

The First Fifteen Hundred Years of Welsh Poetry

Companion Texts to the Recording

Including **Fern Hill**, a tribute to Dylan Thomas

The idea behind this presentation is to allow those unfamiliar with the Welsh language and/or Welsh poetry, both in Welsh and English, a convenient access to an often neglected, extremely rewarding, sometimes daunting, obscure and yet magical world of verse. One that has been flowing (and still flows!) from the western side of Offa's Dyke and, in fact, from Welsh hearts and souls every and anywhere in the world since King Caratocos was a boy!



My qualifications for this job, having learnt/*re-learnt* Welsh in Arizona; having only three years apprenticeship of the nine required in the writing of bardic Welsh poetry; having limited and recently acquired knowledge/exposure to the art form; being a musician !@#\$%? my qualifications are more on the lines of the enthusiast than the professor. But the one advantage I have over the literati is the fairly fresh memory of the frustration in not finding (until recently) moderately accessible writings on the subject designed for the novice, in English or Welsh. In a word, I don't believe that a ticket to this show should be so outlandishly expensive and the ticket office such a mysterious place to find. I hope the true professors in this field will gently correct my errors and misconceptions, and that the spark created by this presentation will lead all concerned on to further, deeper inquiry and pleasure.

John Good/Sioni Dda

Color Keys to Welsh Alliteration and Rhyming Schemes

Example: Y **bar**dd **trw**m dan **br**idd **tra**mor, -- y **d**wylaw

The color coding is used to clarify the relationships of sounds employed in this type of poetry. The vowel sounds Y, A, I, W, (E and U) are ignored; only the consonants are involved.

Y **bar**dd **trw**m dan **br**idd **tra**mor,

This line is divided into two at “dan”. B, r, dd, tr and m of the first part are echoed in the second part. This is called complex alliteration.

Blue tramor

End –rhymes with the other three lines in the poem (not shown).

Orange dwylaw

Occasionally the end of a line alliterates with the first half of the next line (not shown).

Bibliography and Further Reading

In English

Singing in Chains. Mererid Hopwood. Gomer Press, ISBN 1 84323 402 5 **Excellent and understandable!**

Welsh Poems. Gwyn Williams. University of California Press, ISBN 0 520 02603 9

Presenting Welsh Poetry. Gwyn Williams. Faber 1959

The Oxford Book of Welsh Verse in English. Gwyn Jones. Oxford University Press, ISBN 0 19 281397 8

A Guide to Welsh Literature, Volume 1 and 2. Christopher Davies, Swansea. ISBN 0 7154 0124 6

A People’s Poetry (Hen Benillion). Glyn Jones. Seren. ISBN 1 85411 178 7

Yn y Gymraeg / In Welsh

Blodeugerdd Rhydychen o Farddoniaeth Gymraeg . Oxford University Press, ISBN 0 19 812129 6

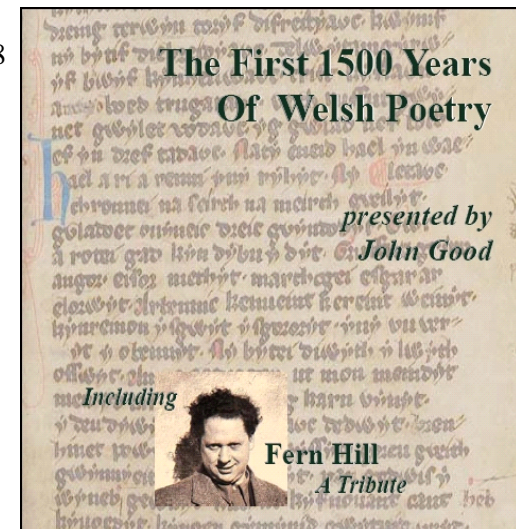
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Gwaith Dafydd ap Gwilym. Gawsg Prifysgol Cymru. 1963

