ALAN FEAR

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A SEARCH FOR IDENTITY AND MEMORY IN SHARON KAY PENMAN'S NOVEL *HERE BE DRAGONS*

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RESUMO

A ideia do País de Gales como uma nação que detém sua identidade própria foi-se diluindo aos poucos, na medida em que se incorporou à história geral e à cultura do Reino Unido, as quais por sua vez são determinadas pela Inglaterra e pelos valores ingleses. A identidade galesa, como qualquer outra identidade nacional, é uma construção feita a partir de muitos fatores determinantes, entre eles os eventos históricos. Nesta tese, apresento minha leitura do romance histórico *Here Be Dragons*, da autora estadunidense Sharon Kay Penman, para explorar e analisar a questão da identidade nacional galesa e para examinar como o conceito de Identidade Galesa se configura naquele universo ficcional. Este trabalho representa também uma busca pessoal e uma investigação sobre minha identidade e memória galesa, já que fui criado e educado numa Gales gerida pelo sistema educacional inglês, que excluía dos currículos quase todas as referências à história, ao idioma e aos valores do País de Gales. O romance estudado se passa em um período da Baixa Idade Média em que Gales luta por manter sua cultura e sua identidade, ao ser confrontada com um poder maior, o dos reis e barões anglo-normandos que buscam construir seu império. Como se trata de um romance histórico, considero importante explorar as relações entre narrativa histórica e narrativa histórica ficcional. Para tanto, apresento um esboço historiográfico e certas considerações sobre o romance histórico como gênero literário. Mais ainda, acredito ser necessário apresentar um pouco da história do País de Gales, não apenas para termos uma ideia do que seja a identidade galesa, mas também para colocar o romance analisado no seu contexto histórico apropriado. Esta tese está construída em três partes. Na primeira, examino os conceitos de identidade e memória cultural e nacional e aspectos históricos formadores da identidade galesa. Para tanto, me apoio em obras escritas por Anthony D. Smith, professor de Etnia e Nacionalismo da Escola de Economia de Londres, como embasamento teórico para os conceitos de nacionalismo e identidade cultural. A segunda parte, que trata sobre História, é dividida em três subseções. Na primeira apresento um esboço sobre historiografia, com considerações sobre como a História é apreendida e estudada. A segunda trata sobre o romance histórico, comentando como se tornou um gênero literário e como se relaciona com a narrativa histórica. A última subseção apresenta traços da história do País de Gales, para estabelecer as ligações com as questões de identidade nacional. A terceira seção da tese apresenta a minha leitura de *Here Be Dragons*, na qual examino como é construída na narrativa a questão da identidade galesa através das personagens principais e nas descrições das paisagens e de estruturas medievais como castelos e mansões. Na conclusão, apresento as últimas considerações sobre os processos que levaram ao apagamento e à consequente busca de resgate da identidade nacional galesa. Acredito assim estar cumprindo minha parte neste processo que é tão bem representado no romance *Here Be Dragons* de Sharon Kay Penman.

Palavras-chave: 1. Literatura e cultura. 2. Identidade nacional. 3. Identidade galesa. 4. Sharon Kay Penman. 5. *Here Be Dragons*. 6. Crítica literária.

ABSTRACT

Wales, as a nation in itself, has to some extent been forgotten and absorbed into the general history and culture of the United Kingdom, which for the most part, is dominated by England and "English" values. Welsh identity, or indeed any national identity, is a construct of many determining factors, not the least of which are historical events. In this dissertation, I present my reading of the historical novel, *Here Be Dragons* by American author Sharon Kay Penman, in order to explore and analyze the question of Welsh national identity and to examine how the concept of *Welshness* is configured in this fictional universe. This work is also a personal search and exploration into Welsh identity and memory, as I was brought up and educated through an English educational system – in Wales – which excluded a greater part of Welsh history, language and values from the curriculum. The novel covers a late medieval period of between 1183 and 1234, during which Wales struggles to maintain its unique identity and culture against the greater power of the empire-building Anglo-Norman kings and barons. As this dissertation concerns a historical novel, in order to better understand the relationship between a history narrative and a historical-novel fictional narrative, an outline of historiography and a background to the genre of the historical novel are important. Furthermore, a description of the historical background of Wales is necessary, not only to give us an idea of the formation of the Welsh identity, but also to place the novel into its correct historical context. The dissertation is divided into three parts. In part one, I examine the concepts of national and cultural identity and memory and the cultural and historical aspects which form the identity of Wales. I have used the works of Anthony D. Smith, professor of Ethnicity and Nationalism at the London School of Economics as a theoretical basis for the concepts of national and cultural identity. Part two, which deals with history, is divided into three sub-sections. In the first sub-section I examine and briefly outline historiography, how history is studied and presented. The second sub-section deals with the historical novel, how it developed as a literary genre and its relationship with the history narrative. The final sub-section is a historical background to Wales in order to have a better understanding of Welsh identity. Part three of the dissertation is my reading of *Here Be Dragons*, in which I examine the construction of Welsh identity in the narrative in the principal characters and the symbols that represent Wales in the descriptions of landscapes and medieval structures such as castles and manor houses. To conclude, I present my final considerations of the processes which have led to the eradication and the consequent search to restore a Welsh national identity. Thus, I believe I am fulfilling my part in this process that is so well represented in Sharon Kay Penman's novel *Here Be Dragons*.

Keywords: 1. Literature and culture. 2. National identity. 3. Welshness. 4. Sharon Kay Penman. 5. *Here Be Dragons*. 6. Literary criticism.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to retrace a lost sense of national Welsh identity through a reading of the novel *Here Be Dragons*, by Sharon Kay Penman, to identify and analyse the author's construction of *Welshness* in the principal characters through their interaction with one another and within their geographical spaces and boundaries. Furthermore, I examine the characteristics of Welsh identity as it is presented in the narrative through descriptions of symbols that can represent Wales, such as landscape and medieval constructions. In this way, I intend to initiate a somewhat personal approach to begin to understand what it means to be Welsh in the 21st century. *Here Be Dragons* is a historical novel set in Wales, England and the Norman territories of France in the 12-13th Centuries C.E., the late medieval period marked, in this region of Europe, by the Anglo-Norman Kings' empire expansion projects into Wales and Ireland, and their territorial disputes with the French monarchy.

The novel has as its historical background the events of the period of when Welsh Prince Llewelyn ap Iorwerth endeavours to unite Wales under one ruler – himself – whilst at the same time protecting the border lands from incursive Norman barons. Also during this period, King John of England has ambitious projects to conquer and occupy as much territory of Wales as possible. Both leaders' activities involve political manipulation of adversaries, marriage alliances, using medieval feudal society's laws – sanctioned by the church in Rome – and straightforward military invasion and occupation. As well as territorial conflicts, in the Welsh border lands known as the Marches, and in France, King John faces a barons' revolt which leads to him being forced to sign the *Magna Carta* and ultimately leads to his persecution and death. Historically, Llewelyn came very close to his goal but faced several setbacks; his grandson and namesake, however, was recognized as Prince of Wales, by the English crown, almost 30 years after Llewelyn's death. John's empire building policies were finally brought to completion, *i.e.* the total conquest and annexation of Wales almost 70 years after his death by his grandson, Edward I.

King John was the Great-great-grandson of William the Conqueror, who led the Norman invasion of England in 1066 and became William I, the first Norman king of England. As Sir Walter Scott portrays in *Ivanhoe*, the social structures in the late 12th century are such that, even more than a hundred years after the Norman Conquest, the feudal system stratification is further accentuated by the differences between the ruling elite Norman class and the defeated Saxons, the latter's nobles having been either slaughtered, imprisoned, exiled or relegated to lower classes. Normans and Saxons, each with their own distinct language and cultural norms, co-existed in England from the time of the Conquest until the 13th or 14th centuries, when England begins to emerge as a nation populated by "English", rather than Normans and Saxons. A glimpse of the society of this emerging English nation is represented in literature through Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, written toward the end of the 14th century in an incipient English language – which linguists later call Middle-English – rather than in Latin, French or a Germanic dialect. Thus within the nations of the British Isles, while England is going through radical mutations as it forms its hybrid cultural identity from Norman and Saxon, so too is Wales in its struggle to maintain a unique identity as the overshadowing Norman-Saxon-English forces are relentlessly pressing at its borders and, in fact, already have settlements in large parts of South Wales for over a hundred years.

Historian Gwyn Williams' history of Wales book is entitled *When Was Wales?* (1985) which implies an unspoken proclamation that *it no longer is*, posing further questions much to the effect of *what happened?* And *what is it now then?* The very essence of Welsh cultural identity has been transformed over many centuries of English dominance and reaching into history through Penman's historical fiction, rather than history narratives, is perhaps a means to connect with the characters from the time before its military annexation and Anglicization. The author's representation and the readers' interpretation of the Welsh identity of these characters can be a way to ascertain and understand what is construed as *Welshness* in oneself and to recall a long forgotten and suppressed national identity.

Through *Here Be Dragons*, and its two sequels, the three novels together forming a 'Welsh Princes' trilogy – concluding with an account of the history of the final annexation of Wales – Penman narrates an otherwise largely oppressed and forgotten history in a form of Postcolonial Literature just as this has done since its emergence in the 1950s and 60s from African states, India and other countries colonised by the British. Although many would argue that Wales cannot be construed as an English colony, in the same way as, for example, India or Australia were part of the British Empire, the patterns of historical events show that it has

been exactly that, *i.e.* invaded, colonized, a mass forced foreign immigration policy in order to "dilute" the native Welsh inhabitants, foreign – English – laws imposed and a series of Parliamentary Acts effectively absorbing Wales into England. In an introductory chapter "Situating the Postcolonial" in *Postcolonial Literatures in English*, C.L. Innes describes Ireland as: "an island settled and governed by the British since the twelfth century, Ireland is seen by some to have a dual status as a postcolonial state in the South while remaining a British colony in the North." (INNES, 2007, p.2), though he makes no mention of Wales, this small nation suffered the same violent history as Ireland, initially perpetrated by the same Anglo-Norman dynasty that colonized Ireland between the 11th and the 13th centuries, and therefore, as with Northern Ireland, it is a feasible argument to consider Wales also as "remaining a British colony". In this way, Penman's narrative is a representation of the collective memory of a nation whose history and cultural heritage have been overshadowed and oppressed by the much stronger dominant nation, England.

As well as the historical events that lead to the conquest and colonization of Wales, *Here Be Dragons* portrays the personal relationships and interaction between the three principal characters: Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, King John of England and Joanna, Llewelyn's wife and John's daughter. These characters are representations of and are based on the historical personages of, respectively: Llewelyn ap Iorwerth the most powerful of the Welsh leaders in the first decades of the 13th century up to his death in 1240; King John of England, who reigned from 1166 until his death in 1216, John was the third King of the Plantagenet dynasty, the last son of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine and younger brother of Richard I, the "Lionhearted"; and Joan, John's illegitimate daughter of whom very little of her early life is known; after marrying Prince Llewelyn, Joan became known as Siwan (the Welsh version of the name Joan) and received the title of Lady of Wales. As my concern for this dissertation is a study of Welsh identity, my main focus is on the Welsh characters, Llewelyn and his sons Gruffydd and Davydd.

In *Here Be Dragons*, we do not find the common symbols of Wales that can be seen in all corners of the country nowadays: the Red Dragon, the daffodils and leeks, instead we find the symbols of the colonising oppression and the marks of resistance of the people struggling to maintain their identity and livelihood. Dotted around the landscape of Wales, as bold and colossal today as they were when they were constructed, are the huge stone castles, the mightiest of medieval weapons and powerful statements, introduced into Britain by the Normans in the 11th century. In response, the Welsh built their own castles, smaller in scale

but no less a powerful symbol and message. These castles are very much part of modern Welsh culture and identity that I shall explore through the narrative and some of which I have literally explored. Walking the tunnels, climbing the narrow spiral stairways, standing on the battlements and gazing around the immense courtyards, all in order to experience for myself the sense of history – more than just a 'history' of kings and queens – everything that has taken place within these sites that pertains to the collective Welsh consciousness and that is imbued and resounds through the stones until today, and continues to do so.

In order to carry out this analysis of Welsh identity in Sharon Kay Penman's novel, I present this dissertation in three chapters. In the first chapter, I explore the concepts of identity and more specifically Welsh cultural identity from a more personal point of view. In this chapter, I reflect on concepts created from my own experiences of a Welsh individual inserted into different cultural spaces and through childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The second chapter deals with historiography, the historical novel and the historical background to distinguish Wales as a nation and to highlight events which have contributed to the formation of Welsh national identity. Here I briefly outline the study of history, historiography and rise of the historical novel as a literary genre in order to establish a link between a history narrative and a historical fiction narrative, both of which share distinctive characteristics. Next in this chapter, I examine a historical timeline and important events which lead to the formation of Wales and Welsh identity up to the 21st century. Though Penman's novel covers only the late medieval period of the 12th to 13th centuries, in order to understand fully what constitutes Wales and Welsh identity, we must go further back into history to the first millennia BCE, the period of the arrival of the so called Celtic peoples, and project forward from the 13th century to illustrate how Wales and *Welshness* has been transformed through occupation, annexation and mass immigration. As support for the historical aspects of the novel, John Davies's *A History of Wales* and Geraint H. Jenkins's A *Concise History of Wales* are invaluable sources of information as both authors are prominent and experienced historians in this field. John Davies was professor of Welsh history at the University College of Wales and was commissioned by Penguin books in the late 1980s to write a comprehensive history of the country, the first undertaking of which he completed in the Welsh language, published in 1990. Davies completed and published the English language edition of his work in 1994. Geraint H. Jenkins held the posts of Director of the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies and Head of the Department of Welsh History at the

University of Wales. Furthermore, as an overall reference for a history of Britain, Simon Schama's *History of Britain* series (2000) have been a very useful guide.

Pinpointing the beginning or the origins of Welsh identity is a debatable subject that can have many points of view and interpretations, we can however form some concepts of the origin of Wales from varying aspects, such as linguistic, archaeological and even DNA research. As a nation, when the name Wales was perhaps first used in an Old Germanic dialect form, a word which meant "foreigners", the 5th century C.E. would be a reasonable period of time to begin, this was the period in which the various tribes that occupied the geographic space that would later be called Wales, were distinct from the Germanic tribes that had begun to invade and populate the geographical space that would later be called England. The so called "Celtic" tribes – I shall explore this concept of identity later – had occupied most of the British Isles for almost a thousand years when the Germanic tribes began to arrive and populate the land. By the time the Normans invaded in 1066, the "Welsh" and the "English" had established their territories, demarcated by a physical boundary constructed by an 8th century Saxon king. After the Norman invasion and subjugation of the Saxon peoples, they expanded their territories further west to include Wales and Ireland, both of which were absorbed into the Anglo-Norman empire. From the 13th century onwards, Wales was subjected to a series of events and social upheaval, with an imposition of English laws, language and culture that national identity has been mutated, possibly beyond recognition. My dissertation explores the author's construction of Welsh identity within the novel and analyzes the way in which, if at all, any of this *Welshness* remains, as a search and recall of lost cultural memory. The historical formation timeline stretches from the first millennia BCE, with the arrival of the Celtic peoples, up until the present time; in the second section of this chapter, I deal with the medieval period when it coincides with events in the novel, and examine how the author presents this through the narrative.

In the third chapter, I examine elements of *Here Be Dragons* and analyse the way in which the author presents the Welsh characterization of the principal personae and other elements within the narrative, such as the spaces in which the characters interact. These spaces, whether the open natural landscapes or man-made structures: castles, manor houses or the *Llys* – the prince's main dwelling – are strong symbols of Welsh identity; the wild landscapes remain relatively untouched and most of the ancient structures can still be seen standing in varying degrees of conservation. The representation of these symbols in the narrative is a powerful image of the reality of the 12th and 13th centuries that still echoes

through the centuries until today. However the echoes have become distorted, the structures remain but their meaning has changed; in an amusing (to the Welsh at least) irony, the immense stone English castles, huge symbols of oppression and power on Welsh soil, have become Welsh castles, attracting thousands of tourists every year, for the benefit of the local community and the overall economy of Wales and are a great source of Welsh pride. In this section, I also recall my trip back to Wales, after an absence of 16 years, which I undertook in February 2015. During this trip I visited several historical sites, many of which are represented in the fictional world of *Here Be Dragons,* and travelled through the landscapes of north and mid-Wales. I reflect on how these geographical topographies and man-made structures are very much a feature of Wales and *Welshness* and how this is demonstrated in the narrative. In this form, my physical journey merges with the journey through the narrative and becomes part of the search for identity and memory.

As the third chapter includes the plot summary as well as the analysis, I have divided it into sub-headings according to a period of time, e.g. when Llewelyn was a boy, and geographical locations where a specific event or series of events occurred. As the narrative of *Here Be Dragons* is a fictional account of historical events, it is a complex task to write about both of these elements in the same analysis, therefore, I have tried as far as possible to use the present tense when dealing with the plot summary and analysis, and the past tense when relating historical events. With regards to the characters, Joanna is the only individual whose name differs slightly from her historical counterpart, Joan, I have therefore used both Joanna and Joan to indicate fictional character and historical figure respectively. I apologise for any lapse in this criteria though I am sure that this will not affect any understanding of the text.

For simplicity, throughout each section of this dissertation when dealing with the medieval period, I have referred to any non-Welsh population or individual as English, Norman or Anglo-Norman, unless otherwise specified, which would be in the case of Saxon or French. Strictly speaking, the Norman dynasties are also sub-divided, from the reign of Henry II, into the Angevin Dynasty, but to avoid any confusion, I have stuck with the designation of "Norman" or "Anglo-Norman" throughout. The "Saxon" cultural label is also problematic, the invading Germanic tribes included Angles and Jutes, I am committing the sin of which I myself am criticizing, by putting them under the one label of "Saxon", I am merely imitating my ancestors' suppositions that everything "over there" was, firstly "Saxon" then later "English". The modern Welsh word for English is *Saesneg*, which is derived from *saesson*, in its turn derived from *Saxones*; Davies (2007) points out that the ancient Britons,

when faced with the marauding Germanic hordes would have made no distinction between the invaders and labelled them all as *saesson*.

As well as an analysis of Welsh cultural identity within a historical novel, I hope this dissertation will serve as, if only a tiny, support for divulging Welsh "awareness". As I write this in July 2016, the Welsh National Football team have reached the semi-finals in the European Cup Football Championship, a championship watched by millions around the world, not least in Brazil, a football loving nation. England also played in this championship and were eliminated at an early stage, I am pointing this out not in order to gloat (though that is one beneficial effect), but rather to highlight the fact that millions of people around the world noted that Wales and England are in fact separate nations. Wales was seen as having a unique culture, differentiated from that of England, through the behaviour of the fans – in France the locals and fans from other countries in all probability heard the Welsh language spoken – and through symbols, colours and of course *Y Ddraig Goch*, that the fans were displaying over the course of the championship. Though of course different in many ways – I am sure that medieval Welsh citizens whilst travelling abroad did not display dragon, daffodil, leek or sheep symbols – they would have been distinctive, however, in many other aspects: dress, mannerisms, physical features and of course language and accent; all of which, created, in the same way as in modern times, stereotypes and misconceptions, in all probability leading to racial prejudice sentiments, but on the other hand carrying a message which shouts, "we are the Welsh, from Wales, we are not English, Wales is a separate nation, with its own culture, language, history, laws, sentiments, ethos".

1 ON IDENTITY AND MEMORY

1.1 Identity

As a label, our national identity is stamped onto us through official documents such as birth certificates, identity cards and passports issued by the government of a nation, in other words a piece of paper tells us, and other people, that we are “American” or “Brazilian” or “French”, “Japanese” *etc*. Of course what is officially recorded on a document may not necessarily conform with the ethnicity and ancestry of that person and an individual may identify him/herself through a construct and declaration of his/her own identity according to, and perhaps driven by, assumptions, beliefs and values. Stuart Hall (2003) presents the post-modern concept of identity as one which is never unified, is fragmented and fractured, and is constantly going through transformational progressions resulting from a continuing and increasing globalization process. These identities, according to Hall, emerge from the “narrativization of the self” from a continuing correspondence with the past and using history, language and culture as resources. In this sense ethnic minority individuals, whether a descendent of a Japanese immigrant living in São Paulo or a Pakistani/British subject in Britain may choose to identify themselves as Japanese or Brazilian, British or Pakistani. What makes them Japanese or Pakistani of course are physical characteristics of race, or DNA technology which can determine ethnic traces; what makes them Brazilian or British is essentially just a piece of paper. An individual’s national identity then can be a construction of that individual according to his or her sentiments and affinities, this of course is not a simple matter of declaration. If I were to suddenly announce that I was Kazakhstani it would not make me Kazakhstani and my claim would obviously be arguable and contested regarding my present situation. However, if I were to move to and reside in Kazakhstan on a permanent basis, adopting cultural customs and habits of that country, I could then validate my claim. In this sense, a national identity can be the construct of an individual, but once again it falls to

the document, the piece of paper, to make that identity officially recognised by the authorities; it would be up to those authorities to grant me or deny me a Kazakhstani "certified" identity.

For many, moving abroad is not an option, persecution, refugee crises provoked by wars and internal conflicts and other factors force people to abandon their homelands and seek refuge in safe havens where they may adopt the local customs and habits or choose to live in communities of their own kind. It may not be easy for some to accept new conditions and strange habits and customs and to be absorbed into the identity of their adopted nation is a confusing issue. In *Identity: Conversations with Benedetto Vecchi*, Zygmunt Bauman (2004) tells of his dilemma at choosing a national anthem which would be played in his honour at a ceremony to receive an honorary doctorate in Prague; the Polish national anthem, the country of his birth but from where his citizenship had been stripped more than thirty years previously; or the British national anthem, his adopted country in which he had been granted citizenship but also where he was still seen as a "newcomer" and "foreigner". In the end, the European anthem was found as a diplomatic solution. Bauman uses this anecdote to illustrate that a person's national identity is not such a concrete concept that can be resolved by laws or documents, which can equally grant or take away an identity.

As with Bauman, on a personal bases, the matter of identity has proven to be a tricky matter for my own concern and has been on my mind and affected me for many years. I was born in Hong Kong, a former British Colony, to Welsh parents, and have always considered myself as Welsh. However, there is no document that declares I have Welsh citizenship, but rather my passport declares that I am a "British Citizen". My birth certificate is registered from the "British Colony of Hong Kong", as Hong Kong has now passed into Chinese dominion I often wonder if I may now apply for Chinese citizenship. My identity "crisis" stems from a worry that, to steal Griff Rhys Jones's (2014) book title, I am "insufficiently Welsh". TV presenter Griff Rhys Jones was born in Cardiff but his family moved to the South East of England when he was just six months old. In his book *Insufficiently Welsh* (2014), Jones tells of his various visits to relatives in Wales as a child, being aware of a Welsh identity but at the same time having a distinct upper-class English accent and an English upbringing and education. As a TV presenter and producer he introduced an idea for a programme on BBC Wales to the director of programmes and it was hinted that he was "insufficiently Welsh" to present a programme about Wales on the regional BBC channel. This incident induced him to pursue his national identity and produce his own program about his personal search for a national identity, and publish the book, which in his words, "is

designed to release the *Welshness* in me" (JONES, 2004, p.5). Dylan Thomas himself, though having no doubts about his nationality, expressed similar sentiments in an address to the Scottish Association of Writers, "Regarded in England as a Welshman, and in Wales as an Englishman. I am too unnational (sic) to be here [Edinburgh] at all" (LYCETT, 2005, p.262). Furthermore, it appears that this "insufficiently Welsh" identity crisis is nothing new; the 13th century deacon and chronicler, Giraldus Cambrensis, Gerard of Wales, who wrote contemporary descriptions of Welsh people and society, was born in south-west Wales into a Welsh-Norman family. According to Davies, Giraldus "complained that he was too much of a Norman for the Welsh and too much of a Welshman for the Normans" (DAVIES, 2007, p.131) an almost exact sentiment to that expressed by Dylan Thomas some 800 years later.

Even more insufficiently Welsh, unlike Jones, I was born outside Wales, but like him, I have spent very little time in the country I call my homeland. Very briefly, my life's course has been the following: after Hong Kong my family moved to Wales in 1964, just eight years later, my father received another RAF posting and we moved to Cyprus. 1974 brought us back to Wales and in 1979 I joined the army and moved to England. During my time in the army I served in Cyprus and Northern Ireland. In 1990 I left the army and returned to Wales, However I was not to stay for long, I travelled further afield and moved to Brazil in 1991. I have been in Brazil, at the time of writing, 24 years. Simple mathematics shows that I have actually spent only 14 of my 53 years living in Wales, and I have been in Brazil three times longer than the longest time I have permanently spent in Wales, the 8 years of my infancy. There is little wonder then that I feel myself insufficiently Welsh.

For me, intrinsically linked to personal identity is the question of Wales itself. When I arrived in Brazil over twenty years ago, I was frequently met with blank stares when I replied "*País de Gales*" to the question of "Where are you from?", and in many occasions I have been asked the question, "Isn't Wales in England?" or something similar. I have observed that, amongst Brazilians, as a general geographical term or means of national identification, the designations, *Inglaterra* and *Inglês* are used far more frequently in everyday language, rather than *Grã-Bretanha*, *Reino Unido* and *Britânico*. Even in some cases such as the local press, I have seen Welsh poet Dylan Thomas and actor Anthony Hopkins[1], referred to as *inglês* and in

[1] Photo published 14/10/2013, on journal *Folha de São Paulo* online: http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrada/2013/10/1356429-anthony-hopkins-diz-que-astro-de-breaking-bad-e-o-melhor-ator-que-ja-viu-leia-carta.shtml. As a curious side note to this, Hopkins was granted USA citizenship in 2000, if the newspaper had referred to him as an "American" actor, they would not in fact be wrong but I suspect it would upset quite a good many Welsh people.

several instances a map of the British Isles has been published with the word *Inglaterra* stamped across from the West coast of Wales to the east coast of England.

Aside from bestowing upon me a feeling of slight irritation and frustration that Wales is either completely unknown, or known as "a part of England", all of this led me to take action in the form of "cultural lectures" to students at any opportunity, and once again to question personal identity and the identity of Wales; not only to question, but to investigate and study the issue further. In 1994 I visited Wales for the first time since I had arrived in Brazil and brought back Sharon Penman's novels, the *Welsh Princes Trilogy*, which had caught my eye in a bookstore. After reading them I was astounded by how much of Welsh history I had not known, and astounded even more by that history itself, of the way in which Wales was virtually stolen by the Normans who then became the English who over the centuries continued to oppress and erase Welsh national identity. Historical Fiction is of course *fiction*, however my curiosity motivated me to investigate the events in several publications on the subject, namely the history of Wales, and I found most that which Penman portrayed in her novels to be historically accurate.

This was a history of Wales that I was never taught at school, *in Wales*. The education system in Wales in the 1970s followed the United Kingdom model of secondary education. This had been modelled on the English system since the middle of the 19th century when all Welsh medium schools were abolished following a commissioned report into the state of affairs of education in Wales – more of which I shall explore further below – and the entire educational system in Wales was conducted through an English language medium. By the 1970s, when I attended secondary school, the Welsh language had a place on the curriculum, however it was not obligatory and furthermore, taught as one of the "modern languages", alongside German and French, in other words, as a *foreign* language. History too was distinctly English biased; classes consisted mostly of learning about the British Monarchs and their deeds since William the Conqueror. Now over 40 years later I can remember very well classes about Henry VIII and his six wives, and his daughter, Elizabeth I's defeat of the Spanish Armada, but I remember nothing of Llewelyn Fawr nor his grandson Llewelyn ap Gruffydd – Llewelyn the Last – simply because that part of Welsh history, and much more, was omitted from the curriculum. A report published on the Welsh Government's website about the *Cwriccwlwm Cymreig* (Welsh Curriculum) comments on the teaching system in Wales before an educational reform and establishment of the Welsh national curriculum:

> The freedom teachers had before the establishment of the national curriculum allowed them to teach a subject like history from a Welsh perspective, and/or to include a strong element of local history in their schemes of work, if they chose to do so. It also allowed them to ignore Welsh and/or local history entirely, and to teach the history of any other country, if they so chose. Although there was never any obligation to do so, many teachers chose to teach a form of British history that was almost entirely dominated by England. The influence of this belief that the history of England is the only 'proper' history is still to be seen in the custom of referring to the history of Wales as a subject distinct from history itself. The history of the state, and thus of England, is the official history, namely, the history taught in the country's schools since the public education system developed in the Victorian era. This did not have to mean a complete absence of Welsh history in schools. Given that Wales had been a part of England, practically and constitutionally, for so many centuries, it follows that Welsh history had to be studied in the wider context of English history. However, when added to a historic lack of confidence in Welsh national identity, too often Anglocentric British history became the only kind of history taught. Rather than interpret Wales within a British context, Wales was often simply just left out of the history taught in schools (CWRICCWLWM, 2013).

It is interesting to note that the teachers were free to teach Welsh and local history however many chose not to do so and an English biased point of view was dominant. This could be seen as a sense of inferiority and that the Anglo-centric history was a way of becoming part of a "superior and advanced" culture, in the same way that many parents at the end of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century, sought to educate their children through a medium of the English language considering Welsh as a backward, dying language with no future.

