Wales, like the rest of Britain, has been subject to the movement of people in and out of the country over the last 500 years. As one of the less wealthy areas of the UK, however, for most of this period the number of people leaving Wales has been greater than those coming into the country. As a largely rural nation, with no large towns until the mid-19th century, there was little reason for immigrants to come to Wales.

Immigration

The Reasons for Immigration into Wales

The early modern period

During the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries there was relatively little migration into Wales. Very few Huguenots came to Wales, probably because Wales, with no large towns, offered little opportunity. A small group did settle in the village of Fleur de Lys in the Rhymney Valley, but little is known of them. Wales had no major ports at this time and, unlike London, Bristol and Liverpool there was little trade from Welsh ports with the growing British empire. As a result there were hardly any African and Asian immigrants in Wales. The first reference to anyone of African origin was in 1687 when "Thomas, a black man" was baptised in Cardiff. Where Thomas came from or how he came to be in Cardiff is not explained.

The relatively few migrants who did move to Wales came to develop the mineral resources of the country, though again the numbers were quite low.

- In the late 16th century Elizabeth I employed two German engineers to develop the mines in Cwm Ystwyth in Cardiganshire.

- During the 17th century lead miners from Derbyshire also came to the Halkyn area of Flint.

- The Hanbury family came from Worcestershire to open an iron works in the Pontypool area.

However, in total these migrants were few in number and it was not until the coming of the industrial revolution in the 18th century that Wales began to experience major shifts of population.

The industrial revolution

The 18th century saw the beginning of the industrial revolution in Wales as the mineral wealth of the country was exploited more systematically. Though some of the early industrialists were Welsh, many also came from England, bringing with them technical knowledge and skilled workers to start new businesses e.g.

- Dr John Lane from Bristol opened the first copper works in Swansea in 1714.

- Isaac Wilkinson, from Lancashire, opened an iron works in Bersham near Wrexham in 1753.

- In Merthyr the leading iron masters – Richard Crawshay, John Guest, Anthony Bacon and Samuel Homfray – were all English.

As industry developed in the 19th century the level of immigration into Wales increased. **The Irish famine** of the 1840s led to the first great wave of immigrants into Wales. There had been a trickle of Irish immigrants before but the famine forced people out of Ireland. By 1861 there were almost 30,000 Irish living in Wales, making them Wales' largest immigrant group by far. They settled primarily in the four largest South Wales towns - Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Merthyr. They were hard working and found jobs in construction e.g. building Cardiff docks, the expanding railway network, as well as in coalmines and steel works. By 1881, one-third of Cardiff's residents were Irish.

In the second half of the 19th century the coal industry expanded rapidly, particularly in the South Wales valleys. Between 1851 and 1911 over 350,000 people migrated to the area to find work. (The population of the Rhondda Valleys increased from under 2,000 in 1851 to 152,000 by 1911.) Up to about 1890 the vast majority came from rural mid and west Wales. After the 1890s however, there were far more migrants from outside Wales, particularly from the west of England.

Some immigrants came from further afield,

The Conti family from Carmarthen photographed in the 1920s with their ice cream carts.
© Conti's Ice Cream; https://www.contisicecream.com/

particularly **Italians** from the Bardi area in northern Italy, escaping the poor farming conditions in that area. By the early 20th century there were over 1,000 Italians living in Wales. Most of them worked in cafes or ice cream parlours, but some also found work as seamen or in the mines and steelworks.

Wales also attracted **Jewish immigrants**.The first small Jewish community was established in Swansea in the mid-18th century, largely due to the efforts of German-Jewish immigrant David Michael. However the main surge in Jewish immigration came in the later 19th century when Jews escaping religious persecution in Eastern Europe settled in Britain. Jewish communities sprung up across Wales, mainly in industrial South Wales, but also across the north Wales coast. By 1918 the Jewish community numbered over 5,000 with 19 congregations. Brynmawr in the Gwent valleys had the largest concentration of Jewish immigrants anywhere in the UK.

Cardiff, a multicultural community

By the early 20th century, Cardiff had become one of the most multicultural communities in Britain with migrants from more than 50 different countries coming to the city as a result of the international coal trade. Welsh coal, particularly Rhondda steam coal, was exported across the globe. In fact, the first ever cargo of coal to leave Cardiff was sent to the small islands of Cape Verde, off the coast of west Africa, and as early as the 17th century Cape Verdeans were arriving in Tiger Bay as seamen. The 19th century saw a huge increase in coal exports from Cardiff. Coaling ships were often crewed by people from various parts of the British empire, particularly the Caribbean, Yemen, Somalia and West Africa, so it is hardly surprising that some of these sailors made their homes in the port. They lived mostly in Tiger Bay or Butetown, near to the port.

The twentieth century

Migration into Wales continued until the start of World War I, but in the 1920s and 30s many people left Wales as the older heavy industries (e.g. coal, steel and slate) went into decline. There was relatively little immigration as the Welsh economy stagnated. However, in the 1930s about 40,000 Jews escaping Nazi persecution arrived in Britain. Some were settled in Wales, where they helped establish the Treforest Trading estate.

The 1930s also witnessed two of the more unusual examples of immigration, both involving children and both the result of political tensions in Europe:-

- In 1937 4,000 Basque children fled from the civil war in Spain to safety in the UK. Over 200 of them came to Wales - to Caerleon, Swansea, Old Colwyn and Brechfa in Carmarthenshire.

- In 1938-9 10,000 Jewish children travelled to the UK in an operation known as the Kindertransport. Around 200 of them went to Gwrych Castle near Abergele.

Following the Second World War Britain experienced severe labour shortages and the government encouraged immigrants into the country. They came from various places.

During the war many **Poles,** (as well as Czechs and Ukranians) fought on the side of the allies. After the war, as Eastern Europe fell to communism, many of them decided to stay in Britain, partly because of a dislike of communism and partly because of ties made during the war years. The 1951 census showed that there were 160,000 Poles resident in the UK. Many were initially placed in resettlement camps (often ex US military bases), like the one in Penrhos, Gwynedd, which became a "Polish Village" with its own church, library, common rooms, shop and allotments.

However, these Polish immigrants, as well as a fresh wave of Italians, were not enough to fill the labour shortage. In the 1950s and 1960s, therefore, immigrants from the New Commonwealth began to arrive in Britain.
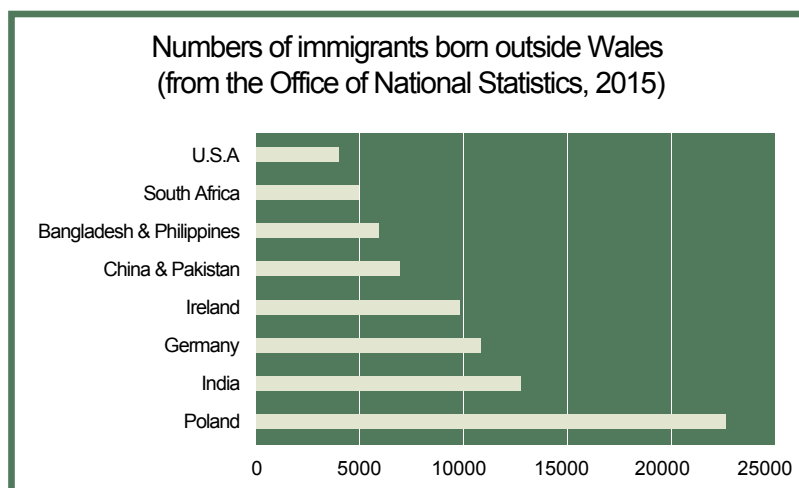
- The British Nationality Act 1948 gave subjects of the British Empire the right to live and work in the UK.

