# Y Ddolen

Linking the Puget Sound Welsh Community

Hydref, Tachwedd, Rhagfyr 2026 Volume 44, Issue 4 October, November, December 2026


## We'll Keep A Welcome For You

### Come gather with your PSWA friends for the Puget Sound Welsh Association Holiday Party & Annual General Meeting *(RSVP for address in Ballard)*

### Sunday, November 8 • 1:00–4:00 PM

What better way to spend a November afternoon than with good company, Welsh cheer, and perhaps even a visit from the **Mari Lwyd**?

Join your fellow PSWA members for our annual **Holiday Party & Annual General Meeting** – an afternoon to eat, visit, celebrate the year behind us, and look ahead to the year to come. And, of course, there will be **wassail** to help set the mood!

The AGM will be part of the afternoon, giving us a chance to take care of a little PSWA business, including the election of Board members. But the afternoon is about much more than the AGM. It's a chance to reconnect with friends, welcome new faces, and celebrate our Welsh community.

This is a **potluck**, so please bring a dish to share and your own drinks. **Water, tea, coffee, and wassail will be provided.**

**RSVP: Email pswa@pugetsoundwelsh.org for address and directions**.

**Come for the food. Stay for the fellowship. And keep an eye out for the Mari Lwyd!**








## President's Letter

Dear PSWA members and friends,

I am very pleased to recognize that PSWA has completed a busy and productive summer season! The chill of autumn is in the air and the first of very welcome rains have arrived as I write this. I fondly recall highlights of our recent events:

As reported in our last issue, on June 6th we celebrated several events with the Welsh in Black Diamond, including America's 250th Anniversary, the Black Diamond Historical Society's 50th Anniversary, their 33rd Annual Welsh Day, and a ribbon cutting for a brand-new mine! We were accompanied by multiple rain squalls – I counted at least six! And I am pleased to say that our noble volunteers showed our banner, staffed our booth despite the heavy rain, and marched in the parade nonetheless!

During July, many of our local choristers joined the North American Welsh Choir, directed by Mari Morgan, on a successful concert tour of British Columbia. We thank local PNW singers/supporters – Ellen, Joel, Mary Lynne, Margie, Rebecca, Andrea, Shari, Jane, and Tammy – for representing our region so well - *Diolch o Galon*!

In August, we enjoyed our Annual Picnic, graciously hosted by Board members Jill Moore and Chris Mooreddrall – *Diolch yn fawr*! As August flowed into September, Board members Mary Lynne Evans, Ellen Webber, and Gerri Parry traveled to NAFOW in Massachusetts, representing the PNW most ably.

In late September, others helped with the 88th Annual Gymanfa Ganu at Bryn Seion Welsh Church in Beavercreek, Oregon.

Throughout the summer, our Board was actively involved in planning and supporting these activities. Please consider volunteering at an event or serving on the Board. We need your ideas and active participation!

**This year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on November 8 is particularly important, and we hope you will make plans to attend.** There will be food, fun, and a short business meeting during which members will hear about the state of the organization. Members will vote on nominees for an open Board position, as well as four Board positions up for re-election in 2026. We will also discuss and vote on proposed changes to the PSWA By-Laws. **With several important votes taking place, your participation can make a real difference. Your voice matters!**

We are also looking ahead to future Virtual Pub events and social gatherings in the South Sound area. There is much more to come! Email PSWA@PugetSoundWelsh.org to share your ideas and get involved.

**Pob Hwyl!**
Joel Ware IV, President

## *The Drunken Daffodil* Virtual Pub: Spooky Welsh Myths & Legends

*-Gwen Weinert*

We all enjoyed the last Drunken Daffodil get together where we told tales about Welsh Coal Miners and Slate Quarrymen in Wales and America.

We will hold another Virtual Pub on **Sunday, November 1st 2:00-4:00 P.M**. and tell spooky tales together. Please join us to listen or tell a scary Welsh story, legend, or myth. Bring your own bottle and enjoy fellowship and spine-tingling Welsh folklore. Karyn Davies has provided some research suggestions to help you find a tale to share, which should be about **six minutes in length**. Click here for the research ideas and links.



**A Zoom invitation will be sent about a week before the event.** If you are not already on our list of interested participants, please email PSWA@PugetSoundWelsh.org to receive the invitation. Mary Lynne Evans and Gwen Weinert are busy working on a schedule of virtual pub meets for 2027. Please contact us if you would like to help host or have ideas for future topics.

## Your Voice Matters: PSWA AGM November 8th

*By Karyn Davies*

PSWA's Annual General Meeting is more than a short business meeting tucked into our annual holiday gathering. It is the time each year when members have an opportunity to hear about the state of the organization, ask questions, and participate in important decisions about PSWA's future.

