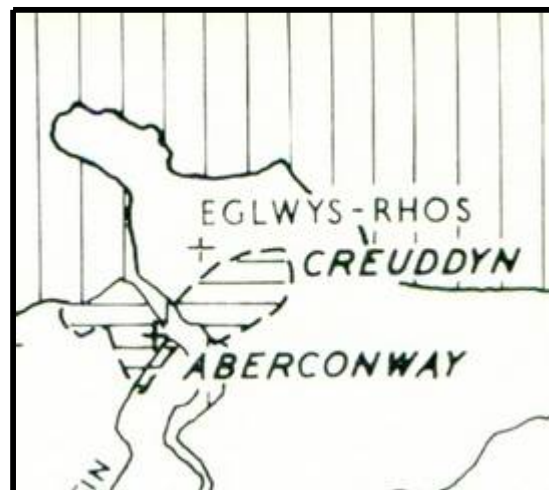


A few notes on the Creuddyn Grange

Aberconway Abbey, a Cistercian monastery, was founded in 1186 first at Rhedynog-Felen. However the austere conditions prompted the monks to move to Conwy in 1192. Llywelyn ap Iorwerth was the effective founder of the abbey.¹²

The Abbey held a number of granges, one being on the Creuddyn (in the commote of Creuddyn, in the cantref of Rhos). The land was held by Dafydd ap Owain Gwynedd until the battle in 1194 with Llywelyn ap Iorwerth. After Llywelyn's victory, much of Rhos passed to Llywelyn whilst the commote of Creuddyn passed to Gruffyd ap Cynan and formed part of the territory seized by Llywelyn upon Gruffyd's death in 1200.

Rhys Hays comments that it is impossible to make any very accurate estimate of the size of the Creuddyn Grange as its boundary is difficult to trace as many of the place names mentioned in Llywelyn's charter have disappeared.³ He estimates that the grange contained about 1200 to 1300 acres. He suggests that it was bordered on the west by the Conwy river for about a mile and half and extended east for perhaps two miles (however given that there are 640 acres in 1 square mile; a smaller size may be suggested based on the above acreage?) It was assumed by Gresham⁴ that the boundaries followed the boundaries of the borough of Conwy and that this assumption was borne out to some extent by the identifications that Gresham made (map below from Hays, 1963).



¹ Hays, Rhys W. 1963. 'The history of the Abbey of Aberconway 1186-1537'

² www.monasticwales.org Aberconwy Abbey & Maenan Abbey

³ See Appendix for Llewellyn's Charter & translation & possible meaning of place names mentioned

⁴ Gresham, Colin A. 1939. 'The AberConwy Charter' *Archaeologia Cambrensis* XCIV, pp 123-62

The somewhat stylised map in Hays suggests that the Afon Ganol, a natural boundary, may have formed its southern boundary (municipal & county boundaries follow this river course); Llywelyn's charter mentions 'thence along the shore of the arable land and marsh' and **Argae velin** (meaning mill dam). Tradition has it that the monks built a causeway 'Sarn y Mynach' across the marshes of the Afon Ganol; presumably to link the monastery at Llandrillo-yn-Rhos with the abbey at Aberconway⁵. If the grange extended eastwards for two miles or so from the River Conwy then it presumably included much of the Llandudno Junction area and part of the Afon Ganol valley; the charter mentions **Trefwarth**, a township in the Llangwstenin parish

If the grange extended northward for a mile & half, the grange would include the more upland areas of Pydew and Esgyryn to the north-east. The middle area would include the limestone escarpments (Llywelyn's charter mentions cliffs/rocks, possibly these are the limestone escarpments?) around Marl & Bodyscallon (one of the more recognizable names in Llywelyn's charter)⁶. There is reference to a spring, several springs form at the base of these escarpments, the area below Bodyscallen along to Marl is known as Coed y Pistyll. The charter mentions **Crocuryn** (Crogfryn) and **Eglwys Ros** (Rhos) and Gresham feels this is the only area where the boundary can be determined from the charter. The north-west area would include the lower, undulating land around Tywyn.

