

# The Legend of Gelert

In Wales, long ago, when the trees were still young, in a palace of stone on the banks of the Conwy, lived Llywelyn the Great - Lord of Snowdon, and his wife - Joan - daughter of the King of all England.



When Princess Joan first came from England she brought Prince Llywelyn a royal gift from King John - a magnificent wolf-hound - with legs long and limber, and the strength of all Ireland in its large Irish paws. A dog terrorised the wild wolves for miles around and gently teased the palace cat.

Llywelyn and the hound Gelert became inseparable companions.

Prince Llywelyn often stayed at a hunting lodge in the mountains, and in the autumn they would hunt deer amongst the steep wooded valleys.



One day when Llywelyn was out hunting his faithful hound Gelert went missing, and Llywelyn returned to the lodge alone. He found Gelert there: limping, panting; his jaws dripping; his black coat clotted and matted with blood. And in the far corner of the room the cradle of Llywelyn's baby son was overturned and empty

Prince Llywelyn stood tall and grim. He withdrew his sword from its scabbard and held the sword high and his eyes tightly closed. The blade flashed down, plunging deeply into the treacherous hound that had killed his small boy.



But Gelert's dying cry was answered by the cry of a child. Llywelyn searched and found his son, alive and unharmed, hidden by the cradle. At the side, slain by Gelert in a fierce struggle to protect the baby, was the body of a mighty wolf, its shaggy throat ripped and yawning with the blackest of blood.



The sad prince buried Gelert with honour in a meadow by the River Glaslyn not far from the lodge. He erected two large stones, one at the dog's head and one at its feet, to mark the grave.

Then Llywelyn built a church close by, dedicated to St Mary, as an offering to god for the saving of his son. The village which grew up around the church took its name from Gelert's grave - Bedd Gelert in Welsh. In the long years after Gelert's death Prince Llywelyn, it is said, never smiled again.



\* THE END \*