A REPORT OF WARS IN GLAMORGAN: evidence of damage, wreckage, and heritage

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ABSTRACT

Glamorgan, a historic county of Wales, boasts numerous defensive structures, including castles, hillforts, and fortifications, that reflect its rich heritage and history. In addition, the county also has relics from the Great War and the Second World War, many of which still exist. While these structures were built for self-protection and defense, their meaning and purpose have evolved over time. Then, what role those remaining relics play on society? It is common to accept that the purpose of them was self-protective, providing defence from attack during raids and warfare. However, when conflicts and war are past and people's interest in their history and heritage is progressively increasing through the years, how did Wales manage those remains and what do they mean? Some have argued that maintaining or conserving military remains is dependent on future management by the government and that it demands a deliberate re-framing of history. This article presents evidence of damage, wreckage, and defeat over time caused by war in the historic county of Glamorgan. Through individual case studies and the use of maps and pictures, the text explores the impact of war on Glamorgan's heritage and the importance of preserving these relics for future generations.

Keywords: Welsh Heritage, Glamorgan Wars, Second World War, Cardiff, Swansea.

UM RELATO DE GUERRAS EM GLAMORGAN: evidências de danos, destroços e patrimônio

RESUMO

Glamorgan, um condado histórico do País de Gales, possui inúmeras estruturas defensivas, incluindo castelos, fortificações e fortalezas, que refletem sua rica herança e história. Além disso, o condado também possui relíquias da Guerra Civil Inglesa e da Segunda Guerra Mundial, muitas das quais ainda existem. Embora essas estruturas tenham sido construídas para autodefesa e defesa, seu significado e propósito evoluíram ao longo do tempo. Então, qual papel essas relíquias restantes desempenham na sociedade? É comum aceitar que o objetivo delas era a autodefesa, fornecendo defesa contra-ataques durante incursões e guerras. No entanto, quando conflitos e guerras passam e o interesse das pessoas em sua história e patrimônio aumenta progressivamente ao longo dos anos, como o País de Gales gerenciou esses restos e o que eles significam? Alguns argumentam que a manutenção ou conservação de restos militares depende da gestão futura pelo

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governo e que isso exige uma reorganização deliberada da história. Este artigo apresenta evidências de danos, destroços e derrotas ao longo do tempo causados pela guerra no histórico condado de Glamorgan. Por meio de estudos de caso individuais e do uso de mapas e imagens, o texto explora o impacto da guerra no patrimônio de Glamorgan e a importância de preservar essas relíquias para as gerações futuras.

Palavras-chave: Patrimônio Galês, Guerras em Glamorgan, Segunda Guerra Mundial, Cardiff, Swansea.

UN RELATO DE LAS GUERRAS EN GLAMORGAN: evidencia de daños, restos y patrimonio

RESUMEN

Glamorgan, un condado histórico de Gales, cuenta con numerosas estructuras defensivas, incluyendo castillos, fortificaciones y colinas fortificadas, que reflejan su rica herencia e historia. Además, el condado también tiene reliquias de la Guerra Civil Inglesa y Segunda Guerra Mundial, muchas de las cuales aún existen. Si bien estas estructuras fueron construidas para la autodefensa y la defensa, su significado y propósito han evolucionado con el tiempo. ¿Entonces, qué papel desempeñan estas reliquias restantes en la sociedad? Es común aceptar que su propósito era de autodefensa, proporcionando defensa contra ataques durante incursiones y guerras. Sin embargo, cuando los conflictos y las guerras pasan y el interés de las personas por su historia y patrimonio aumenta progresivamente a lo largo de los años, ¿cómo maneja Gales estos restos y qué significan? Algunos han argumentado que mantener o conservar restos militares depende de una gestión futura por parte del gobierno y que requiere una reorganización deliberada de la historia. Este artículo presenta evidencia de daños, desechos y derrotas a lo largo del tiempo causados por la guerra en el histórico condado de Glamorgan. A través de estudios de casos individuales y el uso de mapas e imágenes, el texto explora el impacto de la guerra en el patrimonio de Glamorgan y la importancia de preservar estas reliquias para las generaciones futuras.

Palabras clave: herencia galesa, guerras de Glamorgan, Segunda Guerra Mundial, Cardiff, Swansea.

