

THE WINNING ENTRIES FOR

The Young Walter Scott Prize 2016

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First published in Great Britain in 2017 by The Young Walter Scott Prize,
Bowhill, Selkirk, Scotland TD7 5ET

www.ywsp.co.uk

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Introduction By Tan Twan Eng,
Winner of The Walter Scott Prize in 2013 with
The Garden Of Evening Mists

My earliest glimpse of History was through the lens of fiction. I'm sure this is true for most people as well. I was seven or eight years old when I first read a children's edition of Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, heavily abridged and generously illustrated. Even then I was vaguely aware that this was different from the books I had been reading, different from fairy tales and stories of talking animals and children having adventures while on camping holidays. It was mesmerizing, as I read it, to know that *Ivanhoe* unfurled against a background of events that had actually taken place, in an actual geographical setting, long ago. Mesmerising, but also unsettling. I felt the echo of time reaching out to me.

Over time, this awareness of History changed the way I read fiction (which in turn altered the way I viewed the world and my place in it). In my teenage years, I travelled against the direction of time's arrow, stopping at various points in the past: the Shogunate court in ancient Japan, the American Civil War, the Wars of the Roses, Pharaonic Egypt, the British Raj and British Malaya, the dynasties of China and Cornwall's mining past; I travelled all the way back to that first clash of civilizations, between the Neanderthals and the Cro-Magnons. And even as History transformed my reading of fiction, my love of reading nourished and enriched my love of History. It is impossible to separate one from the other.

I have often been asked if it's more difficult to write historical fiction than any other form of fiction. When I write a book I never think it's 'historical fiction' I'm working on. I'm more concerned about creating characters that are believable and real. And the setting of any story – even if it takes place as recently as a week ago – has to come across as vividly one of the main characters in the novel. These are issues that every novelist, not only writers of historical fiction, must grapple with.

This anthology you hold in your hands shows us that the subject matters, characters and time periods of stories can be as varied as History itself: the four stories here sweep from 18th Century Cornwall to mid-20th Century Washington D.C. The narrative voices are individual, diverse and utterly convincing; the stories are thrilling and imaginative, moving and thought-provoking.

The writers of these stories understand that History is not just about the larger-than-life people who did important things and changed the world – it is also about the lives of ordinary men and women. They understand that it is often in the footnotes of history that we discover some of the most unforgettable stories, stories that can be worked upon and transformed, through the art of fiction, to illuminate the furthest reaches of the past and the deepest corners of the human heart.

Tan Twan Eng, *May 2017*

**Message from the Duchess of Buccleuch,
founder of the Young Walter Scott Prize and the
Walter Scott Prize for Historical Fiction**

I offer many congratulations to the winners of the Young Walter Scott Prize this year - Sophia Bassi, Gregory Davison, Demelza Mason and Alice Sargent. We look forward to a long association with them. Their stories represent exactly the kind of writing I hoped to encourage when I established the prize. It takes a particular skill to work within the framework of historical facts to create stories as imaginative as these, all set in the past but shedding light on the present and the future.

Thank you to all those who entered the Young Walter Scott Prize in 2016 - we hope that many of you will continue to develop your historical writing skills, independently, through your schools and libraries or as a result of our Imagining History events, and we look forward to enjoying further outstanding entries later this year.

Elizabeth Buccleuch, *May 2017*

THE YOUNG WALTER SCOTT PRIZE

The Young Walter Scott Prize is the UK's only creative writing prize for young people dedicated to historical writing. **The Walter Scott Prize** for authors of published historical fiction has been hugely successful in celebrating the extraordinary range of writing within the genre. So it was logical to offer young writers a similar chance to showcase their understanding of history through creative writing. Entries to the **Young Walter Scott Prize** have proved every bit as inspiring as those for the **Walter Scott Prize**, demonstrating our young people's keen interest in history and the people who lived it.

But the competition is just one part of the **Young Walter Scott Prize**. Running concurrently is the **Imagining History** programme of workshops, which take place in sites of historic interest throughout the UK.

Led by the Director of the **Young Walter Scott Prize**, Alan Caig Wilson, these unique workshops are designed to allow young minds passionate about writing to explore the making of work that brings together historical research, innovative techniques for writing and the sheer enjoyment of discovery. They have taken place in places as varied as Sutton Hoo, the site of the WW2 internment camps on The Isle of Man, Abbotsford (the home of Sir Walter Scott in the Scottish Borders), Drumlanrig Castle and Caerlaverock Castle in the south-west of Scotland, Trinity House in Leith and Blickling Hall and Holkham Hall in East Anglia. Details of the **Imagining History** programme and how to book places are on the website - www.ywsp.co.uk

The Young Walter Scott Prize is named for Sir Walter Scott who, as a young man, was inspired by the stories, hills and people of the Scottish Borders. Among many achievements in his remarkable life, Scott is credited with having invented historical fiction and he wrote what can only be described as the blockbusters of his age. His books continue to be read throughout the world.

