A Study into the Material Culture of the Morgan Family of Tredegar House in the late-Seventeenth Century

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The focus of this work is upon the material cultures owned by the Morgan family in the late-seventeenth century. Such an investigation is important because there is little surviving information which relates to the Morgan family, and an in-depth study from a collection of remaining inventories offers an insight into how the Morgan family chose to live. When two inventories are compared from different time periods, phases of spending are uncovered which helps to profile individual characteristics. The inventories also give the opportunity to examine the servant's quarters, highlighting the changing material goods that had been bestowed on the servant's over a decade. Indeed, it has been noted that the servants had excellent living conditions and were highly valued by the family.

For this study, the research method includes working closely with the Tredegar inventories for the years 1676, 1688, 1698, 1692 and 1699, and although primary sources are scarce they are used whenever possible. Greater focus is placed on secondary evidence relating to material culture from the seventeenth-century. This research would suggest that during the seventeenth century the Morgan family were prosperous and influential, and after the great restoration work of Tredegar House between 1664 and 1672 they had great aspirations of being the most powerful family in south Wales. Through this research it could be argued that Thomas Morgan, for whom there are few surviving records, was a flamboyant and rather frivolous person who knew what he wanted and certainly obtained it. If he had lived longer he may have become as influential as his father, Sir William Morgan.

INTRODUCTION

> There are many reasons why people wanted to own material goods, some practical, some financial, some psychological. This makes it necessary to explore social as well as economic factors.[1]

As Lorna Weatherill's comments above, there are a variety of ways in which the study of material culture can be examined, as well as a number of reasons for such an investigation. The study of material culture can provide a vivid insight into the past, and a vast amount can be discovered about the individuals who owned the household goods. The ability to purchase new items was obviously determined by the person's financial background and whether they were a spendthrift by nature, or perhaps less inclined to use their wealth, ranging from practical necessities of the household to the accumulation of personal niceties, to the more fundamental psychological reasons for owning such goods – desire and emulation.

The Morgan family of Tredegar has had a long association with the county of Monmouthshire dating as far back as the fifteenth century and finally ending in the twentieth century when the house was finally sold. Each member of the Morgan family was famous during their lifetime and several grew to be significant entrepreneurs, while others became renowned for their eccentric behaviour. What this study will concentrate upon is the ownership of Tredegar House during the late-seventeenth century and the way in which the estate was run coinciding with the material culture of the owners during this period. The primary focus will be Thomas Morgan (1664-1699) and estate management during this period.

Tredegar House is located on the outer reaches of Newport, south Wales, and the family occupied the site from 1402 onwards. The existing house was rebuilt between 1664 and 1672. This involved extensive remodelling of the former medieval structure at considerable expense. Unfortunately no evidence exists for these fundamental alterations. What has, however, survived are a number of important inventories dating from: 1676, 1688, 1689, 1692 and1698.[2] It will be this primary source information which will be used to explore the way by which the Morgan family fashioned their home. Other primary evidence, notably probate records and household accounts where they exist, will also be involved in this discussion and throw light on the family's acquisitive and fashionable habits.

In the last three decades a great deal of attention has been paid to changes in material culture in the early modern period. Some of these studies include Lorna Weatherill's *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760.* Weatherill examined evidence from a number of households and their material consumption throughout Britain between c.1660 and 1760. She explored when different items were introduced into Britain and identified how different regions of Britain felt the effects of material culture:

> Ownership of some goods (earthenware, pewter dishes, pewter plates, looking glasses) increased dramatically; the proportion of households with earthenware and looking glasses more than doubled between 1675 and 1725. Again there are variable differences from place to place.[3]

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[1] Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760* (2nd edn. London: Routledge, 1996), p.200.
[2] These are taken from the Tredegar Manuscripts housed at the National Library of Wales.
[3] Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour,* p.30.

Comparable with Weatherill's work, but having a greater focus on luxury consumption is the *Consumption and the World of Goods in the 17th and 18th Centuries* edited by John Brewer and Roy Porter. This book detailed the great expansion of purchases available in a world of material culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from imported goods such as tea and hot chocolate to clothing and portraits. One chapter sought to explain 'the meaning of consumer behaviour' by analysing household goods and interpreting the characteristics of the owners, noting that:

> Looking-glasses are good examples of possessions with several possible meanings, for they were decorative, and made houses look nicer; they also have an implication that people wanted to look at themselves and ownership indicates a degree of self awareness, or even vanity.[4]

This interpretation of luxury items will be beneficial in assessing the indulgent characteristics of the Morgan family in the late-seventeenth century. Another study into material culture, *Consuming Splendor* by Linda Levy-Peck examined the whole of the seventeenth century and the influences upon consumption, notably the changing economy, population expansion and foreign trade. Not only does Levy-Peck argue that luxury consumption in seventeenth century is heavily under- researched,[5] but she provides great amounts of information about the ownership of luxury goods from discussing the purchasing of goods, the productions of goods, trade, travel to obtain unusual items, and much more.[6] *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850* edited by Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford is another interesting source as it offers an opportunity for comparisons of consumer behaviour.

Lloyd Bowen's *Family and Society in Early Stuart Glamorgan: The Household Accounts of Sir Thomas Aubrey of Llanthyd, c.1565-1641* is also very useful as it gives accounts of a similar family to that of the Morgans who lived approximately twenty-five miles away in Cowbridge. Although this text only lists and surveys, the accounts of the Aubrey family up to 1693 allows for comparisons to be made with Tredegar House as a this time, particularly as these two families would have been equally influential.[7] Secondary sources relating to Tredegar House are unfortunately scarce. There are a few, however, which should prove to be valuable to this study as they provide a greater insight into Monmouthshire society, including *The Gwent County History Volume 3: The Making of Monmouthshire, 1536-1780* edited by Ralph A. Griffiths, Madeleine Gray and Prys Morgan,[8] and two small, yet practical, studies entitled *Tredegar House* by David Freeman and 'Social Conditions at Tredegar House, Newport, in 17th and 18th centuries'. These provide some accounts of the various changes in the history of the Tredegar House, particularly architectural alterations and daily business and activities from the house's most earliest history to the seventeenth century.[9] Combined, these texts give a great amount of information about Tredegar House from the first recorded Morgan's to have occupied the site, to the significant changes to the house's history, notably its extensive

[4] John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p.212.
[5] Linda Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.10-12.
[6] Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, pp.129-32.
[7] Lloyd Bowen, *Family and Society in Early Stuart Glamorgan: The Household Accounts of Sir Thomas Aubrey of Llanthyd, c.1565-1641* (Cardiff: South Wales Record Society, 2006).
[8] Ralph A. Griffiths, Madeleine Gray and Prys Morgan (eds), *The Gwent County History Volume 3: The Making of Monmouthshire, 1536-1780* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009).
[9] David Freeman, *Tredegar House* (Newport: Newport Borough Council, 1982); M. R. Apted, 'Social Conditions at Tredegar House, Newport in the 17th and 18th Centuries', *Monmouthshire Antiquary,* 3, 2 (1972-3), 125-54.

renovation in the seventeenth century. These books will become important for discovering key dates and major changes in Tredegar's history.

This dissertation will reflect on these historical assessments and questions the way in which the Morgan family chose to imitate current fashions or develop their own style of household management and interior decorating. Three general themes will be explored during this study. In the opening chapter the Morgan family and the refashioning of Tredegar House in the seventeenth century will be discussed. It will examine the reasons that the Morgan family in 1664 decided to commence with the major remodelling of Tredegar House, and consider Thomas Morgan's life, particularly what he had achieved in his life at the time he was in residence at Tredegar, the acquisition of noble titles, his income, marriage and landholdings even. The chapter will thereby create a foundation for this study of the Morgan family in the seventeenth century, and will begin to emphasize the characteristics of the Morgan family. The next section of the study will work with the information derived from the inventories in the late-seventeenth century. Attention will be drawn to the luxury items purchased during this period and whether this exposed extravagant spending, emulation of other members of the gentry, as well as whether such purchases were indicative of their attempts to 'impose' themselves on seventeenth century Monmouthshire and Welsh society. The final chapter will examine the inventories regarding the servants quarters at Tredegar House. Consideration will be given to each of the objects within the rooms and how they changed over time, whether the rooms were supplied with additional material goods or perhaps they declined in status. These servants chambers will be compared with the family rooms to determine if the Morgan's during this period were fair employers.

