

## GELERT'S GRAVE

Gelert was Llywelyn the Great's favorite hunting hound, but he was getting old, and not always able to keep up with the pack after a hare or a stag any more. Nevertheless, Llywelyn kept him near, a constant companion as he journeyed from llys to llys to meet his people and see that justice was done throughout his domains. Back at home, among the family, Gelert was equally favoured, being a favorite playmate and companion for Llywelyn's year old son, trusted for his gentleness and good nature.

One of Llywelyn's courts lay near the village of Beddgelert today. Here in the summer, Llywelyn and his wife and Teulu (warband) would sometimes rest for a few days on their progress from llys to llys and enjoy the good hunting the wooded valley offered. On one such occasion, it so happened that Princess Joan, Llywelyn's wife had been called to visit a local priest, on the same day as Llywelyn and his men had planned to go hunting. And so, reluctantly, Llywelyn left his faithful old hound Gelert with a nurse to watch his young son, and galloped off in search of quarry for the banquet table that night.

The hot afternoon wore on to a beautiful, golden evening. The nurse slumbered in a chair beneath the shade of an apple tree as she rocked the sleeping prince in his cradle. She was roused from her slumbers by the cook calling for her help with some errand or other, and thinking nothing of it, left Gelert to guard the sleeping prince. Little did she know that a lone, hungry wolf had been watching nearby, and seeing his chance, slunk his way towards the tree and the baby's cradle.

A little while later, Llywelyn and his men returned with a few fat hares ready for the pot. Gelert came to the courtyard, barking and wagging his tail to greet Llywelyn, but the old hound's mouth was covered in blood. Alarmed, Llywelyn rushed into the nursery to search for his son, finding it empty and the door open to the orchard beyond, he went out to find the little prince's cot upturned and nearby a bloody blanket. Blinded by his grief, Llywelyn thrust his sword into Gelert's flank, but as the great hound let out a dying howl, the little prince let out an alarmed wail from beneath the upturned cradle. Llywelyn found the child safe and unharmed, and hidden nearby, in the shade of the apple tree the dead body of a thin, hungry wolf.