



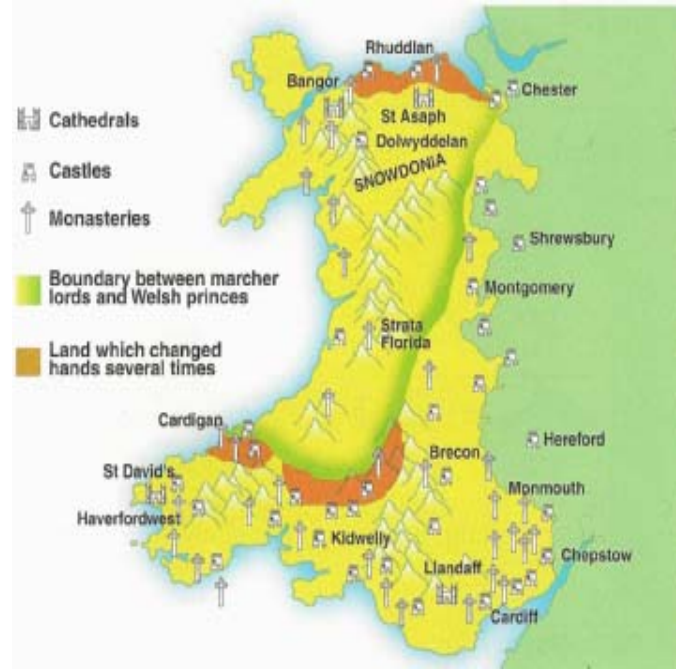
Edward I - The Conquest Of Wales 1275-1284



CE – War and Rebellion B1 and B2 - (War against a foreign country)

1. Background information to the conquest

- Wales was made up of mountains and dense forests, and the Welsh were, constantly raiding England to steal cattle and foods. Both the Romans and the Saxons had failed to conquer Wales.
- William I had come up with a solution to the problem; He created the **Marcher Lords**, based at Chester, Hereford and Shrewsbury. (French marche = border) William chose powerful barons, (friends and relatives whom he could trust) whose job was to control the Welsh. The Marcher Lords were allowed to raise additional taxes and keep any land that they captured.
- William I's policy was very successful, and soon the Welsh were contained in the mountainous area of Snowdonia. The princes (tribal chiefs) in Wales agreed to pay homage to William I. The Marcher Lords built **castles** to control the Welsh, and all was relatively quiet and peaceful.



2. Why did Edward want to conquer Wales? What caused the war?

- The Welsh situation changed during the weak reign of Henry III. The Marcher Lords were too busy with civil war in England to deal with the Welsh. This allowed a powerful man called **Llewellyn** to set himself up as **Prince of Wales** and rule most of Wales except the South. Henry III accepted Llewellyn's position at the Treaty of Montgomery in 1267. Llewellyn then recaptured large areas of land previously held by England and intended to recapture even more.
- Edward I wanted to regain the French lands that had been lost during the reigns of John and Henry III. Before he could do that he believed that he had to sort out problems nearer home, namely the continual threat posed by the Welsh and Scots. Edward thought that his best plan was to become complete **master of Great Britain**.
- Llewellyn planned to marry Eleanor, daughter of Simon de Montfort. This would lead to an alliance with English barons and threaten Edward. Llewellyn wanted to unite the whole of Wales and make it independent of England.
- However, Edward didn't want to just march into Wales in case he sparked off a rebellion. He had to bide his time and wait for an excuse. In 1274, Llewellyn refused to pay homage to Edward by refusing to attend Edward's coronation.
- Edward I believed that Llewellyn had broken his feudal duties. Edward decided to teach him a lesson. If Edward ignored this defiance it would be seen as a sign of weakness. He also wanted to occupy his barons and increase his personal reputation as a warrior king.