Throughout the course of this research emphasis will be placed on whether there was continuity in the purchasing of goods and the running of the household or whether strategic changes occurred during this period. The servant's chambers also will be closely examined as they are listed in great detail in the inventories and any notable changes will be highlighted. Naturally, comparisons will be made between each inventory, however greater comparisons will be made between the 1676 and 1688 inventories. This was the periodic when Sir William Morgan died and Thomas Morgan became the new master of Tredegar House. These inventories should hopefully display a vast difference in material possessions.

CHAPTER 1

THE MORGANS AND THE TREDEGAR ESTATE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

In the late-seventeenth century, Tredegar House experienced one of its greatest transformations in its history. Its conversion from the stone medieval manor to the grand brick mansion, and the extensive reconstruction this occasioned, was conducted by Sir William Morgan between 1664 and 1672. The original estate had been a success for the Morgans, however, it is apparent that they wanted to reconfigure their home to reflect their new wealth. There were, however, earlier transitions but there are no surviving documents which relate to the reconfiguring of the medieval house at Tredegar apart from references to the hall which suggests that such alterations occurred towards the end of the fifteenth century. According to John Leland there was 'a fair place of stone' at Tredegar in *c*.1540,[1] while its grandeur was sufficient for Charles I to stay at the home during the civil wars as he remained there between 16 and 17 July 1645.[2] The intention here is to investigate the nature of these transitions in the building and estate as well as explaining the significance of this family in south-east Monmouthshire in the seventeenth century.

From the above brief observations it is important to demonstrate the specific changes which occurred on the estate, particularly the building programme, in the second half of the seventeenth century as this will offer some context for understanding the significance of the Morgan family in this county. Clearly, there was a major difference between the original stone manor of Tredegar and the brick mansion which Sir William had commissioned. From examining the wing that remains today, there are clear architectural differences between the two houses other than the materials which they are made from. The remaining medieval wing is defensive in its structure, with small double-barred windows facing the courtyard. (Fig.1)

Fig.1.View of medieval wing, central courtyard

[1] John Leland, *Itinerary,* ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (London: Centaur, 1964), IV, vol. 3, pp.31-3.
[2] David Freeman, *Tredegar House* (Newport: Newport Borough Council, 1982), p.4.

In comparison the seventeenth century Tredegar House has large windows facing the grounds, which reflects the more peaceful post-civil war period. (Fig.2)

Fig.2. Seventeenth Century Tredegar House

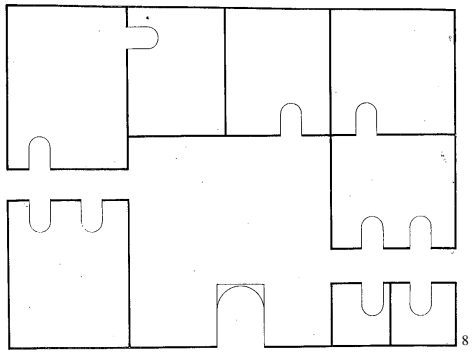
[4]

M. R. Apted has observed that there were many similarities between the traditional and new constructions at Tredegar, but noted that there were also 'significant differences that reflect the change in social customs between the two periods involved'.[5] In the late-medieval house and the one which followed there was a central courtyard where access to the rooms was limited. He stated that any visitor came into the grounds via the north - a process which continued throughout the seventeenth century. He then proceeded by walking through the gates of 'the great bowling green' and 'the middle court' before reaching the main entrance of the house.[6] Moreover, the house 'looked inward to the court and every room was entered either from the courtyard direct or from one of the passages that bisected the west and east ranges on either side'.[7] (Fig. 3)

[3] View from the courtyard, Tredegar House, Newport, showing 15th century part of house. See http://peoplescollectionwales.co.uk/Item/11596-view-from-the-courtyard-tredegar-house-newport (accessed 22.04.2012)

[4] *Tredegar House.* See http://www.newport.gov.uk/rydercup/index.cfm?event=thingsToSeeTredegarHouse&contentID=DevXP001446 (accessed 23.04.2012)
[5] M. R. Apted, 'Social Conditions at Tredegar House, Newport in the 17th and 18th Centuries', *Monmouthshire Antiquary,* 3, 2 (1972-3), 125.
[6] Apted, 'Social Conditions at Tredegar House', 125.
[7] Apted, 'Social Conditions at Tredegar House', 126.

Fig. 3. Medieval Tredegar House Plan (proposed)



It appears that the original design would have been common for the period as John Hilling writer of *The Historic Architecture of Wales* observes, 'Fortifications of any kind were the exception in the sixteenth century, and in most cases attention was concentrated on the appearance of the house'.[9] It also appears that the reconstructed Tredegar House would have been the height fashion which had been influenced by London society. In the same year that William began work at Tredegar, Sir John Denham, Charles II's Surveyor of the Office of Works, began construction on Burlington House (Fig. 4), a home distinctly similar to Tredegar House.[10] Sir John Denham wanted the finest house in London and had the interior filled with Italian landscapes and classical art.[11] In this respect Tredegar and Burlington House are incredibly similar, and it is possible that Sir William Morgan may have been inspired by Sir John Denham's activities.

[8] Apted, 'Social Conditions at Tredegar House',128.
[9] John B. Hilling, *The Historic Architecture of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1976), p.107.
[10] Burlington House. See http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/about/burlington-house,412,AR.html (accessed 23.04.2012). This was designed by Hugh May.
[11] Burlington House. See http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/about/burlington-house,412,AR.html (accessed 23.04.2012).

Fig. 4. Burlington House

It is evident that Sir William Morgan had high expectations for expanding and developing Tredegar House in order that the Morgan Family would transform from quiet, yet wealthy, nobles to prominent, fashionable members of the gentry. It would have been a natural progression for the Morgans to have wanted to have modernised their home in the late-seventeenth century in order to display fashion and their importance. For the external design, William chose a fanciful French Baroque style, which up to this point would have remained quite original to south Wales;

'What makes the exterior of Tredegar House unforgettable is the Bath stone enrichments, of a luxuriant bravura quite unlike the normally restrained Restoration style.'[13] Not only did the house have an exterior which was innovative, it also had an interior to match, which was so highly expensive and intricate to undertake it took several years to complete after the construction work. However, the newly built Tredegar House boasted elaborate hand sculpted ceilings in every State room and bedroom, while the dining room (today known as the Brown Room) (Fig. 5), had wall to wall carved oak panelling and oak flooring, and is argued to be 'architecturally the

[12] Burlington House. See http://www.royalacademy.org.uk/about/burlington-house,412,AR.html (accessed 23.04.2012).
[13] John Newman, *The Buildings of Wales Gwent/Monmouthshire* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), p. 564.

Fig.5. The Dining Room

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most successful room'.[15] A significant feature of one of the State rooms, the Gilt Room (Fig.6), was the painted gold leaf on the wooden panelling and the paintings of Italian landscapes. To a degree it was, according to Apted, 'the equivalent of the medieval solar – the room to which the company retired after dinner on formal occasions'. By 1688, apart from the red curtains, it was nevertheless an empty room but this was probably a temporary measure to allow for additional decoration.[16]

[14] 'The Brown Room, Tredegar House, Newport, seventeenth century'. See http://peoplescollectionwales.co.uk/Item/11614-the-brown-room-tredegar-house-newport-17th-ce (accessed 22.04.2012).

[15] Newman, *Buildings of Wales Gwent/Monmouthshire*, p.566.
[16] Apted, 'Social Conditions at Tredegar House', 134.