1 INTRODUCTION

Glamorgan is a historic county of Wales, limited south and west by the Bristol Channel (Figure 1). It is the most populous (in 1991, population was 1.288.000) and industrialised county in Wales (Newman, 2001). Initially, the County was part of the medieval kingdom of Glywysing until the 10th century. Then, at the end of the 11th centuy, under the Normans, it was changed to the lordship of Glamorgan, with its centre at Cardiff Castle, remaining until the mid of the 16th century. (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017a). In 1536, through the Act of Union with England, it became Glamorganshire. Lately, in the 20th century, it was divided into South, Mid and West Glamorgan (Cannon & Crowcroft, 2015).

Figure 1 – Map of the historic counties of Wales
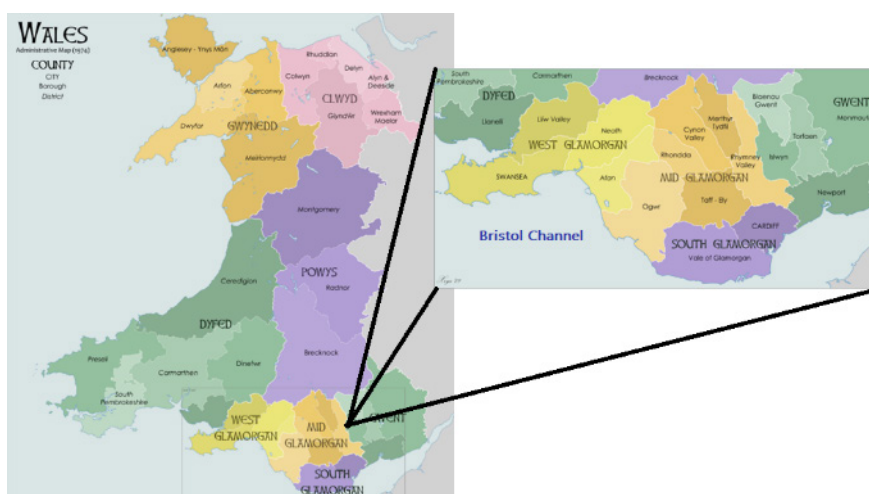
Source: Creative Commons (2012, edited by the author).

The three parts of Glamorgan has its own characteristics: South and Mid, industrial (coal and iron, mainly) and agricultural, and North (the Valleys) and West, scenic beaches, and rocky coasts in Gower Peninsula (Newman, 2001). The county was a war zone between the Normans, the Welsh princes, and the English, having a substantial concentration of castles, hillforts, and fortifications. For instance, Caerphilly Castle was built in opposition to the English domination by Llywelyn Ap Gruffudd, who tried to move the English from Welsh territories. Also, in the 15th century, Owain Glyn Dŵr, a national figure who had important role in Welsh nationalism, during the 19th and 20th centuries, unsuccessfully rebelled against England (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017a, 2017b). After the defeat, Glamorgan relied on its natural resources to become an important part of the Industrial Revolution, in special, the development of Cardiff's and Swansea's waterfront, as leading port for coal exporting, and as a centre of heavy industry and oil refinery, respectively (Newman, 2001).

Therefore, defensive structures are a frequent and persistent theme in Welsh history. Apart from its numerous castles, hillforts and fortifications, Wales has also remained parts from the Great War and the Second World War. Several of them lost or demolished due to various reasons, such as the development of farming activities or clearance schemes between wars, the fact is that many of them still endure (CADW, 2009).

Then, what role those relics play on society? It is common to accept that the purpose of them was self--protective, providing defence from attack during raids and warfare. However, when conflicts and war are past and public interest is progressively increasing through the years, especially as a touristic attraction, how did Wales manage with those remains as heritage and what do they mean? Some have argued that maintaining or conserving military remains is dependent on future management by the government and it demands a deliberate re-framing of history.

Based on those questions, this article aims to show and discuss evidence of damage, wreckage and defeat over time caused by war in the historic county of Glamorgan. As means to achieve it, significant use of maps and pictures will show the extent of damage and, individual case studies will be considered throughout the extent of this article.

Figure 2 - Glamorganshire. Blue dots added by the author of the report.

Source: Eyre and Spottiswoode (1885), modified by the author.

Figure 2 illustrates the main area of Glamorgan with the location of case studies spotted in blue dots on map. From left to right: Swansea, Caerphilly and Cardiff. It is important to note that the real extent of damage and wreckage cannot be pointed in one site, because they affected indirectly and directly the whole country. The case studies are organised in chronological order, which means that, it will be specified or acknowledged whether the record is considered to be damage and wreckage or defeat, damage is taken into consideration in a broad meaning, as to physical or abstract harm (psychologically for example).