Ar y We / On the Web

<http://www.cynghanedd.com/annedd/content/section/7/60/>

<http://users.comlab.ox.ac.uk/geraint.jones/gwasg.aredig/cynghanedd/>



Marwnad Owain ap Urien

Enaid Owain ab Urien,
 Gobwyllid Rheen o'i raid.
 Rheged udd ae cudd tromlas,
 Nid oedd fas ei gywyddaid.
 Isgell gwr cerddglyd clodfawr,
 Esgyll gwawr gwaywawr llifiad,
 Cany cheffir cystedlydd
 I udd Llwyfenydd llathraid.
 Medel gallon, gefeilad,
 Eisylud ei dad a'i daid.
 Pan laddawdd Owain Fflamddwyn
 Nid oedd fwy nogyd cysgaid.
 Cysgid Lloegr llydan nifer
 A lleufer yn eu llygaid;
 Arhai ni ffoynt haeach
 A oeddynt hyach no rhaid.
 Owain a'u cosbes yn ddrud,
 Mal cnud yn dylud defaid.
 Gwr gwiw uch ai amliw seirch
 A rhoddai feirch i eirchiad,
 Rhy ranned rhag ei enaid.
 Enaid Owain ab Urien,
 Gobwyllid Rheen o'i raid.

The Death Song for Owain Ab Urien

God, consider the soul's need
 Of Owain son of Urien!
 Rheged's prince, secret in loam:
 No shallow work, to praise him.
 A strait grave, a man much praised,
 His whetted spear the wings of dawn:
 That lord of bright Llwyfenydd,
 Where is his peer?
 Reaper of enemies;
 Strong of grip;
 One kind with his fathers;
 Owain, to slay Fflamddwyn,
 Thought it no more than sleep
 Sleepeth the wide host of England
 With light in their eyes,
 And those that had not fled
 Were braver than were wise
 Owain dealt them doom
 As the wolves devour sheep;
 That warrior, bright of harness,
 Gave stallions for the bard.
 Though he horded wealth like a miser,
 For his souls sake he gave it.
 God, consider the soul's need
 Of Owain, son of Urien.

Marwnad Llywelyn ap Gruffudd

Oer calon dan fron o fraw — allwynin
Am frenin, dderwin ddor, Aberffraw.
 Aur dilyfn a dalai o'i law,
 Aur dalaith oedd deilwng iddaw.

Lament for Llywelyn ap Gruffudd

Heart cold in the breast with terror, grieving
 For a king, oak door of Aberffraw.
Bright gold was bestowed by his hand,
 A gold chaplet befitted him.

Yr Wylan

Yr wylan deg ar lanw dioer
 Unlliw ar eiry neu wenlloer,
 Dilwch yw dy degwch di,
 Darn fel haul, dymfol heli.

Ysgafn ar don eigion wyd,
 Esgudfalch edn bysgodfwyd.

Yngo'r aud wrth yr angor
 Lawlaw a mi, lili mor.

Llythyr unwaith llathr ei annwyd,
 Lleian ym mrig llanw mor wyd.

Cyweirgod bun, cai'r glod bell,
 Cyrch ystum caer a chastell.

Edrych a welych, wylan,
 Eigr o liw ar y gaer lan.

Dywed fy ngeiriau duun.
 Dewised fi, dos at fun.

Byddai'i hun, beiddia'i hannerch,
 Bydd fedrus wrth foethus ferch
 Er budd; dywed na byddaf,
 Fwynwas coeth, fyw onis caf.

Ei charu'r wyf, gwbl nwyf nawdd
 Och wyr, erioed ni charawadd
 Na Myrddin wenieithfin iach,
 Na Thaliesin ei thlysach.
 Siprys dyn giprys dan gopr,
 Rhagorbryd rhy gyweirbropr.

Och wylan, o chai weled
 Grudd y ddyn lanaf o Gred,
 Oni chaf fwynaf annerch,
 Fy nihenydd fydd y ferch.

The Seagull

Gracing the tide-warmth, this seagull,
 The snow-semblanced, moon-matcher,
 The sun-shard and sea-gauntlet
 Floating, the immaculate loveliness.
 The feathered one, fishfed, the swift-proud,
 Is bouyant, breasting the combers.

Sea-lily, fly to this anchor to me,
 Perch your webs on my hand.
 You nun among ripples, habited
 Brilliant as paper work, come.
 Girl-glorified you shall be, pandered to,
 Gaining that castle mass, her fortalice.
 Scout them out, seagull, those glowing battlements,
 Reconnoitre her, the Eigr-complexioned.
 Repeat my pleas, my citations, go
 Girlward, gull, where I ache to be chosen.
 She solus, pluck up courage, accost her,
 Stress your finesse to the fastidious one;
 Use honeyed diplomacy, hinting
 I cannot remain extant without her.
 I worship her, every particle worships!