- Unemployment in the Caribbean and dislocation caused by the partition of India were other reasons why some people came to Britain.

- In the late 1960s Kenyan Asians and in the early 1970s Ugandan Asians also came to Britain to escape persecution. (Ugandan Asians, like the Poles before them were initially settled in ex-army bases, like the one at Tonfanau near Tywyn).

Some Commonwealth migrants settled in Wales, particularly in the cities. From 1962 onwards, however, successively tighter immigration controls were placed on immigration from the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, throughout the 1960s and 70s, over 70,000 Commonwealth citizens were still admitted per year.

In 1973 **the UK joined the European Union**, which meant that citizens of other member states could come to the UK to work. Initially the number of EU migrants was low – averaging just over 7,000 per year across the UK. However, in the late 1990s there was a dramatic increase as migrants from the new EU states in Eastern Europe came to Britain to find work. Between 2001 and 2011 nearly 3,000,000 immigrants entered the UK. This level of immigration was totally unprecedented in the country's

history, dwarfing the scale of anything that went before.

Since 2004 more than 16,000 migrants from Eastern Europe have registered to work in Wales (1% of total employment) with over half in four areas (Carmarthenshire, Cardiff, Newport and Wrexham). In 2011 the census showed that Cardiff had 45,000 foreign born residents – 13% of its population.

Numbers of immigrants born outside Wales
(from the Office of National Statistics, 2015)

Country	Number
U.S.A	~4000
South Africa	~5000
Bangladesh & Philippines	~6000
China & Pakistan	~7000
Ireland	~10000
Germany	~11000
India	~13000
Poland	~23000

In June 2016 the country voted to leave the EU. What effect this might have on future patterns of immigration is at the moment unclear.

The Experiences of Immigrants in Wales

The experiences of immigrants across the centuries have varied. The extent of their welcome and their ability to be accepted into the local community depends on a number of factors.

- The extent to which they might compete for work

- The state of the economy at the time

- The scale of immigration

- Their religious beliefs

- Their willingness to integrate within the local population.

The industrial revolution

The small number of immigrants into Wales up until the industrial revolution seem to have integrated easily into their local communities. However, the arrival of the Irish in large numbers in the 1840s caused tensions and led to Cardiff's first race riot in 1848 after the stabbing of a Welshman Thomas Lewis, by Irishman John Conners. Irish immigration caused problems for a number of reasons;

- They arrived at a time of economic depression. Local workers were finding it difficult to get work and claimed that the Irish were willing to work for lower wages.

- They arrived in large numbers and in a desperate state. When cholera broke out in Cardiff in 1849 the Irish, who lived in the poorest and most overcrowded slums in the city, were blamed for spreading the disease.

- Local newspapers were hostile and often referred to them as "Mud Crawlers" (due to the fact that they were sometimes dropped on the shoreline by ships' captains and were left to find their own way, dirty, to the nearest town.)

- Wales was largely a Protestant, non-conformist nation while most Irish immigrants were Roman Catholic.

During the 19th century there would be as many as 20 anti-Irish riots across the country, in places as far apart as Cardiff and Holyhead. Ethnic tensions were particularly bad in Monmouthshire and Glamorgan, where the incomers were accused of working for lower wages.

However, as the economy recovered Irish immigrants found it easier to get work. They were willing to take on gruelling work, often in the dirtiest, and most dangerous conditions. Across Wales they could be found at work on construction projects e.g. building Cardiff docks and the expanding railway network, as well as in coalmines and steel works. There is also no concrete evidence to show that the Irish actually undercut the wage rates of local workers. It's likely that that were just convenient scapegoats when times were bad.

By the late 19th century the Irish were becoming more integrated into Welsh society. James Murphy became the first Roman Catholic Mayor of Newport in 1868, while John Beirne was the first Irish Mayor of Wrexham in 1877. A sprinkling of Irish doctors were at the centre of medical care in a number of towns and industrial settlements. One was Dr Mary Hannan, who was described in 1896 as "the first and only lady doctor in Wales".
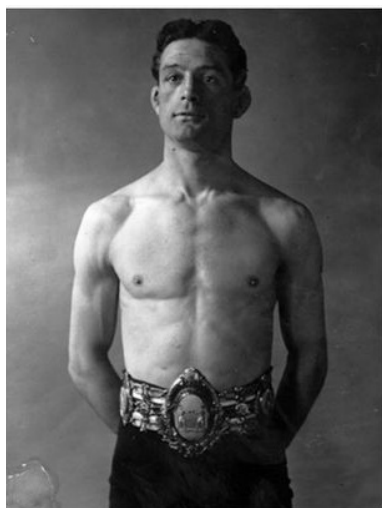
Jim Driscoll
Topical Press Agency / Stringer / Getty Images

Perhaps the best illustration that the Irish were being accepted was the annual Catholic Corpus Christi procession in Cardiff, which the Western Mail in 1891 described as "literally the event of the year in the town". The Irish community also produced its sporting heroes. The most famous was the boxer "Peerless" Jim Driscoll (below) famous on both sides of the Atlantic. He became British featherweight champion in 1906, following this with the British Empire featherweight title. On the day of his funeral in 1925, an estimated 100,000 people lined the streets of Cardiff in his honour.

The growing Welsh economy in the later 19th century also attracted **Jewish immigrants**. Most ran businesses and by the end of the century many towns in the South Wales Valleys were home to small Jewish communities. Though they maintained their Jewish identity, they integrated into Welsh social and political life and had generally good relations with their Welsh neighbours. (The one exception seems to have been in Tredegar in 1911 when mobs attacked Jewish-owned businesses. This was a time of economic hardship and it appears that the Jews were a scapegoat for the frustration of local workers.)

Elsewhere in Europe the Jews often suffered from persecution and pogroms (anti-Semitic riots and massacres) e.g. in Odessa in Russia in 1905. When news of this reached Wales, money was raised in Swansea to aid the families affected by the pogrom.

The **Italian community** in Wales also had generally good relations with the native population. Like the Jews, they were fairly small in number and were not competing for work. Café culture and ice cream parlours were quite new to Wales so they were a welcome addition to the local high street. Their arrival also coincided with the growth of the Temperance Movement and the first Italian cafes were often referred to as "Temperance Bars", which meant they had the blessing of the non-conformist chapels. They became a social gathering point, particularly on Sundays when pubs were closed. This was illegal, but the fine of 5 shillings (25p) was more than made up for by the takings for the day.

The twentieth century

By the early 20th century every small Welsh town had its own Italian café, with well over 300 by the 1930s.

The Berni family outside their café in Pontmorlais, Merthyr.
Merthyr Express / Trinity Mirror

During the Second World War, Welsh Italians without British citizenship were declared enemy aliens. Some were sent to work as farm labourers while others were interned on the Isle of Man or in Canada. In 1940, 53 Welsh Italians lost their lives when the Arandora Star was sunk by a German U boat as it was taking internees to Canada.

