

KATHERYN of BERAIN (' Catrin o'r Berain ', 1534/5 - 1591), 'Mam Cymru' ('The mother of Wales')

Name: Katheryn Of Berain
Pseudonym: Mam Cymru, The Mother Of Wales
Date of birth: 1534/5
Date of death: 1591
Spouse: Edward Thelwall
Spouse: Maurice Wynn
Spouse: Richard Clough
Spouse: John Salusbury
Child: Jane Thelwall
Child: Mary Wynn (née Clough)
Child: Anne Salusbury (née Clough)
Child: Edward Wynn
Child: John Salusbury
Child: Thomas Salusbury
Parent: Jane ferch Robert
Parent: Tudur ap Robert Fychan
Gender: Female
Area of activity: Royalty and Society
Author: William Llewelyn Davies

Born in 1534/5, Katheryn was the daughter of Tudur ap Robert Vychan of Berain, Denbighshire, by his wife Jane, daughter of Sir Roland Velville (died 1527), a natural son of [Henry VII](#), whom [Henry](#) made constable of Beaumaris castle. Katheryn, who is said to have been a ward of queen Elizabeth, ultimately acquired by mortgage Penmynydd in Anglesey.

She was married four times:

(1) to [JOHN SALUSBURY](#), son and heir of [Sir John Salusbury](#) of Llewenni (the settlement deed is dated 11 February 1556/7). They had two sons (*a*) [Thomas](#) (born probably 1564) and (*b*) John (born 1565 or 1566); John died 1566, before his father;

(2) in 1567 to [Sir Richard Clough](#); she went with Clough to Antwerp, where he was concerned in business for Sir Thomas Gresham. It is said that [Maurice Wynn](#) of Gwydir proposed to her as he led her from the church after her first husband's funeral, but she refused as she had already accepted [Sir Richard](#) on the way to church, promising, however, 'that in case she performed the same sad duty (which she was then about) to the knight, he might depend on being the third' ([I. Pennant](#), *Tours in Wales*, 1810 ed., ii, 146-7). From Antwerp they travelled to Spain and in 1569 they moved to Hamburg, where [Clough](#) died in 1570. She and [Clough](#) had two daughters, (*a*) Anne (born 1568), who married Roger Salusbury, and (*b*)

Mary (born 1569), who married William Wynn of Melai. [Clough](#) provided handsomely for his widow and daughters and for his two stepsons. Katheryn returned to Berain and engaged [William Cynwal](#) of Penmachno, the bard and genealogist, to compile a record of her family - see his own words in Christ Church MS. 184 (photostat in N.L.W. MS. 6496).

(3) Sometime before January 1573, to [Maurice Wynn](#) of Gwydir as his third wife, thus becoming the step-mother of [Sir John Wynn](#) of Gwydir. A child marriage between her son [Thomas Salusbury](#), and Margaret, daughter of [Maurice Wynn](#) by his first wife, was arranged in 1574. This led to trouble over the wardship of [Thomas](#), who upon the death of his grandfather (18 March 1577/1578) became the ward of the earl of Leicester, who, however, gave his consent to the completion of the marriage agreement. [Maurice Wynn](#) died in August 1580. There were two children of Katheryn's third marriage, (a) Edward and (b) Jane.

(4) Sometime in 1583, to Edward Thelwall, son of [Simon Thelwall](#) of Plâs-y-ward, Denbighshire. At the same time a child marriage was arranged between her daughter Jane Wynn and his son [Simon](#) (born 1570).

In 1585/6 a daughter was born to [Thomas](#) and Margaret Salusbury, and in September 1586 [Thomas](#), who was implicated in the Babington conspiracy, was executed for alleged treason, and a commission was sent to inquire into his estate. In December of the same year, Katheryn's other son John (now Sir John Salusbury of Llewenni) married Ursula, a daughter of Henry Stanley, 4th earl of Derby (see N.L.W. MS. 5390).

On the death of her father-in-law Katheryn and Edward Thelwall moved to Plâs-y-ward, and Berain was settled on her grand-daughter, Margaret Salusbury.

Katheryn died 27 August 1591 and was buried in Llanefydd church. Many were the stories, true and untrue, told of her in North Wales. During her lifetime and after her death many tributes to her goodness were produced; see, for example, the poems preserved in Christ Church MS. and in N.L.W. MS. 6495-6. Interesting as a personality, *per se*, she is also of importance as the ancestress of several North Wales families or of families connected with Wales. Thus [Hester Lynch Salusbury \(aft. Thrale, aft. Piozzi\)](#) was a descendant of Katheryn's first marriage, whilst [Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, 3rd. bart.](#) of Wynnstay, was a descendant of her third marriage. [Sir John Ballinger](#) (in a long article on Katheryn in *Y Cymm.*, xl) gives four genealogical tables, facsimiles of her signature (she appeared to favour the form 'Katheryn'), and reproduces four alleged portraits, to the authenticity or otherwise of each of which he devotes attention.

Author

Sir William Llewelyn Davies, (1887 - 1952)

Sources

J. Ballinger, 'Katheryn of Berain,' in *Y Cymmrodor*, xl, and sources cited therein

Calendar of Wynn (of Gwydir) Papers, 1515-1690, in the National Library of Wales and elsewhere

Christ Church College Oxford Manuscripts 183, 184

NLW MSS 5390, 6495, 6496, etc

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Katheryn of Berain](#)

Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q6376590](#)

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