Look, friends, not old Merlin, hot-hearted,
 Not Taliesin the bright browed, beheld
 The superior of this one in loveliness.
 Cypress-shapely, but derisive beneath
 Her tangled crop of copper, gull,
 O, when you eye all Christendom's
 Loveliest cheek — this girl bring
 Annihilation upon me, should your answer
 Sound, gull, no relenting note.

Hen Benillion

A phan fo'r Foel fynydda
 Yn gwisgo'i chap yn fora
 'Drychwch arni ddiwedd dydd
 Bydd ar ei grudd hi ddagra.

Rwy'n ishta yma's cetyrn
 Yn cisho dal pycotyng:
 Ond nid yw'r gwr ar gynffon flat
 Yn tynnu at y mwytyng.

Tre-peth ni saif heb siglo
 Yw llong ar mor yn selio
 Dail yr aethnen yn yr haf
 A thin merch braf wrth ddawnsio.

Triban Morganwg

7 sillaf (A)
 7 sillaf (A)
 8 sillaf (B)
 7 sillaf ...(B)..... (A)

When the Treeless Mountain
 Wear's its hat in the morn
 Look on her at evening
 Tears will be streaming.

I've been sitting here 'round about
 Trying my best to catch a trout
 But the flat tailed man, though I wait,
 Hasn't even tugged at the bait.

Three things are made to shake:
 A sailing ship on the sea;
 Leaf on the summer aspen tree
 And a good-looking girl at the dance.

Rhyfel

Gwae fi fy myw mewn oes mor ddreng,
A Duw ar drai ar orwel pell;
O'i ôl mae dyn, yn deyrn a gwreng,
Yn codi ei awdurdod hell.

Pan deimlodd fyned ymaith Dduw
Cyfododd gledd i ladd ei frawd;
Mae sw^n yr ymladd ar ein clyw,
A'i gysgod ar fythynnod tlawd.

Mae'r hen delynau genid gynt
Yng nghrog ar gangau'r helyg draw,
A gwaedd y bechgyn lond y gwynt,
A'u gwaed yn gymyg efo'r glaw.

Why was I born in a boorish age,
When God ebbs on a far horizon;
And man, both commoner and king,
Raises his ugly authority.

When he felt God's going away
He raised a sword to kill his brother;
The sound of battle is in our ears,
And strife shadows poor crofts.

Age-old harps that once were played
Now hang in distant willow groves,
And the scream of boys carried on the wind,
Mixes with rain and blood in the trenches.

Hedd Wyn

Y bardd trwm dan bridd tramor, -- y dwylaw
Na ddirolir rhagor:
Y llygaid dwys dan ddwys ddôr,
Y llygaid na all agor.

Wedi ei fyw y mae dy fywyd, -- dy rawd
Wedi ei rhedeg hefyd
Daeth awr i fynd i'th weryd,
A daeth i ben deithio byd.

Tyner yw'r lleuad heno -- tros fawnog
Trawsfynydd yn dringo;
Tithau'n drist a than dy ro
Ger y ffos ddu'n gorffwyso.

Trawsfynydd! Tros ei feini -- trafaeliaist
Ar foelydd Eryri;
Troedio wnest ei rhedyn hi,
Hunaist ymhell ohoni.

The poet heavy under earth over seas, — the hands
That will not be parted now;
The intense eyes under a grievous door,
The eyes that cannot open.

Your life is over, done — your course
run;
An hour came to go to your grave
Your world traveling ended.

Tender is the moon tonight -- climbing over
the peat bog of Trawsfynydd ;
You yourself sad under gravel
Lying near the black trench .

Trawsfynydd! Over its rocks -- you traveled
On the bare hills of Snowdon;
You roamed through the bracken,
But fell asleep far from it.

Virtue

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright!
The bridal of the earth and sky —
The dew shall weep thy fall tonight;
For thou must die

Sweet rose, who's hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turned to coal
Then chiefly lives.

The World

I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright;
And round beneath it Time in hours, days, years,
Driven by the spheres
Like a vast shadow moved; in which the world
And all her train were hurled.

The Moor

It was like a church to me.
I entered it on soft foot,
Breath held like a cap in the hand.
It was quiet.
What God was there made himself felt,
Not listened to, in clean colours
That brought a moistening of the eye,
In movement of the wind over grass.
There were no prayers said. But stillness
Of the heart's passions-that was praise
Enough; and the mind's cession
Of its kingdom. I walked on,
Simple and poor, while the air crumbled
And broke on me generously as bread.