**This year, your participation is especially important.**

At the AGM, members will vote on a nominee to fill **the remaining two years of an open Board term**. After many years of service, including time as PSWA secretary, Bob Matthews is stepping down from the Board. **We sincerely appreciate Bob's dedication and contributions to PSWA over the years. Bob will be missed!**

Members will also vote on **four Board positions coming up for re-election in 2026** (Karyn Davies, Mary Lynne Evans, Gerri Parry, and Ellen Webber) and will also have the opportunity to discuss and vote on **proposed changes to the PSWA By-Laws**.




These decisions are made by the members who attend the AGM, making your presence and your vote important. In years past, only a small number of members beyond the Board have attended the AGM. We would love to see more of our membership take part this year.

**This is your opportunity as a PSWA member to hear what is happening, ask questions, and have a say in the decisions that shape our organization. We hope you'll join us.**

The AGM is part of our annual Holiday Party & Potluck, so come for the business, stay for the food and fellowship, and a little Welsh cheer!

**Sunday, November 8 • 1:00–4:00 PM**
RSVP to **PSWA@PugetSoundWelsh.org** for the address and directions.

## *Keep Welsh Culture Growing*

As the year comes to a close, it is a good time to think about supporting the organizations and causes that help keep our communities strong. For those of us who value Welsh language, music, history, traditions, and fellowship, a year-end gift to the Puget Sound Welsh Association can help us continue sharing and preserving that heritage throughout the coming year.

Did you know that your employer may match charitable donations? Many companies have matching-gift programs that can double the impact of your contribution. Check with your employer's human resources department or charitable-giving program to see whether your gift to PSWA qualifies.

Every gift, large or small, helps support PSWA's programs, newsletter, activities, and efforts to connect our regional Welsh community.

If PSWA is one of the organizations you would like to support this year, please visit the Puget Sound Welsh Association website and click the Donate button on the right side of the page.

Thank you for helping keep our Welsh heritage alive and growing in the Puget Sound community!

## South Sound Night Out of Hŵyl

**Saturday, October 24th 5:30PM** - Black Bear Diner 10115 South Tacoma Way, Lakewood, WA 98499
Bob Matthews has arranged a meetup for anyone interested in dinner, cobbler, or coffee. If you would like to join us, please let us know by contacting southsound@pugetsoundwelsh.org to RSVP. All welcome!




Check Facebook Group Page regularly for future Nights Out:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/31450906189



## Meet Your Board – Gerri Baker Parry

*By Gwen Weinert*

Gerri Baker Parry's Welsh heritage comes from her Welsh great-great-great-grandfather, Nelson McKinley Roberts, the first generation born in Tennessee. His father, William Roberts, is listed as born in England. He must have instilled a sense of Welshness strong enough to carry through generations, as this lineage was passed down to Gerri as a child: "You are English, Irish, Cornish, Scottish, Polish, Luxemburgish, Pennsylvania Dutch (Swiss) and Welsh." So why did she choose Welsh as her passion? ***"I think it found me."***

After years of being told she looked like her Welsh grandmother, Gerri heard Welsh being sung and spoken for the first time in the Bette Davis film *Where the Corn Is Green*. She was inspired to learn more about this faraway place.

When her children were young, she found an old copy of *Teach Yourself Welsh* in the Oregon State Library catalog and ordered it by mail many times until it was eventually misfiled and lost. In the mid-1980s, she read a small article in *Sunset* magazine about Bryn Seion Welsh Church and attended her first Gymanfa Ganu.

As a single mother of two teenagers, Gerri had little time or money for hobbies and worked at whatever jobs came along—from school lunch lady to landscaper, greenhouse worker, tropical plant shop employee, wallpaper hanger, and house cleaner. She also sold plants at Portland Saturday Market.

For many years, Gerri worked as a personal assistant to Joan, Herbert Hoover's granddaughter, a reclusive artist with many stories of a much bigger world. They became very close. Joan once gave Gerri a large water jug to save pennies so that one day she could travel to Wales. She planted a seed that dreams could become reality.

Gerri later learned videography and editing while volunteering at a local cable access station and created a short documentary of the 1991 Bryn Seion Gymanfa. She soon joined the Bryn Seion Welsh learners' group. With both children off to college, she had time to chauffeur a group of Bryn Seion ladies to Welsh events in Seattle, Vancouver and Victoria, B.C. Gerri and her mother, who lived next door, also hosted several Welsh musicians traveling through the area, some of whom remain friends today.

As president of Portland Cambrian Social Society, Gerri attended her first National Gymanfa Ganu in Bellevue, WA in 1994. There she met organizers Alan Upshall and her future husband, Brian Parry. It was there that plans were hatched with friends to travel to Wales—and Gerri discovered there were just enough pennies in the water jug for the plane ticket.

Gerri became involved with the Welsh Associations of the Pacific Northwest (WAPNW), which brought together Welsh organizations from Oregon, Idaho, Washington and British Columbia to organize regional Welsh Weekends. She learned to use a friend's computer to compile news and events from Pacific Northwest Welsh societies into a regional newsletter. At the 2000 Boise Welsh Weekend, attendees came from Malad, Idaho, and soon afterward the Malad Valley Welsh Festival was born and continues today.

