

EYNON NAME

(Compiled by Marilyn Oviatt Cowley - 1997)

The name Einion (pronounced Einyawn) was once one of the commonest names in Wales; today it is much less so. Sound changes have produced variations, and, as a result, a host of surnames. Some of these are Eynon, Eynion, Eynnon, Eygnon, Enion, Ennion, Eniawn, Inion, Innion, Inon, Ineon, Inians, Anian, Eingian, Eigan, Eingan, Engan, Eygan, Eignon, Aniani, Anyan, Annion, Benyon, Bynon, Beinion, Beinon, Bennion, Binion, Binnion, Benghan (the last probably coming from ap Einion), Onion, Onian, Onions, Onians, Oynion, and Unnion,.

Bishops of Bangor and of St Asaph in the 13th and 14th centuries were named Anian, or altered their name in the episcopal office. The name Anianus was in use in the early Gallican Church and became popular in Wales at this time, no doubt as an ecclesiastical rendering of Einion (Lloyd, HW 744 footnote). Somehow this ecclesiastical version became a surname.

The phonetic changes to Einion came about in ordinary speech. When used in South Wales as in the place name Gorseion, the second vowel I is not sounded so that the ion become on. I remains Einon in the South West in an official place-name or as a Christian name, but the same word, Einion "anvil" is Eingon or Ingon.

There is also a variety of spellings due to the deficiencies of the writing systems of medieval times. Thus there are several spellings representing different schools of writing such as De Eynono ab Traharn (1304); Egnon Loyt, Egnon Abbot (1320); Eignon ap Iorwerth (1325); Eynion Bo'ly, Eynion Penwras (late 13th century); Eigion Voil (1350); Wenthlean Vergheygnon (1350); Eingion ap Elidach (Anglesey 16th Century)

In present day registers names are found as Einon, Eynon, Beynon, Ennion, Enion, Bennion, Denyon, Inions, Binnian, Dinnions, Dinyon, Bynyon, Anyan, Onion, Onions, O'Nions, O/Neans, Onione, Bunyon, Unnion, Bunnion, Beniams, Beniums, Baynham. Some names came about after several sound changes from Einon and each name seems to be constrained to certain localities.

The dictionary describes Einion, a masculine name, as meaning anvil which denotes stability or fortitude, although it is frequently suggested that uniawn meaning upright and just is possible.

"Ap Eynon" means "son of the man of fortitude," according to Burke's General Armory.

The history of Wales emphasizes that attention was given early to genealogy. The second order of Bards was entrusted with the registering of pedigrees of leading families in the country. These men were state-appointed officials. However, genealogy research in Wales can be very difficult because the Welsh, historically, used the Patronymic method of naming. Therefore, a person was identified by describing him as "son of" his father ("ab" before a name beginning with a vowel, "ap" before a consonant

or consonantal "l"), as in Dafydd ap Gwilym, Hywel ab Owain, Llywelyn ap Iorwerth. Sometimes several generations were listed in a man's name.

The introduction of the surname system came about with the spreading of the Norman and Saxon influence. By the end of the 17th century most of the minor gentry and yeoman had adopted surnames but it was mid-18th century or even later in many Welsh areas before a majority of lesser yeoman and tenant farmers had conformed. Even then many people's names could be found in both the old Welsh way and the new way with a surname. (Such as "Islwyn", his bardic name, or Reverend William Thomas.) The introduction of the surname system was not an abrupt change but tended to spread over several generations.

If a man remained in Wales he usually kept his Welsh name longer but if he migrated to England he was certain to take an English surname. This has given rise to a number of Welsh names which have been modified into English --- Caradog became Craddock, Einion became Onions, ab Einion became Bunyan, Guto (a diminutive of Gurffuth) became Gittins, Coch (red) became Gough and Ddu (Black) became Dee.

Changes to names of those remaining in Wales also fused the "ab" and "ap" so that "ab Owain became Bowen", "ap Hywel became Powel(l)", "ap Rhys became Prys (Preece, Price). Also the English possessive "s" was commonly added to the father's name as in Roberts, Williams, etc. Older "ap Ieuan" and "ap John" have given us not only "Johns" but in far too many instances "Jones" Medieval appellations which were not strictly speaking, surnames --- such as "Gwyn" or "Llwyd" have frozen into surnames "Lloyd, "Gwyn(n), "Gwynne", "Wyn(n)" or "Wynne".

There are many Eynon or Einion names well known in Welsh History. Some of these are:

Einion ab Owain ab Hywel Da (c. 960) He was the grandson of Hywel Da (Hywel the Good [d. 950], son of Cadell, prince of all Wales. Hywell is the only Welsh prince to be call "the Good". Cadell is one of the sons of Rhodri the Great and his inheritance was the southern part of his father's principality namely Seisyllwg (Ceredigion and Ystrad Tywi). He bequeathed this to his two sons Hywell and Clydog, and on the latter's death (920) Hywell took possession of the whole. He married Elen, daughter of Llywarch ap Hyfaidd of Dyfed, who brought him Dyfed (modern Pembrokeshire) as her dower. Hywell also took possession of all the territory of Powys when the Prince was killed in battle (942). He thus became "king of all Wales" although Morgannwg and Gwent continued to have independent sovereigns. He succeeded in maintaining peace with the English kings. His major accomplishment was to bring together all the jumbled laws of Wales into one unit and to set them down in writing. These became the laws and customs of Cymry (Wales) even to the laws of present time being based on them.

