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MYSTERIOUS AFAN CUDD



BATTLES

BARDS

& WILD

NEIGHBOURS



by Paula Denby

CALON AFAN

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BATTLES BARDS & WILD NEIGHBOURS



Foreword

Ideas, thoughts, questions, pictures

All put into this little book with hope

to make life easier for you - the unsung heroes

collectively known as teachers,

expected to go over and above and all around.

May this whole resource pack be of use to you and the ideas and history within it inspire and educate a fresh approach to what it means to be born under the shadow of our ancestors' mountain.

'For our descendants'

Battles, Bards & Wild Neighbours

Whilst the main topic of this resource pack is the largely forgotten history of our Princes of Afan, I would like to suggest that we creatively examine their stories to understand how their history impacts us today. In thinking about this perhaps we can wonder how we - who will one day be the ancestors of our descendants - will effect their futures by our actions or non actions today.

The Arts enable us to imagine pasts, present and future. Through the use of music we can change emotional states. Drama can take us into a characters life far different from our own, broadening our perspective of the human experience. Visual Arts give tangible expression to how we see and understand the world.

History reveals this deep human need to express and communicate creatively and imaginatively - from prehistoric cave art to the graffiti on a subway wall in Aberafan- from a medieval bard such as Ieuan Gethin to the multitude of actors, musicians, poets, storytellers and artists from this Afan valley who have poured out their talents to the world throughout history and continue to do so today using technology that our horseback travelling medieval ancestors would have been astonished at.

I often use poetry, story, song to accompany visual arts and crafts. These can inspire an endless stream of creativity from students both young and old. Creative intelligence is different from linear or logical intelligence. For it freely associates between subjects and ideas, weaving its own unique strands out from the imagination of the unique human from which it is expressed.

Y FRWYDR (THE BATTLE)

Prelude

Silent in the woods we hid
Knowing this was a battle
for our freedom, our families
our lives were on the line.

It was fight or die.

We are the Cymry

We will not accept conquest.

The Battle

Hiding silent

we heard them come

from miles away

clanking armour, horses noisy,
men talking and laughing
So certain of victory
they were.

We hid silent

We kept still.

The mighty Oaks reassured us

We could win

We could win.

Still as foxes

Silent as owls

We waited.

Closer and closer they came

in their hundreds, they

poured up the main tracks

in full view.

They were the doves

to us the hawks.

We stayed amongst the trees

'till they were all here.

On our land

Our field of battle.

This mountain had given us

her yews. Our longbows

sprang into action

Our slingers sprang

from cover

arrows, stones all missiles

all aiming at the hated gelyn...

I thought of my baby

hidden in the cave with

my wife.

She was one of our best slingers
accurate. and powerful fast but,
our baby newborn
needs her.

The older children here
with water from the mountain...

I saw him
he who had slain so many
of my friends.

Hate filled my heart
I swung my arm back
as in his arrogance
he took his helmet
off.

Roaring his defiance
as the shields of his knights

raised around him

As he sat that magnificent Stallion -

that roared with his Master

What a horse!

He reared, excited and brave

to do battle

A trained Stallion of war.

My stone flew, avoiding

the horse, slamming his master

from the saddle.

We ran roaring our defiance

Roaring our hate

Roaring with courage

Out from the mighty Oaks we

dropped in our numbers

With courage and skill enough

to take them on

To destroy those who sought

to enslave us to

their ways.

We fought and we

fought

and we kept

their

Horses.



Mynydd Dinas watching over Cwmafan Wassail with Mari Lwyd

credit: Paula Denby

Note: Within this resource pack is information about Mari Lwyd. The Afan valley has our own Mari whose handler Tim Rees I first met on a grey day full of drizzle, on a high field on Mynydd Dinas.

As a child I had been informed through the oral history of local people, that 'a Welsh Prince had been killed in a battle up there'. Tim proceeded to tell me about The Princes of Afan and now through this resource pack you too can learn about our forgotten heroes ...

Tim had been told by the farmer who gave him his Mari skull - that it was from a horse bred from the bloodline of a stallion captured from the Normans after a battle on Mynydd Dinas. How fascinating a story and what inspiration for my poem! I hope you enjoy using this to create your own poems, stories and art.

Q? Who were the Cymru?

Q? Who were the Cymru battling?

Q? What age did Norman knights begin their training to become a knight?

Q? What weapons was a young knight expected to master?

