

BLEDDYN ap CYNFYN (died 1075), prince

Name: Bleddyn ap Cynfyn
Date of death: 1075
Spouse: Haer ferch Gillyn
Child: Maredudd ap Bleddyn ap Cynfyn
Child: Iorwerth ap Bleddyn
Child: Rhiryd ap Bleddyn
Child: Madog ap Bleddyn
Child: Cadwgan ab Bleddyn
Parent: Angharad ferch Maredudd ab Owain
Parent: Cynfyn ap Gwerstan
Gender: Male
Occupation: prince
Area of activity: Military; Politics, Government and Political Movements; Royalty and Society
Author: John Edward Lloyd

He was the son of Cynfyn ap Gwerstan, otherwise unknown, and Angharad, widow of **Llywelyn ap Seisyll** (died 1023), and mother of the famous **Gruffudd ap Llywelyn** (died 1063).

Late authorities supply Gwerstan with a distinguished pedigree, but the name has the air of being a derivative of the English Werestan. As half-brothers of **Gruffudd**, Bleddyn and his brother **Rhiwallon** succeeded to his domains, but no longer in independence, but as vassals and allies of Edward the Confessor. They continued **Gruffudd's** policy of alliance with Mercia and aided the Mercians in their struggle with William the Conqueror, supporting Edric the Wild in 1067, when they ravaged Herefordshire as far as the Lugg, and Edwin and Morcar in 1068.

In 1070 they had to meet a threat nearer home; two sons of **Gruffudd** challenged their power in the battle of Mechain, an encounter in which Bleddyn proved victor and the only survivor of the four. He was now threatened by the advance of the Normans into North Wales; in 1073, Robert of Rhuddlan established himself on the banks of the Clwyd and shortly afterwards surprised Bleddyn in a stealthy attack, in which the Welsh leader lost much booty and narrowly escaped capture.

His career was cut short in 1075, when **Rhys ab Owain** and the nobles of Ystrad Tywi contrived his death. The tragedy was much deplored in Mid Wales, and when his cousin, **Trahaearn ap Caradog**, defeated **Rhys** (1078) in the battle of Goodwick and drove him into headlong flight, it was held to have been signally avenged.

High praise is bestowed upon Bleddyn by the chronicle which was now kept at Llanbadarn. His virtues were those of the ideal prince - clemency, kindness, affability, liberality to the weak and defenceless, respect for the rights of the Church. Some colour is given to this eulogy by the fact that Bleddyn is one of the few princes who appear as having made amendments in the laws of **Hywel the Good**. To later generations he was best known as the ancestor of all later princes of Powys, for, within a few years after his death, his sons had established themselves as rulers throughout the whole of this province.

Author

Sir John Edward Lloyd, (1861 - 1947)

Sources

J. E. Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest*(London 1911), 367, 369, 372, 374, 377-8, 382, 392-3

Further Reading

Sean Davies, *The First Prince of Wales? Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, 1063-75* (University of Wales Press 2016)

Wikipedia Article: [Bleddyn ap Cynfyn](#)

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