Upon the death of Hywel the peace he kept so well disappeared. There was war at once between his sons and the sons of Idwal Voel. The sons of Idwal invaded Dyfed at least twice and laid it to waste. Except for Owain the sons of Hywel were soon killed and Owain reigned alone till he died in 987 or 989. The lands of Gower must have passed from the hands of Hywel's sons because it is recorded that **Einion** ap Owain his grandson, devastated that district twice. Probably **Einion** was extending the family territory to the east, and under his father Owain was able to annex some of the smaller lordships or areas to Deheubarth. All the territory of **Einion** was devastated by the Saxons in 982. The year after this raid (984) **Einion** was killed through the "Treachery of the nobles of Gwent." (He was referred to as **Chief Eynon** for which **Port Eynon** was named in other documents.)

Einion ap Collwyn (1100?) One of the early known bards. [There is ample evidence from the work of Nennius (c. 800) onwards, to corroborate the view that the Welsh bards and cyfarwyddiadid were inferior to none in the wealth of traditional material which they had at their disposal.] **Einion** ap Collwyn is a semi-legendary figure, and it is significant that at least three different accounts of his descent are given us. According to one story, he was the son of Collwyn ap Gwaethfoed of Ceredigion; another makes him the son of Cadifor ap Collwyn of Dyfed; while poets like Lewis Glyn cothi and Gwilym Tew assert that he was a man of Gwynedd who migrated to Glamorgan in Lestyn's days. The gentry of Glamorgan claim their genealogy back to three ancestors one of which is **Einion** ap Collwyn. He and Lestyn ap Gwrgant were also reputed to have played a conspicuous role in Glamorgan history at the time of the first Norman invasions.

Einion ap Gwalchmai (c. 1203-1223), a poet. A portion of an *awdl* by him to Llywelyn ap Iorwerth mentions that prince as fighting against the English. He also composed a beautiful elegy to Nest, daughter of Hywel, of Towyn, and three *awdlau* to God. His religious poems, like his elegy to Nest, are melodious and graphic, and it is evident that in his day he was a popular poet. Gwilym Ddu o Arfon states that his poems 'caught on like a surging fountain.' Another indication of his popularity is to be found in the fact that he became a character in folk-lore.

Einion Offeiriad (c. 1320) (**Einion the Priest**), father of Welsh "grammarians", wrote the earliest Welsh grammar or metrical grammar called a *Gramadeg* between 1322 & 1327 or slightly later. This established the canons of Welsh poetry and was thought to be necessary for the education of prospective poets. He was chaplain to Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd ap Hywel ap Gruffydd ab Ednyfed Fychan and dedicated this book to him. He died in 1356. Little other is known about him. lol

Morganwg tried to show that he was grandfather of Hopcyn ap Thomas ab **Einion** of Ynystawe, but there is no foundation for this statement.

Einion ap Hywel (c. 1389-90) Said to be one of many Welsh mercenaries for the King of France and leader of a company of men.

David ap Einion Harlech is a small town in the county of Merioneth, North Wales, which possesses a fine old castle picturesquely situated, commanding a view of Cardigan Bay and mountain scenery that can hardly be surpassed for its beauty and variety. In 1468, in the reign of Edward IV, the castle was besieged by an army under Sir Richard Herbet and was valiantly defended by **David ap Einion** a friend to the house of Lancaster. To Sir Richard's peremptory demand that he should surrender, **Ap Einion** replied: "I held a castle in France to the admiration of all Wales; and now I shall defend the castle of Harlech in Wales to the admiration of all France." The fortress was ultimately surrendered on the condition that the defender's life and liberty would be assured. The king at first demurring to those terms, Sir Richard Herbert addressed him saying: "Then, Sire, you may, if you please, take my life in lieu of the **Welsh Chieftain's**. If you do not comply, I will replace the hero of Harlech back in his castle, to be retaken in honourable warfare; and your Highness may send whom you please to take him out." **Ap Einion's** fidelity to the house of Lancaster is referred to by one of the Welsh bards in a poem.

Einion Fychan (possibly abt Apr 1346), Owain ap Owain, and Rhys ap Fychan from South Wales apparently had a commission from the king's chancery to lead men across England and attend to their needs; lodging, food, drink etc. He was also imprisoned in the king's prison at Chester.

Einion ap Jana, Sheriff of Anglesey

Einion ap Gwilym, Constable of Newcastle in Emelin.

Einion ab Ithel and his wife sold lands in Macefen to Rohdri and Katherine in 1305.

Einion ap madog ap Rhahaud, Einion ap Gwgon, Einion Wan, Poets

Blessed John Eynon, also know as John Oynon, was a Benedictine monk, Priest at Saint Giles, Reading, England. He refused to surrender his parish to non-Catholic authorities and was arrested, and taken to Reading abbey where he was martyred at the gate with Blessed John Rugg and Blessed Hugh Faringdon. He was born in England and hanged on 15 November 1539 at Reading, England. He was Beatified in 1895. (Patron Saints Index on the Internet)

Baynham is a corruption of ab **Eynon** which is also a corruption of ap **Eynon** (son of), The earliest recorded **Eynon** in Wales was a **Sir Dafydd ap Eynon**, who was a Sargent at Arms of the Gower Yeomanry (A Norman Knight) circa 1313. The earliest recording of the name in Britian is in Suffolk Circa 1111, they were landed with Normans (probably came over with William the Conquer 1066). The name was known as a first name towards the end of the Roman occupation 400 ad. After the Roman occupation, due to the pressures of Saxon and Viking ethnic cleansing, a large number of celts migrated to Brittany (Northern France), a Celtic/Gaulish Nation. Brittany borders with Normandy, so the name migrates from Wales to Brittany to Normandy to England and back to Wales. Most of the **Eynons** in Wales are descended from Flemish Weavers who migrated to Wales (esp-sw wales) in the middle ages due to the perfection by the Monasteries of large scale wool production. (Ancestry.com Message Board on the internet. Submitted by Dafydd Eynon.)

There are many other Einion/Eynon names listed in various books and records.