Gerri and Brian married at Bryn Seion Welsh Church in 1998, when Gerri was president of the Portland Cambrian Social Society and Brian was president of the Puget Sound Welsh Association. After moving to Seattle, Gerri volunteered with the Museum of History and Industry's oral history projects and later worked for 11 years as a videographer and curator of its audio/video media archive.

In 2000, Gerri joined the National Gymanfa Ganu Association board. She was part of the team that transformed the "National" into the North American Festival of Wales (NAFOW) in 2003. That same year, she worked with Catrin Brace of the Welsh Government to introduce *Cinema from Wales* to the NAFOW program, which continues today.

Gerri has served on NAFOW planning committees since 2001 and continues to support the festival and the wider Welsh community. She learned to manage and update the NAFOW website and has continued developing her technology skills to meet the needs of the WNAA board and NAFOW. She now serves as WNAA Systems Coordinator and travels each year to the Welsh National Eisteddfod to help promote North American Welsh organizations and events. She says volunteering has opened many doors.

Today, Gerri and Brian live in her grandparents' refurbished farmhouse in Sherwood, Oregon on four acres of the original family farm. Between them, they have four children and nine grandchildren.

Gerri currently serves as treasurer, web manager and property manager at Bryn Seion Welsh Church and is involved in creating an interpretive center about the Welsh settlement in Beavercreek, Oregon. She is WNAA Systems Coordinator, a board member of the Women's Welsh Club and Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio, and board member and Web Master for the Puget Sound Welsh Association. She also serves on the board of Pioneer Pleasant View Cemetery, where seven generations of her family are buried.

Gerri's Welsh connection is so distant that it may be lost to time. Her pioneer families came to Oregon from Tennessee in 1851 and intermarried in her hometown of Sherwood, Oregon. ***"I'm still piecing that all together."***

## Faint Ohonoch Chi Sy'n Dysgu Cymraeg??

*By Laura Lovell*

Pob hwyl, i bawb.
At our last PSWA board meeting we had a discussion concerning the (now unknown) number of Welsh language students there might be in our PNW area. And some of us would like to figure out how many of you there are, and what geographical area you live in.

I assure you this isn't so we can snoop on you, but we get the feeling from PSWA social events that you might be. if not a multitude, a sizable cohort. And also, we decided that we should figure out some way to assist you all to meet each other and help each other with this beautiful songlike language with admittedly troublesome grammar.

It could mean arranging a Zoom event, but I personally suspect that it might include too many people to be helpful. It might mean smaller, more local events in person. What do YOU think?
Anyway, none of this can be attempted until we know where you are and how many of you there are. So, I would it very much if you would e mail pswa@pugetsoundwelsh.org saying where you are and contact info about yourself.

The Welsh in Vancouver, BC have a very active Welsh Language group, and we could have this too if you're enthused about it. I am. I will do my best to reply to everyone who responds!

And diolch yn fawr iawn am eich ateb chi!

***[Editor's Note:*** *A little bit of PSWA history: the seeds of the Puget Sound Welsh Association were planted through a Welsh-language learning group. That gathering generated Côr Cymraeg Seattle choir group, the Welsh Women brought the choir to events, and together all three spawned Puget Sound Welsh Association. So, in a way, Welsh learners have been part of PSWA's story from the very beginning!* ***If you're learning Welsh (or are interested in learning) we'd love to hear from you and help you connect with others in our area.****]*

## Vancouver Welsh

www.welshsociety.com

***(Most) Saturdays 10:00 AM – Noon***
Paned o De Welsh Language Group. Free Welsh language lessons. All levels. mail@welshsociety.com

***Second Thursdays of each month 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM Via Zoom***
Cambrian Bookworms mail@welshsociety.com



## A Little Welsh for the Autumn

**Did you know?** In Welsh, **Hydref** means both *autumn* and *October*. The word comes from Middle Welsh ***hyðvref***, combining *hydd* ("stag") and *bref* ("call"), referring to the time of year when stags are calling during the rut.

