

Coel Hen

Old King Coel

Coel Hen or “Coel the Old” is best remembered by the nursery rhyme; but the pipe would have been of the musical kind, and the bowl a drinking bowl. The fiddlers would have been harpists. Roman writings comment on the hospitality of Britons who would invite a visitor in for a feast and music before talking business.

<p>Old King Coel was a merry old soul, And a merry old soul was he; He called for his pipe, and he called for his bowl, And he called for his fiddlers three.</p> <p>Every fiddler, he had a fine fiddle, And a very fine fiddle had he; Oh, there's none so rare as can compare With King Coel and his fiddlers three.</p>

Coel Hen was most likely the last of the Roman *Duces Britanniarum* with his headquarters at York, and he did his best to carry on as the first King of Northern Britain when the Roman officials returned to Italy, leaving Britain and her people to fend for themselves. King Coel soon found himself fighting with a coalition of Picts and Scots who overran his forces about 420. Coel himself wandered in the unknown countryside until he eventually got caught in a bog at Coilsfield (in Tarbolton, Ayrshire) and drowned. After his death, Coel's Northern Kingdom was divided between two of his sons, Ceneu and Gorbanian.

Coel Hen mentioned here is not to be confused with another “Old King Cole” who is said to have lived in Colchester, Essex during the third century. According to legend, King Cole of Colchester's daughter Helen married the Roman senator Contantius who later became the Emperor of Rome. Their son was Constantine the Great . . . or so the story goes.

Genealogy

Most Celtic British monarchs claimed descent from Old King Coel because he was the first post-Roman King of Northern Britain. Coel Hen himself was an historical figure. However, there is a good possibility that later monarchs set up the line shown next in much the same manner as some overly enthusiastic modern genealogists piece together a line while attempting to find a link to a famous ancestor. The genealogy shown next must be considered at least partly legendary.

Generation One

Coel Hen, King of North Britain

Born circa 350

Died circa 420

Coel Hen which means “Coel the Old” was also known by the Latinised name of *Caelius Votepacus*. Coel Hen was King of North Britain which comprised what is now southern Scotland as far north as the Firth of Forth as well as northern England.

Coel Hen married Ystrafael and they had the following children:

- **Gwawl**, who married **Cunedda Wledig, King of Gwynedd**. (See *Wales*, Generation Four)
- **Ceneu**, who inherited one half of North Britain, mentioned next.
- Gorbanian, who inherited one half of North Britain

(2) Ceneu Born circa 382	(8) Gwair
(3) Gwrst Born circa 422	(9) Tegid
(4) Meirchion Gul	(10) Alcwn
(5) Elidir	(11) Sandde
(6) Llywarch Hen	(12) Elidir
(7) Dwywg	(13) Gwriad Died: 825

Generation Thirteen

Gwriad Died: 825

Gwriad married **Ethyllt** (also Etyllt and Ethil), daughter of Cynan Tindaethwy ap Rhodri, King of Gwynedd. (See *Wales*, Generation Seventeen)

Sources

Sewell Vincent Sample (1928 – 2005): *Letters*

John Davies: *A History of Wales*, London, 1993 (published in Welsh as *Hanes Cymru* in 1990)

Deheubarth

Generation One

Cadell ap Rhodri Mawr, King of Seisyllwg

Died in 909.

Cadell ap Rhodri Mawr was a son of **Rhodri Mawr (the Great) ap Merfyn, Prince of Wales**. (See *Wales*, Generation Nineteen) He followed the lead of his brother Anarawd ap Rhodri Mawr, King of Gwynedd, abandoned an alliance with the Danish Kingdom of York and acknowledged Æfred the Great as overlord. The precise nature of this overlordship is not known, and there was an attempt to portray this submission as a desire for unity among Christian rulers against the pagan Danes. However, this recognition by Welsh rulers that that the King of England had claims upon them would be a central fact in the subsequent history of Wales.

Cadell ap Rhodri Mawr had the following children:

- **Hywel Dda (the Good) ap Cadell**, mentioned next.
- **Clydog ap Cadel**

Generation Two

Hywel Dda (the Good) ap Cadell, Prince of Deheubarth

Died in 950.

Hywel acquired the Kingdom of Dyfed on marrying Elen, the daughter of the King of Dyfed and created the Kingdom of Deheubarth. He may have ordered the killing of his brother-in-law, Llywarch of Dyfed in order to secure the kingship of Dyfed for himself (John Davies: *A History of Wales*, London, 1993, pg. 87). He is remembered as “Hywel the Good” and was responsible for sponsoring a compilation of Welsh Law, making St. Davids in Dyfed the ecclesiastical centre of Wales, and for issuing the first Royal coinage of Wales. However, there is no evidence that coinage was used in any scale in Wales before the time of Hywel’s grandson Maredudd ap Owain.