2 CAERPHILLY CASTLE AND THE LEANING TOWER

Caerphilly Castle is a medieval fortification located in the centre of the town of Caerphilly (Fig. 3), its settings occupy 30 acres (12 ha) site making it the second largest castle in the United Kingdom (Brown, 2004). Caerphilly was built because of conflicts between the Normans (supported by King of England, Henry III) and the Welsh, its scenario consisted in suffering from frequent attacks and being a battlefield. Furthermore, a memorable element in terms of defensive architecture, due to its colossal gatehouses and its surrounding lake and green field.

Figure 3 - Aerial view of Caerphilly Castle

Source: Cadw (2016).

According to Brown (2004, p.81), Caerphilly Castle is "the most elaborate water defences in all Britain". The castle was built in 1268 by Gilbert de Clare, Anglo-Norman Lord of Glamorgan, with the purpose of conquering Glamorgan and defending against Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, Prince of Wales (BBC, 2010). Llywelyn first attacked it when the castle was still under construction, around 1270, taking it over. However, Gilbert succeeded in building the castle in three years and taking the control back of the fortification (Morris, 2015). Concentric walls were the main scheme of protection, layers of walls within walls (Figures 4 and 6) (Bryn-Y-Ddafad, 2015), and the lakes around the castle were strategic: to frighten invaders, block catapults and archers' range (Fig. 5) (Morris, 2015).

Figure 4 - Digital Model of Caerphilly Castle.
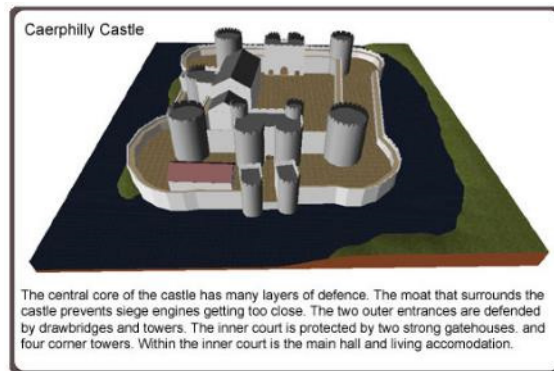

Source: Needham (2016).

Figure 5 – Queen Isabella's attack on Caerphilly Castle. November 2nd, 1326.

Source: Glamorgan Archives (2016).

The enormous design and its concentric defensive plan influenced latterly castles built throughout North Wales, it includes Beaumaris, on the Isle of Anglesey, and Caernarfon, located in north-west Wales, both are UNESCO World Heritage sites, due to their significance (Morris, 2015).

Figure 6 – Ground Plan of Caerphilly Castle.
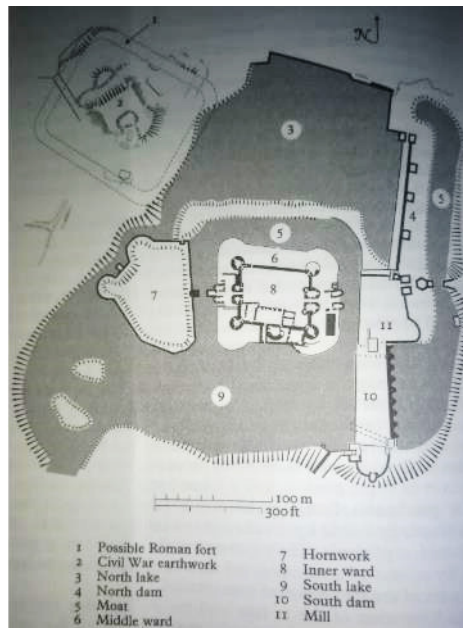
Source: Brown (2004, p.80).

Caerphilly castle continued to be attacked by the Welsh until the 14th century. In 1316, an army of 10.000 men tried to confront it, but failed breaking its defences. Afterwards, as conflicts reduced, the castle faced a period of quietness, which led to disuse, abandon and, consequently, ruins in the 16th and 17th century (Caerphilly Council, 2016; Lancaster, 2016). Currently, one of the elements of the castle that most draws attention is the South-eastern Leaning Tower (Figures 8 and 9). It is known as the Welsh Tower of Pisa [emphasis added] (Fig. 8), and it is said that it is leant at 10 degrees to the vertical, some also believes that it is more leant than the tower of Piza (Bryn-Y-Ddafad, 2015; Morris, 2015).