Rhys Hays, unlike Gresham, argues that it was unlikely that the grange included Deganwy castle and the land associated with that. Gresham had placed the boundary of the grange to the north of Deganwy castle (where the borough boundary is). As Deganwy Castle, a key strategic position, was closely linked with the military action seen in the area over the next hundred or so years, Hays argues that it would seem unlikely that the monk's land included the castle and surrounding Vardre (the name Vardre is thought to be a corruption of the name *Maerdref*, a Royal court linked with Llywelyn ap Iorwerth 'Fawr').

The visible ruins today are those of the castle and accompanying borough built by Henry III in 1245-50. Henry III authorised a new borough at Deganwy. The earliest documents date from 1248 when Henry ordered free burgages (plots of land) to be assigned at 'Gannoc'.⁷ In the Charter of Deganwy..it says that that the *'town of Gannoc shall be ever a free borough and that each of the burgesses of the same town shall, within that borough, half an acre of land for building and making cartilage (thereof) and two acres of arable land outside the same borough, for two shillings each year to be paid to our bailiff'*. The town of Gannoc was to be enclosed with a trench and a wall. An annual fair would be on St. Martin's day & six days after that in November and a weekly market would be

⁵ Senior, Michael. 1991. 'The Crossing of the Conwy'

⁶ Williams, Robert. 1835. The History & antiquities of the town of Aberconwy & its neighbourhood. Appendix. Llywelyn's Charter.

⁷ Draper, Christopher. 2007. 'Llandudno before the Hotels.'

held on a Tuesday.⁸At this point the abbey was still at Conwy and would move to Maenan some thirty-five years later in 1283.

Something of the borough appears to have survived the destruction of the castle by Llywelyn in 1263 and the borough was attached to the new borough of Conway, chartered in 1284. Weekly markets and annual fairs continued to be held and nineteen houses are listed in the 1305-6 Conway rental.⁹

It is interesting in that in the 1846 Tithe survey the two large fields, *Vardref* and *Vattw*, surrounding the castle are included in the demense of Bodsyscallen rather than the neighbouring townships of Penglas and TreHir.

However as Llywelyn's charter mentions the stream near ***Eglwys-Ros*** and also ***Crocuryn*** (Crogfyn) it would suggest that the grange included some land near Eglwys-Rhos church (north-east of the Vardre) but possibly not Vardre & the castle area itself. Possibly the land around the castle was excluded but the grange possibly included land further north of the castle? Gresham argues that ***Ryuoryn, et terrae arabilis monachorum*** (Rhyforio means to dig or delve) may indicate dug or cultivated lands and may be linked to the field 'Gardd y mynachdy'(behind Hill View Road, below the watchtower on Brynia; one of the nearby roads is called Grange Road)

According to Rhys Hays, the grange included much meadow and pasture land and a good deal of woodland; a similar mixture to today's land use albeit the area now covered by housing. There are references in Llywelyn's charter to both arable and cultivated land in this grange and in each case the land referred to as already belonging to the monks; it would appear that Llywelyn was confirming an earlier grant.