## Welsh Online: What's Coming Up

*By Karyn Davies*

- **Welsh Conversation Sessions — Wednesdays, October 7–28**
  Zoom conversation groups organized by the Welsh Society of Western New England and the Madog Center for Welsh Studies. Separate breakout groups are offered for beginner, foundation, intermediate and advanced Welsh learners. 4:30 p.m. Pacific. Conversation sessions, not formal lessons. Information and registration
- **Welsh Genealogy Workshop — October 5 and October 26**
  Zoom-only workshops from the Welsh Society of Western New England focused on researching Welsh roots, answering questions and helping participants work through genealogy "brick walls." 8:00–9:30 a.m. Pacific. WSWNE events calendar
- **"Witsh" with author Mari Ellis Dunning — October 18**
  A free Welsh Voices Zoom program featuring Welsh poet, novelist and lecturer Mari Ellis Dunning discussing her gothic novel exploring the witch trials of 16th-century Wales. Event information
- **Welsh Conversation Sessions — Wednesdays, November 4–25**
  The same multi-level Zoom conversation program continues throughout November. Registration and details
- **Welsh Genealogy Workshops — November 2 and 23**
  Zoom-only genealogy sessions from WSWNE, 8**:00 a.m.–9:30 p.m. Pacific**. WSWNE events
- **Welsh Englynion — November 15**
  Another free **Welsh Voices Zoom program**, this time with Dr. Guto Rhys discussing *englynion*, the specialized Welsh poetry traditionally found on headstones in Wales and elsewhere. Event information
- **Women's Archive Wales: Midwives in Swansea — November 18**
  Professor Billie Hunter presents on the work of midwives in early 20th-century Swansea. The lecture is online, Wednesdays 4–5 p.m. (*check time zone), and open to members and non-members.
  Women's Archive Wales lecture programme
- **Welsh Conversation Sessions — Wednesdays, December 2–30**
  The WSWNE/Madog Center Zoom conversation groups continue through December, with the usual separate levels. Conversation-session information



## Annual Summer Picnic For All

*By Ellen Webber Photos by Mary Lynne Evans*

PSWA held a combined North & South Sound summer picnic on August 9th at the home of Jill Moore and Chris and Nick Mooreddrall. The weather was beautiful, showcasing the views of the lake and their beautiful garden. A small but congenial group enjoyed grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, accompanied by a bountiful array of contributed side dishes and desserts. Some truly addictive pretzel, chocolate, and caramel treats, made by Jill, were a particular hit. Margie Hunt thoughtfully brought some take out containers, so that everyone could go home with leftovers. Laura Lovell played a variety of songs on her fiddle, and lively conversation filled the living room and the deck.







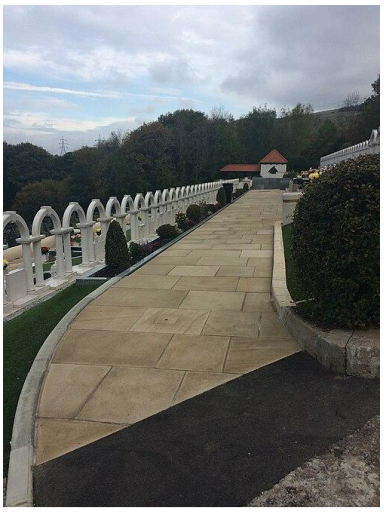


## Poem Contributions From Welsh Miners Virtual Pub Topic

For the August Virtual Pub, which featured stories of Welsh miners, **Eric Bowen** generously allowed his poems to be read. His poignant verses connect the bells of Wales with the communities, miners, and children whose lives were forever marked by tragedy.

**Clychau Cymru**

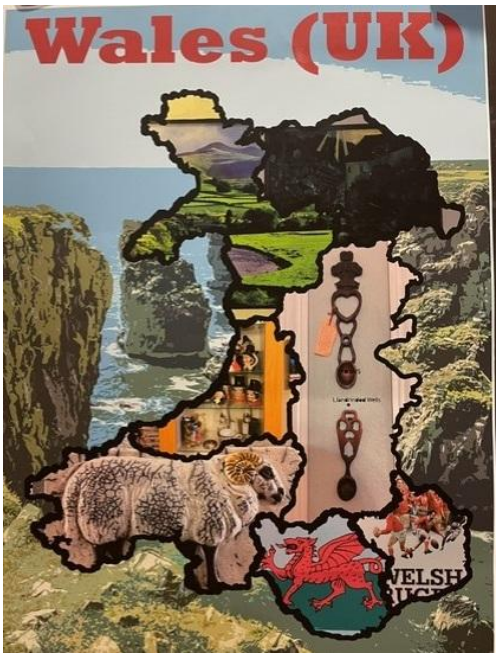
Yn llawen iawn mae'r gân yn son
Am glychau'n canu dan y don
Ond yn isel iawn yn gorwedd
Cantre Gwaelod a wnaeth ei fedd.
Clychau Aberdyfi chwe waith;
Six Bells aeth â glowyr i'w gwaith
Bwrodd tanchwa ei hergyd nwyol
Ar y glowyr, ergyd farwol.
Yn y pyllau roedd bywioliaeth
Cydblethiad bywyd a marwolaeth
Trist oedd y clychau, yn eu cân
I blant a gollwyd yn Aberfan.
Tramor, mae'r clychau'n llawenhau
Yn galw ar y bobl i'w dathliadau
Ond mae ein clychau ar y gwynt
Yn canu am golledion, amser gynt.
- Eric Bowen



*USW15 (talk) (Uploads), C C0, via Wikimedia Commons*

**The Bells of Wales**

In merry tones the tale we tell
Of bells that ring below the swell;
But 'neath Aberdyfi's waves
Lie Cantre Gwaelod's watery graves.
Six times rang Aberdyfi's bells
Six Bells, the coal mine in the dell
Where firedamp struck a killing blow
And claimed the miners deep below.
A livelihood was in the mines;
But life and death they intertwined:
The bells rang woeful, sad, and long
For children lost at Aberfan.
So oft we hear as joyful bells
Of victories, worship, weddings tell;
But Welsh bells ring of long ago
For all we lost, who lie below.
- Eric Bowen




## Wales School Project Shines

*By Alan Upshall*

My grandson, Dylan, had a project for his photography elective which was to create a themed poster, theme of his choosing. He decided to choose Wales and one day he came around the house with his phone photographing different Welsh related objects of which, as you might expect, there are many.