In the 1950s habits started to change. Car ownership, the advent of television and newer forms of entertainment all reduced the appeal of the traditional Italian café. Many have closed as the younger generation have looked elsewhere for work.

In 1919 there were race riots in Tiger Bay, Newport and Barry. Men returned from war to find themselves unemployed and the local black populations became the scapegoats. Similar riots also occurred in London, Liverpool, Glasgow and Hull. In general, however, life was usually more harmonious in the port communities across Wales throughout the 20th century.

The Impact of Immigrants on Wales

Immigrants will almost inevitably have an impact on the communities they enter. Unless it is a mass expulsion like that of the Ugandan Asians, immigrants tend to be younger and more economically active than the population as a whole. Generally, therefore, they make a positive contribution to the host country.

The early modern age

The earliest immigrants who came in the 16th and 17th centuries seem to have been generally welcome. They had a positive impact as they helped to develop the economy as they began to exploit Wales' mineral resources. This process speeded up during the 18th century.

The industrial revolution

The large-scale **Irish immigration** in the mid 19th century also helped to develop the Welsh economy, though they were not universally so well-accepted initially. Many people in Wales were alarmed by the arrival of so many half-starved immigrants. The Monmouthshire Merlin newspaper commented on "the streets of Newport, crowded with many hundreds of famishing Irish".

Although there were periods and areas of resistance to their presence, the Irish were generally hard-working and found it fairly easy to find employment. They were often prepared to do the type of dirty, unpleasant jobs that others did not want. They worked mainly as navvies on the railways, on Cardiff docks and as construction workers in the expanding towns. They also ran lodging houses, often in the poorest areas of town e.g. the Newtown area of Cardiff. Though these were often over-crowded, they provided dirt-cheap accommodation for their countrymen as Irish immigration to Britain continued into the late 19th century.

The Newtown area of Cardiff where many Irish immigrants settled. It was built by the Marquis of Bute for people escaping the famine in Ireland. It was an area of cramped back-to-back housing which was very overcrowded and unhealthy.

Newtown, Cardiff
@OldCardiffPics

The **Italians** also had a considerable impact on Wales. By the early 20th century every small Welsh town had its own Italian café, so much so that they were part of the furniture of Welsh life. They were known as "Bracchi shops", (after Giacomo Bracchi who is believed to have been the man who brought Italian ice cream and confectionary to South Wales). They became a social gathering point, providing a cheap non-alcoholic alternative to pubs and clubs. This was particularly the case on Sundays when pubs were closed (following the Sunday Closing Act – Wales, 1881). There were occasions when Italians were fined for opening on a Sunday, but they paid the 5 shilling (25p) fine and carried on because the Sunday trade contributed significantly to their profits.

By 1939 there were 336 Italian cafes in South Wales alone. Taff Street in Pontypridd had 5 cafes, with another 7 in other parts of the town. The Italian cafes provided a valuable service during the dark days of the Depression. Men who were out of work could make a cup of tea or cocoa last for a few hours in the warmth and comfort of the local cafe – and when times were hard the bill was often put aside until better days arrived in the village.

The Welsh Italian community have also made an impact in other ways. The brothers Frank and Aldo Berni, who started in business in Merthyr Tydfil, opened the first Berni Inn in 1956. By 1970, when they sold its 147 restaurants and hotels, it was the largest restaurant chain outside the USA. Welsh Italians also made their names in other fields:- Joe Calzaghe and Enzo Maccarinelli – boxers; Victor Spinetti – actor; Robert Sidoli -rugby international; Angela Hartnett – chef; Andrew Vicari – painter.

Jewish immigrants also settled throughout Wales, establishing small Orthodox congregations in towns and cities such as Bangor, Llandudno, Llanelli, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport and Wrexham. Most were businessmen and shop owners. Some owned large stores like Pollecoff's of Pwllheli and Wartski's of Bangor and Llandudno, which boasted of being 'By Royal Appointment'. Isidore Wartski went on to become mayor of Bangor, believed to be the first Jewish mayor in Wales.

In the late 1930s the Jewish refugees who fled Nazi-dominated Europe included many with business experience. Though they were relatively small in number, they had a huge impact. They helped build up the Treforest Trading Estate, a light industry complex which brought much needed work to the area around Pontypridd.

Like the Italians, individual Welsh Jews have left their mark on Welsh life. In 1912 David Jacobs became the first Welshman to win an Olympic gold for a track event. In more recent times we have Danne Abse (poet) and his brother Leo Abse (the MP who introduced private members bills to decriminalise homosexual relations and liberalise the divorce laws). Brian David Josephson, professor of physics at the University of Cambridge, carried out pioneering work on superconductivity and was awarded the

Nobel Prize in Physics in 1973. Harry and Abe Sherman started their football pools business in Cardiff after the First World War, employing a lot of local people. In their wills they left money to numerous charities, and paid for the building of the Sherman Theatre in the city.

The twentieth century

The migrants who settled in the ports of Wales also helped develop the economy of Wales. Sailors from the Caribbean, Yemen, Somalia and West Africa are generally thought to have first arrived in Britain in the late 19th century on ships transporting coal and other goods. This role became more important during the First World War, when white British seamen were being transferred into the Royal Navy. African and Caribbean sailors were assumed to be accustomed to a hot climate and hard work, and were therefore taken on to stoke the ship's boilers as 'Donkeymen' or tend to the engines as 'Greasers' below decks.

After World War II many more Caribbean migrants came to work in Britain at a time when the country was experiencing severe labour shortages. Many found work on transport and in the NHS. Migrants from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have also made their mark. In the 1960s and 70s the Indian doctor became a familiar figure in Welsh hospitals and GP surgeries. Our eating habits have become a lot more adventurous as a result of post-war immigrants. Indian and Chinese takeaways and restaurants have become as familiar a part of the high street as Italian cafes had been in the early 20th century. The traditional British fish and chips has fallen behind Chinese, Indian and pizza in terms of popularity.

Emigration

The Reasons for Emigration

Over the last 500 years people have emigrated from Wales for various reasons. In the 16th and 17th centuries many left Wales because of religious persecution. By the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, however, it was more likely to be because of economic factors and the search for a better life abroad. Like other migrants from Britain, those from Wales found themselves in all corners of the world, but particularly America and the British Empire. There were a number of ways, however, in which emigration from Wales was slightly different.

- The Welsh settlement in Patagonia was founded, not because of religious persecution or for primarily economic reasons, but out of a desire to preserve Welsh language and culture.

- Compared to other parts of the UK, Welsh people have emigrated in relatively small numbers. (In proportion to population, Irish emigration to the USA is thought to have been 25 times greater than Welsh emigration).

- Being predominantly Protestant and non-conformist, they headed for countries that were similar in religion e.g. America and Australia, rather than to India or the African colonies.

- Between 1870 and 1914 an estimated 40% of Welsh emigrants returned home – a far higher figure than from other parts of the UK (this is called back migration). The introduction of fast transatlantic steam boats in the 1850s made the voyage cheaper and cut the journey time to two weeks, so migration no longer had to be permanent. In Porth, in the Rhondda, there is an area known locally as "America Fach" (Little America). In the 19th century, many of its residents had spent time living in the USA before returning to Wales.