Fig. 6. The Gilt Room

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Although the Gilt Room and Dining Room appear to be been omitted from the 1676 inventories, it can be argued that this may have been due to on-going work at that time. It does nevertheless appear that the Morgans may have purposely excluded one room from every inventory. In the 1676 Inventory the room omitted was the Cedar Closet (Fig.7) which led directly from the Masters Bed Chamber. This room would have been the most secretive in the household, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that this room was fairly elaborately decorated.[18] Cedar Closets were popular during Sir William Morgan's generation and this addition suggests that he again sought to have a very fashionable home. As the name suggests, the Cedar Closet was made from cedar wood. As this repelled moths and other insects it was clearly a room which would house important clothing and documents. The room was beautifully decorated with scrolled carved pillars and a hand painted ceiling depicting cherubs, while the windows were the only ones in the house which were double-barred. This again emphasises that the room may have contained precious items. The window also contains a rare sundial depicting two flies, symbolising 'time fly's', and the Latin phrase, '*Lumen Umbra Dei*' meaning 'light is the shadow of God'. It is believed that having this phrase upon sundials became popular after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660.[19] (Fig. 8) The glass is also dated to 1672 – the date for the completion of the new Tredegar House.

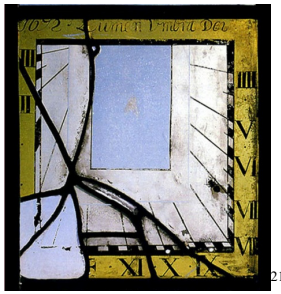
Fig. 7. The Cedar Closet

[17] 'The Gilt Room, Tredegar House, Newport, 17th Century'. See http://peoplescollectionwales.co.uk/Item/11615-the-gilt-room-tredegar-house-newport-17th-cen (accessed 22.04.2012).

18 The Cedar Closet, Tredegar House, Newport, 17th century; see http://www.gtj.org.uk/en/small/item/GTJ75177/ (accessed 5/5/2012).
[19] For example, there is sundial at Groombridge Place, East Sussex, commissioned during the same period, and contains the same phrase. See http://vidimus.org/issues/issue-59/feature/ (accessed 05/05/2012).

 [20]

Fig. 8. Sundial in the Cedar Closet, dated 1672

 [21]

The Cedar Closet also contained a display case for a cabinet of curiosities, an interest which was becoming increasingly popular in the seventeenth century, where people would display their rare and exotic luxuries from all over the world. Sometimes known as *Wunderkammen*, Linda Levy Peck describes how cabinets of curiosities were used as symbols of wealth and power:

> *Wunderkammern* demanded an audience. Prestige was conferred not merely by private ownership but by public display. While the goods were rare and not for sale, their display to well-connected visitors, recorded in continental paintings and prints, resembled the display of luxury goods in shops in the inner sanctum of the new exchange. The gaze of admiring visitors conferred honor on both collector and viewer alike.[22]

20The Cedar Closet, See; http://peoplescollectionwales.co.uk/Item/11625-the-cedar-closet-tredegar-house-newport-17th (accessed 5/5/2012).

[21] Sundial in the Cedar Closet. See http://vidimus.org/issues/issue-59/feature/ (accessed 05/05/2012).
[22] Linda Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.156.

The fact that a cabinet of curiosity was contained within the Cedar Closet highlights that although secretive, this room was used for a display their wealth and growing prestige. Moreover, when the master of the house received important guests the most honoured guests would be received in the Cedar Closet.

The only inventories that are in existence from Tredegar House date from the late-seventeenth century, unfortunately only a very small sample survive Tredegar's most colourful times in 1680 when Sir William Morgan, the original owner of the new manor was still in residence. The rooms which are listed on these inventories are mainly cupboards and kitchen rooms. They name Sir William's wife Lady Elizabeth Dayrell, a women now renowned for her peculiar behaviour and their disastrous marriage. Her unusual behaviour resulted in Lady Elizabeth terrorising her husband. A document described as 'An account of Lady Elizabeth Dayrell's Behaviour towards her husband, William Morgan 1677'[23] describes the moment she attempted to murder on her husband:

> In a great rage and passion... As he was still asleep, she laid hands on him to wake him, and when he did not wake she fell violently upon him in the bed, striking his head and face with her hands. Having woken sufficiently, he mildly asked her what ailed her. She made at him violently again, and declared that she would either kill or be killed, and that she would damn herself or be revenged on him. Mr Morgan having got out of bed, she ran at him and struck him and tore his shirt. Mr Morgan twice put her out of his chamber, and twice she forced open the door and abused him, and attempted to abuse the things in the chamber, breaking a looking glass and endeavouring to break a cabinet... she attempted to burn her hair, first with a candle and then in the fire, but was kept from doing it.[24]

It is understandable that after many previous incidents and William's attempted murder, Lady Elizabeth was finally committed.

The remaining information from the seventeenth century at Tredegar is found in surviving inventories date from between 1688 and 1698. During these years Thomas Morgan (1664-1699), William's son from his first marriage, would have been master of Tredegar House. After the late-seventeenth century onwards, considerable amounts of information can be derived about the family history. However, it can be argued that Thomas Morgan has the least amount of surviving material relating to him. There are few or no documents such as servant's wages, rent fees, or references about him, not even any mention of Thomas from any of his contemporaries. It even appears that Thomas's portrait has been lost from the house, all of this adds to difficulty when trying to determine his characteristics. The few pieces of evidence that have survived about Thomas are kept at the National Library of Wales. With the help of these sources they can provide good insight into Thomas's character, what the interior of Tredegar was like and the material possessions the family owned.

From the surviving records it is clear that Thomas was in residence at Tredegar House for eighteen years. Thomas was only sixteen years old when he inherited the house in 1680, after the death of his father, Sir William Morgan, and on 10 July he married Martha Mansell of

[23] *An account of Lady Elizabeth Dayrell's behaviour towards her husband, William Morgan of Tredegar*, (November 1677). See http://www.gtj.org.uk/en/small/item/GTJ30179//page/1/ (accessed 18.4.2012).
[24] *An account of Lady Elizabeth Dayrell's behaviour.*

Margam who had a dowry of £10,000.[25] Sara Heller Mendelson confirms that arranged marriages during this period were 'the norm',[26] especially when the arrangements were for financial advancement.[27] Alas, no inventories survive from the younger years of Thomas Morgan at Tredegar, however, there is almost a guarantee that those early years at Tredegar would have seen an incredible increase in material possession. The first inventory in 1688 was conducted when Thomas was twenty-four years old and quite possibly much less frivolous than a sixteen year old boy.

Although there is conjecture that while he resided at Tredegar House, Thomas may have supervised the remainder of the interior work in the Gilt Room and built the stable block, there is also evidence that a room was completely changed for a new arrival. In the 1698 inventory the nursery, which has always been present within the house, became converted into 'Young Masters Bed Chamber'. Unfortunately it is known that Thomas died 'without issue' and studying a family tree reveals Thomas had a child who died in infancy. Sadly infant mortality rates were incredibly high during the seventeenth century and to lose a child was not an uncommon occurrence. Entries made by Edmond Christian Williamson of Husborne Crawley between the years 1709 and 1720 revealed that a family who had a total of seven children, had only three who survived their childhood.[28] Once more, due to lack of surviving information for Tredegar, every piece of information about the child is missing, i.e. their name, age when they died and the cause of their death. It is a mystery whether this information has simply been lost over time, or whether the Morgans never wished to disclose this information. It is probable that the latter is the case. From an examination of surviving evidence there is no grave for an infant in the family chapel. This could help confirm that the Morgans at this time wanted to keep the loss of their child private.

