

British History Series: Episode 12 - Wales - Subjection & Resistance

Presented by Chris Green

Key Themes & Events

1. Medieval Wales: A Patchwork of Kingdoms

- Wales was not a unified nation but a collection of kingdoms (Gwynedd, Powys, Deheubarth).
- **Gwynedd** (North Wales): Mountainous stronghold, "breadbasket" due to fertile Anglesey.
- **Powys** (Central/East Wales): Border region with shifting boundaries.
- **Deheubarth** (Southwest Wales): Controlled Pembroke and Milford Haven.

2. English Enroachment & Key Figures

- **Edward I (Longshanks)**: Conquered Wales (1277–1283), built castles (Conwy, Caernarfon, Harlech).
- **Llywelyn the Great** (1173–1240): Unified Wales, married King John's daughter, Joan. Later clashed with Henry III.
- **Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (Llywelyn the Last)**: Last native Prince of Wales. Killed in 1282; his head displayed in London.

3. Owain Glyndŵr's Revolt (1400–1415)

- Descended from Welsh royalty, Glyndŵr led a rebellion against Henry IV.
- **Key Victory**: Battle of Bryn Glas (1402), where Welsh archers defeated English forces.

- **Tripartite Indenture (1405):** Proposed division of England/Wales with allies (never realized).
- **Legacy:** Glyndŵr vanished mysteriously; Welsh hope for independence endured.

4. The Tudor Twist

- **Henry VII:** Descendant of Welsh nobility, defeated Richard III at Bosworth (1485).
 - **James I (1603):** United England/Scotland under a monarch with Welsh roots, fulfilling old prophecies.
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Notable Anecdotes

- **Prince Madoc Myth:** Legend of a Welsh prince sailing to America pre-Columbus (Tudors used this to counter Spanish claims).
 - **Castles of Edward I:** Built to suppress Welsh rebellions; now UNESCO World Heritage Sites.
 - **Penal Laws (1402):** Banned Welshmen from bearing arms, holding office, or educating children in Welsh.
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Key Takeaways

- Wales' medieval history is marked by **resistance to English rule**, charismatic leaders, and strategic marriages.
- Edward I's conquest and castles symbolised the end of Welsh independence but left a lasting architectural legacy.

- Owain Glyndŵr's revolt inspired later Welsh nationalism, while the Tudors' rise gave Wales symbolic victory.