The Young Walter Scott Prize is linked to **The Walter Scott Prize** for historical fiction, presented every year at The Borders Book Festival in Melrose. Past winners have included Hilary Mantel for *Wolf Hall*, Andrea Levy for *The Long Song*, Sebastian Barry for *On Canaan's Side*, Tan Twan Eng for *The Garden of Evening Mists*, Robert Harris for *An Officer and a Spy*, John Spurling for *The Ten Thousand Things* and Simon Mawer for *Tightrope*.

Perhaps one day, one of the entrants for **The Young Walter Scott Prize** will be a winner of **The Walter Scott Prize** too.

The Walter Scott Prize and the **Young Walter Scott Prize** are supported by the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch and the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust.

DEMELZA MASON
Wisbech, Cambridgeshire

*Winner of the Young Walter Scott Prize
11 to 15 age-group*

SMUGGLER'S MOON

Demelza Mason

A rustle, a creak and a splash. The glass-still waters of the Crammer broke like a mirror, distorting the reflections beyond recognition and sending a swan flying noisily from its slumber. Once the sound of wet flapping had gone and the screeching cry faded to an echo, a voice could be heard.

“Ach! Zeph, ye’ll be the death o’ us,” it hissed.

Another voice sniggered. “I ’eard tell as the excise men be about tonight. A say, when they come, we give ’em Zeph, and make a swim for it, like the biddie!”

A few more joined in with the sniggering, but the first voice cut them short.

“T’aint funny, Adam, ye harecop. Ye’ve about as much sense a’ the man t’were named after. Let’s hope, boys, there ain’t no apple trees about tonight!”

The voices, which had fallen into a nervous silence whilst their leader spoke, started up again in an apprehensive chorus of chuckles. The harecop, Adam, sank sulkily to the back of the mismatched group, whilst out front the first man, Ancel, stood just at the edge of the tree line, watching the pond through dark and narrowed eyes. Around him it seemed as if half of the county had gathered. Men from every corner of Wiltshire crept closer to the now still pond, all grievances put aside and all differences forgotten.

On the far side of the clearing, Jethro, Larkhill’s farrier, tripped and fell with a muffled curse and was helped roughly to his feet by Corrin, the blacksmith of the Devenzies. Old men, long retired from their professions and used only to the comforts of a warm fire stood in the thickets, holding the ponies steady, and watching the younger men with keen, unbroken gaze, Whether they were there through some long-kindled sense of duty, or purely for the pleasure of reliving their youth, they would not say, and none could tell.

By now the rope so carelessly dropped by Zeph had been retrieved and a chain of men set up against the banks of the lake. In the lake itself, a peculiar light could be seen.

The men at the edge of the pond were slowly pushing rakes under the surface of the water, and turning them round, feeling across the bed of the pond. A look of intent concentration crept across each face, as the surface of the water slowly began to shake and crease.

To Zeph, who had been sent away to keep lookout for his earlier misdemeanours, it seemed as if the lake had suddenly been filled with large brown fish, bloated and round as if stuffed for a lord's table.

They broke the surface with faint pops and were quickly raked into shore by the nearest man.

And now it became clear to Zeph what the shapes were - small oval barrels, sunk earlier during a quick escape from the excise men.

Next to him the shepherd's hound, Jock, watched the scene with interest. Zeph heard a twig snap behind him, and scrambled quickly to his feet, flicking his tangled hair from his eyes and peering wildly into the darkness of the trees. Adam emerged, chuckling, and tossed the boy a barrel. Sighing with relief, Zeph fumbled for the object and caught it. Jock, by far the worst guard of the two, barked once, yawned and settled down to sleep.

"Git doon, mongrel," Adam said, still laughing. "At least 'e can be trusted ta guard the loot, we'out droppin' it."

Zeph glared at him as best he could, knowing full well that it was he who was the mongrel. "At least my laugh ain't so loud, ya'll wake up a' the soldiers from here ta Salisbury," he said fiercely.

Adam ignored him. "Ye know what this is, mongrel?" he asked. "Suppose not, ye bein' foreign an' all."

Zeph sighed. He was from Cornwall, not the Colonies, and resented being called a foreigner. There's nay gratitude left in this world, his mother was wont to tell him, and Zeph was beginning to believe her.

"'Tis brandy from across the sea," Adam explained, with an exaggerated wave of the hand.

"From France?" Zeph held the barrel closer.

“Ay, that’s right.” A smirk spread across Adam’s face. “Give it to ya lady mother, tell ’er it’ll warm her heart, and make ’er spirits e’en hotter!”

He gave a callous laugh and Zeph scowled.

“It’s going to me Pa, Adam, not me Ma,” he said firmly, choosing words over taking a swing at him.

Adam shrugged. “Please ye sen, boy,” he said, “but me Ma always enjoyed a drop o’ mead afore bed.” He stared out across the wide Wiltshire hills, watching the sheep as they grazed lazily, their bodies slumped in drowsiness, their heads inches from the grass they chewed, remembering.

As he watched him, Zeph wondered what it would have been like, growing up in these green hills amongst these docile creatures. He thought about living away from the squalid dirt of a Cornish mine, but only briefly. He loved Cornwall, truly, and the mine was his family’s income. Zeph knew he should be happy with his lot.

Bringing himself back to the present he was aware of Adam’s conspicuousness, standing out from the tree line. “Adam,” he hissed, tugging at his sleeve. “Adam, git back doon! Go back ta the others!”

