THE HOUSE OF REES

Cilymaenllwyd, Carmarthenshire

A lineage from the age of crusading knights to the cannon smoke of Trafalgar

Source: Burke's Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry, 1845

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The Long Road to Killymaenllwyd

There are families in Wales whose histories are written not in ink alone, but in stone, in saltwater, and in the slow accumulation of land and loyalty across generations. The Rees family of Cilymaenllwyd that ancient estate nestled in the county of Carmarthen is one such family. To trace their story is to walk a corridor that stretches from the mythic kingdoms of post-Roman Britain, through the Crusades and the Wars of the Roses, into the drawing rooms of Regency England and the gun decks of the Royal Navy.

Burke's Landed Gentry of 1845 records them among the established families of South Wales, but the bones of the lineage are far older than any Victorian almanac. What follows is that story told not as genealogical table, but as a history of people: their choices, their wars, their marriages, and the estates they built and defended over nearly a thousand years.

I. The Ancient Root: Urien Rheged and the Kingdom of the West

Every great lineage has a foundation myth, a figure at the base of the tree who is more legend than man. For the Rees family of Cilymaenllwyd, that figure is Urien Rheged.

Urien ruled the kingdom of Rheged in the sixth century a realm that stretched across the hill country now shared between Wales and northern England, its heartlands touching what are today Carmarthen, Glamorgan, and Pembroke. He was a contemporary of the Arthurian age, praised in the great Welsh bardic poems of Taliesin as a warrior king of exceptional courage, a defender of the Brittonic peoples against the encroaching Anglian kingdoms of the east. To bear his name in your ancestry in medieval Wales was to carry a crown.

The Rees family shared this common ancestor with the noble house of Dynevor itself one of the great dynasties of Welsh power a lineage that speaks to the deep roots of the Carmarthenshire gentry in the pre-Norman world of Welsh kingship.

> *In Wales, ancestry was never merely a social credential. It was a statement of belonging — to a land, to a people, to a history that ran deeper than any English title could reach.*

From Urien, the line descends through generations that history records only in fragments, until it crystallises in a figure whose name carries the romance of the medieval world: Sir Elidir Ddu.

II. The Crusader's Blood: Sir Elidir Ddu and the Knight of the Sepulchre

Sir Elidir Ddu Elidir the Black was a Crusader and Knight of the Holy Sepulchre. The designation is significant. The Knights of the Holy Sepulchre were not a military order in the manner of the Templars or Hospitallers, but rather a brotherhood of honour, conferred upon those who had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and been knighted at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre itself. To hold this title was to have stood at the holiest site in Christendom and pledged one's sword in its defence.

The Crusades were, for all their violence and complexity, the defining spiritual and martial enterprise of medieval Europe. That a man of this lineage had made that journey across the Mediterranean, through the contested lands of the Holy Land, to Jerusalem itself speaks to a family of wealth, ambition, and deep religious conviction. He returned to Wales bearing not just a title, but a transformed identity.

Sir Elidir Ddu had seven sons. The seventh of these, Philip, became the branch point. It is through Philip that the line runs forward to Gwilym ap Philip the man who first established the family's presence in Llandilo Vawr, the seed from which Cilymaenllwyd would eventually grow.

III. The Estate of Cilymaenllwyd: Gaining, Losing, and Returning

The estate of Cilymaenllwyd its name rooted in the Welsh landscape, a place of stone and meadow in the heart of Carmarthenshire did not pass smoothly through the generations. In the fashion of so many Welsh landed estates, it was at one point alienated from the direct line, its ownership moving outside the family before being reclaimed through the most Welsh of instruments: a well-chosen marriage.

It was Evan Lloyd ap Rydderch who secured the return, marrying Gwenllian, daughter of John ap Harry, around 1595 and with her the estate that bore her family's heritage. That his son, William ap Evan Lloyd, succeeded directly to Cilymaenllwyd confirms the settlement. The family was home.

Across the seventeenth century, the lineage continued with John ap Philip whose son Rhys established himself on his own estate at Kilverry† before arriving at the man who first took the modernised surname: John Rees. In adopting the anglicised spelling, this John was doing what so many Welsh families did as the administrative and legal pressures of the English crown reshaped Wales: adapting the ancient patronymic tradition into a fixed family name, whilst holding the Welsh identity within the sound of the word itself.