The irony and absurdity of this educational system never occurred to me at the time and only years later when I enrolled in the army (the British Army, there is no exclusively Welsh army, though there are Welsh Infantry Regiments) and began mixing with other young men from all around Britain, I became more conscious of being Welsh. Even more so since my move to Brazil, if Welsh history and culture had been eroded and forgotten about in Wales itself, it is no wonder that in other countries the perception of Wales is either at best as "part of England" and at worst, not heard of at all.

This interest in Welsh identity led up to my study of Welsh literature written in the English language and an analysis of *Under Milk Wood* by Dylan Thomas, which resulted in my Master's degree dissertation, concluded in 2012. In my dissertation I explored further the influence that the English language and culture, through education programmes and Parliamentary Acts, has had on Wales since the 13th century, and how this has produced generations of Welsh who have never known their own native language or history, ultimately erasing cultural memory. The cultural identity of a Welsh person living in the 12th century

would be far from any Welsh person of the 21st century of course, however the purpose of this dissertation is to analyse how this identity has been constructed in the novel in order to attempt to recover a lost and forgotten sense of culture and identity.

After an absence of 16 years I went back to Wales for a brief visit in February 2015, incredibly I had an impression that it was a "foreign" country, not foreign to me but very much distinct from England, it seemed to me that this was a Wales that had become Welsh again. Was this just an illusion I had from being so long away? The Red Dragon symbol was everywhere to be seen in the capital Cardiff and in other major towns; road signs and public information had always been in both Welsh and English, but my impression was that it was so much more; the gift, decoration and souvenir shops were overflowing with Welsh items (many of which, on closer inspection were, bizarrely and paradoxically, "made in China"); excepting Oriental Welsh items, there was genuine Welsh silver, gold and slate. In London the tourists pick up tiny red phone boxes and double-decker buses, a teddy bear in Beef-Eater's uniform, Union Jack t-shirts and coffee mugs; here it is Red Dragon everything, t-shirts, coffee mugs, fluffy toys, fridge magnets. Throughout Wales, many businesses have adopted the company name as "Red Dragon", amongst a multitude of others, I saw "Red Dragon" Car Rentals, Estate Agents, Travel agents and a Bakery. The local radio station in Cardiff and for South Wales is "Red Dragon FM". As well as the ubiquitous Red Dragon, other symbols representative of Wales which abound in almost every store are the Daffodil and Leek; On St. David's Day, 1st March, no Welshman is seen without a tiny leek badge, nor is any Welsh woman seen without a tiny daffodil badge. So is *Welshness* represented and manifest through just symbols and paraphernalia? That maybe so as a visual, material presence, however, I had the distinct feeling that it was more than just the objects and souvenirs that gave me the impression that Wales was more *Welsh* than I had remembered; to my ear, more people were chatting in the Welsh language than I had remembered. What surprised and pleased me even more is that on my return trip, I heard a family conversing in Welsh, in the lounge bar of a hotel near Heathrow airport, as any foreign language would be spoken on English soil. All of this made me feel as though Wales had, culturally at least, broken away from a heavy English sway, and the pendulum was swinging back towards *Welshness*, or at least a collective consciousness of *being* Welsh.

The distinction of the Welsh of the British Isles from the English, of course has a historical background of which I will deal with in more detail below, but briefly the formation of Wales as a nation can be traced to the 5th century CE, with the demarcation of the

territories of the Angles and Saxonic Germanic tribes who had taken advantage of the Roman legions withdrawal from the island to invade, and the Britons who had remained who began to call themselves *Cymry*, fellow country-men. The sense of *Welshness* and national identity stems from this historical background; one of the essential elements in forming a national identity, according to Smith (2009), is a shared common history which is accessed through myth, historiography and popular history and memory.

However, the English dominance over Wales has been erasing this national identity and memory and the so called Act of Union in 1536 during the reign of Henry VIII (who incidentally had a Welsh father) meant an erasing of the nation of Wales itself. Nevertheless culture in many forms has persisted and Wales has been reinvented; writing in his history of Wales: *When Was Wales*, Gwyn Williams is of the point of view that Wales is only Wales because of the Welsh people:

> A country called Wales exists only because the Welsh invented it. The Welsh exist only because they invented themselves… They have made themselves over repeatedly because they have had to make themselves against the odds. There were not enough of them and there were not enough resources around to keep out much more numerous and much more powerful peoples. From birth, they lived with the threat of extinction. Until our own days, they have survived. They survived by making and re-making themselves and their Wales over and over again. So far they have survived for over a millennium and a half; one of the minor miracles of history (WILLIAMS, 1985, p5).

In other words, through English legislation, Wales ceased to exist as a political and geographical entity, it quite simply could have become West England, in very much the same way as Cornwall – also a "Celtic nation" – has become, but rather it has continued to exist as a nation through force of culture and resistance and sheer will of the people who have resisted and refused to become English. Even more so, over hundreds of years, beginning with the Norman and Flemish colonizers in the 11th centuries, right up to English and Italian immigrants attracted to the heavy iron, steel and coal industries in the 19th Century, Wales has been absorbing these settlers and the descendants of these settlers themselves have become, in a sense, Welsh. In areas in which there has been a larger influx of immigrants, principally the industrialized South East, the Welsh language has all but died out but a culture has thrived and so much so that, as Williams pointed out, a new Wales has been invented. Since Williams wrote those words in 1985, rather than becoming more "English", Wales has gained more and more political autonomy. Following a referendum in 1997 to grant more political power to

Wales, the National Assembly for Wales was created in 1998 and in the years since several so called Government of Wales Acts have been passed granting autonomy in areas such as agriculture, economic development, education, health, housing, social services, tourism and transport. With Scotland calling for a referendum for independence in 2014, of which by a narrow margin was opted against, it is possible that Wales can head down that same pathway within a few years, a growing feeling of national identity bolstering a political change.

1.2 Memory

Collective memory, a concept explored by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1980), is the idea that any social group, of any size, share common knowledge and memories which are derived and formed or constructed from unclear impressions and can be passed on through generations. Cubitt (2007) suggests that the term "collective memory" has displaced the terms "myth", "folk history" or "oral history" and has for varying reasons been increasingly employed as a focus of study amongst historians. In this sense, this clashes with the traditional objective historiography – more of which I examine below – of the recording of factual important events and achievements of great monarchs and generals all neatly laid out with their corresponding dates on a timeline. Having knowledge of this historical data provides us with sterile information, we learn that the Normans invaded England in 1066 and subsequently William the Conqueror was crowned king; we learn that Hitler committed suicide in 1945 and that the defeat of Germany and the Soviet occupation of East Berlin initiated the Cold War. However, it is the collective memory which forms our ideas and conceptions of the past – our history – in an entirely subjective way according to the social group, micro and macro, into which we are inserted, and it is this history in its turn which forms our national and individual identities.

The Norman version of the invasion, recounted meticulously on the Bayeux Tapestry, undoubtedly differed somewhat from the Saxon account; William invaded because he believed that the Saxon king Edward had promised him the throne of England, Harold Godwinson, Edward's successor, had the same idea about himself, and was in a position to be able to act quickly enough to claim the throne. How these two different accounts filtered down and how it was perceived by the general populations at that time, we shall never know,

though these perceptions would have remained in the collective memories of those populations for centuries. Similarly, and this from a personal point of view, having grown up in Britain in the 60s and 70s and having served in the British Army throughout the 80s – on active service during the "Cold War" – I formed an impression that the communist Soviet state was an evil machine of destruction which would at any moment launch nuclear devastation upon the west and consequently dominate the world. It is highly probably that a young man growing up in the Soviet Union and serving in the Soviet army in the 80s would have had the same ideas about the "evil" Capitalist west.

Historically, a colonizing power imposes laws, prohibits native customs and practices, even language, and implements an education that effectively oppresses and alters the collective memory of the colonized nation. The English point of view in the 19th century of Wales being a primitive backward country in need of radical educational reform, ideas formed by government commissioned research into education – more of which we shall see below – would have been far different from the Welsh speaking community's idea of a rich ancient culture, struggling for survival in face of an oppressive patronizing colonial power which is attempting to eradicate it. In this sense, from the 19th century, or we could say even a process which began in the 12th century, the Welsh collective memory, through history, language and culture has been swayed and a large part of this memory of a Wales before colonization has been lost forever and new versions have been put into its place.

In the 18th century and through the 19th century, a general revival of interest in cultural identity spread through Ireland, Wales and Scotland. Where practices and customs had long been forgotten or where the real history was an "inconvenient truth", gaps in the memory were filled from myth and legend and alternative histories were conjured up. An example of this is a perspective of Scottish history; in 1761 James MacPherson appropriated an Irish history and transformed it to the Scottish highlands and through the publication of a series of epic poems, supposedly written by Ossian an ancient Celtic character and the narrator of the poems, created an ancient history for the highlanders who had in fact settled in the region, from Ireland, from the 5th century. The Ossian poems placed the Highlanders as the natives of the region from at least four hundred years previously. John MacPherson, a minister on the Isle of Skye, Scotland, coincidently sharing the same surname but otherwise unrelated, then wrote a background history to the Ossian story claiming that the Irish had stolen the Highlanders' history. The Ossian poems were later proved fake but the history had stuck in popular memory and the ancient Scottish highlander was born. Further to this, the traditional

Scottish kilt, worn by the Scottish Celts since ancient times, was in fact not. The kilt was an Englishman's invention and an adaptation of a long plaid coat. Englishman Thomas Rawlinson an 18th century industrialist employed highlanders to supply timber for fuel furnaces in England. Rawlinson observed that the men were unable to work very well in heavy robes and so he designed the kilt, adapted from the heavy coat (TREVOR-ROPER, 1983). The image of the Scottish Highlander in his tartan kilt (one specific pattern for each clan) was then popularized by the writings of Sir Walter Scott in the 19th century in a similar way to Simôes Lopes Neto's (2010) "Gaucho" in his work *Contos Gauchescos*. The Scotsman's clan tartan was devised by Scott for a royal pageant and accepted and adopted by the clans themselves, an "ancient tradition" of the 19th century. Mel Gibson's Hollywood blockbuster *Braveheart* further endorsed stereotyped images of the ancient clansman in a kilt and face-painted with blue woad (a characteristic of the ancient Picts who inhabited Scotland a thousand years or so before the events of the film).

In Wales too, a search for a cultural identity gained popularity in the 18th and 19th centuries at the time when Wales was almost entirely absorbed under English rules and conventions due to mass immigration, education policies and a feeling amongst the gentry that the English language was the language of the educated and of the future. As with Scotland, where there were large gaps in the memories of history and tradition, these were filled with invention and elaboration. The *Eisteddfod*, a culture and music festival and competition was first recorded as having been held at the court of Lord Rhys in south-west Wales in 1176; the tradition was revived towards the end of the 18th century and in 1815, Iolo Morganwg, a stonemason and antiquarian incorporated the "Gorsedd of Bards of the Island of Britain" into the festival, giving it a ceremonial characteristic of an ancient tradition. The *Gorsedd*, which can be translated as "throne", was established by Morganwg (whose actual name was Edward Williams, Iolo Morganwg being a Bardic name) who claimed that the bards were the successors of the ancient druids. Morganwg created a whole set of "ancient" bardic "rules" of rites, rituals and mythology which were incorporated into the *Eisteddfod* festival and adopted by a newly emerging neo-druidism religion. Morganwg's "ancient" rituals and ceremony are still practiced in the *Eisteddfodau* (plural form) of today. Morganwg also played a part in the creation of the Welsh myth of Prince Madoc's "discovery" and "colonization" of North America in the 12th century. Madoc was one of the many sons of Owain Gwynedd, ruler of north-west Wales between 1137 and 1170 and grandfather of Llewelyn Fawr. Madoc is said to have voyaged overseas and discovered landfall, North

America, he then returned to Wales gathered up a number of people to colonize the land, set sail westwards and was never seen again. This story was popularized during Tudor times as a claim of sovereignty over the Spanish for the New World discoveries. In the late 18th century, when the interest of Celtic culture and Welsh matters were kindled once again, John Williams, a Welsh minister and historian residing in London, published his version of the events and Morganwg backed up the story with "documents" proving that the descendants of Madoc and his colonizers still survived as native-American Welsh speaking tribes. These tribes were never found even though a "Madogian" Society had been formed which encouraged emigration, to some success, to the United States.

It is entirely feasible that Madoc sailed across the ocean and made landfall, it has, after all, been proven that the Viking Leif Erikson made a similar journey some 200 years previously. In Madoc's case there is no concrete archaeological or documented evidence, only popular hearsay. Curiously though, in his book *Princes and People of Wales*, John Miles, retired army Lt. Coronel and free-lance journalist and historian, writes,

> "It is impossible to say just when the expedition set out […]. The point of departure was Aber Kenion Gwnyon, now known as Rhos-on-Sea. Madoc and Einion made their way by a south-west course, leaving Ireland to the north. They passed east of the Azores and the ships, carried by the current, made the crossing of the Atlantic, finding landfall at Mobile Bay on the Gulf of Mexico" (MILES, 1977, p.44)

Miles continues on this vein of an evidential history of the story of Madoc but with no reference to source or any explanation of where the information originated. This is in contrast to the style of Christopher Winn (2007) in which he uses the phrases: "Prince Madoc, *who is said to have sailed* …" (my italics) (WINN, 2007, p.78) and "*Many people believe* that Prince Madoc did survive…" (my italics) (Idem.). Whatever the veracity of the Miles' version of the history of Prince Madoc, it is entirely believable, and contributes to the popular memory of the Welsh people who will no doubt defend the story rigorously.

The story of Prince Llewelyn Fawr's favourite hunting dog Gelert is another example of invented history transformed into popular memory, I have included my own version of the folk tale as an annex (annex 5). In a field near the village of Beddgelert (Gelert's Grave) in north-west Wales there is large stone, protected by a low fence, which marks the grave of Llewelyn Fawr's hunting dog Gelert. Two slate memorials (one engraved in English, the other in the Welsh language) recount the story and claim that the body of the dog is buried on that

spot. In actual fact there is no body of a dog buried under the stone and the whole story is an adaptation of a traditional folk story in order to attract tourists to the village, and in this sense the ruse works. The story is in fact an ancient folk tale of which there are variants in many countries and cultures. In the early 1800s an enterprising hotel owner of the village, constructed the "grave" and connected the folk tale with the 13th century prince Llewelyn who ruled over that region of Wales. The name of the village originates not from the name of a dog but from the name of a Christian missionary, Celert, who settled in that area in the 8th century, any unsuspecting tourist who now visits the site could quite well believe that the bones of a brave hunting dog, once belonging to Llewelyn Fawr, are buried in that exact spot as there is nothing to indicate otherwise.

The dark side of collective memory however can be manifest in "chosen people" and "promised land" myths which have shown throughout history to have caused wars, conflicts and intolerance in varying regions of the world. As an illustration of this, in the city of Aodhya in northeast India there is continuing tension between the Hindu and the Islamic communities based on the Hindu belief that Aodhya is the ancient birthplace of the god Rama and therefore that any construction of mosques is a defilement of the holy place. However, a study at the University of Allahabad shows that the myth of the birthplace of the god Rama was created in the 19th century and that a 16th century mosque, destroyed by Hindu zealots in 1992 was not in fact ordered to be built by the Muslim Mogul Babur, despite Islamic popular belief (SRIVASTAVA, 1994).

Taken as history then, collective memory is at its best harmlessly dubious and amusing but at its worst offensive and even dangerous in the sense that people can be led to believe in histories that would cause resentment and mistrust, this is prevalent and repeated through history in land disputes, from small scale family feuds to entire countries, when each side believes they are the legitimate claimants to the territory in question.

1.3 National Identity-*Welshness*

As we have seen, modern Welsh identity has been formed from a historical fusion of myth and invention – the Welsh "inventing themselves" as Gwyn Williams pointed out – and a persisting ancient British culture, albeit vaguely remembered and pieced together.

Descendants of Flemish and Norman settlers in medieval times became Welsh, and hundreds of years later English and Italian settlers during the coal and iron industries' golden ages are now the men and women of the South Wales Valleys. This blend of cultures has transformed and defined Welsh identity as it is today and it is a sad irony that the majority of the inhabitants of Wales, those that call themselves Welsh, do not speak the native language. Welsh speaking Welshmen and women clearly have a defining feature of their identity, however, for that majority who, for varying reasons, do not have this linguistic ability, tracing a national identity usually falls to national symbols and unavoidable stereotypes. The stereotype buffoonish Welshman, has been used for comic effect since at least Shakespeare's time, Glendower, Fluellen and Sir Hugh Evans in *Henry IV Part One, Henry V* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* respectively, are Shakespeare's own contributions. In modern times, complete with an exaggerated south-Wales valley's accent and colloquialisms such as "boyo" "bach" and "mun" the same character has been used on British national TV and film for decades – one only has to think of the character Spike in Roger Mitchell's *Notting Hill* (1999) – in a way that now would be considered as bordering on racist. In the last few decades however, the independent Welsh film and TV industry has created programmes and films with more true to life character portrayal, examples of these are *Hedd Wyn* (1996), *Solomon and Gaenor* (1999) and the TV series *Hinterland* (2013).

Amongst the symbols that represent Welsh identity the most conspicuous and powerful is *Y Ddraig Goch*, the Red Dragon (annex 11), which has been the national flag of Wales since 1959 but has an ancient history stretching back to the Roman occupation of Britain, more of which I shall explore below. Another prominent symbol is the leek (annex 11), plastic or cloth representations of which are worn as badges on St. David's Day, 1st of March, and carried by fans to football and rugby matches around the world. The origin of the use of this vegetable as a symbol of Wales are obscure. According to legend, Cadwaladr, the 7th century Welsh king, ordered his men to wear a leek to distinguish themselves from the Saxons in battle; the story also has Llewelyn Fawr issue the same order for battle against the Normans. It is feasible that both leaders had issued such an order, Llewelyn hearing of his ancestor's strategy, imitates the same action as a clever tactic, or it could be that in some ancient historical battle, a British leader had the idea and, in the way that legends are created, this was attributed to one of the great leaders. There is a possible explanation to the creation of this legend; Llewelyn Fawr's court bard Llywarch, described his patron as leading an army of green and white clad soldiers (LLOYD, 2016) – the colours of the vegetable – whether the

vegetable was chosen as a symbol for Wales because of the soldiers' uniform or *vice-versa*, we shall never know, but by the 15th century the same colours were adopted as a background to the Red Dragon symbol. Whatever the historical truths of the matter are, by Shakespeare's time, the leek had become recognised as being associated with Wales, in *Henry V*. In this play the character Fluellen mentions that the Welshmen in the king's service wore leeks in their caps as a means of identification and the king himself agrees to wear a leek, claiming to be Welsh, on St. David's Day.

As well as the leek on St. David's day, a daffodil, the yellow narcissus flower (annex 11), is also worn, mostly by women and can now be seen alongside the dragon and leek at sporting events and in souvenir shops as a symbols of Wales and Welsh culture. The use of a daffodil was promoted in the 19th century, as a more aesthetic alternative to the leek (MORGAN, 2013), and, since the leek and daffodil share almost the same name in Welsh, *cennin* – leek, *cennin pedr* – ((Saint) Peter's leek), daffodil, it's promotion and adoption as a symbol would not have been difficult. Furthermore, the yellow daffodil grows abundantly during the spring time in all of the rural areas and inner city gardens of Wales and so it is easy to see why this flower would be adopted as a pleasing symbol, just as the thistle of Scotland, the shamrock of Ireland and the red rose of England.

Lastly, as far as national symbols are concerned are the three feathers and *Ich Dien* motto (annex 11). This symbol has been in use as the Royal Arms for the Prince of Wales since at least the 14th century, firstly by Edward the Black Prince, Prince of Wales from 1343 to 1376 (BOUTELL, 2007). Popular belief is that the Black Prince acquired the symbol from King John of Bohemia at the Battle of Crecy in 1346, however there is no evidence to support this. Like the "Saint Peter's Leek", the feathers' motto, *Ich Dein*, German for 'I serve', help in its adaptation and adoption by the Welsh, since *Ich Dein* is similarly sounding to the Welsh *Eich Dyn*, meaning "your man", and, it could be argued, has a similar meaning. The symbol is the Prince of Wales's personal Royal Badge but it has also used as the official badge of the Welsh national rugby team and the Welsh Regiments of the British Army.

Other elements that can point to an idea of national identity of Wales include geography and industry. Geographically, Wales has a greater area of rural landscape than urban populated centres, forming a traditionally agricultural society, the people of which feel bound to the land and have done so for centuries, following the same way of life as their ancestors before them. By contrast, especially in the south-east valleys region, heavy industries have grown since the 18th century. These industries, coal and iron, as well as

attracting thousands of immigrants into the area, changed the landscapes from rural green valleys, to polluted, blackened densely populated urban centres. The population relied on the coal mines or the iron foundries for employment and means of living, from this a low-wage, working class society emerged. The unions and workplace stimulated leisure activities and following the *Eisteddfod* tradition which has its roots in the 12th century and was encouraged and promoted in the 19th century, in the workplaces and chapels, male voice choirs began to be popular. Due to this tradition and the *Eisteddfod*, Wales gained a reputation as "The Land of Song" and from this, another stereotypical image is that all Welshmen are supposed to be good singers or musicians. The revival of the *Eisteddfod* and the male voice choirs is an echo of the ancient tradition of the bard in the Celtic society. As the Welsh are the descendants of these ancient Britons, this love for music and poetry has remained in popular memory, forming a concept of the Welsh as being a musical nation.

With regards to sport, as an alternative to the increasingly popular football, rugby, was adopted by the working class population of south Wales in the 19th century and has since become Wales's national sport. Rugby was introduced from England, traditionally a "gentleman's" sport, that is, invented and originally played at the public schools[2], and has become a huge success in Wales with most large towns boasting a rugby club and the sport as a compulsory subject on the physical education curriculum at schools. As football is embedded into Brazil's culture and society, so rugby is in Wales, a traveller through the country cannot fail to notice in every town and village, at least one field boasting the distinctive H shaped posts which mark either end of the rugby pitch. Nevertheless, though very popular in Wales, it would be inaccurate to state that every Welsh person likes or plays rugby, the sport has become symbolic of Wales but it touches on stereotypical when used to describe the Welsh population.

It would take years of study and volumes of work to comprehensively lay out every element of what could be constituted as Welsh identity, I have here highlighted some of the more evident manifestations of what we could call *Welshness*, however, as already noted, this is difficult to pinpoint without resorting to symbols and stereotypes; being Welsh and having a Welsh identity is a matter of construct and affinity.

[2] Paradoxically, so called "public" schools in Britain are actually fee paying "Private" schools, which cater for the higher levels of society.

2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

2.1 On History

To merely state that history is the study of the past is far over-simplifying the answer to the question of a definition of the discipline. Following a 19th century traditional, positivist viewpoint of history reporting straightforward facts, dates and important events, French historian Marc Bloch (2008) and his English contemporary Edward Hallett Carr (2008) devoted volumes of work and essays in search of properly defining and restructuring the emerging new social science of their time (notably, Bloch's *The Historian's Craft* and Carr's *What is History?*). Carr points out that one of the main issues to discuss is the matter of what constitutes history, and the difficulties the historian has in sorting through infinite masses of information, usually in the form of ancient manuscripts or more recent documents, in order to choose what will become *history*. Moreover, a principal characteristic of history is the manner in which the historian analyses, interprets and reproduces the documented information. These interpretations vary greatly over time and amongst geo-political entities. A striking example of this is how King Richard III of England, much vilified during the Tudor period, has been the subject of a further study due to the recent discovery of his remains under a city centre car park[3]. This research, culminating in the staggering discovery of the King's bones, was instigated by The Richard III Society, based in England, which has campaigned for many years to reverse the image of the evil despotic monarch that Richard III has gained due to interpretations of history and a popular belief in fiction, namely the works of Shakespeare. Historian Eric Hobsbawm observes,

> History is the raw material for nationalist or ethnic or fundamentalist ideologies […]. The past is an essential element perhaps *the* essential

[3] A full documentary of this discovery can be seen at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SgdmR_cNP0

> element, in these ideologies. If there is no suitable past, it can always be invented. (HOBSBAWM, 1997, p.5).

Since the Plantagenet dynasty was supplanted by the Tudors through a series of conflicts known as the War of the Roses, culminating with the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 in which Richard III was killed and Henry Tudor was crowned Henry VII of England, the Tudors had to consolidate their power and control over an England which was still in shock and unsure of where loyalties should lie. What better way to do this than commission a popular playwright to concoct a sensational story of an evil, child- murdering deformed hunch-back king? Just as TV and the media are used nowadays to sway popular opinion, and propaganda films are used in times of war and conflict, Shakespeare's plays, especially those dealing with historical events and characters, were a powerful means of getting the public on your side.

Hobsbawm states that historians have a great responsibility, "to historical facts in general, and for criticizing the politico-ideological abuse of history in particular" (HOBSBAWM, 1997, p.6). About these responsibilities, he notes the immense difficulties the historian faces since, "the current fashion for novelists to base their plots on recorded reality rather than inventing them, thus fudging the border between historical fact and fiction." (HOBSBAWM, 1997, p.6) and a post-modernist "fashion" within literature and anthropology departments of Western universities which implies that, "all facts claiming objective existence are simply intellectual constructions – in short, that there is no clear difference between fact and fiction." (HOBSBAWM, 1997, p.6). The problem is, Hobsbawm, points out, that there *is* a clear difference – "Either Elvis Presley is dead or he isn't" (HOBSBAWM, 1997, p.6) is the sharp, frank example he offers – and it is the historian's task to sift through mountains of information and carry out a thorough analysis in order to offer a clear and precise interpretation of an event or period at which that historian himself was not present. In this sense the historian is dependent on second- (or even in some cases, third, fourth, *etc*.) hand information from unreliable and, more often than not, biased, eye-witnesses.

Another example of a mutating unreliable history is the legend of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, borne out of the chaotic period of the Anglo-Saxon colonisation of the land that would become England. For the most part the stories of Arthur were made popular through Thomas Malory's compilation of tales, *Le Mort d'Arthur*, written in the 15th century. Malory had in fact collected and compiled stories of King Arthur from different and varying sources, even from as far away as France. These stories had been passed from

generation to generation since the time of the aforementioned Anglo-Saxon colonisation during the 5th to the 6th centuries. One would think that such a great and powerful leader would surely be mentioned in some document of the time. However, contemporary chronicles such as *Di Excidio Britanniae* (*The Ruin of Britain*) and *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, have no mention at all of any leader with the name Arthur, or the Latinised, Arturius (SCHAMA, 2000). The former was written by the Welsh monk Gildas in the mid-6th Century, who records the history of Britain of the 5th and 6th centuries describing principal battles between Saxons and Britons. One of the most important battles in which the Saxons were defeated by the Britons was the battle of Mount Badon fought in the late 5th or early 6th century in the South West of England. Gildas records the victorious leader of these Britons as Romano-Celt war leader Ambrosius Aurelianus, a descendant of Roman and Celtic noble families. However, in the 9th century, another Welsh monk, Nennius, in *Historia Brittonum*, *The History of the Britons*, attributes the victory over the Saxons to none other than Arthur (SCHAMA, 2000); *Historia Brittonum* is one of Malory's sources for his creation of *Le Mort d'Arthur.*

One hypothesis suggested by novelist Bernard Cornwell through his trilogy known as *The Warlord Chronicles*: *The Winter King*, *Enemy of God* and *Excalibur*, is that the lack of any real recorded evidence that Arthur existed is due to the fact that the warrior king never fully converted to Christianity and was therefore written out of history by the Christian monk chroniclers of the time. In these novels the first person narrator is an old man, who, through defeat and subjugation, had been forced to become a monk. He recalls his days as a great warrior before being captured, under the command of Arthur and now he is writing his memories of those times, in secret as the Abbot of the monastery in which he abides forbids him to write anything about the pagan British warrior king. Marion Bradley (1983), in her well-known novel *The Mists of Avalon*, also posits the question of Arthur's conflict between the old pagan Druidic religion and the newly emerging Christianity. Whether he at all existed and converted to Christianity we shall never know, however the legendary figure of Arthur had become Christian somewhere through the stories circulated between the 5th and 15th centuries, culminating in Malory's epic: a great leader, defending the Christian faith against the marauding pagan Saxon hordes, and, with his knights, going on a quest to find the Holy Grail. The stories highly romanticised to fit in with the chivalric and Christian codes of the middle ages giving us an anachronic knights-in-shining-armour image far from the pagan Romano-Celtic tribal leader figure of the 5th century. What then does the modern historian

have as evidence of the existence of King Arthur? Only some fanciful stories from the 15th century and an unreliable document of the 9th century. Moreover, in an ironic twisted development of this *history-legend* the hero figure of Arthur was appropriated by the very people that – *according to legend*, I am obliged to add – he was defending his land against. English King Edward I, after defeating the Welsh princes and subjugating the land, was hailed as the heir to King Arthur. At court in North Wales the king fashioned a round table where his knights celebrated the victory over the Welsh. Furthermore, an inscription on Maximillian I's tomb in Innsbruck, Germany acknowledges Arthur's title as *Konig von England,* king of the English (DAVIES, 2007).

