

Wales

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This essay focuses on the political, economic, and cultural history of ancient, medieval, industrial, and contemporary Wales from the 8th millennium BCE to 2013. It is based on four lectures written for the participants in Stanford Travel/Study's Wales Walk, July 2014.

I begin by looking at the settlement of ancient Wales – how its Mesolithic and Neolithic peoples subsisted, how the Britons, Picts, and Scots conquered the island of Great Britain, and how Viking raids and settlement influenced Wales. I then examine how the Norman Conquest (11th century) changed Wales, why Welsh rebellions led to an English takeover, and why Wales's economy grew in the 13th and 17th centuries but stagnated in the 14th-16th centuries. I next analyze industrial Wales (1707-1914) – how Welsh industrialists benefited from union with England and Scotland, how Wales became a heavy industrial power, and why agricultural employment fell in 19th-century Wales. Lastly, I turn to modern Wales (1914-present) – its economic transformation from industry to services, the parties that dominated Welsh governments, and the role of the National Assembly since devolution in 1998. I append a time line, a bibliography and a description of sites I visited in Wales.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Wales_within_the_United_Kingdom.svg>

Wales (Dark Green Area) – In Relation to the Islands of Great Britain and Ireland and to The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (Light and Dark Green Areas)

Ancient Wales (8th millennium BCE-11th century CE)

Mesolithic and Neolithic Settlers (8th millennium BCE-500

BCE). The earliest known inhabitants of Wales were nomadic hunter-gatherer peoples of the Mesolithic Era (Old Stone Age, 8th-4th millennia BCE). Their diet consisted primarily of fish and shellfish along with berries, nuts, and vegetables. Hunting for deer played a secondary role. Seabirds were a further source of meat, as were stranded whales that also provided oil and whalebones. For transportation Mesolithic peoples relied on coracles, round boats made of skins stretched over a light wooden frame. Those craft permitted mobility along Wales's jagged coasts where land travel was difficult.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Coracle_boat.jpg

Mesolithic-style Coracle Boat

Peoples of the Neolithic Era (New Stone Age, 3500-500 BCE) migrated from Asia to the west coast of Wales, probably via Spain and Ireland. They brought superior tools, compared to the flint and bone implements used by Mesolithic peoples, and food production systems based on growing crops (barley and wheat) and raising livestock (cattle, pigs, sheep, and goats). They cleared woodland areas for cultivation and grazing and established permanent settlements (such as that at Bryn Celli Ddu on Anglesey Island).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BrynCelliDdu3.jpg>>

*Bryn Celli Ddu – A Late Neolithic Chambered Tomb
on Anglesey Island, Wales, 4th Millennium BCE*

Initially, the agricultural surplus was devoted to constructing peaceful monuments such as tombs. Copper came into use in Wales by about 2500 BCE, and bronze followed soon thereafter. Between about 1000 BCE and 500 BCE, new techniques for making agricultural tools and weapons prompted an expansion of the bronze industry.

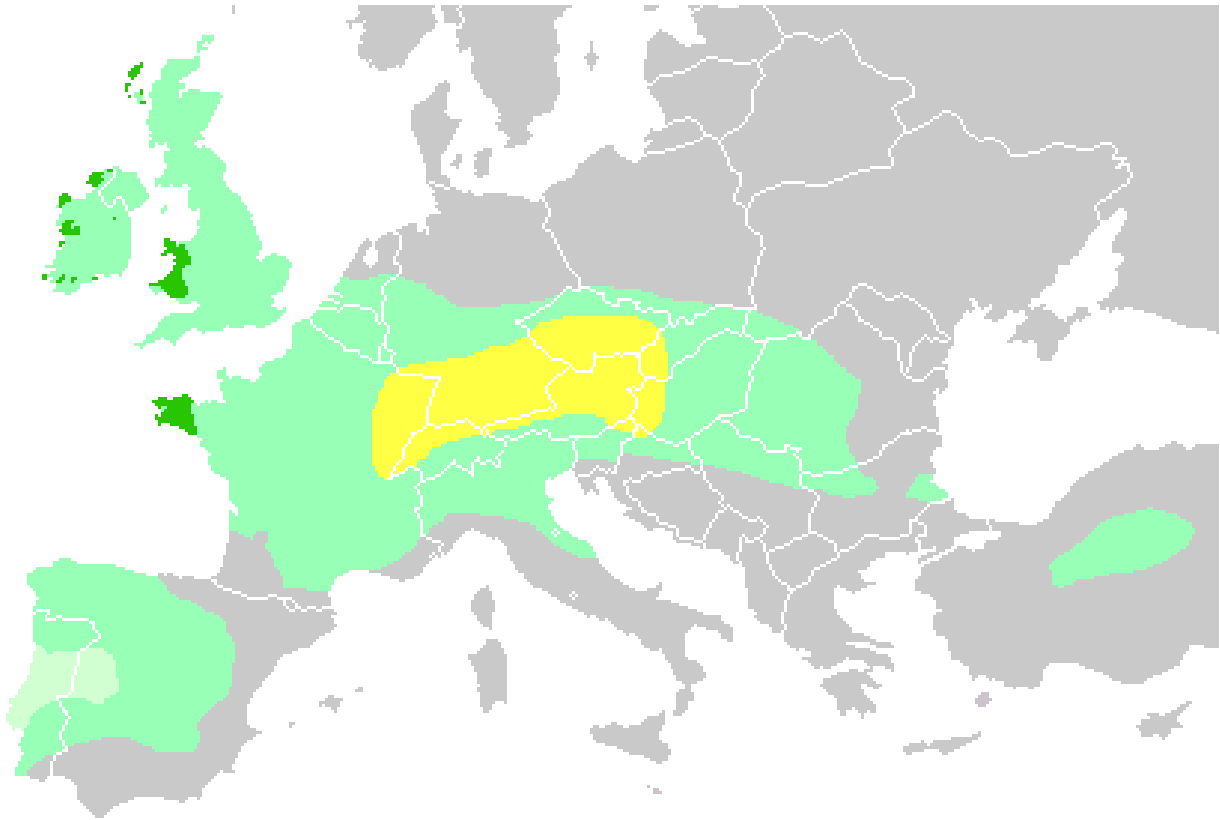
Archeological findings from that period begin to include fortified settlements (about 600 identified hillforts) and exotic goods imported from Europe, indicating increases in both militarism and wealth.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bryn_y_Castell_-_geograph.org.uk_-_377131.jpg>

Iron Age Hillfort, Bryn y Castell, Gwynedd, Wales, 1st Millennium BCE

Celtic Migrations (6th-1st c. BCE). In the late 3rd millennium BCE, the Celts, red-haired Indo-Europeans, began migrating westward from Central Asia to Austria and then to France. By 500 BCE, the Celts arrived in Great Britain and introduced iron plows and weapons, pottery wheels, and gold minting. They maintained trading links with Europe. The warlike Celts built fortified settlements with sophisticated weaponry. Celtic social hierarchies included an upper class of nobility, druids (priests), and bards, a second tier of farmers and craftsmen, and a lower level of slaves.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Celtic_expansion_in_Europe.png>

*Celtic Settlements in Europe –
Hallstatt Core (Yellow), Maximum Spread, c. 275 BCE (Light Green),
Celtic Languages Spoken Today (Dark Green)*

Three Celtic peoples with similar social organizations – the Britons, Picts, and Scots – inhabited Britain in the 1st millennium CE. The Britons, the Celtic settlers of all of Britain south of the Forth-Clyde Valley line, were the largest Celtic group in Britain. The Britons subsisted on crops and livestock, supplemented by hunting and gathering. The main grains grown were wheat and barley. Cattle were

an important source of food and a symbol of wealth. The Britons spoke the Brythonic form of the Celtic language and were the ancestors of the Welsh people.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Snettisham_HoardDSCF6581.jpg>*

*Gold Briton Celtic Torc, Snettisham Hoard, Norfolk, 1st century BCE –
British Museum, London*

The Picts lived north of the Forth-Clyde Valley. Their culture was based on a strong clan system and featured finery, feasting, drinking, gift exchange, and combat. The tattooed and painted Pictish warriors fueled their fierce battle frenzy with hallucinogenic liquor.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pictish_Symbol_Stone,_Eassie_-_geograph.org.uk_-_1532406.jpg>

*Eassie Stone, Pictish Christian Symbols –
Eassie, Angus, Scotland, mid-8th century*

The Gaelic-speaking Scots emigrated into Scotland from northern Ireland in the 3rd and 4th centuries CE, extending the Irish Kingdom of Dal Riata into west-central Scotland. Like all of the Celts in Britain, the Scots lived in small homes, practiced crop and animal agriculture, and formed clan-based, tribal kingdoms.

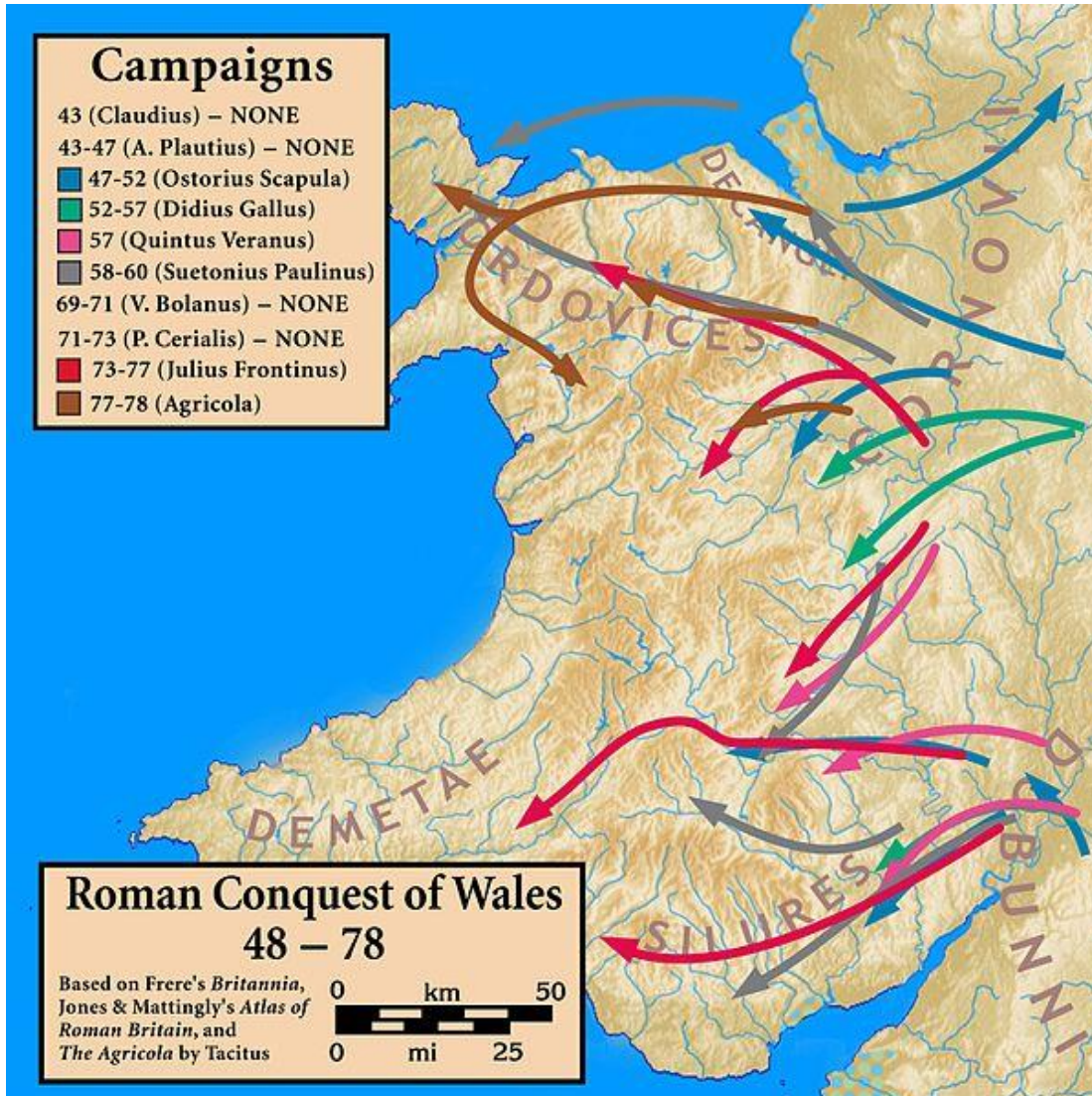


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Scotland_Dunadd.jpg>

Dunadd Hill Fort, Argyll, Scotland – 7th-century Capital of the Scottish Kingdom of Dal Riata in South-central Scotland