People's Collection Wales;
https://www.peoplescollection.wales/

Though the settlement of Patagonia has an important place in Welsh history, it was not the most popular destination for Welsh emigrants. In fact, most migrants who left Wales across the centuries simply moved across the border into England, while for those who left Britain completely, America was the destination of choice. From the 17th century until the end of the 19th century in every decade except one,

America was the first choice of Welsh emigrants (the exception was the 1850s when gold was discovered in Australia). Patagonia was never a huge draw. Even South Africa, with 4,300 Welsh emigrants in 1920, was more popular than Patagonia with only 4,000 at most.

The Early Modern Age

Most of the earliest emigrants left Wales because of religious persecution and their favoured destination was America. The legend of the medieval prince, Madoc ap Owain of Gwynedd and his voyage to America also encouraged Welsh emigration. In fact, Elizabeth I used the story to justify sending British settlers to found colonies in America. In 1792 (seven years before the Lewis and Clarke Expedition), John Evans, a Welsh Methodist, searched for "Welsh Indians" in the northern reaches of the Missouri River. However, even discounting the legendary Madoc, the Welsh settled in America early, relative to other Europeans.

An early 19th century painting of Mandan Indians. They are using what look like Welsh coracles, one of the reasons why they were referred to as the "Welsh Indians". Shortly after this was created most of the tribe died in a smallpox epidemic, making it hard to find out if there was any truth to the legend.

Public domain via Wikimedia Creative Commons; https://bit.ly/2KIIQXf

The first attempt to establish a Welsh colony in 1617 in Newfoundland, Canada was a disaster. The new settlement was called Cambriol (or New Cambriol), but it lasted only 20 years. Poor soil, an adverse climate and attacks by the French led to it being abandoned. It was another 50 years before there was another attempt by Welsh migrants to establish an overseas colony.

- In 1663 a small group of **Baptists**, led by their minister **John Myles**, wanted to escape religious persecution. They left for America where they founded the town of Swansea, Massachusetts.

- In 1682 a much larger group of **Welsh Quakers** followed William Penn to America, also to escape religious persecution. Penn wanted to call this settlement "New Wales", but the authorities in London did not like the name, so it was changed to Pennsylvania. The Welsh Quakers, led by John Roberts, settled in an area that came to be known as the "Welsh Tract". It became the heart of Welsh settlement in America for many years. By 1700, the Welsh accounted for about one-third of the colony's population of 20,000. So many Welsh Quakers left for America that those left behind referred to themselves as "the remnant".

- In 1798 Morgan **John Rhys**, A Baptist minister from Llanbradach in Glamorgan, founded the colony of **Cambria in Pennsylvania**. This community kept its distinct Welsh identity and use of the Welsh language for many years.

An 18th century map of **the "Welsh Tract"**, in modern Pennsylvania. Welsh place names like Radnor and Haverford can be seen, reminding us of the areas of Wales from which many of these early settlers came.

The Welsh Tract
Library of Congress,
Geography and Map Division

In addition to those who migrated to escape religious persecution, there were other types of migrants.

- At least half the people who left for America in the 17th and 18th centuries were **indentured servants** (a person who signed a contract or indenture to work for an employer for a fixed number of years, after which they were free to go their own way). Many among them were Welsh.

- There were also what might be called the unwilling emigrants i.e. **criminals who were transported** to the West Indies, America or later Australia. Following the Battle of St Fagans in 1648, 240 royalist captives were sent to the West Indies. In the next 200 years many other Welsh convicts were transported.

These included Lewis Lewis, a leader of the Merthyr riots and the Gwent Chartist leaders John Frost, Zephaniah Williams and William Jones (though Frost was later pardoned and returned to Newport). By 1852, an estimated 1,800 of Welsh convicts had been transported to Australia, of whom about 300 were women.

Besides America Welsh emigrants could also be found in the West Indies. India, which at the time was ruled by the East India Company, was also home to some Welsh migrants.

The nineteenth Century

During the 19th century Welsh emigrants could be found across the world in places as diverse as Australia, Canada, South Africa, Argentina, Brazil and Russia. However, for the vast majority America remained the preferred destination. Possibly as many as a quarter of a million people born in Wales were living overseas at the beginning of the 20th century.

America appealed to Welsh migrants for a number of reasons:

- American governments encouraged migrants to develop the resources of the USA.

- Welsh farmers and industrial workers had the skills that were in particular demand.

- There were huge areas of cheap land in America for those who could not afford land in Wales. In 1872 Robert D. Thomas, a Congregational minister, wrote a guidebook in Welsh highlighting the great opportunities in America. It became popular in Wales and probably encouraged further emigration.Periods of economic downturn in Britain made emigration attractive e.g. the depression in farming after the end of the Napoleonic War in 1815 and again in the "Hungry Forties". In the 1860s newspapers in Merthyr and Aberdare were writing about "emigration mania" or "emigration fever" as so many people left the area.

- Letters from those who had emigrated encouraged others to follow. Like other migrant groups the Welsh tended to cluster in certain areas, so they were able to maintain close ties.

In the **early 19th century** most of the Welsh settlers In America were **farmers**. They left Wales to escape rural poverty. The first large group arrived in 1818 and settled in Gallia and Jackson counties in Ohio, an area known as "Little Wales". As well as farming they helped construct the state's roads, canals, and railroads. Locally,

these families are referred to as the "1818 Welsh". Their letters home describing the opportunities the area offered encouraged others to emigrate. By the beginning of the 20th century Ohio had an estimated 10,000 Welsh settlers.

From the 1830s skilled industrial workers from Wales, particularly the South Wales valleys, also began to emigrate to America in large numbers. The industrial revolution had created a large pool of skilled Welsh workers who were in demand all over the world. Steelworkers settled in Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Chicago, while the development of the anthracite mines around **Scranton and Wilks-Barr in Pennsylvania** drew Welsh miners by the thousands. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Scranton had nearly 10,000 inhabitants of Welsh descent. From the time of the Civil War to the end of World War I, it claimed to have the largest concentration of Welsh people in the world outside Wales and England. (Today, Pennsylvania has some 200,000 people of Welsh ancestry, more than any other state.)

Welsh Americans in the mid-19th century also built the American **slate industry**. Between 1845 and 1851 nearly 1500 people left the towns of Bethesda and Llanberis for the slate quarries of Vermont, USA alone. There were also large slate communities in the states of Pennsylvania and New York, centred around the towns of Granville and Fair Haven. At least six other states had slate quarries, all worked mainly by Welsh immigrants.

In the last decade of the 19th century many Welsh **tinplate workers** also left for the USA. Until the late 1880s Wales produced 80% of the world's tinplate and dominated the world market. However, in 1890 America introduced the McKinley Tariff. This raised the price of imported tinplate, throwing the Welsh industry into a depression. Hundreds of Welsh workers left for American tinplate works in Philadelphia and Ohio. Many of them became important figures in the industry.