As we have seen, the history that we read today is a complex result of an analysis and interpretation of the historian from selections of documents or evidence that does not have any guarantee of authenticity of any form of truth. In this sense, we are "allowed" to see only what chroniclers have selected for us to see, and furthermore, what historians consider important enough to report; Carr observes,

> Our picture has been pre-selected and pre-determined for us, not so much by accident as by people who were consciously or unconsciously imbued with a particular view and thought the facts which supported that view worth preserving. (CARR, 2008, p.12)

More recent history, within living memory, such as from World War II, can of course rely on eye-witness accounts as a source of information to build up a picture of how events unfolded. However, research about memory in the field of psychology has shown that eye-witness accounts can be unreliable due to various factors such as anxiety or stress and that a witness will recall only information which makes sense or has more meaning for them (McLEOD, 2009).

One of the most polemic instances of conflicting eye-witness accounts is that of the events of 30 January 1972, in which British soldiers fired on a peaceful civil rights march through Londonderry in Northern Ireland and killed 13 people, the day became popularly known as Bloody Sunday. According to the testimonies of the soldiers, they believed themselves to be in danger of their lives as they were being shot at from somewhere in the crowd they were facing. In his book *The IRA*, Irish historian and writer Tim Pat Coogan (1987) states, "However, *no one* else in Derry that day, including some journalist eyewitnesses of the calibre of Simon Winchester, then of *The Guardian*, *heard any shots* until

the army began firing" (COOGAN, 1987, p. 344) (my italics). Conversely, in a *Guardian* newspaper report from the time, by aforementioned Simon Winchester, "those of us at the meeting *heard only one shot before the soldiers opened up* with their high velocity rifles" (WINCHESTER, 1972), (my italics); and furthermore in the same article, Winchester quotes another eye-witness at the scene as saying, "it was impossible to say who fired first"[3] (WINCHESTER, 1972). In another archived *Guardian* report of that day, journalist Simon Hoggart, quotes the commanding officer of the paratroopers as saying,

> We moved very quickly when the firing started. Their shots were highly inaccurate. I believe in fact they lost their nerve when they saw us coming in. Nail bombs were thrown and one man who was shot was seen to be lighting a bomb as he was shot. This is open to conjecture, but I personally saw a man with an M1 carbine rifle on the balcony of a flat. I don't believe people were shot in the back while they were running away. A lot of us do think that some of the people were shot by their own indiscriminate firing. (HOGGART, 1972).

This is a widely differing account to that of other witnesses at the scene on the day. According to the marchers, nobody in the crowd was armed and everything was peaceful until the soldiers began firing; according to the commanding officer and several of the soldiers, the marchers were armed with a variety of weapons including assault rifles and nail bombs and were in the act of firing the weapons and throwing the bombs before the soldiers opened fire. There is also an obvious, albeit slight, discrepancy between Coogan's account and the Guardian reporter's account, Coogan reports than no one, including Simon Winchester, heard any shots, before the soldiers opened fire; and yet Winchester himself reports hearing a shot. Who fired a gun first? Was it the soldiers or was it someone in the crowd of protesting civilians? An initial inquiry set up immediately after the events of the day, known as the Widgery Tribunal, cleared the soldiers and their commanding officer of any blame (COOGAN, 1987). This created such an outcry that a demand for another, independent investigation was called for which was finally instigated more than twenty years later in 1998. The Saville Inquiry as it was known, which was concluded and published in 2010 , found that the soldiers who had given testimonies for the Widgery report had deliberately lied to protect themselves. The conclusion of the Saville Inquiry (SAVILLE, 1998) was that the soldiers fired first and were directly to blame for the deaths of unarmed civilians. The Widgery report is no longer available online, however a report written by Henry Foy (2010) about the discrepancies and differences between the two reports can be found at *The Guardian* website.

Had there been no outcry about the Widgery report and no consequent further inquiry, "history" would have told us that the British soldiers were attacked by a large crowd of belligerent civilians, many of them armed with guns and bombs. As we can see in this example, as well as the psychological issues that can make a witness unreliable, the witness can deliberately lie for a variety of reasons, usually to protect him/herself. In the same way, eyewitness accounts of historical battles and rebellions vary considerably; the 14th century French chronicler, Jean Froissart, puts the numbers of the crowd at the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 in England as 50,000 whereas a more likely figure is between 5,000 and 10,000 (SCHAMA, 2000). Bruce Campbell states "*roughly* 10,000 insurgents *may* have assembled" (CAMPBELL, 2006, p.223) (my italics), a greatly varying number that illustrates that we never can know for sure the exact truth of these events.

History then is not a straightforward matter of the study of the past and a reporting of that past as a chronological sequence of events; some singular facts we know to be undoubtedly true, Elvis Presley *is* dead (though this is still disputed by some people), great historical events on the other hand, such as the world wars, need to be treated, analysed and reported with meticulous care and attention.

2.2 The Historical Novel

Over the years there has been a continuing fascination for identifying with and relating to the past through the production and consumption of historical fiction. Kate Mitchell (2013) notes the public interest reflected in the number of historical novels on best seller lists and as recipients of literary awards. Mitchell observes that when the Institute of Historical Research in the United Kingdom held its annual conference in 2011 the main topic discussed was historical fiction and an internet website was opened for the public because of popular request.

From Sir Walter Scott's *Waverly* and *Ivanhoe* to today's best seller writer Ken Follett's *Pillars of the Earth* and his latest New York Times listed *Winter of the World*, these novels are an alternative window into the past which may or may not be an historically accurate account of events, though, as we have seen above, the history narrative itself may or may not be historically accurate. Historical novels offer an alternative window into the past in

the sense that, though events may have been recorded at the time by contemporary chroniclers, a novelist can create a more detailed verisimilar scene around the event taking place, such as an exchange of views going on between knights observing King Henry II of England as he rages about the archbishop Thomas Becket. Ken Follett, in *Pillars of the Earth*, places one of the principal fictional characters as one of the historical four knights who murdered Becket after the king intimated that something had to be done; the knights understood this as a direct order to assassinate the archbishop. Although the king's words were recorded at the time – not, as popular belief would have it, "Will no-one rid me of this turbulent priest?" (SCHAMA, 2000) – the words of the knights were not. Follett suggests a brief conversation between the knights as, "Some of us think the time has come for sterner measures", "What do you mean?", "Execution!" (FOLLETT, 1990, p.953). Whether these actual words were spoken or not, the created verisimilitude is appropriate for the event.

The author's creation of the fictional universe within the real universe attributes tangible personality and identity to figures we may otherwise have only known about through tedious school history lessons of meaningless dates and names. The author is also at liberty to create a personality and life story around an otherwise anonymous figure recorded present at an historical event whose actions may well be part of documented history; in London in 1381, when the rebel leader Wat Tyler confronted the 14 year old King Richard II during the Peasants' Revolt, someone in the crowd was heard to shout out an accusation that Tyler was a thief, according to Schama, the accuser was a young squire in the entourage of the king (SCHAMA, 2000). Author Edward Rutherfurd, in his epic historical novel *London: The Novel*, puts the words into the mouth of the main fictional character in the chapter that deals with that period of history, "And then James Bull entered English history, 'I know that fellow,' he blurted out, his voice ringing across Smithfield. 'He's a highwayman from Kent.'" (RUTHERFURD, 1998, p.575). The narrator's meta-fictional announcement that Bull "entered English history" makes the bridge from the novel to a history narrative, reminding the informed reader that this fictional novel is dealing with real history.

This meta-fictional bridging within the narrative, as well as writers' notes in prefaces and end notes, began in early historical novels as the authors' response to reviewers' anxieties that the readers may not know of how to interpret the novel, i.e. as fiction or history (STEVENS, 2013). In this way, the author allows the reader to recognize the historical facts within the fictional narrative. In her novels, American author Sharon Penman frequently reinforces a narrative of a specific historical event by inserting fragments of medieval

manuscripts, "From the chronicle of the thirteenth-century monk Robert of Gloucester: 'Such was the murder of Evesham, for battle it was none'" (PENMAN, 1988, p.527); by changing to a very formal narrative style in short paragraphs in order to convey an impression of a history narrative, "On November 12th of God's Year, 1276, the royal council of the English King judged Llewelyn ap Gruffydd to be in rebellion, and war was declared against Wales" (PENMAN, 1991, p.227); or, as with Rutherfurd's meta-fictional bridging style sentences that appear throughout the fictional narrative, such as in this example, "The number of Jews hanged was given as nineteen in the official records, as two hundred and ninety-three by the chroniclers of the time" (PENMAN, 1991, p.356)

According to Hungarian literary critic Georg Lukács, one of the first to study the historical novel, this genre evolved from the realist novels of the 19th century, which in their turn emerged because of socio-cultural upheavals of the time: the Napoleonic Wars, the rising wave of the Industrial Revolution and the beginnings of capitalism (LUKÁCS, 1983). Earlier, 18th century Gothic novels, such as Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, demonstrate elements of historical fiction that Sir Walter Scott would elaborate into what are widely considered as the first historical novels in Western culture (de GROOT, 2010). *The Castle of Otranto* is presented as a 16th century translation, of a much earlier Italian manuscript, which was "found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England" (WALPOLE, 1766, p. v). Walpole demonstrates a sense of authenticity to historiography in the preface to *The Castle of Otranto*, when the narrator observes, "[The writer] must represent his actors as believing [the manners of the times]" (WALPOLE, 1766, p. v), however, Lucáks notes that,

> What is lacking in the so-called historical novel before Sir Walter Scott is precisely the specifically historical, that is, derivation of the individuality of characters from the historical peculiarity of their age (LUCÁKS, 1983, p.19)

Furthermore, "in the most famous 'historical novel' of the eighteenth century, Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, history is likewise treated as mere costumery" (LUCÁKS, 1983, p.19), that is, as just a decorative background to the plot. The individuality of characters and bringing history to the forefront of the novel is later developed by Scott with his publication of the so called *Waverely* novels beginning in 1814 with a book of that name.

Waverley deals with the historical events of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 in Scotland, an attempt by the exiled Charles Edward Stuart, the son of King James II of England, to regain the throne for the House of Stuart. In this novel, a young officer in the

English army, Edward Waverley, travels to the highlands but there sympathises with the Jacobean cause and is captured and accused of treason. The Jacobean highlanders rescue Waverley and he is taken to a castle to meet Charles Stuart, popularly known as "Bonnie Prince Charlie", pretender to the British throne. Scott is able to insert fictional characters into the historical setting and events to interact with historical characters such as the Scottish rebel barons and the pretender Prince, to form a believable history. Lukács (1983) notes that, what differentiates Scott's work from the earlier Gothic novels and the realistic social novels of the 18th and early 19th centuries is that, rather than merely describing the social norms of the time using the historic period as a background, the historic events in Scott's novels have a direct impact on the characters and the society described. This, according to Lukács, is the beginning of the historical novel.

Waverley was the first of a series of novels which Scott published anonymously and which are known as the *Waverly Novels*, each one being published as 'from the author of Waverley'. One of the better known of these, *Ivanhoe* (pub.1819), deals with an earlier period of history, 13th century England, and the conflicts between the Saxons and the Anglo-Normans who had already been established as England's ruling class having supplanted the Saxons over 200 years previously. Once again the eponymous protagonist interacts with factual-historical characters within a factual-historical framework, with an authenticity that communicates as much reliable information as an historical narrative. In order to do this, the authentic and accurate portrayal of the fictional characters must be consistent with the real characters; they must be given life into the world where the historical characters already exist. In this sense Lukács notes,

> What matters therefore in the historical novel is not the retelling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. What matters is that we should re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality. (LUKÁCS, 1983, p.42)

Scott's work had a profound influence on 19th century writers, not only authors of fiction, but also historians; Thomas Macaulay complained that the duty of the historian had been appropriated by the novelist (de GROOT, 2010). Charles Dickens is amongst the British writers upon which Scott's work had great impact. Dickens's first historic novel *Barnaby Rudge* (2012) has as its historical background the anti-Catholic riots of London in 1780. In his narrative Dickens describes the violence and destruction of parts of London through the

personal ‘eye-witness’ accounts of the characters caught up in the unrest. Much the same discontent transferred to the streets of 18th century Paris is described by the characters of *A Tale of Two Cities* (1993) embroiled in the events of the French Revolution.

In Europe and Russia, writers such as Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert and Pushkin were following the developments of the historical literary trend and Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* (2007) became an outstanding example of the Russian literature form of the historical novel.

By the beginning of the 20th century the historical novel had become a clear sub-genre and bibliographical guides were published, such as Ernest Baker’s *A Guide to Historical Fiction* (1914) listing the options available from around the world. At that time Baker observed that historical fiction had educational value and would be of interest for both a student or a professor of history and “for the reader interested in history who has not the time or inclination to study the most serious historians” (BAKER, 1914, p. vii). Furthermore, Baker recognised the importance of the contribution that historical fiction had to offer to the study of history,

> Historical fiction is not history, but it is often better than history. A fine historical painting, a pageant, or a play, may easily teach more and carry a deeper impression than whole chapters of description and analysis. […] a good [historical novel] – though chronology may be at fault and facts inaccurately stated, will probably succeed in making a period live in the imagination when text-books merely give us dry bones (BAKER, 1914, p. vii).

From evolving into a sub-genre in itself, the historical novel has since diversified into sub-sub-genres with the emergence of historical romance, adventure, war, and even science-fiction (time travel into the past). Amongst the last mentioned is Diana Gabaldon’s (1992) *Outlander,* in which the heroine, a Second World War nurse, travels back in time to 18th century Scotland and becomes involved in the Jacobite Rebellion; bringing the historical novel full circle back to where it began with Scott’s *Waverley*. Also in science-fiction, Kurt Vonnegut’s (1974) satirical *Slaughterhouse-Five* takes the historical novel into new dimensions of literary forms when the protagonist, Billy Pilgrim, finds himself in different time phases of his life, unexpectedly and with no set chronological pattern – which is also how the narrative is formed, a fragmented chronology – after being abducted and kept in a ‘zoo’ on a distant planet by alien beings. Through different periods of his life Pilgrim finds himself in pre- and Post-Second World War USA , in the war itself as a solder during the

Battle of the Bulge, which took place in the winter of 1944-45; and as a prisoner of war in Dresden when it was bombed by the allies in February 1945. The bombing of Dresden, one of the most destructive single events of the war, is used as the main historical background setting of the novel, it was there that the author himself was a prisoner of war, and during the night of the bombing, held in the cellar of the Slaughterhouse, designated number five. The Second World War is also the historical background framework for Ian McEwan's (2001) meta-fictional work *Atonement* in which the characters are involved in the Blitz, the bombing of London by the German *Luftwaffe* during the early 1940s; and the Allied military withdrawal from mainland Europe at the beaches of Dunkirk in the Spring of 1940.

The historical novel then has come a long way from 18th century Gothic, the social realist novels of the early 19th century and Walter Scott's *Waverly*. Historical fiction now includes various sub-genres and even novels which deal with alternative histories, or *uchronia*, such as William Overgard's (1980) *The Divide* set thirty years after a Nazi German victory of the Second World War; or Alan Moore's (1986) dystopian New York in his graphic novel *Watchmen*.

2.2.1 Reading Fiction, Learning History

In the late 19th century, Lobengula, the last king of the Ndebele people of what is now the country of Zimbabwe, was pursued to his death by British forces and his lands taken for the Crown colonies to become Rhodesia, named after the English magnate and empire builder Cecil John Rhodes. After it gained independence from Britain in 1965 two opposing factions fought a bloody civil war to wrest power from the white minority government. This was achieved in 1980 when the government of Robert Mugabe took power and Rhodesia was renamed Zimbabwe. Further South the two Boer wars of 1880s and the turn of the century respectively, involved British forces and the descendants of the 17th century Dutch settlers to South Africa, known as Boers. The British wished to control the main trade routes to India and also annex large regions which were known to be rich in mineral resources. The Boers, primarily a robust farming people, fought as fast moving mounted guerrillas in small units able to strike fast and withdraw to before the British could organize a defence. The British on the other hand adopted a 'scorched-earth' policy in which they burned the farm lands of the

Boers, in order to deprive them of their supplies, and interned their women and children in concentration camps, where many died of disease.

Many centuries before, in England, King Henry III and his son Edward, were captured by the forces of rebel baron Simon de Montfort at the Battle of Lewes in 1264. Edward pulled off a cunning and daring escape in which he challenged his captors to a horse race, after all the horses except his own had been exhausted in previous races. Edward then gathered support and mounted a raid on the Knights Templar gold bullion store in London in which he and his knight followers stole gold bars in order to finance their war against de Montfort. Edward was successful and de Montfort was finally killed and dismembered at the Battle of Evesham in 1265.

In 1974 the Greek Military Junta staged a *coup d'état* on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus in order to overthrow the government of Archbishop Makarios and unite Cyprus with mainland Greece. Turkey, taking this as a sign that the Turkish citizens of Cyprus would be persecuted and even that there would be the possibility of genocide, mounted a full military invasion and occupied the northern half of the island. Consequently the *coup* failed and Makarios was restored as President. However, because of the Turkish occupation of the North, Greek-Cypriot people living in this region were expelled to the South and conversely, Turkish citizens living in the South, moved north and a military border zone, complete with armed soldiers, barbed wire and mine fields, was created between the North and South. The island has remained divided ever since and the then established Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus remains unrecognised by the United Nations.

Above are three examples of world historical events unconnected in any way, except perhaps that the first and the last geographical locations have been part of the British Empire and the second at the very beginnings of the British Empire, Edward, as king, having conquered and colonised Wales. What brings these three pieces of historical information together here is that I have chosen to illustrate them as examples of history through literature. The above historical information was gleaned entirely from historical novels. The first, the histories of the Ndebele nation, Zimbabwe and the Boer Wars of South Africa are told in South African writer Wilbur Smith's 'Ballantyne novels', *A Falcon Flies*, *Men of Men*, *The Angles Weep* and *The Leopard Hunts in Darkness*, which follow the fortunes of the fictional Ballantyne family through these historical events from 1860 to 1980. The history of King Henry and Edward's capture and Edward's subsequent escape, armed bank robbery and victory in battle is told in Sharon Kay Penman's *Falls the Shadow*, which narrates the rise to

power and final defeat of Simon de Montfort. Finally the brief history of the military *coup* and Turkish invasion is told in American journalist Michael Jansen's novel, *The Aphrodite Plot*. The historical facts of these novels can be verified through documented history, it may or may not be important for the reader to know if these events really happened.

In this sense, we can say that historiography and historical fiction are in some ways similar, or arguably even the same, in that they both produce a narrative which conveys information that tells a story from a past time. A history narrative presents us with "historical factual events", however, the narrative of these "factual events" is the historian's interpretation of often unreliable evidence from the past. In the same way, a historical fiction narrative is the author's interpretation of this evidence, and furthermore, the author can construct personality traits and a cultural identity of historical characters based on documented descriptions of those characters' actions.

2.3 Historical Background: When was Wales?

2.3.1 Wales before Wales

Wales is often referred to as a Celtic nation, one of the few remaining, alongside Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall, the Isle of Man and Brittany. I use nation here, not with the meaning of an independent state under one government but rather with a meaning, as defined by Smith (2009) of a people sharing a common territory, language, customs and ultimately, a history. The question of identity already begins here with the matter of *Celtic;* linguistically, 'Celtic' languages are within the Indo-European family of languages and descended from a common Celtic, or Proto-Celtic, which spread around most of Europe, arriving in the British Isles in two waves, known as Q-Celtic and P-Celtic; the first developed into Goedelic, or Gaelic languages of which Irish and Scottish still remain; the second into Brythonic languages, of which include Cornish, Breton and Welsh (CRYSTAL 2010). Archaeological evidence has shown that these people, known as *Keltoi* by the ancient Greeks, spread out eastward and westward from central Europe around 800 BCE, arriving in the British Isles around 700 BCE. This is not to say that they were the first population of Britain, during the Iron Age the British Isles were already populated with Neolithic groups long before the

"Celtic" tribes began to arrive. These Neolithic peoples were responsible for such constructions as Stonehenge and Silbury Hill – a thirty metre high artificial mound in the South of England – demonstrating great engineering, organizational and logistical skills and indicating a relatively large population capable of assembling in great numbers at any given time, possibly for religious ceremonies. As well as these engineering feats, within the first millennia BCE the population of Britain had developed into a highly agrarian society, and with possession of fertile land and animal husbandry came the need for protection and shelter, and so hill forts, which are numerously dotted around the British Isles and range in size from small fortified enclosures to large hill-top areas of six hectares or more, began to appear. There is no evidence to suggest that the arrival of the Celtic people was an aggressive invasion or if they were met with a violent resistance or whether they integrated peacefully with the native population. It is impossible to tell how much influence the Celtic people had over the already rich culture, however according to Davies the orthodox view is that,

> the Celtic language and the essentials of Celtic culture were brought to Britain […] by small groups of migrants who were not large enough to change the basic racial composition of society but who were powerful and confident enough to be culturally dominant. (DAVIES, 2007, p.22)

By the time the Romans arrived, conquered and settled, these Britons, the descendants of the Neolithic peoples and the Celtic immigrants had formed into aggressive warring tribes spread over most of Britain.

Of these warring tribes, in the Western region that would become Wales were the Ordivices and Deceangli in the North and the Demetae and Silures in the South; it could be reasonably argued that these are the ancestors of the Welsh people; one characteristic that they had in common with the Welsh of the late medieval period, Llewelyn ap Iorwerth's time, is that despite sharing a common language and culture, they were not unified but rather the region – not only here, but the whole of the British Isles – was divided into petty warring kingdoms that were mutable according to the power or weakness of the tribes and tribal leaders. By the Anglo-Saxon period of the late 10th century, in England this had been resolved into one Saxon kingdom, but Wales continued divided.

The Roman occupation period of the British Isles, after the first decades of insurgency on the part of the Britons, was relatively peaceful. In order to subdue and contain the Ordivices, Deceangli and the Demetae and Silures, the Romans constructed a series of

fortifications with larger military camps established in a roughly quadrangular formation, demarcating the territory of what is now Wales, at strategic points in the North East, North West, South East and South West. It is interesting to note that the Ordivices were the most troublesome tribe, surmisable from archaeological evidence which shows more activity and a larger and longer occupation of the Roman forts in the North West area. Hundreds of years later this is the region of Llewelyn's power base and the area which has historically offered more resistance to foreign invaders; this is probably due to the difficult terrain of high mountains and deep valleys which offer ideal opportunity for guerrilla style warfare, employed by the Welsh when faced with a superior adversary.

By the end of the 4th century the Roman occupation of Britain was winding down and the large fortified towns in Wales were falling into decline due to the withdrawal of the garrisons. Davies (2007) calls the first century after the Roman withdrawal a period of "estrangement" (from the Roman culture which had become embedded into the Briton society) and notes that it is in these one hundred years or so that the nation of Wales is born.

2.3.2 Wales Becoming Wales

According to Davies (2007) the years 400-600 CE are the most enigmatic and debatable amongst historians, with regards to Wales; not for lack of recorded evidence but rather the quantity of written material from that time about Wales that offers an innumerable number of possible analyses and multiple ambiguous interpretations. That the British Isles were subject to invasions by Germanic tribes, Angles, Saxons and Jutes in the 5th century is an undisputed historical fact. The British chroniclers, recording events of the time, made no distinction between the various groups of invaders and referred to them in Latin as *Saxones*, or in Welsh *Saesson*. In order to avoid confusion of various terms I shall maintain the ancient chroniclers' tradition and refer to them from now on as Saxon or Germanic.

During the 5th century, Rome had already been withdrawing its troops from Britain leaving the inevitable power vacuum amongst the remaining Britons, some of these British tribes asked overseas neighbours for help in defeating their belligerent closer neighbours and this opened the gates for the Germanic tribes to freely invade and sack the coastal areas, which in turn led to further incursions and occupation. However, even before the so called

"Barbaric Invasions" Germanic culture had flourished in parts of Eastern Britain since they had settled as part of the Roman occupational force – it was a tradition for the Roman army to recruit from colonized lands. What then happened over the next two or three centuries is open to debate and has diverse historical versions. The traditional historians' interpretation that the Saxons then carried out wholesale slaughter and genocide as they pushed their way inland *en masse*, the Britons fleeing before them into the West, has given way to a more likely view of a slower, less aggressive migration and settlement over the next centuries. There were bloody battles, of this there is no doubt, as would be expected with any clash of two warrior-like cultures, but the extensive carnage is now thought to have been on a much smaller scale and the Britons, rather than fleeing in terror either adapted to the newcomers or were left pretty much alone.

Whatever the scale of violence and slaughter, it took the Saxons almost another century before they reached the region of what would become the border lands between England and Wales. The western-most parts of Britain, Devon and Cornwall, remained as British kingdoms even right up until the 8th and 10th centuries respectively, with Cornwall maintaining a Celtic culture and language, strong traces of which can still be found today.

It was during the 7th century that Mercia, the Central-West region England, emerged as one of the strongest Saxon kingdoms. When this region came under frequent attack from the Britons who occupied the lands to the West, they found it necessary to construct a protective barrier, an earthwork ditch and dyke extending North to South over 60 kilometres in length, following roughly what would become the Wales-England border. This early defence system was superseded in the 8th century by a much longer earthworks system, thought to have been constructed during the reign of Saxon King Offa, and therefore now known as Offa's Dyke. Offa's Dyke and the earlier earth wall, known as Wat's Dyke, run a non-parallel course from North to South, sometime within metres of each other and at other stretches, kilometres apart. Offa's Dyke however, extends further South to almost the full length of the modern day border, some 240 kilometres. When constructed, this formidable barrier must have been a consummate declaration of territorial boundaries and a clear message to stay out.

Even before the construction of Offa's Dyke, the psychological frontiers were beginning to emerge, the sense of "them" and "us", the invader and the native. In the Germanic dialects, the native Britons were called *Waelas*, which originated the words Wales and Welsh, the proper noun and the adjective respectively; the original word has been

interpreted as “foreigner”, and the same root word can be found in names of the Walloons of Belgium, Welschtirol in Northern Italy, the Vlachs of Eastern Europe and in Cornwall, Southwest England. Meanwhile, the Britons began referring to themselves as *Cymry*, derived from a more ancient Brythonic word, *combrogi*, meaning “fellow countrymen”. The use of *Cymry* or *Kymry* was seen in poetry from the mid-7th century and preserved in manuscripts from the 13th century (DAVIES, 2007), this superseded the use of the word *Brythoniaid* (Britons) in earlier poetry. The Germanic tribes were divided into several kingdoms and it was not until around the year 1000 that the use of *Englisc* emerged, derived from the Latin *Angli* or *Anglia*, for the tribe of Angles that had settled on the British Isles (CRYSTAL, 1996).

The *Cymry* of the 7th and 8th centuries were not restricted to the Western parts of the British Isles, as well as in the Southwestern regions already mentioned, the Britons still held a kingdom in the North, now the county of Cumbria, the name of which is derived from *Cymry.* It is curious to note that the modern day name for Wales in Welsh is Cymru, obviously also derived from *Cymry*, the English name is an exonym, however the name Cumbria remains in use in the English language.

The construction of Offa’s Dyke and, during the same period, the increasing use of *Cymry* to refer to themselves, demonstrate a definitive formation of, not only the emerging nation of Wales, but also an embryotic England. An England which over the next few centuries would absorb the Brythonic kingdoms of Cornwall and Cumbria. Between the 8th and the 10th centuries, this fragmented England, suffered not only internal strife amongst the warring Germanic kingdoms, but a new invader was seeking the shores of the British Isles, the Danes and the Norsemen from the northern countries of Europe. This was a continuing cycle of violence and settlement, an extension from the Saxon invaders that began in the 5th century. Settling over large parts of North Eastern England, the Danes, perhaps running out of impetus because of a Saxon “buffer zone”, did not reach Offa’s Dyke and an over-land invasion of Wales never materialized. They did however invade the North and the South Western coastal regions of Wales, the settlements of these regions were not so extensive as those of Northern England, the Scottish islands and Ireland – the city of Dublin was founded by these invaders.

It was during this period of invasions from the Danes and Norsemen in the mid-9th century that a strong Welsh leader emerged who, through a marriage, alliances and military strength was able to rule as King over the most part of Wales. Although a powerful leader, Rhodri Mawr – the Great – was unable to unite the entire *Cymry* to form one nation of Wales

and there still remained some regions of the South and South West that did not come under his rule. When Rhodri died in battle in 877 his kingdom did not immediately pass to one heir, but rather, according to Welsh law of the time, was divided amongst his surviving sons and once again Wales was fragmented into a number of petty kingdoms. The cycle was repeated in the 10th century when two leaders rose to power and were able to rule over a large part, but not quite all, of Wales.

It is important to mention the first of these, Hywel Dda (the Good) (900-950) who was responsible for the systematization and consolidation of the Welsh Law, an important act which demonstrated a unique identity of an emerging nation and a powerful component of culture to equal that of the strong incipient English culture, the growing force to the east of Offa's Dyke.

It seems then that although this birth of the Welsh nation and a consciousness of a *Cymry* identity occurred, the Wales that we see emerging between the 5th and the 10th centuries is not a nation under one ruler as such, despite the efforts of a number of powerful leaders, but rather a nation of people sharing the same language, culture and religion – for by now Christianity had taken hold throughout the British Isles –fragmented into anything between three to five petty kingdoms. Despite this fragmented structure a common Welsh identity existed, manifest in the language, culture, law and lifestyle of the inhabitants of the region.