Roman Incursions and Anglo-Saxon Migrations (1st-8th centuries CE). Rome initiated an expedition against the Celtic Britons in Britain in the 1st century CE, because they had supported Celtic resistance to Roman conquest in Gaul (France). Under Emperor Claudius, the Romans conquered Britain in 43, although their campaigns were unsuccessful beyond the Forth-Clyde line (where they built the Antonine Wall in 142). In 79, Gnaeus Julius Agricola, Roman Governor

of Britain, renewed efforts to conquer northern Britain and defeated the Celtic tribes at the Battle of Mons Graupius in northeast Scotland in 84.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wales.Roman.Conquest.jpg>

Roman Conquest of Wales, 48-78 CE

Despite further expeditions, the Romans never established a permanent occupation of northern Britain. The Roman occupiers relied

on Celtic agricultural settlements in southern Britain to provision their legions, and the interaction between their occupation forces and the indigenous peoples led to a transfer of ideas. From the Romans, the Celts learned building skills, traditions of dressing stones, knowledge of horsemanship and horse-breeding, and further fighting skills. The Romans also provided the names for two Celtic peoples – the Picts (“painted warriors”) and the Scots (“bandits”).



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bridgeness_slab_detail.JPG>

*Roman Cavalrymen Conquering the Picts, Bo'ness, 142 CE –
National Museum of Scotland*

Following the Britons' expulsion of the Romans from Britain in 410, Anglo-Saxons (Angles, Saxons, and Jutes from northern Germany and Denmark) invaded, and they settled much of southern Britain by the end of the 5th century. As a result, Britain then was inhabited by four groups of peoples – three Celtic (the Britons/Welsh, Picts, and Scots) and one Anglo-Saxon (the English). In post-Roman Wales, numerous Celtic kingdoms, notably Gwynedd, Powys, and Dyfed, fought incessantly for control.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
 <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Britain_in AD500 -
 Project Gutenberg eText 16790.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Britain_in_AD500_-_Project_Gutenberg_eText_16790.jpg)>

Great Britain and the Welsh, Picts, Scots, and Anglo-Saxons, 500 CE

Viking Incursions and Formation of Wales (9th-11th centuries).

Norwegian Vikings could reach the northern Scottish islands in 24 hours and enjoy easy access to England, Wales, and Ireland. The islands

served first as bases for raiding the mainland of Britain and later as venues for settlement. The Viking raiders focused their attacks on monasteries, because they were rich sources of gold, communion wines, priestly garments, and food stores. The islands and coasts of Scotland proved an ideal choice for Viking settlement, because the warmer climate allowed winter pasturing of livestock.

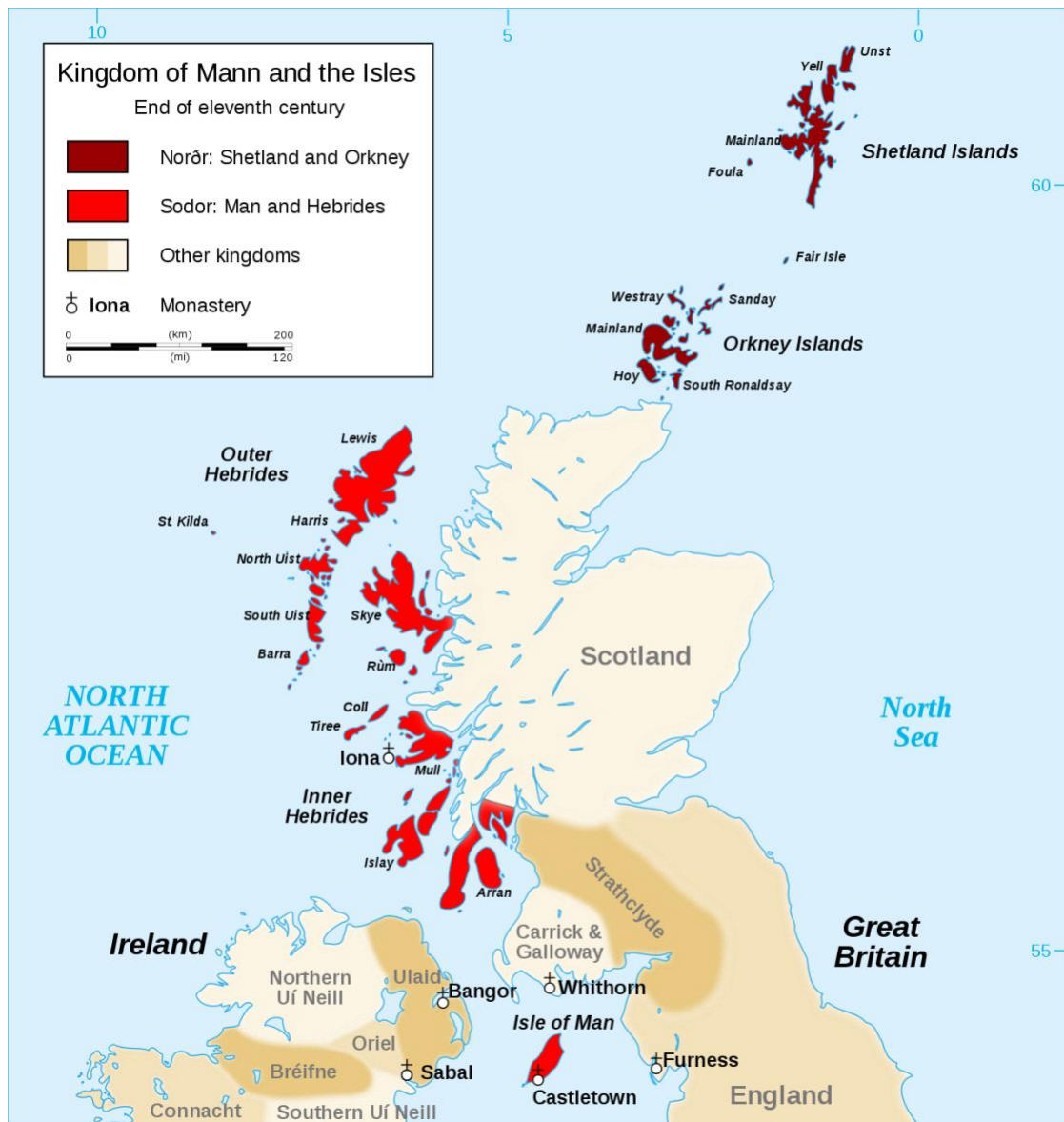


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Skuldelev_II.jpg>

*Skudelev II, Large Viking Warship Built in Dublin, c. 1042 –
Recovered and Displayed in Skudelev, Near Roskilde, Denmark*

From the mid-9th century, Norwegians conquered the Shetland, Orkney, and Hebrides Islands and the northwestern coastal regions of

Highland Scotland. They ruled the Hebrides and coasts until 1266 and the Orkneys and Shetlands until 1469. Viking control isolated the Highlands and Islands from the rest of Scotland.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kingdom_of_Mann_and_the_Isles-en.svg

*Viking Kingdom of Mann and the Isles (Purple and Red Areas),
Late 11th century*

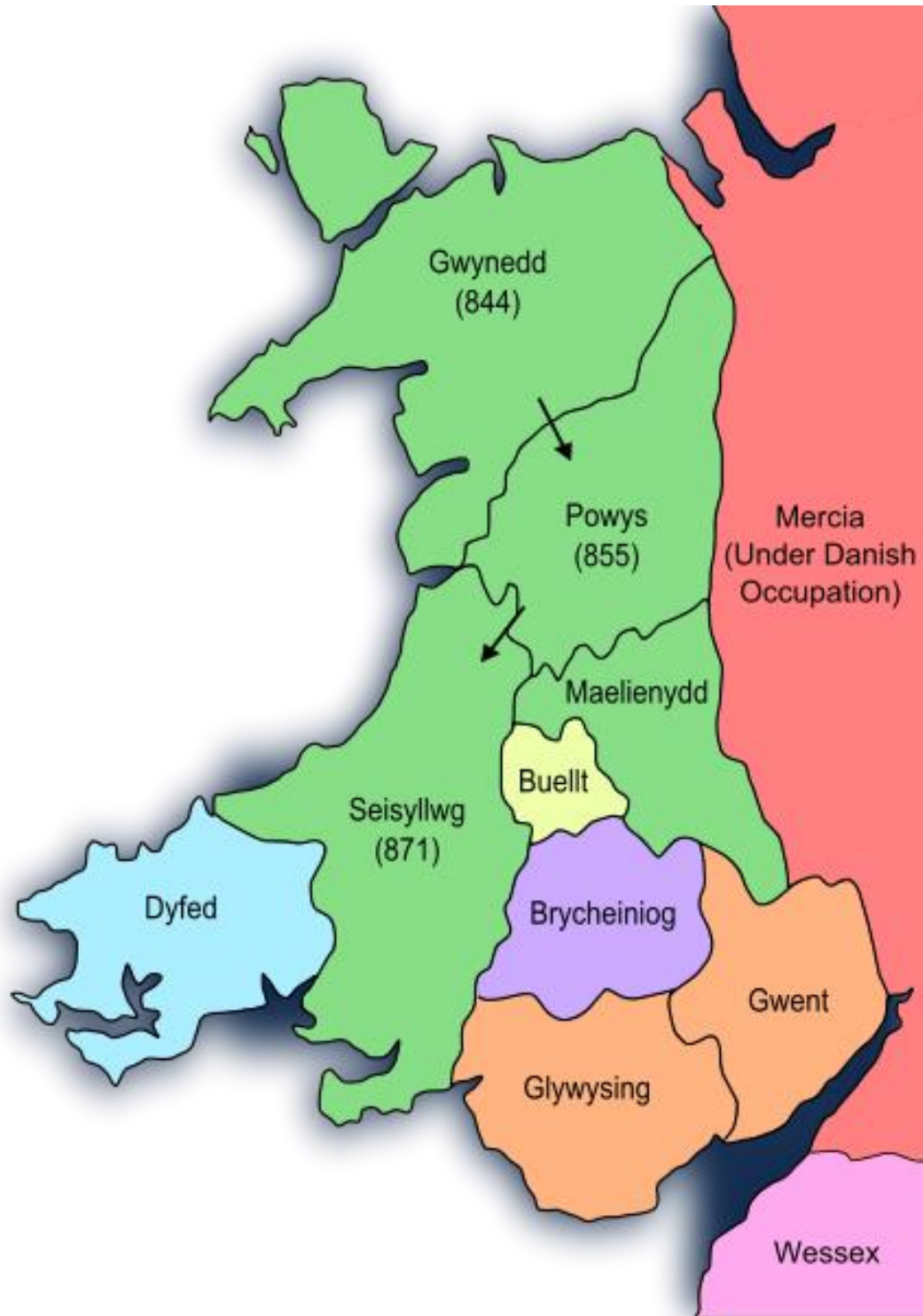
Danish Vikings also controlled parts of England, but not Wales. The Danish conquest of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain was incomplete because of divisions among the invaders. The Brythonic dialect of Celtic, spoken by the Britons, developed into the Welsh language by c. 700. By the 9th century, Wales, though lacking sustained political unity, evolved a unified Welsh culture through common law, literature, and language. The Welsh language was first written in the Lichfield Gospels in the 8th century.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Portrait_of_St_Luke,_St_Chad_Gospels.jpg>