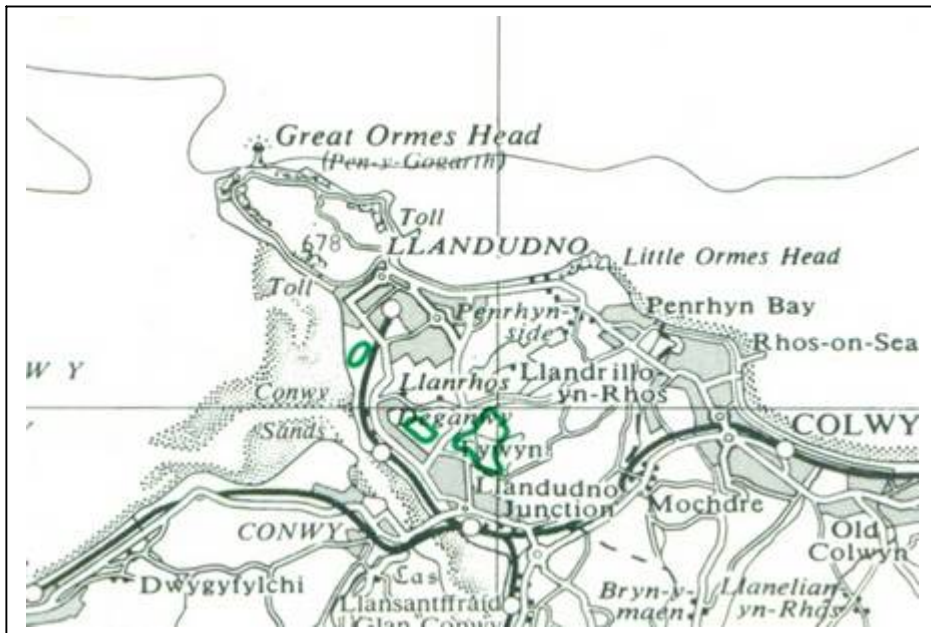
Also granted to the monks was 'the waters of Conway' which is taken to mean the river lying between the monks' lands on the two banks i.e. the land around the Abbey & the Creuddyn Grange. The grant was specifically to include the right of toll upon this stretch of water; a toll that was later associated with Marl Hall.

David Williams's¹⁰ maps of Cistercian lands in Wales plots the known extent of monastery land using a wide variety of documentary sources (although as he notes the exact extent of Cistercian land in Wales may never be fully known and the delineated areas represent something of an underestimate).

⁸ Bezant Lowe. 'The Heart of Northern Wales'

⁹ NPRN 33013. see www.coflein.gov.uk for aerial shots of earthworks associated with the Vardre.

¹⁰ Williams, David H. 1990. 'Atlas of Cistercian Lands in Wales'.



Edward I initiated the building of Conwy Castle to replace Deganwy castle as the leading military station of the area; the main obstacle was that Abbey of Aberconway already occupied the site required for the castle and its walled town. By September 1283 Edward, probably with the monks, had chosen a new location at Maenan, in the Rhos cantref. Although a certain amount of confusion ensued as being on the west bank of the Conway meant that the abbey would be under the diocese of St. Aspah's rather than Bangor. On 24th June 1284 Edward made a formal announcement to move the abbey to Maenan. Later on 8th September the borough of Conway received its charter from Edward; part of Deganwy was incorporated in the borough of Conway.

On 23rd October 1284 Edward, in a charter, formally granted the new site to the abbey. The charter announced that the monks had relinquished to the King the old site of their abbey and also the grange of Creuddyn. Evidently the grange was too close to the king's new castle. Although the monks received more new land from Edward including amongst others 'the hamlet of Cumrewet¹¹ with half the meadow of Raulin in the commote of Creuddyn'. These names have not remained but a document of 1352 indicates that the only land in the Creuddyn held by the monastery consisted of one-fourth of the vill of Bodysgallen, a place mentioned in Llywelyn's charter and bearing the same name today. Bodysgallen was located in the limits of the Creuddyn grange which had been ceded by the King. It appears that a small part of it was not required by the King and was

¹¹ Possibly Cwm Howard, sometimes in the past spelt Cwm Hewert as on Dawson map of c.1820 and early O.S. maps

granted back to the Abbey together with new lands granted in Anglesey. A part of the weir near Deganwy was also granted to the Abbey by the King.

In the 1846 Tithe survey of Eglwysrhos there are seventeen parcels of land belonging to the Hon. Edward Mostyn Lloyd Mostyn which it is remarked that these lands previously belonged to a medieval monastery and are free of tithes. The schedule refers to these lands formerly belonging to the Monastery of Gogarth. However this is possibly an error as it was the Bishop's Palace at Gogarth with its own grange on the Great Orme (Gogarth) rather a monastery. The Bishop of Bangor, Anian, christened Edward II in Carnarvon Castle on April 25th 1284 and for this service and other service he had several manors or Regalities bestowed upon him and his successors; one of which was land on the Great Orme.

