

Western Mail

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If you're called Gwyndaf or Einir, then you're as Welsh as it gets

Gwyndaf and Einir were yesterday unveiled as the 'Welshest' names in the land by researchers. Experts came up with the list by trawling through electoral registers throughout the UK and finding out which Welsh first names appeared most often with Welsh-origin surnames.

The survey found that 93% of Gwyndafs had traditional Welsh surnames, compared with just one in 10 of Britain's Gwendolyns and Lloyds.

Richard Webber, the visiting professor at University College London who carried out the research, said, 'There's a very nice pattern in Wales and it's more interesting because of the abundance of distinctively Welsh names.'

One obvious point of gender difference in the lists is that the top men's names are significantly more likely to have a Welsh surname than the top women's names.

This can be explained by the fact that some women with a Welsh first name will take on a surname that's not necessarily Welsh when they marry.

Aside from producing lists of the Welshest first names, professor Webber said such research had practical applications for businesses and family tree enthusiasts.

'There are two strands of interest in all this work,' he said.

'There's the practical one - because many organisations are quite concerned to know how diverse their customers or employees are.

'Often it's difficult because people don't like filling in questionnaires asking which ethnic group they're from and they're not necessarily accurate.'

He also said that his work - particularly the online surname profiler at www.spatial-literacy.org - was popular in the US, where people can be fanatical about tracing their family roots.

'The second point of interest is for genealogists and historians. Names are, in a way, like DNA in the way you can trace how names have travelled throughout the world.'

To demonstrate how names travel he cited his own surname, which has its roots in Taunton and Exeter.

Prof Webber added, 'It's a name you find a lot in the Welsh Valleys.

'If you couldn't find employment in the English countryside then South Wales was the easiest place to reach.'

Prof Webber is part of the team from his university's Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis, which contains a database of more than 10m names across the world.

The team recently mapped how Anglo-Saxon names have spread across the world over the past 100 years as part of the first ever attempt to measure and quantify the geographical spread and size of the exodus of Britons abroad.

They found that while surnames like Blair originated in the west of Scotland, and the number of **British people** called Blair has grown by 50% since the 19th Century to 12,473 today, they are now outnumbered by their 27,379 distant US cousins.

Meic Stephens, emeritus professor of Welsh writing in English at the University of Glamorgan, and author of *Welsh Names For Your Children: The Complete Guide*, was surprised by yesterday's findings.

'It's quite astonishing really,' he said, 'Gwyndaf is quite uncommon, they tend to be down in Carmarthenshire, and Einir tends to be up North, and that's not where the large populations are.' He suggested Gwyndaf probably came from Gwyn (white) and Taf (as in the river Taff) or Dafydd, and that its popularity may have been boosted by world-beating rally driver Gwyndaf Evans. Meanwhile Einir possibly comes from the Latin Honora meaning 'reputation'.

50 'Welshest' Male Names								
	Percent with Welsh Surnames							
1	Gwyndaf	93.81	18	Meirion	83.02	35	Dyfrig	75.71
2	Medwyn	91.67	19	Arwyn	82.96	36	Hywel	75.50
3	Goronwy	91.20	20	Ifan	82.93	37	Dafydd	75.22
4	Eurwyn	89.74	21	Bleddyn	82.67	38	Jenkin	74.26
5	Arwel	89.06	22	Aled	82.43	39	Carwyn	73.96
6	Gerallt	89.05	23	Ifor	82.33	40	Trefor	73.87
7	Arfon	89.04	24	Dewi	82.32	41	Geraint	73.77
8	Tecwyn	88.34	25	Iorwerth	82.16	42	Gwynfryn	73.66
9	Elfyn	87.97	26	Eirwyn	82.12	43	Tegwyn	73.47
10	Emyr	86.85	27	Gruffydd	82.05	44	Leuan	73.43
11	Eifion	86.17	28	Dyfed	80.98	45	Berwyn	72.35
12	Gwynfor	85.24	29	Ieuan	79.98	46	Elvet	72.09
13	Hefin	83.64	30	Gwilym	79.40	47	Emrys	69.61
14	Elfed	83.63	31	Cledwyn	79.12	48	Gerwyn	69.07
15	Iolo	83.46	32	Griffith	77.95	49	Brynmor	68.57
16	Meurig	83.19	33	Myrddin	76.44	50	Iestyn	67.72
17	Merfyn	83.13	34	Islwyn	75.84			

50 'Welshest' Female Names								
	Percent with Welsh Surnames							
1	Einir	77.54	18	Heulwen	59.37	35	Rhian	51.05
2	Gwenan	73.85	19	Menna	59.15	36	Lynwen	50.69
3	Meinir	72.77	20	Eirlys	57.73	37	Blodwen	50.00
4	Sioned	71.67	21	Alwen	57.71	38	Bethan	49.82
5	Llinos	71.56	22	Carys	57.17	39	Ceris	48.26
6	Eirian	71.03	23	Nerys	57.11	40	Tegwen	46.19
7	Non	70.48	24	Menai	56.91	41	Ceridwen	45.82
8	Morfudd	68.40	25	Delyth	56.88	42	Ceinwen	45.58
9	Ffion	66.47	26	Enfys	54.76	43	Eirwen	45.55
10	Anwen	65.40	27	Mair	54.58	44	Morfydd	45.41
11	Nia	64.88	28	Beti	54.44	45	Myfanwy	44.38
12	Lowri	64.08	29	Manon	53.63	46	Valmai	42.38
13	Eleri	63.16	30	Elen	53.22	47	Gwenllian	42.26
14	Annwen	61.95	31	Iola	53.18	48	Gwladys	42.19
15	Eurwen	61.69	32	Eluned	53.11	49	Cerys	41.86
16	Alwena	61.59	33	Angharad	52.72	50	Rhiannon	40.52
17	Catrin	60.49	34	Mairwen	52.12			