*The Lichfield (St. Chad) Gospels, c. 730 –
Earliest Example of Written Welsh Language*

Rhodri Mawr (Rhodri the Great, died 878), the King of Gwynedd in northwest Wales, unified more than half of Wales (Gwynedd, Powys, and Ceredigion) by successfully fending off the Vikings and the Anglo-Saxons. But Wales divided again soon after his death and once more became politically unstable.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wales_844-78_\(Rhodri_the_Great\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wales_844-78_(Rhodri_the_Great).svg)>

*Expansion of Gwynedd under Rhodri the Great (844-878) –
Brief Unification of Wales (Green Areas)*

Medieval Wales (11th century-1707)

Norman Conquest of Wales (from 1067). Following the Norman conquest of England in 1066, the French-speaking, Norman military aristocracy embarked on a military and colonial takeover of the most productive parts of Great Britain. Norman incursions into Wales began in 1067. Initially, Norman motivations were to pacify the Celtic Welsh kingdoms – Gwynedd in the northwest, Deheubarth in the southwest, Morgannwg in the southeast, and Powys in the east – and force them to pay tribute. Ultimately, the Norman aristocracy used military force to colonize the best agricultural land and establish new towns in Wales.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wiston_Castle_\(4077887299\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wiston_Castle_(4077887299).jpg)>

*Wiston Castle – Marcher Lord (Norman-English Baron) Castle
on Hill Top in Southern Wales*

Norman military force featured skilled horsemen, crossbowmen, and users of siege weaponry. The Welsh kings retaliated with guerrilla tactics. The key to Norman success was their building of 600 stone castles, often accompanied by walled market towns. The Norman feudal lords then ruled their estates and towns, and Norman kings integrated the network with force and church control.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Armborst,_1500-tal_-_Livrustkammaren_-_106745.tif>

Medieval Crossbow – Anglo-Norman Military Advantage in Wales

The principal Norman conquerors of Wales were the Marcher lords of three nearby Anglo-Norman cities – Hereford, Shrewsbury, and Chester. They focused on controlling the fertile lowlands of the eastern Welsh borders (which abutted their territories) and the fertile southern coastal plains of Wales. Following conquest, the Norman lords established urban plantations to create and transfer wealth to themselves. They set up manorial estates, opened new agricultural land, and often imported English settlers for their labor forces. In their castle-protected,

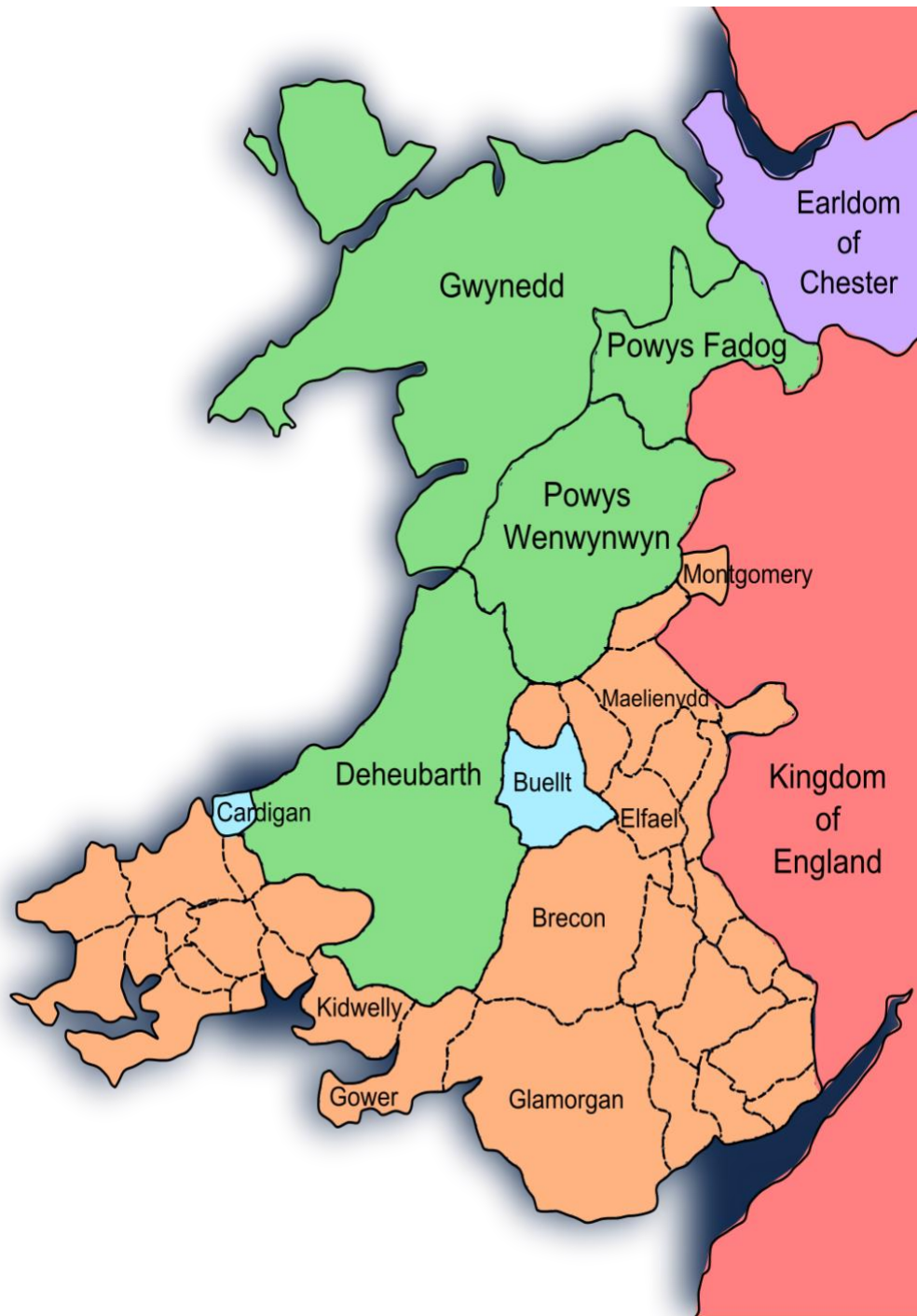
walled towns (“Englishries”), they taxed trade and charged rents to townspeople. The Norman colonial elite prospered.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Manorbier_Castle.jpg>*

*Manorbier Castle, Tenby, Pembrokeshire, Southwest Wales –
A Marcher Lord Investment*

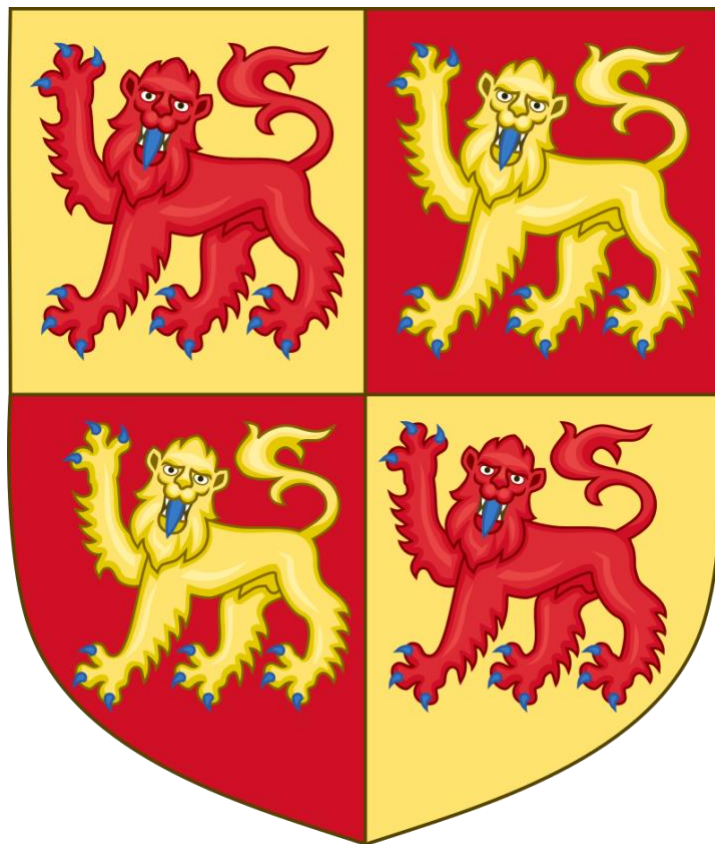
Struggle for Independence and English Takeover of Wales. A century after the Norman invasion, Wales remained divided and splintered. Anglo-Norman (English) Marcher lords controlled about one-third of Wales – the south and the eastern border regions. But Welsh kings and nobles had staved off Norman advances and continued to rule over the other two-thirds of Wales – the mostly mountainous areas in the north and west.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wales_1234_\(Marchia_Wallie_and_Pura_Wallia\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wales_1234_(Marchia_Wallie_and_Pura_Wallia).svg)

*Norman Marcher Lordships (Orange Areas)
 and Independent Welsh Kingdoms (Green and Blue Areas), c. 1234*

Llywelyn ab Iowerth (1173-1240), an extraordinary King of Gwynedd (in northwest Wales), was the first Welsh ruler to unify Wales. England then was distracted by baronial plots against King John. Through a shrewd combination of ruthless military acumen, astute royal marriages (between his daughters and Marcher lords), and accumulation of feudal wealth, Llywelyn conquered and unified Wales and earned the title of Llywelyn Fawr (the Great).