It can be suggested from existing information that Thomas had aspirations of expanding and developing Tredegar from the Restoration mansion by adding a red brick stable block, which made an enormous statement about the family's wealth. (Fig. 9). This, according to John Newman, 'matched the house in scale and slender, on the west side of the spacious forecourt.'[29] The stables were clearly built a little later than the house. The brickwork is Flemish bond in contrast to the more old-fashioned English bond of the house. Nor do they appear in Thomas Dineley's sketch of the house and forecourt from the north-west, made in 1684. However, they must have been made shortly thereafter, as painting and gilding of the 'dial and figure over the stable' were paid for in 1688. It is probable then, that 1688 was the year in which both house and stables were completed.'[30] Freeman noted 'This magnificent building was evidently designed to reflect the splendour of the seventeenth century house on which it is clearly modelled.'[31] Even to this day it is still mistaken a separate manor due to its stateliness. This helps to confirm that Thomas was similar to his father in that he wanted a

[25] http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/morgan-thomas-1664-1700 (accessed 22.04.2012).
[26] Sara Heller Mendelson, 'Debate: The weightiest business: marriage in an upper-gentry family in seventeenth-century England', *Past and Present*, 85 (1979), 126-35.
[27] Mendelson, 'Debate: The weightiest business', 126-35.
28Asa Briggs, *How They Lived III: an Anthology of Original Documents Written between 1700 and 1815* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1969), pp.2-3.
[29] Newman, *Buildings of Wales Gwent/Monmouthshire*, p.562.
[30] Newman, *Buildings of Wales Gwent/Monmouthshire*, pp.562, 563. The date of construction for the stables is unknown and disputed.
[31] Freeman David, *Tredegar House* (Newport: Newport Borough Council, David Freeman, *Tredegar House* (Newport: Newport Borough Council, 1989) p.41.

grand home and to make an impression. It is also a clear indication that Thomas had a weakness for splendour.

Fig. 9. The Stable Block

 [32]

From studying the inventories from the late-seventeenth century it is apparent that Tredegar House was a house of luxury. It is quite evident that Thomas Morgan frequently purchased items that were of the highest quality. For example, for the Gilt Room 'one greene silver inbroydred couch',[33] and he would sometimes purchase items that were unusual for the age. In the 1698 inventory 'Jocolatecupps' were listed for the Dining Room.[34] In the seventeenth century drinking chocolate would have been a rarity, but luxury imported items and goods, such as coffee and chocolate, were in high demand by members of the elite. Levy Peck explains how the aristocracy were actually drinking chocolate for medicinal purposes during this period:

> By the 1650s and 1660s chocolate, coffee and tea from Latin America, Africa and Asia became available in London... Henry Stubbe physician to the King and Lord Windsor in Jamaica...wrote an extensive report to the Royal Society from Jamaica in which he discussed the dangers of turning chocolate into a luxury desert, presumably made from sugar.[35]

There were other fashionable items added to the room such as Turkeyware and Japanware which appeared to become favourites of the Morgans, to the extent of having rooms almost filled with such finery:

> The Drawing Room 1692: six cane chaires, one cane couch, twelve flower'd silk chaires one couch and cushion the same, two oval tables, two stands of Japan one large looking glass of the same work one Turkey carpet and one paire of guilt leather hangings.[36]

[32] *The Stables at Tredegar House, Newport, south Wales.* See http://www.nationaltrustimages.org.uk/image/778423 (accessed 22.04.2012).
[33] NLW, Tredegar Inventories, 1698.The Gilt Room.
[34] NLW, Tredegar Inventories, 1698.The Brown Room.
[35]Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, p.116, and citing Henry Stubbe, 'The reminder of the observations made in the Formerly Mention'd Voyage to Jamaica', *Philosophical Transactions, 3* (1668), 721-22. In the 1680s the book appears to be promoting coffee, tea, chocolate and tobacco, including John Chamberlayne, *The Natural History of Coffee, Thee, Chocolate, Tabacco... collected from the writings of the best physicians and modern travellers* (London, 1682).
[36] NLW, Tredegar Inventories 1692.The Drawing Roome.

The Morgan family themselves appeared to have been heading for great success and the inventories reflect this. The House which was magnificently furnished symbolised a powerful family who were making a strong impact upon Monmouthshire. It is apparent that during the seventeenth century, the Morgans had aspirations of becoming one of the most influential members of the aristocracy in south Wales. Although the family would have had natural competition from other local powerful families, such as Bute family and the Kemeys who lived at Cefn Mably, the Morgans after a sudden surge of wealth continued to access power and prosperity. This was reflected in a home which is now celebrated as 'one of the most outstanding houses of the Restoration period in the whole of Britain'.[37]

CHAPTER 2

THE MORGAN FAMILY AND LUXURY GOODS DURING THE LATE-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Morgan family during the seventeenth century had transformed their home from a medieval manor to the restoration mansion that survives today. Not only did the Morgans wish for their peers to be impressed by the exterior of their home, Tredegar House included an equally outstanding interior, the majority of which still survives today. From this it is evident that during the seventeenth century the Morgan family experienced the necessary financial successes to fund such developments. Concentrating on the inventories that were produced between 1688 and 1698 it will be determined whether the Morgans were considerable consumers of luxury goods or perhaps, after heavily spending on other parts of the household, they sought to replace goods that had simply deteriorated while also continuing to purchase new luxury goods. These lists will be compared with a few remaining inventories dating from 1676 as this will help to determine if Thomas Morgan during the late-1680s actively purchased material goods and new fashionable styles for his home.

In recent years there has been a greater interest from historians in consumer behaviour. Many of them concentrated their studies on the eighteenth century explaining that the rise in industrial wealth was matched by a rise in consumer spending, particularly on luxury goods. In *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb as well as in a series of volumes of essays edited by John Brewer on consumerism, discussed the arrival of new goods, modern modes of shopping, the reshaping of identities and the purchase of fashionable goods in the 'long' eighteenth century. They all stress the underlying connection of the consumer revolution to the industrial revolution.[38] According to these historians, eighteenth century consumption, which was driven by new desires and new products purchased by middle-class consumers, 'marked a sharp departure from the court-centred consumption of previous centuries'.[39] Yet, there are those historians who have concentrated their studies upon the seventeenth century, notably Lorna Weatherill who provides a clear insight into the world of material goods in this period.[40] She explains that during this time the middling sorts were

[37] Newman, *Buildings of Wales Gwent/Monmouthshire*, p.562.
[38] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*: *the commercialization of eighteenth-century England* (London: Europa, 1982); John Brewer and Frank Trentmann*, Consuming Cultures, Global Perspectives: Historical Trajectories, Transnational Exchanges*, (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2006); and John Brewer and Ann Bermingham (eds), *The Consumption of Culture: Word, Image, and Object in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).
[39] Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, p.11.
[40] Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760* (2nd edn. London: Routledge, 1996).

drifting away from objects of necessity and had begun to indulge in the purchase of more unusual items. Indeed, she commented that between 1675 and 1725 the 'ownership of domestic goods increased' while also noting that 'brisk changes' in the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were a result of industrial development as well as 'increasing imports of consumer items'.[41] Linda Levy-Peck whose *Consuming Splendor Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* examined the seventeenth century and the desire for luxury items, argues that this was the birth of the consumer age. She observes that this was a period when the nobility began to reconstruct their homes, began to travel abroad with the sole pursuit of collecting foreign luxuries to fill their homes with imported goods, and a time when people began to frequently visit London and were influenced by it. She wondered why so many historians concentrated their time on 'the long eighteenth century' while so little work was concentrated on the seventeenth century, observing that 'little of the new work analyses the significant role of luxury consumption in the early seventeenth century'.[42] Another historian who has focused her work on seventeenth century cultural traits is Susan E. Whyman. Her 1999 study, *Sociability and Power in Late Stuart England; the Cultural World of the Verneys 1660-1720* examined an aristocratic family (the Verneys) during this period. She concentrated her attention on their day-to-day activities rather than analysing the material goods the family possessed. She scrutinised records relating to their births, marriages and deaths, as well as periods of good health, sickness, and ability to earn money. Whyman, like Peck after her, stressed that the seventeenth century was the beginning of consumerism and showed how London was a heavy influence upon smaller towns and communities, noting 'the tremendous impact of London upon individuals whom we think of as embodying the "country"'. She further stated that this was 'a time when the values of London's polite, but competitive culture were intruding upon those of landed families'.[43]

The work of some other historians also offer comparative views across many generations. John Brewer and Ray Porter's *Consumption of World Goods* provides an overview of consumer behaviour from across the world and from many different generations.[44] Once again focus on the seventeenth century is lacking. There is one chapter which focuses on the seventeenth century written by Lorna Weatherill who argued that during this period there was an increase in consumption brought about by individual needs of the middling sorts. She asked the following questions: What were basic necessities? Did people die without them? Did people from the middling sorts live without comfort?[45] In this chapter she provided various examples of household and 'luxury' objects purchased (including looking-glasses, clocks, books, pictures, and gold and silver items) as well as discussing the symbolic importance to the individual purchaser which indicated 'different aspects of domestic life.' [46] In their edited volume, *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850* Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford also provided essays which provided different perspectives, periods of study and an attempt to understand the varying consumer demands in the late-seventeenth century. As with