One last small group of 19th century Welsh emigrants should also be mentioned. In the 1860s **Welsh Mormons** left for America. Though they were not actually persecuted, they were not popular and went to America for reasons of religion. Many Welsh Mormons settled in Malad City, Idaho, which today claims to have a greater proportion of inhabitants of Welsh descent than anywhere outside Wales itself (though the population is only just over 2,000). Malad's local High School football team is known as the "Malad Dragons" and it flies the Welsh Flag as its school colours.

Welsh emigrants also found themselves in other parts of the globe.

- The 1851 Australian census indicates that there were only about 1,800 Welsh-born settlers in **Australia**, a very small number of whom were 'free' settlers i.e. not convicts. However the discovery of gold in Ballarat in Victoria in the early 1850s saw a dramatic rise in Welsh migrants. In the 1860s huge deposits of copper were also discovered in South Australia and workers from Swansea and Llanelli went to develop the area. Ironically it was this discovery that eventually broke Swansea's dominance over the world copper markets.

- The city of Donetsk in present day **Ukraine** was founded in 1869 by John Hughes, an engineer from Merthyr Tydfil. He was recruited by the Russian government to build a steelworks and coal mines in the region. The town was initially named Yuzovka (Hughesovka). Welsh mining engineers also helped to develop the industry in South Africa and even China, which is, today, the largest producer and user of coal in the world.

- There were slate quarries in Newfoundland, Canada and, Australia that attracted Welsh workers from the mid-nineteenth century. Richard Jones, a slate quarry manager from Bethesda even emigrated to Prussia (now north-east Germany) in 1857.

- Relatively few Welsh people went to New Zealand, though they were among the earliest to arrive, as sealers and whalers. One of New Zealand's most famous places, Milford Sound, was named in the early 19th century by a Welsh sealer.

Patagonia
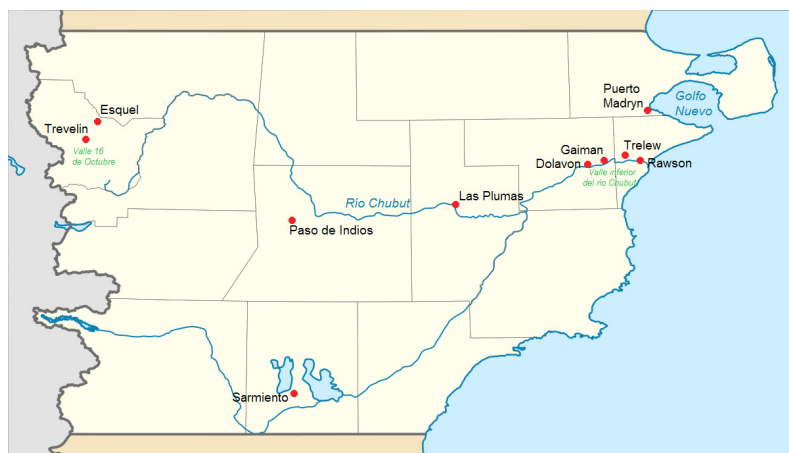
Today the one story of 19th century Welsh emigration that is probably best known is the settlement of **Patagonia**. It began in 1861 in the home of Michael D Jones in Bala, when a group of men met to discuss the possibility of founding a new Welsh colony as a way of preserving their Welsh heritage. Patagonia was chosen as the place for a new Welsh settlement for a number of reasons:

- As Wales industrialised, many Welsh people believed that the Welsh language and culture was being lost in its Welsh homeland.

- Attempts to preserve Welsh language and culture in America had also failed. In 'Welsh' towns such as Utica in New York State and Scranton in Pennsylvania, Welsh emigrants came under great pressure to learn English and adopt the American way of life. This was difficult to resist and most Welsh immigrants soon became "Americanised".

- Patagonia had huge areas of land and no other immigrant groups had yet settled there. In the eyes of Michael D. Jones it was a place where "a strong and self-reliant nation will grow in a Welsh homeland". His drive was a main reason for the creation of the colony.

- This plan also had the approval of the Argentinean government, as this would give them control of a large area of land which was also claimed by Chile. They, in turn, accepted that Welsh immigrants would be allowed to retain their language and religion.

The first 153 settlers arrived in 1865 and after initial problems managed to get the colony established around the town of Rawson in the Chubut valley. They created an irrigation system which improved the fertility of the land. Then in 1886 work began on the railway to link the farming area to Puerto Madryn on the coast. This was helped by the arrival of another 465 Welsh settlers. In the late 1880s the colony expanded in to the foothills of the Andes, with new settlements at Esquel and Trevelin. There is some disagreement about the total number of Welsh people who migrated to Patagonia. However, the general figure is quite low, with even the most generous estimates at only 4,000.

The twentieth century

During the 20th century the number of Welsh people leaving Britain fell noticeably (though large numbers still went to England to find work, particularly during the inter-war years). For those who did go overseas, America was no longer the first choice.

- Canada was promoted as a good prospect for immigrants. In 1902 just over 200 settlers relocated from Patagonia, following a dispute with the Argentine government. However, the main wave of settlement began after World War I. Between 1914 and 1950 more than 50,000 Welsh went to Canada. They settled mainly in the mining areas of Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta or on farms in the Canadian West.

- Welsh emigration to Australia also increased during the 20th century, particularly after the introduction of the Assisted Passage Scheme following World War II. New South Wales and Victoria were the most popular destinations. Around 20% of the population of New South Wales are at least partly of Welsh descent. In the early twentieth-century most of the Welsh settlers were farmers, but later on many miners also emigrated.

The Experiences of Emigrants

The early modern age

The earliest Welsh emigrants headed for America to find the freedom of religion that they were denied in Britain. However, to achieve this they faced not only a long and hazardous voyage but also the prospect of a new life in a place that was completely alien to them, (particularly in an age before mass media and when most people rarely travelled beyond their own locality).

For the first settlers in America there were also other factors that made life in the New World more challenging. The first was **relations with the Indians**.

- In 1675 Wampanoag Indians attacked colonists in New England, whom they claimed had not kept to their treaty. The Welsh settlement at Swansea had to be rebuilt after it was destroyed by fire and many of its inhabitants killed.

- The Quakers managed to maintain better relations. They were non-violent and never carried weapons, so possibly the native tribes never saw them as a threat. The Quaker leader William Penn learned the language of the Indians and studied their culture. He thought the Indians were the lost tribe of Israel and also believed the Indian language was similar to Hebrew. In 1756 nearly all the Quakers in the Pennsylvania Assembly resigned when the Governor declared war on the local Indians.

- The later "Welsh Hills" settlement in Ohio also had Indian neighbours. The house of David Lewis was often visited by a chief known as "Big Jo" and his followers, but they were not hostile. People visiting neighbours or attending chapel at night took weapons to protect themselves from the wolves that prowled around. The son of Theophilus Jones wandered out of the settlement only to find himself surrounded by wolves. He spent the night in a tree before rescuers found him. Letters reveal that bears and pumas also caused problems.

A second issue that divided religious groups was the issue of **slavery**. For many colonists, who had come to America to gain religious freedom, the idea of denying that same freedom to another human was unacceptable. As early as 1696 the Welsh American Quaker Cadwaladr Morgan was trying to persuade fellow Quakers not to own slaves. In 1776, at the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting the Quakers banned members from owning slaves (though it was not until the end of the American Civil War in 1865 that slavery was finally abolished in the USA).