Q? What were "Welsh Guerilla" (not Gorilla !) warfare tactics?

Q? How does hearing this poem make you feel?

...' the Welsh not only had to fight to keep their land secure against those who would wrest it from them. The Welsh nation itself has had to struggle in order to exist'...

(Dilys Gater)

Funfact: The echo effect that resounds from Mynydd Dinas up to Pontrhydyfen would have been known by the "silent" Cymru but not by their "noisy" enemy.



Afan Valley ©2017 Paula Denby

This oil painting was created "plein air" whilst I sat on Mynydd Dinas looking up the Afan Valley toward Pontryhdyfen and beyond. It clearly shows the shape of the hills and mountains that it is locally believed, are the cause of the bounce back echo effect!

This view was captured using thick oil paints meaning a very careful walk back down the mountain to my car tentatively holding onto a wet oil painting.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS

INDOORS / OUTDOORS: I have successfully used pencils, coloured pencils, coloured chalks and / or charcoal (with fixative sprayed immediately the work is complete to avoid it being smudged) oil crayons, wax crayons - little watercolour tins of paint and acrylic paints. An outdoor area around the school can be utilised for its views, plants and trees. These can later be developed into paintings on paper, card, canvas, fabrics, prints; (lino, mono) ...

If walking to Mynydd Dinas (this is a reasonable possibility for many Port Talbot schools) the pupils have happily carried their own materials including rolled up paper and something to rest it on such as a thin book or A4 clip file or even a piece of thick cardboard. The more enterprising have been seen to use one another's backs!

RETELLING STORIES

2D: Think Bayeux tapestry and cranky boxes, think shadow puppets, finger puppets, storyboards, comics and collages

3D: Needlefelt, airdry clay is an option if there's no Ceramics department in school (yet!) even plasticine figures designing a battleboard, a mountain, wildlife, trees, humans

etc. This could also involve "full ownership" by harvesting and carving your own piece of wood.



Needefelt lapwing by Megan Green YBB

TOYS! This pack is about families at war (if we really dig deep) traditional toys, chessboard figures, were often carved from wood and I imagine softer toys may have used perhaps sheepswool for young children. Older children could create their own from a piece of sycamore, a lovely non toxic wood that is abundant on the low slopes of Mynydd Dinas above Baglan.

MUSIC: The link below is to a live performance by Stevie Nicks of her song "Rhiannon" inspired by no other than Pryderi's mother Rhiannon and her story from **Y Mabinog**

https://youtu.be/2o-_ZvDqPEw?feature=shared

Horses have long represented freedom, and Rhiannon's story is surely about freedom of choice

Marriage as a means of forging alliances without bloodshed has been a landgrabbing, peacemaking tactic used throughout the ages by Queens, Kings and the Lords of Afan.

ROLEPLAY

Q? What other stories can you think of that illustrate the use of this tactic?

Q? Imagine that you are a King or Queen whose country is at war. You have an opportunity to gain Peace by marrying one of your children to one of your enemy's children. Would you do it?

VOICE: After listening to a dramatic reading of "Y Frwydr" the super drama teacher Helen John at YBB offered these following suggestions...

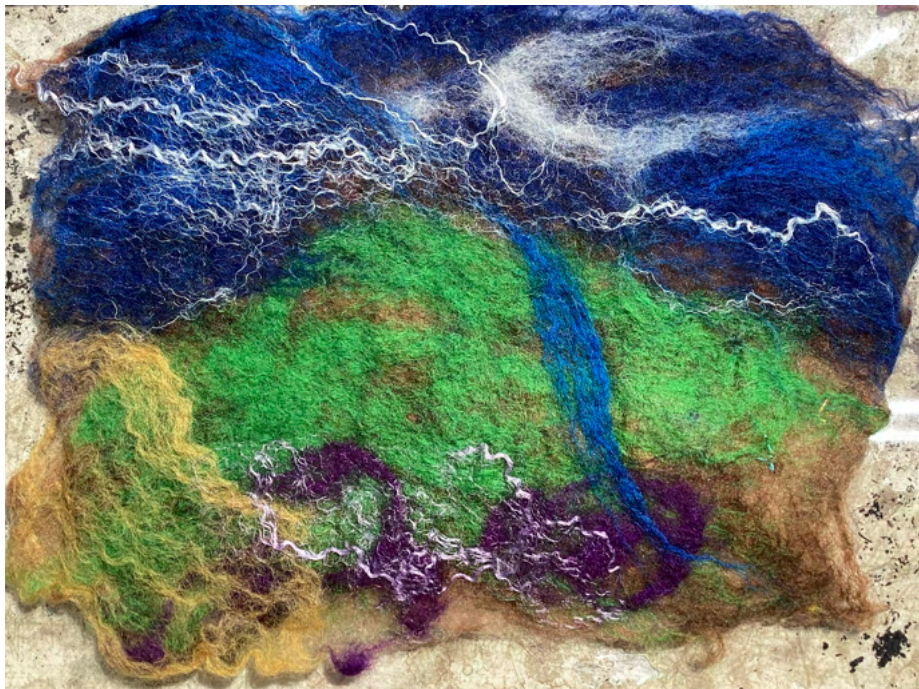
GCSE DRAMA: the poem 'as a monologue with choral speaking, with freeze frames behind, with some physicalization, some physical theatre...