Adam turned to him idly. “Hm? Oh, ay, the others. I’m goin’, I’m goin’... Cease your yappin, mongrel,” he muttered. The spell was broken and he wandered back into the woods, snapping twigs and cursing as he went.

Adam was a most unlikely smuggler. But then again, Zeph mused, so was he. Silence fell once more but only for a second. As the initial deafening of Adam’s voice faded, the night sounds began to filter in. The soft trickle of a nearby stream as it meandered on its way, the ‘twit’ of the female tawny, answered by the ‘twoo’ of her mate. And always the trees talked quietly across the still, endless expanse of night sky. A peace settled on Zeph, his eyelids felt heavy and only Jock’s soft whines for attention kept him awake.

And then it was broken, shattered by the ripping of leaves from the trees, and the panting, wide-eyed face of the far look-out, sent back through the forest to watch the road.

“Soldiers!” he cried. “There be soldiers comin’, not 50 yards back!”

He dragged Zeph roughly to his feet. “Go, boy! Tell the others! Go!”

Zeph ran wildly through the trees, twigs tearing at his clothes, crashing into the clearing with a cry of “Soldier! Soldier!”

Ancel was the first to react, tossing his barrel into the thickets and calling, “Run boys, just leave it, run!”

Some followed him, dropping their barrels and fleeing. Others stopped to pick them up and staggered off, loot piled high in their arms. Still more stayed, trying desperately to hide the dropped cargo amongst the trees.

It was pure luck that by the time the excise men appeared through the shadows, lanterns in hand, every barrel was out of sight. In one last desperate act of loyalty to their cargo, the remaining men formed a rough semi-circle around the pond, blocking the excise men’s view.

Zeph found himself pushed to the front of the crowd, not having moved for fear since he sounded the alarm.

“You’re out very late, sirs.” The man spoke in clipped, London tones and Zeph could feel his eyes boring into him.

Zeph’s own eyes widened in fright.

“Well, boy, do you speak for these fine gentlemen?”

“I...” stuttered Zeph.

The man was making fun of him, but it felt as though Jock had crawled inside his mouth, forcing down his tongue and making it impossible for him to speak.

“Boy!” The man was growing impatient, peering past the smugglers to try and see into the silvery depths of the pool.

In his mind’s eye, Zeph saw the cramped, disease-ridden prison where they took all smugglers, thieves and common braggarts, saw himself rotting, far away from home, gradually becoming a part of the walls that held him. Utterly mute, he looked around at each face in turn. Nobody spoke. In one last desperate attempt to find inspiration, Zeph looked up at the sky. The inky darkness spread out above him in a great curtain of deep, rich blue. It was a cloudless night and the sky was punctuated with silver stars, like bright pinpricks winking in and out of focus. And straight above him, the great white whale of the sky,

the moon shone, full and round. The harvest moon.

Zeph had always been fascinated by the stars and now, like countless numbers of people before him who are faced with great danger, he found his thoughts wandering.

The moon, 'tis like the blind eyes of Old Albert, he thought. Old Albert, the peddler who mended Ma's shoes. But nay, his eyes could move, and a had 'em fixed on me enough when a was a lad to know. 'Twas like me Ma's cheeses, strained and oppressed and pale as bone... Zeph's eyes widened. Above him the stars twinkled. To his left the trees whispered secrets in the dark, and behind him, in the pond, the swan they'd so rudely disturbed returned to roost with a gentle hiss of feathers.

"'Tis late, sires," Zeph whispered, the hound in his throat rising slowly to stretch, yawn and move away. "For, 'twas the only time we could do it."

The excise man's eyes narrowed. "Do what, boy? Speak up!"

Around him, Zeph felt the men shift subtly to face him.

"To rake it in, sir," he stuttered. He pointed in the moon's direction, scared that at any moment the hound might return to its nap. "Rake in the cheese. Oh ay, it be a fine night for the cheese making, sirs, a fine night." He smiled innocently and around him murmurs of approval could be heard, spreading out through the men like a desperate and disbelieving tidal wave.

The excise man's expression remained hard as he surveyed the men before him. "One or two simpletons I might believe, but all of you? There must be, what, a dozen of you here?"

"Oh nay, not all o' us!"

Zeph watched incredulously as Adam walked forward and laid a firm hand on his shoulder. "Most o' us, we just be 'ere ta make sure the mad 'uns deny fall in!"

And then it seemed the most peculiar thing happened. All the men simultaneously divided themselves into the mad and the sane, without a word having passed their lips. Behind him, Zeph heard somebody laugh hysterically, while another soothed him. Two more joined in,

and one man could be heard crying, "The rakin', the rakin', 'tis ruined, the rakin'!"

And then, from in front, Zeph heard the most beautiful sound that had been uttered all night - the excise men began to laugh. "Why, they be but simple yokels!" one said.

"Each as mad as the next!" another concluded.

Their leader, a captain, smiled and shook his head. "Don't trouble yourselves, boys, we'll be going now, and leave you to your raking in peace. Just be sure to keep a firm grasp on that boy." He addressed Adam with mock concern. "We don't want bodies to be fished out in the morning!" With a final laugh he clicked his heels, turned his horse and led his party back through the woods.