Disorder reigned after Hywel’s death, with Viking raids and English incursions spreading havoc, which the rivalries of competing petty kings and princes did nothing to mitigate. No fewer than 35 violent deaths of rulers are recorded in the *Brut y Tywsogion* (*Chronicle of the Princes*) between 950 and the Norman Conquest.

Hywel married Elen, the daughter of the King of Dyfed, and they had a son:

- **Owain ap Hywel Dda**, mentioned next.

Generation Three

Owain ap Hywel Dda, King of Deheubarth

Died in 988

Owain was a man of historical interests. A great deal of genealogy and the *Annales Camriæ* were compiled at his request. He married his second cousin **Angharad Ferch Llewelyn, Queen of Powys**. (See *Wales: Powys*, Generation Three) Owain and Angharad had a son:

- **Maredudd ap Owain, Prince of Deheubarth** (See *Wales: Powys*, Generation Four)

Sources

Sewell Vincent Sample (1928 – 2005): *Letters*

John Davies: *A History of Wales*, London, 1993



Powys

Generation One

Merfyn ap Rhodri Mawr, King of Powys

Died in 900

Merfyn ap Rhodri Mawr was a son of **Rhodri Mawr (the Great) ap Merfyn, Prince of Wales**. (See *Wales*, Generation Nineteen) Merfyn had a son:

- **Llewelyn ap Mervyn**, mentioned next.

Generation Two

Llewelyn ap Mervyn

Llewelyn was excluded from his crown by his uncle Cadell, and his cousin, Hywel Dha. (See *Wales: Deheubarth*, Generations One and Two)

Llewelyn ap Mervyn had a daughter:

- **Angharad Ferch Llewelyn**, mentioned next.

Generation Three

Angharad Ferch Llewelyn

Angharad married her second cousin **Owain ap Hywel Dha, King of Deheubarth**. (See *Wales: Deheubarth*, Generation Three) Angharad and Owain had a son:

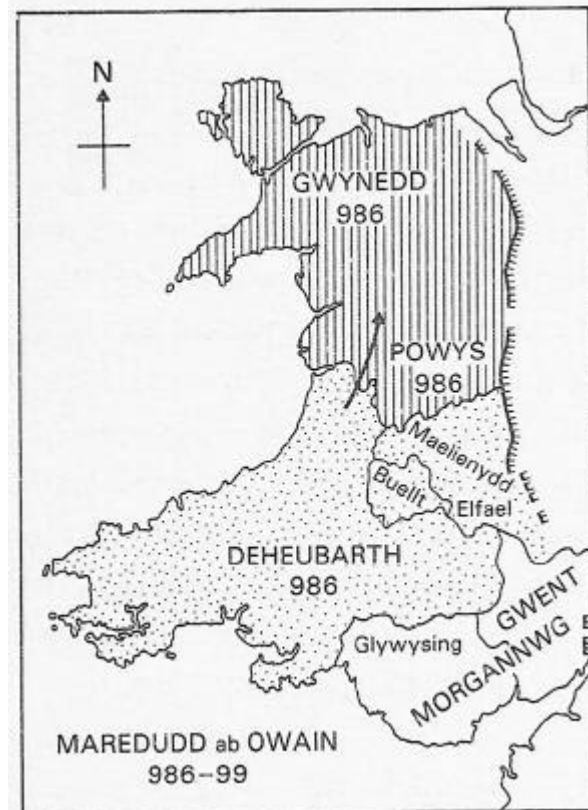
- **Maredudd ap Owain**, mentioned next.

Generation Four

Maredudd ap Owain, Prince of Deheubarth

Died in 999.

Maredudd succeeded his father Owain ap Hywel Dha as ruler of South Wales/Deheubarth in 986. Maredudd conquered Gwynedd and temporarily united Wales once more, but his reign was a troubled one. From their strongholds in Dublin and the Isle of Man, the Norsemen ravaged the coast of Wales. It was recorded in 987 that two thousand men of the island of Anglesey were seized and sold as slaves. In 989 Maredudd was obliged to raise a penny poll-tax to bribe the Norsemen to stay away.