A LEVEL or FILM: film snippets of people with the poem as a voiceover.'

OTHER VIEWPOINTS: Let us not overlook the stallion's viewpoint of the battle or the Mighty Oak trees or the creatures living underneath them?!



Pencil drawing by Martha & Darcy age 10 YBB



Wet felt of Mynydd Dinas by Dawn Noonan YBB

WRITING: stories, poems, orations, plays, music - all can be combined with images both 2 d and or 3 d.

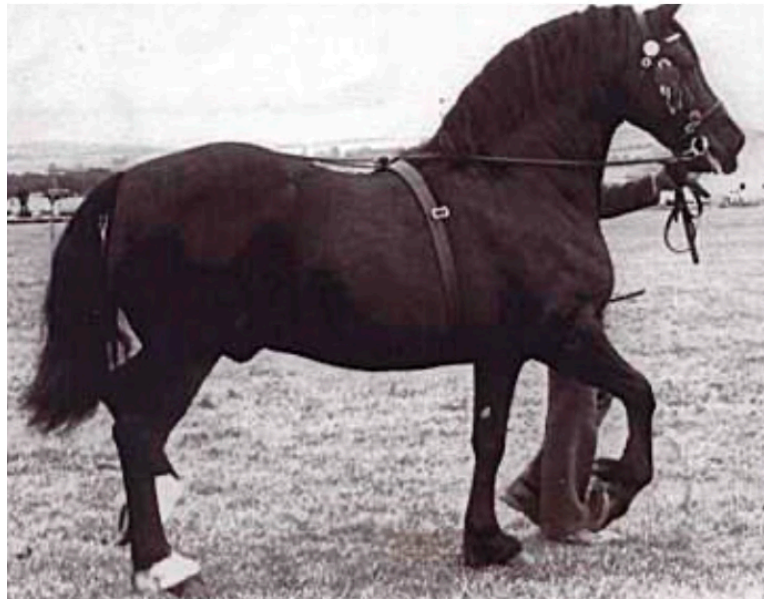
Whilst in the process of creating the Afan Erioed logo I studied the seals of the Princes as part of my research and realized that the inclusion of the horse on Morgan ap Caradog's seal was significant because it revealed a clear portrait of a horse, wrought in as much detail as its sword wielding rider. (I recalled Napoleon's great portrait astride his war destrier Marengo).

Interestingly equestrian seals were popular at this time with the Nobility of France and Britain.

Q? Why do you think I drew the knight's head above Mynydd Dinas?



Logo design (in progress) by Paula Denby



Llanarth Briant". courtesy of Llanarth Stud

Funfact: The conformation of the horse on the seal with its "dished" face looking out of the seals image is very similar to our modern day "Welsh section D" cobs



Sunset overlooking Swansea Bay from Mynydd Dinas credit: Paula Denby

This is a field above the Motte and Bailey Castle site

Q? Can you see what creatures are on the field?

Funfact: There is a field near this castle site that the farmer once told me was named "Cae Bolan" due to it being the shape of a bowler hat! (mystery clue)

Thankfully Expressive Arts departments are returning to our schools in Wales. I recall my own school's drama performance of a historical tragedy - the social history of the story was learnt through the script, through the roles of the characters we were playing. There is no limit to how wide and far the Arts can reach across the curriculum. Endless possibilities of one question leading to others ...

