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| |  | | --- | | [**Home**](http://www.welsh-costume.co.uk/index.php) **|** [**High Hats**](http://www.welsh-costume.co.uk/welshhighhat.php) **|** [**Costume Links**](http://www.welsh-costume.co.uk/costumelinks.php) **|** [**Woollen Industry**](http://www.welsh-costume.co.uk/woollenindustry.php) **|** [**Woollen Industry Links**](http://www.welsh-costume.co.uk/woollenindustrylinks.php) | | | |
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| |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | Welcome to Coast and Country's web site about our National Costume and the Industry behind it | | | | | | |  |  |  | Our current concept of Welsh National Costume is largely the result of one womans efforts to preserve and popularise a sense of Welsh national identity.  Augusta Hall, later [Lady Llanover](http://web.ukonline.co.uk/gwenynen.gwent/Home.htm) (her husband\* was elevated to the Peerage late in life) was what nowadays would be called an activist  She wanted her home  Llanover House  to become known for the promotion of Welsh language and culture.  Her influence lives on, in that her ideas of what an "idealised" Welsh costume should be, have now become the basis for a recognised form of our [National Costume](http://web.ukonline.co.uk/gwenynen.gwent/gwenllian.htm).  Mrs Stevens of the Museum of Welsh life says  *The costume regarded as national dress is based on clothing worn by Welsh countrywomen during the early nineteenth century, namely a striped flannel petticoat, worn under a flannel open-fronted bedgown, with an apron, shawl and kerchief or cap"*  ***\*****She married Benjamin Hall, who as Commissioner for Works at the Houses of Parliament gave his name to the bell "Big Ben"*  Girl in "traditonal" Welsh National costume    What we do know is that she did a lot of research into the subject and commissioned Cambrian Costumes by Cadwaldr and the illustrations (see drawing) in this book of water colours influenced other artists to do likewise.  Some even argue that she completely invented the current concept of Welsh National clothing, with no accurate basis:  *Lady Llanover ruthlessly inflicted her new fad on all and sundry (H.M.Vaughan  South Wales Squires)*  There is no denying that she was a talented "publicist" - she made her estate workers, tenants and guests wear a "uniform" based on her ideas of national dress. Not universally popular - for her maids changed out of them at the first [opportunity](http://web.ukonline.co.uk/gwenynen.gwent/costume.htm) for a more "fashionable dress when they left the estate!  Welsh girl in the costume of part of Gwent (drawing by Cadwaldr )  So what really was the National Costume at that time?  Dr. Iorwerth C. Peate. (Translated from the Welsh by Helen Fordor)  *"According to common belief, the Welsh costume comprises a high hat, petticoat, bedgown, apron and shawl, the whole of local manufacture. The bedgown was a sort of long coat, forming a waist, and closing over the bust, and a long tail which folded behind over the petticoat, with the apron hiding the petticoat front."*  ***"It is necessary to understand that there was nothing especially Welsh in this dress. The same was as familiar throughout England"***  Mrs Stevens of the Museum of Welsh life says:  *the popular image of Welsh National dress of a woman in red cloak and black hat is one which has developed as a result of various influences which arose in the nineteeth century*  Mrs Stevens goes on to make the point that wearing a costume enabled people to declare their national identity in a period when it was under threat.  To fair to Lady Llanover, one of her main aims was to popularise and support the native woollen industry and she built a woolen mill in the grounds of Llanover House.  There was also the beginnings of mass tourism and the concept of quaint as a tourist "trap" is not a modern one! Several researchers have suggested that this was the main driver for the popularisation of a National Costume.  (engraving) An early print of various Welsh costumes    ***Acknowledgements:*** *Helen Fordor's* [*Lady Llanofer - "The Bee of Gwent"*](http://web.ukonline.co.uk/gwenynen.gwent/Home.htm) *has been an absolutely invaluable resource. If you are interested in Welsh Costume you should read her fascinating account*  [Web Site Design by Webs Wonder](http://www.webswonder.co.uk/) - [Content by Paul Winter 8/12/06](mailto:paul.winter@lycos.com) |  | |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  |  |  | |  | [Holiday cottage in Pembrokeshire, West Wales great for family holidays. Experience traditional Welsh costume including the distinctive Welsh hat whilst enjoying a vacation in Pembrokeshire](http://www.welsh-cottages.co.uk/?propref=611)  [Celtic holidays in West Wales for researching the history of the Celts, churches, monuments and castles. Self catering cottages in West Wales make wonderful holiday accommodation. Celtic country, Celtic history and Celtic clothing can all be enjoyed while staying in a Welsh self catering cottage.](http://www.welsh-cottages.co.uk/?propref=831)  [Visit Wales and enjoy a self catering holiday cottage while exploring the castles and history. Pembrokeshire, Wales, a summer holiday location not to be missed. Holiday in Pembrokeshire enjoy a self catering cottage, a perfect destination for a walking holiday.](http://www.welsh-cottages.co.uk/?propref=841) |  | |  |  |  | |  | |

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