



### Rhys's disputes with his sons and heirs

- Rhys ap Gruffudd had at least nine sons and eight daughters, not all of them by his wife.
- Rhys preferred primogeniture – the eldest son inherits everything.
- Welsh *cyfran* meant lands were shared among all of someone's sons.
- Rhys wanted to keep Deheubarth as a strong kingdom that was well-defended.
- Maelgwn, another of Lord Rhys's sons born in 1170, was given the lordship of Cemais. Hywel Sais was given Llawhaden in Dyfed.
- Maelgwn was imprisoned by his elder brother and father in 1189 because he was so difficult to control.
- Maelgwn helped imprison his father in Nevern Castle in 1194.
- While in exile in 1197, Maelgwn was able to find a supporter for his cause in Powys.

### Imprisonments

- In 1189, Maelgwn was imprisoned for two years by his father and eldest brother, Rhys ap Gruffudd.
- In 1194, Rhys ap Gruffudd was imprisoned in Nevern Castle by Maelgwn and Hywel Sais.
- In 1195, Rhys ap Gruffudd imprisoned Rhys Gryg and Maredudd.
- In 1197, Gruffydd ap Rhys was captured by his brother Maelgwn.

### Rhys's death in 1197 and his burial

- Rhys ap Gruffudd died on 18 April 1197 from a disease, possibly plague.
- Gruffydd ap Rhys was named as his successor.
- Maelgwn attacked Deheubarth to take control of it for himself, capturing Aberystwyth and imprisoning his brother.
- Rhys ap Gruffudd had ordered that his body be buried in St David's Cathedral.
- The building of the Cathedral that stands in St David's today began in 1181.
- De Leia refused to bury Rhys as he had excommunicated him after accusing Rhys of stealing horses.
- To fix this, de Leia scourged Rhys's corpse, whipping the corpse repeatedly.
- Although Rhys was buried in the cathedral, his tomb dates from the fourteenth century.
- 'The Lord Rhys' was one of the grand titles he gave to himself to reflect his status – it was never given to him by anyone else.
- He had made significant progress in reducing the Normans' hold over southern Wales.
- By the 1500s, Rhys was praised for being rebellious towards the English.
- By the 19th century, Rhys was seen as the defender of Welsh culture and identity.
- Modern historians have pointed out that his peace with England in the 1170s and 1180s was a personal bond with Henry II that did not survive Henry's death.

### The legacy of Rhys ap Gruffudd

- When Rhys ap Gruffudd died in 1197, Maelgwn gained military support from Gwenwynwyn ab Owain Cyfeiliog, the prince of the southern part of Powys, and attacked Deheubarth.
- They captured Aberystwyth and Gruffydd ap Rhys, who was imprisoned in England.
- When Gruffydd was released in 1198, he recaptured most of his territories.
- Gruffydd and his brother Maredudd died in 1201. Hywel was murdered in 1204.
- Gruffydd's young sons, Rhys Ieuanc and Owain, took up their father's cause.
- Llywelyn ab Iowerth became king of Gwynedd and, by 1201, was on good terms with King John.
- He was attacked by John in 1211 and led an alliance of Welsh princes, including those from Deheubarth, against England.
- In 1215, Llywelyn was one of the lords who forced John to sign the Magna Carta.
- In 1216, Llywelyn used the new powers granted by the Magna Carta to hold a council of Welsh princes in Aberdyfi.
- This council divided Deheubarth among Rhys ap Gruffudd's sons: Maelgwn, who received the southwest of Deheubarth; Rhys Gryg, who received the southeast; and his grandchildren, Rhys Ieuanc and Owain, who received the north.
- Deheubarth was controlled by Gwynedd.



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