[41] Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain*, p.25.
[42] Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, p.11.
[43] Susan E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural World of the Verneys 1660-1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.4.
[44] John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).
[45] Lorna Weatherill 'Consumption and the World of Goods', in Brewer and Porter (eds), *Consumption of World Goods*, p.212.
[46] Weatherill 'Consumption and the World of Goods', p.212.

other texts on consumption, the majority of this work was again devoted to an appreciation of the eighteenth century.[47]

It appears that the Morgans wished to be the most fashionable family in the area, and followed the changing trends of the seventeenth century. It cannot be mistaken that the Morgans wished to create an interior for Tredegar House which not only had a grand and unusual design but possessed many luxury goods. The inventories depict that both state rooms and bedrooms had grand furnishings for the period. It is arguable that Tredegar House may have been one of the most fashionable homes in south Wales, being heavily influenced by London and other English fashions. Indeed, the transmission of London fashions to the provinces' spread at a rapid rate. In his analysis Paul Hunneyball showed how quickly Hertfordshire adopted 'new architectural styles' and how rapidly the county elites accepted London-based tastes.[48] It appears that it was not just London architectural styles that were having an influence on the nobility but also the purchase of expensive objects. This period saw the arrival of exotic items which had been imported along with sumptuous soft furnishings laden with silver or gold embroidery. Levy-Peck has noted that:

> Contemporaries aspired not merely to material goods but also to the cultural messages embedded within them. "French wares" in the New Exchange, Venetian glass, Flemish tapestry, China scarves... textiles, Parisian interior furnishings, and rarities, wonders, and inventions, drawn from the East and West Indies, Asia and Africa, marked their purchasers as fashionable, cosmopolitan and, in some cases, modern. The "endless desires" met by these luxury objects helped to support status, shape identities, promote creature comforts, enlarge sociability as well as to advance the economy.[49]

In this context, the Morgan family during the seventeenth century appear to have been heavy consumers of luxury goods. Surviving evidence in both decoration and rare objects, prove that the Morgans had a taste for splendour. The surviving inventories dating from the seventeenth century thereby provide an opportunity to examine the material world of the Morgan family.

During 1676, William Morgan was master of Tredegar House. He had five children, Thomas at this time being twelve years old. Little information has survived about William Morgan, and consequently not much is known about his character. Furthermore there is no documentation about his purchases from this period, but it can be concluded that the man who built such a grand house as Tredegar would not have been a reserved one. When studying the 1676 inventories it is apparent that William wanted a lavish house. Rooms are described in the inventory as the Indian Chamber, the Yellow Damaske Chamber, and the Velvett Roome. These rooms did not, however, include vast amounts of material objects, but rather they contained a considerable number of expensive materials such as silk, linen, satin, velvet, taffeta, etc.[50] When examining this inventory there is evidence that William Morgan concentrated upon the interior design of the rooms rather than the objects contained within them. Every family bedchamber had a tester bed to match the room. For example, the Yellow Damaske Chamber is described as 'One bedstead and boulster . . . quilt, two pillows, 2

[47] Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford (eds), *Consumers and Luxury: consumer culture in Europe 1650-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).
[48] Paul Hunneyball, *Architecture and Image-Building in Seventeenth-Century Hertfordshire,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), and cited in Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendour*, p.212.
[49] Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, p.113 and citing Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p.112.
[50] NLW, Tredegar Inventories, 1676.

blanketts… rug and curtains blue of yellow damaske headboard tester and quilt of yellow.' There were also 'curtains of printed paragon… cushions of yellow damaske, one side table, one large looking-glass, one small dressing glass… brass, one bellows with the pipe, a paire of snuffers, a pewter basin, 2 pewter chamber potts… tapestry'.[51]

When discussing interiors, Levy-Peck confirms that silk hanging and tapestries where highly popular for the gentry during this time and that they had also been fashionable during the sixteenth century as well. She observed in her studies that gentlemen consistently looked to improve their furnishings.[52] William Harrison also noted 'the increasing richness of interiors in the late Elizabethan period for all social groups', while Geoffrey Beard has emphasised 'the increase in refinement and luxury… during the latter part of the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth century'. He drew attention to the striking difference between the goods left by Sir George Shirley in 1622 and those left by his ancestor Sir Ralf Shirley in 1517. Sir George had elaborate bed furnishings of red taffeta all 'suitable to the bed'.[53] Although there are many items in the 1676 inventory which are described as 'old', it must be remembered that Tredegar House had only been completed four years previously, with no more description included in the inventories other than '1 old chaire'.[54] It can be difficult to determine if the object may have been brought over from the original house, or whether it was bought for the new manor and deemed as old after four years of use.

Twelve years later in 1688, Tredegar House appears to have been awash with luxury items. By this date Thomas Morgan was twenty-four years old and would have been the master of Tredegar House for eight years. It is very probable that Thomas would have made many personal alterations to the house by 1688, and the interior would certainly have been modified to suit his taste. The items listed in the inventory suggest that Thomas was a flamboyant character who indulged in many of the gentry pursuits of the period. For example, in 1682 he applied for a 'pass' to travel to France 'with two companions and three servants. He ran up enormous debts of honour, and was ordered to return by privy seal two years later.'[55]

By comparing the 1676 inventory with the 1688 inventory a stark difference can already be identified. To begin with there are the newly listed state rooms such as 'the Dineing Room', and the Gilt Room, as previously mentioned, they may have been omitted in 1676 due to the fact that they may have been undergoing work. There is some evidence to suggest that Thomas Morgan may have supervised the completion of the Gilt Room as the 1688 inventory describes the room as containing nothing other than curtains and a fireplace,[56]which contrasts heavily with the remaining rooms of the house. This gives the impression that the room had recently been decorated and was waiting to be furnished. The room did not remain like this as different objects appear with each inventory and in 1698 the room had:'1 greene silver inbroydred couch, 1 large looking glass, 1 tea-table and two small stands, 1 paper screen, 1 paire of dogs, slice and back, 10 red curtains, gilded sconches'.[57] The State rooms contained many luxury

[51] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1676.Yellow Damask Chamber.
[52] Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, pp. 215-16.
[53] William Harrison, *Description of England:* the classic contemporary account of Tudor social life, ed. Georges Edelen (Washington, D.C.: Folger Shakespeare Library [and] Dover ; London : Constable, 1994), pp.200-1; Geoffrey Beard, *Upholsterers and Interior Furnishings in England, 1530-1840* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p.58. Both cited in Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, pp.215-16.
[54] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1676.
[55] http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/morgan-thomas-1664-1700 (accessed 28 February 2012).
[56] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1688. The Gilt Room.
[57] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1698. The Gilt Room.

items, notably Japanware, Turkeyware chairs and other imported items. In 1688 there were eighteen Turkeyware chairs in the New Parlour and twelve in the Dining Room.[58] H. Avray Tipping noted that during the seventeenth century many similar households indulged in these new fashionable trends:

> At Hampton Court in 1699 it was not merely the state and principle bedchambers that were supplied with chairs, but even the "Foot Guard rooms" had them of the cane type, while in the "Horse Guards officers" rooms there were "two dozen of Turkey work chairs".[59]

Laquered Japanware also became increasingly popular throughout the household in both state rooms and bedchambers as it is listed many times. The Drawing Room contained the most items, including by 1698 mirrors, a table and side table. Levy-Peck highlights the impact and influence that Asia had upon the nobility in the early seventeenth century and how its popularity increased:

> Northampton had neither family home nor fine furniture when he became privy councillor to King James in 1603... [his] inventory of 1614 reveals the richness of the aristocratic interiors in the early years of the seventeenth century. His furnishings were both splendid and exotic, including lacquer chests from Asia that became ever more popular over the century.[60]

It is evident that Thomas wished to refashion Tredegar House and renewed the majority of the objects in the bedchambers and renamed a vast amount of the rooms. However, in the State rooms, although a large amount of new furniture and objects were accumulated, a great deal of original items remained. These included gilt leather wall hangings from the drawing room, twenty-three guilt leather chairs and an oval table from the New Hall.[61] (Fig.10) It appears that the Morgan family had been heavily influenced by the current fashions of the time as Levy-Peck observes that gilded leather had become popular in the early the seventeenth century:

> Beyond glass and tapestry, Stuart industrial policy fostered new fashions in interior decoration through domestic production. Thus, Gilded leather panels on walls alternates to hangings and tapestries, had already appeared in Holland and France in the late sixteenth century . . . By 1614 the Earl of Northampton lined his rooms gilded leather.[62]

[58] Apted, 'Social Conditions at Tredegar House', p.151.
[59] H. Avray Tipping, 'English Furniture of the Cabriole Period', *Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, 33, 187 (1918), 134.

