

HUMANITIES — WELSH HISTORY · YEAR 5–6

Gwrthryfel Glyndŵr — The Glyndŵr Rising

A Deeper Study — Years 5–6

Causes of the Rising

1

Land dispute (1399)

The immediate cause: a land dispute between Owain Glyndŵr and his neighbour, Lord Reginald de Grey of Ruthin, which the English courts decided against Glyndŵr. He appealed to Parliament and was ignored.

2

Welsh grievances

The Rising drew on deep Welsh frustrations: English colonists had been given preferential rights in Welsh towns; Welsh people could not hold office; discriminatory Penal Laws restricted Welsh freedoms.

3

Proclamation as Prince (September 1400)

Owain was proclaimed Prince of Wales at Glyndyfrdwy, Denbighshire, by his supporters. The date — 16 September — is now Owain Glyndŵr Day in Wales.

4

International support

At its height (1404-1406), Glyndŵr had alliances with France (Franco-Welsh Treaty of Paris, 1404), Scotland, and Castile. France sent troops. The Rising was recognised internationally.

5

The Pennal Letter (1406)

Glyndŵr's diplomatic letter to the King of France — his most detailed vision for Wales: a Welsh church independent of Canterbury, two Welsh universities (north and south), Welsh law reinstated.



6

Why it failed

Henry IV's son (later Henry V) proved a brilliant military commander. English resources were far greater. French support faded. By 1415, the rebellion was over and Glyndŵr was in hiding.

Glyndŵr's legacy

Why he remains central to Welsh

- HIS VISION: the Pennal Letter shows Glyndŵr was not just a rebel — he had a coherent political vision for an independent Wales with its own church, universities, and legal system.
- THE MYSTERY: Glyndŵr was never captured. He vanished around 1415. His grave is unknown. This mystery feeds the legend.
- THE SLEEPING KING LEGEND: like Arthur, Glyndŵr is said to sleep in a mountain — waiting to return when Wales needs him. This legend connects Welsh mythology to Welsh national feeling.
- IN POETRY: almost every generation of Welsh poets has written about Glyndŵr. He appears in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 1* as 'Owen Glendower.'
- THE FLAG: Glyndŵr's coat of arms — four golden lions rampant on red — appears on the Royal Badge of Wales and the Prince of Wales's heraldry.
- MODERN WALES: Owain Glyndŵr Day (16 September) is a proposed Welsh national day. Institutions across Wales — Glyndŵr University in Wrexham — bear his name.