Figure 7 – Ground Plan of Caerphilly Castle showing which tower was affected.
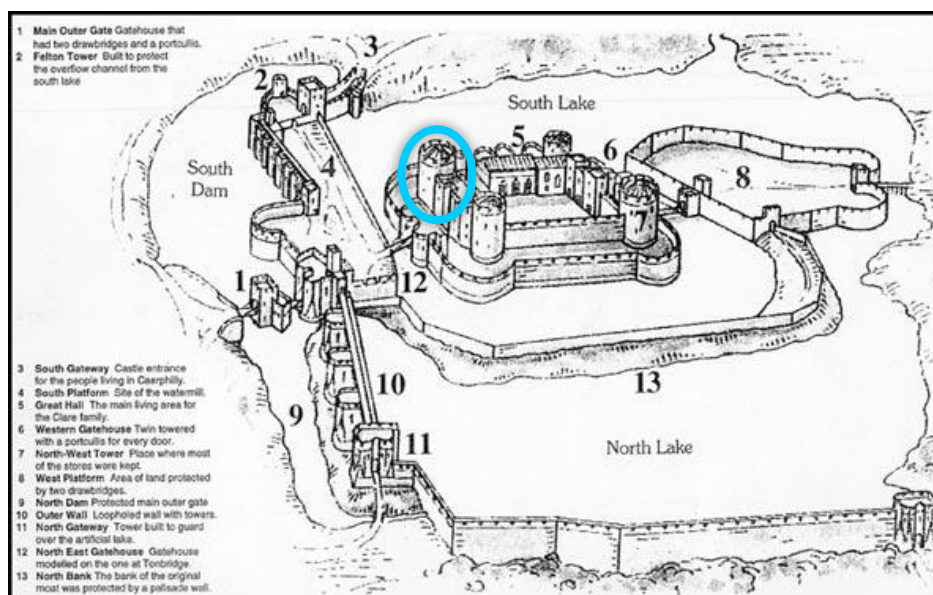
Source: Spartacus Educational Publishers Ltd, 1997-2016.

There are two theories about how it leaned, but neither are certain nor have evidence to support it. The first argues that it was damaged during the English civil war and later, it was slighted. The second theory is that it was due to subsidence.

Figures 8 and 9 – The Leaning Tower and View from the South Dam, respectively.

Source: Morris (2015) and Welsh Government (2017).

In the English Civil War (1642), the castle did not have an active role, a small fort was built and damaged by gunpowder. After the war, Oliver Cromwell commanded that the castle to be slighted to prevent it to be used as fortification afterwards. The supposed damage resulted in the leaning tower, which is still conserved as it is since those days (Lancaster, 2016). Nevertheless, it is uncertain if the castle was truly slighted, or it was result of decay and subsidence. Finally, after a period of abandonment, in the 18th century, the Marquis of Bute began restoration of the castle, later, continued by the government (BBC, 2010).

3 THE FIGHT TO SAVE THE WELSH LANGUAGE

There are several reasons that caused the decline of the Welsh Language, but one is certain, the wars and rebellions that happened throughout Wales history. The Welsh language suffered a heavy toll from revolts against the English domination, the Industrial Revolution and the First and Second World Wars.

Welsh is the oldest language in the United Kingdom aging probably 4.000 years, also one of the pioneers' written languages in Europe. The language emerged in the 6th century and was spoken in great part of Britain, including a city in Scotland, Strathclyde (BBC, 2014a; Welsh Government, 2009). During most of Wales's history and before the Anglo-Norman invasion by Edward I, King of England (1277-1283), Wales was organised into many medieval kingdoms. In the 12th century, Norman King Henry II of England oppressed and entered the kingdoms, annexing territories to England so, by the 13th century, Wales was split between native Welsh areas and the territories of the Anglo-Norman lords (Creative Commons, 2016b; Creative Commons, 2016c).

The country was still independent until 1277-1283, when the King of England defeated Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, the last Prince of Wales. The consequence was an annexation of the other territories not yet conquered by the Normans, to the English crown. This fact led to frequent rebellions against the English until 1536, with the Act of Union, Wales was officially part of England. Consequently, English became the official language. During that time, it was not possible for any Welsh speaker to hold office in Wales without becoming fluent in English (Kroulek, 2012).

The Welsh language was banned in politics, business, and documents - excluding most people from civic life, disregarding their language, law, and culture. Therefore, this act had terrible consequences:

Henceforth no Person or Persons that use the Welsh Speech or Language shall have or enjoy any manner Office or Fees within this Realm of England, Wales, or other the King's Dominion, upon Pain of forfeiting the same Offices or Fees, unless he or they use and exercise the English Speech or Language (Welsh Government, 2009, p.3).