† *Kilverry: the Welsh original of this estate name remains unverified. It is likely an anglicisation built on the element* ***cil*** *(a corner, nook, or sheltered recess — as in Cilymaenllwyd itself), combined with a personal name or lost topographical word. Confirmation is sought from the University of Wales Dictionary of Welsh Placenames or Cadw / Coflein estate records.*

IV. Hector Rees and the Jacobite Rising: A Knighthood Declined

Of all the episodes in the Rees family history, the story of Hector Rees born 1683, Magistrate and High Sheriff of Carmarthenshire in 1745 may be the most revealing of character.

The year 1745 was a year of crisis for the British crown. Prince Charles Edward Stuart Bonnie Prince Charlie, the Young Pretender had landed in Scotland and was leading a Jacobite army south toward England, claiming the throne in his grandfather's name. The rebellion sent tremors through the Welsh gentry, many of whom had residual Jacobite sympathies even whilst holding positions of civil authority.

Hector Rees's conduct during the insurrection was evidently of sufficient distinction that the crown offered him a knighthood in recognition. He declined it. The reasons are not recorded in Burke's account, and that silence invites reflection. Was it Welsh pride? A reluctance to be bound more formally to an English crown. A man of sufficient standing to feel a knighthood added nothing to what he already possessed. Or and this is perhaps the most interesting reading was there some residual sympathy for the Stuart cause that made the reward sit uneasily?

> *To be offered a knighthood and refuse it is itself a form of power. It says: I stand here not because I need your recognition, but because this is where I belong.*

Whatever his reasoning, Hector Rees remained Hector Rees no title, no suffix, but a man whose name was recorded in the annals of Welsh civic life with evident respect.

V. The Magistrates: John Rees and the Architecture of Civil Life

The Rees family of the eighteenth century were not warriors in the medieval sense, but they were something equally important to the functioning of Welsh rural society: magistrates, sheriffs, and administrators. It was through these roles that the landed gentry exercised their authority in the Georgian era, sitting on the bench, managing local militias, and maintaining the connection between crown and community.

John Rees, born 1724, continued this tradition as a Magistrate, strengthening the family's connections through his marriage to Mary, heiress of Daniel Hughes of Penymaes. His son, another John Rees born 1749 served in turn as High Sheriff of Carmarthenshire, and married Amy, daughter of Sir William Mansel, Baronet. The Mansel family were themselves one of the significant gentry dynasties of South Wales, and this marriage placed the Rees family within a web of connections that stretched across the county hierarchy.

These were men who understood that land alone was not enough. The great families of Georgian Wales built their influence through a combination of estate management, judicial authority, military service, and strategic marriage. The Rees family were practitioners of all four.

VI. Salt Water and Cannon Smoke: John Rees of Cilymaenllwyd and the Royal Navy

Then comes the most vivid chapter in the Cilymaenllwyd story and the one that speaks most powerfully of the age into which this family was born.

John Rees, born 1781, succeeded to the estate upon his father's death in 1802. But before he took up the responsibilities of a Welsh country gentleman, he had lived a life of extraordinary naval adventure. As a midshipman in the Royal Navy, he served during the climactic years of the wars against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France wars that would reshape Europe and define the century.

The Helder Expedition, 1799

The Helder Expedition of August 1799 was one of the most ambitious combined operations of the Revolutionary Wars a joint Anglo-Russian force of some 30,000 men dispatched to the coast of the Batavian Republic, the Netherlands then under French domination, with two objectives: to liberate the Dutch people and to seize the Batavian fleet anchored in the Texel roads before it could be turned against Britain.

The naval element succeeded beyond all expectation. On the 28th of August, Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Strachan led a squadron into the Texel anchorage and the Dutch fleet thirteen ships of the line and eighteen smaller vessels surrendered without a single shot being fired. It was a remarkable bloodless triumph, the entire enemy fleet handed over intact. For the young John Rees, serving as midshipman, it was his first taste of a fleet action and a lesson in how wars could sometimes be won by presence and nerve alone. The land campaign that followed proved far less clean, bogging down in the autumn mud of North Holland before a withdrawal was negotiated, but the naval prize had already been secured.

The Battle of Camperdown, 11th October 1797

If the Helder was a bloodless lesson, Camperdown was the opposite one of the most savage fleet engagements of the age of sail, fought in shallow, treacherous waters off the Dutch coast that left no room for manoeuvre and no prospect of escape for either side.