"There be no doubt about it," said Adam as he slumped to the ground behind the retreating horses. "We'll 'ave a good laugh at un... when we git home with our brandy!" He turned and stared up at the boy. "Zephaniah Job," he said, "you be a born trickster. 'Tis a smuggler's moon as shines tonight, I tell ya. 'Tis a Smuggler's Moon..."

And for the first time that night, Zeph laughed.

ALICE SARGENT
Llanwrda, Carmarthenshire

*Winner of the Young Walter Scott Prize
16 to 19 age-group*

THE GREATEST GIFT

Alice Sargent

Meat. Real, fresh, succulent meat. The mere thought of it makes my salivary glands explode with anticipation and my malnourished body feel relieved to be at the end of this monotonous winter diet of sea trout, great salmon and steelhead, with only the occasional strip of salted rhea.

The whole tribe is gathered at the heart of the village, ready to start the journey into the highlands, and I feel a deep sense of satisfaction as I glance around. Two beginnings and no endings all season... I send up a silent prayer of thanks to Kooch.

We respectfully return the camp to Mother Nature before deserting it. Only an extremely shrewd eye could discern the evidence of our recent abode; the slightly unnatural twist to the branches of the scattered peumo trees, which we entwined to insulate our canopies.

As the moon crouches behind the horizon and the sun whispers its arrival, we leave the clearing, our burdens lightened by the promise of rich food and clement weather.

*

We find the white man several suns later. Unmoving, he lies face down in the wet grass.

Rayen, one of the Cacique's daughters, dismounts from her horse before approaching the figure. Tugging at the stiff body, she rolls him onto his back and we survey the dead man with interest.

I have never seen a white human before. The translucent skin looks like it will disintegrate beneath Rayen's fingertips. The perfect network of pink and scarlet facial muscles is painted elaborately across the skull. His glassy eyes are the colour of a cloudy spring stream. His frost-bitten lips have traces of blood drawn on the lilac flesh.

The elders are alarmed. They have not seen white men for many

years, since the last battle between the Tehuelche people and the Argentinian government.

Is this a premonition?

*

Later that day, I see unfamiliar tracks crossing our path. Squatting down, I try to identify the markings.

The footprints seem a lot smaller than that of our kinsmen, so I rule out the possibility of another tribe having moved West before us. They are stamped deep into the damp earth, as though the footwear was much heavier than our own guanaco leather boots.

I beckon to my brother, Lican, who is considered the best tracker in our tribe. He bends down beside me, a puzzled frown creasing his large forehead. Rising, he turns to meet the Cacique's questioning expression.

"I have never seen such traces before, Cacique," Lican says confusedly.

"What?" the Cacique asks, dumbfounded.

"The prints are far too small and deep to be made by our fellow Natives. I know not where they come from," Lican answers anxiously.

The tribespeople start muttering around me, the volume increasing into a clamour of voices.

"It was that white man... An omen- "

"The Argentinian government is going to- "

"We need to- "

"QUIET!" our Cacique bellowed. "We will send out a search, and uncover the hostility. They are intruders to our land, and must answer as such. Lican - how long ago were these prints laid?"

"It's hard to say. Probably about a day," he mutters, the frown deepening further in contemplation, so that his forehead appears folded like that of his quillango.

"Then we shall stay here for the next few sunsets. The horses and children need a rest. In the meantime, you and your brother shall glean

the whereabouts and circumstances of these encroachers,” the Cacique states resolutely, before turning back to his wives.

*

Lican and I leave soon after, once the people have chosen a nearby clearing to use as temporary shelter. We are given two of the freshest horses for the ride, though even they are weary. As we are about to depart, Rayen comes up to us and proffers me a new knife. The craftsmanship is beautiful and I thank her for such a useful gift. To decline would be considered a grave insult to her.

“It is for your safeguarding, Lautaro. To help deliver you home again,” she says flirtatiously. I nod back politely, before bringing my horse’s head up and falling into stride with Lican.

We ride silently, focused upon the tracks we are following. They gradually grow blurred, whether from the flagging sun or fatigued tread, I cannot fathom. The closer I study the footprints, the more anxious I become. There are many, many individuals’ steps here. This group could be twice the size of our own tribe.

A few hours later, we decide to stop for the night. The tracks are barely visible to our strained eyes in the failing light, and our horses have begun to foam at the mouth. Lying against my horse’s steamy body, I shiver in the chill of my thoughts.

*

We set out on foot the following day, so that we can observe the intruders without detection. Not long after sunrise, we find them.

White. People. Men, women, infants - many, many white people!

Knife-sharp cheekbones jut out from rounded skulls, their eyes sunken deep into the pallid sockets. Emaciated men and women stumble between the poorly constructed shelters, wandering apparently aimlessly. An eerie silence hangs over the camp, as though it is not home to the many children huddled outside the huts.

I shoot a look of dismay at Lican, who shakes his head grimly. We skirt around the settlement, gathering as many details as possible to report back to our tribe.

The more I see, the more torn I feel. These are white people, who do

nothing but kill and torture and thieve people they consider themselves superior to. Yet their pain and suffering is evident in the bitter wrinkles that age their faces. These people need help.

