

## BODWRDA (BODWRDDA), family, of Bodwrda, Caernarfonshire

An old Caernarvonshire family, descended from Trahaearn Goch, lord of Cymydmaen. The surname was adopted by HUGH GWYN, sheriff of Caernarvonshire, 1605 (son of John Wyn, sheriff 1584). Of his twelve children, the eldest, JOHN BODWRDA (died 1648?), was sheriff in 1629, and may have been the John Bodwrda 'secured' by the then sheriff (Sir T. Cheadle) for supposed Roundhead sympathies on the outbreak of civil war; three went to S. John's College, Cambridge, where Hugh's wife's brother, **Owen Gwyn** (or **Gwynne**), was elected master in 1612.

WILLIAM BODWRDA (1593 - 1660), second son, went there in 1612 after graduating at Oxford, becoming M.A. 1615, B.D. 1623, and a Fellow of the college till his ejection for refusing the Solemn League and Covenant in 1644. After holding several college livings in England, of which he was deprived by Parliament in 1646, he was presented in 1651 to that of Aberdaron (near his home), the gift of which had been made over to the college by **archbishop John Williams**.

GRIFFITH BODWRDA, the third son, who left S. John's without graduating, was in 1626, as under-sheriff of Caernarvonshire, exonerated by the Lords on a charge of violating the Parliamentary privilege of **Lewis Bayly**, **bishop of Bangor**. Either he or his nephew and namesake (below) was a prolific writer of englynion.

HENRY BODWRDA, fourth son, became a Fellow of S. John's and a schoolmaster in England, and shared with his brother William a legacy from the master, **Owen Gwyn**.

GRIFFITH (or GRIFFIN) BODWRDA (1621 - 1679), politician and placeman, was the third son of the above John Bodwrda, and of Margaret, daughter of **John Griffith**, Cefn Anwich. He was educated at Shrewsbury school and on 27 October 1639 entered St. John's College, Cambridge (following his elder brothers John and Hugh), under the tutorship of his uncle William Bodwrda, and holding a scholarship founded by **Dr. John Gwyn** in 1574 from rents in Maenan, on the nomination of his second cousin **Robert Wynne**, Bodysgallen, as 'nearest in relation of kindred unto mee and the founder.' He left without graduating, and was appointed through the good offices of **John Glynne**, recorder of London, to the Wine Licence Office and that of Receiver of Firstfruits, together worth £500 a year. He was one of the commissioners for the North Wales 'Association' in 1648, entered Lincoln's Inn in 1649, and in 1656 was elected for Beaumaris to Cromwell's second Parliament, where he took a prominent part in debates, supporting the Humble Petition and Advice but urging limitations on the financial and judicial powers of the Protector, and protesting against the financial burdens imposed on his own constituents. His greatest speech was a powerful plea for religious liberty during the attack on James Nayler, the Quaker 'Messiah' (12 December 1656). In the same year he was made Keeper of the Records of Common Pleas, in 1657 commissioner of taxes for Anglesey and Caernarvonshire, and in 1659 he was again returned for Beaumaris in Richard Cromwell's Parliament, where he supported the new Protector's title, urged a strong foreign policy, and wished to disfranchise Brecon for a false return at the last election. At the same time he presented to his college a copy of Brian Walton's recently published *Polyglot Bible*, acknowledged in a fulsome Latin address of thanks. In 1654 he was associated with **John Glyn**, **John Carter**, and **William Foxwist** in the purchase of the lordship of Hawarden from the earl of Derby. Elected to the Convention Parliament, he was one of the deputation chosen to escort Charles II from Paris (26 April 1660), subsequently turned informer at the regicide trials, and was entrusted by Charles II with the dismantling of Caernarvon castle. During the Great Fire (1666) the king put him in charge of homeless refugees at Islington. He failed, though backed by secretary Arlington, to obtain a commissionership of Excise for London in 1668, but soon afterwards (c. 1672) he was given a post at the Treasury in Dublin, where he remained till his death in 1679, having obtained five years earlier permission from the Crown to purchase land for development near the castle. He remained on the commission of the peace for Caernarvonshire, from which his name was removed only during the 'purge' of political suspects in February 1680 - some months after his death.

His brother HUGH (also of Lincoln's Inn) was sheriff in 1686.

### Author

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### Further reading

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