The nineteenth century

The Welsh emigrants who went abroad in the 19ᵗʰ century had little problem in finding work. They tended to be skilled, sober, educated and hard-working, qualities which meant they were in demand across the globe. They often dominated their industries and got the best-paid jobs, a fact which irritated other nationalities e.g. the Irish, who claimed that the Welsh kept the best jobs for themselves.

Right up until the end of the 19ᵗʰ century the vast majority of Welsh emigrants were non-conformist and Welsh speaking. They tended to congregate in certain areas e.g. Ohio and Pennsylvania, where they tried to keep their culture and religion alive as a way of preserving their identity. The centre of Welsh life in their towns and villages was the chapel.

- As well as being places of worship, chapel buildings served as community halls, welfare centres and temporary shelters for new arrivals.

- Sunday Schools and Bible reading led to a high degree of literacy among Welsh emigrants. The use of the Welsh language was common in all communities where the Welsh settled in numbers and could be passed on for generations. From 1851, Y Drych ('The Mirror') was published in Manhattan, one of a number of Welsh-language newspapers for Americans.

- Eisteddfodau were held in towns across the world where Welsh communities existed.
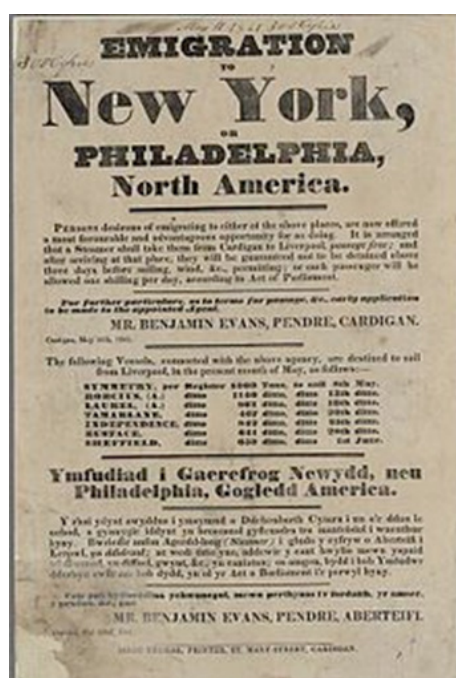
A poster, written in English and Welsh, advertising passage to America. It lists the seven vessels that were sailing from Liverpool to New York in May 1841.

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Scranton in Pennsylvania was an important cultural centre in Welsh-America. The city was known as "Athen Cymru America" (the Welsh Athens of America) because of its rich cultural life. Some of the biggest Welsh chapels in America were located there and it also hosted some of the largest eisteddfodau in America in the last quarter of the century, which were supported by the whole community, not just the Welsh. Several Welsh-language newspapers and magazines were also published in Scranton in the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s.

However, by the end of the 19th century Welsh Americans in Scranton and other towns were becoming increasingly Americanized in their habits and speech:

- They were in a country in which the English language dominated.

- Second and third generation migrants joined occupations outside their traditional industries, and often moved away from the original place of settlement.

- Some intermarried with other ethnic groups, diluting the Welshness of their children.

- Other ethnic groups e.g. Italians and Eastern Europeans moved into areas and jobs previously dominated by Welsh migrants.

A similar sequence of events took place in Australia. From 1865 the leading Welsh-Australian monthly newspapers, Yr Australydd (The Australian) and Yr Ymwelydd (The Visitor) covered news of chapel services, Cymanfaoedd Canu and Eisteddfodau for Welsh migrants in Victoria. In 1863 an Eisteddfod was held in Victoria. It proved so popular that it was rotated annually through the larger towns in Victoria. However, by 1876 both newspapers had gone out of circulation. By the end of the decade the relatively small Welsh population of Australia was beginning to disperse and lose its identity through assimilation into the general population.

The Welsh colony in Patagonia also faced early problems which almost led to its abandonment:

- Patagonia was not the green and fertile land the Mimosa settlers had been promised. Much of it was barren, infertile and lacked water. The first homes were dug into the cliffs in Puerto Madryn where they landed. Eventually they reached the site for the colony in the Chubut valley about 40 miles away, where they established the town of Rawson at the end of 1865.

- In the early years other problems emerged. Floods, bad harvests, arguments over the ownership of land and the lack of a direct route to the ocean (where they could export their produce and import necessities) made life very difficult.

- The settlers included tailors, cobblers, carpenters, brick makers, and miners, but few farmers, which was rather unfortunate particularly as they needed to feed themselves. Though they received help from the native Teheulche Indians who tried to teach the settlers how to survive on the pampas, the colony looked as if it was doomed to fail from the lack of food. However, after receiving several mercy missions of supplies, the settlers persevered. An irrigation system made the land fertile and a railway line to Puerto Madryn gave the colony a link to the outside world

However, in the early 20th century the settlement was facing new problems;

- Some Welsh settlers left for Australia. Some wanted to avoid conscription into the Argentine army while others resented the fact that the Argentine government wanted all teaching to be in Spanish.

- There was a shortage of suitable farming land in the Chubut Valley.

- New immigration after 1914 came mainly from Italy and other southern European countries. Welsh became a minority language.

- The cooperative society (Cwmni Masnachol Camwy which traded on the settlers' behalf in Buenos Aires and acted as a bank) went bankrupt in the Great Depression of the 1930s. This had an adverse effect on the economy of Patagonia.

Despite all this the Welsh language survived among a minority. More recently there has been a revival. The Argentine government has been more relaxed about the use of Welsh and people from other ethnic groups have begun to send their children to Welsh medium schools.

The Impact of Welsh Emigrants

The early modern age

The early Welsh non-conformist settlers in America, along with others from England and Scotland, had a huge influence on the development of modern America. They were hard-working and contributed to the economic development of the colonies. They believed that every true Christian was equal in the eyes of God. This idea was not only seen in their religious beliefs but also helped shape American politics and society, as well as the American character.

- The non-conformists rejected hierarchies e.g. archbishops and bishops. They set up their own churches, in which every member was equal. They chose their own ministers and other church officials. These ideas of equality under God crossed over into political life as well. At their town meetings every church member had the right to speak, vote on decisions and help choose the town council. This was the beginning of American democracy.

- They believed in covenants (agreements) in all aspects of their lives e.g. covenants between God and man, ministers and congregations, and men and their families. In these covenants both sides had responsibilities. Thus, for example, the Quakers of Pennsylvania believed they should obey the laws of the colony, but in return the politicians who made the law were expected to govern in the best interests of all citizens.

- They were self-disciplined and believed that hard work was a religious duty and the way to please God. They thought that becoming wealthy through hard work was not a sin, but rather a sign of God's favour.

- They emphasised that everyone was responsible for his own actions (every man was "his own priest"). This made them self-reliant and hard-working – the basis of modern American individualism.

- They placed great importance on education, so schooling was free. It was important to be able to read so that they could study the Bible to be sure that they were following God's will. Welsh non-conformists helped to establish some of America's first universities. Morgan Edwards, a Baptist minister originally from Pontypool, was the driving force behind the opening of Brown University, Rhode Island, in 1764. Elihu Yale, of Welsh descent, donated money to Yale University (1701) which was named after him. These early American universities helped spread non-conformist ideas about government and society e.g. religious

freedom, equality, the right to justice and a dislike of discrimination. These ideas helped create modern America.