In the 18th century, because of the Industrial Revolution, modern manufacturing and demanding for materials, such as coal, the population moved out from farmlands in North and Mid Wales to the South, Glamorgan area, which had 20% of its inhabitants of coal miners. As the revolution progressed, immigration increased (BBC, 2014b). Most immigrants came from outside Wales, consequently, they entirely ignored the language, since there seemed to be no reason to learn Welsh, as the official language was English since the 1536 Act of Union.

Another influence for the Welsh language to decline was globalization. Newspapers, the radio, and cinema, with news coming from London was in English. Thus, if an ordinary worker wanted to be informed and read the news from the empire, they had to be able to understand English (BBC, 2014b). Unfortunately, it seemed Welsh was an early victim of globalisation.

In 1911, census recognised Welsh as a minority language, spoken by less than half of the population. It continued to decrease during the 20th century until 1942 Welsh Court Act, demanding rights to use the language in court since its prohibition in 1536 Union Act. In 1962, a radio programme - The fate of the language [emphasis added] - endeavoured listeners to resist and continue to use the language in their quotidian lives.

Additionally, in 1977, Radio Cymru emerged and broadcasted all news in Welsh. Those initiatives led to, in the end of the 20th century, an intensification in the number of Welsh speakers. The Government affirmed that "there are 575,730 individuals who speak or use Welsh, some 21% of the total population of Wales. The 2001 census also highlighted that 40.8% of children ages 5 – 15 spoke Welsh" (Welsh Government, 2009).

In 2003, the Welsh Assembly Government's National Plan for a Bilingual Wales was implemented declaring that "A truly bilingual Wales means a country where people may choose to live ... through the medium of either or both Welsh or English, and where the presence of the two languages is a source of pride and strength to all of us." (Welsh Government, 2009.

Fortunately, the language endured, as it continued to be spoken and related to the feeling of Welsh Nationalism, as an element of intangible heritage belonging to the nation's identity.

4 GLAMORGAN AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A brief background of the Welsh economy from mid-18th century until the Great and Second world war is necessary as basis to understand how and why war damaged Glamorgan. As consequence of the Industrial Revolution, Wales changed from a rural country to one of the leading nations in heavy industry. The availability of iron ore and limestone deposits produced vast iron blast furnaces around the coastal areas of the county of Glamorgan. War powered the expansion of coal-mining industry, due to high demand of iron and steel. Consequently, by the end of the 19th century, the county was manufacturing half of the iron exported by Britain (BBC, 2014c). With the development of transport and steam engines, railways enabled coal to expand from the coast to the cities, such as Cardiff and Swansea. According to (Dobbs, 2015):

On the outbreak of war Cardiff was one of the richest trading centres in the world ... The city's wealth came from the coal – often referred to as "black gold" – mined in its surrounding valleys, which was exported around the world. It was in Cardiff, at the Coal Exchange on Mount Stuart Square, that Britain's first million--pound deal was struck.

These cities were industrialised with the improved levels of products exported through the docks, making these transactions highly important to the Welsh economy (Jenkins, 2002; BBC, 2008). Therefore, when the war came, Wales was an attractive target to the enemy because of its ports and mineral richeness.

4.1 THE CARDIFF BLITZ AND GRANGETOWN

Due to its position as one of the largest coal exporters in the United Kingdom, Cardiff's waterfront was highly vulnerable to attack during the Second World War. It was no surprise that the city became a prime target, enduring severe damage and heavy casualties. The city faced continuous bombing, beginning with the first German air attack in July 1940 and continuing throughout the following year during the spring and summer. The worst bombing occurred on January 2nd, 1941, known as the Cardiff Blitz, when over 100 German planes surrounded the city and carried out a devastating attack (Carradice, 2011).

Figure 10 – Map of Cardiff, yellow dots depict the location where raids occurred.
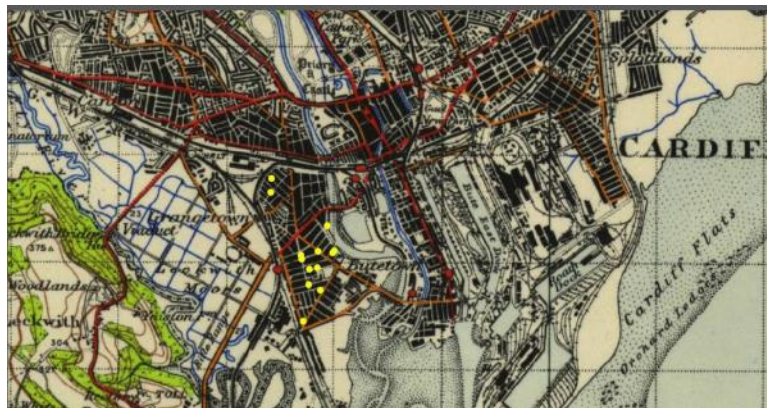

Source: Grangetown Community Concern and webmaster (2016).