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arms_of_Llywelyn.svg>

Battle Insignia of Llywelyn the Great (1195-1240)

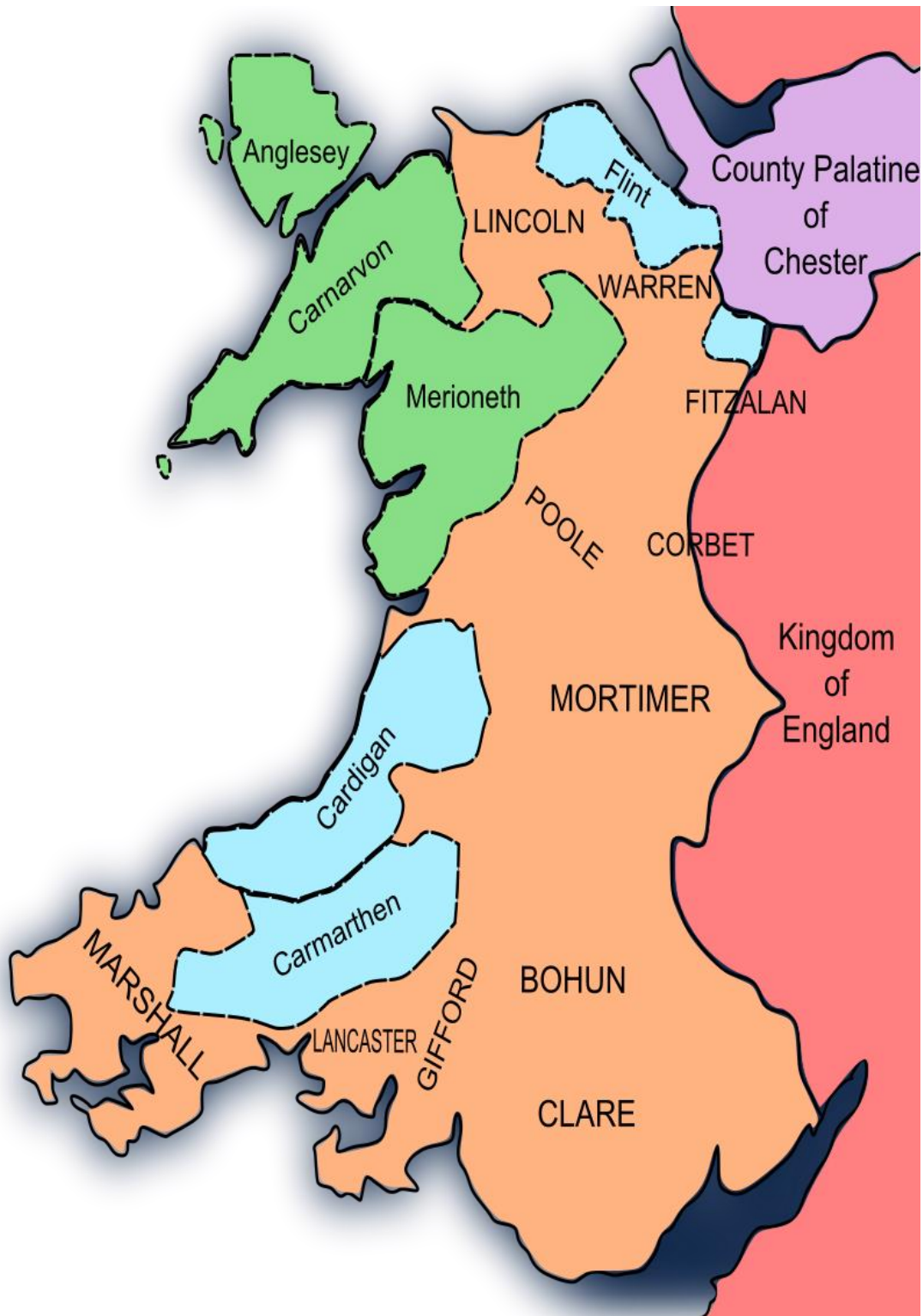
Things fell apart under his son, Dafydd. But his grandson, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (1246-1282), re-conquered Wales when England was weakly led by King Henry III. Under the Treaty of Montgomery (1267), England recognized Wales as an independent principality and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd as the Prince of Wales. However, Wales's independence was short-lived. In 1277, King Edward I of England organized a full-scale invasion of Wales. Five years later, Llywelyn was killed in battle, a loss from which Wales could not recover.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wales_after_the_Treaty_of_Montgomery_1267.svg>

Wales, After the Treaty of Montgomery (1267) – Fleeting Independence

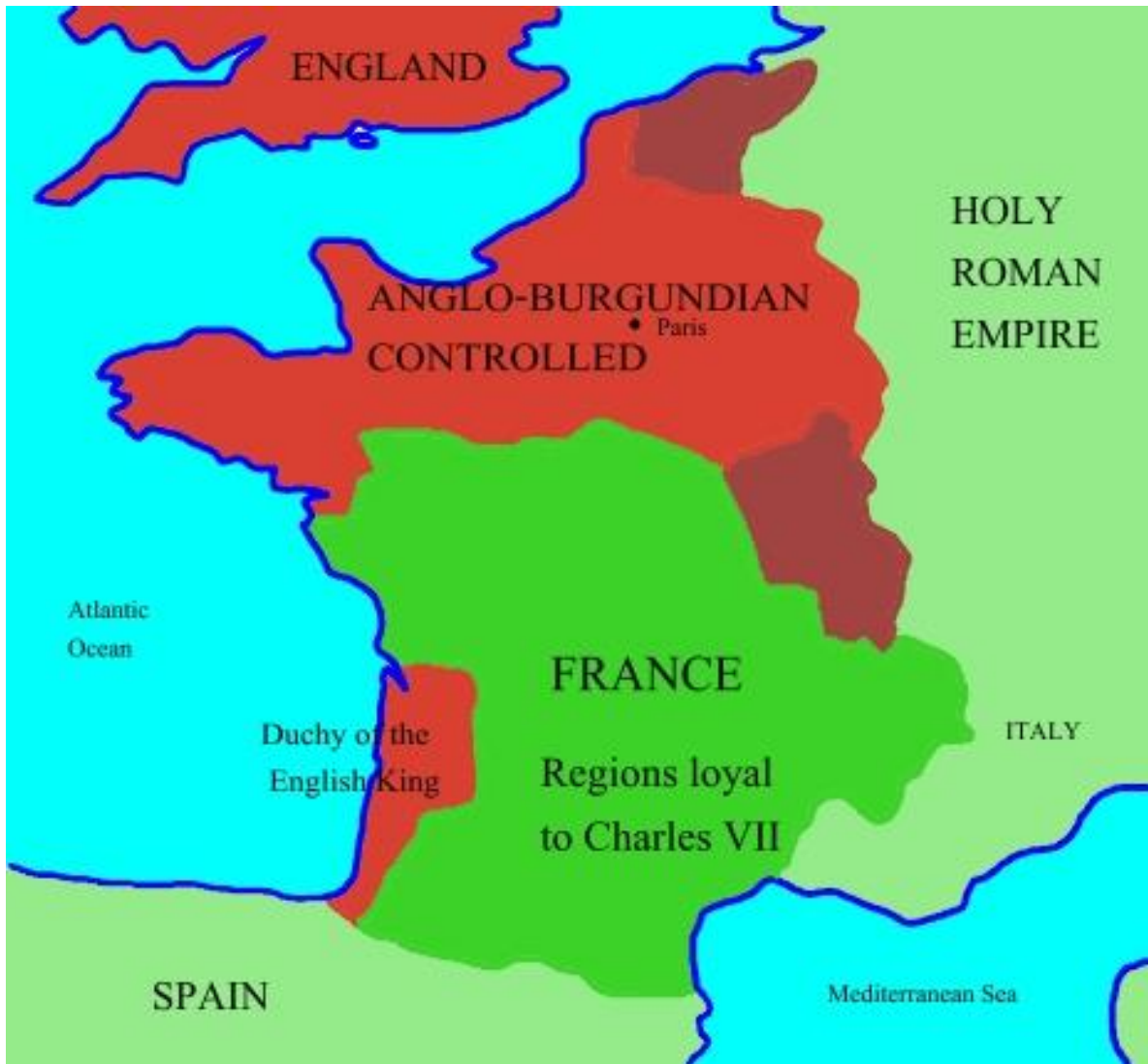
Under the terms of the Statute of Rhuddan (1284), England annexed Wales, Wales lost its status as a principality, and England imposed English law on Wales. Edward I then created a new principality in the former Welsh-ruled areas and, in the 1290s, exerted his control over the Marcher lords.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wales_after_the_Statute_of_Rhuddlan_1284.svg

Wales, After Edward I's Conquest (1284) – Full English Control

Rebellion and Union with England. Two calamitous events in the 14th century had significant impacts on Wales. During the Black Death (1348-1349), one-third of the population of Wales (100,000 people) died. Labor became scarce and more mobile, wages rose, and tenancy replaced serfdom. At the same time, England and France fought the Hundred Years War (1337-1453). The English Crown heavily taxed Wales to help pay for the conflict, and Welsh resentment intensified.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hundred_years_war_france_england_1435.jpg>

Areas Held By England (Red) and France (Green) in The Hundred Years War, 1435 – Intensified Welsh Resentment

Between 1400 and 1415, Wales rebelled against English rule. The rebellion was led by Owain Glyndwr, a Welsh nobleman, charismatic leader, and successful lawyer. Because of widespread Welsh

resentment, Glyndwr's revolt spread throughout Wales by 1405. France sent an invading force in support of the rebellion but withdrew in 1406. Thereafter, the English gradually regained control of Wales, and the revolt failed. Welsh hopes of regaining independence evaporated.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Owain_Glyndwr%27s_statue_at_Cardiff_City_Hall.jpg>

*Owain Glyndwr (1359-1415) –
Charismatic Leader of Unsuccessful Welsh Rebellion*

Wales was placed fully under English control by two Acts of Union (1536 and 1543). Thomas Cromwell, the chief minister to King Henry VIII, wanted a unitary state in Britain. There was little opposition

in browbeaten Wales. The Acts of Union imposed shire (county) government and English common law on Wales and demarcated the border with England. They ended the Marcher lordships and transferred Shropshire and Hereford to England.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cromwell,Thomas\(1EEssex\)01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cromwell,Thomas(1EEssex)01.jpg)

Thomas Cromwell, Chief Minister to Henry VIII – Acts of Union (1536, 1543) Created a Unitary State between England and Wales

England/Wales united with Scotland in 1707. At war with France, English leaders wanted to avoid a pro-French ruler in Scotland. Scotland's merchants wanted duty-free access to markets in England and its colonies, and its shippers wanted the protection of the English navy.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:United_Kingdom_labeled_map9.png>

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland – England (Red, 1543) and Wales (Yellow, 1543), Scotland (Blue, 1707), and Northern Ireland (White, 1921)

Medieval Welsh Economy. Estimated changes in population provide a good proxy for development in the medieval Welsh economy (1300-1780). Wales's population is estimated to have been 300,000 in 1300, following the prosperous 13th century, but suffered a decline to 200,000 in the plague-afflicted 14th century. Two centuries later, in 1540, the population of Wales had recovered only very slowly to 225,000 people. But economic progress in the 17th and 18th centuries permitted a more than doubling of population to 490,000 in 1780.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cambriae_Typus_\(Kaerius\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cambriae_Typus_(Kaerius).jpg)

*First Map of Wales, Humphrey Llwyd, 1606 –
Medieval Wales Stagnated for Three Centuries*

Little change occurred in Welsh agriculture between 1200 and 1600. The lowland areas specialized in cereal crops (barley and wheat), whereas farmers in the highlands raised animals (sheep and cattle). However, innovations – more lime applications, better crop rotations, and new rural markets – improved agriculture in the 17th century.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:18th_century_flour_mill.JPG>

Agricultural Change – 18th-century Grain Mill

The commodities and directions of foreign trade were largely unchanged until the end of the Medieval period. Wales continued to export primarily wool (raw or coarse cloth), meat (beef), and animal hides (cattle). Most Welsh trade was conducted with England, especially London.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carthenni_Cymreig_-_Welsh_Blankets_-_geograph.org.uk_-_1394807.jpg>

*Medieval Wales Exported Raw Wool and Woolen Blankets –
Double-woven Tapestry Blankets in the Factory Shop, Melin Brynkir*

In the 17th century, Welsh entrepreneurs responded to a growing demand for fuel by increasing the export of coal. By 1700, coal accounted for 90 percent of Welsh export earnings. In the 17th century, lowland Wales experienced a rise of Anglicized gentry among yeoman farmers. The improvements in agricultural technology were accompanied by a large increase in the English demand for animal products (meat, cheese, and milk) and wheat. Those changes created pressures for enclosure of pasture and of common grazing areas.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anthracite_chunk.JPG>*

Welsh Anthracite Coal – 90 Percent of Export Earnings by 1700

Industrial Wales (1707-1914)

Welsh Industry and Trade (1700-1850). The first Welsh industry geared for export was woolen textiles (“Welsh Plains”). Home weavers in rural mid-Wales produced coarse, light flannel cloth (also called “Negro Cloth”) to make working uniforms for African slaves in the British Caribbean islands or British North America. Exports of Welsh Plains began in the mid-17th century and continued until the abolition of slavery in the mid-19th century.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Welsh_spinners_and_spinning_wheel,_Wales-LCCN2001703565.tif>

*Welsh Wool-yarn Spinners, c. 1890 –
Used Techniques Earlier Employed To Make Welsh Plains*

Along the south coast of Wales, copper refining developed to produce utensils for sugar and rum production in the British Caribbean. Copper clarifiers (large pans) and rum stills were used to convert the slave-based sugarcane to exportable raw sugar and rum. By 1850, south Wales was producing half of the world's copper products.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Cwm_Ciprwrth_copper_mine_wheel_-_geograph.org.uk_-_1060275.jpg>

Wheel (25 Feet in Diameter), Cwm Ciprwrth Copper Mine, Wales

A third early Welsh industry was iron smelting. Pig iron was produced near the South Wales Coalfield, centered on the booming town of Merthyr Tydfil. Welsh iron production began in the mid-18th century to supply raw materials for British weaponry in the Seven Years War

against France and the American Revolutionary War. With the onset of the Industrial Revolution in Britain in the late 18th century, Welsh pig iron was used in new machines and tools. By 1850, Wales was producing 40 percent of Britain's iron.