A couple of weeks later he produced the poster (for which he got a 98% in the class) attached. Me, being a bit picky and from South Wales questioned the coal mines in the north (there were coal mines in the north as well as slate quarries, but the South is where the coal belt really was), but he's fitted coal, sheep, dress, dragon, rugby, scenery, Snowdonia (Eryri) and tradition, all into the Welsh boundary set against the Welsh Coast.

He brought us a framed copy of the poster which is now hanging on the wall where we can see it. We think he did a great job.

**Welsh Rugby Update:**

Wales will compete in the inaugural **Nations Championship**, with home matches against **Japan (November 7)**, **New Zealand (November 14)**, and **Australia (November 21)** at Principality Stadium in Cardiff. The tournament concludes with Finals Weekend in London **November 27–29**. [Follow the Nations Championship here.]

## If You Missed NAFOW 2026…

### Springfield, Massachusetts - September 2-6, 2026

*By Mary Lynne Evans*

The **North American Festival of Wales** (NAFOW), the annual gathering of people of Welsh descent and those with an affinity for Welsh culture, was held in **Springfield, Massachusetts** this fall. Springfield is full of attractions: the Basketball Hall of Fame, the birthplace of Dr. Seuss, and the former home of the Milton Bradley Company. The area was settled by Welsh immigrants, including Miles Morgan, whose statue presides over the village square. The **Welsh Society of Western New England** and city officials rolled out the red carpet for more than 400 attendees.

The five-day festival featured a full schedule of events. On Friday evening, the Welsh North American Association honored **Philip Davies**, who has been involved with the North America Wales Foundation for more than forty years. Davies worked steadily and quietly to strengthen the organization's financial foundation and deepen cultural ties with Wales. The evening continued with a concert by **Caleb Nicholas**, the 2025 National Esteddfod winner of the Osborne Roberts Memorial Prize, leaving the audience with music and praise ringing in their ears.

Evening concerts featured **Bryn Fôn** and his band, **Mered Morris** and **Geraint Cynan**, and vocalists **Eve Goodman** and **Gwilym Bowen Rhys**. Saturday night's *Voices of Wales* concert showcased **Rhys Meirion**, **Jess Robinson**, and an ensemble of students from the **Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama**, directed by **Tim Rhys-Evans** and accompanied by **Zoë Smith** and **Menna Rhys.**

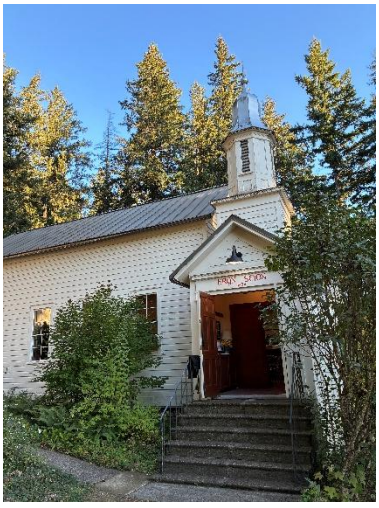
Seminars explored a wide range of topics, including preserving Welsh culture; the House of Yale; Welsh colonists in New England; quarrying, mining and slate splitting; plygain, a Welsh caroling tradition; hymn singing; painter Gwen John; family research through the National Library of Wales; and the Madoc myth. Welsh language sessions were also offered, along with late-night hymn and pub singing and a limerick contest.

The festival continued Sunday with worship at Trinity United Methodist Church and the **94th National Gymanfa Ganu**, a marathon Welsh hymn sing. That evening, a *Noson Lawen* featured vocal soloists, comedians, instrumentalists, small ensembles, and impromptu performances by visiting artists from Wales. The limerick contest winners were crowned by PSWA's own Ellen Webber and Mary Lynne Evans.

Next year's festival will be held in **Cleveland, Ohio**. If you've never attended NAFOW, perhaps next year is the time to come experience the music, culture, fellowship, and fun for yourself! ***[Follow: www.nafow.org]***

## Ychydig o Gymraeg/ A Little Welsh: Bryn Seion Gymanfa Ganu

*By Nerys Jones; Photos by Dan Rowbotham*



***[Editor's Note:*** *Your Board discussed adding Welsh language content to your Y Ddolen. This article is the first of the new column and we look forward to hearing your comments about it and suggestions for content!]*

Cefais pleser arbennig unwaith eto eleni i arwain cynulleidfa mewn cân yn y Gymanfa Ganu flynyddol ym Mryn Seion, Beavercreek, Oregon ar y 27ain o Fedi, hefo Geneva Cook ar yr Organ. Fe gawsom hefyd berfformiad arbennig gan y delynores, Bethany Evans.

