

EDNYFED FYCHAN, (EDNYFED ap CYNWRIG) and his descendants, noble family of Gwynedd

Name: Ednyfed Fychan
Spouse: Tangwystl ferch Llywarch ap Brân
Spouse: Gwenllïan ferch Rhys ap Gruffydd
Child: Gwenllïan ferch Ednyfed Fychan
Child: Gwladys ferch Ednyfed Fychan
Child: Angharad ferch Ednyfed Fychan
Child: Tudur ap Ednyfed
Child: Rhys ab Ednyfed
Child: Cynwrig ab Ednyfed
Child: Gruffydd ab Ednyfed Fychan
Child: Howel ap Ednyfed Fychan
Child: Goronwy ab Ednyfed Fychan
Gender: Male
Occupation: noble family of Gwynedd
Area of activity: Politics, Government and Political Movements; Royalty and Society
Author: Glyn Roberts

Ednyfed ap Cynwrig (died 1246), claiming descent from Marchudd, was a member of one of a group of kindreds long settled in Rhos and Rhufoniog. As seneschal (in Welsh, distain) of Gwynedd c. 1215-1246 (*A History of Wales*, ii, 684-5), his political and military services to **Llywelyn the Great** were rewarded, not only by the grant to Ednyfed himself of bond villis in Anglesey, Nantconwy, Arllechwedd Uchaf, and Creuddyn, but also by the concession, made to all the descendants of Ednyfed's grandfather (Iorwerth ap Gwrgan) that they should for the future hold their lands throughout Wales free from all dues and services other than military service in time of war. This special tenure, known as that of 'Wyrion Eden,' is prominent in the 14th century in the lordship of Denbigh amongst the collateral branches of the family (*Survey of Denbigh*. lv, 297, 303; *Ellis, Tribal Law and Custom*, i, 113), Ednyfed's own descendants in the same period are found in the townships of Trecastell, Penmynydd, Erddreiniog, Clorach, Gwredog, Trysglwyn, and Tregarnedd in Anglesey, and in Crewyriion, Creuddyn, Gloddaeth, Dinorwig, and Cwmlannerch in Caernarfonshire (*Rec. Caern.*, passim). They are also found in Llansadwrn in Carmarthenshire and at Llechwedd-Ilwyfan, Cellan, and Rhyd-onnen in Cardiganshire (*Cal. Pat. Rolls*, 1225-32, 271; *A History of Carmarthenshire*, i, 178; *Cal. Fine Rolls*, 1327-37, 304; *Cal. Inquisitions*, vii, no. 418; *Bridgeman, Princes of South Wales*, 264). Even before the conquest of 1282, therefore, Ednyfed's immediate descendants formed a 'ministerial aristocracy' of considerable wealth, and their widespread possessions, combined with the favourable terms on which they were held, made them the forerunners of that class of Welsh squires whose emergence is characteristic of the post-conquest period.

The pedigrees are not in complete agreement about the number of Ednyfed's children, but during the reigns of **Dafydd ap Llywelyn** and **Llywelyn ap Gruffydd** (1240-82) several of his sons figure prominently amongst the counsellors of those princes. For some years before his death in 1268, GORONWY AB EDNYFED was seneschal to **Llywelyn ap Gruffydd** (*A History of Wales*, ii, 743; *Litt. Wall.*, 4, 28, 45). His brother, TUDUR AB EDNYFED, was captured during Henry III's inconclusive campaign against **Dafydd ap Llywelyn** in September 1245, and was released in May 1247 on swearing fealty to the king. Despite marks of royal favour in the following years, Tudur was one of **Llywelyn ap Gruffydd's** leading advisers after 1256, succeeding his brother Goronwy as seneschal and remaining faithful to the prince until his death in 1278. His loyalty was emulated by his son HEILYN; he had been a hostage in the king's hands between 1246 and 1263 and he submitted finally to Edward I in 1282 (*Littere Wallie*, 3-4, 26, 50-2, 77, 85, 97-9, 101-3, 109, 111-3; *Calendar of Close Rolls*, 1242-7 (369, 457, 510), 1247-51 (5, 72, 518), 1256-9 (184, 207), 1261-4 (207); *Calendar of Patent Rolls*, 1232-47 (466, 496), 1258-66 (248); *Assize Roll*, 9, 14, 118-22, 157, 261; *Rec. Caern.*, 210-11). The Goronwy ap Heilyn of the period 1277-82 (*Assize Roll*, passim) was probably not of this line. Other sons of Ednyfed in the following of the later princes of Gwynedd were HYWEL (bishop of St Asaph, 1240-7), CYNWRIG, and RHYS (**Thomas**, *A History of the Diocese of St. Asaph*, i, 215; *Litt. Wall.*, passim). For **Gruffydd ab Ednyfed** and his descendants, see under **Sir Gruffydd Llwyd** (died 1335).

From Goronwy ab Ednyfed (died 1268) were descended the '**Tudor's of Penmynydd**.' His son, TUDUR HEN (died 1311), and grandson GORONWY AP TUDUR (died 1331), appear to have been members of that Welsh official class of which their kinsmen, **Sir Gruffydd Llwyd** and **Rhys ap Gruffydd** (died 1356), were outstanding members. In the next generation the brothers TUDUR and HYWEL AP GORONWY, both of whom died c. 1367, are found in possession of Trecastell, Erddreiniog, and half of Penmynydd in Anglesey and 'Gavell Gron. ap Eden.' (which included the nucleus of the later Penrhyn estate), and half of 'Gavell Kennyn' in Crewyriion in Caernarfonshire, as well as the Cardiganshire possessions mentioned above. Their possessions in Anglesey and Caernarvonshire passed to Tudur's sons - GORONWY OF PENMYNYDD (died 1382), EDNYFED OF TRECATELL (died c. 1382), RHYS OF ERDDREINIOG, GWILYM OF CLORACH, and MAREDUDD, whose precise share of the family inheritance is not known. Goronwy, Rhys, and Gwilym were in the personal following of Richard II. Maredudd, father of **Owain Tudur** and great-grandfather of **Henry VII** (see the article **Tudor** family of Penmynydd), is a more shadowy figure; he was escheator of Anglesey before 1392 and is described in 1404 as an esquire to the bishop of Bangor. The three surviving brothers and their near kinsmen were prominent supporters of **Owain Glyn Dwr**. Rhys was executed at Chester in 1412. The greater part of their lands were forfeited to the Crown and came into the possession of the **Griffiths of Penrhyn**, also descended from Ednyfed Fychan through **Tudur ab Ednyfed**. A remnant of the **Tudor lands at Penmynydd** remained in the possession of the descendants of Goronwy ap Tudur (died 1382) through his daughter Morfydd and her husband, Gwilym ap Gruffydd of Penrhyn.

Editorial note 2020:

Ednyfed Fychan had two wives: 1) Tangwystl daughter of **Llywarch ap Brân**, (the mother of six children, including Tudur and Hywel); 2) Gwenllïan daughter of the **Lord Rhys** of Deheubarth (died 1236), the mother of Goronwy, Gruffydd, Gwladus and Gwenllïan. P. C. Bartrum, *Welsh Genealogies AD 300-1400* (1974), 'Marchudd 4'

Author

Professor Glyn Roberts, (1904 - 1962)

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See further the articles [Griffith of Penrhyn and Williams of Cochwillan](#); [Pirs Griffith](#); [Edmund Tudor, Jasper Tudor, and Owen Tudor](#); [Tudor family of Penmynydd](#); [Williams of Mart](#); [John Williams, \(1582-1650\)](#)

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