



Restoring Deheubarth by 1137

- The Norman invasion of Wales, which began in 1066, intensified after 1086.
- In 1078, Rhys ap Tewdwr became ruler of Deheubarth.
- Rhys ap Tewdwr was killed in 1093 while fighting the Normans in Brycheiniog.
- His son, Gruffudd ap Rhys, was taken to Ireland for his own protection and did not return to his family's lands until 1113.
- Gruffudd participated in several revolts against the Norman King Henry I, but they made peace in 1122.
- Gruffudd was permitted to retain only his family lands in the commote of Caeo, a small part of Cantref Mawr.
- The civil war in England (1136–1153) between the supporters of Matilda and Stephen, known as The Anarchy, provided Welsh princes with an opportunity for revenge.
- Gruffudd ap Rhys and his eldest sons, Anarawd and Cadell, joined the rebellion. Gruffudd ap Rhys seized control of most of Cantref Mawr and Cantref Bychan.
- Owain and Cadwaladr, princes from Gwynedd, also joined the rebellion.
- The Normans were beaten at the Battle of Crug Mawr. Gruffudd ap Rhys held a forty-day festival to celebrate this victory.
- His wife Gwenllïan and two of his sons, Morgan and Maelgwyn, were killed by the Normans at Kidwelly Castle.

Warfare in Wales 1137–1157

Deheubarth and Gwynedd

- Gruffudd ap Rhys died in 1137.
- Anarawd ap Gruffydd continued the rebellion by Deheubarth.
- Working with Owain Gwynedd, he captured Cardigan Castle from the Normans in 1138.
- Anarawd was killed on the orders of Cadwaladr ap Gruffudd of Gwynedd in 1143.
- The alliance with Gwynedd ended due to disputes over control of Ceredigion.
- By 1153, Deheubarth had established control over Ceredigion.

Deheubarth and the Normans

- Cadell ap Gruffydd captured Carmarthen and Llansteffan castles in 1146.
- He collaborated with the Norman lord William FitzGerald to capture Wiston Castle from Flemish settlers in 1147.
- Cadell captured Loughor Castle in 1151.
- Later in 1151, Cadell was attacked by Normans from Tenby and left for dead.
- This incident left his half-brothers, Maredudd and Rhys, in charge of Deheubarth.
- The accession of a new king in England, Henry II, in 1154 resulted in a pause in the fighting between the Normans and the Welsh.

Henry II and the Welsh Revolt 1157–1170

- Henry II faced significant challenges within his empire in France and with the Church at home, which prevented him from fully controlling the Welsh princes.
- Henry aimed to stop Owain Gwynedd from taking land in Powys.
- In 1157, Henry lost a battle at Ewloe, but Owain Gwynedd subsequently pledged allegiance to him.
- In 1158, Lord Rhys met Henry and swore an oath of loyalty, relinquishing all his lands except Cantref Mawr.
- Henry hoped this agreement would strengthen the marcher lords, but Rhys continued to fight them, even after his sons, Maredudd and Hywel, were taken as hostages.
- In 1163, Henry humiliated the Welsh princes at the Council of Woodstock.
- Rhys retaliated by attacking his Norman neighbours after they murdered his nephew, Einion.
- In 1164, Rhys joined other Welsh princes in open defiance of Henry.
- Henry's 1165 military campaign against the Welsh ended in disaster.
- The Welsh forces, led by Owain Gwynedd and supported by Rhys ap Gruffudd and the princes of Powys, repelled Henry's army at the Battle of Crogen.
- Lord Rhys continued his rebellion, and by 1167 he had regained control of Ceredigion, Cantref Mawr, Cantref Bychan and parts of Dyfed.
- Following Owain Gwynedd's death in 1170, Lord Rhys emerged as the leading figure among the Welsh princes.