Beth all fod yn well na chanu emynau adnabyddus a newydd yng Nghymraeg, mewn capel sydd yn llawn hanes am ddwy awr ar brynhawn Sul? I ddilyn y gwasanaeth fe gawsom Dê Bach hyfryd yn y Grange, lle rydym bob amser yn mwynhau gwledd o frechdanau, bara brith a chacennau cri, gyda phaned o de (neu ddau) gan fwynhau y cyfle i sgwrsio a meithrin perthynas.

Roedd y capel a'r Gymanfa Ganu yn rhan sylfaenol o'm mywyd ers o ni'n ifanc, ac mae llawer o'r emynau hyn wedi canfod lle yn fy nghalon. Mae'n rhoi cymaint o lawenydd i mi rannu fy nghariad at y grefft hon bob blwyddyn, gan annog y gynulleidfa i feithrin hyder gyda'r geiriau Cymraeg, tonnau adnabyddus ac ambell dôn newydd.

Sefydlwyd y Gymanfa Ganu ym 1859 yng Nghapel Bethania, Aberdâr, dan arweiniad y Parchedig Evan Lewis. Cynhelir cymanfaoedd bob blwyddyn mewn llawer pentre a thref ac mewn eisteddfodau ledled Cymru, yn ogystal ag

ymhlith y gymuned Gymreig dramor.  Cefais y cyfle i ymuno ar Gymanfa ym Melbourne, Awstralia yn gynharach eleni dros benwythnos Dydd Gŵyl Dewi dan arweiniad Robat Arwyn, diwrnod arbenning.

Mae cadw'r elfen unigryw hon o ddiwylliant Cymru yn bwysig iawn; felly, os nad ydych wedi profi Gymanfa Ganu eto, rwy'n eich gwahodd i ymuno â ni y flwyddyn nesaf ym Mryn Seion – ar y 26ain o Fedi 2027 am 2 o'r gloch y prynhawn.

Gobeithio gweld chi 'na!



On the 27th of September, Geneva Cook I had the pleasure again this year to lead the congregation in song at the 88th Annual Gymanfa Ganu at Bryn Seion, Beavercreek, Oregon.  Our special music for the afternoon was performed by the wonderful harpist Bethany Evans.

What could be better than singing Welsh Hymns in a place of worship with so much history for two hours on a Sunday afternoon, followed by a wonderful Tê Bach at the Grange, where we always indulge in a feast of  sandwiches, bara brith, Welsh cakes, drink a much needed cup of tea (or two) and enjoy the opportunity to sit and visit with each other and relish in the joy we all experienced.

Chapel and the Gymanfa Ganu was a foundational part of my life growing up, and many of these hymns are in my veins. It brings me so much joy to share my love for this art form every year, encouraging the congregation to build confidence with the pronunciation of the Welsh words along with familiar and not so familiar hymns.

The Gymanfa Ganu was established in1859 at Bethania Chapel in Aberdare, pioneered by the Reverend Evan Lewis. Cymanfaeodd canu are held each year in many villages and towns and Eisteddfodau throughout Wales and wherever the Welsh diaspora live.  I had the pleasure of attending the Gymanfa in Melbourne, Australia over St David's Day weekend earlier this year conducted by Robat Arwyn.

It is of great importance that we preserve this unique feature of Welsh Culture, so if you have not yet experienced our Gymanfa Ganu, I invite you to join us next year at Bryn Seion - 26th September, 2027 at 2PM.

Hope to see you there!

## Wales and the Future of the United Kingdom

*By Karyn Davies*

Wales has recently become part of a renewed discussion about the future of the United Kingdom.  In September, the leaders of Plaid Cymru, the Scottish National Party and Sinn Féin met in Cardiff and signed a memorandum calling for constitutional change and recognizing the right of Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland to determine their own futures.

For Wales, supporters of greater independence or self-government point to greater control over Welsh resources, spending and policy decisions.  Independence could also give Wales greater freedom to establish its own international relationships and economic policies.  On the other hand, independence would bring major questions about taxation, public finances, trade, currency, defense, and the relationship with the rest of the UK.

Views in Wales range from maintaining the current arrangement, to seeking greater Welsh self-government and sovereignty within a reformed United Kingdom, to full independence.  Different political parties and groups support different points along that spectrum, so the debate is broader than simply being "for" or "against" independence.

For now, the discussions represent a debate about Wales's constitutional future rather than a decision that Wales is leaving the United Kingdom.

