

WYNN family, of Berth-ddu and Bodysgallen, Caernarfonshire

This family was a younger branch of the **Wynn** family of Gwydir, founded through the marriage of Griffith Wynn (son of **John Wynn ap Meredydd**, died 1559, and uncle of **Sir John Wynn of Gwydir**) with the heiress of Robert Salusbury of Berth-ddu.

OWEN GWYNN (GWYNNE, GWYN or WYN) (died 1633), Master of S. John's, Cambridge,

was the third son of this Griffith Wynn. Nominated in 1584 to one of the Welsh scholarships founded at S. John's, Cambridge, under the will of his uncle, **Dr. John Gwyn**, of which his father was executor, he graduated there in 1588, was elected next year to a Fellowship under the same foundation, and proceeded to the further degrees of M.A. in 1591 and B.D. in 1599. He then became rector of Honington, Suffolk, from 1600 to 1605, when he was succeeded by his cousin and pupil **John Williams**, later archbishop of York, receiving instead the living of East Ham (1605-11). He was bursar of the college from 1608-11, and in the following year was elected Master (largely through **Williams's** influence among the Fellows) over the head of the far more distinguished Thomas Morton, later bishop of Durham - an action which Hacket believes **Williams** to have later repented. In the same year he was made D.D. on the occasion of a royal visit, 'without the uneasiness of performing exercise,' and was presented to the living of Luffenham, Suffolk, declining the archdeaconry of Shrewsbury, offered to him by bishop Neile of Coventry and Lichfield. As vice-chancellor in 1615 he took official part in the reception of King James and the prince of Wales, but no fresh preferment resulted till, in 1621, prince Charles put forward his name for the vacant see of S. Davids. Gwynn seems to have been lukewarm, and Laud was appointed instead; **Williams**, elected to Lincoln the same year, consoled his old tutor with the archdeaconry of Huntingdon and the vicarage of Buckden (both in his diocese), which Laud had vacated, and a prebendal stall in Lincoln cathedral (1622). A suggestion that he should be given St Asaph on the death of **Richard Parry** (1623) also came to nothing, nor does he seem to have been presented to any of the four livings (including Aberdaron, vacant 1624) with which **Williams** had recently endowed the college, and for which Gwynn was considered. During the following years he was engaged in completing arrangements for **bishop Williams's** gift of a library to the college - the one great monument of Gwynn's period as Master. In 1626, at the request of bishop Neile (and doubtless under the influence of **Williams**, now Buckingham's protégé), he supported Buckingham's election as chancellor of the university over the Puritan nominee - an event which caused a great political storm; but Buckingham did not live to return the favour.

Hacket and Baker both speak slightly of him as Master, the former describing him as 'a soft man and prone altogether to Ease'; William Cole on the other hand rates him as 'sufficient' for his post, in an age when the college could count among its alumni Wentworth, Fairfax, and Falkland, as well as **Williams**. **John Owen**, the epigrammatist, dedicated two Latin epigrams to him (l, iii, 166; ll, 89), and **William Llyn** a cywydd (*Cynfeirdd Lley*n, 94-5). He showed no great personal ambition, but he was solicitous for the interests of his Welsh 'cousins'; **William** and **Henry Bodwrda** were both Fellows under him, and benefited under his will, and if Robert Wynn of Gwydir (whom he admitted as an undergraduate) missed his Fellowship, that was no fault of the Master, who saw to it that he was well to the fore when royalty was entertained in 1615. On his death in 1633 he was buried in the college chapel; he left no important legacy to the college, but a Welsh *Bible* which came into its possession on his death is believed to have been his.

The estate of Berth-ddu passed to Owen Gwynn's elder brother,

HUGH WYNN I (or Hugh Gwynne),

who added to it that of Bodysgallen by marriage with the heiress, daughter of **Richard Mostyn**. He helped **Thomas Willems** with material for his dictionary, carried to the Star Chamber a quarrel with **Sir John of Gwydir**, and served, in 1609, as sheriff of Denbighshire, in which office he was succeeded by his son ROBERT WYNN I in 1618. He greatly enlarged Bodysgallen, but crippled the estate in the process, and was on that ground passed over as sheriff in 1633.

HUGH WYNN II (1620 - 1674), royalist colonel,

was the eldest son of Robert Wynn I, born on 20 February 1620. During the Civil War he commanded for the king a Denbighshire regiment, with which he served in the operations in and around Chester, and was wounded near Wem in 1643. Wynn was one of the hostages offered as guarantee for the performance of the articles of surrender when Chester fell (1 February 1645), and subsequently fought in North Wales up to the surrender of Denbigh castle (14 October 1646) and from 1650 in Ireland. He petitioned to compound on 14 April 1649 (describing his conduct in the war as 'ill-advised'), was fined £63 13s. 4d. (one year's purchase) and received his discharge on 6 June 1650, but took no part in the public life of the Interregnum. After the Restoration, however, he served as magistrate, deputy-lieutenant, and commissioner of taxes for Caernarvonshire, and also had the sole right of nominating to scholarships under the educational trust of his great-uncle Owen Gwynne (above). He died 13 December 1674, having married, successively, daughters of Sir James Bodvell, **Richard Vaughan of Cors-y-gedol** and **lord Bulkeley**, the last being the widow of Sir William Williams of Vaynol. His daughter's tombstone in Llan-rhos church describes him as 'a great sufferer for the Royal Cause'; he left the estate (already encumbered by his father) heavily mortgaged. A contemporary painting of a man in armour, formerly at Bodysgallen, now at Gloddaeth, is traditionally identified as colonel Hugh Wynne (reproduced in *Llandudno ... Field Club Proceedings*, XXV).

ROBERT WYNN II (born 1655),

eldest son of the colonel's first marriage, followed family tradition by entering S. John's, Cambridge, 1673, and was also an active magistrate, but he had to sell Berth-ddu. His son, ROBERT WYNN III, Member of Parliament for Caernarvon in 1754, died childless, and Bodysgallen descended through his younger brother,

HUGH WYNN III (died 1754), prebendary of S. Pauls,

who was educated at Eton and S. John's, Cambridge, where he was admitted 19 March 1713, and graduated LL.B. 1719, and LL.D. 1728. Ordained in London in 1720, he was presented to the livings of Dolgelly, Merionethshire, and Llanidan, Anglesey, in 1725, resigning the latter in 1731, after becoming precentor (not chancellor, as in obituary, *Gent. Mag.*, 1754, 283) of Bangor cathedral (1730-44), a post which he combined with the living of Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd, Denbighshire, till 1734, when he exchanged it for that of Llanrhaeadr. From 1733 he was also archdeacon of Merioneth and rector of Llandudno; in 1753 he became prebendary of Salisbury, and in 1750 of S. Pauls. He married, successively, into the families of **Corbett of Ynys-y-maengwyn** and **Vaughan of Cors-y-gedol**, and died on 13 October 1754, leaving a sole heiress, whose marriage to **Sir Roger Mostyn** (1776) carried the Bodysgallen estate back to its former owners.

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