent, the situation pleasant & the house seems good. Came round by *Slebech & Picton Castle*, Seats of Mr. Symmonds & Lord Milford, Mr. Bevan being with me.

In the Evening Major Aubrey of the Breconshire Militia commanding here called on us to offer a house he has in Brecknoch, very well situated & furnished, with a Garden, but asks £50; a sensible good sort of man he seems to be.

September 12: Sunday. Instead of going to Church I went to the Bridge to see the ceremony of an anabaptist christening—about 12 they came out of their meeting & the Minister, having got up on the end of the Battlement of the Bridge, made a sort of preaching prayer in English & then in Welsh, after which he led the new Christian, an old woman of 60, into the River up to her knees & then he made another short prayer & having said 'I baptise thee, my sister, in the name of the Father, Son & Holy Ghost', laid her down on her back under water & so walked out again. When he ascended his battlement

again & made another long prayer in English & in Welsh. In the evening at St. Martin's, a large, old, ugly, wretched church.

September 13: Mary and I rode to breakfast to Pembroke—looked at Morris's lodgings, walked about the Town, dined there & returned home in the Evening. Looking out of the Inn window I was spied & known by young Stibs of Navan, who was marching thro' Pembroke with a party to go & recruit in Ireland. In the ferry returning we met a Mr. & Mrs. Parry who very civilly rode & conversed with us to Haverford West.

September 15th: Rode to Wiston to ask Mr. Gibbon about it. It is to be let, but he cannot give a positive answer for a few days—the Garden excellent & not too large. The house is dirty after the auction so I could not see it. In the Evening an express arrives that a Privateer had come into Fishguard bay & taken several ships & attempting to land, but Major Aubrey would not stir for that.

September 16. I went to Llether,<sup>7</sup> 10 miles, to ask a Mr. Jones if he would let his house in this town—he will not—a most dreary, dull ride on the Road to St. David's with Mr. Crawford. At my return hear that more Expresses had come this morning & that not only 140 Militia but many Gentlemen of the Town & Lord Milford with many more were gone to Fishguard & from several that Guns were heard all the Morning. After dinner ride 6 miles of that road (& meet nobody returning) as far as Trefgarn [Treffgarne] where, on a Rocky Mount, are two huge Knobs of Rocks that are seen at a great distance & under this rough hill a beautiful wooded vally, irrigate by the River of Haverford West, remarkable for good trout fishing.

The carts used here are all drawn by 2 oxen with a yoke & a pole & 2 horses abreast, carry about a ton or less. About 100 Lime Kilns about this town. Coals delivered here at 16d per barrel, 10d at pit, & 6d carriage.

N.B. A Barrel 4 Bushels or Strikes of 10 Gallons each so that the measure here being 5 to 1 Irish measure. A ton Irish sells here for 8s. 6d. Slide Carn much used in the country, particularly in Carmarthenshire.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Milford: '... very small and irregularly built (the houses all being constructed of a rough stone), and consists only of a few little public houses.' Extract from the diary of a lady who landed at Milford from Liverpool in May, 1772, quoted in *The History of Haverfordwest with some of that of Some Pembrokeshire Parishes*, by J. Brown, J.W. Phillips, & F.J. Warren, Haverfordwest, 1914.

2. Presumably Bangeston Hall, seat of John Hooke-Campbell (later Campbell-Hooke), Lord Lyon King-of-Arms from 1754, and brother of Pryse Campbell, of Stackpole Court. Their grandfather, Sir Alexander Campbell, had come into the Welsh estates by marrying Elizabeth, sister and heir of Sir Gilbert Lort, of Stackpole, in 1689.
3. In her 'A tour to Milford Haven', 1791, Mrs. Morgan says: 'It is generally confessed that Haverfordwest is the handsomest, the largest, and the gentlest town in South Wales' (*History of Haverfordwest*, p.106-7).
4. '. . . Instead of coales they use a kind of slacke called culm, which is worked out of the mines and lyes them there at ninepence a stocke, which is there term for measure. This slack is tempered with damp clay and made up in balls, so if you call for a fire to be made up you must say, 'Ball the fire'.' (*History of Haverfordwest*, p.185 quoting from the *Tour of 1791*).
5. 'The roads are very narrow, so much so that the husbandmen are obliged to blow horns before them when they use the teames, which are generally drawn by a pair of horses and a pair of oxen.' (*History of Haverfordwest*, p.186, quoting from the *Tour of 1791*).
6. Richard Fenton in his *Historical Tour through Pembrokeshire*, published in 1811, describes Lanion as 'now unroofed and suffered to fall into decay'. Ruined walls still existed in 1905 but nothing now remains. The old Bush House was destroyed by fire in 1866.
7. Llethr was a farm in Brawdy parish. Fenton describes it as 'deserted' (*Tour*, p.142).