Bardic Tradition

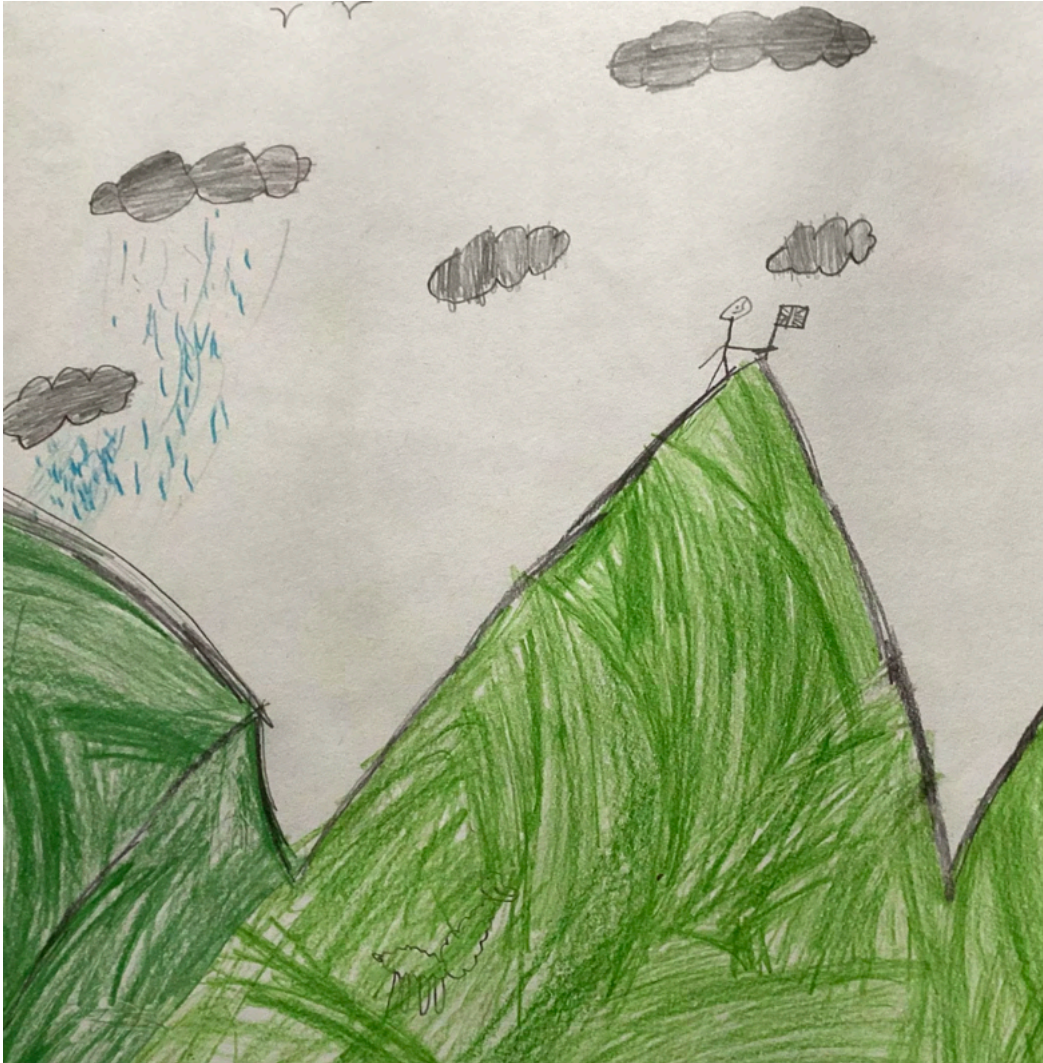
I have previously mentioned the plethora of creative talents that have emerged from and continue to do so in modern day Port Talbot. This Bardic tradition extends back and forth through time and is worth delving into.

 A useful book to investigate this plethora with is:

"Real Port Talbot" by Lynne Rees ISBN: 9781781726525

My poem "Y Frwydr" is in keeping with my Port Talbot lineage and of the Bardic tradition of recording important events. Whilst I am writing centuries after this battle, my imagination allows me and the listener to be there...

Q? Any other battle poems? What is their history, their styles, who wrote them ?



coloured pencil drawing by Michael & Jaxon age 10 YBB

Funfact: Films are superb examples of the **expressive arts** utilizing music, drama, words all in a visual spectacle.

Q? What is your favourite film that uses "hero and villain" as its main theme?

Below is a link of a reading presented by today's British Druid Order of the 14th century Medieval Healing Charm



"Cad Goddeu, The Battle of the Trees" from the Book of Taliesin.