Places like Grangetown, Riverside, Llandaff, and Cathays, all of them were severely affected: "33,000 houses were damaged, over 500 demolished and 355 civilians killed" (Johnes, 2014). Amongst the areas hit, Grangetown was one of those that suffered the most damage and was left in wreckages.

Figures 11 and 12 – First Map shows the districts affected and, the second, streets bombed in Grangetown.
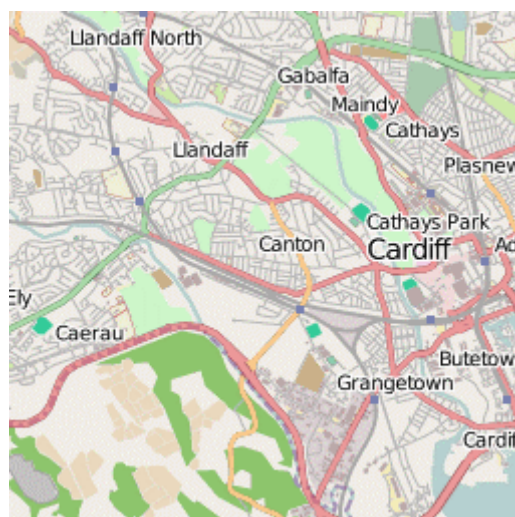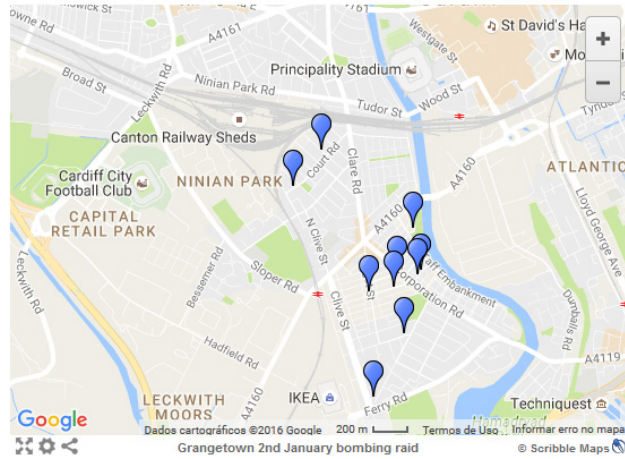
Source: (Creative Commons, 2017) and (Media Wales Ltd 2016), respectively.

The main streets affected were Neville Street (Fig 13), Clive Street, Ferry Road (Figs. 14 and 15), Corporation Road, Holmesdale Street, Blackstone Street, Court Road, Jubilee Street, and Stockland Street (Media Wales Ltd, 2016).

Figure 13 – Air raid damage to Neville St, Grangetown.

Source: Media Wales Ltd (2016)

Figure 13 depicts Ferry Road and the corner of Holmesdale Street, seven were killed at the corner of Ferry Road and Holmesdale Street (Media Wales Ltd, 2016). Figure 15, on the right, shows Ferry Road and the corner of Holmesdale Street in 2016.

Figures 14 and 15 – Air raid damage to Neville St, Grangetown.
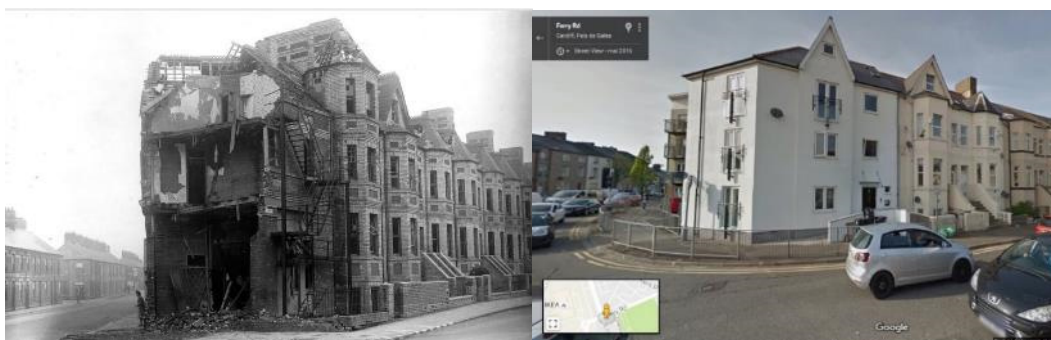
Source: Media Wales Ltd (2016) and Google Maps (2016).