After these five hundred years or so of a disunited nation of Wales, the country was finally brought under the rule of one leader for a brief period of only six years between 1057 and 1063 when Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, a descendant of Hwyl Dda, accomplished this feat by brute force rather than diplomacy and inter-marriage alliances. Gruffudd ap Llywelyn`s reign was bloody and short lived, after a battle with the Earl of Wessex, Harold Godwinson, who was to become the last Saxon King of England, Gruffudd fled into the mountains where he was either betrayed or killed by his own men, proving once again that the Welsh were not united in their fight against the English, a characteristic which would bring about the downfall of Wales. This triumph of a United Kingdom of Wales had never before been achieved and never again would be repeated, the next time Wales would come under one leader would be under the Norman kings.

2.3.3 Wales Becoming Part of England

The history of Wales is intricately interwoven into the history of England. Great historical events that happened in England inevitably resounded in Wales. Three years after facing Gruffudd on the battlefield, Harold Godwinson, now king of England, faced William, Duke of Normandy in a field in the Southeast of England. 1066 is known as a watershed year in British history. William defeated Harold, who was killed in the battle, and placed himself on the throne of England. What happened in the years that followed was a huge restructuring and shake up of the Saxon society that had become established in England. The country now went through transformations beyond recognition as the Saxon ruling class was overthrown and replaced by the Normans; now the rulers of England were also rulers of vast territories of France and their empire building aspirations did not stop there. Expanding their territories was to the Normans a natural endeavour to be undertaken at any available opportunity, and they brought with them their most potent weapon in order to achieve their aims: the motte and bailey castle. This impressive show of power and strength was first hastily constructed of earth and timber; an earth mound was created – the motte – on top of which a timber construction was erected. With time the timber was replaced by stone and a courtyard – the bailey – with a surrounding wall was constructed around the motte. Advancing into Wales, these castles were placed at strategic points as a show of force and dominance; nothing like this had ever been seen before and the natives must have been awed at the sight, not only of the massive constructions themselves, but also by the force, manpower and engineering skills needed to undertake the works.

Where castles were constructed, towns sprung up outside the castle walls, and later – through defensive necessity – the walls themselves encompassed the towns. Within the first two centuries of Norman rule settlements had spread over large parts of South and South West Wales. These towns, unprecedented in this region, were populated by Norman and Flemish settlers, in this way implementing a colonization policy of diluting the native population, creating Norman territories within Wales where the local inhabitants of the region were unwelcome. Attempts to dislodge the settlers by force achieved varying degrees of success, with the protection of the castles and the Norman military, however, the towns began to thrive and grow.

When William became king he established a buffer zone of powerful barons at the Welsh border, known as the March, who were given free rein to raid and impose Norman law

and punishments in Welsh territory at will without need of permission from their king. William`s successors allowed this privilege to continue over the centuries and the Marcher lords at times wielded so much power that they became troublesome for the king himself, as was with the cases of John and his son Henry III, both of whom faced civil disobedience, rebellion and war led by these powerful lords. For the Welsh it was a double edged sword, often literally, for the most part the Marcher lords were belligerent towards the Welsh, doing exactly as the king had intended, raiding, claiming land and imposing their own laws, on the other hand it was also common for intermarriages to occur between the Norman Marcher families and Welsh nobles, forming Norman-Welsh alliances that could be beneficial to Welsh.

2.3.4 Llewelyn's Wales

Born sometime between 1171 and 1173, as a child Llewelyn would already have seen his country being torn apart by the *Cymry* themselves and it is likely that he would have either witnessed first-hand, Norman raids, or heard plenty of fireside stories of the foreign invaders. Towards the end of the 12th century most of North Wales was ruled over by a powerful leader Owain Gwynedd, a descendant of Rhodri Mawr and grandfather of Llewelyn. When Owain died in 1170 a dispute broke out over the claims for the title of King of Gwynedd and a violent land-grab war ensued. Both of Owain`s sons from his first marriage, Hwyel and Iorwerth – the father of Llewelyn – were killed in battle and Owain's sons from his second marriage, Dafydd and Rhodri, divided the land between them. This was a continuation of a perpetual cycle of unrest that affected the whole of Wales. Much the same history was to blight the South of Wales in the 1190s, when the powerful ruler, who had gained control over most of the South, Lord Rhys, who used the title Prince of South Wales, died in 1197, his named heir faced battle with an older half-brother and another Welsh ruler from East Wales, and the whole region fell to civil war once again.

At the time of Llewelyn's father's death in battle, Llewelyn was two or three years old, not much is known of his early years but according to chronicler, Gerard of Wales, in his work *Descriptio Cambriae*, Description of Wales, Llewelyn was 12 years old when he went

into battle against his uncles to avenge his father's death. Though embarking on a military campaign at such an early age is improbable for medieval standards, certainly at some point in his youth, between 1194 and 1199 Llewelyn defeated both his uncles in battle and eliminated other contenders and rivals to become ruler over Gwynedd in the North West region of Wales. There is very little documented about Llewelyn's early teen-age years, according to Penman (1985), in her author's note to *Here Be Dragons*, because of Llewelyn's leniency toward the Corbet family of Shropshire in border disputes, as well as a reference to "uncle" referring to a Corbet family member in a letter, it is reasonable to surmise that Llewelyn's mother, after the death of Iowerth, married one of the Corbet brothers and Llewelyn spent some of his childhood in Caus castle, the Corbet family seat. Caus castle, now nothing more than an overgrown mound of earth – all that remains of the motte – is situated in the midlands of England, within sight of the Welsh border. The visible physical manifestation of that border is the ancient, even in Llewelyn's time, Offa's Dyke boundary, constructed in the 8th Century. Caus castle lies within 2 kilometres to the west of this ancient frontier. Whether he had been at Caus or not, Llewelyn would have been aware of this physical boundary between the two cultures, Welsh and English, even as a child. The castle was constructed over the site of an iron age hill fort as a Norman motte and bailey design by Norman Lord Roger Fitz Corbet towards the end of the 12th century, the name is derived from Pays de Caux, the Corbet family homeland in Normandy. During Llewelyn's time it was recorded that Robert Corbet, Roger's descendant, had the king's permission to carry out extensive construction work (GATEHOUSE, 2016).

As well as the disputes amongst the native rulers of Wales, by Llewelyn's time, large parts of the South and West had already been occupied by Normans and Flemish settlers, moving into the newly forming towns and beginning a process of Anglicisation and an unstoppable progression of the transformation of Welsh culture and identity which would continue over hundreds of years.

2.3.5 The Conquest of Wales, Annexation and Subjugation

The novel *Here Be Dragons* covers the period in history of between 1183 through to 1234, the most part of Llewelyn's lifetime. We have seen the formation of the nation of Wales up to late medieval times. In order to have a better understanding of the character, culture and identity of Wales in modern times I shall now outline a brief history from the late medieval period to the 21st century.

During his lifetime, Llewelyn had come close to ruling over all of Wales but never quite reaching the accolade of Prince of Wales, though in 1230 he used the title of Prince of North Wales and Lord of Snowdonia. When he died in 1240 his successors were unable to hold on to the power that he had yielded though his grandson and namesake showed promise as a great leader. However because of a rebellion and what was seen by the English king as treason, Llewelyn ap Gruffudd, later known as Llewelyn Ein Llyw Olaf, Our Last Leader, was killed and the powerful English King, Edward I launched a full military invasion, which was to be the final conquest of Wales, in 1282. With the death of Llewelyn ap Gruffudd Welsh resistance crumbled and to further exert power, Edward I began a massive castle building project. Five immense stone castles, of a concentric design, the like of which had never been seen before in Wales, were constructed around the North West of Wales with approximately 16-25 miles distance between them, an easy day's horse ride. This solid stone ring of power demonstrated to the natives the force and supremacy of the English crown. To further subjugate the Welsh, a series of decrees known as the Statute of Rhuddlan was written up and promulgated in 1284. The statute introduced, or rather imposed, the English legal system into Wales and created the English counties system of local government.

In an astute diplomatic move, Edward I made sure that his fourth son, also named Edward, was born in Wales at the largest of his new stone castles, Caernarvon. The young Edward was then invested with the title Prince of Wales, the title which is until today is given to the eldest male heir to the British Monarch. Towns were created in which Welsh people were prohibited from entering and English and Flemish settlers were encouraged to migrate into the region in order to "dilute" the native Welsh population.

The process of colonization had begun. The British Empire, as it was later known, began as the Norman Empire, as these warrior kings first dominated the Saxons of England then went on to expand their territories into Ireland and Wales.

With no strong leader to lead a country wide rebellion, the Welsh were subdued, nevertheless despite the influx of foreign settlers and imposed alien laws, the Welsh language and culture survived and thrived, the colonization serving to strengthen a self-awareness of national identity. Minor rebellions sprang up all over the land but were soon crushed and it wasn't until the very beginning of the 15th century that a leader emerged who was able to command a nationwide uprising and unite Wales under a common cause of the expulsion of the English.

Owain Glyndwr was descended from royal families of mid and of Southwest Wales and was a prosperous landowner. A land dispute initiated by Glyndwr's English neighbour Reginald de Grey led to Glyndwr rising in rebellion, neighbouring landowners, dissatisfied with English occupation and law, supported the rebellion and soon all of Wales was in arms against the English. In 1401 it was reported that Welsh peasant workers in England and Welsh students at Oxford were deserting their posts and returning to Wales to join the rebellion. It seemed that the Welsh finally had had enough of the bullying and wanted to be rid of English rule once and for all. Glyndwr continued to enjoy success and to defeat the English at the castle strongholds and in 1404 he held a Parliament in Machynlleth in Northeast Wales, and was appointed and crowned Prince of Wales. Glyndwr's success was so great that he was able to make treaties with the powerful Marcher barons and come to agreements as to how the kingdoms of Wales and England should be divided. In 1405, when his French and English – those opposed to the crown – support deserted him and a new English military leader emerged, the future King Henry V, Glyndwr began to suffer defeats. In 1409 Glyndwr's family were captured but he himself managed to escape with his closest allies and generals. Owain Glyndwr continued a sporadic guerrilla war against the English at least through until 1413 and even as late as 1415 the generals were trying to regain the support of the French. However, nothing more was heard of Glyndwr after 1413 and unlike his Scottish counterpart, the rebel William Wallace, who was captured and executed almost exactly 100 years previously, Glyndwr was never found and more than likely died peacefully in old-age somewhere in rural mid-Wales. When Henry V came to the throne Glyndwr was pardoned, but he never appeared to receive the Royal Pardon. Welsh rancour at English rule after Glyndwr's short-lived united Wales was manifest in the literature for generations after his disappearance (DAVIES, 2007).

Once again Wales fell under English jurisdiction and this was further ratified in the mid16th century during the reign of Henry VIII. Henry VIII brought about massive changes in

the political and religious landscape of Britain. As is well known and documented, in his quest to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragorn (and not actually to divorce, as is popularly thought), Henry broke from the Catholic Church and founded the Anglican Church. What followed, known historically as the Dissolution, was a wholesale destruction of the monasteries of England and Wales. In Wales four of the biggest and most important abbeys were destroyed and the land and treasures sold off for the crown, these were Valle Crucis, Strata Florida, Margam and Tintern abbey, in mid and South Wales. Strata Florida and Valle Crucis had been meeting places for important treaty negotiations between the Welsh leaders during the time of Llewelyn. Dozens of other smaller religious establishments were also destroyed, including at Llanfaes, where Llewelyn had established a monastery in honour of his wife, Joanna. Joanna's mortal remains were discarded and lost forever.

Politically, during Henry VIII's reign, a series of statutes were passed by parliament and sanctioned by the King, which became known as the Acts of Union, effectively incorporating Wales into England and extinguishing any legal distinctions between England and Wales. In fact the Acts of Union were an official endorsement of what had already been happening in Wales since the Edwardian conquest almost 300 years previously, that is, the adoption of English law and political county system. Furthermore, although the Welsh language was not prohibited outright, Welsh speakers were barred from public positions and all administrative and law proceedings were carried out in the English language thereby excluding monoglot Welsh speakers. This was an ongoing process of the erosion of the culture, as the Welsh gentry, highborn landowners and descendants of royal families wished now to learn English to advance their station in life. All was not gloom and doom however, in becoming part of England, Wales could now have Welsh representation in Parliament and in 1543 there were 27 Welsh members of parliament out of a total of 349. This at least allowed Welshmen to have some say in how their country was governed, albeit following the English model.

2.3.6 Resistance, Revival and Further Blows to Welsh Identity

As Wales was becoming more and more Anglicized from the 16th to the 19th centuries, efforts were made and events came about which stimulated the use of the Welsh language, and through this, sustained culture and identity. As a religious nation the population followed church teachings and were encouraged to attend church and read the bible. Towards the end of the 16th century, William Morgan, the Bishop of Llandaff, translated the bible into Welsh and almost a thousand copies were printed and distributed to parishes around Wales. The availability of the Welsh bibles contributed greatly to the survival of the language and even more so established Welsh as more than just a spoken language. Davies writes:

> As parsons throughout Wales were addressing their congregations […] in the solemn rhythms of the Welsh of the Bible […], they familiarized the Welsh with an exalted image of their language. In imbuing their congreations with the language, they themselves became steeped in it, and thus there developed a tradition of 'literature-loving parsons' to which Welsh culture would be deeply indebted. (DAVIES, 2007, p. 245)

Almost two hundred years later, a preacher, Griffith Jones established a network of schools for teaching adults and children to read and write in Welsh. By the time of his death in 1771, over two hundred thousand pupils had attended Jones' Welsh language schools (DAVIES, 2007). In the late 1700's two societies were formed by groups of patriotic Welshmen living in London, The Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, "vowed to defend the purity of the Welsh language, to stimulate interest in the history and literature of Wales and to promote economic and scientific ventures beneficial to Wales" (DAVIES, 2007, p. 305). The *Cymmrodorion* contributed to the publication and promotion of important literary works in the Welsh language. Ironically the *Cymmrodorion* sought members from the elite gentry of Wales, men who were for the most part monoglot English speakers. The *Gwyneddigion* (Gwynedd Scholars) *Society* was formed as a counter-reaction to the elitist policies of the *Cymmrodorion*. One of the *Gwyneddigion's* most important ventures was to promote the Eisteddfodau, an annual festival of arts, literature and culture held in Wales to this day on all levels, from junior school to International Festival.

In contrast to the cultural movements, civil unrest was an ugly feature of this period. Between 1839 and 1844, a heavy tax on the road system around Wales, provoked a series of uprisings known as the Rebecca Riots. Taking their name from a biblical scene, the *Merched*

Beca, Rebecca's Daughters, as the rioters labelled themselves, destroyed the toll gates that levied a heavy fee on vehicles passing through. The violence escalated and Rebecca's Daughters began targeting English stewards, tax collectors and wealthy landowners and by 1843 more criminal elements were joining the crowds and the violence became indiscriminate. The army were called in to restore law and order and by 1844 the rioting had been supressed. The aftermath of the uprisings and increasing political and social unrest forced the government in London to instigate a series of reforms and the so called Rebecca Commission was set up to investigate trouble spots and suggest solutions. The findings of the commission were damning, blaming the root of the problem on the linguistic divisions between the upper and lower classes and that the Welsh language "hindered the Law and the Established Church from civilizing the Welsh" (DAVIES, 2007, p.387). As a consequence of this, a series of educational projects were set in motion with the sole purpose of 'civilizing the Welsh'.

Another similar commission was set up three years later, proposed by Member of Parliament William Williamson, a Welshman, who wished to investigate the state of education in Wales and the availability of education in the English language. Three English government officials travelled through Wales interviewing Anglican clergymen who had a very biased view against Welsh non-conformism – the prevailing form of religion in Wales at the time – and compiled a report based only on the anti-Welsh sentiments of wealthy landowners, the Anglican church and monoglot English speaking teachers contracted to teach in Welsh speaking areas. The report was presented in three large books bound up in blue covers and the event became known as *Brad y Llyfrau Gleision, The Treachery of the Blue Books*. What would be seen now as a malicious racist statement the report found that:

> "The Welsh language is a vast drawback to Wales, and a manifold barrier to the moral progress and commercial prosperity of the people. It is not easy to over-estimate its evil effects. […] It dissevers the people from intercourse which would greatly advance their civilization and bars the access of improving knowledge to their minds. As a proof of this, there is no Welsh literature worthy of the name." (BLUE BOOKS, p.66)

A similar sentiment was expressed by contemporary critic and writer Matthew Arnold who, while praising the richness of Celtic culture kept alive by the Welsh, at the same time, paradoxically strongly condemned the language. In his work *The Study of Celtic Literature* published in 1891, Arnold wrote,

> "The Welsh language is the curse of Wales. Its prevalence, and the ignorance of English have excluded, and even now exclude the Welsh people from the civilisation of their English neighbours.[…] The sooner the Welsh language disappears as an instrument of the practical, political, social life of Wales, the better for England, the better for Wales itself" (ARNOLD, 1891)

Both statements reflect the sense of superiority felt by the English as a colonising nation in such countries as India, South Africa and Kenya. This sense that the 'natives' were primitive and ignorant and had to be civilized and enlightened was expressed by Cecil John Rhodes, founder of the British colony of Rhodesia, who wrote in 1877, "the more of the world we occupy, the better it is for the human race" (in SCHAMA, 2000, p. 361).

The Blue Books report contains further damning statements mostly to the effect that the Welsh were lazy, ignorant, immoral and of low intelligence, mainly because of poor educational standards, that is, through a Welsh language medium. The recommendation of the report was that all education be through the medium of the English language which was implemented over the following years. The historian John Davies writes, "the completion of a network of English medium schools was a heavy blow to Welsh, especially in those areas where the language was already in retreat" (DAVIES, 2007, p. 437). By the 1880s the English Grammar School model of education had been established throughout Wales and matters of local – that is Welsh – interests, such as economy, history, culture and language, were not on the curriculum.

Other major factors were changing the face of Wales radically during this period. The industrial revolution which had been boiling since the end of the 18th century had found in Wales coal and iron. Coal was precious for fuelling the ever increasing steam powered transport systems around the world, trains and ships, as well as heavy industrial machinery. Large coal fields were found, principally in the South East region of Wales and the mining industry expanded rapidly. The coal fields attracted thousands of immigrants from all over Britain and abroad. In just one small town, Trefethin, at the heart of the coal mining area, it was estimated that in the 1840s as high as 44% of the inhabitants were English immigrants (DAVIES, 2007). Such a high number of foreign settlers was bound to be detrimental to the preservation of language and culture to the area.

Throughout the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the huge increase of a foreign population plus the implementation of the English language medium education

system – not only language, but English ideals, ethics and norms – further changed the character of the native of Wales. Large areas and populations of Wales were now predominately English speaking and the Welsh language was in decline and retreating to the rural West and North West regions.

2.3.7 Developments in the 20th and 21st Centuries

Since the 18th century, with the establishment of Welsh language and literature societies, the interest in finding a cultural identity and returning to a "Welsh" Wales has been increasing. This mounting sentiment of a need for a unique identity, led to the creation of several specifically Welsh institutions such as the University of Wales, the National Library of Wales and the Welsh Guards Regiment of the British Army. With a growing feeling of injustice and under-representation, especially in the aftermath of the huge upheaval that was World War I, the first all-Welsh political party, *Plaid Cymru*, was formed in 1925, their main aim being, "To secure independence for Wales in Europe"[4] (PLAID CYMRU, 2016). *Plaid Cymru* have grown to become the second most represented political party in Wales, second only to the Labour Party, this is an indication that a great part of the population of Wales are seeking Welsh solutions for socio-economic issues, rather than relying on the English biased system. As far as the Welsh language is concerned, over the centuries, the number of Welsh language speakers had been steadily declining, as a response to this, the *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg*, the Welsh Language Society was created in 1963 with the aim to promote the Welsh language, not only in everyday use, but in official government or council proceedings – i.e. on documents, legal procedures and such like – which had previously been English monolingual. During the 1960s and 70s, *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* were ostentatiously active to call the attention to the local councils and to the central government in London. Their actions included defacing and destroying English language road-signs, occupying antenna masts of English language radio and TV stations and invading the radio studios during broadcasts. According to the society website, their successful campaigns have resulted in: the creation of Welsh language road-signs; exclusive Welsh language radio and TV channels; several government Welsh Language Acts to sustain and promote the language in

[4] Source: Plaid Cymru website details in references

communities and public services to provide Welsh language documents and speakers for any situation. Further to the Welsh Language Society, and largely because of their efforts, an official government Welsh Language Board was established in 1993 which, with the passing of a parliamentary act, officially promoted the language to an equal status to that of English. The results from the 2011 census show that only 19% of the population of Wales is proficient in the language, this puts the number at about 562,000 inhabitants[5], though according to the Welsh Language Society, this is slowly increasing. There are also an estimated 110,000 Welsh speakers living in England and approximately 5,000 inhabitants of the Chubut region of Patagonia in Argentina are fluent Welsh speakers, a number continuously increasing thanks to a British Council Welsh language scheme[6]. All of this demonstrates a positive swing towards finding a unique Welsh cultural identity and breaking away from the strong English influence.

Politically, as has already been mentioned, in 1998, following a referendum, the first National Assembly for Wales was established, allowing more autonomy in many areas. A Government of Wales act in 2006 created the Government of Wales, the executive section of the National Assembly which allows for further law making powers. It is quite possible that, as Welsh national feeling grows, a call for a referendum for the independence of Wales may not be in the so distant future.

[5] Source: Statistics for Wales details in references
[6] Source: Welsh Language Project Report details in references

3 *HERE BE DRAGONS*

3.1 *Y Ddraig Goch*

The title of the novel *Here Be Dragons* is an echo of the message supposedly inscribed by medieval cartographers on the unexplored regions of which they had no knowledge on ancient maps. In fact there is only one surviving example of such an inscription that being on the so called Hunt-Lennox Globe, dating from around 1510 and preserved in the New York Public Library. The warning of the presence of such a terrifying beast could justify and exonerate the ignorance of the map makers and the reluctance of adventurers, and it implied danger for anyone brave enough to venture into those territories. For the Saxon or Norman settlers living on the border lands, Wales would be as mysterious and dangerous as those areas marked thus on the maps; there were tales of the Welsh being ungodly, barbaric and they most certainly ate babies and raped your women. The dragon then was a symbol for everything monstrous and pagan, it is no coincidence or wonder that the Patron Saint of England, St. George – who, despite being the very epitome of English patriotism, was probably Greek – is often depicted killing a quite small red dragon, showing George's – Christianity's – obvious superior power over the insignificant pagan beast. In defiance of England's George, the red dragon, now the Red Dragon, *Y Ddraig Goch*, has become Wales personified. One of the most powerful symbols and iconic flag, as I have already described, *Y Ddraig Goch*, can be seen on almost every street corner of any large town in Wales and the name, either in Welsh or English, is repeated throughout any business directory. Not only is it visible in many places, but also in a wonderfully ironic *coup, Y Ddraig Goch* now flies over those massive symbols of colonial oppression, the immense stone castles that the English king Edward I constructed in the 13th century as a show of power and dominance.

In one sense, the title of the novel is also reminding us that Wales remains a mystery, an unknown nation somewhere "in England" that the modern day foreign tourist is unaware

of. On a map, here is the Western region of England where there is nothing, for everything happens in London, Oxford, Bath – just over the Wales border – and for Beatles fans, Liverpool, also within a 10 minute drive to Wales, and within 20 minutes of where the first language spoken amongst the inhabitants is Welsh, an entirely foreign and different culture from England. And when the modern day tourist dares venture out of the tourism comfort zone of England and across the border, they will indeed find that "here be dragons" in the multiple flags and images found in every city, town and village. The mysterious, mythical, terrifying beast of paganism, destruction and chaos has become the friendly, benevolent animal proudly welcomed and adopted by the Welsh in defiance of Christian opposition and English disapproval; when the Red Dragon badge was proposed in 1953 with the words *Y Ddraig Goch Ddyry Cychwyn*, roughly translated as the red dragon roars and inspires, the then Prime Minister of Great Britain, Winston Churchill reacted with the words, "Odious design, expressing nothing but spite, malice, ill-will and monstrosity" (NATIONAL ARCHIVES 1953). In a popular children's folk tale which tells the story of how the Red Dragon became to be used as the national flag, the dragon in the story is seen as a dangerous, fearsome beast which lives in the dark and evil forest and devours any living thing that approaches it. However the dragon turns out to be a benevolent shy creature which itself was afraid of the people of the village. The story tells of a village which had been suffering from months of rains and cold weather, rendering the firewood damp and unable to ignite; the villagers suffered from cold and could not cook their food having no fires. Someone suggests capturing the dragon and chaining it in the centre of the village as a slave to provide fire and warmth. An unwilling "volunteer" is sent into the forest to capture the dragon and bring it back in chains, however when he encounters the dragon he discovers that it is a lonely creature and wishes only to have friends and company but has been shunned by humans in the mistaken belief that it is a fierce monster. The unwilling hero agrees to accompany the dragon back to the village and explain to the folk there that there is nothing to fear and that the dragon is not dangerous at all and will quite gladly help in exchange for friendship and company. It is easy here to see an allegorical parallel with the people of Wales adopting a savage pagan beast as their national symbol. In another version of the story the village's bad weather and woes are brought about by a white dragon which surrounds the village with its body and freezes everything. The red dragon comes to rescue the village, fights with and defeats the white dragon.

This white dragon and red dragon myth has its origin in ancient oral stories which have been recorded in medieval manuscripts such as the tale of *Lludd and Llefelys* in the Mabinogion, a collection of stories compiled in manuscripts between the 12th and 13th centuries from much older stories of oral tradition. Lludd is the King of Britain and Llefelys his brother becomes king of France. Lludd's kingdom is blighted by three plagues, the second of these plagues is a ghastly scream that would tear through the land and cause the inhabitants of the island to lose their senses, women would miscarry, and the earth and waters become barren. Lludd goes to his brother for help and Llefelys tells him that the scream is caused by a red dragon fighting against a white dragon, Lludd is instructed to trap and subdue the dragons with mead, a potent alcoholic drink, and bury them in a stone chest in the mountains of Wales, in popular folklore at a place which is now called Dinas Emrys, a site of an ancient iron age hill fort.

The myth of the two dragons also appears in other ancient manuscripts. In one of the many tales in *Historia Brittonum*, the History of the Britons, King Vortigern of the Britons is instructed to build a city on a hill. When all the materials for the city have been collected at the location, overnight they mysteriously disappear, this happens repeatedly until the king seeks advice from his counsellors, who recommend that a "fatherless boy" be sacrificed over the building site. When the boy is found he enquires as to his fate and when told he is to be sacrificed, the boy offers an answer to the conundrum. He instructs the king to excavate under the site and there in that spot will be found two dragons fighting, one red and one white, the boy explains,

> the red serpent is your dragon, but the white serpent is the dragon of the people who occupy several provinces and districts of Britain, even almost from sea to sea: at length, however, our people shall rise and drive away the Saxon race from beyond the sea, whence they originally came (NENNIUS, (GILES translator) 2015, p.25).

In Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, The History of the Kings of Britain, written in the first decades of the 12th century, it is Merlin, from the King Arthur legends, who interprets and prophesies over the fighting dragons,

> "Woe to the red dragon, for his banishment hasteneth on. His lurking holes shall be seized by the white dragon which signifies the Saxons whom you invited over; but the red denotes the British nation, which shall be oppressed by the white. Therefore shall its mountains be

> levelled as the valleys, and the rivers of the valleys shall run with blood" (GEOFFREY, (THOMPSON, translator) 2015, p.133).

Merlin further prophesies that the Red Dragon would rise again and drive the Saxons from the shores of Britain. As these tales were oral stories passed around and down through generations, we can surmise that sometime between the 5th and 7th centuries the red dragon was seen as representing the native British peoples before, or during the time of the Saxon incursions. It is probable that the native tribes had "borrowed" the image from the Romans, who had used it as a battle standard, some three or four hundred years before the Saxons stepped foot on the island, the Romans in their turn had taken the dragon symbol from the varying tribes that they had encountered on campaign in the Middle East (LOFMARK, 1995). During the time of the Roman occupation of Britain, many tribal leaders and high born Britons assimilated and adopted the customs and lifestyle of the Romans. As a military design the dragon would have naturally made its transition to the British warrior chiefs and when the Saxons landed on the shores it is likely that they faced armies bearing the dragon banner and painted onto shields and helmets. The tales of the Red Dragon of the Britons finally made their way into the ancient manuscripts and the fantastical imaginations of the writers and story tellers created the myths of the Red Dragon and the White Dragon.