Fern Hill Begins

Cysga Di Fy Mhlentyn Tlws (Traditional)

Cysga di fy mhlentyn tlws
Cysga di fy mhlentyn tlws
Cysga di fy mhlentyn tlws
Cei gysgu tan y bore, cei gysgu tan y bore

Go to sleep my pretty child
And you shall sleep 'til morning.

If Nothing is Forever

I read the other day about a boy from home
Said he was in love, still felt alone.
If nothing is forever, everything's for nothing.

He was doing really well, call it success
What you and I'd call more he would have called less
If nothing is forever, everything's for nothing.

If we could have given you your heart's desire,
We'd have swam across oceans, walked through fire
But If nothing is forever, everything's for nothing.

The night is falling, your voice is calling us.
Was it really time for you to go?

We sit around and think about the things that you did
Your life was so public but you kept yourself hid.
If nothing is forever, everything's for nothing.

We knew you'd made your mind up, had to let you go,
Now we're alone without you, God only knows
If nothing is forever, everything's for nothing.

If we could have given you your heart's desire,
We'd have swam across oceans, walked through fire
But If nothing is forever, everything's for nothing.

The night is falling, your voice is calling us.
Was it really time for you to go?

Mae'r nos yn dod, a'ch llais yn galw ni
Oedd hi'n wir pryd i ti fynd.

Questions in Llareggub.

Nogood Boyo! Captain Cat!!
Speak out, we know you're there;
Hear your laughter in hedgerow with wrens;
Footsteps splash along the cliff-top walk
Lane leading from pubs drunk dry
Down to ever thirsty tide pools:
Speak out against this life-long silence of our days.

For what are heron gulls without a town crier?
Breakers bombilating, drum-majorless?
What will drowned sailors do?
Locker key lost in grating surf,
Or fisherwives find, backs bent over cockleshell fields,
What find in fresh wet sand,
Uncovered by tomorrow and tomorrow's tides?

And what are we Welsh but
'truant boys from the town',
Stumbling over split and dangling infinitives;
Fumbling ourselves euphemistically.

Fern Hill

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,
 The night above the dingle starry,
 Time let me hail and climb
 Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
 And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
 Trail with daisies and barley
 Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
 In the sun that is young once only,
 Time let me play and be
 Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
 And the sabbath rang slowly
 In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
 And playing, lovely and watery
 And fire green as grass.
 And nightly under the simple stars
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the night jars
 Flying with the ricks, and the horses
 Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all
 Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
 The sky gathered again
 And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm
 Out of the whinnying green stable
 On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,
 In the sun born over and over,
 I ran my heedless ways,
 My wishes raced through the house high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows
 In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
 Before the children green and golden
 Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
 In the moon that is always rising,
 Nor that riding to sleep
 I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.
Oh! as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
 Time held me green and dying
 Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

Dafydd y Garreg Wen

"Cariwch," medd Dafydd, "fy nhelyn i mi,
Ceisiaf cyn marw roi tŷn arni hi.
Codwch fy nwylo i gyrraedd y tant;
Duw a'ch bendithio fy ngweddw a'm plant."

Neithiwr mi glywais lais angel fel hyn.
Delyn fy mebyd, ffarwel i dy dant."

David of the White Rock

Bring my harp to me said Dafydd
So I may play before I die.
Put my hands on her strings.
God, bless my widow and children.

Last night I heard an angel say
"Dafydd come home, playing through the glen."
Harp of my childhood, farewell to your strings.
God, bless my widow and children.

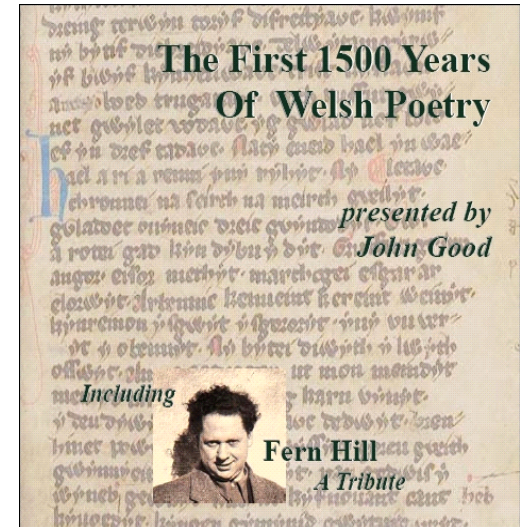
Credits

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Musical Performers: John Good & Steve Colby

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