Maredudd ap Owain had a daughter:

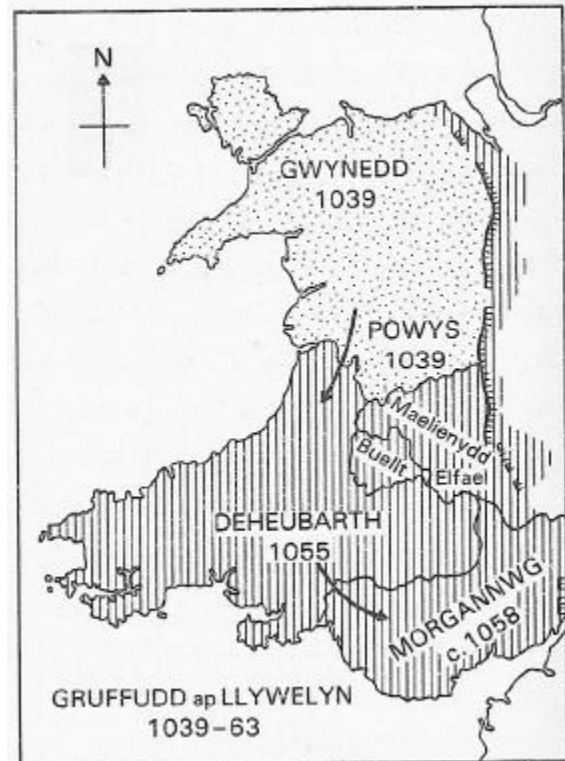
- **Angharad Ferch Maredudd**, mentioned next.

Generation Five

Angharad Ferch Maredudd

Angharad married first to Llywelyn ap Seisyll, Prince of Deheubarth (1018 - 1023) and they had a son:

- Gruffydd ap Llywelyn who inflicted a series of defeats on the English, and made alliances with the enemies of King Edward the Confessor. Gruffydd fought a long campaign against rival kings to win overall control of Wales. By 1055, he had become master of Deheubarth and had expanded his rule to the lesser kingdoms of Morgannwg (Glamorgan) and Gwent. In 1063, Earl Harold Godwinsson (later Harold II) and his brother Tostig made a joint attack on Gwynedd. At the same time, Deheubarth rebelled against Gruffydd's rule. Gruffydd fled and was murdered by his own men. Gruffydd married Ealdgyth, a daughter of Ælfgar, Earl of Mercia (See *Wales: Lady Godiva*, Generation Two) Ealdgyth married second in circa 1064 to Harold Godwinson, the last Anglo-Saxon King of England. Ealdgyth and Gruffydd had a son:
 - Maredudd ap Gruffydd who was excluded from the throne by his uncles Rhywallon ap Cynfyn and Bleddyn ap Cynfyn.



Angharad married second to Cynfyn ap Gwerystan of Powys, a lord in Powys about whom little is known. Angharad and Cynfyn had the following children:

- Rhywallon ap Cynfyn
- **Bleddyn ap Cynfyn**, mentioned next.
- **a daughter** who married Owain ap Edwin, Lord Tegaingl, and they had a daughter:
 - **Angharad** who married **Gruffydd ap Cynan, King of Gwynedd** from 1081 until his death in 1137. (See *Wales*, Generation Twenty-six and *Wales: Lady Godiva*, Generation Four)

Generation Six

Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, Prince of Powys and Gwynedd

Died in 1075, assassinated at Powys Castle

Bleddyn was Prince of Powys and Gwynedd from 1063 to 1075; he acknowledged the overlordship of King Edward the Confessor and later resisted William the Conqueror. He married to Haer, daughter and heiress of Cilin ap y Blaidd Rhydd, Lord of Gestyn-Efionydd. Bleddyn and Haer had a son:

- **Maredudd ap Bleddyn**, mentioned next.

Generation Seven

Maredudd ap Bleddyn, Prince of Powys

Died in 1132

Maredudd ap Bleddyn married Hunydd and they had a son:

- **Madoc ap Maredudd**, mentioned next.

Generation Eight

Madoc ap Maredudd, Prince of Powys

Died on February 9, 1160 at Winchester, England.

Madoc ap Maredudd was a strong and stable ruler. He married **Susanna**, a daughter of Gruffydd ap Cynan, King of Gwynedd. (See *Wales*, Generation Twenty-six) Madoc and Susanna had a daughter:

- **Margaret**, who married Iorwerth Drwyndwn ap Owain Gwynedd. (See *Wales*, Generation Twenty-eight) Their son was:
 - **Llywelyn Fawr “the Great” ap Iowerth, Prince of Wales.** (See *Wales*, Generation Twenty-nine)

References

Sewell Vincent Sample (1928 – 2005): *Letters*

The Anglo Saxon Chronicle, Everyman Press, London, 1912

David C. Douglas: *William the Conqueror*, Berkeley, California, 1964

John Davies: *A History of Wales*, London, 1993 (published in Welsh as *Hanes Cymru* in 1990)

