

LLYWELYN ap GRUFFYDD or LLYWELYN BREN (died 1317) nobleman, soldier and rebel martyr

Name: Llywelyn ap Gruffydd

Pseudonym: Llywelyn Bren

Date of death: 1317

Child: Llywelyn ap Llywelyn ap Gruffydd

Child: William ap Llywelyn ap Gruffydd

Child: Roger ap Llywelyn ap Gruffydd

Child: Meurig ap Llywelyn ap Gruffydd

Child: John ap Llywelyn ap Gruffydd

Child: Gruffydd ap Llywelyn ap Gruffydd

Parent: Gruffydd ap Rhys

Gender: Male

Occupation: nobleman, soldier and rebel martyr

Area of activity: Military; Patriots; Politics, Government and Political Movements; Religion; Royalty and Society

Author: Thomas Jones Pierce

He is described as son of Gruffydd, not Rhys (a patronymic which has hitherto caused some confusion), in a letter announcing his capture in 1316. Record evidence reveals him as a man of culture with unusual literary interests for a person of his class and period, possessing considerable property and personal wealth in Senghenydd and Miscin - 'a great man and powerful in his own country,' as a contemporary chronicle has it. All this suggests that he was the son of Gruffydd ap Rhys, a native vassal of the honour of Glamorgan, and a great-grandson of **Ifor Bach**, lord of Senghenydd, and Nest, granddaughter of **Rhys ap Tewdwr**. Since 1256 Senghenydd had been fully absorbed into the feudal organisation of the honour, and Llywelyn appears to have been on excellent terms with the young earl, **Gilbert de Clare**, holding office under him and, possibly, acting as the earl's leading adviser on native affairs. With **Gilbert**'s untimely death in 1314, Glamorgan passed for a time into royal custody, an event accompanied by changes in local administration, particularly when **Pain de Turberville**, lord of Coity, was appointed *custos* in 1315; **Pain**, a near neighbour and enemy of Llywelyn's kinsmen of Afan, was no friend of Welshmen, whatever their degree. Llywelyn was removed from office, and there followed a short period of bitter personal recrimination on both sides, which reached a climax in Llywelyn's unsympathetic hearing before Edward II. Fearing treachery, he returned home secretly early in 1316, and in view of general discontent throughout the Welshries, had no difficulty in raising a widespread revolt among the hillsmen of Glamorgan. The rebellion, though attended by serious devastation of the Vale and a number of determined attacks on several important strongholds - including Caerphilly - was over in a few weeks. The rebels had little hope of success when the marcher lords combined under de Bohun and **Mortimer**, to whom Llywelyn made the heroic personal surrender which won the admiration of an alien chronicler. He was in prison at Brecon on 22 March. From 27 July 1316 to 17 June 1317 he was held in the Tower of London. By that time Glamorgan was being exploited in the interests of the Despenser s and Llywelyn fell a victim to their greed; his estates were seized, and he was brought to Cardiff where he suffered a traitor's death. Among the charges later brought against the Despenser s was the murder of Llywelyn Bren. With the deposition of Edward II, the estates in Senghenydd were resumed (11 February 1327) by his sons - Gruffydd, John, Meurig, Roger, William and Llywelyn.

Author

Professor Thomas Jones Pierce, (1905 - 1964)

Sources

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Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

Malmesbury, *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II* (1882&€"3)

Calendar of Ancient Correspondence concerning Wales (1935)

Calendar of Close Rolls

Calendar of Patent Rolls

Ralph Griffiths, 'The Revolt of Llywelyn Bren, 1316' in *The Glamorgan Historian*, II, 186-96

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Llywelyn Bren](#)

Additional Links

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