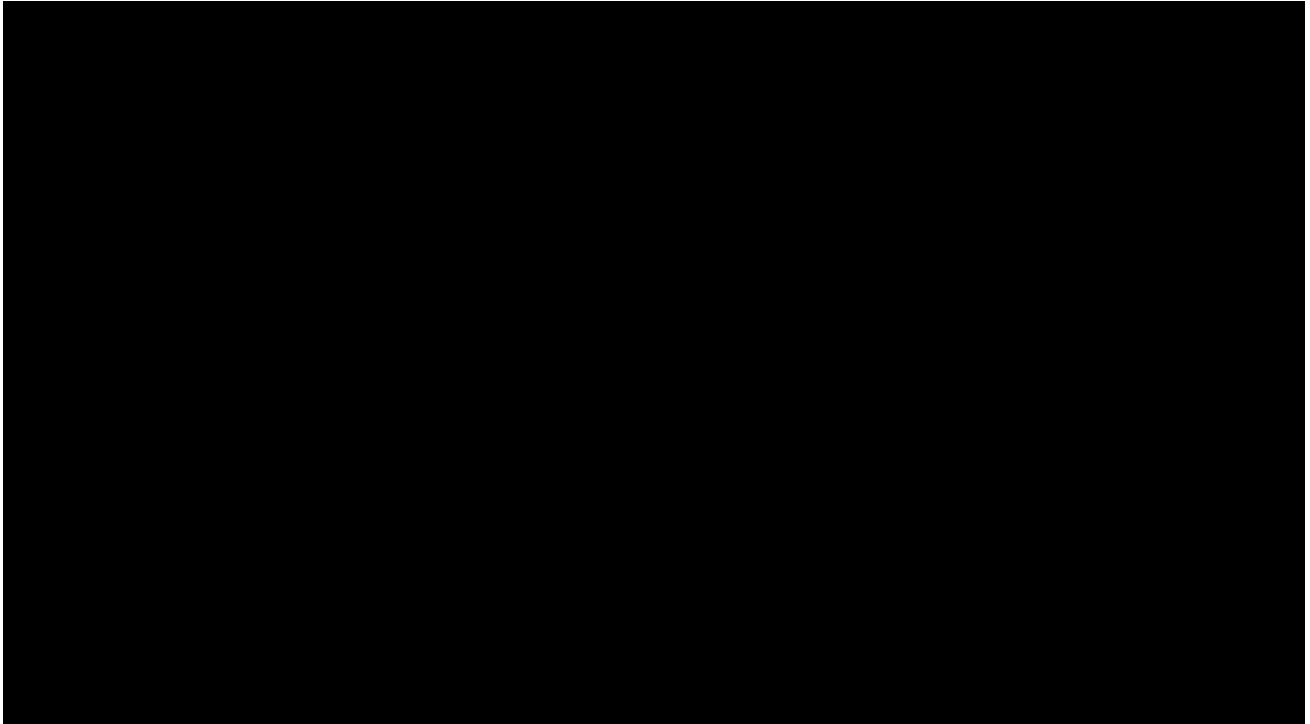


WYNN family, of Gwydir, Caernarfonshire



The Wynn family of Gwydir belonged to a stock which was engaged during the 14th and 15th cents, in establishing the nuclei of small estates in the free townships of Penfyfed and Pennant in Eifionydd. About the beginning of the 14th century, Dafydd ap Gruffydd of Nantconwy (claiming descent from [Owain Gwynedd](#)) married Eva, daughter and heiress of Gruffydd Fychan, one of the coheirs of ' Gwely Wyrion Gruffydd ' in Penfyfed. The descendants of this union are found at Gesail Gyfarch, Ystumcegid, Clennau, and Brynkir. During the revolt of [Owain Glyndwr](#), Ieuan ap Maredudd ap Hywel ap Dafydd ap Gruffydd of Cefn-y-fan (later called Ystumcegid) and Gesail Gyfarch supported the crown and died in 1403 while defending Caernarvon castle against [Glyndwr](#)'s forces; his brother, Robert, was one of [Glyndwr](#)' followers and received a pardon from Henry, prince of Wales, in 1408.

As a result, possibly, of this division of loyalties, the bulk of the family possessions remained in the possession of the line of Ieuan ap Maredudd until 1463; in that year, the lands were partitioned and Gesail Gyfarch fell to the share of Ieuan ap Robert ap Maredudd (1437 - 1468). He was a Lancastrian and died of the plague at Gesail Gyfarch in 1468. His son, Maredudd, to avoid implication in the feuds of his kinsmen in Eifionydd, purchased the lease of Dolwyddelan castle about 1489; he later built Penamnen, and finally purchased Gwydir from Dafydd ap Hywel Coetmor about 1500.

JOHN (WYN) AP MAREDUDD (died 9 July 1559)

Son of Maredudd ap Ieuan, succeeded to his father's lands at Gwydir, Nantconwy, Dolwyddelan, and Llanfrothen. (Gesail Gyfarch went to his half-brother, Humphrey). He rebuilt Gwydir in 1555 and was Member of Parliament for Caernarvonshire, 1551-3, and high sheriff for Caernarvonshire, 1544-5, 1553-4, and 1556-7. The career of his son, MAURICE WYNN (died 18 August 1580), was similar. The first to adopt the name ' Wynn ' as a surname, he was Member of Parliament for Caernarvonshire, 1553, 1554, 1559, and 1563-7, and high sheriff of Caernarvonshire, 1555, 1570, and 1578.