As a powerful symbol of unity and defiance, the red dragon appears in the 15th century, when Henry Tudor marched through Wales with an army to meet Richard III at what was to be the last battle of the Wars of the Roses, the Battle of Bosworth Field. Landing in Southwest Wales, Henry travelled northwards and bore with him a Red Dragon standard, a symbol that the Welsh people would identify with, venerate and follow. In a classic Tudor propaganda move, Henry claimed to be descended from one of the great Welsh kings of the 7th century, Cadwaladr. Cadwaladr had fought against the Saxons and, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, had carried a Red Dragon banner into battle. Henry Tudor was exploiting the ancient mythology of Merlin's prophesy that the red dragon would rise again and defeat the Saxons and once again rule the island. In an ironic twist, Henry Tudor's son, Henry VIII, sanctioned the Acts of Union which effectively annexed Wales and made it merely the eastern territories of the Kingdom of England; English laws were imposed, or further ratified, and the Welsh language prohibited. So rather than the Welsh, that is British, native rulers reigning over the ancient island of Britain once again, an English king, descendant of Welsh noblemen, with no regard for cultural or national identity, ignored a thousand years of history and claimed everything south of the Scottish border as England.

Despite Henry VIII's disregard of the existence of Wales as a nation, the red dragon remained on the Tudor coat of arms, but as a symbol of the House of Tudor rather than of Wales. When the Stuarts succeeded the Tudors as monarchs of Britain, the dragon was replaced on the royal arms by another mythical beast, the unicorn.

With the revival of the Eisteddfod and the emergence of the Gorsedd movement in the late 18th and early 19th century – which also coincided with the Celtic Twilight in Ireland – through the efforts of Iolo Morganwg and others, the need and search for a national identity, and all that it entails, language, arts, literature, music and the symbols representing the Celtic culture, came to the forefront again. It must have been seen as a great step forward for Welsh recognition when King George V in 1911 decreed that the red dragon should be incorporated onto the arms of the Prince of Wales, and the next logical step was for the dragon symbol to be used on a national flag, which was finally sanctioned by Queen Elizabeth II in 1959.

Going back through history and returning to the matter of the novel *Here Be Dragons*, which deals with the royal houses of Wales in the 12th and 13th centuries, it is interesting to note that, although a powerful symbol and undoubtedly well known myth since at least the 6th century, the dragon was not used on the Royal Arms of the principal leaders of those times. The Arms of the Royal House of Gwynedd adopted by Llewelyn ap Iorwerth's father and continued in use by Llewelyn, consisted of four lions *passant*, that is with three paws on the ground and the front right paw raised, the same pose, or *attitude* in heraldic terms, as the Red Dragon of Wales. One of the more powerful leaders of the South, the Lord Rhys, bore the image of a single lion *rampant* – both forepaws raised – on his arms.

In the early middle ages, the dragon was never exclusively a *Welsh* symbol, but rather a *British* one that became associated with the Welsh as their cultural identity was forming when the British Isles was settled by the Germanic tribes. By the 13th century, and with the Norman settlement, Wales was a geographical concept divided into several petty kingdoms and, as we have seen, the English kings and Marcher Lords took advantage of these Welsh native disputes, allying with one or another to suite their own needs and to further stir discontent.

The dragons of the title are also a representation of the fierce warriors that the Norman and Saxon foot soldiers and mounted knights faced. With a smaller force and with no castle walls or protected towns to seek refuge behind, the Welsh resistance practiced guerrilla warfare, small bands of highly mobile and fast trained men who could make a lightning strike

against a superior force and disappear just as quickly into the forested mountains and valleys where it would be almost impossible to be tracked down. For the inexperienced foreign combatants the Welsh must have seemed like a magical beast, striking fiercely and swiftly as though from thin air, and vanishing in an instant, during the chaos of an unexpected strike before the superior army can muster. The dragon here then represents the Other, the unknown, different and alien, "over there" and to be avoided.

3.2 *Here Be Dragons* Plot and Analysis

In her author's note in *Here Be Dragons,* Penman states that the structure of the novel is based on historical facts from research of contemporary chroniclers. However, where details are not clear Penman uses intuitive deduction in order to create verisimilar action and characters. As a historical novel, *Here Be Dragons* narrative follows a chronological order with the month and year specified as part of each chapter's heading, beginning July 1183, though the chapter does not necessarily span only that specified month. Also as part of the chapter headings are the locations of where the action of that chapter takes place, and again the location does not necessarily remain the same within the chapter. The narrator is omniscient third person with varying points of view through characters. The action takes place in Wales, England and the Norman territories of France.

3.2.1 Llewelyn as a Boy and Young Warrior

Here Be Dragons relates a complex interaction of diplomacy, relationships and warfare in which Llewelyn ap Iorwerth of Wales, his wife Joanna and his father-in-law, John, the king of England, are involved.

The first chapter presents Llewelyn as a small boy living in England with his mother and step-father – a minor Norman lord – on the Marches, the much disputed border land between England and Wales. In this chapter the important geographical, social, economic and psychological characteristic differences between England and Wales of the late medieval

period are clearly established; differences which resound down through the centuries to modern Wales. The repeated use of language of strong emotions of yearning and the feeling of being uprooted, in the first two short paragraphs – *alien, unfriendly land, heartsick longing, strangeness, heritage, sorrow, misery* – immediately calls our attention to the psychological barrier, between the two cultures. As a small boy separated from his friends and most of his family, it would be natural to feel such emotions, however, Llewelyn not only feels the homesickness of being in a foreign land, but he is also very much aware of cultural differences, not explicitly defined here but rather expressed in the sentiment of having to "adapt to the strangeness of English ways" (p.3). We are made aware within the first paragraphs that differences of some sort exist between England and Wales and as we are seeing things from Llewelyn's point of view we are set in mind that England is a hostile land populated by a violent, cruel and disagreeable people. Without mentioning the word in the first paragraphs, though the theme appears again later, the narrator is in fact describing Welsh concept or emotion of *hiraeth*, the word of which is said to have no accurate equivalent in English translation, in this sense it can be likened to the Portuguese word *saudades.* While the strong emotion is not strictly confined to only Welsh people of course, *hiraeth* is described as a feeling of longing and nostalgia for that which has been lost or which is far away and unreachable. When he is reminded of ancient bloodlines, Llewelyn is overcome with the emotion, "…a yearning for Wales so overwhelming that he found himself blinking back tears" (p.6). The young boy, though just across the border of Wales, is experiencing a *hiraeth* moment and this is a foreboding that Llewelyn's Wales is about to be lost forever.

Llewelyn's boredom at living in the castle with no friends compels him to investigate the nearest large town, Shrewsbury. At this period in history, in the northern region of Wales, a town of such proportion did not exist. In the southern regions, where the Normans had already settled, larger towns were beginning to appear, but for Llewelyn and more likely for other Welsh travellers who ventured across the border, a town on such a scale as Shrewsbury must have been an awe inspiring sight. Having been granted a royal charter – rights for commercial enterprises – by the 13th century, Shrewsbury was a prosperous town with a castle, churches, two bridges – one with a fortified gatehouse – many houses and a population of around 3,000. No doubt large towns would have begun to develop in Wales if the Norman conquest had not occurred, but it would be impossible to know the style of development or even the historical period, what is known is that the Norman settlements played a major part in the urban development of Wales.

We are presented then with the differences, as perceived by the young boy, of the cultural and geographical spaces, as well as the psychological barrier between "us" and "them", the Other. Wales the wild magical land of mountains, narrow trails and forests, populated by tribal warriors and hunters; and England, advanced, civilized, wide roads leading to towns, developed and with economic power to construct large castles and settlements, populated by a farming people of strange customs. The image of Wales as a mystical land of mountains and forests persisted into the 19th century when the railroads opened up Wales for the Victorian tourists who wished to experience the wild Celtic regions of the United Kingdom.

In this region nowadays, the roads pass back and forth over the invisible border with no frontier control, passport checks or customs; on the principal routes, large signs welcome the traveller to Wales or to England, depending on the direction of travel. The border is in fact a line on a map, established in 1536, paradoxically created with the Acts of Union, annexing Wales to England but at the same time demarcating a line between England and Wales. In Llewelyn's time there were no such roads or signs of course, the "border" was indistinct – except for the remains of the Saxon King's barrier – the further west would be deeper into Wales, and *vice versa* for England, and the lines on the maps would depend on whose maps they were. Now, tourists will be unaware of which country they are in until confronted with a bilingual road signs; "Slow" in reflective paint on the asphalt, after a few hundred metres becomes "Araf-Slow", I can only wonder at what unsuspecting tourists would make of that. On my trip in 2015 I was pleasantly surprised to be identified as a "polite Welshman", because of my accent, by the landlady of a pub on the English side of the border, I found it interesting, though I suppose quite normal, that people so near to the border are distinguishing the Welsh, a clear indication that Wales, despite the English policy since medieval times, has remained as culturally unique, at least in popular mind-set. My encounter with the English lady reminded me of Llewelyn's experience near the town of Shrewsbury.

On his journey to Shrewsbury, Llewelyn meets with another boy of a similar age (around 9 years old), Stephen de Hodnet, and the question of identity between the two boys arises. Both are speaking Norman-French and immediately, from Llewelyn's accented French, de Hodnet perceives that Llewelyn is foreign and initially mistakes him for English, this momentarily confuses Llewelyn as he had assumed that the *other* boy was English, whereas de Hodnet is identified as Norman. Another psychological border is suggested here, on the one hand we have Wales-England, and now England-Norman. Between the former there is

also the physical barrier created by the 8th Century Saxon king, Offa. In the latter there are no physical frontiers, but rather social and cultural, Saxon-Norman, even over a hundred years after the Norman Conquest of Saxon England. However, for the boy Llewelyn – who represents the emerging Welsh national identity – everything and everyone over the "other side" is "English". Centuries later, as the Welsh identity has been eroded and mutated, in my experience in other countries and cultures, I have perceived a tendency for the whole of the United Kingdom to be referred to as "English". As the Normans became "English", firstly as a misperception, and later as a national identity (it is doubtful that any English person in the 21st century would identify themselves as "Norman"), so the Welsh have also, in the same inaccurate generalization of national identity that the Normans were likely to have experienced over eight hundred years ago.

When de Hodnet's older brother, Walter, appears with two friends, a micro-history of England and Wales is played out in one small scene involving five boys. The older brother and his friends are the bullies, the stronger, more powerful, arrogant Norman-English, Llewelyn is defiant and brave but unable to hold out against the more powerful enemy. The scenario begins when Walter immediately presumes Llewelyn is of a much lower social order and, when the boys notice Llewelyn's horse, they cite a Welsh stereotype of "scratch a Welshman, find a horse thief", a sentiment that has been immortalised in a nursery rhyme, "Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief", recorded in the 18th century and incredibly still published, at least until 1997, in *the Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (OPIE, 1997). As animosity between the two emerging nations built up, these forms of stereotype were bound to emerge and many remain today, there is even a verb in the English language, *to welsh*, which means to renege on a bet or fail to honour a promise or agreement. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* the verb is of an unknown mid-19th century origin, but it is quite possible that it came from a specific stereotype or even perhaps a notorious Welshman who made a habit of not honouring his payments.

Llewelyn is beaten when he reacts defiantly when he realizes that the boys intent to rob him of his horse and clothes. Stephen de Hodnet intervenes and informs his older brother that Llewelyn is the step-nephew of Lord Robert Corbet. The older boys cease the beating, however Llewelyn spits angrily into Walters face. Naturally Walter is enraged and violently forces Llewelyn into saying that all Welshmen are thieves. This scene symbolises the medieval period struggle between Wales and England. The weaker party, Wales-Llewelyn is

proud, defiant and brave, however, as a tragic-hero figure, his hubris brings about his downfall.

When Llewelyn is 14 years old, his mother learns of the death of her brother, and the family, including Llewelyn's Norman step-father, return to Wales to see to family affairs. It is here that Llewelyn, against his mother and step-father's wishes, decides to stay in Wales and raise support to fight against his uncles and win back what he believes to be rightfully his, as heir to the lordship of Gwynedd. In a flashback glimpse into his years in exile, Llewelyn climbs the heights of Breiddyn Craig, (8 kms north-west of Caus Castle) whenever he feels *hiraeth*. On the hill top he gazes west into Wales, into his ancestors' lands of Gwynedd, distant and unreachable. Although now within the boundaries of Wales, during the 13th century Breiddyn Craig would have been in the undefined "no-man's land" between Wales and England, Breiddyn Craig to the Welsh, Breidden Hill to the English. King Offa of Mercia constructed his famous barrier just a few hundred metres to the west of Breiddyn, thus claiming the hill for the kingdom of Mercia. At over 360m the hill dominates the surrounding countryside and is a strategic landmark for both sides. On the hill top Llewelyn would feel in touch with his native land, physically neither in England, nor in Wales, reaching out towards his homeland, though unable to be there. The geographical feature represents an undefined Wales, once claimed by the foreign invaders, now a twilight zone where Llewelyn feels he can assuage his *hiraeth* without being in Wales.

Though the location in Wales where Llewelyn grew up and where he now meets with his childhood companions is no further than 20kms west of Caus in England, the language of the narrative, changes, in contrast to the "alien, unfriendly, strange" sentiments that Llewelyn experienced, now he feels like a freed bird, able to "soar up into the sun-bright azure sky." (p.23). The countryside is no longer unfamiliar to him, the rivers are unpolluted and "teaming with trout and greyling, dappled by summer sun and shadowed by willow and alder" (p.23). The description is of a magical paradise, the idyllic river-bank, the woods abundant with wild-life. I am reminded of my return in 2015, from my "exile" of 16 years, everything seemed so much more "Welsh", much more magical. For Llewelyn, the unspoilt nature and the very air and atmosphere of Wales made him feel truly home at last. However, when faced with meeting with his childhood friends he becomes reluctant to show himself due to an uncomfortable feeling of not quite fitting in, a sensation perhaps of being "insufficiently Welsh". After being away from his homeland for four years, Llewelyn feels that there are barriers to overcome, he believes that there has been a strong Norman influence on his life

and that perhaps has lost part of his true *Welshness*. Here again is Llewelyn-Wales, Wales having suffered a strong Norman influence and transformation of identity. When he overcomes his reluctance and meets with the other boys, they too jokingly allude to his "part-Norman" flawed identity. The boys agree to support Llewelyn's campaign to overthrow his uncles, and in a dramatic gesture, cut themselves and swear their allegiance in blood, the blood is symbolic of the violence that the boys – and Wales – would face in the years to come.

As I have already stated, through the English orientated education system of Wales, the history I learned at school omitted the Welsh narrative. We learn of the Saxon King Harold's treaty with the Vikings, effectively creating what would become known as Danelaw. That is, England cut diagonally through, north-west to south-east, from Liverpool to London, the north-eastern section being dominated and under the rule of the Danish invaders and settlers. Also very important in our history class was William the Conqueror's defeat of the last Saxon King, Harold, at Hastings, an event which changed the face of England. All of these historical events and social structuring are fundamental in the make-up of the cultural identity of *England*. Of course there were ramifications and great impact of these events and structures in Wales, none of which was taught through history classes. Within the first two chapters of *Here Be Dragons*, a clear Welsh identity is characterized as being distinct from Anglo-Norman. We understand that there is an antagonistic relationship between Wales and England and negative stereotypes exist on both sides, though we can also see the beginnings of the Anglo-Norman influences over Wales through the interaction of the character of Llewelyn with the Norman boys and with his family – his step-father and step-uncle, Robert Corbet, the Norman Marcher Lord. Llewelyn's mother marries a Norman nobleman and Llewelyn is likely to have been brought up from that time on, speaking and having a Norman biased education, through a French language medium, a reflection of how Wales would be placed under the same forces, albeit that Norman-French would become English, through time, in the sense of the language and the cultural identity.

As another important factor in the shaping of the identity of Wales, the landscapes and spaces of Wales can also be seen as being distinct from England, through Llewelyn's perception we see Wales as wild, mystical, untouched and untamed, there are no towns or centres of large populations and therefore Wales remains unpolluted. England on the other hand is hostile and bleak with large towns and filthy rivers. This of course is Llewelyn's point of view, we can say though that Wales remains as a largely rural landscape, and, during the

13th century, aside from the few Norman settlements in the south, there were no towns or greatly populated centres. Llewelyn's vision of the large town of Shrewsbury and its polluted rivers of England is a portent of a future in which this region becomes heavily industrialized. Just twenty kilometres to the east, the city of Birmingham went through a massive expansion during the industrial revolution, creating one of the most densely populated regions of Europe during the 19th century, again something that was taught to us in History at school, with no mention of any socio-economic development of Wales.

The narrative relates developments of the Royal House of Plantagenet, in Normandy Richard, King Henry II's son is in rebellion against his father. John, the younger son, defects to Richard's side while the king is on his deathbed. Upon Henry's death Richard becomes king (the first of that name, also known as *Coeur de Lion* "the Lionhearted") and whilst away on crusade, John rebels against William Longchamp whom Richard had left to govern England as regent. The rebellion is a success and when John learns that his brother had been taken prisoner in Austria on his return journey, John assumes the throne. However, Richard is ransomed and returns to Normandy where he pardons his younger brother.

Ten years pass and at the age of 20, Llewelyn is active in his campaign to defeat his uncles and become ruler of Gwynedd; he faces opposition from neighbouring Welsh leaders as well as the powerful Marcher Lords, and therefore must build alliances from both sides. In two chapters, with a space of six years between them, Llewelyn is seen in conflict with the Anglo-Norman adversaries. In the first of these conflicts he meets again with Walter de Hodnet, the boy who had beat him when he was 10 years old. De Hodnet is leading a group of Saxon foot soldiers through Wales in order to deliver an important message to Davydd ap Owain, Llewelyn's uncle, at Rhuddlan castle, within Welsh territory. In contrast to when Llewelyn was exploring parts of England, now the positions are reversed, from the point of view of the Saxon soldiers, it is now Wales that is the dark foreboding, alien, hostile land. Llewelyn's Welsh woods are no longer magical and bright with birdsong and clear running streams replete with trout, but rather threatening, gloomy and dangerous. There is no clearly defined path like the road that Llewelyn had followed to Shrewsbury town. This is the mysterious, unknown territory, the land of the dragons which remains uncharted by the map-makers. When the group are ambushed by Llewelyn and his men, they are identified and addressed as "English", with no distinction of Saxon and Norman, a reminder of the national identity that will become dominant over time. Welsh guerrilla warfare tactics– small, fast moving groups, able to strike and disappear – against their more powerful Norman

neighbours, are demonstrated in this scene. This time it is Llewelyn that has the upper hand over de Hodnet and in a reversal of roles, Llewelyn humiliates the other man, though not violently as was the act committed against him. With tales of Welsh atrocities from years past in their minds, the men are surprised when they are released without harm.

Six years later Llewelyn has grown in power and is able to head an army with the latest sophisticated siege weapon technology of the time. His army is carrying out a violent assault on a Norman held castle. This reflects the increasing Anglo-Norman presence in Wales, the establishment of small castles, of the motte and bailey design as I have already described, and the Welsh opposition and reaction towards these incursions and settlements. The Welsh Marcher Lords, during the 12th and 13th centuries, crept slowly westwards and established improvised wooden palisade forts at strategic points. When they were able to take hold, stone walls were constructed to strengthen the position. Mold Castle, Llewelyn's siege of which is described here, is one such construction. The town of Yr Wyddgrug, Mold to the English, within ten kilometres west of the current Wales-England border, grew up around the castle as a Norman settlement. The name Mold derived from the Norman-French for "high hill", whereas Yr Wyddgrug, means "burial mound", as Llewelyn points out to the Norman Lord trapped in the castle. This town then would be one of many Anglo-Norman towns encroaching into Welsh territory that would become, actually, Welsh towns but with a massive English influence, the changing face of Welsh identity. When the castle is captured a Welsh soldier brings a bolt of green velvet, taken from somewhere within the castle, to Llewelyn, saying that it would match Llewelyn's lady's red hair. Green and red, the colours of the modern day Welsh flag affirm that the town and castle are now back in Welsh hands.

3.2.2 Dolwyddelan castle

Through the narrative, we learn of two important historical events from captured messages from both the ambush and the castle siege scenes. The first is that King Richard had been captured and was being held ransom by the Duke of Austria and the second, being six years later, that the same King had been fatally shot by a crossbow while besieging a castle in France.

On Richard's death, John is named heir, however another claimant, Arthur, Richard and John's nephew, rebels against the decision, claiming that Richard had named he, Arthur, as heir, and not John. Arthur is captured by John and placed in captivity. However, Arthur disappears and is never seen again, rumours abound that John had him killed or even that he carried out the deed himself. Meanwhile, John learns that he has an illegitimate daughter from a brief affair five years previously, the girl, Joanna is brought to him and he accepts her as his daughter and treats her as a loving father would and Joanna is brought up in John's royal household.

With the disappearance of Arthur and an unpopular campaign in France, John begins to make enemies of a number of powerful barons. Stephen de Hodnet, the boy whom Llewelyn had befriended near Shrewsbury town years previously, and his older brother Baldwin, have allied themselves with one of the rebel barons and are therefore outlawed and seeking refuge in Wales. They are met with Llewelyn's men and are led to Dolwyddelan Castle.

The A470 is one of the principal routes that runs north to south through Wales. Driving in a southerly direction on this road in February 2015, through the Lledr river valley, I suddenly realized I was following the same route as the characters, the de Hodnet brothers, in *Here Be Dragons*, and, as in the narrative, the castle, "appeared without warning, seemed to spring suddenly from the rough-hewn rocks overlooking the River Lledr." (p.134) (photo annex 6 and map annex 1). An earlier castle on an adjacent knoll is thought to be birthplace of Llewelyn as it was the principal home of his father, Iowerth (TURVEY 2010). The ruins of the castle, now preserved by Welsh Heritage organization CADW, are a permanent feature on the landscape and a solid reminder of a turbulent period of history. Llewelyn had reinforced the castle towards the end of the 12th century – the de Hodnet brothers are surprised by a recently built high curtain wall – which reflects the need for a strong defensive position against Norman aggression deep within Wales; Dolwyddelan is situated in the foot-hills of the Snowdonia mountain range, more than 100 kms from the Wales-England border. Taking this into consideration, the fortifications also indicate the need for a stronghold for refuge and protection against any Welsh attack, a reminder that the Anglo-Normans were not Llewelyn's only adversaries. The castle guards a strategic east-west mountain pass and originally consisted of two squat oblong towers, one facing south-west and the other facing north-east, the latter now nothing more than a crumbled shell. I climbed the hill and stood within where the main courtyard used to be, it was an eerie sensation, the ruins were deserted – rarely

visited by tourists in February – being in the exact spot where over eight hundred years ago, Prince Llewelyn himself commanded his armies. The remaining tower consists of two floors, though with a basement, a defensive stair leading to the first floor, high ceilings and the tower terrace, the actual height is more like a five storey building. Each floor is one single chamber, one of which is described in the narrative as Llewelyn's bedchamber, it is here that Baldwin de Hodnet is surprised by the décor of the room and its similarity to a Norman style and Llewelyn admits to having adopted some Norman customs. This is a reflection of the beginnings of the strong Anglo-Norman influence on the cultural identity of Wales, an influence so strong that it is able to reach into this region, many kilometres distant from the English border. One room of the remaining tower has been preserved as a walk-in museum, though bare of furniture, large posters on the walls tell the history of the castle and of Llewelyn ap Iorwerth; in this room Llewelyn would have received visitors such as Stephen and Baldwin de Hodnet, the room is spacious enough, roughly 10m by 8m, to accommodate a large table for seating several guests. Despite the resemblance to a Norman culture that Baldwin had noted, a Welsh bard entertains the guests with songs and poetry, something that Baldwin is also surprised at, the fact that bards enjoy such status. The bard, singing and reciting poetry of heroic deeds and of a rich ancient history, all in the Welsh language, is a reminder that although everything that can be seen in the castle seems Norman, under the surface, everything is still very much Welsh.

As Llewelyn's power-base, Dolwyddelan is the setting for three significant scenarios in *Here Be Dragons*. The first of these is when Llewelyn presents his wife Joanna with a French translation of the "Runnymede charter" – *the Magna Carta* – the iconic document reluctantly signed by King John and hailed as the first charter of human rights (though it concerns mostly the barons and monarchy rather than the common people). When reading the charter, Joanna observes, referring to the Welsh, "How glad I am that we have our own laws, that we are not subject to trial by ordeal or combat and a Welshwoman's oath is conclusive […]" (p.456). For Joanna, Norman, the Anglo-Norman king's daughter, to refer to herself as being Welsh shows a further merging of cultures, Wales is under a heavy Anglo-Norman influence, but the Norman's cannot help but be influenced also by Wales, as proven by the actions of some Marcher Lords as they marry into Welsh families and adopt Welsh customs. Here also Llewelyn predicts the future when he observes that the Normans are becoming English, with the loss of their lands in France. Concerning Wales, the *Magna Carta* includes a clause which states that any land or property seized unlawfully from any Welshman "by our

father King Henry or our brother King Richard, and it remains in our hands or is held by others under our warranty"[7], the property is to be restored, and furthermore for any dispute which arises involving Welshmen over the property it should be settled by Welsh law if it occurs in Wales. As the document was drafted largely by the Marcher Barons who were rebelling against King John, this shows a propensity to preserve Wales, rather than to absorb it as part of the emergent Anglo-Norman empire. The charter also refers to a "Marcher Law" as distinct from Welsh and English law as though the Barons are in control of their own land, which in some way they were, neither Welsh, nor English, the border region of an indistinct nature. With the passing of the Act of Union in 1536 the privileges of the Marcher Lords were abolished and, as we have seen, a distinct border line drawn on the map; on the left Wales, on the right England. In a sense, the Marcher "land" exists within the borders of Wales as the hybrid, England-Norman-Welsh influenced culture which have evolved since Llewelyn's time.

The second of these important events at Dolwyddelan castle is when Gruffydd, Llewelyn's son, returns from captivity and meets his half-brother, Davydd, Joanna's son. Gruffydd had been a hostage of the English king as assurance that the Welsh would not rebel. After four years in captivity, since one of the provisions of the *Magna Carta* is, "We will at once return the son of Llewelyn, all Welsh hostages, and the charters delivered to us as security for the peace"[8]. Gruffydd is released and returns to Wales. The character of Gruffydd is fiercely nationalist, though the concept of nationalism would not be formulated until centuries later. He loathes the Anglo-Normans, including his own step-mother, Joanna. Even though he speaks Norman-French, he refuses to do so with her and speaks only Welsh. He is defiant, impulsive and arrogant and indicates to his father several times that he would never pay homage, or bow to, or even meet with the English king. Gruffydd is Wales in its essence, the ancient Wales, with no Saxon or Norman interference, even before the foreigners invaded the shores of Britain. However, a new Wales is emerging, represented by Davydd, half-Welsh, half-Norman, with a heritage of two rich cultures blending to form one. When they meet at Dolwyddelan, Davydd is 6 years old and Gruffydd is 19. At first Gruffydd does not know who the small boy is when Davydd offers his "lucky penny". This symbolizes a rapprochement between the Welsh and the Anglo-Norman cultures, however the offering is rejected when Gruffydd realizes who the younger boy is – a Norman, and Gruffydd's words

[7] A digitalized and translated copy of the *Magna Carta* is available on-line at the British Library site, details in references.
[8] Idem.

are a reflection of his – the ancient Wales's – sentiments towards the Anglo-Normans when he exclaims, "Go away, you had no right to do this, to seek me out. I do not want you here" (p.462). Gruffydd does not accept that Davydd is Welsh and therefore cannot be any prince of Wales. There is a premonition in their words when Gruffydd claims that John – Davydd's grandfather – means to have a "puppet English Prince to dance to London's tune" (p.461) and Davydd replies, "I'm Welsh, how could I ever be an English Prince?" (p.461). Almost 70 years later, another of John's grandsons –Davydd's cousin – Edward I, names HIS son as Prince of Wales. Again a complex question of identity arises, on the one hand Gruffydd refuses to accept Davydd as Welsh because of his Norman mother, Davydd describes himself as a "bridge" between the two cultures and sees himself as both Welsh and Norman. Edward I's son was born in Wales and therefore can be considered Welsh. He was known as Edward of Caernarfon – his place of birth – and went on to become King Edward II of England (and Wales). By ensuring that his son was born in Wales, Edward I was giving the Welsh people a Welsh prince. The current Prince of Wales, Charles, was invested with this title at Caernarfon Castle, the same in which Edward of Caernarfon was born. There still exists a hard-core nationalist Welsh faction who do not recognise Charles as Prince of Wales, who believe that non-Welsh speakers – such as myself – are not really Welsh and who would certainly vote for an independent Wales if ever there were a referendum for such. I have observed this on the social networks of internet and have met at some instances people like this. All of these sentiments and characteristics are represented in the persona of Gruffydd, a representation of a Wales-topia where the Saxons, Normans and English have been expelled and where there is a Welsh government for the people of Wales, who of course speak only Welsh. This has never existed, even at the time of Gruffydd, since Wales was divided into three princedoms, the rulers of which each vying for the title of King of (all of) Wales.