The rest of our inspection uncovers a few strange animals, as dejected-looking as their owners. Woolly, tan coats cover skinny bodies that reach up to my knee and skulls with pointy foreheads shift restlessly amongst the mud huts. Their shelters have a strange textured roof to them, probably made from reeds or willow.

Eventually, we retreat from the outskirts of the camp, exhausted by the many new things that have confronted our eyes and minds. Lican and I do not talk as we make our way back to the horses, and ride out, back to our own people.

*

We reach our own clearing before nightfall, our minds still a war of thoughts and emotions. Dismounting from our horses, we ignore the circle of anxious faces surveying us and tend to our exhausted mounts. Respect is the key to survival. Without it, we would lose these magnificent creatures' trust.

Once they have been sponged down, watered and fed, Lican and I follow the Cacique to the centre of the makeshift canopies. We sit in the middle of our people and describe our findings.

A stunned silence meets our words. Nobody expected this. In the backs of our minds, we all suspected a rival tribe has emerged onto our territory. Perhaps the Chopi had come back to wage war again.

This is so, so much worse. White people. Our enemies. Who need our help.

Eventually, it is bold Rayen who speaks first.

“We must go to them and help them. They may be white, but they are just women and children and families too.” Her voice is hesitant.

An elderly woman protests angrily. “These people have killed our ancestors. They do not let us be at peace, in our own lands. How dare you suggest we should help them. Let them starve!”

The crowd of Tehuelche shift restlessly, still forming their individual opinions.

I raise my head and stare harshly at the pensive faces. "Kooch does not teach us to let innocents die! Have the baby and young children insulted and abused our own? Have the women ever set foot in our land before? We cannot tarnish the whole white race with the same brush, as we have rightfully painted those who have caused our people suffering!" My vehemence clearly surprises the people, who are accustomed to my usual subdued attitude.

After much arguing back and forth, it is agreed that a small group of us shall make ourselves known to the intruders. If the Cacique agrees with me, then we will help them as best we can, before moving on ourselves to the highlands.

*

The following sunrise, about twelve of our people set out on horseback, riding hard to the East. I ride between Quidel, one of the youngest warriors, and the Cacique.

Little is said as we ride, as any words that leave our mouths get tossed away on the galloping wind. Only when we near the camp, do we slow our pace. When we can see the outskirts of the white camp, we all raise our voices, singing and chanting the words of our tribe's greeting song. We do not wish to alarm them, or make them feel that we have crept up on them unawares.

No sentry stops us as we ride into the village. A dog slinks away from our snorting horses, not even a howl rising at this occurrence. His ribs stick out painfully, his black tongue lolling from a dirty snout.

We stop our horses when we reach the apparently deserted village. Sliding to the ground, we all cross our arms over our chests and bow slightly to show our unaggressive stance. A young man suddenly appears from the hut we have stopped by, shouting unintelligibly and wielding a small knife. We bow further and raise our hands away from the knives and weapons stuck in our rhea ligament belts.

Eventually the white leader puts his knife away and stands watching us. More faces emerge from the other huts. We see people stumble towards us, swaying with fatigue. One young man falls to the ground, his legs humiliatingly crumbling beneath him. Instantly, Quidel runs forwards and, grabbing under the armpits, he hauls the man so that his back is straight and his legs lie forwards in a much more dignified position.

The Cacique grabs the bags slung over his saddle, and tosses them forwards, at the feet of the man we first saw. Gingerly crouching, the man opens a pouch and pulls out a handful of seeds and nuts. Digging further, he pulls out the guava fruits, which have only just ripened. He regards them suspiciously.

Realising he is unfamiliar with them, the Cacique strides forwards and plucks a guava from his startled hands. Biting into the fruit, he smiles and nods as the juices trickle down his chin. Now knowing that it is safe to eat, the white man shouts “bwyd, bwyd” and the white children rush towards him. Distributing the food amongst them, he turns and inclines his head in sincere gratitude.

Our pact of our friendship is sealed with these few anonymous actions. We later discover that these strangers are not even from South America. They have come from the land across the seas, where they have been persecuted for their language and culture. They call themselves Welsh.

*

Over the next several sunrises, we help teach the Welsh how to survive in this tough region. We show them how to hunt and what animals to expect throughout the seasons. They accompany us on a hunting expedition, and learn how to throw boleadores to capture a fleeing beast. They learn where to shoot their arrows, so that the sacrificed animals are caused the least possible pain. We show them how to use every part of a dead guanaco. The fat to grease our skin and protect it from the blistering sun or stabbing cold; the meat and blood to make various meals with the foods foraged from the bush; the hide for canopies and clothing.

One of the days we catch some of the wild lowland horses and teach them how to ride these feisty spirits.

We give them the greatest gift of all: survival.

Historical background

During the mid-nineteenth century, the first suggestions to start a Welsh colony in South America were proposed by Professor Michael D. Jones, a Welsh nationalist. People had begun to realise that the cultures, lifestyle and language of the Welsh people were becoming gravely endangered in their own native country - a direct result of the prevailing English influence.