[60] Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor,* p.217. citing "An inventory of the Effects of Henry Howard, K.G., Earl of Northampton taken on his deathbed in 1614, together with the manuscript of his will," *Archaeologia*, 42 (1869).
[61] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1688. New Hall.
[62] Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor*,p.83.

Fig.10. The New Hall

There were a number of alterations in the bedchambers and most rooms changed their names only, 'The best chamber, and Chamber next to the Best' remained, but the contents of these rooms also changed remarkably, including having heavy silks and satins with matching testers, valances and chairs have been replaced with only silk quilts and perhaps curtains, intricate cushions and additional imported objects.[63] (Figs. 11 and 12)

Fig.11. The Best Chamber

[64]

[63] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1676/1688.
[64] 'The Best Chamber, Tredegar House, Newport, 17th century'. See http://peoplescollectionwales.co.uk/Item/11634-the-best-chamber-tredegar-house-newport-17th (accessed 22.04.2012).

Fig. 12. Chamber next to the Best

 [65]

In 1689 another set of inventories were completed, being so soon after the previous set, it provides an opportunity to compare the growth of material goods. Over the course of the twelve months between 1688 and 1689 it appears that few additions had been made. In the state rooms, the Drawing Room there was the addition of '2 gilt sconches' which accompanied a room with gilt leather hangings, a Turkish carpet, cane chairs with velvet cushions, a Japanware looking glass and calico curtains.[66] In this set of inventories the additions may be small as not many objects appear to have been removed from the other rooms at this time. The 1692 inventories demonstrate a decline in excessive spending. There were very few additions to the inventories and the majority of rooms were identical to what was recorded in 1689. It is clear that the Morgans were still spending money on material goods, however as these first three sets of inventories were recorded only a few years apart from each other. Some of the changes noticeable during this time included the purchase of Japanware which were added to the Drawing Room and there was also a large trunk for the New Room,[67] while the rest of the state rooms remained the same as they had three years previously. It is unknown what may have caused the decline in accumulation of material possessions as a few items were still added to the home, and nothing disappeared, nor do financial problems seem to have been an issue. It appears that Thomas Morgan may have been called away from Tredegar House a great deal, particularly in December 1688 when he was recorded as having joined forces with William of Orange against James II.

The few additions to Tredegar may have been influenced by Martha Morgan, Thomas' wife. Levy-Peck explains how during the seventeenth century it was quite common for the lady of the household to go shopping and make slight alterations to the house. She notes that during the seventeenth century some women could make decisions for the household, however, in the

[65] 'The Chamber Next to ye Best Chamber, Tredegar House, Newport 17th century'. See http://peoplescollection wales.co.uk/Item/11618-chamber-next-ye-best-chamber-tredegar-house-n (accessed 22.04.2012).
[66] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1689.
[67] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1689.

higher orders this was rare, but she does note that 'despite contemporary strictures against women shopping, in the 1610s and 1620s great noble families had no qualms about their wives and daughters shopping in public'.[68] Once again there is no proof that Martha had any say concerning the household purchases, but a surviving dress which is believed to have belonged to her dated *c*.1680 indicates that she may have had a weakness for luxury goods as well. (Fig. 13) The dress is green taffeta, with a robed bodice with silver fries. It is edged with silver fringing, crimped silver gauze and a stomacher of silver lace. [69]

Fig. 13.Green Taffeta Dress (*c*.1680)

The 1698 inventory displays the greatest changes and an increase in luxury items at Tredegar House as many rooms had changes in objects or furniture, especially the nursery where there were great transformations. In 1698 the nursery was renamed 'The Young Masters Chamber'. In previous years the room had only minimal changes, but significant alterations were visible in 1698:

> 1 bedstead, feather bed and bolster, 2 pillows, 1 little pillow, 3 blanketts, 1 little yellow quilt, 1 white cotten coverlet, 1 suit of white Dimity Curtains and valians wrought with green, Worsted and foot vallians of the same, 4 inside curtains of white calico, headpiece and tester of white calico stript with wrought Dimity, 1 great chaire, 4 lesser chaires, 2 low stooles of the same as ye bed, 1 low cane chair, 1 chest of drawers, 1 stand, 2 pes. Of Turkey hangings, 1 Japan birdcage, 1 iron back, 1 iron grate with brass tops, 1 iron pair of ton-s, fire shovel and tester.[70]

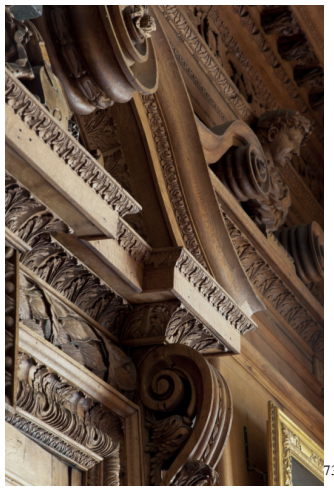
[68] Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, pp.68-9.
[69] It is kept at St Fagans, the National History Museum of Wales.
[70] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1698.Young Masters Chamber.

This room had been furnished to a very high standard, including tester beds, expensive fabrics, chairs to match the bed, Turkeyware and Japanware. It is evident that the Morgans wanted the best for their son. It is apparent that the transformation of this room occurred because the family had an heir, however many other rooms were altered in similar ways. The Dining Room originally had one oval table and twelve Turkey-work chairs,[71] but, in 1698, the room had a long list of items:

> 2 tables, 4 stands, 2 large looking glasses of inlaid walnut tree, 18 carved cane chairs with 17 pink coloured little cushions striped with silver and trimmed with green and white fringe, 1 cane couch, 1 squab, 2 small cushions of flower'd velvet, 1 iron back, 1 iron grate with brass tops, 1 brass fire shovel and tongs, 1 paire of bellows and a hearth brush.[72]

Although the material possessions within this room had multiplied between 1688 and 1698, the Morgans appear to have kept the Dining Room quite simple in order to have the main focus upon the oak carvings in the room (Fig 14). Moreover, the depiction of a mouse was said to refer to Charles I and his small stature. (Fig. 15).

Fig. 14. Detailed Carvings from the Dining Room,



[73]

[71] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1688-1692. The Brown Room.
[72] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1698. The Brown Room.
[73] http://nttreasurehunt.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/ntpl_7794161.jpg (accessed 22.04.2012)

Fig. 15. Charles I depicted as a mouse in the Dining Room

[74]

During the decade that the inventories were recorded notable changes were seen within the household and the luxury items that were contained within it. Naturally changes occurred and objects were replaced over time. The Morgans displayed a decline and final rush in personal expenditure. There could be many reasons for the diminished spending such as family members being away and close proximity of inventories, yet when considering an increase in material possessions a possible cause could be a rise in family wealth, a return of a family member who had perhaps been absent, or may be a family celebration. From the evidence available it does appear that Thomas enjoyed indulging in material goods. His nephew William KB became famous for his frivolous nature in the early 18th century purchasing items such as a new chaise and a great silver punch bowl costing £61.2.11d[75] Unfortunately due to a lack of surviving information no final conclusion can ever be determined for Thomas' spending habits, however it could be debated that he may have been very similar to William KB.