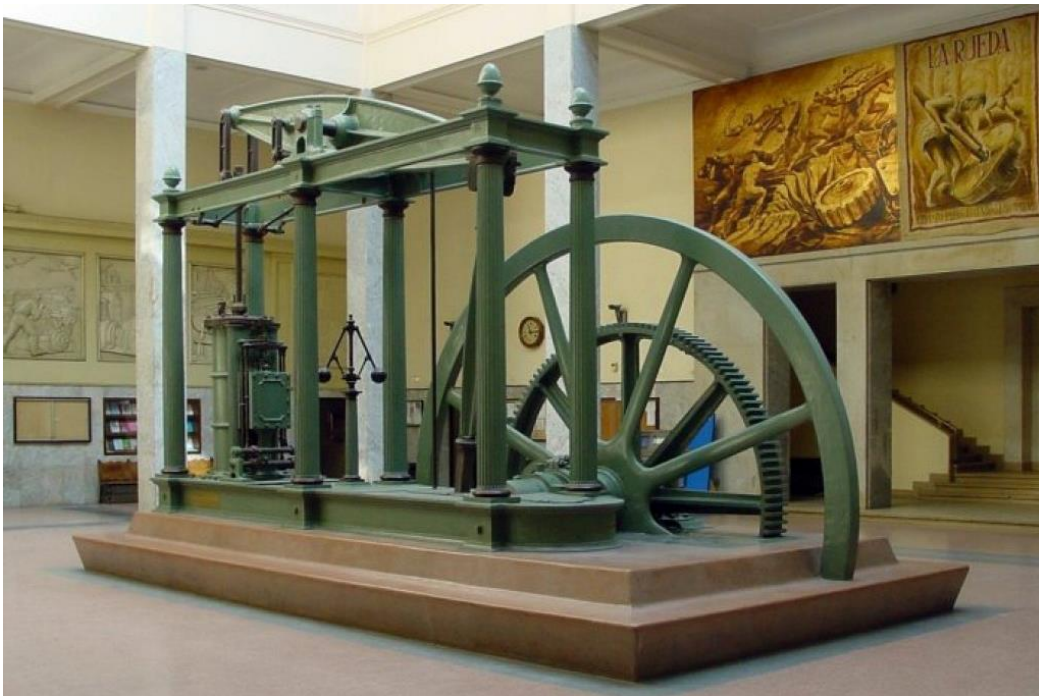


Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%27Cyfarthfa Ironworks Interior at Night%27, by Penry Williams, \(1825\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%27Cyfarthfa_Ironworks_Interior_at_Night%27,_by_Penry_Williams,_(1825).jpg)

Pig Iron Production, Cyfarthfa Blast Furnaces, Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales Coalfield – Painting by Penry Williams, 1825

Recent history had endowed Britain with numerous advantages for industrialization – an elite committed to economic change, experienced business entrepreneurs and merchants, a skilled labor force, good roads and ports, a strong education system, and a wide network of

international trading connections. Wales relied on English and Scottish along with Welsh entrepreneurs, technology, and capital to initiate its early industries.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Maquina_vapor_Watt_ETSIM.jpg>

*James Watt's Steam Engine, 1775 –
Propelled Britain's Industrial Revolution*

Welsh Industry and Trade (1850-1914). In the second half of the 19th century, Wales became one of the world's leading industrial workshops, largely on the back of "King Coal." High-quality, steam coal from the South Wales Coalfield (and secondarily from northeast

Wales) was a key component of Britain's Industrial Revolution. Welsh coal fueled new steam-powered ships and machines.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British.coalfields.19th.century.jpg>

Coal Fields in Great Britain in the 19th century – South Wales and North Wales Were Prominent

The British Navy converted from sail to steam in 1851, and mercantile ships followed gradually thereafter. Welsh coal was exported to ship bunkers around the world.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Launch_of_the_Iron_Steam_Ship_Great_Britain,_19th_July_1843_RMG_PY8918.jpg

*Launch of the Great Britain, 1843 –
World's First Iron-hulled, Steam-powered Ocean Liner*

Steam coal from Wales also powered mechanized industries, especially in Britain. At the onset of World War One, Wales was exporting one-third of the world's traded coal, and two-thirds of Wales's total population lived in two counties of south Wales (Glamorgan and

Monmouthshire). In 1913, Wales had 485 collieries that produced 57 million tons of coal and employed 210,000 miners. The center of steam coal production was the Rhondda Valleys in south Wales, and Cardiff boomed as the main port for coal exports and became the leading city in Wales with 164,000 residents in 1900.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lewis_Merthyr_Colliery.jpg>*

Lewis Merthyr Colliery – Rhondda Valleys, South Wales Coalfield

South Wales used coal to produce iron and steel and became the world's leading manufacturer of tinplate (sheet iron or steel coated with tin), producing over 800,000 tons in 1913. Wales also had significant

production of quarried slate (in the northwest) and nickel, copper, and zinc (in the south). However, the Welsh industrial boom, based on raw materials, was heavily skewed – very little knowledge-based secondary industry developed, 400,000 rural Welsh residents moved to south Wales, and income inequalities between industrialists and miners/workers were wide.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons*, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:George Childs Dowlais Ironworks 1840.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:George_Childs_Dowlais_Ironworks_1840.jpg)>

*Wales Focused Excessively on Heavy Industry –
Dowlais Ironworks, Painting by George Childs, 1840*

Welsh Agriculture and Enclosures (1750-1914). Starting in the mid-18th century, Wales, like all of Britain, experienced an Agricultural Revolution. Higher crop yields were achieved by systematic fallowing, better rotations, and increased use of manure. The improvement of pastures, through planting clovers, and the intensive planting of turnips for animal feed permitted larger herds of animals. More animals meant more manure and thus better pasture and higher crop yields.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Turnip_2622027.jpg>

*Britain's Agricultural Revolution –
Intensive Planting of Turnips Allowed Larger Herds of Animals*

But those changes required the consolidation of farm-land and the removal of tenants. Land enclosures in Wales were carried out with

limited opposition. Tenants migrated to towns to work in coal mines or factories. Between 1800 and 1850, Welsh land-owners introduced intensive farming that led to higher yields for cereals, production of high-quality beef, and larger farm sizes.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sir_Edwin_Landseer_-_Rent-day_in_the_Wilderness_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg>

*Lowland Enclosures Removed Tenants –
Rent Day in the Wilderness, by Sir Edwin Landseer, 1868*

Improvements in transportation accelerated enclosure. From the 1850s, railroads allowed fattened cattle to be shipped to London and encouraged a shift from crop to animal agriculture in Wales. The main rural protest movements in 19th-century Wales were the Rebecca Riots

(1839-1844) in the southwest. Small-scale farmers invoked the Biblical passage that “Rebecca should possess the gates of her enemies” to protest against tolls on butter and other produce moving on rural roads and workhouses set up in the Poor Law of 1834. The British Parliament made concessions that ended the protest.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:RebeccaRiots.gif>>

*Rebecca Riots (1839-1844) Against Tolls and Workhouses –
Cartoon in Illustrated London News, 1843*

Wales had a structural transformation in the 19th century. The share of Welsh residents living in rural areas declined from 80 percent in

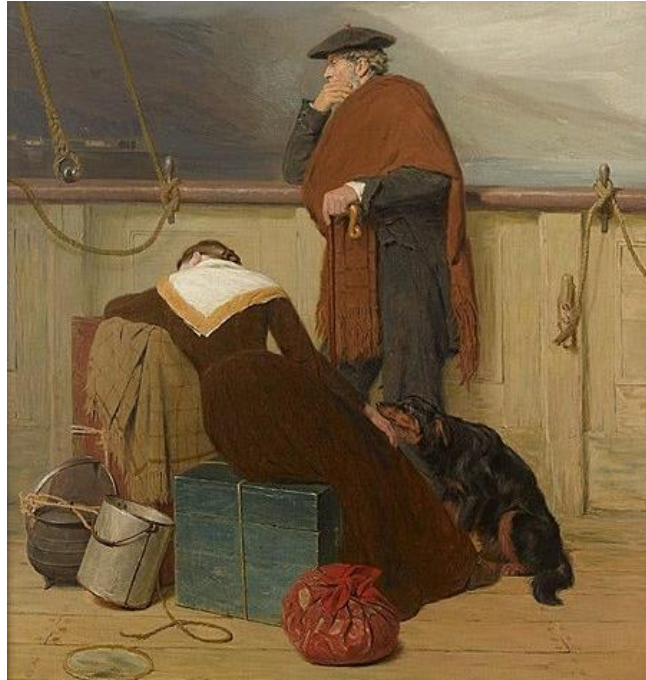
1800 to 20 percent in 1910, and the share of the Welsh workforce engaged in farming fell from one-third in 1851 to 11 percent in 1911.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Britain_Needs_You_at_Once_-_WWI_recruitment_poster_-_Parliamentary_Recruiting_Committee_Poster_No._108.png>

Many Welsh Ex-Farmers Became Defenders of the British Empire

Welsh Emigration. Between 1821 and 1915, 44 million people emigrated from Europe, mostly to the Americas or Australasia. The largest numbers departed from Italy (8 million), Germany (5 million), and Spain and Portugal (4.5 million). With 300,000 emigrants – 15 percent of Wales’s 1901 population of 2 million – Wales had a low proportion of migrants in comparison with the rest of the UK.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lochaber_No_More_by_John_Watson_Nicol.jpg

*Painful British Emigration –
Lochaber No More, by John Watson Nichol, 1883*

The explanation for low Welsh emigration was neither a lack of people nor an unwillingness to move. The population of Wales quadrupled – from 490,000 in 1780 to 1.2 million in 1851 and then to 2 million in 1901. Many Welsh moved from farms to towns and took new jobs in south Wales during the 19th century.

The low rates of Welsh emigration arose from unusual circumstances. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Wales lacked good ports and a large mercantile fleet and so had limited links with the British

colonies in North America and the Caribbean. In the 19th century, Wales benefited from rapid growth of industry and mining, and the South Wales Coalfield provided a New World for emigrating Welsh farmers.