After much exploration of the Southern regions, primarily carried out by Captain Love Jones-Parry and Lewis Jones, Patagonia was declared suitable for Welsh colonisation. The Argentinian government permitted them to cultivate the land and have their own “little Wales beyond Wales” in exchange for using the Argentinian flag and acceding to the country’s laws.

On 28th July 1865, a converted tea-clipper (the *Mimosa*) arrived in Patagonia, carrying 153 Welsh settlers. Unfortunately, they discovered that the analogy drawn between the Welsh lowlands and Patagonia was misleading. They landed in an arid, harsh landscape, with little food or drinkable water.

After a long march to the valley of the Chubut River (during which there were both deaths and a birth) the group decided to settle next to the Camwy river. However, in late 1865, their poorly built houses were destroyed by a flash flood, which also washed away their few crops of maize and potatoes.

Following the harsh winter and lack of harvests, an indigenous Native American tribe, the Tehuelche, discovered the depleted group of Welsh settlers half-starving. Despite their fear of the white race, brought about by the brutal treatment of the Argentinian government, this tribe decided to help the Welsh by giving them food and teaching them how to survive in the extreme conditions. Without the Tehuelche, the Welsh settlers are unlikely to have survived, and the idea of a Welsh colony in Patagonia would have probably died with them.

Today however, Patagonia is a region shared by Chile and Argentina, which thrives and still maintains the Welsh language and cultures.

SOPHIA BASSI
Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland

*Runner up in the Young Walter Scott Prize
11 to 15 age-group*

DEAR MOTHER

Sophia Bassi

11th November 1909

Dear Mother,

I am missing you so very much. Edna and Edward are still squabbling, despite what I tell them. I seem to be looking after those mischievous twins more now that you are gone. Father has offered to work a few more hours for a little bit of extra pay. He is too kind, he always tries to be such an optimist, and does people favours. Willow managed to say her first word yesterday – you’ll never guess what it was! VOTE! Well, she actually said “Dote” but I know, and I think she does too, that she meant ‘vote’. And that is all because we talk about you so much at home, Mother.

At school this week, we were writing stories about our families, and of course, I wrote all about you and what you do and where you are right now. When Mrs. Baxter came round to my desk and read over my shoulder she didn’t say anything but she sniffed and turned her head away. I know she was displeased by what I had written, but I cannot believe that she does not support our fight.

Bessy gave me her second copy of her Suffragette newspaper: it is full of meeting dates, notes of protests and the progress that is being made. She is such a good friend to me; I have asked Father, when he finishes work at the pharmacy, if Bessy could visit and we could make our own Suffragette scrapbook. You really have inspired me to go, join them and try and change this unfair world in which we live. In the paper it said that there is a meeting tomorrow at The Albert Hall at half-past four; do you think Bessy and I should go? Mrs. Pankhurst herself is going to be there too. It truly would be marvellous to go and witness what it really is like to see how many people - like myself - are there to stand up for Women’s Rights. I do realise, you have told me so many times, that I am only fourteen years of age but I too need to fight for what is right. And I will not stop until we get what is right for

us women. Tomorrow at school I shall tell Bessy about it, she is sure to come.

So darling Mother, how are you keeping? Bessy's mother told her that it is really horrible in prison: I had no idea that you would have to be force-fed! That is so appalling and inhumane, dear Mother! I feel so sorry and my heart breaks for you. When we get the chance to vote all that will change. Oh I can't bear the thought of you curled up in a cold stone cell at night. Whenever I go out for a walk I always put on my sash and walk as proudly as I can.

I miss you so much, I can't wait for you to come home. Please write back as soon as you find out when you are coming home. Keep standing up for what is right and I will do the same.

I love you so much, and I am so proud of you,

Yours with love,

Cecilia

12th November 1909

Dear Mother,

Bessy and I went to the meeting at The Albert Hall and it was truly marvellous and inspiring. Even though we arrived early so we could stand at the front, there were so many people already there that Bessie and I had to take turns to stand on an upturned crate at the very back. But a kind old lady did let us shuffle to the front a little bit. As we all stood there waiting, a rumble of voices began to pick up, but Bessy and I just stood and looked around at everyone. I had made sure to wear my sash and I had made Bessy a little bracelet out of little ribbons in the Suffragette colours: purple, green, and white.

As soon as Mrs. Pankhurst stepped up, the room fell silent, it was incredible. She started by saying it was wonderful to see that so many people had come. She told us all that there would be a protest, this time next week, from Mr. Dell's Bakery all the way down the street,

ending at Father's Pharmacy. And there would be banners and signs provided, she told us. I have heard that in the last protest, someone almost got arrested for hitting a policeman. (I have not told Father about this meeting, or the protest; I am not sure if I should.) Then she said that tomorrow night she, and a few others, would go to Mr. Curtace's house (remember, the cruel newspaper writer?) when he is asleep, smash his windows and then start a fire in his entry hall! She is so brave, I think. I would never be able to do something like that. At the end everybody clapped as she stepped down.

