

LLOYD family, of Rhiwaedog (Rhiwedog), parish of Llanfor, Meirionnydd

Although the present (Plas) Rhiwaedog, near Bala, was not built until the second half of the 17th century (1664 ? - see sketch plan in *Merioneth Inventory* under item 364), there is documentary evidence that the Lloyd family is ancient and was once dominant. According to **J. Y. W. Lloyd** (*Archæologia Cambrensis*, 1874, 198) the ' Lloyd family became possessed of Rhiwaedog by the marriage of their ancestor MEREDYDD AB IEUAN AP MEREDYDD with MARGARET, eldest daughter and coheirress of EINION AB ITHEL of Rhiwaedog, Esquire of the Body of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, in A.D. 1395, and high sheriff of Meirionnydd for life. He was [according to **Lloyd**] the son of ITHEL AB GWRGENEU FYCHAN AB GWRGENEU AP MADOG AP RHIRYD FLAIDD.'

The deputy-herald **Lewis Dwnn**, when he visited Rhiwaedog on 1 August 1592, received a copy of the family pedigree from ELISE AP WILLIAM LLOYD, who was high sheriff of Merioneth in 1565. The ancestry as given by **Dwnn** (*Visitations*, ii, 225-6 - see the footnotes by **W. W. E. Wynne**) is traced through **Owain Gwynedd** and **Llywarch Hen** to Coel Godebog. **J. E. Griffith** (*Pedigrees*, 234) gives the descent from **Owain Gwynedd** down to 1832, and (ibid., 383) shows also the relationship of **SIMON LLOYD** (died 1711), of Plasynre, Bala (brother of the JOHN LLOYD of Rhiwaedog who died in 1724), and of his descendants, to the main branch of the family. This main branch ended in the first half of the 19th century with the deaths, in each case without issue, of (a) WILLIAM LLOYD DOLBEN, who was succeeded by two cousins, (b) MARTHA ILES (died 1825), and (c) her sister ANN SOPHIA MARIA ILES; the surviving Iles sister died in 1832, having bequeathed the property to Frances (daughter of John Lloyd of Berth and Rhagatt), wife of **Richard Watkin Price**, of Rhiwlas, also in the parish of Llanfor.

The family, in the course of the centuries, provided Merioneth with a number of sheriffs. Of these the first may have been EINION (EIGNION) AP ITHEL AP GWRGENEU, ' Esquire of the Body of John of Gaunt,' Duke of Lancaster; he died during his year of office (1399-1400). The next was the ELISE AP WILLIAM LLOYD who served in 1564-5. Then followed JOHN LLOYD (1615-6), who may be the same as the JOHN LLOYD who was sheriff in 1636. LEWIS LLOYD was high sheriff for 1652-3 and may be identical with the LEWIS LLOYD of 1665-6. JOHN LLOYD was high sheriff for 1704-5, as was another (or the same?) JOHN LLOYD in 1715-6. JOHN LLOYD of Fachddeiliog served in 1738 and WILLIAM LLOYD (of Rhiwaedog again) for 1764-5; the latter died in 1774 without issue and was succeeded by WILLIAM LLOYD DOLBEN (above), son of William Lloyd's sister Susan (Dolben). HUGH LLOYD of Cefnbodig (on the Bala side of the lake) and Chester, sheriff in 1831-2, is described by **W. W. E. Wynne** (**E. Breese**, *Kalendars of Gwynedd*, 83) as ' lineally descended from the ancient and once powerful family of Lloyd, of Rhiwaedog '; his nephew, GEORGE PRICE LLOYD, of Plasynre, Bala, served for 1840-1; whilst EDWARD EVANS -LLOYD, of Moelygarnedd, near Bala, nephew of the latter, served the office in 1887-8. And, finally, the sheriff for 1939-40 was ARTHUR CAMPBELL LLOYD JONES -LLOYD, of Moel-y-garnedd and Chester.

To the pedigree compilers, including many of the bards who are named below, **Llywarch Hen**, named by them as an ancestor of the Lloyd family, was himself a bard. Today we know (see **Ifor Williams**, *Canu Llywarch Hen*, 1935) that he was a chieftain who is the subject of the early Welsh 'saga' contained in the poems associated with his name. The older belief that he was a poet may account (in part only, of course) for the remarkable amount of patronage extended at Rhiwaedog to itinerating bards (clerwyr), particularly during the 16th and 17th century. **Griffith Roberts** (Gwrtheyrn, 1845 - 1915), Bala, gives (in two of his manuscripts, now **NLW MS 7411C** , **NLW MS 7421B**) the names of many bards who wrote poems to various members of the Rhiwaedog family and who visited the house. Amongst them are **Gruffudd Hiraethog**, **Siôn Ceri**, **Bedo Hafesp**, **Siôn Mawddwy**, **Siôn Brwynog**, **Siôn Phylip**, **Richard Phylip**, **Richard Cynwal**, **Wiliam Cynwal**, **Rhys Cain**, **Wiliam Llŷn**, **Siôn Tudur**, **Simwnt Fychan**, **Tomos Prys**, **Huw Arwystli**, **Lewis Dwnn**, **Tudur Aled**, **Lewis Môn**, **Lewis Menai**, **Owain Gwynedd**, besides other lesser-known bards. Even the learned **Dr. John Davies** of Mallwyd wrote poems to members of this family. (For the 'bardic controversy' between **Richard Phylip** and **Richard Cynwal** concerning the position of ' bardd teulu ' to Rhiwaedog see the article on ' Phylipiaid Ardudwy ' in *Cymm.*, xlii.) This tradition continued, although in an attenuated form, to the 18th century, for when William Lloyd died in 1774 the poet **Robert Williams** of Pandy Rhiwaedog (1744 - 1815), wrote a Welsh elegy in memory of his neighbour (**NLW MS 595D**).

Rowland Vaughan of Caer-gai is not named with the above-mentioned bards, although he also wrote poetry to one member of the family. It is of far greater importance that **Rowland Vaughan** dedicated his best-known work, *Yr Ymarfer o Dduwioledeb* - a translation of *The Practice of Piety* by **Lewes Bayly**, bishop of Bangor - to Margaret, sole heiress of Sir John Lloyd of Ceiswyn, serjeant-at-law, and wife of John Lloyd of Rhiwaedog. Of greater interest even than the dedication is the fact that **Rowland Vaughan** undertook the translation at Margaret Lloyd's request; he states at the beginning of his dedicatory letter that he could not but do his best to carry out her wish as an expression of gratitude for her great kindness and courtesy towards him and his family.

Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

Sources

To the references named in the text should be added

Archaeologia Cambrensis, V, i, iii

R. J. Lloyd Price, *The history of Rulacc, or Rhiwlas Ruedok, or Rhiwedog; Bala, its lake; The Valley of the Dee River; and much more of Meirionethshire and Counties adjacent thereto* (London 1899), and the sources named in this strange work

Archaeologia Cambrensis, III, v ('Precious Pebble of Owain Gwynedd'), V, i, ii ('The Crystal Pebble [of Owain Gwynedd] at Rhiwaedog'), and V, iii

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