1. Lady Mary de Briouze was the first witness called to testify to the miraculous events surrounding William Cragh, hanged for his part in an attack on Oystermouth Castle.

2. She was the third wife of William de Briouze senior, the Lord of Gower, whose allegiance was to the Norman king, not the Welsh aristocracy. She only spoke French, the language of the conquerors. Other languages spoken were English and Welsh, and Latin was used in many documents.

3. She was therefore an unlikely ally of William Cragh, a Welshman who was involved in a local rebellion of the Welsh against the Normans. She was an aristocratic foreigner, one of the conquerors; he was a Welsh peasant, whom she termed a brigand. Nevertheless she apparently pleaded with her husband to spare him. After he was hanged she sent one of her servants to measure him for the votive candle - the body was measured for length and width and the string then covered with wax to form a candle, which was then lit to attract a saint's attention, in the hope that the saint would intercede on the behalf of the dead person, the saint in this case being Thomas Cantilupe, the late Bishop of Hereford. She also arranged for someone to care for him after he was miraculously revived. She then accompanied him, with her husband, to Hereford cathedral, to the tomb of St Thomas de Cantilupe.

   Her behaviour may have been influenced by the idea that women were able to, and indeed should, intercede with their husbands'; 'if [her husband is hard and unmerciful, and an oppressor of the poor, she should invite him to be merciful'[1]

   And

   > It is unquestionable that Lady Mary 'had a special devotion' to St Thomas, because as Bartlett acknowledges, 'Briouze connections with Hereford were extensive', having been distantly related by marriage to a second cousin of her husband. It was in the best interests of all involved to emphasise the religious marvel, thus aiding in the canonisation of St Thomas, and the associated prestige attached to his

[1] For a consideration of this, see Farmer, S. 1986. *'Persuasive Voices: Clerical Images of Medieval Wives'*, Speculum, 61: 517-543

name, of which the de Briouze family and Swansea by extension, would benefit from.[2]

4. How valuable is her testimony? The world she lived in was very different in some ways to ours. It is unlikely that many people nowadays in the western world would believe these events to be a miracle, if they believed they happened at all. But Lady Mary's world did believe in miracles. It is possible that she did believe that what she heard about William Cragh was indeed true. Even so, the events she was testifying to took place around 17 years earlier, so how accurate her memory was is debatable. She was in her room in Swansea Castle while the events she was testifying to took place. She did not see anything herself, and only knew what others told her. She was not, therefore, a witness to the miraculous events as they took place.

[2] Rowley, R. *The Spectacle of Execution: Saintly Miracles, Secular Authority and Miraculous Criminal Resurrections*, (Unpublished) p.11 at www.medievalswansea.ac.uk/encontext/interpretations accessed 20.10.20