Admiral Adam Duncan's North Sea Fleet, sixteen ships of the line, intercepted the Batavian fleet under Vice-Admiral de Winter on the 11th of October 1797. Duncan's tactics were aggressive and unconventional: rather than forming the traditional line of battle, he drove his fleet straight through the enemy formation in two divisions, cutting it apart and turning the engagement into a series of brutal close-quarters duels. In waters barely deep enough to float a man-of-war, the guns spoke at point-blank range.

The carnage was considerable on both sides. By the time the smoke cleared, eleven Dutch ships of the line had been taken, including de Winter's flagship the Vrijheid de Winter himself surrendering his sword personally to Duncan aboard the Venerable. It remains one of the most complete victories in the history of the Royal Navy. For a midshipman standing on deck that October afternoon, deafened by cannon fire in twelve fathoms of grey North Sea water, it was an experience that would mark a man for life.

The Battle of Copenhagen, 2nd April 1801

Of the three great actions in which John Rees served, Copenhagen is perhaps the most layered in its significance a battle fought not against a declared enemy, but against a neutral nation Britain had decided it could not afford to leave uncontrolled.

By the spring of 1801, Napoleon had assembled the Armed Neutrality of the North Denmark, Sweden, Russia, and Prussia a coalition designed to deny Britain access to the vital naval stores of the Baltic. Without Baltic timber, hemp, and tar, the Royal Navy could not keep its fleet at sea. Britain's response was characteristically direct: a fleet of eighteen ships of the line under Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, with Vice-Admiral Horatio Nelson in effective tactical command, sailed into the Kattegat and bore down on Copenhagen.

The Danish defences were formidable. Eighteen hulks, floating batteries, and warships were moored in a line along the harbour approaches, supported by the guns of the Trekroner fortress. Nelson attacked on the 2nd of April with twelve ships of the line the shallower draught vessels, as the approach channel was perilously tight. Three of his ships ran aground immediately. The remainder pressed on into a storm of fire.

John Rees served this action aboard HMS Ardent the second ship to lead the British line into the engagement. It was a position of extraordinary danger. The Ardent had already bled heavily at Camperdown four years earlier she had lost her captain and taken devastating casualties in that action and her crew went into Copenhagen knowing precisely what close action cost. For four hours the battle raged at ranges sometimes no greater than the width of a street, the air thick with smoke, splinters, and the noise of guns that could be heard as far away as the Swedish coast.

At the height of the battle, Admiral Parker watching from his position further out flew the signal to discontinue the engagement. Nelson, famously, raised his telescope to his blind eye and declared he could not see the signal. He fought on. Within the hour, the Danish fire had slackened, and a ceasefire was agreed. Britain had secured the Baltic and shattered the Armed Neutrality. Nelson called it the hardest fight of his life harder than the Nile, harder than Trafalgar would prove to be.

For John Rees of Cilymaenllwyd, it was the last great action of a naval career that had taken him from the shallow waters of the Texel to the gun decks of Copenhagen harbour. When the Peace of Amiens came the following year, he came home and one suspects he was ready to.

> *The smoke of those guns at Copenhagen drifted across the Baltic for hours. For a young Welshman from Carmarthenshire aboard the Ardent, it must have seemed like the whole world was made of noise and fire.*

VII. The Peace and the Return: Amiens 1802

On the 25th of March 1802, the Treaty of Amiens was signed between Great Britain and the French Republic, ending however briefly a decade of almost continuous European war. Church bells rang across Britain. After the grinding anxiety of the Revolutionary Wars, the threat of invasion, and the relentless cost in blood and treasure, the nation exhaled.

For the men of the Royal Navy, Amiens meant something very particular. The fleet that had held Britain safe through a decade of peril was stood down, its ships laid up in ordinary, its officers placed on half pay, its midshipmen released into a world that suddenly had no immediate need of them. For some it was relief. For others men whose entire adult identity had been forged at sea it was an abrupt and disorienting silence.

John Rees was twenty-one years old when the peace came. Behind him lay six years of naval service, three major fleet actions, and the education that only war at sea can give the management of fear, the weight of responsibility, the strange democracy of the gun deck where

a man's worth was measured in nerve rather than birth. He had stood on the deck of the Ardent at Copenhagen less than twelve months before the treaty was signed. Now the guns were quiet.

