

The Ghostly and Disturbing History Research Essay

Introduction

"The truth is that monsters are real, and ghosts are real, too. They live inside us, and sometimes they win." (King, 2002)

Welsh History dates back years ago. According to the BBC, **"As a country Wales began Henry VIII's Act of Union in 1536. Before that time, it is believed Wales has been inhabited since 250,000 BC."** (BBC - Wales - History of Wales, no date) With so much history surrounding Wales, there is no doubt the past still here till this day. Following along with my Specialism in Writing, I will be researching about the Ghostly and Disturbing History in Swansea and Neath.

This research will be conducted for the Textual Practice Module. This module is a podcast in which I will talk about various locations around Swansea and Neath. I have based this project off two YouTube channels named *Buzzfeed Unsolved* and *Most Haunted*. I chose these two channels due to the humour BuzzFeed Unsolved project and, the eerie yet interesting setting Most Haunted project.

Margam Castle

As part of this podcast, I plan to talk about various locations. My first being Margam Castle within Neath, Port Talbot. This location has hidden history behind it in which, I plan to address within my Podcast. Alongside with the history behind Margam Castle, I plan to address the ghostly encounters that are rumoured to happen inside the castle.



(Margam Castle, no date)

According to the Haunted Swansea and Beyond book, **“Margam Castle was built in 1830 by Christopher Rice Mansel Talbot. It was built on the site of an Iron Age Settlement.”** (South Wales Paranormal Research, 2012)

The book also states that, **“After completion, the castle was housed to the Talbot Family who lived with a small number of staff. The family resided in the castle until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. Margam Castle was then brought by David Evans Bevan. He found it too much for him carry on so the castle was requisitioned by British and American forces for many different uses.”** (South Wales Paranormal Research, 2012)

The history behind Margam Castle is a key importance. It tells you about the people who lived within the castle and how it became an importance to Neath, Port Talbot today.

Many stories have been told about the ghosts which haunted Margam Castle, one story being the most common about an aggressive ghost called Mia. Other stories contain experiencing visions of a lady by a lake. The most common stories you will hear is about the children that can be heard giggling or little pebbles being thrown at the windows.

Mumbles Pier

The second location I plan to address within my Podcast is Mumbles Pier in Swansea. Similar to my research of Margam Castle, I will focus on the hidden History behind Mumbles Pier and as well as speak of the ghostly encounters that have been told.



(Mumbles Pier, no date)

According to Haunted Swansea and Beyond, **“Mumbles Pier was opened on May 10, 1898. It was designed by W. Sutcliffe Marsh.”** (South Wales Paranormal Research, 2012)

The book also states, **“Mumbles Pier was commissioned as the terminus for the Swansea to Mumbles railway. It was visited by many steelworkers and miners who lived within the area. The pier became popular in the Victorian era, despite it not being highly decorated it was a popular tourist attraction.”** (South Wales Paranormal Research, 2012)

An addition to the information about Mumbles Pier, I have found that according to the Mumbles Pier, **“The Mumbles Pier is one of only six surviving iron piers in Wales. It cost £10,000 to complete and was relatively late in the history of piers.”** (Pier, no date)

Much like Margam Park, Mumbles Pier’s history is also a great importance. It shows us how far the pier before it became what it is today.

So far with Mumbles Pier, I have only found one ghostly encounter in which was mentioned within the Haunted Swansea and Beyond book I have been referencing to. In this shortest version, a man was stood on the pier waiting for his daughter to finish up her late-night job. It was 3AM, he saw a lady in all white walk along the pier in which he thought was strange. The figure soon vanished before his eyes leaving no evidence of anyone being on the pier with him.

The Wellington Bomber Crash site

My third location I plan to address is The Wellington Bomber Crash site. This site lays in Brecon Beacons National Park, which is known for it’s breath-taking mountain walks, however, Brecon Beacons holds its sinister secrets.



(‘Wellington bomber MF509’, 2012)

According to Adventure Britain, **“On the night of 20th November 1944, Wellington MF509 developed trouble in the engines and flew into shower clouds causing heavy layers of ice on the wings. With insufficient power from the port engine the aircraft lost height and crashed into Garreg Goch, Brecon Beacons, killing all six Canadian crew members.”** (*Brecon Beacons Walks Crashed Wellington Bomber - Adventure Britain*, no date)

The information behind The Wellington Bomber Crash Site holds an importance within Wales and us as people. It reminds us about the soldiers who fought for us.

It is told that Remembrance Day services are held at this crash site, a book on the memorial plaque states the six crew members who tragically died in this crash. Many stories are told of this place some explaining an intense feeling of fear and sadness when approaching the crash site, almost as if they feel they are feeling what the crew members felt before they died.

Swansea Town Centre

The last location I plan to address is Swansea Town Centre and its docks. This location is different from the others as the site of Swansea Town Centre doesn't scream much history at you. However, much like most of these locations, secrets are hidden in them all.



(Swansea City Centre — The Waterfront City Centre, no date)

Swansea Town Centre is known for its 'Echoes of Air Raids.' According to Haunted Swansea and Beyond, **"The worst bombing occurred called 'The Three Nights Blitz,' on 19th, 20th and, 21st of February 1941. The raids are told to have lasted a total of thirteen hours and led to 230 deaths and almost 400 casualties, as well as, causing significant damage to Swansea docks and almost complete obliteration of old Swansea town centre."** (South Wales Paranormal Research, 2012)

The History behind Swansea Town Centre is important to tell. In modern days, it is known to be busy with people shopping or late-night parties. Not much or practically no one knows the disaster that struck Old Swansea Town Centre.

Conclusion

I will now talk about what comparisons I have seen within these locations of my choosing as well as what strengths and weaknesses I have encountered during my research.

Starting with comparison, I can see similarities within the locations such as, being involved in the world war and/or World War two. All these locations have a hidden history to them that aren't well known in which was one of the main reasons in choosing them. All these locations are known to be popular tourist attractions or places you walk/drive past daily.

Most of these locations if not all have limited amount of history which is one big cause of concern for my podcast. Due to this lack of history, I decided on adding in ghostly stories or stories told about these locations from people of the public.

Discovering which locations to explore was the hardest part out of this research. This was one reason of why my locations kept changing. With so many areas to explore yet little time, I decided to explore areas that you wouldn't think would have history behind them. This is where I settled with these locations I have researched.

This is one way how I plan to create my Podcast interesting. Another weakness I found when researching was, some locations I wanted to include within my podcast I couldn't add. This was either due to the history being too long such as Craig Yr Nos Castle, or some I found hard to fit into my criteria of my Podcast.

For this podcast, I specifically wanted to choose locations that you wouldn't

see so many documentaries about. Therefore, I am pleased with these locations I have chosen.

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