As Bessy and I were preparing to leave, I went up to Mrs. Pankhurst (Yes, I did that!) and told her all about you, where you were and how you got to be there. She asked how old Bessy and I were and I said fourteen, then (you will not believe this) she offered us the job of handing out newspapers to people on the street! She warned us that we had to stand on the road in case we got arrested for obstruction but we said we did not mind. As we were leaving two ladies were handing out sashes and badges, Bessy took a sash and I took two badges, one for me and one for you when you come home.

I hope you are managing, we are all missing you so much.

Cecilia

24th November 1909

Dear Mother,

How are you? I hope you are sleeping enough, I remember you get really frustrated by the smallest thing when you do not get enough sleep. Edward is learning about Shakespeare at school and anything he says now he will say it in a theatrical way, as though he were on stage. It is really quite hilarious!

On the way to school I heard ladies talking; one of them, in a frightfully ugly bonnet with crimson ribbons, said that everyone knows Suffragettes are unladylike! How dare she? You are a beautiful lady, darling Mother. And her bonnet was truly frightful!

At school, Bessy told me that some members of The House of Commons have said they support us and, would you believe it Mother, they are all men! It is super to think that men as well as women are fighting with us. In the Daily Mail, it said that Marion Wallace Dunlop is continuing her hunger strike in prison. I am so proud of what you are doing and so blessed to have a mother like you.

We are all missing you terribly at home although Ada is trying hard and settling in to her new job as maid. In fact she feels a bit like a sister to me now, although she is still rather shy. Edna made little baby dolls from paper yesterday and is now trying to make them all a house from an empty crate of oranges that Ada gave her from the kitchen.

I am looking forward to the protest and will write to you again soon with all the news.

Your loving daughter, as always,

Cecilia

11th December 1909

Dearest Mother,

I am so sorry not to have written for a week or two but I have been terribly busy, helping with the children who have both had dreadful 'flu. They send you their love, as always and are feeling much better now.

The protest was breath-taking: there were so many people, all coming to march for the same reason. The police were there and there was such a lot of them, not doing very much at all, actually just standing, watching, like a predator, waiting to pounce on its prey. Even the large horses pulling the grand carriages, and the trams that were forced to a halt, seemed to be anticipating something terrible about to happen. The chanting then took over; it grew louder and louder as the crowd waved their placards and shouted 'Votes! Votes! Give women the vote!' It all happened rhythmically, along with the stamping of placards and feet on the shiny cobble-stones.

How I wished you were with us, Mother, but I know you will be home soon. The noise was incredible; the tram-cars stood silently but their passengers were not so quiet; police whistles called for order and silence but the chanting grew even louder; ladies' crinolines crushed together as the mounting crowd swayed under the gas lamps; horses' hooves clattered and chimed on the damp ground. It was exhilarating and I am so proud to have been in a real protest, with Mrs. Pankhurst and so many others.

When we were packing up, outside the pharmacy, I saw Father through the window, but thank the Lord, he did not see me as I could not bear to imagine what he would do if he were to find out what I was doing. Do you think I should tell him? It grieves my heart so, that I should be keeping such a thing from my darling Father, but I know it would wound him more if he knew the truth.

I kept re-living it all in my head as I walked home, watching my warm breath dance in the cold winter air, with my heart pounding in my chest.

On an evening now, Ada helps me practice playing the piano, while Edna, Edward and Willow all try to play Ludo sat around the table in the parlour; the little ones do make me laugh and they are growing up so quickly. I look forward to the evenings now, I have learnt how to put out a gas lamp and every time it comes to bedtime I help Father with his nightly duty.

Ada is trying to cook some of the meals you cook for us but she is a slow learner! I do not worry so much but the twins and Willow are very hard to please. Last night we had semolina and it was truly like the thickest glue I have ever seen! Perhaps I can use it for my scrapbook next time I need to secure a news clipping! Father seems to be very anxious about your trial but he will not tell me when it is. Dear Mummy please know I pray for you every night and I know you will be home with us soon.

With all my love,

Cecilia

19th December 1909

Dearest Mother,

How long these days are without you. Father and the children and I are praying for your safe return.

On the way home from school last night I saw the neighbours' Christmas trees all lit up with candles; we are waiting for you to come home before we buy our tree.

I am terribly worried about Father. Recently he has seemed very down in the dumps and is shutting himself away in his study. He has told Ada and me not to open the door to anyone.

Oh Mummy, the little ones really need you but I am being strong until you return. I saw a placard last week at a march which said, "To ask for freedom for women is not a crime".

We are missing you so. I am so proud of you. I love you.

Yours forever,

Cecilia

20th Dec. 1909

Mrs. Jemima Cressida Campbell of 27 Somerset Gardens, Highgate, London N6, charged with disorderly behaviour and the destruction of property, died suddenly, of unknown causes, in Holloway Prison on 20th December 1909.

She leaves a husband Edward, daughter Cecilia aged 14 years, twins Edward and Edna 6 and Willow 2.

GREGORY DAVISON
Sutton, Surrey

*Runner up in the Young Walter Scott Prize
16 to 19 age-group*

MARCHING FOR THE DREAM

Gregory Davison

“I have a dream.”

Finally, the time was here. We stood, hundreds of thousands of men, black and white, before the statue of the man who moved for freedom, and we were winning that very freedom he spoke of and fought a war for. I stood, one black face, among an ocean of many. I was part of the flock, a flock of black and white, a flock with no master but the Almighty himself. And the flock was silent for the words of Martin Luther King Jr.