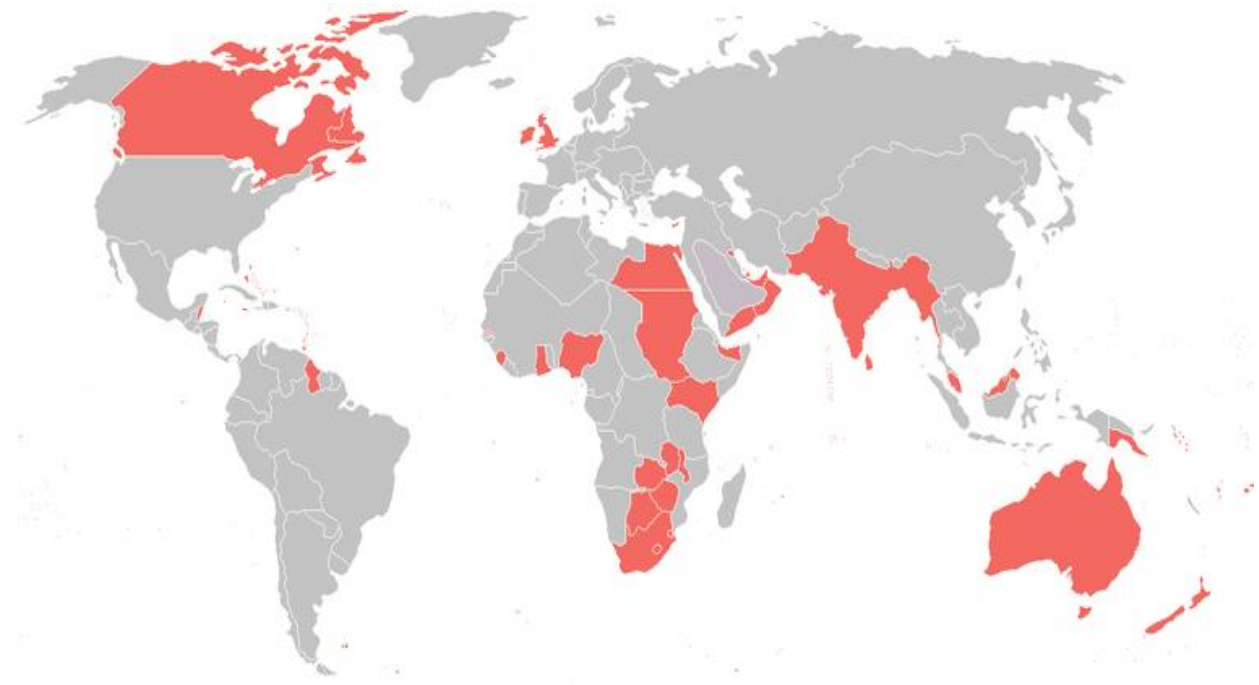
Year	Population ^[72]
1536	278,000
1620	360,000
1770	500,000
1801	587,000
1851	1,163,000
1911	2,421,000
1921	2,656,000
1939	2,487,000
1961	2,644,000
1991	2,812,000
2011	3,064,000

Source: Wikipedia., available at
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Wales>

Estimates of the Population of Wales, 1538-2011

Many of the 300,000 Welsh who chose to emigrate were skilled miners or industrial workers. About 100,000 Welsh migrants went to the United States, and one-third of them settled in Scranton, Pennsylvania to work in anthracite coalfields and form the largest Welsh

community outside of Britain. The other major destinations for Welsh emigrants were Canada, Australia, and South Africa. About 3,000 Welsh emigrated to the Chubut Valley in Argentina's Patagonia to form the settlement of *Y Wladfa* (The Colony) and preserve the Welsh language and culture.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British_Empire_in_1914.png>

*The British Empire in 1914,
One-fourth of the World's Land Area and Population –
Welsh Emigrated to the Americas, Australasia, and South Africa*

Modern Wales (1914-present)

Economic Change (1914-1950s). During the First World War (1914-1918), Wales continued its concentration on the export of steam coal and on coal-powered, heavy industry – iron, steel, tinsplate, and munitions. Britain’s demand for military equipment deepened that dependence. Wales thus missed the consumer-oriented, second Industrial Revolution, based on electric power, motor vehicles, and synthetic materials.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1914_Star_20_hp_tourer_\(31724765871\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1914_Star_20_hp_tourer_(31724765871).jpg)>

*Star Motor Car, 20.1 Horsepower, 1914 –
Wales Missed the 2nd Industrial Revolution*

Following the war, Wales, along with many competitors, anticipated a rebuilding boom and expanded heavy industrial capacity. But the boom was short-lived, ending in Wales by 1921. Global economic depression brought massive unemployment in Welsh industry in the 1920s and 1930s – 27 percent of Welsh workers were unemployed in 1930.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_102-10246,_England,_Arbeitslose_vor_Gewerkschaftshaus.jpg>

Unemployed Men in Front of a Workhouse, 1930

Welsh coal began a long-term decline as fuel oil replaced coal in steam-ships and heavy industry innovated to reduce demand for coal.

Employment in Welsh coal mines was cut in half – to 126,000 in 1936. Nearly half a million Welsh emigrated between 1921 and 1940, mostly to England. The outbreak of the Second World War (1939-1945) and the ensuing demand for armaments revived Welsh heavy industry.

Within Britain, Wales benefited from few of the war-related inventions – jet engines, electronics, antibiotics, and radar. Their production instead was sited mostly in England.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Port_talbot_large.jpg>*

*Port Talbot Steelworks, Largest Steel Plant in the UK –
Wales Continued to Focus on Heavy Industry during World War Two*

By 1945, Wales's dependence on making iron, steel, and tinplate had returned with a vengeance. Welsh heavy industry helped fill a replacement demand for equipment destroyed in the war. The newly-elected Labor government nationalized much of Britain's heavy industry – coal (1947), railways (1948), and steel (1949). But Wales's myopic dependence on heavy industry continued.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wales_blaenavon_bigpit.jpg>*

*Coal Production Was Nationalized in 1947 –
Big Pit Coal-mining Museum, Blaenavon, Wales*

Economic Change (1960s-present). The Welsh coal industry continued its collapse. By 2000, only two Welsh coal mines, employing

2,000 miners, were operating. The steel and tinplate industries were consolidated, but they too went into decline in the 1980s. International competitors were more efficient. Manufacturing now employs only one-fifth of the Welsh workforce and generates one-third of Welsh income. In the past half-century, Wales has experienced a belated economic restructuring – from heavy industry to services and light manufacturing.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tower_Colliery.jpg>*

*Tower Colliery, Cynon Valley, Aberdare, South Wales –
Last Deep Coal Mine in Wales, Closed in 2008*

Wales is now the poorest region in the UK, and Welsh per capita income, \$25,650 in 2019, was only 75 percent of the average in the United Kingdom (and 55 percent that in the United States). Two-thirds

of Wales's income and three-fourths of its jobs derive from a vast array of services. Yet Wales has few high-value financial and business services. Tourism is expanding and employs 10 percent of the Welsh workforce, mostly in seaside resorts.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caernarfon_Castle_\(7345\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caernarfon_Castle_(7345).jpg)>*

*Caernarfon Castle, Gwynedd, North Wales – Overseas Visits to Wales
Fell from 1.1 million in 2006 to 941,000 in 2018*

The restructured Welsh industrial sector is now dominated by 190,000 small enterprises. The diverse firms make a wide range of products, including gasoline, steel, power-generating machinery, and

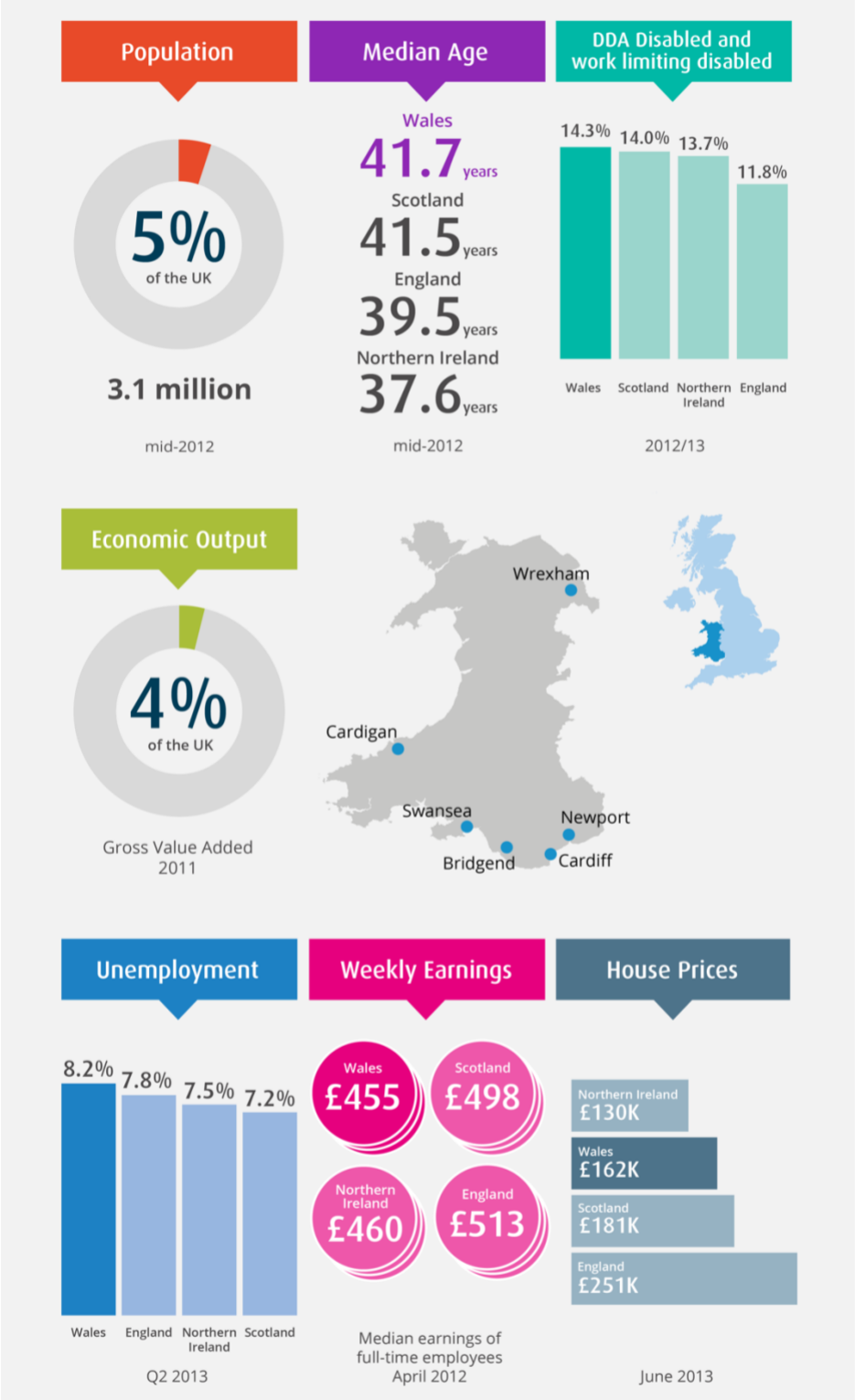
auto parts. The fragile Welsh economy is propped up by UK government transfers, which provide a fifth of disposable income, and public-sector jobs, which employ a fourth of Welsh workers.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Trade %26 Invest Wales -
Aston Martin Case Study.webm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Trade_%26_Invest_Wales_-_Aston_Martin_Case_Study.webm)>*

*Aston Martin Lagonda Production and Technology Center,
St. Athan, Wales*

The Welsh electronics industry is located in prosperous southeast Wales. Foreign-owned IT multinational corporations, largely from the US and Japan, located in Wales in the 1980s and 1990s, attracted by inexpensive labor, tax incentives, and EU market access. Most produce consumer electronics, not software, and do little R&D in Wales.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Profile_of_Wales.png