3. The Conquest begins - First Campaign

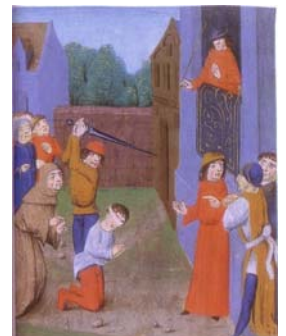
- In 1277, Edward sent a fleet and a large army of 15,000 men to deal with the rebellious Llewelyn. Edward was determined to crush “*this rebel and disturber of the peace*”.
- Edward's military plan was brilliant. Rather than challenging the Welsh in the wooded and mountainous country of Gwynedd, where the Welsh could use the ground and archers to good effect, he treated the mountains as a castle to be besieged. His army cut a broad path through the Welsh forests cutting North Wales off from the South. Valleys were sealed off as well as escape routes blocked.
- Llewelyn was forced to flee to his stronghold in the Snowdonia Mountains.
- The Welsh were surrounded. Edward persuaded other minor Welsh princes not to help Llewelyn (many were jealous of his power).
- Edward's fleet was positioned off the coast and kept Edward's army supplied with food whilst also cutting off Llewelyn's food supply which had been coming in from Anglesey. With a bitter winter taking grip, Llewelyn was starved into surrender.

4. Treaty of Conway (Aberconway) in 1278.

1. The land between Chester and Snowdon was **divided into shires** (counties), with a sheriff to make sure that law and order was kept,
2. Llewelyn was **stripped of the title**, Prince of Wales,
3. Llewelyn's **lands were reduced** to just the western half of Gwynedd,
4. Llewelyn was **humiliated** by having to pay homage to Edward in public in London.

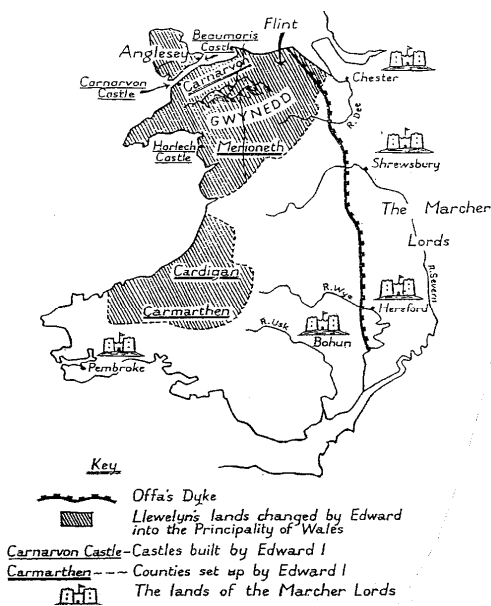
5. Llewelyn and David's rebellion 1282 2nd Campaign

- Over the next few years, Edward began to introduce English laws and built castles at Rhuddlan, Aberystwyth and Flint.
- English merchants were encouraged to trade in North Wales. However, the Sheriffs treated the Welsh harshly. Any protests were ignored.
- In 1282, Llewelyn, helped by his brother David, rebelled again. They massacred the garrison's of two castles and marched onto Chester.
- Edward marched into Wales with his army. Llewelyn fearing that he would again be trapped in the north of Wales, tried to march south to get help but was intercepted and defeated at the **Battle of Builth**. Llewelyn was killed in single combat with a knight. His head was cut off and taken to London where it was placed over the gate of the Tower of London.
- David surrendered, hoping for mercy. However, Edward was in no mood to show leniency and David was executed as a traitor. He was hanged, drawn and quartered as a rebel, his head joined that of Llewelyn on a spike, and the quarters of his body were displayed around Wales. Edward was now master of Wales.



6. The Statute of Wales (Rhuddlan) 1284,

1. Created the **Principality of Wales**.
2. Wales was now divided into counties, each under **English law**.
3. The King's eldest son was to assume the title of '**Prince of Wales**'.
4. The Welsh were allowed to keep some of their **ancient laws and customs**.



- After the Statute of Rhuddlan, Edward built castles at Conway, Beaumaris and Carnarvon.
- Edward offered some administrative posts to Welshmen.
- English merchants were encouraged to trade in Wales.
- The children of important Welshmen were taken to England for their education.
- The Welsh longbowmen, so deadly against the English, were recruited into Edward's army, where they helped in his conquest of Scotland. This reduced the Welsh fighting strength.



6 Conclusion

Minor opposition continued but it was insufficient to threaten Edward's control of Wales. Edward I himself had declared, chillingly, that it was his intention '**to put an end finally to the matter**'. Now Edward could turn his attentions to Scotland!

Although Edward I would regard his conquest of Wales as a success others would disagree. The cost of the conquest, the building of castles and maintaining an army of occupation was enormous. The way in which Edward treated the Welsh aggravated the already bad feeling towards the English and strengthened their determination to remain independent.

