



## Henry VIII's attempts to govern Wales

### The role of John Veysey, Bishop of Exeter, as Lord President

- Henry VIII appointed **John Veysey** as Lord **President of the Council in Wales and the Marches**. This position was crucial in asserting royal authority in Wales. The Council acted as both a court of law and a governing body.
- Veysey was tasked with enforcing the king's law in the Marches, addressing feuds, and ensuring that Marcher Lords complied with royal instructions. He aimed to bring Welsh governance in line with Tudor laws and administration.
- Many Marcher Lords resisted royal interference, protecting their privileges and local autonomy. The significant differences between Wales and England made governance difficult. While he was Lord President, Veysey's primary role was as Bishop of Exeter.

### Troublesome Marcher Lords: The Herberts and the lordship of Magor

- Marcher lordships, such as the **Herberts** and the lordship of Magor, resisted Henry VIII's efforts to centralise power, clashing with Tudor aims to curb semi-autonomous governance along the Welsh–English border.
- These lords held legal, military, and economic privileges that conflicted with royal authority, posing significant challenges to the Crown.
- Henry VIII sought to consolidate control over the Welsh Marches, strengthening the Council of Wales and the Marches, which the Herberts resisted as a threat to their autonomy.
- Magor**, a strategic Marcher lordship in Monmouthshire, highlighted tensions due to its importance in trade and the local governance resisting Crown interference.
- Despite increased authority of the Council of Wales and the Marches, areas like Magor remained centres of disputes, highlighting the difficulties in imposing royal control before 1531.

## Princess Mary and connections with Wales

### Mary as Princess of Wales, 1525–1531

- In 1525, Henry VIII designated his eldest child, **Mary Tudor**, as **Princess of Wales**, a title traditionally granted to the heir to the English throne. This reinforced Tudor claims over Wales and tied the region symbolically to the English crown. Her title also served to affirm Mary's status as Henry VIII's legitimate heir.
- Mary was given the title of Princess of Wales during a public proclamation at Ludlow Castle, the seat of governance for the Prince of Wales. This linked her directly to the governance of Wales as **Ludlow** was the base of the **Council in the Marches**.
- Mary did not play an active role in governing Wales. Instead, her appointment was largely **symbolic**, emphasising the union between England and Wales under the Tudor monarchy. Mary did not reside in Wales permanently, but she spent time in Ludlow Castle.
- Her title of Princess of Wales was effectively **removed in 1531** when Henry VIII's marital troubles escalated, and his priority moved to producing a male heir.

### Princess Mary's court at Ludlow from 1525

- Princess Mary's court at **Ludlow Castle** (from 1525) was a symbolic element of her role as Princess of Wales, representing royal governance in Wales.
- Her title as Princess of Wales aimed to strengthen Tudor authority in the region.
- Ludlow Castle, near the Welsh border, had historic ties to the Princes of Wales and the Council in the Marches.
- At age **nine**, Mary was sent to Ludlow as part of her formal installation, with her court mirroring that of a reigning monarch, highlighting her status as Henry VIII's heir.
- Her time at Ludlow provided a royal education, preparing her for diplomacy and statecraft.
- Mary was **recalled to Henry VIII's court** in 1528, likely due to his focus on producing a male heir and the instability from his annulment proceedings with Catherine of Aragon.

## The significance of the protest of Sir Rhys ap Gruffudd

### Grievances over Henry VIII's interference with his inheritance

- Sir Rhys ap Gruffudd**, grandson of **Rhys ap Thomas**, a key supporter of Henry VII at Bosworth (1485), expected to inherit his grandfather's estates and influence after his death in 1525.
- However, Henry VIII, wary of powerful Welsh families, seized much of the lands and granted key titles to Walter Devereux, **Lord Ferrers**, bypassing Sir Rhys. This sparked a bitter **feud** between Rhys and Ferrers.
- In June 1529, during the Court of Great Sessions in Carmarthen, Rhys, accompanied by 40 armed men, threatened Ferrers with a knife, leading to his imprisonment. His wife, Catherine, attempted to rally supporters.
- These escalating tensions contributed to ongoing unrest in Wales.
- Rhys was ultimately **executed for treason** in December 1531, marking the tragic culmination of this bitter power struggle.

### Accusations of treason and how they were dealt with

- In 1531, Sir Rhys was summoned to London under suspicion of **treason**, presented as an opportunity to clear his name.
- The crown intended to make an example of him, with the trial held before a biased Tudor court.
- Rhys was found **guilty** of high treason, accused of conspiracy against the king and disloyalty.
- He was **executed** in December 1531, in a public spectacle designed to deter Welsh nobles from opposing the crown.
- After his execution, Rhys's estates and titles were **confiscated**, weakening the Gruffudd family's power in Wales.
- The redistributed lands rewarded Henry VIII's loyal supporters and bolstered royal authority in South Wales.