- Many of the values we associate with the U.S. e.g. individualism, egalitarianism and optimism can be traced back to the early non-conformist settlers.

Welsh emigrants, therefore, had a great influence on the emergence of modern America, in spite of their relatively small numbers. We can see this influence in the Declaration of Independence - all men are created equal with unalienable rights; and in the First Amendments to the constitution – the right to freedom of religion, free speech etc.

- 16 of the 56 signatories **of the Declaration of Independence** were of Welsh descent.

- The Welsh American, Gouverneur Morris (1752-1816), helped draft the Constitution of the United States. He is credited with having written the famous words of the preamble: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

- Several of the **early Presidents** were of Welsh descent, including **Thomas Jefferson** (whose family came from a village near Snowdon), John Adams, John Quincy Adams and James Monroe, as was Jefferson Davis, the only president of the Confederacy during the American Civil War.

George Washington is known to have famously said, "Good Welshmen make good Americans."

On the other side of the world, there were also a handful of Welsh emigrants who were quite influential **in India**.

- Sir William Jones from Anglesey became a judge in the supreme court in Calcutta. He was a pioneer and expert in Oriental Studies and by the end of his life had learned 28 languages.

- Thomas Parry from Welshpool set up his banking and cloth business in Chennai (Madras) in 1788. The Headquarters of the EID Parry company is still there in the central business district of Chennai, near "Parry's Corner", which was named after him.

- Sir George Everest from Crickhowell became Surveyor General of India in the 1820s. The mountain was named in his honour.

The industrial revolution

The many thousands of Welsh skilled workers who emigrated in the 19th century helped develop the economies of the host countries, particularly the USA which became the world's largest economy by the early 20th century. Many rose through the ranks to become mine managers and executives. However, the development of new coalfields and metal works overseas caused a decline in the Welsh steel, copper and tinplate industries as demand for exports fell.

The non-conformist background of many Welsh Americans also led them to support social causes. In the years before the Civil War, Levi Coffin and his wife Catherine, descendants of Welsh Quakers, helped 2,000 slaves escape via the "underground railway". In the later 19th century some Welsh Americans also began to campaign for prohibition, and supported the Sabbath-enforcing Blue Laws.

One of the most remarkable of Welsh American reformers was "Mattie" Hughes Cannon. Born in Llandudno, she emigrated after her parents became Mormons. As the fourth of six wives, at first sight she looks like an unlikely pioneer. However, besides qualifying as a doctor, she also campaigned for votes for women in Utah. In 1896 she became the first female state senator in the USA defeating her own husband in the process.

The twentieth century

During the 20th century the focus for some Welsh American reformers was on improving working conditions and pay. Two made an impact as trade union leaders. John L. Lewis, served as president of the United Mine Workers of America (UMW) from 1920 to 1960. He was the driving force behind the founding of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), which helped organize millions of industrial workers. John Owens emigrated from Clydach Vale to the USA in the 1890s. After losing a leg in a mining accident he occupied himself with union work. He created the USA's first workers health and welfare system.

Welsh Americans have also made an impact on other areas of life during the 20th century:

- Calvin Coolidge, and Richard Nixon became Presidents of the USA.

- Many Welsh actors and singers have enjoyed fame in America e.g. Richard Burton, Anthony Hopkins, Tom Jones and Shirley Bassey.

On the 1990 census, two million Americans reported their ancestry as Welsh.

Welsh emigrants have also had an impact in Australia over the last 100 years or so, particularly in politics. Two prime ministers of Australia were of Welsh descent. Billy Hughes became prime minister in 1915 and led Australia until 1923. He had a reputation for being ruthless and difficult to work with and was a larger than life character. He served for more than 50 years as an MP. During this time he represented six political parties, leading five, outlasting four, and being expelled from three. More recently Julia Gillard (born in Barry) became Australia's first female prime minister between 2010 and 2013.

Wherever they have settled Welsh emigrants have taken the memory of their homeland with them in the form of place names. In the Quaker area of the Welsh Tract many towns still bear Welsh names. Some, such as North Wales, Lower Gwynedd, Lower Merion, Upper Merion, Narberth, Bala Cynwyd, Radnor, and Haverford Township, are named after places in Wales. Others, such as Tredyffrin or Uwchlan, have independent Welsh names. In the slate area of Pennsylvania, USA, the town of Bangor was named by Robert Jones, after his home town. In fact there are at least 14 other Bangors in the USA, another 3 in Australia and 4 more in Canada. In Canada place names give us an idea of the many areas of Wales from which emigrants arrived - Newport and Pontypool (Ontario), Cardiff (Alberta), Bangor (Saskatchewan), Cardigan (Prince Edward Island), Welshpool (New Brunswick) and St Brides (Newfoundland).

Internal Migration

Though many people have migrated to or from Wales from overseas during the last 500 years, far more people have moved internally within the UK. For most of that period Wales has been a nation of outward migration, with the great majority of Welsh emigrants simply crossing the border to find work in England. The one exception to this was the brief period from about 1890 to 1914 when many English workers came to the South Wales valleys to work in the coal industry.

The early modern age

After the conquest of Wales by Edward I in the late 13th century, there had been some migration into England. However, following the victory of Henry Tudor in 1485, the number of Welsh migrants to England increased. Though Henry was proud of his Welsh ancestry he did not go out of his way to favour his Welsh subjects. However, England offered opportunities that were not available in Wales so during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries many Welsh made the move across the border regardless.

- In 1500 the largest town in Wales was Carmarthen, with only 2,000 inhabitants (little more than a glorified village). For ambitious Welshmen nearby English towns, like Shrewsbury and Bristol, had more to offer. London, which by 1600 had 200,000 inhabitants, was a huge draw and about 2·5% of its population was of Welsh origin.

- The only universities were in Oxford and Cambridge. Welshmen wanting careers in the law or the church had to study in England.

- After the Act of Union 1536 Wales was governed in the same way as England and for the first time Wales had its own MPs. London was the centre of political power, so Welshmen who wanted to take part in political life moved to London.

Welsh migrants found it fairly easy to assimilate in England. Unlike other nationalities e.g. Italian and German merchants and the Irish, the Welsh were not counted as "aliens". However, their pronunciation and idiosyncrasies did mark them out and make them an object of humour (as in the caricatures below). A good example is Fluellen in Shakespeare's Henry V, but Shakespeare also says affectionately of this character, "There is much care and valour in this Welshman." The nickname "Taffy" (from Dafydd) came into common use in the 16th century, as did the phrase, "Look you", though it is doubtful it was actually used by the Welsh themselves. The gentle fun that was poked at the Welsh was far less unpleasant than the nasty humour that was directed against later migrant groups like the Irish.

Caricatures from the mid-18th century of Shon-ap-Morgan, "gentleman of Wales", and his wife Unnafred, on their way to London. Both are riding goats. Shon has leeks hanging from his saddle and is carrying a large cheese. In the text it tells us that in her bag Unnafred has two mouse traps "lest the mice should eat the cheese".