An 8-year-old citizen describes the night of the 2nd of January:

> I lived in Jubilee Street, Grangetown … I was eight years old. We were in the Anderson Shelter which my father had built half submerged in the back garden, with several feet of soil over the top. … It was a bitterly cold January night that my mother, father, brother, and I huddled together in the shelter. … Until that night my mother had been afraid of thunder and lightening, but that night cured her. The following morning after the all-clear siren had sounded, we emerged into the street to discover half of it had disappeared as the result of a land-mine. I had lost most of my little friends that night, some I was later told had sought refuge under the stairs in the misbelief that they would be safe. They possibly thought that it would be warmer there than the freezing cold Anderson Shelter. (CaringLen, 2005).

4.2 THE HOLLYMAN'S BAKERY

The story about Hollyman's Bakery is the unhappiest event at the night of Cardiff Blitz. In Grangetown, on the corner of Stockland Street and Corporation Road, Hollyman Brothers Bakery had a big cellar which they decided to use as shelter for local people, calling neighbours and who else was passing by. They managed to have around 32 people inside, including all their family. Unfortunately, the building took a direct hit by a landmine and people in the cellar were killed (Grangetown Community Concern and Webmaster, 2016).

Figure 16 – Hollyman's bakery and Plaque erected by Grangetown Local History Society

Source: Duffy (2011).

There is not much left of the bakery as the bomb blasted and left an 8ft pile of wreckage. The building now is open as a hardware shop, but it has a plaque on its wall, by the Grangetown Historical Society, as a memorial to remember that night and the kindness of the family for providing shelter for the community (Media Wales Ltd, 2016).

4.3 THE SWANSEA THREE-NIGHT BLITZ

In February 1941, during the 2nd World War, Swansea suffered the heaviest bombing raid in Wales. The city was a strategic target to Hitler and Luftwaffe (German Air force), as it was a major centre of coal exports and metal industry (Dulin, 2016).

Figure 17 – Map showing the location of Swansea.

Source: TravelSmart Ltd: University Guides (2016).

Thus, on the nights of the 19th, 20th and 21st the city centre was halved destroyed: "857 buildings were destroyed, and more than 11,000 properties damaged ... statistics that 230 people were killed and 397 injured ... The extent of the damage was such that ... Swansea was declared an evacuation area and the children of the town were evacuated to the countryside for their safety." (IWA, 2016).

This incident left many of its significant buildings in wreckages, including St Helens Hospital, St Mary's Church, and the Victorian Market on Oxford Street. Surprisingly, some buildings in the city centre endured and had minor damage, such as the Old Swansea Central Police Station (Media Wales Ltd, 2016).
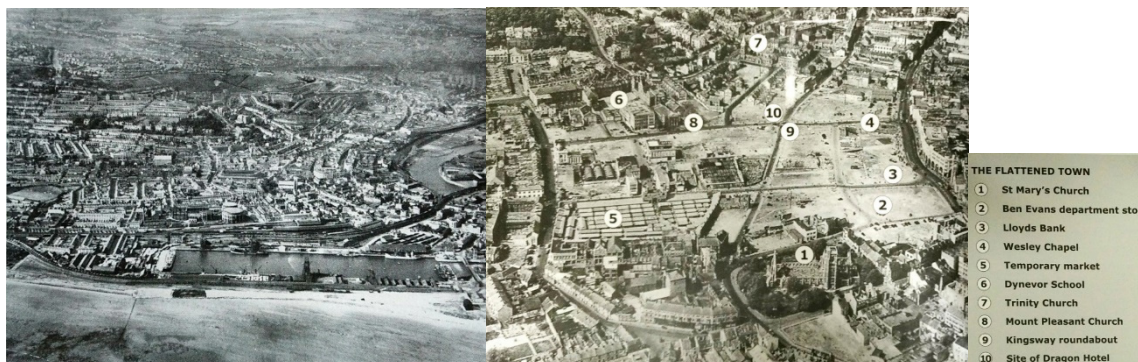
Figures 18 and 19 – On the left, damage on the façade, Old Swansea Central Police Headquarters, Orchard Street.
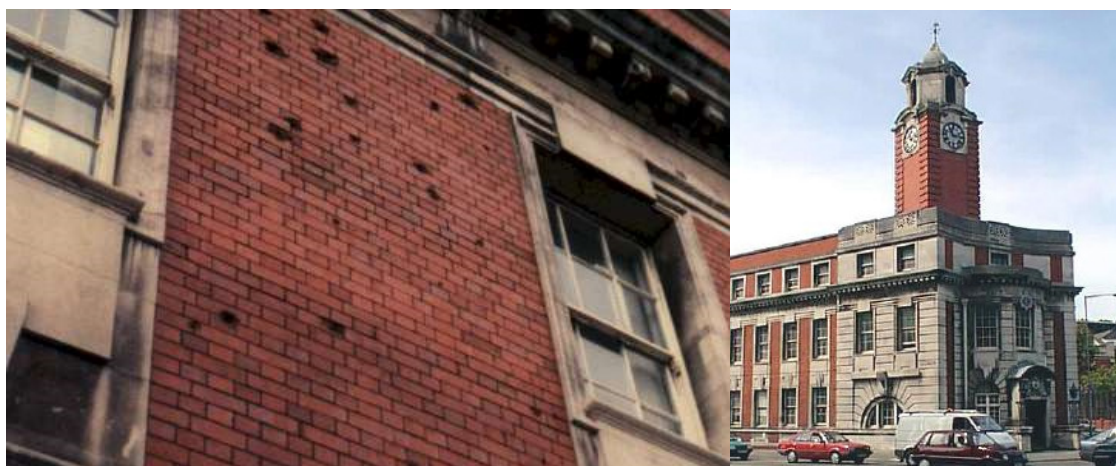
Source: TravelSmart Ltd: University Guides (2016).