He came home to Carmarthenshire.

In 1802, his father died, and John Rees succeeded to the Cilymaenllwyd estate. The timing, in retrospect, feels almost providential — as though the two great transitions of his life, the end of war and the inheritance of land, arrived together by design. Within a year he had married Anne-Catherine, daughter of Elias Vanderhorst, the American Consul at Bristol, and begun the work of building a family and managing an estate that his ancestors had held, lost, and reclaimed across two centuries.

The Peace of Amiens lasted fourteen months. By May 1803, war with France had resumed and would not end until Waterloo in 1815. John Rees did not return to the Navy. He served instead as a Magistrate, Deputy-Lieutenant, and Lieutenant-Colonel of the local militia the same pattern of civic responsibility that had defined his father and grandfather before him. The quarterdeck had made him; Carmarthenshire would keep him.

There is something quietly remarkable in that transition. The man who had watched the Dutch fleet surrender at the Helder, who had stood in the smoke at Camperdown and Copenhagen, now sat on the magistrate's bench in a Welsh county town and managed the rhythms of rural life harvests, tenancies, local disputes, the slow turning of the seasons. He carried both worlds within him, and the estate of Cilymaenllwyd was the richer for it.

VIII. The Vanderhorst Connection: Dutch Roots, South Carolina, and the Atlantic World

John Rees's marriage in 1803 brought into the Cilymaenllwyd story a thread that stretches not just across Wales and England, but across the Atlantic Ocean itself and back, by a different route, to the Protestant world of northern Europe from which so much of the British story draws its deeper currents.

He married Anne-Catherine, daughter of Elias Vanderhorst, the American Consul at Bristol. The Vanderhorst family were not, as Burke's Landed Gentry suggested, French Huguenots. The true origin is more precise and, in some ways, more remarkable. The family descended from a Dutch subaltern officer who had come to England in the retinue of William of Orange in 1688 that defining moment when a Protestant Dutch prince crossed the North Sea to claim the English throne and reshape the religious and political settlement of Britain forever. From that crossing, a family took root. Within a generation, a branch had crossed a second ocean, settling in South Carolina towards the close of the seventeenth century and beginning the work of building a new life in the American colonies.

They thrived. The Vanderhorst name became one of the established names of South Carolina society, bound up with the commercial and political life of Charleston and the wider colony. Arnoldus Vanderhorst Elias's nephew rose to serve as Governor of South Carolina, a remarkable elevation for a family whose grandfather had arrived in the New World with

nothing but his Protestant faith, his Dutch name, and the particular resilience of a man who had already crossed one sea in the cause of something he believed in.

Elias Vanderhorst himself represented a different dimension of the family's reach. Appointed American Consul in Bristol in 1792, he served in that role for over two decades a period that encompassed the Revolutionary Wars, the Napoleonic era, and the transformation of the Atlantic trading world. Bristol was at that time one of Britain's great ports, its commerce threading outward to America, the Caribbean, and beyond. To be American Consul there was to stand at a significant node of the Atlantic world, managing the interests of a young republic in one of the empire's busiest harbours.

Through Anne-Catherine, his daughter, that extraordinary history entered the blood of the Rees family of Cilymaenllwyd. A Welsh naval veteran from Carmarthenshire, whose ancestors had held land since the age of the Crusades, married the daughter of a Dutch American diplomat whose own family line ran back to William of Orange's fleet and forward to the governorship of an American state. It is, when held up to the light, a quietly astonishing connection the kind that the age of sail made possible and that no subsequent age has quite replicated.

Cilymaenllwyd was never merely a Welsh estate. It was always, in its way, connected to the wider world.

IX. The Next Generation: A Family in Full

John Rees and Anne-Catherine raised a family that reflected the wide social world of the Regency and early Victorian period. Their children married into naval families, Carmarthenshire gentry, and beyond:

b.1806 John-Hughes Rees — Magistrate for Carmarthenshire, married Isabella Rutson. Their son Myson-John Vanderhorst Rees, born 1834, carried the Vanderhorst name into the next generation as a deliberate act of remembrance.

1832 Charles-Courtenay Rees married Rosa Llewellyn, a marriage that kept one foot firmly in Welsh society.

— Arthur-Augustus Rees named in that Regency manner that blended classical ambition with family honour.

