

## HWEL ap GRUFFYDD ap IORWERTH, or SYR HWEL Y PEDOLAU (of the Horseshoes) (fl. c. 1300-1340).

**Name:** Hywel ap Gruffydd ap Iorwerth

**Child:** Gruffydd ap Hywel ap Gruffydd ab Ednyfed Fychan

**Parent:** Gwenllïan ferch Howel ab Ifan ap Trahaearn ap Gwgan

**Parent:** Gruffydd ab Ednyfed Fychan

**Gender:** Male

**Area of activity:** Public and Social Service, Civil Administration; Politics, Government and Political Movements

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According to a story recorded by [Robert Vaughan](#) of Hengwrt about 1650, Hywel ap Gruffydd ap Iorwerth was descended from Hwfa ap Cynddelw, founder of one of the so-called 'Fifteen Tribes.' His mother was said to have nursed Edward II after his birth at Caernarvon in 1284; as a result, Hywel enjoyed the favour of the king and was knighted by him. He was a man of great physical strength, able to bend horseshoes with his hands (*Cambrian Register*, i, 145-55; [Yorke](#), *Royal Tribes* (edn. 1887), 65 and 172-3). No record evidence exists to support the legend but medieval poets used his name to typify physical prowess (*Iolo Goch ac Eraill* (edn. 1937), 107 and 356; [Richard Llwyd](#), *Beaumaris Bay*, 53n). The descent from Hwfa is confirmed by [Lewys Dwnn](#) (*Visitations*, ii, 206 and 259), but elsewhere [Dwnn](#) makes him the son of [Gruffydd ap Ednyfed Fychan](#) (ii, 16), thus identifying him with the Hywel ap Gruffydd who, as a partisan of Edward I, was drowned in the Menai Straits in 1282; on this identification, Hywel y Pedolau would be the ancestor of the [Sir Gruffydd ap Rhys](#) of South Wales whose descendants were later settled at Abermarlais in Carmarthenshire (see [Ednyfed Fychan](#), [Sir Gruffydd Llwyd](#), and [Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd](#)). Little reliance can be placed on [Dwnn](#)'s authority in this case; elsewhere again (ii, 46) he wrongly identifies Hywel ap Gruffydd ap Ednyfed Fychan as [Hywel ap Gruffydd 'y Fwyall'](#) - an individual whose descent is well authenticated. Confused references which imply the existence of the tomb of Hywel y Pedolau at S. Peter's, Carmarthen, before 1790, are not convincing (see *Cambrian Register*, i, 145n; [Dineley](#), *Beaufort Progress*, cxci; E. Donovan, *South Wales*, ii, 188-9; [Dwnn](#), ii, 16n). The balance of probability is in favour of the descent from Hwfa ap Cynddelw, who would appear to have settled in Anglesey c. 1200 (*Transactions of the Anglesey Antiquarian Society and Field Club*, 1951, ii). His descendants, including those of Hywel 'y Pedolau,' are found in Anglesey and Caernarvonshire (see [J. E. Griffith](#), *Pedigrees*, 14-15, 29, 58, 71, 76, 95-6, 136, 228). It may confidently be suggested that Hywel 'y Pedolau' of the legend represents the historical Hywel ap Gruffydd who figures prominently during the early years of the 14th century as a member of that Welsh official class, led by [Sir Gruffydd Llwyd](#) in North Wales and [Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd](#) in South Wales which showed such remarkable loyalty to Edward II throughout his reign (*E.H.R.*, iii, 577-601). Early in Edward's reign his brother, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd ap Iorwerth, claimed to be the hereditary *pencenedl* (chief of kindred) of the line of Hwfa ap Cynddelw (*Ancient Petitions*, 2873). In 1305 Hywel ap Gruffydd and his three brothers (Llywelyn, Gruffydd and Iorwerth) 'of the cantref of Aberffraw' complained of an unjust assessment on their Anglesey lands (*Rec. Caern.*, 216). He served in Scotland, presumably in the Bannockburn campaign (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 1313-18, 367) and in 1326-7 he was imprisoned in Caernarvon castle, together with his brother Iorwerth and eleven others, for their adherence to Edward II before his abdication and death (*Cal. Close Rolls*, 1327-30, 182). He was probably the Hywel ap Gruffydd who represented Anglesey in the Parliament of 1327, and in 1331 he accused William de Shaldeford, who had been deputy to [Roger Mortimer](#) (see [article Mortimer family](#)), justice of North Wales in 1327, of having encouraged [Mortimer](#) to encompass the death of Edward II in order to frustrate an attempt to rescue him by his Welsh adherents (*Bulletin of Rylands Library*, vol. 6, 35-6 and 43-9). The date of his death is not known, but he may have been the Anglesey man of the same name who swore fealty to the Black Prince in 1343 (*Archæologia Cambrensis*, supplement 1877, clii). The survey of Anglesey in 1352 (*Rec. Caern.*, 51) shows that Gwely Metusalem ap Hwfa ap Cynddelw in the commote of Llifon was in the possession of Hywel's nephews - Madog ap Gruffydd Fychan and Llywelyn ap Iorwerth ap Gruffydd - 'et alii'; the expression almost certainly conceals Hywel's own heirs.

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