It can be concluded that Thomas Morgan was a frivolous and flamboyant character, who perused the latest fashions and trends when furnishing his home. When the 1688 inventory is compared with the 1676 inventory there is a substantial difference in personal furnishing tastes. Where William Morgan's tastes for interior decoration were laden with expensive materials he was less expressive with the furniture he purchased. Levy-Peck, however, observes that this was the fashion in the early seventeenth and late-sixteenth centuries.[76] Lorna Weatherill also highlights that similar styles were becoming increasingly popular in middle class homes.[77] Both William and Thomas proved that they wanted to achieve a house of luxury. William with bedchambers filled with silks and damask, and Thomas focusing more attention on the State rooms, adding luxury Asian ware and other unusual imports. This quick turnover of expensive and exotic furniture, as well as the other debated changes he made within Tredegar House proves that Thomas aimed to be as powerful and influential as his father. It is nevertheless unfortunate that just a twelve month after the final set of inventories he passed away.

[74] http://tredegarhouse.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/img00243-20110114-1246.jpg (accessed 22.04.2012)

[75] David Freeman, *Tredegar House* (Newport: Newport Borough Council, David Freeman, *Tredegar House* (Newport: Newport Borough Council, 1989) p.7.
[76] Levy-Peck, *Consuming Splendor*.
[77] Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain*, pp.33-32.

CHAPTER 3

THE DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIAL GOODS AMONGST SERVANTS DURING THE LATE-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

From previous chapters it has already been proven that the Morgans indulged in the purchase and enjoyment of luxury goods throughout the latter decades of the seventeenth century, and it has also been suggested that different family members may have been influenced by fashions during the period. This section now takes into consideration further comparisons from the luxury chambers within the household to the servant quarters that were also included in the inventories. It is understandable that these rooms would have displayed less decoration than the family rooms, and it provides an insight into how material wealth was not always shared throughout the household. This should help to explain whether the Morgans were fair employers by means of providing comfortable accommodation for their staff. Thus, were the rooms uniform with no clear differentiation between varying occupations throughout the household? To assist this process, comparisons will be made between the 1676 and 1688 inventories to determine whether the servants living arrangements witnessed a dramatic alteration after a change to the younger management of Thomas. Another aspect which will be considered is whether the acquisition of material goods was correspondingly held at the same levels throughout the household? For instance, where there had been an influx of material possessions within the household were the servant's quarters also suitably furnished in terms of tasteful decoration?

There appears to be minimal work about servants within aristocratic households around the seventeenth century, especially in regard to their material possessions. Antonia Frasier briefly discusses servants in her study about women's role in society in the seventeenth century. She explains that 'Victorian horror stories' should be forgotten when considering the seventeenth century condition of servants as their treatment was entirely different. She goes on to explain how the position of servants within the household was valued, being considered as one 'family':

> The intimacy denoted by the use of the word family had many considerable advantages; food was shared, and where plentiful . . . indeed the free regular provision of food, and often clothing as well, placed the domestic in a privileged position.[1]

Fraser describes how during the seventeenth century there was a closeness between the leading families and their servants. In the case of Mary Woodforde, wife of Prebendary at Winchester Cathedral, she wrote of the marriage of her servant Ann in the 1680s that she 'lived with us thirteen years and a half'. In this context, the idea of a maid as 'an inferior creature, entitled therefore to an inferior life', came later.[2] Just from the layout of the servant's rooms it is evident that the Morgans did not view their servants as inferior nor did they appear to be purposely segregating them. During Victorian times and beyond at Tredegar House it was common knowledge that the servants slept in the attic rooms with great care for gender segregation, men in the one wing, women in the other and a door locked in the middle.[3]

[1] Antonia Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel: Women's Lot in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Pheonix, 2009), p.181.
[2] Fraser, *Weaker Vessel,* p.182.
[3] Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale, 1978), p. 276.

However, every inventory between 1676 and 1698 shows a very similar layout for servants sleeping arrangements. It is entirely different from the sleeping arrangements seen in the Victorian period. Although there were some servants bedchambers in the attic space (garret chamber), some servants rooms were in between family bedchambers. This is not only because this would mean that the servant would be closer if a family member needed them during the night, but it also supports Fraser's argument that employers during this time did not view servants as inferior beings.

Lorna Weatherill similarly explains how servants were an essential component in the seventeen century household, explaining that it was common for people of the middling sorts to have servants and purely out of necessity, not as a display of wealth.[4] Susan E. Whyman in her study about the Verney family describes how the family were cared for, and were very considerate towards their servants, providing help and support when needed. In one example she noted that when his servant, Nan Webb, died, Sir Ralph stated: 'I am contented to be at charge of a coffin and winding sheet for her, and if they will bury her at Claydon, I will allow strong beer for the company . . . and also pay parish duties'.[5] In relation to servants in the seventeenth century, the most information which has survived comes from the period when William Morgan was in residence at Tredegar. From this information it is evident that in 1680 William Morgan paid £2 in legacies to his servants when he died, a respectable amount in the seventeenth century highlighting the closeness that William Morgan must have shared with his servants:

> In his will Sir William Morgan bequeathed fourty Shillings to 'everie one of my domestiques that attend and lodge in my house of Tredegar and Machen at the tyme of my decease'.[6]

This document recorded the paying of these legacies on 12 May 1680 to forty-six servants at Tredegar and eight at Machen.[7] Fraser explains how it was very common to have servants mentioned and left considerable amounts during this period, observing that servants 'featured prominently in wills, where quite large sums would be bequeathed'. She noted the example of Mary, Countess of Warwick, who left £80 to Martha Upsheer her chambermaid, £70 to Anne Coleman, another old servant, and £40 to 'my ancient servant Mary Taverner', formerly her housemaid. Mary Warwick's executors were instructed to pay these annuities. Dame Margaret Verney, wife of Sir Edmund and mother of Sir Ralph, specifically mentioned all the women servants at Claydon when she drew up her will. Most of whom were still in service when she died ten years later.[8]

It appears that with regard to finances, William Morgan was very considerate of his employees. When examining the 1676 inventories belonging to the servant's chambers, it is noticeable that the house contained a mixture of rooms belonging to upper-servants and rooms belonging to lower-servants. It is not only the number of beds within the chamber, or the positioning within the house which highlights this, features such as a feather bed, compared with a plain, bed and bolster also were included. Plain beds were, however, in a minority, and the majority of rooms contained feather beds which during this time, was a rarity in servants rooms. Lorna Weatherill explains that the majority of homes that kept servants, usually had the most basic bedding, i.e.

[4] Lorna Weatherill 'Consumption and the World of Goods', in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p.139.
[5] Susan E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural World of the Verneys 1660-1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.19.
[6] NLW,Tredegar transcript MS. No. 102/80 c.1680.
[7] NLW, Tredegar Will, MS. No. 102/801680.
[8] Fraser, *Weaker Vessel*, pp.181-2.

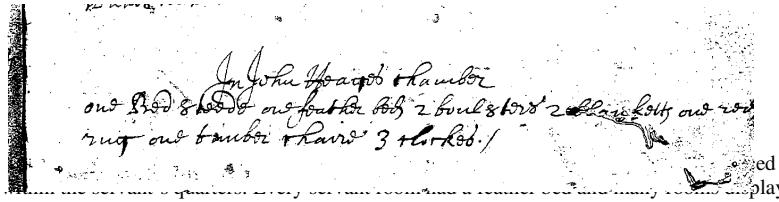
having beds stuffed with chaff or flock. She goes on to explain how it was usually only the very wealthy who provided feather beds and extra comfort for their servants.[9] William Morgan definitely went to great lengths to try and provide comfort for his staff. M. R. Apted explains that a surviving document from 1686 indicates that staff wages ranged from £2 to £25 per year.[10] Both sums would have been substantial wages during the seventeenth century, confirming that Tredegar House would have been an excellent place to work. The majority of the servant's quarters appear to have had decorative items of some kind, such as rugs and chairs and sometimes curtains, while a greater majority of rooms also contained feather beds. Fraser provides an example from 1688 which could highlight that perhaps either possessions had become inexpensive in the latter seventeenth century, or it had become a regular practice to provide greater staff accommodation. In the example of Belton House in Grantham, the inventory of Sir John Brownlow noted that in 1688 and inventory included a 'fine new fireplace' designed by Christopher Wren and 'all the rooms, including the servants rooms, had feather beds, besides three blankets and a quilt.'[11]

One room belonging to one servant, John Heague, a joiner or carpenter, who was paid £2 a year in 1680,[12] had a room containing 'One bedstead, one feather bed, 2 boulsters, 2 pillows and blankets, one red rug, one timber chaire and 3 clorkeds'.[13] (Fig. 16) This is significant as it was very rare for any other items of comfort or luxury to be contained within any servant's room during this time. One of the finest servant's rooms belongs to a Mr Powell whose room contained:

> One bedstead, one feather bed and boulster, 3 blanketts one plaine red rug, 4 red curtain and valance, one pillow 1 side table . . . 1 with stools . . . one pewter basin one pewter chamber pott one low stool and pan, one slice and tongs.[14]

It is has already been shown that William thought highly of his staff at Tredegar, however if the recent alterations within the house had only ceased four years previously, perhaps William could not justify spending great quantities of money on his servants.