The third important event in the narrative that is set at Dolwyddelan castle brings up the Wales-Anglo-Norman prince/ruler question once again. As I have already mentioned above, by Welsh Law, upon his death, a man's property had to be divided equally amongst his sons, including sons born out of marriage, princes and leaders were subject to this law. This seems a very fair system in comparison to the Anglo-Norman system of Primogeniture, in which the first born son inherited the entire estate. In noble families, the siblings had to survive on the charity of the oldest brother, otherwise the options for the men was to find their own way in the world by becoming knights or entering the priesthood and the women had to hope for a marriage into a noble family or they could enter into a monastery and become

nuns. The Welsh system, on the other hand, had the effect of fragmenting any large estate that the father had, in all probability, strived most of his life to build up. Though the Welsh system was ratified as a Law by Hywel Dda, it seems to be more like an ancient tradition as it was followed by all the leaders of Wales within their own kingdoms rather than they deciding their own systems. It is interesting to note that, despite not being a united nation as such, Wales's princes followed one law, apparently based on traditions and consolidated by Hywel Dda in the 10th century. Llewelyn Fawr was to change this. After gathering his closest advisors, allies and family, except for Gruffydd, Llewelyn announces that his sole heir is to be Davydd. By acting in such a way, Llewelyn is adopting an Anglo-Norman system and breaking with Welsh tradition, not only by naming a unique heir but also by bypassing his first born son, illegitimacy not considered a barrier to inheritance according to Welsh custom and tradition. By Anglo-Norman standards Gruffydd's illegitimacy would bar him from any right to inheritance. Llewelyn's reasons are practical and diplomatic, he knows that under Gruffydd's obstinate rule, and his refusal to appease the English king, Gwynedd and Wales would suffer a full military invasion and inevitable defeat against a much more powerful adversary. On the other hand, by choosing Davydd as his heir, Llewelyn is eroding an ancient custom and accepting a foreign one, this is some sense models a cultural identity in a different form; the tradition is being changed from within rather than from an enforced outside influence. Had Wales not been invaded and colonized by Davydd's cousin, Edward I, some 70 years later, Wales may well have evolved in a similar way, with Anglo-Norman customs and traditions being accepted and adopted over those of Wales, rather than the colonizers bringing with them their traditions, customs and laws.

Historically, Llewelyn Fawr did name Davydd as his heir, whether he did so at Dolwyddelan Castle I have been unable to discover. The meeting between Davydd as a young boy, and his older half-brother Gruffydd, may well have taken place. Given the circumstances and the political situation, it is highly likely that Gruffydd felt strongly resentful against Davydd and the confines of the household at Dolwyddelan would predispose such a meeting. Joan, Llewelyn's wife would certainly have known about the *Magna Carta*, but where, when and her opinion of it is not recorded in history. At the ruins of this once great Welsh castle, it is easy to imagine such events happening in the halls and courtyards some 800 years previously, after the conquest of Wales in 1283, Dolwyddelan was garrisoned by the English but was abandoned by the 15th century and became neglected. The castle is now a Welsh possession once again and is a lasting monument to Welsh perseverance and resistance.

3.2.3 The City of Chester

When Joanna is just 13 years old, in a political move to gain alliance with strong leaders of Wales, John betroths her to Llewelyn and the two are married in 1206 in the border town of Chester. Founded by the Romans, Chester is already an ancient city by the 13th century when Llewelyn and Joanna's wedding takes place at this location. Practically on the modern day border, though lying on the English side, Chester, given an alternate history, could well have been a town in Wales. When the Romans left at the beginning of the 5th century Chester remained occupied by *Cymry* peoples of the Kingdom of Powys until the year 616 when they were defeated by the Saxon king Aethelfrith in the Battle of Chester and the town was overtaken by the Saxons and claimed as an English settlement (DAVIES, 2007). Sometime during the 10th century, the walls of Chester were extended and refortified as protection, not from the Welsh, but from Viking marauders. The wedding takes place in St. Werburgh's Abbey, the current day Chester Cathedral, and the reception is held in the great hall of Chester Castle (annex 9). Both these locations are now major tourist attractions of the city of Chester (map annex 1). The original cathedral dates from the 11th century and has been reformed and modernized several times. The castle also has undergone several modifications, especially during the 18th century when new buildings were constructed over the original castle and used as a prison. These buildings which remain in good repair are currently used as the Crown Courts and a military museum.

The wedding of Llewelyn and Joanna symbolizes a union of both the Welsh and the Anglo-Norman cultures. As the Norman Marcher Lords were encroaching more and more into Welsh territory, it was not uncommon for these unions to take place, allowing a merger of the two cultures in a different form than that of colonization and imposition which would come later. Nonetheless, the differences between the Welsh and the Anglo-Norman guests at the reception create a tense atmosphere, demonstrating that, at this time, just a few kilometres to the West of this town is a completely foreign land with its own unique language and customs. As I travelled through these border towns and met with people from both sides, I had the same impression, that there is a Wales, a unique foreign land, "just over there", though I felt no sentiments of antagonism. However, such is the sense of hostility that has existed, of the Welsh, fomented over centuries and such is the proximity of Chester to the border and within this once disputed and violent border region, a popular belief, still circulated – several people mentioned it to me while I was there as a kind of joke – is that a law still exists that has never

been repealed which is that it is illegal for a Welshman to be within the city walls of Chester during the hours of darkness and that it is perfectly legal to shoot a Welshman with a crossbow if he is seen within the city at these times. The same "laws exist" for the towns of Shrewsbury and Hereford. However, a document, *Legal Oddities*, on the British government law site, exposes this and several other "unrepealed laws" as false, and reports that it probably stems from a City Ordinance Code of 1403, itself untraceable, passed in response to the Owain Glyndwr rebellion.

At the reception, after an initial potentially violent incident between the Anglo-Normans and the Welsh, the entertainment distracts the guests, hunting birds, rowdy dancing and bawdy singing. The wedding is a micro-cosmos of the complex Norman-Welsh relationships. On the one hand the underlying antagonism is ever present, on the other hand the Marcher lords with lands in Wales saw the alliance as a peaceful solution in that their lands would be left alone, and through intermarriage, merger and adopting of customs, they themselves and their descendants would become Welsh.

When the time comes for them to retire to bed, the "bedding ceremony", when the drunken guests accompany the couple to the bridal chamber, even to the point of watching the bride undress, is the ancient precursor to the modern day custom of showering the couple with confetti and decorating the marriage car with trash and graffiti. Joanna is, naturally, reluctant to participate in the revelry and Llewelyn helps by creating a diversion which allows them to escape to the chamber unseen. Also a medieval custom was to display the blood stained sheets the next morning to demonstrate that the bride went to the bed a virgin. Llewelyn, observing that Joanna is still very much a child, is unwilling to consummate the marriage and so Joanna is then preoccupied about the consequential absence of a blood stain. In a dramatic gesture, and an echo of the scene played out when Llewelyn was an adolescent, Llewelyn cuts his own inner-forearm to create a blood stain in order to fool the guests the next morning. The blood is a powerful symbol of the aggressions Wales has suffered at the hands of the Normans; it is also reminiscent of submission and reflects Llewelyn's actions of submitting to the Anglo-Norman King John, Joanna's father, which he is obliged to do several times over the years, as are his son and grandson who submit respectively to the son and grandson of John. When Llewelyn calls her by the Welsh equivalent of Joanna - "Siwan" (pronounced *shewan*, there is no *J* in the Welsh alphabet), Joanna indignantly insists that her name is *Joanna*, in this way refusing to accept a Welsh identity, though in the years to come, she would become known as "The Lady of Wales", and be accepted by the Welsh as one of their own.

Joanna returns to Wales with Llewelyn and as an outsider begins to understand the animosity between the Normans and the Welsh.

3.2.4 Aber, Llewelyn's *Llys*

If Dolwyddelan were Llewelyn's main military power-base, then Aber was his home, his *Llys* – Royal Court – situated on the north coast of Wales, overlooking the island of Anglesey, in the settlement known as Abergwyngregyn. On the site currently stands a 16th century manor house known as Pen Y Bryn, constructed on a bank of earth known as Garth Celyn. It is recorded that the Archbishop of Canterbury was at this site in 1282 to negotiate peace terms between Edward I of England and Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, the grandson of Llewelyn Fawr. The King of England offered a substantial annual pension and a large estate in England if Llewelyn were to surrender Wales to the Crown. Llewelyn affronted by this offer – or rather, bribe – wrote a letter of refusal to the king dated from "Garth Kelyn" (DAVIES, 2007). Interestingly, and perhaps disappointingly, the official website of the village of Abergwyngregyn does not recognize Garth Celyn as the site of the ancient *Llys*, but rather another site in the middle of the village, where there is very little information. I find it surprising that this part of the rich history of Wales, that is, of the Princes of Gwynedd, is given very little importance on the official website of the village. However, Garth Celyn itself has its official website on which a lively campaign for its recognition as the ancient seat of the Princes of Gwynedd is promoted. On a video on the website, the current owner of Pen Y Bryn reports that when she and her family first moved into the house in 1988, the people from the village began visiting with simple gifts such as eggs and fruit and mentioned that she is now living in "Llewelyn's house" indicating the folk memory of the village. This prompted the owner to investigate further, and she found evidence in records that the house was indeed constructed over Garth Celyn, Llewelyn's *Llys* I spoke with this lady on the telephone to arrange a visit to this ancient site, unfortunately due to my schedule, I was unable to find time to see the mansion. The landlady of the mansion, due to personal matters, has been obliged to put the property on the market and maintains the website in order to raise funds to preserve the local as a historic heritage site. It is a shame that the newly emerging Welsh government cannot or will not, for whatever reasons, invest in this site and promote it as a major tourist

attraction. Indeed as already expounded upon above, Wales is relatively unknown and its history has been overshadowed and supressed by the larger more powerful England. It seems incredible, almost like a conspiracy theory, that by all appearances, this suppression continues. While we learn about the beginnings of the English parliament and the palaces of the English kings and queens at school, no mention whatsoever is made of Garth Celyn.

At Aber, it is now Joanna that is in a strange and hostile land, as Llewelyn was as a boy in Caus, being now 14 years old, Joanna is at a similar age and feels that the customs and habits are strange. Joanna feels isolated in the vastness of the wild landscapes of forests, mountain and sea which contrast sharply with the English towns and cities that she is accustomed to. One of the most striking things about Aber is the nature and spectacular landscapes, immediately to the north of Abergwyngregyn is the wide stretch of the Irish Sea and island of Anglesey, to the south the land rises up sharply to form the Snowdonia mountain range. The Snowdonia range boasts as amongst the most spectacular landscapes of the British Isles, deep valleys and high snow-topped peaks cover an area of over two thousand square kilometres. The highest peak, *Yr Wyddfa*, Snowdon in English, at a little over a thousand metres, is Britain's second highest mountain, after Ben Nevis in Scotland. It is in this region that the Welsh were able to conduct a guerrilla campaign against any invader, striking with small commando groups and disappearing into the valleys and mountains where it would be difficult for them to be hunted. Nowadays, the region is a protected national park and the invaders are the tourists, with over three million visitors each year[9].

To escape the boredom of the household, where she feels trapped and friendless, Joanna takes long walks on the beach and into the mountains. On her 15th birthday, a significant date as this represents a coming to womanhood in some societies, on the beach Joanna observes the expanse of water between the mainland and the island, despite the calm appearance, the waters are treacherous, replete with hidden strong currents and whirlpools of opposing tidal forces. In the same way, the situation between Llewelyn's Wales and John's England is now relatively calm, from Joanna's point of view. There are dangers beneath the surface that she cannot yet perceive, she is aware of some tension between her father and her husband, Norman-England and Wales but as yet the danger is not physically manifest.

When Llewelyn's two young daughters wander onto the beach, in an effort to earn their trust and befriend them, Joanna builds a sandcastle. When the daughters ask if it is an English or Welsh castle, Joanna replies that she does not yet know, this is an indication that

[9] Source Snowdonia National Park web site, details in references

she is becoming Welsh and is now unsure of her Norman identity. The girls however are in no doubt, it is a Welsh castle. Joanna and the girls have unknowingly constructed a mini-history scenario; a castle constructed by the Normans now belonging to Wales. The history story is further played out when Gruffydd arrives; firstly to distract the girls, Joanna suggests building a moat, the castle's defences are being reinforced in the face of an enemy. Interestingly to note, the Welsh castle – constructed by a Norman – is under threat from a Welsh enemy, a reminder that the Anglo-Normans were not Llewelyn's only adversaries, and also a reminder that these castles frequently changed hands in territorial disputes. Also on this micro-scale, this is a portent of Gruffydd's future rebellion against his own father. The boy destroys the sandcastle and the girls lose interest in Joanna's rapprochement, signifying a small victory for Wales, in some sense. However, Joanna resolves to gain the girls' trust, a reflection of a peaceful Norman influence towards Wales, rather than the violence that Gruffydd – representing a radical, jingoistic Wales – offers. The sandcastle is also a metaphor for Joanna's life in Wales and her relationship with Llewelyn, she must construct a solid identity within Wales's borders, and yet, like the sand, it is fragile and open to attack from Wales itself, the girls recognise it as Welsh, but Gruffydd refuses to accept that, just as he refuses to accept her relationship with his father. Two years later, in another confrontation with Gruffydd, Joanna, heavily pregnant with her second child, tense and stressed because Llewelyn is away on campaign, accuses Gruffydd of chasing away and, though it is implicit, killing her pet dog. She apologises – the dog had reappeared unharmed - Gruffydd naturally is furious and demonstrates a hatred for Joanna through expression and posture, another exemplification of an unbending Welsh feeling towards the Norman-English, present in some elements that Gruffydd represents; Joanna describes him as "wild and perverse and dangerously unpredictable" (p.284) a similar sentiment that over many years the Normans and then English have held as a perception of Wales, a wild and dangerous region to be conquered and tamed.

After the sandcastle episode, Joanna walks up the valley to Rhaeadr Fawr, Aber Falls, a distance of some five kilometres. On the way, she pauses to watch sheep being herded into a pen to be sheared, a typical and very common Welsh rural scene to this day. Joanna is absorbing a *Welshness* through an unconscious osmotic process; she reflects on what she has learned about Welsh rural life, indicating this subtle development in her psyche. The waterfall is another powerful symbol, this is nature at its rawest and most beautiful, the magical Wales that still exists. To use a cliché, as with the de Hodnet brothers' route to Dolwyddelan castle, I

walked in Joanna's footsteps – and in all probability, Joan's historical footsteps – up the valley to Rhaeadr Fawr, Aber Falls (photo annex 8 and map annex 1). Though not mentioned in the narrative – perhaps not having been discovered at the time of Llewelyn – there is a Bronze Age archaeological site besides the footpath indicating that this area has been settled for at least three thousand years. I could not help but wonder about the millions of people, ancient Britons, Welsh, Normans, English and now tourists from all over the world, who have trodden the same pathway. The falls themselves are an impressive display of nature, the water falling over a bare rock face of almost 40 metres in height into a deep plunge pool and flowing away as a tributary to join a larger river where Joanna observed a wide variety of flowers, my trip to Aber falls being in February, the abundance of flowers was absent though this did not in any way distract from the natural beauty of the site. It would have taken Joanna perhaps over an hour to reach Rhaedr Fawr, the distance from the beach is over five kilometres, however the path is a gradual climb, nowadays the trail is well trodden and in parts facilitated in parts by stone steps and gravel of which Joanna would not have had the benefit. Over 800 years later, I can echo the words of the narrative from Joanna's perception, "It proved to be a very pleasant walk. On [my] left rose the height of Maes y Gaer, on [my] right thickly wooded hills. As the path wound upwards [I] could look back and glimpse the sea" (p.216). An added bonus for me was the friendly wild Welsh mountain ponies that approach the tourists in the hope of a tasty treat.

At Aber, like the de Hodnet brothers, Joanna notices the Welsh love for music and the importance that the Bard has in this society, something which was lacking, and even mocked, in the their Anglo-Norman society. Until today Wales is sometimes referred to as The Land of Song with its rich choral traditions from the 19th century non-conformist chapel choirs, and the *Eisteddfod*, the music, literature and culture festival with its origins in the late 12th century.

A four lane highway now cuts sharply between the village of Abergwyngregyn and the straits that separate the mainland from the island. Travelling westwards, it is no longer necessary to take the mountain trail, Penmaenmawr, over which Joanna journeyed on horseback, though the rocky promontory still dominates this part of the coast. In ancient times the cliffs along the coast met with the sea making it impossible to travel along this route, the highway having been constructed relatively recently allows an easier journey. From the road, it is possible to glimpse *Pen Y Bryn* through the trees on the rise of Garth Celyn. Following the same route, Llewelyn would have been able to reach his palaces on the island of Môn,

Anglesey, within a day's horseback ride, nowadays, on the modern highway, it is a short ten minute drive from Garth Celyn to the island. A bridge now connects the mainland with the island near a point where Llewelyn ap Gruffydd defeated an English army as they crossed a temporary pontoon bridge in an invasion attempt from the island in 1282. This event, known as the Battle of Moel y Don, is described in *The Reckoning*, Sharon Kay Penman's third novel in the Princes of Gwynedd Trilogy.

After a year, their marriage has still not been consummated, Joanna thinks it is because she is undesirable and that Llewelyn does not love her, from Llewelyn's point of view, at 15 years old, she is still a child. Reflecting on this relationship Joanna sees herself as in a limbo, "a wife and yet not a wife. Just as at her father's court. The King's bastard daughter, not truly belonging there, either" (p.207). She is also going through an identity transformation, a Norman immersed in a Welsh world, neither here nor there, becoming Welsh and yet unable to be completely free of her Norman individuality. Accepted by some, treated indifferently by others and wholly rejected by a few, is Wales's relationship with the incoming Anglo-Normans. Joanna finds a friend in Catrin and is pleasantly surprised to discover that Catrin is also Norman, wed to Rhys, one of Llewelyn's closest advisors and friends. Catrin introduces herself to Joanna as Catherine, her Norman identity, Catrin being the Welsh version. Just as Joanna would not become "Siwan", Catrin/Catherine still sees herself as Norman – after thirteen years – though Rhys refers to her as Catrin, her Welsh identity. Catrin tells of how she was kidnapped by Rhys from the border village of Blanc Minster, now known as Whitchurch in England. Rhys was trading goods in Blanc Minster, an indication that as long as they had goods or money to trade, the Welsh were welcome in England, the matters of commerce know no borders. He sees Catrin, who is there with her brother, also on business, and decides that he would kidnap her. Unlike Llewelyn's marriage to Joanna, which was politically motivated, Rhys actively seeks and undertakes a dangerous venture to bring Catrin to Wales and marry her. This shows a willingness of the Welsh not only to passively accept and absorb Anglo-Norman culture and subtle influences, but also to go beyond the border and actively and unconditionally bring into Wales that foreign culture which Catrin represents.

Catrin and Alison, a personal maid from Yorkshire whom Joanna had acquired while on a visit to England, are also representative of the subtle "infiltration" of the Anglo-Normans into Welsh society and culture. At the same time, Llewelyn reveals in a conversation with Joanna, he is in the process of codifying the ancient laws of Hwyl Dda – the Good – "Laws

needed to be flexible, to reflect the changing needs of changing times" (p.208), an explicit declaration of Llewelyn's awareness of the changes in his world and his willingness to adapt, though he is meeting with some resistance from "those that clung mindlessly to the old ways" (p.208), also an indication that in some ways Wales is resisting change. On the other hand, he expresses his view that Wales should have a church independent from that of England, under the control of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Llewelyn – Wales – is also in a sense in a limbo, just as Joanna. Llewelyn feels that his Wales needs a change, the Anglo-Norman influence, but at the same time there is a necessity to hold on to the old Wales, with some elements fiercely defending that view.

At Aber, as Llewelyn treats Joanna as a child, in the sense of their relationship as a married couple, in other words, they do not share in sexual relations, Llewelyn maintains a concubine, Cristyn, who is also mother of two of Llewelyn's younger children. After she cuts short a visit to England and arrives back at Aber two weeks earlier than expected, eager to see Llewelyn, Joanna catches him and Cristyn in bed together. At first furious, Joanna waits until the next morning to converse with Llewelyn, he has left on court business but Cristyn is still in the bed-chamber. In a bizarre striking scene Joanna orders the bed to be taken out into the bailey and burned. This is a potent message that Llewelyn must reject his Welsh concubine and accept his Norman wife, this is also representative of a violent incursion of the Anglo-Normans into the Welsh way of life. Fire is a powerful symbol of passion and demonstrates Joanna's desire to be accepted by the Welsh, she is telling Llewelyn that she wants to belong, to Wales and to him. The fire destroys his old way of life and he must accept the new, Joanna. By doing this he is also accepting the Anglo-Norman to Wales, though at the same time the Norman is absorbing a Welsh identity. The Cristyn / bed-fire incident finally brings Llewelyn and Joanna together as a married couple.

3.2.5 Cricieth Castle

Over the months Joanna begins to learn Welsh proving she is now willing to accept a Welsh identity, though from Gruffydd's point of view, her French accented rendering of the Welsh language is unacceptable and still identifies her as very much Norman. In another

confrontation on a beach, paradoxically Gruffydd defiantly refuses to speak Welsh with Joanna and will speak with her only in Norman French, thus outwardly denying her the opportunity to practice and improve her language skills, but psychologically denying her access to his inner world and the world of Welsh culture. Joanna on the other hand insists on speaking Welsh to Gruffydd, showing her determination to be accepted into this world. Also present at this scene is the grandson of a Norman baron whom Llewelyn is offering shelter at the castle. Joanna escapes to the beach because she is incensed that Llewelyn should receive as a guest the Norman baron William de Braose who has rebelled against her father, the English king. When Gruffydd insults Joanna by calling her a whore, it is the Norman boy who defends her, this then is a complex crossing and overlapping of culture and relationships. Joanna the Norman, seeking admittance to Welsh identity and yet being denied this by Gruffydd, Joanna's husband supporting the Norman lord, because he has rebelled against the king, Joanna cannot abide this and yet she is supported by the baron's grandson.

When Llewelyn berates Joanna for not being present for their guest, she defends her father and Llewelyn expounds on the Welsh ancestry as a way of explaining why he cannot trust King John. Llewelyn puts forward an important concept, perhaps a key notion of Welsh cultural identity that I have examined above; that is history. As he explains, Llewelyn can trace his lineage back to the 5th century and, in all probability, his ancestry goes back to the first arrivals of the Celts, around 700 BCE, or even beyond that, to the nomadic neo-lithic peoples of Britain. The Normans also have a rich history of course, but Llewelyn's point is that his forebears have been on the same land for 700 years and in all likelihood, some thousands of years before that. The Normans on the other hand have no land that they can call ancestral. Originating from the raiding Scandinavian sea-farers, the Normans settled in the greater part of France and, as from the 11th century, in England. As Llewelyn points out to Joanna, "Your people have dwelt in England for over a hundred years, yet you do not think of yourselves as English" (p.316). Another hundred years or so would pass before the Normans become "English" and even longer before all ties with France are severed. We are returning here to the complex matter of identity; the Welsh of Llewelyn's time had been on the island of Britain for thousands of years, speaking the ancient Welsh language, hearing stories, histories, folk memories, passed down orally from generation to generation. A DNA study over the whole of Britain shows that, amongst the population of Britain, the DNA of many of the Welsh people, especially those in the north-west – Llewelyn's domains – is closer to that of the earliest hunter-gatherers that populated Britain around 10,000 years ago (LESLEY et. al.

2015). This gives a true sense of belonging, and that, from the scale of history involved, is quite an understatement. This sense of belonging and the folk memories of thousands of years give rise to the deep emotion of *hiraeth*, elsewhere described, when a Welsh person is uprooted from his or her homeland. Without these thousands of years of heritage, is it possible to feel *hiraeth*? Llewelyn tells Joanna, "You do not sicken when uprooted or exiled […]. You know nothing of *hiraeth*" (p.316). A large part of the population of Wales in our current time is of course descended from many differing cultures, including Norman. Another question which arises here is: are these nth generation of Norman/Flemmish/English/West-Indian immigrants any less Welsh than those descended from the hunter-gatherers? There is no simple and easy answer, one must understand firstly what does to BE Welsh mean, and that also is a multi-faceted and complex concept of which I am seeking some answers here. Perhaps one is only truly Welsh when one can feel *hiraeth*, to merely "miss" one's homeland is not truly *hiraeth*.

Llewelyn is also fearful of the advance of the Normans into Wales, he tells Joanna, "You will never understand what I feel when I see Norman castles guarding Welsh mountain passes, when I hear French spoken instead of Welsh in the valley of the Rhondda" (p.316). The choice of the Rhondda to illustrate the Norman occupation is representative of the whole valleys region of south-east Wales. The Rhondda is in fact two valleys, Rhondda Fawr (great) and Rhondda Fach (small), and are the most well-known of the south-east Wales valleys, having been made so through Richard Llewellyn's novel *How Green Was My Valley*, and subsequent Hollywood film in 1941 of the same name. The Norman's had occupied this region of Wales as early as the end of the 11th century, though the valleys remained relatively unpopulated for hundreds of years, with only isolated farmsteads. However, during the early 19th century the Rhondda, and the adjacent valleys to the east and west, suffered a huge population explosion due to the coal mining, steel and iron industries, with thousands of immigrants from England effectively "diluting" the culture, something that the Normans had set out to achieve in other regions some centuries earlier. Despite the efforts of the Welsh language societies and the Welsh mining community, the English language prevailed, due to the sheer numbers of immigrants and the English educational policies implemented at the time. However, these immigrants have assimilated into the Welsh way of life, and the valleys region now boasts a rich Welsh culture, where, in the latest survey in 2016, 82.3% of the population of around 235,000, consider themselves as Welsh, albeit only 19.1% of this total

population are Welsh speakers[10]. In some sense, Llewelyn's fears have come to pass – though it is English that is spoken and not French – on the other hand a strong sense of *Welshness* survived, has been reinvented and has flourished. Parenthetically, the film *How Green Was My Valley*, which won 5 academy awards, ironically was shot entirely on a reconstructed set of a Welsh village in southern California and starred only one Welsh actor who was given a minor role. Hence, Hollywood succeeded in representing a micro-history of the valleys region, not only in the physical infrastructure of the fake village, but by casting the roles of Welsh men and women to American actors, thus unintentionally (or perhaps not) imitating the foreign immigrants' assimilation into Welsh society and culture.

Joanna's confrontation with Gruffydd and Llewelyn's discourse on the ancestry of the Welsh are set at Cricieth Castle which was constructed by Llewelyn Fawr in the 1230s, and is situated on the south-east coast of the Llyn peninsula (photo annex 10 and map annex 1). Curiously, Cricieth Castle appears to be two castles, one constructed within a larger one, or perhaps conversely, a larger castle later constructed around the smaller one, in fact this is a common Norman design known as a concentric castle. However in this case, the original design was not intended as a concentric castle, one of these buildings was erected firstly by Llewelyn Fawr, a further fortification by his grandson Llewelyn ap Gruffydd and sometime later Edward I captured the castle and expanded the fortifications. There is some debate however, as to who did what and when. There is evidence and counter-evidence to show that any part of the castle can be Welsh or Norman, but the general consensus is that the smaller inner castle with its two large D-shaped towers guarding the gate is the Welsh part and Edward constructed around this, effectively creating a concentric castle in a much later part of the 13th century (DAVIS, 2007). The castle is a reflection of the multi-faceted Welsh cultural identity and of the complex Anglo-Norman-Welsh relationships of Llewelyn, Joanna, Gruffydd and the barons. It was constructed by the Welsh, far from the English border, and yet conquered and re-invented as a Norman castle in the heart of Wales. In several uprisings since Edward I's conquest, Cricieth Castle has been attacked more by the Welsh than it has by English or Norman, the last being Owain Glyndwr's rebellion in the early 15th century, the English garrison was routed and the castle burned and destroyed, the scorch marks from this fire can still be seen on parts of the castle walls today. Despite its destruction, the ruins of the castle are still an imposing edifice, the twin gate towers overshadow the village below and, as

[10] Source: Statistics for Wales, details in references.

with all the castles, now stands as a tourist attraction for the benefit of Wales, though not as promoted or exploited as it deserves

3.2.6 Aberconwy and Deganwy

As Joanna's relationship with Llewelyn strengthens, she is torn between the love for her father, whose radical policies are prejudicial for the Welsh, and the love for her husband. Llewelyn's ambitions of creating a united Wales under one ruler are not advantageous for the English crown and John uses underhand strategies to prevent this. When John believes that Llewelyn is becoming too powerful he launches a full military invasion into Wales and occupies the land as far as the east bank of the river Conwy, some 80 kilometres into Welsh territory, and encamps at Deganwy Castle. Deganwy in the early 13th century, must have been an impressive sight, constructed on twin rocky hills over 100 metres above the river (photo annex 7 and map annex1). This location has been an important historical strategic point for the Welsh since at least the 6th century when a hill-fort at the site was occupied by one of the early Welsh kings. This would have been one of the major defences within Wales against any Saxon incursion or attacks from the Welsh kingdom of Powys which lies to the south-east, further evidence that the enemies of the Welsh were themselves. In the late 11th century one of the first Norman invasions and settlements established and reinforced the castle at Deganwy but this was soon destroyed and overtaken once again by the Welsh. Llewelyn Fawr took advantage of the Norman stone construction to rebuild a larger stronger fortification on the site. It is Llewelyn's castle that King John occupied in 1211. Llewelyn's guerrilla war tactics, to strip the land of any supplies – livestock and grains – halt the Anglo-Norman army at the banks of the Conwy. The fact that Llewelyn is able to carry out such a tactic reflects the demographic circumstances and state of urban development – or rather lack of – of the time. The population is spread out over a wide area, living in small, isolated easily abandoned settlements; the people are able to move quickly and silently and disappear into the mountains, giving the impression to the invaders of a magical, ghostly race and a wild, strange land where dragons quite possibly exist.

