

## BODVEL (WYNNE and GWYNNE), of Bodvel, Caernarfonshire, Caerfryn (Anglesey), etc.

The Bodvel s, who trace their descent from Collwyn ap Tangno, first come into public notice with JOHN WYN ap HUGH of Bodvel (died 1576), who bore the royal standard for Warwick (later Northumberland) against the Norfolk rebels (1549), and was rewarded with the grant of Bardsey Island, which he was alleged in 1569 to be using as the headquarters of a highly-organized nest of pirates. His son HUGH GWYN (BODVEL) (died 1611) was imprisoned for opposition to the earl of Leicester (son of his father's patron) as ranger of Snowdon forest, and while he was still in durance a commission was issued (1578) to **Nicholas Robinson**, bishop of Bangor, and **Elis Prys** to investigate his relations, as a 'known papist,' with his brother-in-law **Hugh Owen** of Plas Du (1538 - 1618) in exile at Brussels. No incriminating evidence was found, and in 1589, after reconciliation with Leicester, Bodvel was elected M.P. for Caernarvonshire, serving also as sheriff in 1589 and 1597.

### ROGER GWYNNE of Bodvel (1577 - c. 1605), Roman Catholic priest and missionary

He was probably either son or younger brother of the above Hugh Gwyn. As a youth he came under the influence of **Fr. William Davies** (died 1593), in whose charge he was in 1591 making for Ireland with three fellow- aspirants to the priesthood, guided by **Robert Puw of Penrhyn**, when they were arrested at Holyhead and imprisoned for three months at Beaumaris, refusing to recant under torture. On release Gwynne went to Spain, entering the seminary at Valladolid in 1596. He was ordained in 1602 and sent on mission to Wales next year; but his ship was intercepted on the way to Swansea, and Gwynne was interrogated and sent to the Tower under the allegation (never tested in the courts) that he had confessed to a plot to kill James I. Gardiner (*Hist.*, I, 106) suggests that this 'confession' produced a momentary triumph in the council of the Hispanophobe party, who may have engineered it. GWYNNE remained in the Tower till 1605, after which no more is known of him.

### ROBERT GWYNNE (fl. 1578)

He was probably of the same family, but no record of his origins has as yet come to light.

### CHARLES GWYNNE, alias Bodvel or Bodwell, alias Browne (1582 - 1647), Jesuit missionary

The son of Thomas Wynn of Boduan, Pwllheli (younger son of John Wynn ap Hugh of Bodvel) and of Elizabeth, daughter of Owen ap Gruffydd of Plas Du and sister of **Hugh Owen**. He was brought up a Protestant and 'learned grammar' in his own county, but being reconciled to Rome by Fr. J. Chambers while on a visit to **Hugh Owen** at Brussels he entered the English College at Rome (where he was ordained in 1613) and became a Jesuit in 1620. He was sent on the Welsh mission of S. Francis Xavier in 1623. Cwm, Llanrothal, had been established as headquarters of a new Jesuit province by **Fr. John Salusbury** in 1622, and was called the college of St. Xaverius. **Fr. John Salusbury**, died in 1625 and Bodvel succeeded him as rector.

He procured from his uncle ' Hugh Morgan of Hilton ' - whom Mr. J. M. Cleary plausibly identifies with **Hugh Owen** - funds for maintaining a Welsh scholar at Rome, by means of which **David Lewis** (died 1679), nephew of **Fr. Augustine Baker** (1575 - 1641), was enabled to enter the English College (1638). In 1618 Gwynne inherited the fortune of **Hugh Owen**, who had disinherited the heir at law, **John Owen the epigrammatist** (1560? - 1622), because his works were on the papal Index. Gwynne erected a tablet to **Owen's** memory in the English College at Rome (text in *Archæologia Cambrensis*, 1853, 130-1).

### JOHN BODVEL (1617 - 1663), Royalist colonel

He was the son and heir of Hugh Gwyn Bodvel's grandson Sir John Bodvel (kt. 1614, died 1631) and of Elizabeth, daughter of **Sir John Wynn** of Gwydir (1553 - 1626). He entered the Middle Temple in 1633 and in 1640 married Ann, daughter of Sir William Russell of Chippenham, Cambridgeshire, co-Treasurer of the Navy. He sat for Anglesey (where his grandfather had acquired by marriage the estate of Caerfryn) in the Short and Long Parliaments, where he took his stand with the militant Protestants who opposed the court, and was nominated by the Commons as deputy-lieutenant of Caernarvonshire in March 1642.

On 2 August 1642 he was given leave of absence by the House and a store of arms for the defence of 'his home in Wales,' but by May 1643 he had become a commissioner of array for Caernarvonshire and a ' custos rotulorum ' for Anglesey, and he attended the Oxford Parliament in January 1644, when he was also admitted to the degree of D.C.L. there. When the Oxford Parliament adjourned in July, Bodvel took his family to Caerfryn, serving as governor of Caernarvon castle from March 1646 (N.L.W. Brogyntyn Coll., unscheduled letter from Lord Byron to Bodvel and others 13 March 1646), helping as colonel and commissioner of array both in the defence of the island and in the negotiations for its surrender in July 1646.

His estates were sequestered in November 1647, and he incurred further fines by supporting the Royalist rising of 1648 in Anglesey. He appears to have fled abroad on the king's execution, and on his return his name was included in the Act of 1651 for the sale of delinquents' estates, but the sales were quashed in 1652 and he was finally cleared of delinquency in April 1655.

In 1657 his wife, a strong Puritan who had already (1646), appealed to the Lords for the removal of their children from the father's custody on the ground of his bad example, arranged without his consent a marriage between their second daughter and Robert, son of the Cornish lord Robartes, a wealthy Presbyterian and former Roundhead field-marshal. Bodvel, after refusing to recognize the match, relented after the restoration and stood godfather to his second grandson Charles Bodvel Robartes, promising to make him his heir and to give him a Welsh education. But his distant cousin **Thomas Wynn** of Boduan (died 1673) - grandson of the Thomas Wynn named above (see **Charles Gwynne**, 1582 - 1647) and ancestor of the **first lord Newborough** - had long been intriguing for the succession to the Bodvel estates, and he now got Bodvel into his power by poisoning him against his family and hiding him from importunate creditors in the slums of London, where, in the extremity of squalor and sickness of body and mind, he made a new will (1662), leaving his estates to **Wynne's** son Griffith (who assumed the name of Bodvel) and another distant cousin.

After his death (March 1663) lord Robartes and his son contested the will in Chancery and the House of Lords, eventually (1666) obtaining an Act of Parliament which set it aside in favour of **CHARLES BODVEL ROBARTES** (1660 - 1697), who on the death of his paternal grandfather (created earl of Radnor 1685) succeeded, owing to the prior death of his elder brother, as 2nd earl of Radnor. During his minority Bodvel House was licensed under the Declaration of Indulgence (1672) for Independent worship and was for a time the residence of **James Owen** (1654 - 1706). Overtures for a marriage into the Gwydir family broke down when he was 19 (1679). On his father's death in 1682 he succeeded him as mayor of Caernarvon and constable of the castle; but after succeeding to the earldom he disposed of his Welsh estates, discharging his Welsh offices (with that of chief forester of Snowdon, 1692) by proxy, and living in London, where he became the close friend of Dean Swift.

## Author

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