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Welsh migrants could be found at all levels of English society. A few reached the highest levels. William Cecil (a descendant of the Seisyllt family from Gwent) became chief advisor to Elizabeth I. His was followed by his son Robert, who unearthed the "Gunpowder Plot" against James I. Elizabeth's principal companion was Blanche Parry of Radnorshire. Also influential at court was John Dee – mathematician, astronomer, astrologer and magician. He advised the queen to create English colonies abroad and is said to have coined the term "British Empire". (However, not all Welsh migrants were met with such favour. In 1584 Edward Jones and Thomas Salisbury were executed for their part in the Babington plot and in 1595 the Jesuit priest, John Penry, was also executed in London.)

Burleigh House in Lincolnshire. It was built in the late 16th century by Sir William Cecil. It shows the power and influence of the Cecil family.

Image by Anthony Masi / CC BY 2.0. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en

In the early 17th century Thomas Myddleton, from Denbigh, became Lord Mayor of London. He was also one of the founders of the East India Company, which became the world's wealthiest company in the 18th century. In 1613 his brother Hugh built the "New River" which brought much-needed fresh water supplies into London.

Other Welsh migrants had an impact on life inside Wales.

- Until the mid-17th, century, as kings tried to keep control of the media, books could only be printed in London, Oxford and Cambridge, and so Welsh scholars had to go to London to get books produced in the Welsh language. The first book printed in Welsh, "Yn y lhyvyr hwnn", was published in London in 1546. In 1588 it was followed by Bishop Morgan's Welsh Bible. As more and more books were printed in Welsh, Welsh people were able to read books in their own language and this helped breathe new life into the language.

- Welshman who had made their fortunes in London also gave money in their wills to open schools in Wales e.g. the lawyer Geoffrey Glyn provided the funds for Friars School in Bangor, and in 1614 William Jones, a haberdasher, left money to build Monmouth Grammar School.

The 18th century London Welsh migrants formed societies, the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion and the Gwyneddogion. These were partly social, enjoying food and drink, but they also helped revitalise Welsh language and culture. The Cymmrodorion did much to preserve Wales' literary tradition, while Iolo Morgannwg, a member of the Gwyneddogion, helped to re-create the eisteddfod.

The industrial revolution

Inward migration

Wales began to industrialise in the late 18th century, and its growth accelerated throughout the 19th. In the early 19th century ironworks in the South Wales valleys, copperworks in the Swansea valley and slate quarries in North Wales were the main employers, but by the late 19th century coal was the dominant industry. By the early 20th century, about one in four Welsh workers was a coal miner.

For much of the 19th century, the majority of migrants to these industrial areas of Wales came from the rural counties of Wales and the everyday language among the workers at the iron and copper furnaces and slate quarries would have been Welsh. There were English speaking migrants, but relatively few. As most of their fellow workers were monoglot Welsh, they tended to learn the language.

In the second half of the 19th century the population of Wales more than doubled (from 1,163,000 in 1851 to 2,421,000 by 1911). The South Wales valleys experienced a huge influx of people drawn there by the expanding coal industry. Between 1851 and 1911 an estimated 366,000 people migrated into the area, 129,000 of them between 1901 and 1911. South Wales was absorbing migrants at a faster rate than anywhere outside the USA. In 1901 in the three most industrialised counties - Clwyd, Gwent and Glamorgan – population growth was 10 times the national average.

During the latter part of the 19th century the level of immigration from England increased, particularly people from the West country. English was heard more frequently in the workplace and on the streets. By the early 20th century in much of industrial South Wales it had begun to replace Welsh in everyday use.

There were also other factors which had an impact on the Welsh language.

- There were Welsh language magazines and newspapers, but they were available only in weekly or monthly editions. Trains delivering London daily papers made it possible for a worker in Wales to find out the latest news as long as he, or she, could read English.

- English was seen as the language of progress. Communities in the Valleys were at the forefront of industrial and social change, not only in Wales but internationally. Welsh began to lag behind English as an effective language in this new world.

- In marriages between Welsh and English speakers, English tended to be the language of the house.

When the 1911 census showed that for the first time for around 2,000 years Welsh was a minority language, spoken by just 43.5% of the population, the news caused hardly a ripple.

Outward migration

Even in the 19th century, with so much work available in Wales, there was still some Welsh migration into England. From the late 18th century people from north west Wales left for Liverpool. Some worked in the docks while others found employment as builders. They often gave Welsh names to the streets they built and lived in e.g. Denbigh Road, Snowdon Lane or Madryn Street (where Ringo Starr was born). By the end of the 19th century around 80,000 people (about a quarter of Liverpool's population) were Welsh.

With so many people of Welsh origin Liverpool was known as "the capital of North Wales". By the end of the century it had 70 Welsh chapels and churches and four National Eisteddfodau were held there. Welshmen also made their name in medicine. In 1830 Evan Thomas moved from Anglesey to Liverpool, where he specialised in treating broken bones. His son, Hugh Owen Thomas, continued his work. He invented the Thomas splint which held a fractured femur in place and reduced the need for amputations. After it was introduced in World War I the death rate from femur fractures fell from 80% to only 20%. Evan's nephew, Robert Jones, became the first lecturer in orthopaedic surgery in Liverpool university, which had a world-wide reputation for its work in orthopaedics.

London also continued to attract Welsh migrants, particularly from rural Cardiganshire and other areas of west Wales. Many of them found work in the growing milk trade. Throughout the 19th century and into the 20th this was a niche which was dominated by the Welsh, much in the same way that Italians later dominated the café trade.

The Welsh milk girl was a common sight on London's streets in the early 19th century. From the mid-century she was replaced by her male Welsh counterpart, with his hand cart.

Milk maid, Gado Images / Alamy Stock Photo

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The twentieth century

After the rapid population growth in the years leading up to World War I, the inter war years witnessed a major reversal - a huge outflow of population. Over 400,000 people left Wales between 1918 and 1939, most of them to find work in England. There were a number of reasons for this:

- Traditional heavy industries, like iron and coal, were in decline. This was partly because of loss of markets during World War I, partly because of foreign competition e.g. from German steel, and partly because of changing technology use e.g. coal being replaced by oil in ships and trains.

- Newer manufacturing industries e.g. motor cars and electrical goods did not need to be built near coalfields. Instead they were established in the south and east of England e.g. Oxford and Slough or the Midlands e.g. Birmingham.

In the years since the end of World War II, internal migration has slowed, though it has not stopped altogether. However, it has changed in nature. In the early 20th century, the South Wales coalfield was a magnet for immigrants from all parts of the United Kingdom, while rural areas were characterised by massive out-migration. By the end of the century the situation was reversed. Well over 80% of the inhabitants of the South Wales valleys were Welsh by birth, whereas in many rural areas, the proportion was below 50%. People from wealthier parts of the UK, particularly southern England, are buying holiday or retirement homes in Wales. In some areas this has led to a shortage of affordable housing for local people. This, combined with the lack of employment prospects in rural Welsh communities, has started a new movement of young people in search of jobs and homes in the towns and cities of Wales and in other parts of the UK. Inward migration has also had an impact on the Welsh language, with many Welsh-speaking areas feeling that the language is under threat in what used to be its heartland.