

MY FATHER, MY HERO

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**Bachelor of Arts with First Class Honours
in History**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the life and times of my Welsh father who was born in 1904 and died in 1976. It is a personal story which sits within the contemporary public history of both Great Britain and Europe.

Supported by primary sources and secondary scholarship the work is presented in the style of a memoir which uses creative writing techniques.

The use of this method is supported by an analysis of approaches to writing history posited by renowned historians and the work of contemporary writers of creative academic non-fiction. Note is also made of criticisms of memory recall and attitudes towards speculation.

This dissertation, supported by extensive and detailed research provides a solid foundation for understanding the constraints, boundaries and opportunities my father had within the broader context of significant twentieth- century themes such as class, attitudes towards marriage and divorce, World War II and post-war reconstruction. Central to this history is the process of discovering a Welsh family, their early twentieth- century working-class living conditions, education and career opportunities.

Conditions in pre-war Britain and the lead-up to the declaration of war on Germany in 1939 are explained before unexpected ways of contributing to the war effort are explored. Revelation of austere conditions in post war Britain, the impact of the Beveridge Report and its effect on education precede the conclusions which reflect on the benefits of writing a personal history.

Finally note is made of the influence of the historical process and techniques involved.

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