# Wales and the Singing Mushroom Pizza

*By Mary Lynne Evans*

"That piece of pizza is mine," said a deep voice over my shoulder.
I had just decided to order the three remaining pieces of mushroom pizza in Pagliacci's display case. I responded loudly without thinking, "I got here first."

The restaurant was full of families. My own had decided on their orders and were moving toward the checkout register.
I turned toward the deep voice and looked up at a tall, black, muscular man.

I thought, *"Probably a super-middleweight. I'm a short grandma and tip the scales at the low end of super-featherweight. What is happening?"*

I said, "I'm not afraid of you. Put 'em up. I have a brother. I know how this goes." I raised my fists in a classic boxing stance, and the man did the same.

We tentatively began a duck, bob, and weave. I thought, *"He knows who he is. He'll probably lead with a light jab, followed by a left hook, and it will be over."* I made a very small feint and thought, *"What are you doing, Mary? You don't know this guy, and you really are not prepared to duel over a mushroom pizza. You've never landed a punch in your life. Pagliacci's is not going to like this."*

I couldn't not continue! I was taking an improvisation theater class, which I adored, and this was definitely the start of an improv assignment.

We circled each other and feinted a couple more times.

Then he said, "Did your brother ever hit you?"
"Not once," I said.

He smiled. "We didn't dare hit our sisters. They would have slapped us hard."
I pumped my fist in the air. "Go girls," I said.

Then he said, "Are you Jewish?"
I thought, *this encounter is going in some unusual ways.*

"No," I said, "but why do you ask?"
He put down his fists and replied, "Because you are small and smart!"
"That happens to Welsh people too," I said.
"I know," he replied. "I've been to Wales."

My jaw dropped along with my dukes. I thought: *The odds on this conversation ever happening are astronomical. Who is this guy? Why did I slip into improv so quickly? Why would I put up my dukes over pizza? Why were there only three pieces of pizza left? Where is this going?*

"Are you Welsh?" he asked.
"Yes, proudly. My grandpa emigrated to Halifax. He ended up in Black Diamond, Washington. How do you know Wales?" was my reply.

"I've been there," he said, as people came in the door behind him. "My church sang in Saint David's Cathedral in West Wales. Have you done that?"
"Wow, I've been in that magnificent cathedral, but only to sit in a pew. I've only sung in smaller country churches. What brought you to Wales?"

He said, "We participated in the international singing contest."
"The Annual International Eisteddfod in Llangollen?" I gasped.
"Yes, and we had homestays," he continued.
"And?" I asked.
"We won the grand prize."

I bowed very low and shook his hand. "That is a huge accomplishment. It is a real honor to meet you."

Just then, my daughter-in-law called, "Maughi (our family word for Grandma), are you going to order?"
I looked at my new friend. There was so much more I wanted to talk about, but I said, "I'm sorry, but I think I need to sit with my family. Do you want the mushroom pizza?"
"No thanks," he said, "I'm settling on the ham and pineapple."
"Great!" I said. "I hate ham and pineapple."
"My name is Mary."
He said, "I'm William."

We shook hands for a long time and then moved to our separate tables.

When my family got up to leave, I went over to him. "William, I can't tell you the difference you have made in my day. It was wonderful meeting you and hearing your remarkable story. I wish you the best."
William stood up. "I feel the same way."

He put up his dukes playfully. I laughed and we left.

*[Editor's Note: The Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod is a festival which takes place every year during the second week of July in Llangollen in North Wales. It started after WWII to heal the wounds of war and to promote peace. Over 5,000 singers, dancers and instrumentalists from over 50 countries are invited to take part in 20 competitions each day.*
*In the evening, concerts are held on the main stage for audiences of more than 50,000.]*

## *You Meet The Nicest People On The Monorail*

*By Joel Ware*




A few days ago, I met this friendly party of Welsh tourists on their way to see the Space Needle. They were sightseeing for a day in Seattle before taking a cruise to Alaska! They are Steve, Andy, Jane and Val - all Thomases, from Swansea, Wales!

I wished them a wonderful cruise, and shared that my wife has five lineal ancestors named "Thomas ap Thomas!" [*Editor: Photo shared with permission.*]

## Modern Welsh Musical Artist TeiFi:

### Bringing the Welsh Language to the Beatbox and Loop Pedal

*By Chris Mooreddrall*

For South Wales creator Teifi Emerald, who performs as **TeiFi**, writing in Welsh has never been about checking a box for cultural heritage. She treats *Cymraeg* as an active playground for live improvisation, dropping it into urban beats, soul hooks, and live loop-station arrangements. Coming from physical and experimental theater, she gives an old tongue an undeniably fresh rhythm.

The Welsh music body Tŷ Cerdd has characterized her work as a mix of soul-folk, street-level poetry, and bilingual rap. Rather than keeping Welsh tucked away inside church choirs or competitive festivals, she approaches it like everyday speech—fast-moving, candid, and dynamic.