From the castle, King John's view, to the south across the estuary, is of Aberconwy Abbey, founded and patronized by Llewelyn Fawr in 1199, and his final resting place, as well as that of his sons Gruffydd and Davydd. When Edward I conquered Wales in1283, he chose not to rebuild over the remains of Deganwy, but rather, as a show of power, to build the massive Conwy Castle on the west bank of the river, proving that he was easily able to overcome this natural barrier and symbolically set foot into the Welsh heartland. The abbey was destroyed and Conwy Castle was constructed over the site. It is now possible to stand on the ruins of the battlements of Conwy Castle and gaze across to the twin mounds of Deganwy where that castle once stood, just as Llewelyn would have observed the Anglo-Norman encampment from Aberconwy Abbey. On the opposite bank, now all that remains of Deganwy Castle are the scattered rocks of the towers and walls, since Llewelyn's grandson Llewelyn ap Gruffydd razed the fortification in order for it not to fall once again into the hands of the Anglo-Norman king. As a touristic site, on the battlements of Conwy Castle is an artist's impression of how Deganwy Castle would have been, painted on a large metal plate and from the view point of that spot. The castle walls once stretched over the two hills, a distance of over three hundred metres, in the small valley between the hills was the distinctive Welsh double D-shaped, gate-house towers, with an earthen ramp leading up to the entrance, the ramp is still visible today. As testimony to the instability of this region of Wales, Deganwy Castle changed hands no less than eight times since its earliest life as a hill-fort until it was completely destroyed by the Welsh in 1263.

After this initial defeat, John returns and, having learned from his first mistake, this time brings supplies for the army and occupies a great part of north Wales, including west of the River Conwy. Joanna becomes a skilled diplomat and is able to diffuse a battle that would have otherwise destroyed Llewelyn. King John accepts Llewelyn's surrender at Aberconwy Abbey. As terms of surrender, Llewelyn's powers are severely constrained, he must relinquish vast areas of land and he is forced to hand over his son Gruffydd as well as the sons of other Welsh leaders as hostages to the English crown to ensure compliance, a common practice in Medieval diplomatic negotiations. John makes Llewelyn's surrender as humiliating as possible, a representation of the English propensity throughout the centuries to act in a humiliating, bullying and demeaning way towards the Welsh. Llewelyn's one consolation is the face-saving act of Joanna when she kneels before him, and not John, recognizing her husband, the Welsh, as her overlord and not her father, the Anglo-Norman. Also present at Llewelyn's surrender are several of the Marcher Lords, the Anglo-Norman border barons,

who demonstrate sympathy for Llewelyn and antipathy towards John. Their acts, a bent towards Wales rather than England, and Joanna's, show the changing cultural face of Wales which emerges from their settlements and inter-marriages. On the other hand, amongst Llewelyn's enemies present are several Welsh lords representing the complexity of the Welsh-Anglo-Norman relations and incipient socio-cultural structures.

Three months later, when he learns that Llewelyn has entered into an alliance with the French king, John, in a rage, orders the hostages to be hanged, including boys as young as 8; Gruffydd however is spared, due to the intervention of John's son, Richard, Joanna's half-brother. John's impulsive and imprudent decisions and actions are making him even more unpopular with the powerful barons and of course the Welsh leaders. Further to this, the king makes an enemy of Pope Innocent III over the appointment of the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury and is excommunicated, one of the Catholic churches most powerful punishments for errant monarchs. Joanna's relationship with Llewelyn becomes strained as she refuses to believe the atrocities committed by her father. However she slowly begins to comprehend the true nature of her father and ceases all communication with him. Meanwhile John begins another campaign in Normandy in an effort to recover his lost lands from the French. The campaign is a failure and John returns to England where he faces a revolt of the barons and is finally forced to sign the *Magna Carta*.

As John is busy campaigning against the rebel barons in England and caught up with the intricacies of the political consequences of the *Magna Carta*, so Llewelyn becomes busy campaigning to unite Wales under one banner. He invites the principal Welsh leaders to a meeting in the settlement of Tywyn on the west coast to discuss a unification plan. All of them, including his greatest Welsh enemy, Gwenwynwyn ap Owain, swear loyalty to Llewelyn thus earning him recognition as the Prince of Wales, though this is not acknowledged by the Anglo-Norman crown and therefore never recorded historically, since, to use the cliché, "history is written by the victors". The changing face of Wales is illustrated when Gwenwynwyn soon recants his allegiance with Llewelyn and allies with King John. On the one hand, Wales had briefly become effectively a United Kingdom under one ruler, the other princes and lords willing to cede their power in order to maintain a Wales for the Welsh, on the other hand there exists a Welsh element that, through pride and jealousy, denounces a united Wales and seeks the aid of the greatest enemy, whose aim is to conquer and annex Wales. Thus, the great Welsh paradox, Wales wishes to preserve its freedom, unique culture and independence but cannot do so, mainly due to the conceit of the Welsh themselves. In

some sense this is a repeat of the history of Britain, when in the 5th century, the ancient Britons, from whom the Welsh are descended, were unable to unite to fight against the common enemy, the invading Saxons.

John, having reconciled with the Pope, appeals for help from the Catholic Church. The Pope consequently annuls the charter on the basis that it is illegal and unjust. John's army is mobilized once again against the rebel barons, and after some initial success, soon begins to lose ground. More of the barons begin to defect to the rebels and John is forced to move around the country, campaigning against the insurgents and retreating from stronger elements. Weakened and losing support, John contracts dysentery and dies within a few days. John's son Henry is declared king, becoming the third of that name, however at such a young age of 9, England is governed by William Marshal, one of John's closest advisors, until Henry becomes of age.

3.2.7 After John

As a prudent ruler, Llewelyn agrees to pay homage to King Henry III, Gruffydd however interprets this as a cowardly act of surrender. With a boy-king on the throne of England, Gruffydd sees an opportunity for Wales to rise up in power. Llewelyn explains in their discussion why this would not be possible; Wales at the beginning of the 13th century – Henry III assumes the throne in 1216 – does not have the economic resources that England has. Llewelyn admits that his dream of a completely independent and united Wales is impossible to attain without allegiance to England, furthermore there is still the matter of the disunity between the Welsh leaders. By maintaining an allegiance with England, Llewelyn hopes for peace, this however, will open a way for a strong Anglo-Norman influence to infiltrate into Wales – further immigrations to the already established Norman settlements for example – something that Llewelyn does not wish for and would not be able to counter owing to the allegiance. In some sense Llewelyn is allowing for Wales to be overtaken by the Anglo-Norman powers but the alternative could be worse, Gruffydd's Welsh Wales would be torn apart by civil war or annihilated by a full English invasion force.

The dilemma that Wales faces is illustrated with Llewelyn's alliance with his former enemy, the Earl of Chester, and Llewelyn's attack on the Flemish settlements in Pembrokeshire, south-west Wales. The Flemish had been encouraged to settle in this region from the very first Norman incursions at the beginning of the 12th century; one hundred years later, in Llewelyn's time, they are well established in fortified towns where the Welsh were prohibited from entering. Llewelyn leads an army into the area, attacks Norman castles and destroys the town of Haverford. Despite Llewelyn's efforts, this region recovered its Anglo-Norman and Flemish characteristics and flourished, so much so that by the 16th century, when most of Wales had maintained its Welsh character, the Welsh language in Pembrokeshire was all but extinct, and it became known as "Little England beyond Wales", even today in Welsh it is known as *Benfro Saesneg*, English Pembroke. At the same time as his attack on Pembrokeshire, Llewelyn makes peace with the Earl of Chester, a necessary alliance which will deter Cheshire from raiding further into north-east Wales, but will also prevent Llewelyn from reclaiming any territory that had already been taken by this Marcher Lord; thus many former Welsh settlements, such as Oswestry, Ellesmere and Whitchurch are overtaken by Anglo-Normans and are claimed for England when the border was established in the 16th century.

As Davydd grows older, Joanna begins to fear for his life at the hands of the aggressive Gruffydd. She sets a trap in which Gruffydd loses control of his temper and he is placed under arrest and confined to Deganwy Castle. Llewelyn learns of Joanna's conspiracy and they become estranged.

While they are estranged, Joanna begins an affair with a young Norman, Will de Braose, who is being held as a high born hostage at Aber, the same young man who had defended her against Gruffydd's slur some years earlier. Joanna feels certain compassion toward him, and strong feelings of guilt because of the way her father had treated the de Braose family. Historically, the de Braose family were powerful Marcher lords with holdings in large areas of south Wales, William de Braose inherited the titles and lands from his father also named William. The younger William is an example of the emerging Norman-Welsh characteristic of Wales, he was born in Brecon, south-east Wales; the fictional Will speaks fluent Welsh and it is probable that the historical William de Braose spoke Welsh for diplomatic and practical reasons, just as Llewelyn Fawr and the principal leaders of Wales spoke Norman-French. When Joanna ends the affair because she realizes how dangerous it is and that she does not love him, over the following several weeks, de Braose persistently

appears and refuses to believe that Joanna does not want him. Joanna having been assimilated into the Welsh culture is now representative of Wales – she has been accepted by Llewelyn's people and now holds the title of Lady of Wales – she initially invites the Norman into her domains, as the Welsh leaders have made alliances and intermarriages with the Norman families residing in the border regions. However, the love affair between the Wales and Anglo-Norman is not to Wales's liking and the Norman is rejected. Nonetheless, just as Will de Braose is persistent and demanding with Joanna, so too are the Anglo-Normans with Wales. The situation comes to a head when De Braose invades Joanna's private bed-chamber at Aber; the transgression was set up as a trap by Senena, Gruffydd's wife, as revenge for Joanna's act of getting Gruffydd imprisoned. Again a micro-history of Wales is played out; Senena, who has the same feelings as Gruffydd about the Anglo-Normans, reflects the Welsh leaders who, while not wishing an Anglo-Norman occupation of Wales, seek help and alliances in order to overthrow other Welsh leaders. Llewelyn returns unexpectedly – tipped off by Senena – de Braose is hanged without trial and Joanna is placed under house arrest and banished to a manor at Llanfaes on Anglesey. Joanna's apparent infidelity is an ultimate betrayal, not only for Llewelyn, but also for Wales; over the years she had not only become Llewelyn's confidant and trusted partner, but also a bridge between the two opposing cultures, her acceptance into the Welsh community reflecting the manner in which the traditional Welsh way of life is slowly and minutely mutating. At the same time Joanna herself has assimilated this Welsh way of life, has had her own Norman identity eroded, in the same way as de Braose and other Marcher lords. Joanna and de Broase's clandestine meeting is a new Wales emerging, one that the Anglo-Norman – or perhaps now Welsh-Norman – is forcing, as de Braose had forced his way into Joanna's chamber – one that neither Wales nor England wants to accept, but cannot prevent.

After she had spent a year in exile, Llewelyn visits Joanna at Llanfaes, she tells him the truth of what happened and they are reconciled. On their return to Aber, Llewelyn and Joanna pass through the settlement of Bangor. Bangor is an example of how the urban development in Wales is increasing at this time, not only where the Anglo-Normans had built castles and encouraged immigrants to settle, but also where monasteries, cathedrals and abbeys were established. In Bangor, a monastery was established in the 6th century by Bishop Deiniol, who later became a saint, and a larger cathedral was constructed over the site in Llewelyn's time though it was extensively damaged by the armies of King John when they crossed the River Conwy and later again by Edward I's army. The large cathedral and

monastery induced a small town to grow around it to provide services to pilgrims, worshippers and the monks and clergy. Other similar places in Wales at the time were, St. David's in south-west Wales and St. Asaph's in the north-east, both with remarkably similar histories as Bangor, i.e. a monastery founded in the 5th or 6th century followed by the building of a cathedral and a consequential small town – which is later granted city status – springing up around the ancient buildings. As well as the ever expanding Anglo-Norman settlements then, Welsh towns were beginning to appear in Llewelyn's time, these towns had the protection of the local lord or prince, in Bangor's case Llewelyn, but were frequently raided and sacked by the Welsh themselves or by the Marcher lords, depending on the proximity to England.

Another feature of these settlements is the market day, into which Llewelyn and Joanna ride, a specific day on which the traders would be allowed to sell their wares. This of course would generate the economy of the region allowing for further expansion and construction. Davies (2007) states that Llewelyn encouraged and patronized the development of urban centres, thus promoting economic growth. It would be a challenging exercise to project the urban development of Wales had there been no Anglo-Norman interference; doubtless some towns or cities would not exist today, or perhaps be smaller and of less importance, principally those which have grown up around the large Norman castles such as Caernarfon, Harlech, Conwy and Carmarthen. The capital city of Cardiff itself began as a number of small Iron-Age settlements along the river Taff, later the Romans constructed a fort at the river mouth in order to subdue the war-like Celtic tribe, the Silures, of the region. When the Romans left, the region was sparsely populated until the arrival of the Normans in 1081 when William the Conqueror constructed a motte and bailey castle within the Roman walls and the town of Cardiff, populated by Anglo-Norman settlers, grew up around the castle. As an "English" town within Wales, Cardiff was burned to the ground by Owain Glyndwr in 1404 but was soon reconstructed and flourished as a port city. Incidentally, it is no coincidence that Caernarfon, Carmarthen and Cardiff, share the same – or a derivation of – prefix, as well as other Welsh town names such as Caerleon, Caerphilly and Caerwent. *Caer* is the Old Welsh[11] word for "stronghold" or "fort", the etymology of the name coming, not from the Norman castles built at the sites, but from the earlier Roman forts or Iron-Age strongholds. The Norman castles were commonly constructed over or near the Roman fort site at strategic points.

[11] Welsh spoken between around 800 BCE to the 12th century CE (CRYSTAL, 2010)

3.2.8 Peace of Middle

After three years of her return from exile, Joanna reflects over the recent important events. Henry III has proven to be a weak king and an even weaker battle commander. His poor choices, contrary to the agreements made by his father in the *Magna Carta*, lead once again to a barons' revolt. Llewelyn takes advantage of the fragile state of the English monarch and allies with the barons. It is a paradoxical relationship, just as the marriages; Llewelyn wishes to preserve Welsh custom and culture, and yet he is obliged to make alliances with the very element that threatens the Welsh cultural identity. On the other hand, because of these alliances and inter-marriages, the Anglo-Normans are, essentially, becoming Welsh themselves. At least three of Llewelyn's daughters, and his son Davydd, as well as the sons and daughters of the other Welsh princes, married into Anglo-Norman nobility, thus initiating Welsh-Norman families.

After defeating the royalist forces, Llewelyn and his Anglo- and Welsh-Norman allies meet King Henry III in the Shropshire village of Middle for a peace accord. In a reversed situation from that of when he surrendered to John, it is now the king of England suing for peace and Llewelyn defines the terms. From this treaty Llewelyn is able to be granted most of the lands of Wales to be under his lordship. The Pact of Middle – as it later became known – allowed Wales to enjoy a period of relative peace. Llewelyn at this point has achieved his lifetime ambition, to be lord and prince over all of Wales, though this was not recognized by the English crown, nor assumed by Llewelyn himself, who went under the title of Prince of Aberffraw (the Aberffraw Dynasty being the rulers of Gwynedd) and Lord of Snowdonia. His policies of uniting the other native princes, without assuming lordship over their lands enables Wales to become a powerful independent state in which Llewelyn encourages and patronizes the cultivation of literature and music. Deeply embedded into this flourishing Welsh culture now is the strong Norman influence, not only of the already established Anglo-Norman towns around the coast line of south-west Wales, but also through the inter-marriages of the Marcher families with Welsh families.

The stability in Wales has been brought about by Llewelyn's diplomatic and political skills, however he knows that this peace is fragile and dependent on the other Welsh leaders and the English crown to hold it together. An explosive element in this equation is Gruffydd, who has been imprisoned at Deganwy Castle for six years. Llewelyn decides to release

Gruffydd, justifying this to Joanna by pointing out that Davydd is now well experienced in battle, politically mature and fully capable of taking over as a Prince of Wales when Llewelyn dies. Furthermore, Davydd has been recognised by the Pope, the English Monarch and the other principal Welsh leaders as Llewelyn's legitimate heir. Llewelyn knows that, with Gruffydd's release, all he has built up during his lifetime is at risk upon his own death, and yet he makes the radical decision of freeing Gruffydd. Gruffydd is the representation of the ancient, untainted, savage Wales that must be liberated and must confront the emerging hybrid-Wales. Llewelyn knows this, however the risk is that Wales will be consumed and fragmented once again in civil war, on the other hand Wales may rise all the more stronger with the ancient Welsh heritage overcoming the Anglo-Norman influences which are threatening Welsh cultural identity. Davydd's Wales is one of compliance to the English crown, more alliances, more compromises with Marcher barons, a slow eroding of the ancient culture and history, but a Wales of peace and stability. Llewelyn wishes for this peace and stability without the overwhelming Anglo-Norman power which has a negative impact on the Welsh way of life, however this seems difficult, if not impossible, to attain.

The narrative ends with Llewelyn and Joanna at Rhaeadr Ewynol waterfalls, an apposite setting for a final scene, the turbulent waters a reminder of the troubled times and danger that Wales now faces, but also a reflection of the wild untamed Wales that remains. Llewelyn and Joanna are discussing the present and the future of Wales and Welsh identity. Llewelyn correctly predicts that the Normans will become the English; with the loss of territories in France, the Anglo-Norman kings were turning more towards the territories of Great Britain and Ireland. However, the kings of England continued to claim for the French crown resulting in the historical conflict we now call the Hundred Years War, which raged on between 1337 to 1453, with victories and defeats on both sides. History shows that France prevailed of course and Llewelyn's prediction became true when the Anglo-Norman monarchs became the English Kings and Queens. As for Wales, in the words of Joanna, Llewelyn has, "engendered a sense of shared identity amongst the Welsh, an awareness of their common destiny" (p.700). In uniting Wales Llewelyn created a Wales for the Welsh, nevertheless it came with the price of the Anglo-Norman influence which begins to erode ancient Wales. Llewelyn's reply to Joanna's observation is the simple question, "How long will it last?", how long can Wales remain as Wales and how long can Wales remain united and free from the Anglo-Norman crown's power? Joanna wishes she "could foretell for him the future of Gwynedd, assure him the Welsh would continue to thrive in the shadow of a

stronger neighbour" (p.700). Though she cannot be sure of her prediction, like Llewelyn's about the Normans becoming English, Joanna's prophecy does indeed come true, though Wales suffered through history, the Welsh and Welsh culture have survived and thrived and especially so in Gwynedd. As testimony to this, I personally witnessed how the Welsh culture is thriving in this region; after spending some five hours walking around the battlements, tunnels, towers, stairs chambers and courtyards of the mighty Caernafon Castle, constructed as a show of power by Edward I, after his conquest of Wales, I walked into *Caffi Maes*, next door to *Y Pantri Cymraeg*; as well as on the battlements and towers of Caernafon Castle, *Y Ddraig Goch* was proudly displayed above the coffee shop. Inside the waitresses were chatting amongst themselves in Welsh, here Welsh is spoken as a first language The names of the stores and bars, the Red Dragon flag flying over the buildings and the spoken Welsh language in the streets around the colossal castle are proof that the Welsh have indeed thrived literally in the shadow of a stronger neighbour.

3.2.9 Historical Aftermath

Joan died in 1237 and was buried at Llanfaes, the very place where she had been held under house guard after William de Braose's invasion of her chamber. Llewelyn founded and dedicated a monastery to her memory at Llanfaes. Within a year of Joan's death, Llewelyn suffered a stroke and retired to the monastery at Aberconwy, his son Davydd took over the duties of crown of Prince of Aberffraw. Llewelyn died in 1240 and was buried at Aberconwy monastery. Davydd acted quickly and captured Gruffydd and Owain, Gruffydd's eldest son, and imprisoned them in Cricieth Castle, once again Gruffydd was held prisoner. Davydd enjoyed some initial success in keeping Wales united and he made a peace accord with his uncle Henry III. In this agreement, Davydd was made to hand over Gruffydd and Owain to the English crown as hostages. Gruffydd and Owain were imprisoned in the Tower of London. In 1244, Gruffydd made an escape attempt from one of the highest chambers of the tower. In that old cliché of prison escapes, he tied bedsheets together as a makeshift rope and began to lower himself from the window. Unfortunately the ersatz rope was unable to hold Gruffydd's weight and he fell to his death.

Davydd died unexpectedly without heirs in 1246, his successor was Gruffydd's second son, also called Llewelyn. Llewelyn II was as diplomatic and astute as his grandfather after whom he was named, in so much as he was able to regain territory from the Anglo-Norman incursions and win alliances with other Welsh princes without conflict. However, his younger brother, Dafydd ap Gruffydd – as impulsive as his father Gruffydd – began a full scale rebellion by attacking the Anglo-Norman garrison at Hawarden Castle in north-east Wales at an inopportune time. This was the trigger for the final full invasion and conquest of Wales by the English army led by Edward I. Llewelyn II had no choice but to support his younger brother's rebellion; however, on a recruiting expedition to the south west, Llewelyn was betrayed and tricked into being separated from his troops, then lured into an ambush and murdered. He was decapitated and his head sent to London to be displayed at the Tower. Davydd was able to continue the revolt for another six months but his armies were no match for the Anglo-Norman forces supported by those Welshmen not loyal to the House of Gwynedd. He was finally captured in June 1283, tried for treason at Shrewsbury and hanged, drawn and quartered, the first prominent leader to be executed in such a gruesome manner. Edward I would condemn the Scottish rebel, William Wallace, to the same fate twenty two years later, a scene highly dramatized in Mel Gibson's Hollywood film *Braveheart*.

CONCLUSION

Relating the events narrated in *Here Be Dragons* with veridical historical events, as well as journeying through the landscapes and visiting the sites described in the narrative, has been a most incredible and enlightening experience. I have included in the annexes just some of the very many photographs that I took during this trip and annotated them with relevant information concerning the narrative. Though I visited several, I have not included images of the immense stone castles constructed by Edward I after his final conquest of Wales: Rhuddlan, Conwy, Beaumaris, Caernarfon and Harlech – Edward's "Iron Ring" – as these were constructed after the time frame which is covered in *Here Be Dragons*, nevertheless they do have a great significance in the history and the shaping of the cultural identity of Wales. These massive castles, initially powerful symbols of the dominating force of the Anglo-Normans, have been absorbed into the Welsh culture, just as the foreign settlers themselves; they are now part of the ancient Welsh landscapes. For Wales, the period of history of the reign of Llewelyn Fawr and John of England, the period covered by the narrative of *Here Be Dragons*, saw the initial stages of the forming of a Welsh national identity, that is, a unique hybrid identity of the ancient British people with the Anglo-Norman settlers. These second third and fourth generation Anglo-Normans becoming Cambro-Norman and these becoming Welsh, and, on "the other side of the fence", the Anglo-Normans becoming English. It is feasible to argue that Edward I's conquest merely accelerated a formation that was already in process: the merger and the acceptance of the Anglo-Norman culture, demonstrated by Llewelyn's and other Welsh leaders' marriages into the Marcher lords' families, and the sons and daughters of these families marrying into Welsh gentry; we can assume that this also happened on all levels of society.

Another significant factor in the shaping of Wales is that, geographically, it has been more susceptible to modification than have the other nations pressed by the Anglo-Normans, and has therefore been "absorbed" easily into England and has equally "absorbed" England. If we see Edward I as the nemesis of the Celtic nations, then geography was in his favour when it came to Wales, but time and geography were against him with regards Ireland and Scotland.

Ireland has the natural barrier of the sea which prevented an easy conquest, as did the highlands of Scotland. From a military strategic point of view, as the Anglo-Norman kings must have seen, Wales is simply more convenient, troops could easily be massed at the border and logistic support supplied through the roads and by sea, not so effortless for Ireland and Scotland. The thoughts of these medieval monarchs must have been somewhere on the lines of, "Let's do Wales first, after that we can think about Scotland, then Ireland". After the subjugation of Wales, Edward did turn his attention to Scotland, however he died aged 69 – a well advanced age for that time – whilst on campaign against the Scots. Too late though for Wales. His son, Edward II was not a strong enough battle commander to continue his father's legacy, not only that but Edward I had bankrupted the English crown on his Welsh campaigns and his subsequent massive castle building projects. The English crown simply ran out of money, for the time being, for any further expeditions abroad.

With its ancient Celtic heritage and a strong foreign influence, Wales then can be seen as a bridge between these cultures, as in the narrative, how Davydd sees himself: a bridge between the Anglo-Norman and the Welsh. In the narrative, we can see the bridge under construction, sometimes interrupted, sometimes partially destroyed – by one or the other of the sides – and reconstruction resumed, the framework of which is finally completed over the centuries. Now Wales is a bridge between the English and the ancient Celtic, not so Celtic and yet neither not so English; or perhaps in the sentiments of Dylan Thomas and Gerard of Wales: too Celtic for the English, and yet too English for the Celts. Thus neither English nor Celt, but rather *Welsh*, an invention of themselves, as Williams (1985) pointed out. Perhaps Wales is indeed a mish-mash of what Hobsbawm (1983) calls "invented traditions" but I would argue that ALL traditions are invented and what makes them "traditional" is time.

Sharon Kay Penman's novel differs from a history of Wales – for example, that of John Davies – obviously in the one sense that it is Historical Fiction rather than a traditional history narrative, but more importantly is that the history, culture and the essence of Wales is seen and interpreted through the eyes of an outsider, distanced in space and time. In this way the narrative takes a form from a wider, more impartial perspective. As Sharon mentions in her e-mail (annex 2), as a foreigner visiting Wales to research the original idea for a novel, it was almost as though Llewelyn himself spoke to her from centuries past, urging her to write "our" story, the story that was not widely known throughout Wales itself, having been suppressed by a colonial power. In the same sense, I began to be compelled to reflect on what it means to be Welsh, inevitably leading to this personal quest, only when removed from that

very culture. I am reminded of a rock song from the 70s entitled *Utopia* written by Dave Brock of the band Hawkwind, the lyrics of which repeated over and over, "If you want to get into it, you've got to get out of it". This process was activated in 1979 when I left Wales and, in the army, gained the nickname "Taff"; I was labelled, an identity tag, because I had an accent and came from Pontyclun. Moving to Brazil stimulated the process, with the realization that little is known of Wales here, and, as we have seen of the oppression of the history, it is probable that little is known of Wales in many other countries too. Being in Brazil has given me the opportunity to study literature and here I chose Dylan Thomas and then *Here Be Dragons* as my corpus of study; I have the feeling that, had I remained in Wales and studied literature, it is unlikely that I would have chosen Welsh literature written in the English language or a historical fiction of the history of Wales for a Master's degree and Doctorate degree, respectively. So, if I wanted to get into it, I had to get out of it, as, only when I left Wales I found it necessary to question my own personal identity, how Wales is perceived by outsiders and furthermore, how Wales has been constructed historically. In *Here Be Dragons* we can see one part of this historical construction, perhaps the most crucial part, the beginning of the strong outsider influence which would suppress the ancient Celtic Wales but would help form a new Wales of a unique culture; to be the Wales of today, it was necessary to become England first, then to be reborn, the process of which is still happening today; the dragon then, like its mythical cousin, the Phoenix, rises from the ashes. The characters of *Here Be Dragons* represent the modelling of this construction, Llewelyn's marriage to Joanna, shows acceptance and absorption of a new culture; though any change will be met by resistance and violent attempts to overthrow foreign influence, this is demonstrated in the character of Gruffydd. Davydd is the bridge, or the new Wales that is emerging at this time. Joanna shows how the Anglo-Normans adapted and absorbed the Welsh way of life. It is highly probable that Joan, Lady of Wales, and the other Anglo-Normans who married into Welsh families, learned the Welsh language, thus assimilating many aspects of Welsh culture.

The landscapes described in the narrative, the rugged mountain peaks, raging waterfalls and dark forests, represent Wales in its rawest form: the wildness, disorder and chaos – also symbolized by the dragon – versus the civilized, order and discipline of England. The dragon then represents the land and the people, the people that resisted and then absorbed a foreign culture into its own. In this sense the dragon becomes a metaphor for the Other, the unknown and opposite, something to be wary of. The Romans followed by the Saxons and

then the Normans and now the English, all in their turn, have seen Wales and the Welsh as the Other. From the Welsh point of view, the dragon has become the symbol for resistance, defiance and unity. Initially seen as the Other; separate kingdoms each struggling for supremacy, the dragon, an unknown enemy that nobody would approach for fear of being devoured, was dominated by leaders such as Llewelyn Fawr, only to be quashed by the English force. In defiance, the dragon, the Other, has assimilated these occupying and oppressing forces and turned them into the unique identity and culture that we see emerging today in Wales.