The water in the pool shimmered with the reflection of thousands of people, making the crowd seem even larger under the bright sun. The moment was powerful beyond what was within reach of the human mind to fabricate. The tall white pillars stood tall and strong as ever, but even more so under the gleaming of the sun.

The hero himself stood high above us and his voice showered upon us like the seasons rain. He stood on the high podium in front of one of our greatest monuments with several microphones in front of him to project his voice to all of us, so that every man here could hear what he spoke. Nobody looked at the great monuments we were surrounded by; all eyes looked at that man to hear his powerful words. He was so passionate and rightly so, because he knew he was fighting for what is right. America was waking up. There were so many of us, but he captivated us all; we were mesmerised by his wonderful dream, his beautiful, peaceful dream.

The dream was beautiful and on any other day, I would be callously reminded of how far we were yet to come, that it was still just a dream. But today, of all days, the dream was real and instead I was reminded of how far we had come already. I remembered how proud I felt when my daughter started at her school, as a black girl in a previously white school.

I was so proud of her, so proud to be her father, because my daughter could go to school with white boys and girls. They were cruel, but to their cruelty she showed only kindness and bravery. She wasn't just a girl, she was a woman. She wasn't just my princess, she was my hero. She wasn't just my daughter; she was my rock.

One day, when she went to school, she was attacked by a gang of white boys. They pelted her with rocks and rubble and one struck her down with a stone from a distance, all while jeering with ignorant words and cruelty in their hearts. She ran home to me with tears in her eyes. How it hurt to see those dreadful tears! But I cleaned her up, washed and bandaged her cuts with the utmost care. I carefully stitched up her clothes so that they were perfect for my little girl.

She went to school the next day, happy and smiling despite the cruelty she had and would face. I waved her onto the bus with tears of joy pooling in my eyes, just as pride pooled in my heart. "She's gonna be brilliant. The world isn't ready for such a girl," I thought then.

"I have a dream..."

Tears welled up in my eyes; the crowd cheered. The moment was precious like the rarest of jewels, but bitter for the memories it dragged up from the shadiest and most horrifying pits of my being. The memories weren't bad ones; they were the best memories I had, but as with all happy memories a melancholy hung over them like the black clouds of a distant but fast approaching thunderstorm. Today of all days, those black clouds were closer than ever.

My daughter's mother sat on her left and I, her father, on her right. We laughed to hear her laugh, and at all the absurd questions that only little children ask aloud. She inquired into everything she saw and her trail of thought jumped canyons, spurning reason and looking only for answers. "Why do we eat, Daddy?" "Why are dogs so different?" Sometimes we could only laugh and try to give a reasonable explanation, both fulfilling and understandable. "Why can't we have a dog?" "What was it like before you were born?" Some made no sense at all. But some made all the sense in the world. "Why are some people black and some people white?" "Why aren't we allowed in the nice rooms?"

“I have a dream...”

I found myself crying again. The man next to me was a small, white man with a smile on his face, cheering at everything. He turned to me and asked, “Are you alright? I know, it’s really emotional isn’t it?”

I wiped away the tears and replied, “Yes, yes it is.”

“That man is a hero. It’s about time we started treating everyone right.” Then he went back to hanging on his every word, satisfied that I was alright.

The last time I had done something like this was last year in Birmingham, Alabama. We were all gathered together, stern and powerful in a massive crowd of proud black faces, black men and women wearing their colour with pride to the dismay of many onlookers. I was alone then, as I am now: I wouldn’t want my family to have seen what happened next. The police arrived, and for a black man the police were almost always bad. They hated that we could stand; they hated that we could approach them; they hated that we could feel safe, so they lashed out with self-condemning brutality. They rushed at us with batons held high and they ruthlessly beat innocent men to their knees. I saw the carnage and for a moment thought myself safe, but a crippling pain shot through my body as if a wild dog dug its massive canine teeth into the flesh of my arm. I fell to my knees as the massive hound tore and chewed on my arm. It was a terrible day and I was in hospital for days, not that I was treated well there either. Today was much better, but somehow worse.

“I have a dream...”

“They are empty words,” I thought. “We all have dreams, but they don’t become reality.” When I wasn’t being mistreated, I was made to feel guilty. I wasn’t crying anymore - I was enraged, but it didn’t show. This was all for nothing. Today, of all days, I realised that none of it mattered, no matter what they did; nothing could return what they had already taken.

One day, my daughter didn't come home. She never came home again. She never saw me again. I saw her bruised and pained face, lying in the grips of a sleep from which she would never wake. They laughed. Those white boys had the strength to laugh at their handiwork. We could never prove it was them, but I knew it. They had become more and more brutal ever since that first day. Perhaps her smiling charm offended them. Who knows what it takes to drive young men to murder. Surely it couldn't be merely the colour of their skin?

For further information about any aspect of the work of
The Young Walter Scott Prize, please contact The Administrator,
Young Walter Scott Prize, Bowhill, Selkirk, TD7 5ET
or info@youngwalterscottprize.co.uk

The Young Walter Scott Prize

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