Sir JOHN WYNN (1553 - 1627)

Maurice's son John was the best known member of the family. A student of All Souls, Oxford, in 1570, he was at Furnival's Inn in 1572 and at the Inner Temple in 1576. He appears to have lived in London until his father's death in 1580, although he may have travelled abroad. After inheriting Gwydir, he entered vigorously into the public life of North Wales; he was high sheriff of Caernarvonshire, 1587-8, 1603, of Merioneth, 1588-9 and 1600-01, and of Denbighshire, 1606-7, and Member of Parliament for Caernarvonshire, 1586-7. He was knighted in 1606, appointed a member of the Council of the Marches in 1608, and created a baronet in 1611.

Unscrupulous, acquisitive, litigious, and hot-tempered, he was the leader of the dominant party in Caernarvonshire, and it was only in the closing years of his life that the supremacy of his family and party in the county was threatened by the rivalry of the [Griffiths of Cefn Amwlch](#), leaders of the conservative Llyn squires (see under Sir Richard Wynn, second baronet). He attempted to introduce the manufacture of Welsh friezes into the Vale of Conway, was interested in the Parys Mountain (Anglesey) copper mines, and in 1625 suggested to [Sir Hugh Myddelton](#) a project for reclaiming Traeth Mawr, separating Caernarvonshire from Merioneth. He founded [?] a school and alms houses at Llanrwst in 1610 [but see under [John Williams \(fl. 1584-1627?\)](#)]. One of the petitioners for a royal commission to hold an eisteddfod in 1594, he encouraged

the literary activities of his kinsmen, [Thomas Wiliems of Trefriw](#).

His own [The history of the Gwydir family](#)^[3] was published in 1770 (ed. [Daines Barrington](#)), in 1827 (ed. [Angharad Llwyd](#)), 1878 (ed. [Askew Roberts](#)), and again in 1927 (ed. [John Ballinger](#)). He was also the author of a survey of Penmaenmawr (published in 1859 and reissued in 1906, ed. [W. Bezant Lowe](#)).

By his wife Sydney, daughter of Sir William Gerrard, he had ten sons and two daughters.

JOHN WYNN (c. 1584 - 1614)

Eldest son of Sir John Wynn. He was educated at Bedford School and Lincoln's Inn. He was high sheriff of Merioneth, 1611-2, and was knighted in 1613. His marriage to Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas Cave, appears to have been unhappy, and he travelled in France and Italy, 1613-4, and died at Lucca, 1614, possibly in the Roman faith.

RICHARD WYNN (1588 - 1649)

The younger brother of John (c. 1584 - 1614), succeeded as second baronet in 1627. Educated at Lincoln's Inn, he entered the Lord Chamberlain's service, 1608, was groom of the bedchamber to Charles, prince of Wales, 1617-25, and accompanied him on his voyage to Spain, 1623. Appointed treasurer to queen Henrietta Maria, 1625, he was groom of the bedchamber to the king and queen in 1629. He was Member of Parliament for Caernarvonshire, 1614, Ilchester, 1621-2 and 1624, Andover, 1640, and Liverpool, 1640-9. His unsuccessful contest for Caernarvonshire, 1620, when he was defeated by [John Griffith of Cefn Amwlch](#), marked the eclipse of the political influence of Gwydir in the county. He erected the Gwydir chapel in Llanrwst church, 1633. Despite his close connections with the royal family, he showed no eagerness to waste his estates in the king's service during the Civil Wars.

His marriage in 1618 to Anne, daughter and coheiress of Sir Francis Darcy, was childless.

OWEN WYNN (1592 - 1660)

The baronetcy and estates fell to Richard's brother Owen. He was educated at Westminster, Eton, and S. John's, Cambridge, he was apprenticed to a merchant of the Staple in 1608, but eventually came under the patronage of lord-keeper (later archbishop) [John Williams](#), whose niece, Grace, he married in 1462. Like his elder brother, he took no active part in the Civil Wars. Although threatened with sequestration in 1656, he appears to have escaped and as sheriff of Caernarvonshire in 1653, he proclaimed Cromwell as Protector. He was high sheriff of Denbighshire in 1656. He was interested in alchemy, chemistry, and metallurgy, and corresponded with [Dr. John Davies of Mallwyd \(c. 1567 - 1644\)](#).

RICHARD WYNN (c. 1625 - 1674)

Owen's son, succeeded as 4th baronet in 1660. He was high sheriff of Caernarvonshire, 1657-8, Member of Parliament for Caernarvonshire, 1647-53 and 1661-75, and was associated with the municipal government of Denbigh. In 1659 he appears to have been implicated in the royalist insurrection arranged by Sir George Booth and [Sir Thomas Myddelton](#) (whose daughter, Sarah, he had married in 1654) and was for a while imprisoned at Caernarvon. On his death in 1674 his estate passed to his daughter Mary (1661 - 1689), who married, in 1678, Robert Bertie, baron Willoughby de Eresby later marquis of Lindsey and duke of Ancaster, in whose family Gwydir remained until 1895. The baronetcy passed to John Wynn of Watstay (1628 - 1719), only son of Henry Wynn, tenth son of the first baronet, and was extinguished by his death.

Author

Professor Glyn Roberts, (1904 - 1962)

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