Profile of the Welsh Economy in 2012

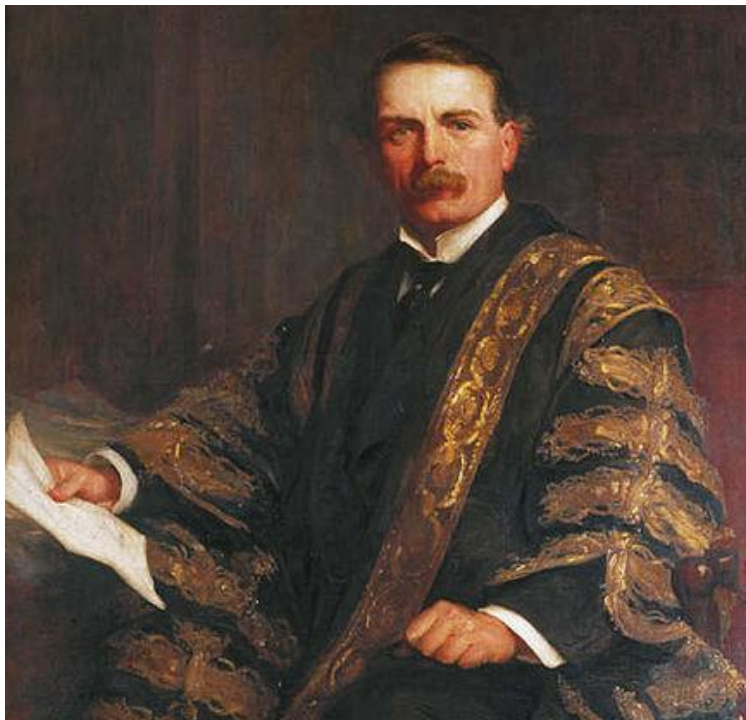
Political Transitions. Political transitions in Wales hinged on reform acts that increased the size of the electorate. Most Welsh supported William Gladstone, when he led the Liberals in Britain during the second half of the 19th century. Working-class Welsh appreciated Gladstone's legalization of trade unions. When the Reform Act of 1884 extended the franchise to male householders, some Welsh workers supported socialist parties.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gladstone-by-Watts-1859.jpg>>

William Gladstone (1809-1898), Scotsman, Liberal Party Leader, and Prime Minister – Portrait by George Frederic Watts, 1859

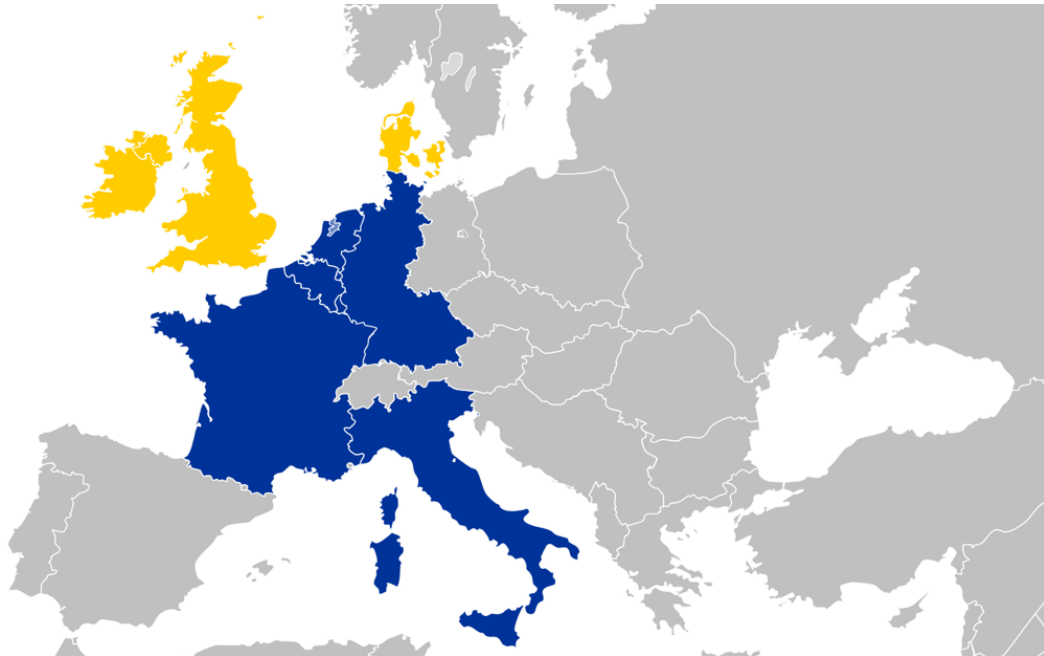
In 1918, a Reform Act tripled the electoral franchise and diluted Liberal support. Many new voters, workers and women, supported the Labor Party, which was founded in 1900 by two Scots, James Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald. Labor became the leading party in Wales after the 1922 election. But Labor-Liberal coalitions had no solution to the Depression, and the Conservative Party led Britain during the Second World War.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:David_Lloyd_George_1911.jpg>

David Lloyd George, Welshman and Liberal UK Prime Minister (1916-1922) – Portrait by Christopher Williams, 1911

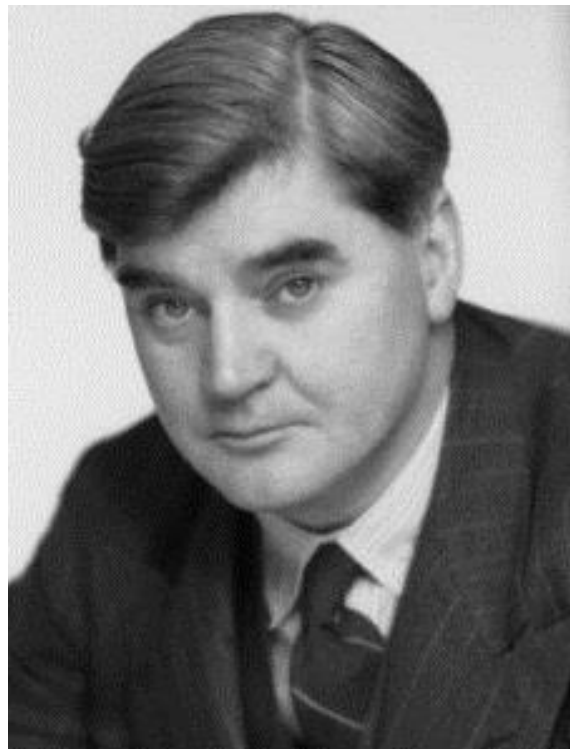
The election in 1945 resulted in Labor Party dominance in Britain. The new Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, nationalized industry and power and introduced a broad program of social welfare (state pensions, unemployment insurance, and a national health system). In Wales, the Labor Party underpinned its political power by creating unionized jobs in the newly nationalized coal and iron and steel industries. As part of the United Kingdom, Wales gained membership in the European Economic Community in 1973.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:EC09-1973_European_Community_map_enlargement.svg>

*First Enlargement of the European Economic Community (1973) –
United Kingdom, Ireland, and Denmark*

Led by Margaret Thatcher, the Conservative Party returned to rule in 1979. Thatcherism – privatization of industry, liberalization of markets, and reduction of union power – was unpopular in Wales, where the Tories closed coal mines and steel mills and cut public spending. When Britain elected Tory governments between 1979 and 1997, in Wales the Labor Party retained its leading share of votes and parliamentary seats.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aneurin_Bevan_\(crop\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aneurin_Bevan_(crop).jpg)>

*Aneurin “Nye” Bevan –
Welsh Labor Politician, Architect of the British National Health Service*

Devolution and the Welsh Parliament. The Welsh National Party (Plaid Cymru) was formed in 1925 by Welsh intellectuals to promote Welsh language and culture. Plaid was ineffective politically for two decades. Although Gwynfor Evans provided strong leadership for 36 years (1945-1981), Plaid had little success in winning parliamentary seats. It finally won its first seat in 1966.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1959_Election_in_Merioneth_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1959_Election_in_Merioneth_(cropped).jpg)>

*Gwynfor Evans – Charismatic, but Ineffective Leader
of the Plaid Cymru Party (1945-1981)*

Plaid's share of the Welsh parliamentary vote rose very modestly – from 11 percent in 1974 to 14 percent in 2001. The 1979 referendum on

home rule failed (by a four-to-one margin) in part because Plaid and Labor provided only tepid support. However, Plaid (along with the Labor) gave stronger support for home rule in the 1997 referendum. The voter turn-out was 50.3 percent of those eligible to vote, and the voters narrowly favored the creation of a Welsh parliament (also by 50.3 percent).

In 1998, the British Parliament devolved authority on all issues, except foreign policy, defense, economic policy, and social security, to new legislatures in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. The first election for the 60 members of the new National Assembly for Wales (known as the Senedd) was held in 1999. Labor won only 28 seats and formed a coalition with the Liberal Democrats; Plaid won 17 seats.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mark_Drakeford_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mark_Drakeford_(cropped).jpg)>

*Mark Drakeford –
First Minister of Wales and Leader of the Welsh Labor Party (2018 –)*

Labor governed alone after the election of 2003, formed a coalition government with Plaid in 2007, and has governed alone since the 2011 election. Carwyn Jones served as First Minister (head of government) from 2009 until 2018, and Mark Drakeford has held that position since December 2018. In its short existence, the Welsh Senedd has focused on issues of social justice (free bus transportation for seniors) and equal status for the Welsh and English languages in the Assembly.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Wales.GIF>

Contemporary Wales

Time Line for Wales

8 th -4 th millennia BCE	earliest inhabitants of Wales – nomadic hunter-gatherers
3500-500 BCE	Neolithic peoples migrated in from Asia – brought agriculture – constructed hillforts
509-27 BCE	Roman Republic – Roman Senate elected rulers
500 BCE	Celts arrived in Wales – iron plows and weapons, pottery wheels, gold minting
27 BCE-476 CE	Roman Principate – military prowess decided succession
1 st millennium CE	three Celtic peoples (Britons, Picts, and Scots) inhabited Great Britain – similar social organizations and languages
43 CE	Roman Emperor Claudius conquered Celtic Britons in Britannia
44-88	Romans conquered Wales
84	Battle of Mons Graupius, northeast Scotland– Gnaeus Julius Agricola, Roman Governor of Britain, defeated Celtic tribes
3 rd -9 th centuries	Picts established the Fortriu Kingdom in Scotland – wheat, barley, cattle
3 rd -4 th centuries	Gaelic-speaking Scots emigrated into Scotland from Northern Ireland – extended the Irish Kingdom of Dal Riata into Argyll

410	Celtic Britons expelled Romans from Britain
5 th century	Anglo-Saxons (Angles, Saxons, and Jutes from northern Germany and Denmark) invaded and settled southern Britain
5 th century	Angles established Kingdom of Northumbria, southeastern Scotland and northeastern England – ruled for 2 centuries
5 th century	four groups inhabited Great Britain – three Celtic (Picts, Scots, and Britons) and one Anglo-Saxon (Angles)
8 th century	Norwegian Viking raiders attacked monasteries in Britain
c. 730	Welsh language first written in the Lichfield (St. Chad) Gospels
793-795	first Viking raid on Lindisfarne and Iona
844-878	Rhodri Mawr (Rhodri the Great), King of Gwynedd – unified two-thirds of Wales (Gwynedd, Powys, and Ceredigion)
843	Kenneth MacAlpin, Scots King of Dal Riata conquered Pictland – created new Kingdom of Alba with capital at Forteviot
from mid-9 th century	Norwegians conquered Shetland, Orkney, and Hebrides Islands and northwestern coastal regions of Highland Scotland