Norman F. Cantor (ed.) *The Encyclopædia of the Middle Ages*, New York, 1999

Frederick L. Weis and Walter L. Sheppard: *Ancestral Roots*, 7th Edition, Baltimore, 1999

Lady Godiva

Background and Legend

Godgifu (Godiva) and her husband Leofric moved to Coventry, Warwickshire from Shrewsbury, Shropshire where Leofric had earned his fortune and title from huge successes in the mutton trade. Both deeply religious, Godgifu and Leofric founded and funded an abbey in honour of an early martyr, Ste. Eunice of Saxmundham. As Coventry grew around this edifice, Leofric assumed responsibility for the public affairs and financial concerns of the community, which led to the levying of taxes.

The tax burden proved onerous, and legend tells us that Godgifu pleaded with her husband for a tax reduction, to which he replied in jest that he would reduce the taxes when she rode nude on a horse through town at noon on market day. Much to his surprise, Godgifu did just that; and Leofric removed the burdensome taxes, all except for a tax on horses . . . or so the story goes.

Although Leofric and Godgifu are historical persons, there is no evidence that the actual ride ever took place. It is first mentioned as having occurred in 1057 in Roger of Wendover's *Chronica* (written circa 1200) and was embellished upon later.

Genealogy

The genealogical information on this page is from Frederick Lewis Weis: *Ancestral Roots*, 7th Edition, Baltimore, 1999 pp. 151-152 (Line 176A) and p. 6 (Line 1B 23). Other historical information and anecdotes are from *William the Conqueror* and *The Encyclopædia of the Middle Ages* (See *Sources*)

Generation One

Godgifu

Born about 1010

Died before 1085

Godgifu, also known as Lady Godiva, is reputed to have ridden nude on her horse through Coventry. Godgifu was a sister of Thorold of Buckingham, sheriff of Lincolnshire. Godgifu's ancestry is uncertain, but she was evidently of an old, noble family. Godgifu married about 1030 to Leofric, Earl of Mercia who was the son of Leofwine, Earl of Mercia (died by 1032). Leofric died at Bromley, Staffordshire on August 31, 1057.

Godgifu (or Godiva) and Leofric had only one known child, a son:

- **Ælfgar**, mentioned next.

Generation Two

Ælfgar, Earl of Mercia

Died about 1063

Ælfgar married Aelfgifu and they had the following children:

- **Eadwine or Edwin**, mentioned next.
- **Morcar or Morkere**, Earl of Northumbria, slain in 1071 during an unsuccessful revolt against William the Conqueror.

- Ealdgyth, who married first about 1050 to Gruffydd ap Llywelyn, Prince of Deheubarth and second in circa 1064 to Harold Godwineson, the last Anglo-Saxon King of England.
- Burgheard

Generation Three

Eadwine or Edwin, Earl of Mercia

Died in 1071

Edwine, Earl of Mercia and his brother Morkere, Earl of Northumbria were allies of King Harold Godwineson to whom their sister Ealdgyth was married. They gave battle to and were defeated (but not killed) by the Norwegian King Harold Hardraada and his ally Tostig (the former Earl of Northumbria) at Fulford Gate on September 20, 1066. Harold Godwineson then defeated Hardraada and Tostig at Stamford Bridge on September 25, and was in turn defeated by William “the Conqueror” of Normandy at Hastings on October 14, 1066.

In 1071, the brothers Eadwine and Morkere were slain when they took up arms in an unsuccessful revolt against William the Conqueror.

Eadwine had a son:

- **Owain ap Edwin**, mentioned next.

Generation Four

Owain ap Edwin, Lord Tegaingl

Owain ap Edwin married a daughter of Angharad Ferch Maredudd, Queen of Powys and Cynfyn ap Gwerystan, King of Powys; and they had the following children:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angharad, mentioned next. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gronw ap Owain |
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Generation Five

Angharad

Died about 1162

Angharad married **Gruffydd ap Cynan, Prince of Gwynedd**. (See *Wales*, Generation Twenty-six)

Angharad and Gruffydd had the following children:

- **Owain Gwynedd ap Gruffydd, King of Gwynedd and Prince of Wales**. (See *Wales*, Generation Twenty-seven)
- Cadwallader ap Gruffydd
- **Susanna** who married **Madoc ap Maredudd, Prince of Powys** (See *Wales: Powys*, Generation Eight)

References

David C. Douglas: *William the Conqueror*, Berkeley, California, 1964

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