Often billing her gigs as **"Rude Grooves and Smooth Loops,"** her work has several defining traits:



- **Conversational Code-Switching:** She pivots between English and Welsh within the same verse, reflecting the natural rhythm of bilingual speech. Her sets combine fast rap lines, rich vocal harmony, and impulsive dance moves.
- **Consonant-Heavy Beatboxing:** Welsh's percussive consonants and rolling sounds become part of her rhythm. Her loop-based arrangements layer beatboxing, field recordings, and unexpected vocal sounds.
- **Twisting Welsh Folklore:** Her theatrical shows turn Welsh folk tropes on their head, including surreal, traditionally costumed mermaids exploring ideas about female bodies, parenthood, and desire. Her theater background includes a Best Actress nod at the Theatre Critics Wales Awards for her solo production *WiLD*.

Her recent catalog continues to put Welsh into fresh contexts:

- **"Llif" (Flow):** Built entirely from layered vocal loops, this independently released single was written to shake off self-doubt and push TeiFi to rap in her mother tongue again.
- **"Glaw – Shoda":** This Tŷ Cerdd commission combines her Welsh spoken word with Bengali poetry by Newport author Modina Ferdous. Rain becomes a symbol of fresh starts, while TeiFi connects her grandparents' journey as Jewish refugees to the experiences of new immigrant communities arriving today.
- **"Unwaith Rownd Yr Haul" (*Once Round the Sun*):** A year-long song cycle featuring a different local plant for each month, exploring Welsh herbal remedies and seasonal customs over electronic basslines.

TeiFi shows that keeping a minoritized language thriving does not require treating it like an artifact. By grounding Welsh in self-deprecating humor, sharp observation, and dance rhythms, she keeps it firmly planted in the present.
*TeiFi's YouTube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGJqjKxeKk9Z_UvPdv7uEGQ*

**Llongyfarchiadau mawr, Elfyn Evans!** Congratulations to **Dolgellau-born Elfyn Evans and his co-driver Scott Martin**, who became the **2026 FIA World Rally Champions** at the dramatic season finale, **Rally Italia Sardegna**, in Sardinia on October 4. Evans narrowly edged Sweden's **Oliver Solberg and co-driver Elliott Edmondson** by just FIVE points after Solberg crashed only two corners from the finish of the final Power Stage. Evans is the **first Welshman ever to win the World Rally Championship!** Read more at the WRC website.



## The Sounds of a Welsh Christmas

*-By Karyn Davies*

Long before Christmas playlists and holiday concerts filled our December calendars, Welsh communities had their own way of making the season heard. Across Wales, Christmas and the New Year were times for singing, storytelling, music, laughter—and occasionally a little good-natured mischief.

Think of a **Plygain** service in the early hours of Christmas morning, when singers gathered in a darkened chapel to offer unaccompanied carols. Or a Noson Lawen, where people didn't simply come to listen to a program; they brought their own songs, poetry, instruments and stories. Even some of the less formal Christmas customs, such as **toffee-making** gatherings, were opportunities to spend an evening together.

And then there was the **Mari Lwyd**. Her arrival at the door was not a quiet affair. The horse skull and her companions challenged the household in verse, with those inside answering in verse until someone finally surrendered and let the Mari in. The reward was more singing, merriment and, presumably, whatever refreshments were available.

What these traditions have in common is something easy to overlook: **the audience was also the entertainment.**

There was no need to buy a ticket, hire a performer, or sit quietly and watch. You sang. You recited. You played. You answered the door. You pulled the toffee. You joined your neighbors.

It is perhaps no accident that Dylan Thomas's *A Child's Christmas in Wales* feels so familiar even to those who did not grow up in Wales. His remembered Christmas is filled with voices, food, family, weather, stories, and the sounds of people together. It is less a description of particular customs than a picture of how Christmas lives in memory: not as something we simply watched, but as something we experienced together.

Perhaps that is one reason these traditions continue to appeal to Welsh communities today. The form may change, but the idea remains familiar. A Christmas gathering is at its best when everyone has a part in making it merry.



So, as the holiday season approaches, perhaps we might think less about what we need to *watch* and more about what we can **sing, tell, play, share - and make together**.

And years from now, those may be the things we remember most: the voices, the laughter, the stories, and the sounds of Christmas being made together.

- **Nadolig llawen!**


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***We welcome your contributions of relevant articles, news, announcements, events, and photos:***
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**⚠DEADLINE FOR NEXT SUBMISSION: December 20th**

# PSWA Membership/Renewal, Donations, T-Shirts, & Red Dragon Band CD

**Annual memberships renew each January.** Your contributions entitle you to a subscription to *Y Ddolen*, our wonderful quarterly newsletter, and provide vital support for our St. David's Day celebration and other activities through the year. In addition to our sponsored events, the Puget Sound Welsh Association acts as a valuable resource for anyone interested in Welsh culture, language, and music. Questions? Contact Ellen Webber.

## Annual Memberships/Fees

- ❑ Individual ($10) $_____
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**Thank you for your prompt renewal!**

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