1833 Frances-Mansel Rees married Miles Smith, the Mansel name preserved in her own, a reminder of her grandmother's Baronet lineage.

— Anna-Mansel Rees married Charles David Williams, Commander R.N., returning the family, through marriage, to the naval world her father had known.

— Harriot-Cooper Rees and Helen Rees the daughters of the household, their stories not fully recorded but their presence felt in the architecture of this large, prosperous family.

The name Myson-John Vanderhorst Rees, given to a child born in 1834, is itself a small act of historical memory a Carmarthenshire family carrying a South Carolina name into the mid-Victorian era, a living reminder that this estate at the edge of Wales was connected to a world far larger than its fields and hedgerows suggested.

X. The Arms of Cilymaenllwyd: Lion, Border, and Hound

The coat of arms recorded in Burke's for the Rees family of Cilymaenllwyd presents a language of symbol that would have been immediately legible to any educated contemporary. A lion rampant the great beast of heraldic courage and sovereignty stands within a border of fleur-de-lis, that most ancient of heraldic motifs, associated with French royal lineage and, through the Crusades and the chivalric world, with sacred aspiration.

The crest features a talbot passant the hound of loyalty and the hunt a creature that speaks of stewardship and fidelity. Together, the arms tell a story: a family of courage, connected to the wider world of European chivalry, faithful in their obligations to land and lord.

That the fleur-de-lis appears in the border is itself intriguing, given the later arrival of Dutch-Protestant blood through the Vanderhorst connection. History has a way of making heraldry prophetic.

XI. An Unexpected Thread: The Emanuels of Pembrey and the Shadow of the Gibbet

No genealogical investigation ends quite where it begins. This one, which opened with a Burke's entry and a sixth-century king, closes in a place that could not have been anticipated on the crossroads of Penymynydd on Pembrey Mountain, where the story of the Rees family of Cilymaenllwyd reaches across the centuries to touch, however tentatively, the family of the researcher who uncovered it.

The connection emerges from a detail buried within the magistrate record of John Rees himself. In his role as Justice of the Peace for Carmarthenshire, John Rees father of the naval hero at the centre of this article was instrumental in bringing to justice a man known locally as Will Mani, whose full name was William Emanuel. Emanuel was from the village of Pembrey itself. He had terrorised Pembrey Mountain and the Kidwelly road and was convicted of the barbarous murder of an elderly woman committed on that same mountain. It was John Rees who ordered his garden at Pwll to be searched. Labourers digging the ground uncovered a blood-stained coat its cuff identified by a local tailor as the garment worn by Emanuel on the night of the murder. The evidence was conclusive.

William Emanuel was tried at Carmarthen and sentenced to death. He was hanged at Pensarn, on the edge of Carmarthen town, in 1788 the last man in Carmarthenshire to suffer the additional indignity of gibbeting. His body was then transported twelve miles back across country and placed in an iron gibbet cage at the crossroads of Penymynydd on Pembrey

Mountain the very landscape where the murder had been committed, and where his name was most feared. The gibbet stood as a public warning to all who crossed those upland roads.

Except that the body was not there in the morning.

Who removed it, and why, was never established. Whether it was an act of family loyalty, a local protest, or something else entirely, the gibbet stood empty at dawn and William Emanuel's remains were never accounted for. It is the kind of detail that lodges in local memory and passes through families for generations and it did. The story was still being told in Pembrey households well into the twentieth century.

Among the Emanuel families of Pembrey in 1788 was a young man named Thomas Emanuel, born in that same parish in 1760 the original single-M spelling, the older Welsh-rooted form of the name. Thomas married Ann Griffiths in Pembrey on the 8th of September 1782, six years before the execution. He was twenty-eight years old when William Emanuel was hanged at Pensarn and his body carried back to the mountain crossroads above Trimsaran. He lived in the same parish, carried the same surname, and died in Pembrey in November 1802 at the age of forty-two the same year, almost to the month, that John Rees the younger came home from the Navy to inherit Cilymaenllwyd.

Whether Thomas Emanuel and William Emanuel were cousins, near neighbours, or something closer has not yet been established. The parish records of Pembrey hold the answer, and that work remains to be done. What can be said is that they shared a surname, a parish, and a decade and that the magistrate whose family is the subject of this article was the same man whose legal authority sent William Emanuel to the gallows at Pensarn and the gibbet at Penymynydd.