Fig. 16. John Heayes Room



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an increase in material goods. Indeed, some rooms equal to what would have been seen in

[9] Weatherill 'Consumption and the World of Goods', p.161.
[10] Apted, 'Social Conditions at Tredegar House',131.
[11] Fraser, *Weaker Vessel*, p181.
[12] NLW,Tredegar transcript MS. No. 102/80, c.1680.
[13] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1676, John Heayes.
[14] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1676. Mr Powell's Chamber.

homes of people of middling sorts.[15] One of the rooms which contained the greatest amount of material possessions was that of Mrs Powell:

> 2 standing besteads with mat and cords, 2 feather beds and boulsters, 2 pillows, 4 blanketts, 2 red rugs, 1 set of curtains and valians of red cloth, 1 sell curtains and valians of kiddermaster, 1 table with a green carpet, 1 grate for firing with slice and tong, 1 iron back, 1 paire of brass snuffers, 1 little table tinned over, 2 chaires, 1 stoole, 1 table stand, 1 chase stoole, 1 looking glass.[16]

The most basic room within the house was the stable which contained only a simple bed and rug. From the items contained within the room, Mrs Powell clearly had an important status within the house. Sadly, nothing is known about her, not even her position, however M. R. Apted believes that she was the Housekeeper,[17] which would explain why her room is the most comfortable amongst the servants quarters. Also due to later alterations within the house it is not even known which room she had. There are twenty-five named servants in the 1688-1698 inventories, but very little information has survived about them.

Where the state rooms witnessed a reduction in expenditure between the 1689 and the 1692 inventories, the servant's quarters also experienced a similar decline. In the great majority of rooms the objects remained completely identical, however, a few rooms had minor adjustments. In 1689 Mrs Powell's chamber had the addition of two extra bolsters, an extra pillow and an additional blanket. The 1692 inventory from this chamber appears to be missing which makes it impossible to judge whether there were any further changes. The chamber named 'The New Kill Room' remained identical between 1688 and 1689,and this chamber appeared to be very basic when compared with Mrs Powell's chamber. The inventory for 1688-9 described the room as '1 tymber bedstead with matt and cord, 1 feather bed and boulster, 1 blankett, 1 greene rug lined with a blanket'.[18] Three years later in 1692, the rug had disappeared suggesting a small decline in material goods. There were some marked changes to several rooms specified in the 1692 inventories. The inventory of 'The Ox House' noted that it had'1 bedstead, 1 dust bed and boulster, 1 coverled',[19] which demonstrates a great decline in material possessions in this part of the household. The vast majority of servant's rooms over these years either reflected no attention, minimal additions, or a slight decline in possessions possibly though ware and tear.

These inventories for the servants quarters proves to be very interesting, as during this year (c.1692) the Morgans displayed an increase in luxury consumption and it is evident that they were distributing their material possessions throughout the entire household. When studying the 1689 inventories there is nevertheless a clear decline in material possessions amongst all the servants. Mrs Powell's chamber ended up looking tired with;

> 2 bedsteads with mats and cords, 2 feather beds, 3 bolsters, 3 pillows, 4 blanketts,2 red rugs, 2 suits of red curtains, valliance and testers of the same, 1 old cane chair, 1 table with an old wrought green carpet, 1 chest, 1 little

[15] Weatherill 'Consumption and the World of Goods', p.13.
[16] NLW, Tredegar Inventory, 1688. Mrs Powells chamber.
[17] Apted, 'Social Conditions at Tredegar House'p.131
[18] NLW, Tredegar Inventory1688-89. New Kill Room.
[19] NLW, Tredegar Inventory 1962.The Ox House.

> table covered with tin, 1 old trunke, 4 pictures, 1 back, 1 iron grate, fire shovel and tongs.[20]

The room now contained fewer blankets and there were items which needed replacing as they were 'old' and worn. The 'Ox House' thereby suggests that there was a noticeable reduction in furnishings containing only a feather bed, four timber bedsteads, a green rug and various other objects, while the 1698 the inventory describes this room as including nothing other than '1 dustbed and boulster'.[21] What could have caused this decline? Many other servants rooms show a decline in material objects such as these, either objects disappearing from rooms or a limited furnishings, several of which need replacing. No rooms appeared to have any added luxuries or even necessities. There are addition blankets, but such references are still a rarity. It is unknown what may have caused the decline in the servant's quarters, possibly some items such as chairs may have been old items of furniture from the bedchambers when Thomas had first reorganised the house. It is also likely that these items may have been donated to the servants, explaining why they were not recorded in the 1676 inventory and then not replaced when they became old or broken. There is also evidence to suggest that the Morgans at this time may have been cutting back. For example, in the Ox House there is a clear reduction in staffing - over ten beds in the room in 1688, but only one bed a decade later.[22]As there is obvious evidence in the state rooms that the family were spending their wealth during this time, there is the possibility that they may have been holding back on the furnishing the servants quarters so that they could indulge in the purchase of luxury goods.

It appears that the Verney family also experienced a similar decline in 1684 and made cuts in the provision of their staff:

> In 1684, a reduced staff of seven of seven house servants cost Sir Ralf only £33. 10*s*… Rents may be high and discipline strict, but when a currency caused hardships in 1696, Sir Ralph acted paternally. He worried about Goody Dixon's sickness and charged Coleman to 'tell me if she is in want, for I would not have her suffer much.[23]

It is apparent that over the years that the inventories were compiled, changes were shown in the servant's chambers. In 1676, although the rooms were more basic, it has been shown that William Morgan was very thoughtful towards his staff at both Tredegar and Machen, considering them in his will, treating them equally and providing them with comfortable living conditions if they lived at Tredegar house. The great change in the servant's rooms in 1688 is very obvious. It is unknown whether during this time, Thomas may have wanted to refurbish the servants rooms and perhaps the items were old objects donated from elsewhere in the home. There could be many reasons which could explain the decline in material goods, notably staff cutbacks, or the family saving their money on some areas of their home so they could be extravagant in other areas. Although there is the suggestion of staff cut backs during this time, and the reduction of material possessions within the servants quarters, there is evidence that the servants were well looked after at Tredegar, Mrs Powell remained at Tredegar until her death in 1702 and considered the servants of the House in her will, once again indicating that the house operated as a wider 'family' unit:

[20] NLW, Tredegar Inventory 1698. Mrs Powells Chamber.
[21] NLW, Tredegar Inventory 1696.The Ox House.
[22] NLW, Tredegar Inventory 1688-98. The Ox House.
[23]Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late- Stuart England*, p.19.

> She left legacies to the members of the household staff – in this case 4/- to each including the price of a pair of gloves to wear at the funeral. On this occasion 37 men and 12 women were regarded as being included within the terms of the legacy.[24]

Yet due to the lack of surviving information concerning the Morgan's purchases and financial records conclusions are extremely difficult. It is nevertheless obvious that the Morgan family during the late seventeenth century were considerate employers who provided good wages for staff, were attentive of their needs, and provided them with excellent accommodation. With all this considered it cannot be doubted that Tredegar House would have been sought after place to work during this time, and it is very possible that the Morgan family would have considered their staff as their family.

[24] Apted, 'Social Conditions at Tredegar House'p.130.

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