As they are described in the fictional world narrative, the castles Dolwyddelan and Cricieth stand as solid reminders of a turbulent past. The huge stone structures now serving as playgrounds for children, passing curiosities for casual tourists and fascinating hours of study for history enthusiasts, are a fixed feature of the landscape and have been so for almost a thousand years, embedding them into the Welsh national consciousness. They stand as testimony, not only to Welsh resistance against the Anglo-Norman pressure, but also to the fragmented structures of the Welsh society of the middle-ages. The twin hills where Deganwy castle once stood dominate the small town below, where, I am sure, the inhabitants are very much aware of their heritage of the rich historical site where many battles over the possession of the castle took place. Similarly, the inhabitants of Conwy, a short kilometre away over the stretch of the estuary, are living in the midst of history, the massive Conwy Castle in the heart of the town – or perhaps one could say IS the heart of the town – has been part of the lives of generations of Welshmen and women growing up within the town walls, constructed as an extension of the central castle to protect the citizens. The castle is constructed over the site of Aberconwy Abbey, from where Llewelyn observed the Anglo-Norman army at Deganwy, and where he was buried. Just a few kilometres to the west of Conwy is the site of Garth Celyn on which Llewelyn's *Llys* once stood, in the village of Abergwyngregyn where the villagers still have the folk memory of "Llewelyn's house". All of these places are a great part of the Welsh heritage and national identity that has resisted, succumbed, absorbed and emerged as the Wales we see today.

Despite the dragon's new found wings, Wales remains an unknown territory, it can still be marked down with the legend *Here Be Dragons* on a map. Almost every day I see evidence of this, through my students and people I casually meet, who still refer to me as *Inglês*, despite what I have repeated to them; through my neighbour's desire of "one day I will visit Scotland and Ireland" (no mention of Wales); through a social networking friend of a

friend who posted a video about his trip to Scotland, Ireland and England (again…); through a casual conversational remark, “I love the medieval castles in England and France!”, and in many other ways, I see Wales as the “forgotten nation” of the United Kingdom. After centuries of an oppressed history there is still a long way to go before the tourist will chose Wales as a primary UK destination, before the name Wales is as known as the name England. The process is gaining ground, through narratives such as *Here Be Dragons* and other post-colonial Welsh literature written in the English language, of which I explored in my Master’s degree dissertation, an otherwise untold history of Wales is emerging, and in this sense also becoming part of the unique Welsh national identity that the literature itself expounds.

As a final observation, as well as the analysis of the narrative, this thesis has been on the lines of a personal “search for identity and memory” in the form of the question, where do we, the Welsh, come from? Part of the answer is in *Here Be Dragons*: we are the original British people, in the 11th to the 12th centuries we faced our most difficult struggle to maintain our uniqueness. However this was impossible due to powerful influences of a foreign invader, in part we resisted, in part we welcomed and invited this foreign invader in. After this time, through legislation and bureaucratic processes we became English, though the *Welshness* persisted and the foreign invader was absorbed and became Welsh. If you want to get into it, you’ve got to get out of it. Utopia.

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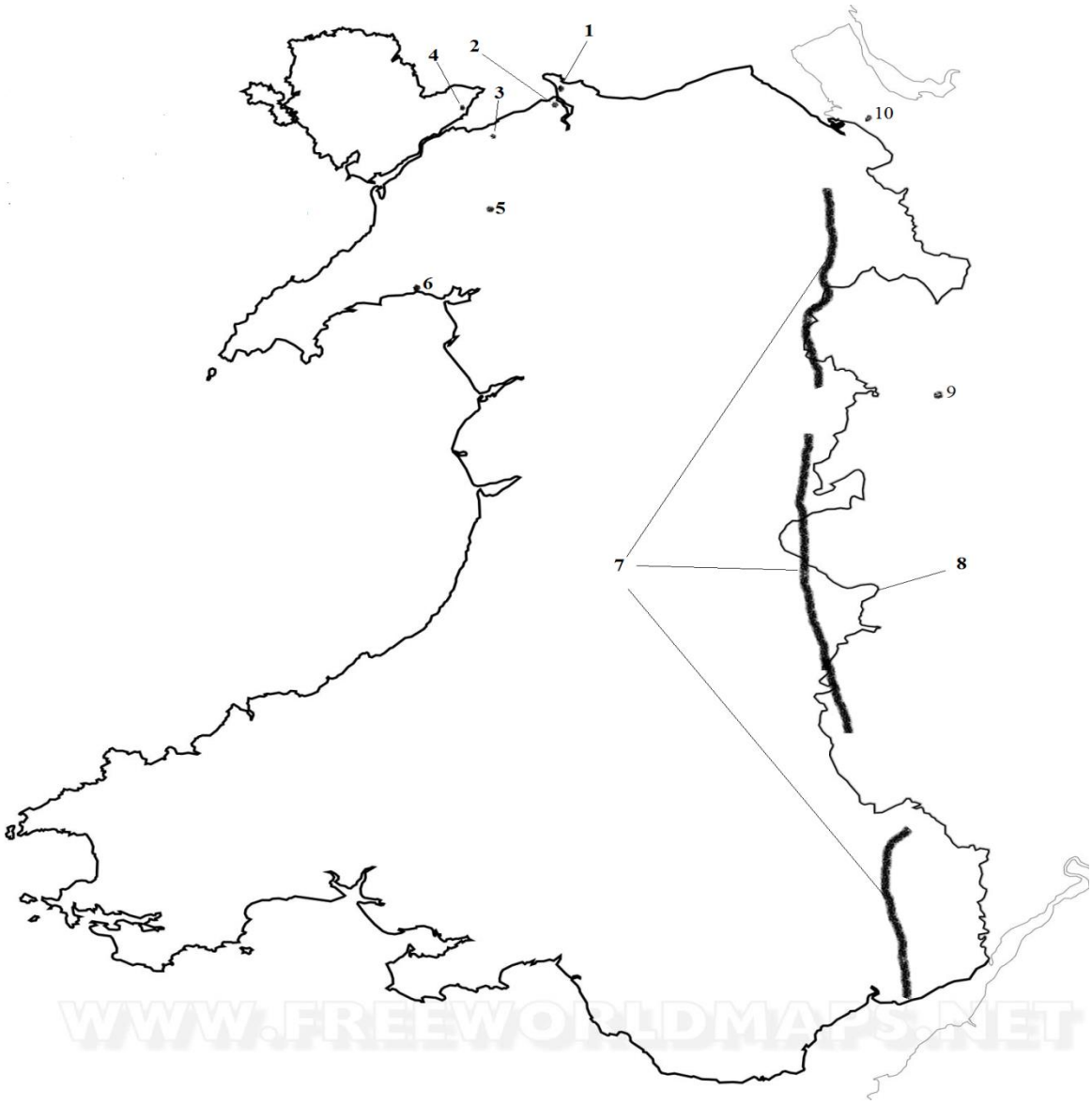
ANNEX 1

Map of Wales showing key points relevant to *Here Be Dragons*
Key:

1. Deganwy Castle
2. Aberconwy Abbey
3. Aber and Aber Falls
4. Llanfaes
5. Dolwyddelan Castle
6. Cricieth Castle
7. Offa's Dyke route
8. Modern day border between England and Wales
9. Shrewsbury
10. Chester

100kms
I----------I



Outline map, source: www.freeworldmaps.net, accessed 12 February 2017

ANNEX 2

http://www.booksnbytes.com/authors/penman_sharonkay.html
Access on: 13/08/2015

E-mail from Sharon Kay Penman, 5 November 2012.

Dear Alan,

As I explained in my earlier e-mail, I am finding it more and more challenging to keep up with the volume of e-mails I get from readers. So I am glad I saw your post on Facebook! I am very flattered that you would consider my novels for your thesis. That is such a wonderful compliment. Now to your questions. My family ancestry is Irish, Welsh, Scots, and English. Unfortunately, both sides of my family came to the US so many years ago that they long ago lost touch with kin back in the "Old Countries," so we do not know which Irish or Welsh cities were their home towns. My maternal grandmother's surname was Thomas--very Welsh. Penman is Scots, at least as far as we know, but it is also a Celtic name, with equivalents in Welsh and Irish. I believe it means "top of the cliff" in Cornish. My mother's middle name was very unusual for a girl born in the Kentucky hills--Iola. (They pronounced it I-ola, with a long i) Her mother could tell her only that it was a family name. It was not until I began to research *Here be Dragons* in the 1980's that we solved the mystery. My mom

was delighted when I was able to tell her that this was a proud Welsh name, the feminine form of Iolo. She was fascinated, too, to learn that she should have been pronouncing it Yola.

I had originally not intended to write about the Welsh. My second book was to be about King John and his illegitimate daughter Joanna. The genesis of the novel was this question: What would it be like for a woman to learn that the father she'd always adored was actually a moral monster? I knew, of course, that Joanna had wed a Welsh prince, but not much more than that when I moved to Wales to research *Dragons*. Well, it took only about a fortnight for Llywelyn to steal the book right out from under John's nose. And not content with that, he then convinced me that I should do a trilogy about his family, and of course I listened to this remarkable, charismatic Welshman! *Here be Dragons* is my own favorite of my novels, in part because it was lovely to have characters left alive at the end of the book after spending twelve years working on *The Sunne in Splendour*. But *Dragons* also began my love affair with Wales and the Welsh. I became utterly intrigued with medieval Welsh history and happily for me, my readers would share my fascination with this small Celtic country. After finishing my Welsh trilogy, I have tried to have at least one Welsh character in all of my books to tide me over until I can write about Owain Glyn Dwr.

I will be happy to respond to your questions, but I am under a serious time crunch now as I struggle to meet the killer deadline for *A King's Ransom*, which is supposed to be done in February. If I manage that, it will prove to me that the Age of Miracles is not dead. So it would probably be helpful if you spaced out your questions to me rather than hitting me with a large number at one time, okay? Good luck meeting Monday's deadline. Sharon

ANNEX 3

E-mail from Sharon Kay Penman, 8 November 2012.

Hi, Alan,

That is easy to answer. To the best of my knowledge, you will be blazing a new trail. I am not aware of any prior academic work done about my writing. The closest I've come was when some of my novels have been included in the curriculum of university classes. As to your second question, no, I did not see *The Story of Wales*. Although I live on the wrong side of the Atlantic, I can occasionally watch BBC programs, though it is a bit of a hassle. But I was alerted by Welsh friends that my favorite Welshman, Llywelyn Fawr, was ignored, and I was so offended that I decided not to watch the show! After all, how could Llywelyn Fawr be omitted in any story of the Welsh past? That would be like telling the story of the American Revolution and not mentioning George Washington.

Just let me know whenever I can be of any assistance.
Sharon

PS I love *Under Milk Wood*; it would be easy to get intoxicated on the language alone.

ANNEX 4

E-mail to Sharon Kay Penman, 8 November 2012.

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-----Original Message----- From: Alan
Sent: Thursday, November 08, 2012 6:47 PM
To: skp1124@comcast.net
Subject: Re: Penman Contact Form – questions
Hi Sharon,

Thanks for giving me more of your precious time! You are helping a lot already, my supervisor (I'm not sure if it's "supervisor" in the States, tutor? Advisor?), says I should annex your e-mail to the project, I'll do that.

There was only one real question in the FB post and that was, do you know if there has been any other academic work done about your writing? (not including book reviews) and if so, where I can find it? The second was not a related to my academic research, well kind of in a way, it was just a TV programme recommendation - have you seen the BBC production *The Story of Wales*? Six 1 hour episodes (it's on youtube), very good production, though I was a bit disappointed that they skipped over Llywelyn Fawr. I've almost finished the project, handing it on Monday. If it's approved I will have to present it and go through an oral examination in December then only just before Christmas I'll know if I've been accepted onto the Phd programme. Then the semestre starts in March. As I've already done the Master's degree (I did my thesis on Anglo-Welsh writing and concentrated on Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*), I can use the credits and will only have to complete with 6 more credits, that's just 2 subjects. Then I'll be writing and reading all the way for the next 4 years! Hopefully I can get it done in 2 or 3 years. Sorry to hear about all the troubles over the Sandy aftermath, hope things are all well and good now.

Thank you so much again.
Hwyl Fawr! Alan

ANNEX 5

Welsh Folk Tale

PRINCE LLEWELYN'S HUNTING DOG

Retold by Alan Peter Fear

One of the greatest princes of Wales of all times was Llewelyn ab Iorwerth ab Owain, or Llewelyn Fawr, which means Llewelyn the Great; few monarchs have earned this appellation, Llewelyn shares it with Alexander of Macedonia, Charlemagne of the Francs and his own ancestor, Rhodri Mawr. Llewelyn was prince in the time when Princes of Wales were *Welsh*, and not English as they are today.

Our prince lived in a huge stone castle in the heart of The Land of Song, the army led by John Lackland of England had tried and failed several times to bring down the walls of Llewelyn's castle and the prince and his men had pursued the English all the way back to Offa's Dyke with their tails between their legs.

Llewelyn Fawr's wife was the beautiful lady Joanna, the daughter of aforementioned John, how she came about to be the Welsh prince's wife is a story that is told elsewhere, suffice to say that she denounced her nationality and turned her back on her nasty father, who was also known as Softsword, an allusion to his lack of prowess in battle (or perhaps the ladies named him that for other reasons we needn't go into here). Their first son, a baby of 3 months, was named Dafydd, the future prince.

In times of peace, when he wasn't chasing the English around the hills, Llewelyn liked very much to hunt. When he could, he and his men hunted wolves and dragons, but there wasn't much meat on a wolf in the winter and dragons were tough and sinewy and getting rarer and rarer each year; so they were content most of the time with rabbits and deer. Always

accompanying the prince on his hunts were his hounds, Don, Juno, Seren, Morwen, Dylan and his favourite, Gelert. Gelert was an enormous hound of Irish breed, trained especially to hunt the largest beasts of the forest, he wasn't much content with rabbits and dear. Gelert, friendly and faithful, had saved the prince when the hunting party was attacked by an enraged wild boar. The hound had leapt forward and caught the monster by its throat and crushed the boar's trachea before it could open the prince's belly with its razor tusks.

When the snow covered the hills in its soft white blanket and small furry creatures left their nests under trees only when they were extremely hungry in order to scratch the whiteness away to find insects, sticky grubby things or anything green; and when the wolves howled at the moon, competing with the wind, and became more and more courageous from hunger, Llewelyn and his companions and dogs liked to go into the forest to find anything soft and furry, kill it and make a barbecue and a fine coat or hat, depending on the size of the soft and furry creature. Occasionally, if he were feeling in a jolly mood, the prince would let the hounds rip the rest to pieces.

It was on such a day when the snow covered the hills in its soft white blanket, etc, etc., early morning when everyone was still under the furs in the great hall of the castle, Llewelyn was already awake and breaking his fast on salted dragon meat and decided that today would be a good day for a hunt. He called the dogs to him.

"Don, Juno, Seren, Morwen, Dylan, Gelert! Come on you stinky fur balls, it's time to go find something to eat."

They came running like a fur hurricane. Llewelyn called the roll:

"Don!"

"WOOF!"

"Juno!"

"ARF!"

"Seren!"

"WARF!"

"Morwen!"

"ROF!"

"Dylan!"

"Present!"

The prince looked up sharply.

"WOOOF!"

Llewelyn frowned before continuing, "Gelert!"

This time there was no answer, probably still under the blankets, Llewelyn thought, not interested in rabbits, he deserves a rest. Anxious for the hunt, the prince resolved to go out without his favourite hound, he kicked his men out of their sleep and when all was ready they set off through the castle gates – wide open since the nearest Englishman was 50 leagues distant – and into the woods.

The hunt went well, four rabbits, big Sunday stew; two crows, a small pie; and a mole which would make a nice afternoon tea and one glove, the other would have to wait until another mole could be found.

At the entrance to the castle, the great dog Gelert came bounding down the stone stairs to greet his master. When he came closer, Llewelyn saw that the hound's jaws and teeth were dripping with blood.

"But what is this Gelert?! What has happened?"

The dog, happy to see its owner, just grinned like only dogs can, but with bloody teeth, and wagged its tail so hard its back end also went that way. Gelert looked at his master adoringly with big shiny friendly eyes, its tongue lolling out and dripping blood.

Llewelyn looked up to the top of the stairs to see the nursery door open, where his son slept. With a shout of horror, the prince took the stairs in four strides, he reached the nursery door and looked inside, what he saw made his blood freeze. The room was a mess of overturned furniture and blood, blood everywhere! Dafydd was nowhere to be seen.

"What have you done dog? What have you done?!"

In a blind rage, Llewelyn unsheathed his sword and in one swift movement sunk it into faithful Gelert's side. The dog whimpered, looked at the prince with big sad eyes and sank to the floor, dead.

There was the tiniest of squeaky sounds, a little cry, in the corner of the room. Llewelyn look up from the corpse of his favourite hound, there was the baby's cradle, overturned and bloody sheets spread around. In an instant, Llewelyn turned the cradle over.

There, under the cradle was the baby prince Dafydd, asleep and unharmed and making little noises in a dream of breast-milk. Beside the baby was the body of a huge old grey and

black wolf, its trachea crushed as if from a mechanical iron vice and its fur matted with the blood of wounds of bites of a very large dog.

Prince Llewelyn never recovered well from the loss of his favourite hound Gelert, he did the best he could to preserve the memory of the faithful dog and made a beautiful fur hat that he never removed even on the hottest of days. The rest of the body of the dog was buried with full honours of a brave warrior.

Dear tourist, as you travel through Wales today in your rented car, take an afternoon to visit the north-west, drive around the gentle curves of the hills of Snowdonia, carefully now. There, a little north of the town of Porthmadog, on the A498, just south of the junction with the A4085, stop your car a while at the little village of Beddgelert, get out, follow the footpath across the meadow, after some yards you will come across a cairn of stones, erected above one of the bravest dogs in history. Bedd Gelert, the Grave of Gelert.

Source: FEAR, A. P. “Prince Llewelyn’s Hunting Dog.”, details in references.

ANNEX 6

Dolwyddelan Castle

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Dolwyddelan Castle, as seen from the Lledr River valley, the same scene that would have greeted the de Hodnet brothers on their visit to Wales.

ANNEX 7

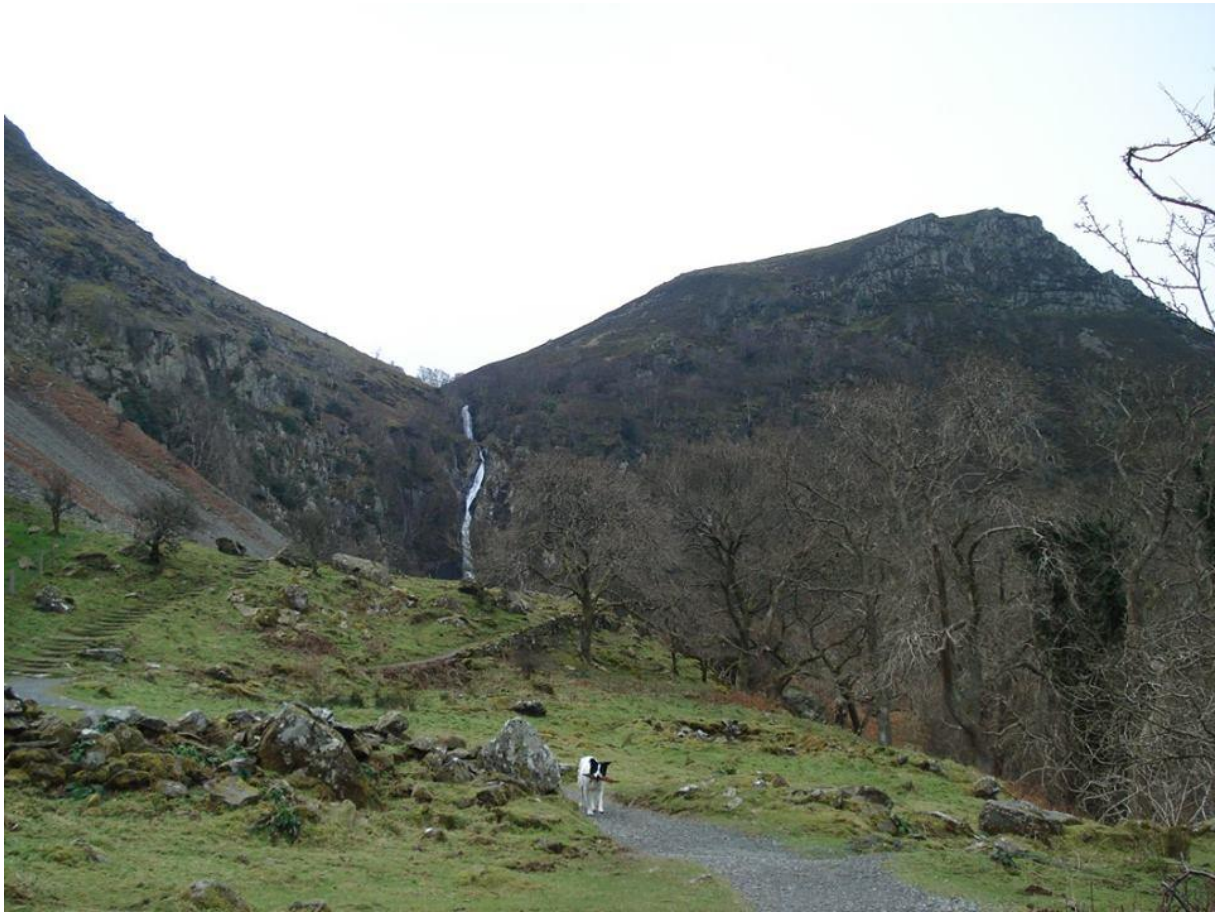
The site of Deganwy Castle

© A. P. Fear. 02/15/2015

The twin hills of the site of Deganwy Castle from the viewpoint of where once was Aberconwy Abbey across the River Conwy. Llewelyn observed the Anglo-Norman garrison at Deganwy Castle from this viewpoint. It was at Deganwy Castle where Llewelyn imprisoned his son Gruffydd.

ANNEX 8

Rhaeadr Fawr, Aber Falls



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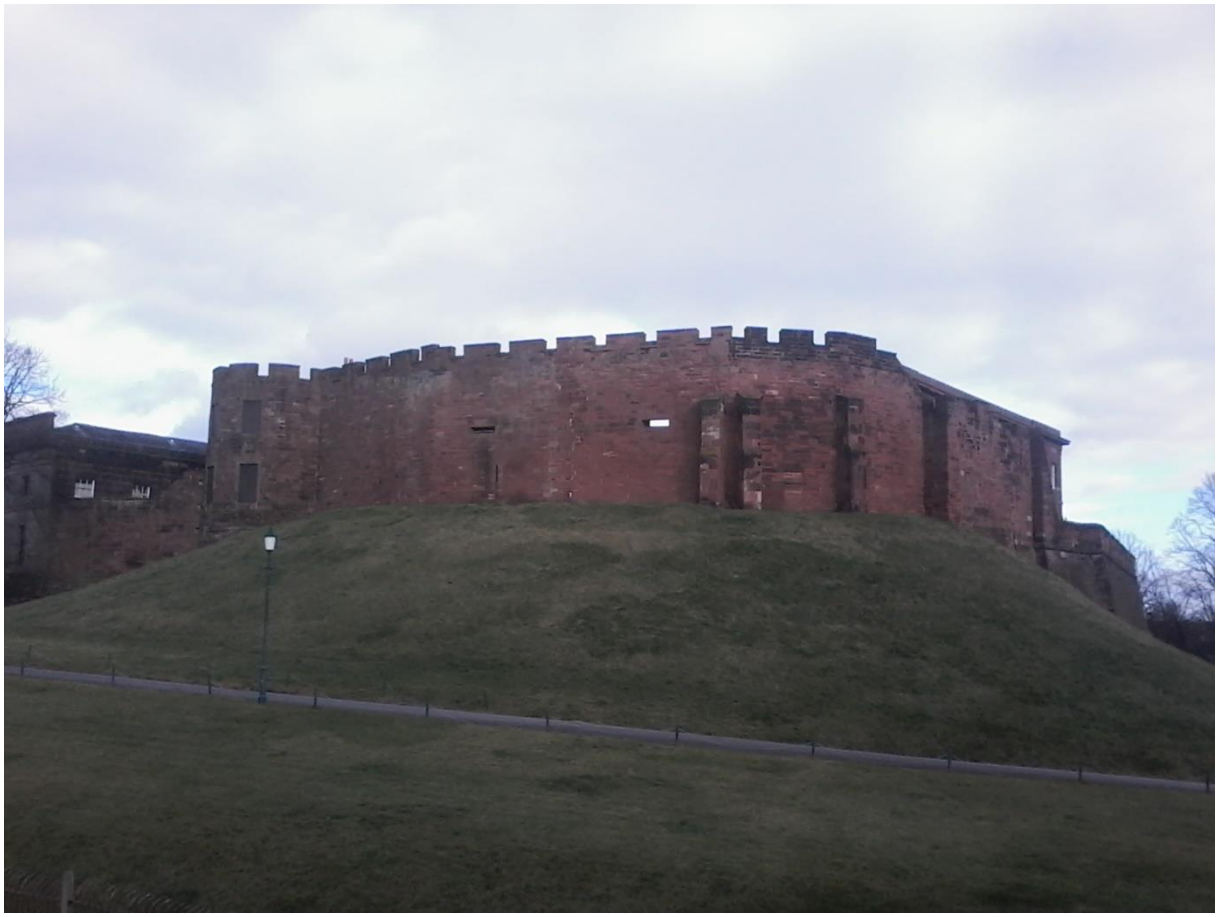
Aber Falls, the sight that would have greeted Joanna-Joan on her walk up the Rhaeadr Fawr River valley. The narrative describes the valley as more densely wooded and Joanna-Joan would not have had the benefit of the gravel pathway and cut steps.

ANNEX 9

Chester Castle



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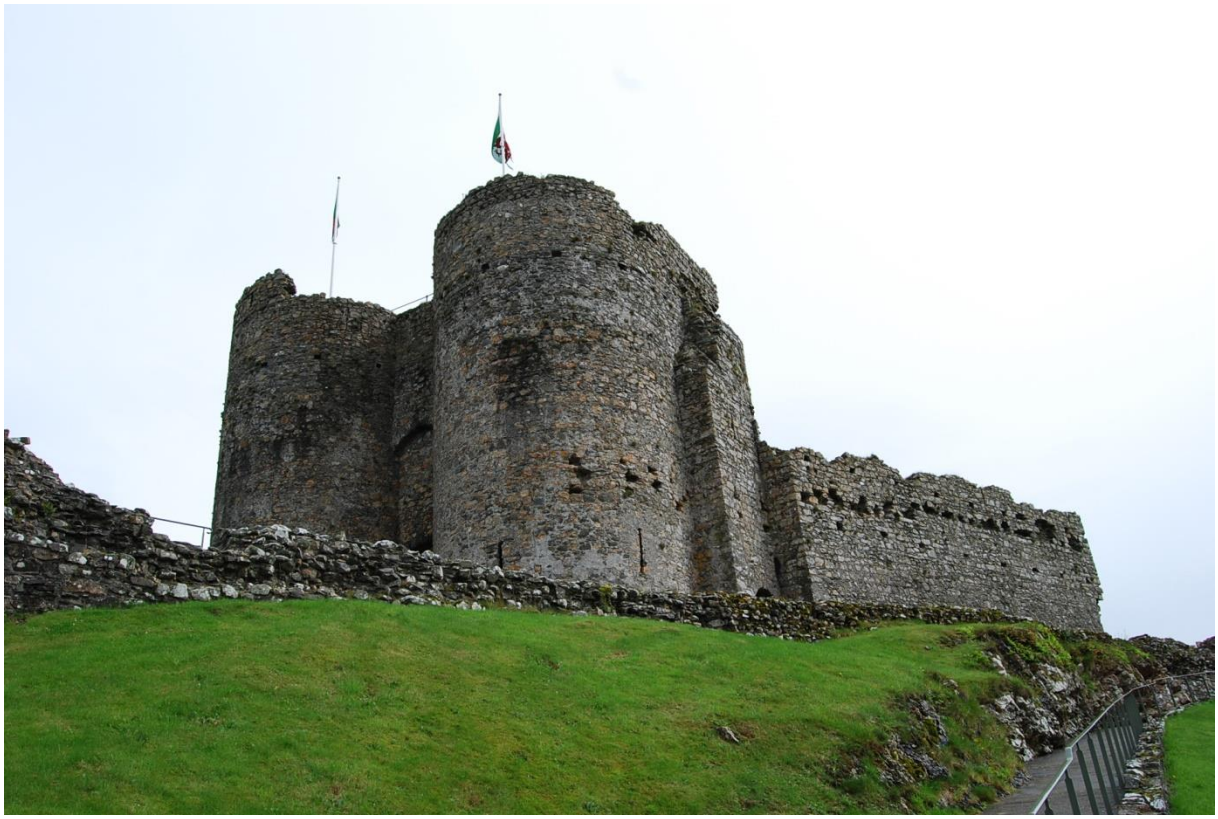
Part of what remains of Chester Castle walls; where Llewelyn and Joanna-Joan's wedding reception was held.

ANNEX 10

Cricieth Castle



Source: Great Castles website at https://great-castles.com/cricciethgallery.php, accessed 8 February 2017

What remains of Cricieth Castle: the imposing twin gate towers. Cricieth Castle was another of Gruffydd's prisons.

ANNEX 11

Four of the most common symbols of Wales: *Y Ddraig Goch*, the Three Feathers, the Leek and the Daffodil.

Source: www.wales.com, accessed 17 February 2017