These parcels of land included the land around Llanrhos church and the school opposite & small fields around these two building. Further over from the church is the field Gardd y Mynachdy. Towards the present day Crag-y-Don were two fields near Fferm.

Then near the coast, between Ffrith Geriog and Maes Du were two fields; these maybe the land shown on William's map near Cerrig Duon. Old OS maps refer to this coastal area as 'Warren' (as in Rabbit Warren) and perhaps the monks were making use of this foodsource? Possibly these lands represent the land ceded back to the monks?

On 1st October 1350 an agreement was made between the monks and King Edward III regarding the abbey's grange at Ffriwlwyd (near Criccieth); this grange was exchanged for the advowson of the church of Eglwysrhos, made at the request of the monks. The church said to be rebuilt by the monks and rededicated to their patron saint, the Virgin Mary instead of the original dedication of St. Eleri of Gwytherin. The well across the road from the church is known as St. Mary's Well and as mentioned further along there is a small field called Gardd y Mynachdy.

Later Henry VIII's final break with Rome came on 30th March 1534 and with it the dissolution of the monasteries. From the 'Valor' list, the name 'Bryned' Rhys Hays argues must be the name of the Creuddyn grange as Bryned (possibly this is Brynia, name of hill & farm there now; Gardd y Mynachdy is near there) was placed in the county of Caernarvon and in the diocese of St. Asaph's. Besides the abbey at Maenan, the Creuddyn grange was the only one to be so located. At the dissolution 'Bryned' ('Brened' in the accounts) had 3 tenants at will, 1 by lease. The tenants at will pay £1 6s 8d; 6s 8d for a holding called 'Apprynney' and 1s for a parcel of land.

There is a tradition that Marl Hall or at least its site was associated with a monastery, and nearby in Marl Woods there is a path called the 'Nun's Walk'.

William's map shows the area near Marl Hall (roughly between Marl Lane, Pentywyn Hill, Glanwydden Lane & limestone escarpment behind Marl Hall). Possibly it is this land which is the link to the tradition that Marl Hall was associated with a monastery? Certainly some of land delineated was in the Marl Hall Estate although parts belonged to the neighbouring Bodyscallen Estate.¹²

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¹² Tithe Map of Eglwys Rhos 1846

**Transcript of original Charter of Llywelyn ap Iorwerth relating to
Creuddyn Grange**

(in 'The Aberconwy Charter' by C. Gresham, 1939, Archaeologia
Cambrensis Vol XCIV)

Dedi etiam et concessi atque confirmavi eisdem monachis has terras apud creudyn per hos videlicet terminus, ascendendo de Conwy usque ad quendam fonticulum existentem in extrema parte terrae arabilis monachorum apud hennron, hinc per superiorem partem terrae ab eisdem cultae usque ad lapides grandes existents in erw voruran, Inde usque ad communem viam, hinc per ductum via usque ad claud supra erwdus, hinc usque ad capud carrec wyber, hinc per superiorem partem Ryuoryn, et terrae arabilis monachorum usque ad extremum partem gwernegof, hinc per alveum desubtus gwernegof usque ad terram crocuryn, hinc per lapides in termino constitotos usque ad rivulum juxta eglwys Ros, hinc per dictum rivuli usque ad alveum, qui est in extrema parte prati monachorum subtus crocuryn, hinc per ductum alvei usque ad descensum rivuli, qui est inter bodesgallen, et brongoch, et descendit in dictum alveum, hinc usque ad fontem quondam, hinc per rupem proximam desuper pendentem usque ad lapidem quem vocant quadratum hinc usque ad rupem in qua est fovea, hinc usque ad carrec ereu, hinc usque ad secundam rupem ultra carrec walch, hinc per superiorem partem terrae cultae monachorum usque ad claud inter trefwarth, et callaurwerth, et sic per dictum illias claud usque ad paludem subtus, hinc per extemam partem terrae arabilis monachorum usque ad nemus eardur filii kendelu, hinc per claud usque ad capud illius claud, Inde per ripam paludis inter terram arabilem, et paludem usque argea velin, hinc per ductum aquae usque ad Conwy, Concessi etiam eisdem monachis totam aquam Conwy, et ejusdem aquae transitum, atque piscarium de aber egeffyn usque aber Conwy ..