The researcher who uncovered this connection was born in Trimsaran the village that sits directly below Penymynydd, within sight of the crossroads where the gibbet once stood and the body once vanished. Pensarn, where Will Mani was hanged, lies 12.4 miles to the north near Carmarthen town. The mountain that connects both places stretching from Penymynydd all the way back to Pembrey village is the same mountain where the crime began and where the story ended. His family name, Emmanuel the double-M form adopted by his grandfather as a deliberate or unconscious act of reinvention, distancing the name from its single-M Pembrey origins carries within it the same root as the man John Rees sent to the scaffold two and a half centuries ago.

None of this is confirmed lineage. It is presented here not as genealogical fact but as the kind of resonance that serious research sometimes produces the moment when two separate investigations, pursued in good faith, arrive unexpectedly at the same crossroads. The Rees family of Cilymaenllwyd and the Emanuel family of Pembrey existed in the same landscape, in the same years, on opposite sides of a magistrate's judgement. Whether the blood connection exists remains an open question. But the historical connection is now beyond doubt.

> *The gibbet stood empty at dawn. The family carried the name forward. And the mountain kept its secrets.*

The Living Thread

The Rees family of Cilymaenllwyd are not, in the grand scheme of Welsh history, among the most famous of names. They did not produce a princess who died in battle, or a warrior who shaped a kingdom. But they represent something equally vital: the sustained, generation-by-generation work of maintaining a Welsh identity through the pressures of conquest, anglicisation, civil war, and imperial ambition.

From Urien Rheged's mythic kingdom to a Crusader knight's sons on the Welsh hills; from a Carmarthenshire estate reclaimed through marriage to a young midshipman standing on the deck of the Ardent in Copenhagen harbour; from a Dutch officer's descendants building a dynasty in South Carolina to a child named Vanderhorst Rees in a Welsh farmhouse this is a history woven of survival, adaptation, and the stubborn persistence of family memory.

That is, in the end, what all genealogy is. Not the record of the powerful alone, but the accumulated evidence that people lived, loved, chose, endured, and passed something forward. The House of Rees passed forward an estate, a name, and a story worth telling.

A Summary of the House of Rees: Cilymaenllwyd

The story of the Rees family of Cilymaenllwyd is, at its heart, the story of Wales itself ancient in its roots, tested by centuries of pressure, and sustained by the quiet determination of people who understood that land, name, and memory are not separate things but one indivisible inheritance.

The lineage begins in the sixth century with Urien Rheged, warrior king of a post-Roman Britain still finding its shape, praised by the bard Taliesin as a defender of his people against the encroaching world. From that mythic foundation, the line passes through a Crusader knight who stood at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, through the medieval Welsh landscape of Llandilo Vawr, and into the estate of Cilymaenllwyd lost once, reclaimed through the most Welsh of instruments, a marriage where it would remain for generations.

The family served their county and their crown as magistrates, sheriffs, and administrators across the Georgian era, building influence not through conquest but through the patient accumulation of civic responsibility. They declined royal honours when honours demanded it, as Hector Rees demonstrated in 1745, and they answered the call of war when the age required it, as John Rees demonstrated across three of the most ferocious naval engagements of the Napoleonic era the Helder, Camperdown, and Copenhagen before returning home to manage his fields with the same disciplined calm he had once given to the quarterdeck.

Through his marriage to Anne-Catherine Vanderhorst, the estate of Cilymaenllwyd acquired a connection that stretched from a Dutch officer in William of Orange's fleet, across the Atlantic

to the governorship of South Carolina, and back again to a farmhouse in Carmarthenshire. Their grandson carried the Vanderhorst name into mid-Victorian Wales as a deliberate act of remembrance proof that this family understood, instinctively, that the past is not behind us but within us.

What Burke's Landed Gentry recorded in 1845 as a column of names and dates was, in truth, a tapestry of extraordinary reach Welsh kingship, Crusader faith, naval courage, transatlantic connection, and the enduring attachment to a piece of Carmarthenshire land that gave the family its identity across fourteen centuries.

The House of Rees of Cilymaenllwyd did not shape the great events of history. But they were present at many of them, and they came home every time.

Vivit Post Funera Virtus — Virtue Lives On After Death.

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Research and narrative by Graham Tudor Emmanuel (Tudor59)
People's Collection Wales | Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire | 2026

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