- 1066 William of Normandy conquered England – Norman military aristocracy appropriated most productive parts of Great Britain
- 1067 Norman military aristocrats began conquest of Wales – colonized best agricultural land – established towns – built 600 stone castles
- 1195-1240 Llywelyn ab Iowerth (Llywelyn the Great), King of Gwynedd – first Welsh ruler to unify Wales – conquest, royal marriages
- 1215 proclamation of Magna Carta in England
- 1246-1282 Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Prince of Wales – re-conquered and re-unified Wales – last Welsh sovereign Prince of Wales
- 1267 Treaty of Montgomery – England recognized Welsh independence and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd as Prince of Wales
- 1277-1282 King Edward I of England re-conquered Wales – ended Welsh independence
- 1284 Statute of Rhuddan – England annexed Wales, imposed English law on Wales
- 1306-1329 Robert I (the Bruce) ruled Scotland – Anglo-Norman noble – won Scotland’s freedom in 1318
- 1337-1453 Hundred Years War – England won key battles, briefly ruled France, but lost gains – taxed Wales heavily

1348-1349	Black Death – one-third of population of Wales (100,000 people) died
1371-1689	Stuart Dynasty ruled Scotland – Auld Alliance between Scotland and France
1400-1415	Welsh Rebellion – led by Owain Glyndwr (Welsh nobleman and lawyer) – England gradually regained control
1509-1547	Henry VIII ruled England
1536, 1543	Acts of Union – created unitary state – imposed English common law on Wales – transferred Shropshire, Hereford to England
1558-1603	Elizabeth I ruled England
1603-1625	James I ruled England – Union of Crowns
1649-1660	Wales under military rule during the Cromwell Commonwealth
17 th century	Welsh agriculture improved – yield increases from applying lime, better crop rotations, new rural markets
mid-17 th -mid-19 th c.	Wales exported Welsh Plains – coarse, light flannel clothing for African slaves in British Caribbean and British North America
1685-1689	James II ruled England – unpopular pro-French Catholic

1689	William of Orange and his wife, Mary (a daughter of James VII) accepted English and Scottish crowns
1701-1713	War of Spanish Succession – Britain defeated France
1707	Act of Union between England/Wales and Scotland – formed United Kingdom
1756-1763	Seven Years War – Britain defeated France
mid-18 th -mid-19 th c.	Wales had an agricultural revolution – higher crop yields – systematic fallowing, better rotations, increased use of manure
late 18 th century	Great Britain initiated the Industrial Revolution -- Welsh pig iron used in new machines and tools.
1793-1815	Napoleonic Wars – Britain defeated France
19 th century	Wales a leading world industrial workshop – coal from the South Wales Coalfield – iron and steel – tinsplate – nickel, copper, zinc
19 th century	structural transformation in Wales – Welsh residents living in rural areas declined from 80 percent in 1800 to 20 percent in 1910
1800	Irish Parliament passed the Irish Act of Union – ended Ireland’s parliament – put Ireland in the United Kingdom in 1801

1821-1915	44 million people emigrated from Europe– mostly to Americas or Australasia – 300,000 from Wales (35,000 to Pennsylvania coalfields)
1837-1901	Queen Victoria ruled Great Britain
1839-1844	Rebecca Riots – rural protest movement in Wales – opposed tolls on rural roads, workhouses – British made concessions
1884	Reform Act of 1884 – extended franchise to male householders – many Welsh workers supported socialist parties
1900	Labor Party founded – James Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald
1913	485 Welsh collieries produced 57 million tons of coal and employed 210,000 miners
1914-1918	World War I – Britain, France, Russia, US defeated Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottomans
1914-1918	First World War – Welsh industry – export of steam coal – coal-powered iron, steel, tinsplate, and munitions
1916-1922	David Lloyd George, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom – Liberal Party, Welshman
1918	Reform Act of 1918 – tripled electoral franchise – diluted Liberal support

- 1925 Welsh National Party (Plaid Cymru) formed by intellectuals – promote Welsh language and culture – ineffective for 20 years
- 1930s global economic depression – massive unemployment in industry and mining in Wales
- 1939-1945 World War II – Allies (Britain, France, US, USSR) defeated Axis (Germany, Italy, Japan)
- 1939-1945 Second World War – demand for arms revived Welsh heavy industry – iron, steel, and tinplate
- 1945-1951 Clement Atlee, Labor Prime Minister – nationalized industry – state pensions, unemployment insurance, national health
- 1945-1981 Gwynfor Evans, leader of Welsh National Party (Plaid Cymru) – little success in winning parliamentary seats
- 1947 British Labor Government nationalized coal production
- 1948 British Labor Government nationalized railways
- 1949 British Labor Government nationalized steel production
- 1957 France, Italy (with Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg) founded EEC
- 1973 UK (with Ireland, Denmark) joined the European Economic Community (EU)

- 1977 British Labor Government nationalized shipbuilding
- 1979 Margaret Thatcher, Conservative Prime Minister – privatized industry, liberalized markets, and reduced union power
- 1979 referendum on Welsh home rule failed (by a four-to-one margin) – Plaid Cymru and Labor Party provided only tepid support
- 1997 Welsh voters passed home rule resolution – creation of Welsh parliament (50.3 percent)
- 1997 Scottish voters passed home rule referendum – creation of Scottish Parliament (74 percent)
- 1998 British Parliament devolved authority on all issues, except foreign policy, defense, macro-economic policy, and social security
- 1999 first election for National Assembly for Wales (Senedd) – governing coalition of Labor and Liberal Democrats
- 2003 second election for Welsh National Assembly – Labor governed alone
- 2007 third election for Welsh National Assembly – Labor-Plaid coalition
- 2008 last Welsh deep coal mine shut down – Tower Colliery, Cynon Valley, Aberdare, South Wales

2009-2018	Carwyn Jones, First Minister (head of government) of Wales
2011	fourth election for Welsh National Assembly – Labor governed alone
2016	fifth election for Welsh National Assembly – Labor governed alone
2016	British voters opted to leave the European Union (52 percent in favor of Brexit) – 47.5 percent of Welsh voters favored to remain
2018-present	Mark Drakeford, First Minister (head of government) of Wales
2019 –	Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of UK – Conservative Party
2019	Welsh per capita income was \$25,650 – only 75 percent of the United Kingdom average – 55 percent of the US level
2020	The UK, including Wales, left the European Union and concluded a Brexit treaty with the EU

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Sites Visited in Wales

Wales Walk

Stanford Travel/Study Program

July 5-17, 2014

Land-based

Conwy, Conwy

The Hotel Bodysgallen Hall is sited in an enticing rural setting near Conwy, in northwestern Wales. There, our group spent two days hiking in the realm of the Medieval Welsh Kingdom of Gwynedd. We began in the Isle of Anglesey, a flat breadbasket, which juts into the Irish Sea as the most northwesterly part of Wales. We walked out to Penmon, at the eastern end of Anglesey and ate a delightful picnic lunch opposite Puffin Island. Later, we boarded powerboats to cruise down the Menai Strait, which separates Anglesey from mainland Wales, ending at Caernarvon – the site of one of Edward I’s castles. On the next day, we hiked in Snowdonia in mountainous Gwynedd and visited the slate quarries of Blaenau Ffestiniog. In the 19th century, Northwest Wales was a leading producer of slate, used for blackboards, roofs, and pool tables. Our group rode on a narrow-gauge steam train, formerly used to transport slate.

Portmeirion, Gwynedd

Portmeirion is a stunning Italianate-style village, tucked against the picturesque estuary of Tremadog Bay in northwestern Wales. This chimerical creation was the passionate obsession of Clough Williams-Ellis, a Welsh architect who created Portmeirion gradually between 1925 and his death in 1978 at age 95. Williams-Ellis collected artworks throughout the United Kingdom and incorporated them into his imaginative wonderland. Today, Portmeirion is a leading Welsh tourist destination with 30 diverse hotel rooms and 50 colorful cottages. From

this intriguing site, our group walked to the village of Llanystumdwy – the home of David Lloyd George, one of Britain’s most distinguished leaders in the 20th century. Lloyd George served as the Liberal prime minister between 1916 and 1922, leading Britain to victory in the First World War. Because of his rags-to-riches ascendancy and reformist ideals, Lloyd George is revered by many in Wales.

Llangammarch Wells, Powys

Powys, a prominent Welsh kingdom in the Middle Ages, is today a lightly populated county in central-eastern Wales. We stayed in the beautiful Lake Hotel near Llangammarch Wells in southern Powys. We walked over the moors and around the lakes beneath the Cambrian Mountains and down the Wye Valley, avoiding grazing sheep. We stopped at the site where Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, the last Welsh Prince of Wales, was killed in 1282 by the conquering army of King Edward I of England (known as Longshanks because he was 6 feet, 2 inches tall). We also visited Llandovery, the site of successive settlements under Roman, Welsh, Norman, and English control. Our group then walked to the significant castle of Carreg Cennen, located on a cliff near the border between Wales and England. The proprietor gave us a lively guided tour and explained the medieval castle’s importance during the Norman and English conquests.

St. David’s, Pembrokeshire

St. David’s is the smallest city in the United Kingdom (population 1,500), earning city status because it houses the magnificent St. David’s Cathedral. We visited that wonderful pilgrimage site, built from 1181, and listened to three choirs singing at an Evensong service.

Pembrokeshire is the county that includes the majestically scenic southwestern peninsula of Wales. Our main walk in Pembrokeshire was inspiring. We began on the west coast at St. Justinian’s, ambled around the tip of the peninsula along the scenic coast, and ended at Porth Clais on the south coast, observing sea cliffs, islets, and dolphins in the Irish

Sea. En route back to our hotel, the quaint and lovely Warpool Court Hotel near St. David's, we walked to a Medieval ruin on the crest of a hill, where St. Non is believed to have given birth to St. David about 500 CE. St. David died on March 1, 577, and Welsh people honor their patron saint annually by wearing daffodils.

Laugharne, Pembrokeshire

En route from St. David's to Crickhowell, we Stanford walkers stopped in Laugharne (pronounced Lon), a spectacular town of 2,000 residents in southwestern Wales. Laugharne has a long history as a key small port, and it features an imposing Norman castle from the 12th century and a land-enclosing Flemish dike from the 14th century. Laugharne today is best known as the long-time home of Dylan Thomas, the Welsh poet. Thomas and his Irish wife, Caitlin, and their three children lived in the Boathouse in Laugharne between 1949 and 1953. There, Thomas wrote the novel and stage-play, *Under the Milkwood*, just before he died in 1953 at age 39. Our group walked the route that Thomas had followed in 1944, when he composed an oft-quoted poem to celebrate his 30th birthday. We also hiked through the scenic coastal town and to the cemetery where Dylan and Caitlin Thomas are buried under a plain wooden-cross marker.

Crickhowell, Powys

Our Stanford walking group spent its last three nights in the wonderful Gliffaes Country House, a rural estate-hotel on the River Usk outside of the small town of Crickhowell in southeastern Wales. We walked up Coity Mountain, circled around the top of that hill, and strolled down into the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape UNESCO World Heritage site. There we lunched on a small lake among the Coity Tips, rehabilitated slag heaps from the Blaenavon coal mine. We then paid a visit to the Big Pit coal mine and spent an hour 90 meters underground on a fascinating guided tour by an ex-coal miner. A century ago, the South Wales Coal Field had 485 operating coalmines, but the last one closed in

1998. On our last day in Wales, we walked again in the beautiful Brecon Beacon Mountains. We journeyed to the Glanusk Estate to eat lunch at the private church of the Legge-Bourke family and later visited Tretower, a 13th-century Norman castle.

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