**The Abbey of Aberconwy in the land of Carnarvon, founded in
the year 1198- translation of original Charter of Llywelyn ap
Iorwerth Prince of Wales**

(in 'The Heart of Northern Wales' by W. Bezant Lowe)

Gresham (1939, 'The Aberconwy Charter' in Archaeologia Cambrensis notes that the charter & translation given in Bezant Lowe contains some errors...but unfortunately Gresham does not give a translation of the charter although he gives some notes on place names which are given later.

'Creuddyn....ascending from Conwy to a certain spring rising in the further part of the arable land of the Monks at Hermiron, hence by the upper part of the land tilled by the same, to the great stones existing in Erw-voruran, thence to the public road, hence by the course of the road to a 'claud' above Erwedus, hence to the top of Carrec-Wyber, hence to the upper part of Ryvoryn and the Monk's arable land, to the furthest side of Gwernegof, hence by a channel under Gwernof to Crocyrn, hence by the stones set up on the boundary, to the rivulet next Eglwys-Rhos, hence by the course of the stream to a water channel which is in the extreme part of the Monk's meadow under Crocuryn, hence by the water channel to the descent of a stream which is between Bodyscallen and Brongoch and descends into the said water channel, hence to a certain spring, hence by the nearest rock hanging overhead, to a stone which they call 'squared', hence to a rock in which there is a cave, hence to Carrcereu, hence to the second rock beyond Carrecwalch, hence by the upper part of the Monk's cultivated land to a 'claud' between Trefwarth and Callaurweth, and so by the course of that 'claud' to a Marsh of Iarddur, son of Kenddelu, hence by a 'claud' to the head of that 'claud', hence by the bank of the Marsh to Argaevelin, hence by the course of the water to Conwy'

Below are the translations & notes Gresham has given for the Welsh place names mentioned in the charter.

Claud (Clawdd) a term used in the charter, meaning could be a bank or ditch.

Hennron (Lowe has Hermirion)...it may be henuron 'old hill' or a compound of rhon 'shaft/spear'Gresham notes both are doubtful.

Erw vororan..the u is written for a v, the name being Erw Vorvaran, modern form is Morfran, a Cormorant.

Erwedus..there is an adjective gweddus..'fair/seemly'..this maybe a comounf of it..er-weddus or erw-weddus 'fair field'.

Carrec wyber..the final c now softens to a g ...Carreg Wiber..'Viper rock' (*interestingly last year Llandudno was reported to be a 'hotspot' for adders [member of the viper family] with 7 reported snakebites around Llandudno!*)

Ryuoryn...Rhyforio means to 'dig or delve' and Rhyforyn would be a place dug up or perhaps cultivated land.

Gwernegof....Gwern y gof...the meadow of the smith.

Crocuryn...now Crogfryn...the overhanging hill or Gallows Hill.

Eglwys Ros...now Eglwys Rhos

Bodesgallen...still called Bodysgallen...from Bod 'a dwelling' and 'ysgallen' thistle....'the house where the thistle grew'

Brongoch....Bron Goch...Red Hill

Carrec Ereu....pershaps Carreg y rhew or ereu.

Carrecwalch...Carreg Walch...'Hawk Hill'

Trefwarth.....maybe for Trewerth, a tref that has been sold to somebody. Or also names like Iorwerth.

Callaurwerth...seems to mean a place 'worth a cauldron'.

Argaevelin /Argae velin..Mill dam