

DAFYDD LLWYD ap LLYWELYN ap GRUFFUDD, of Mathafarn (c. 1420 - c. 1500), poet

Name: Dafydd Llwyd ap Llywelyn ap Gruffudd
Date of birth: c. 1420
Date of death: c. 1500
Spouse: Margred wraig Dafydd Llwyd ap Llywelyn ap Gruffudd
Child: Margred ferch Dafydd Llwyd ap Llywelyn ap Gruffudd
Child: Llywelyn ap Dafydd Llwyd ap Llywelyn ap Gruffudd
Child: Maredudd ap Dafydd Llwyd ap Llywelyn ap Gruffudd
Child: Ieuan ap Dafydd Llwyd ap Llywelyn ap Gruffudd
Gender: Male
Occupation: poet
Area of activity: Poetry
Author: David Myrddin Lloyd

He is best known as the author of some fifty of the 200 extant vaticinary poems (*cywyddau brud*) of his generation. In his day he was also famed as an interpreter of the old Welsh prophetic books. His home was in Llanwrin parish, and the pedigrees record that both he and Margaret, his wife, were sprung from leading families in that part of the country. He outlived his children, of whom three sons were named Ieuan, Maredudd, and Llywelyn, mention being also made of a daughter named after her mother (*Powys Fadog*, vi, 37), and possibly of other sons. Besides the vaticinary poems, there remain poems of controversy between him and **Llywelyn ap Gutun** and others. Not having to compose for a living, he did not leave many petition poems, panegyrics, or elegies. The objects of his praise, moreover, are men whom he really admired, usually from amongst the leading Welshmen of the day, and some of his finest work is to be found in his elegies. His *cywydd* to **Saint Tydecho** is valuable as the only extant 'vita' of that saint, and his poem to the river Dovey is a work of great beauty, and fine passages of natural description revealing acute observation are by no means rare in his other poems. The earliest of his poems which can be dated is his elegy to **Sir Gruffudd Vaughan** (died 1447), and the poet lived to sing the praises of Arthur, son of **Henry VII**, who was born in 1486 - if we can accept the testimony given in *Collections, historical & archaeological relating to Montgomeryshire*, xxxi, 195. He was composing as late as 1497. No elegy by him Arthur (died 1501) is known, nor to **Henry VII** (died 1509), the poet's greatest hero. Contemporary poets praised Dafydd Llwyd as a soldier, a huntsman, an esquire (an honour bestowed on him after the victory at Bosworth), as a poet, and as an upholder of the prophetic tradition of Merlin.

In his vaticinary poems, he puts into verse much traditional material, but often as political propaganda. He is capable of praising **Dafydd ap Ieuan ab Einion**, as well as his enemy **William Herbert**, but there is no inconsistency in this as he cared little for the English dynastic struggle of the day, except in so far as the Wars of the Roses might give his chance to a liberator of the Welsh nation. The main sources of inspiration for Dafydd Llwyd were the yearning for the unity and freedom of his people, and resentment towards the English for the disabilities which they had imposed on the Welsh. Apart from his *cywyddau* there remain only his *awdl* to **S. David** (which is also vaticinary) and a few *englynion*. There is a tradition that **Henry Tudor** spent a night with Dafydd Llwyd at Mathafarn on his journey to Bosworth, and that the poet's wife advised him (as if that were necessary) to foretell that prince's good fortune.

Author

David Myrddin Lloyd, (1909 - 1981)

Sources

Unpublished M.A. thesis by Leslie Richards

Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies, iv, 310

Collections Historical and Archaeological relating to Montgomeryshire, xxx, 195

Heraldic Visitations of Wales and Part of the Marches between the years 1586 and 1613, under the authority of Clarenceux and Norroy, two kings at arms (Llandoverly 1846), i, 296

Howell T. Evans, *Wales and the Wars of the Roses* (Cambridge 1915)

Garmon Jones, 'Welsh Nationalism and Henry Tudor' in *The Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*, 1917-8

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Dafydd Llwyd ap Llywelyn ap Gruffudd](#)

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