Bryan (2012) argues that "Swansea has risen out of the ashes and rubble to become the city it is today: a jewel on the South Wales coast, with the new face, and a bright future".

Figures 20 and 21 – On the left, view of the city centre before the Blitz, on the right side, main buildings affected by the raids.

THE FLATTENED TOWN
1 St Mary's Church
2 Ben Evans department store
3 Lloyds Bank
4 Wesley Chapel
5 Temporary market
6 Dynevor School
7 Trinity Church
8 Mount Pleasant Church
9 Kingsway roundabout
10 Site of Dragon Hotel

Source: Roberts (2011, pp.82-83).

After the war, Swansea was rapidly rebuilt, but some are skeptical concerning quality of post-war architecture:

> … the plans of its town council for a new shopping and commercial centre were subject to endless delays, shortages, and restrictions. The rebuilt town centre, some 20 years later, was a product of its time - functional but with little style, the outcome of inadequate funding (Dulin, 2016).

5 CONCLUSION

The objective of this dossier was to exemplify and discuss evidence of the damage, wreckage, and defeat caused by war within the historic county of Glamorgan. This report covered the period from the 6th century to the year 1268, and from the 16th century to the 18th century, using Caerphilly Castle and the history of the fight to save the Welsh Language as a basis for the Great and Second World War background. It concludes with a discussion of the terrible nights of January 2nd and February 19th, 20th, and 21st, 1941, which included the Cardiff and Grangetown Blitz and the Three-Night-Blitz in Swansea.

Caerphilly Castle is an enormous fortification built in 1268 due to the war between the Welsh and Normans. However, these conflicts lasted until the English Civil War in the 16th century, resulting in damage to the south-east tower, which leaned. It is ambiguous whether the tower was leaned because of war or subsidence. However, considering the reasons why Caerphilly was built in the first place and its background history, it seems feasible to reframe it as damaged by the conflicts: Normans against the Welsh and the English Civil War.

The case studies in this report provided strong evidence that the real extent of damage and defeat caused by all wars over time affected the whole country indirectly and directly. For instance, after the transformation of Wales from a farming country to an industrial economy during the Industrial Revolution, the Welsh language was a victim of a globalized world, with people immigrating from all parts of Britain to work in the furnaces. However, the language endured and continues to be spoken by its native population.

The Cardiff and Swansea Blitz are evidence of the damage and wreckage of Wales's most recent past, and the consequences deeply affect Welsh people and its landscapes. It is important to acknowledge that damage is considered in a broad meaning, encompassing physical and abstract harm. To assemble all evidence,

factors such as narratives and emotional issues were regarded and interpreted as means to re-evaluate history and understand its significance. Truthfully, there is no winning in war, only damage and losses. When one declares victory, it is simply to represent that the war has ended, and what remains are evidence of defeat, death, damage, and ruined buildings.

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