<https://youtu.be/rvXt-QLbZ3U?feature=shared>



A book that I have found useful is "The Battles of Wales" by Dilys Gater ISBN 0-86381-178-7. It combines historical data with storytelling and poetry to make it very readable.

~

History is recorded usually by the conquerors, but a Bard will often record events that were/are important to himself or herself, personally - be they Baglan's medieval poet Ieuan Gethin's poem describing the theft of his bees

' ...from the hills to the hollow trees.

By God of heaven, they are extracting the honey like vagabonds...'

or, nationally as in Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch's "Lament for Llewelyn ap Gruffudd"...

'Heart cold in the breast with terror, grieving

For a king, oak door, of Aberffraw...'

" Y Frwydr" is a David & Goliath story, a Star Wars Rebels v The Empire, a French Resistance v Nazis...

'Many poets did not survive but their works remain with us as a poetic witness, to the dark times in which they and we lived'

(Carolyn Forché)

~

Nature & Our Wild Neighbours

'I am the lapwing who sits in the grass
I am the bird whose voice goes unheard'

(Paula Denby)



"The Lapwing" (detail) on scratchboard © Paula Denby 2024

Once known as the garden of Wales where a squirrel's feet didn't touch the ground between Margam and Neath Abbeys, the lands surrounding Mynydd Dinas has been mined extensively for her minerals.



Felt Bat by Verity Oswald age 17

Q? Who speaks on behalf of our wild neighbours?

Q? What is a wildlife corridor?

Q? How can land around schools and gardens around houses be helpful to our wild neighbours?

Q? Can you identify any wildlife corridors near your school?

Q? Why are the council grass verge cutters leaving areas uncut?

Funfact: There is a thriving starling population in Sandfields Estate. Why are they making a comeback? Through watching them last Summer I realized they were using the eaves of rooftops as nestsites and the old peoples' home were keeping their bird feeders well stocked. Whilst it is true some people would not allow starlings to use the corners under their roofs to nest under, it is my personal experience that they are very clean birds and do not create any mess. Instead the joy of watching parent birds feed their young, their fledglings' first flight and their numbers increasing each year gives satisfaction to me. Another bonus is they have cleaned my leafy blocked gutters in their searching for insects underneath the leaves!

~

Sadfact: The lapwings must have been known to the Princes and the people of the Medieval period who walked or rode the paths through Baglan Moors. I imagine pretty flocks of them and wonder if they are the tufted birds that sat on newly built back garden fences on a newly built Sandfields Estate watching their new human neighbours in the 1960s.

Today their breeding habitat is so reduced that local Conservationists despair that they will remain.

-



Pencil drawing "Cat" by Brooke Little age 15 (YBB)

Another mammal our Medieval ancestors would have known is the Wildcat, once widespread throughout Britain and still living wild in Scotland.

Q? How do you feel about reintroducing wildcats into the Afan Valley?

Q? What other "Medieval Afan Valley mammal" that I haven't mentioned has been reintroduced successfully into other parts of Britain?

Q? How do you feel about the loss of and subsequent reintroduction of our ancient wild neighbours?

Funfact: The recent comeback of the Red Kite in Wales is an example of a more well known bird demonstrating the resilience of our wild neighbours - if given a helping hand, as at Gigrin Farm and yes they have returned to Afan valley!

~

The Afan (river) though clean today was once blackened, so poisoned local people describe it as 'black and dead'.

Yet today, through the continued efforts of communities, anglers and local council the Afan is thriving. Her waters teeming with life, as she winds her way down the valley wrapping around Mynydd Dinas, before bubbling past Tesco and onward to the sea at Aberafan.

This river is fed generously by the ever flowing springs that pour out from Mynydd Dinas.



Nant y Glais waterfall credit: Paula Denby

Springs that have legends of astonishing healing powers echoed in names of streets, pools and fields such as Wellfield, Holywell and Nant y Arian to name but a few.

Where there is water there is life

It is both sad and hopeful that this mountain stands as Guardian for so many species of flora and fauna that have become extinct elsewhere within the county. It is indeed remarkable that skylarks and meadow pippits sing above the heather, that dung beetles exist on the unimproved pastures of the hill farmers - who thankfully don't graze sheep - thus with their horses and cattle creating wildflower meadows bursting with insects and the lizards that prey on them.

Q? What is unimproved pasture?

Q? Why do you think so much indigenous flora and fauna have disappeared from Port Talbot and the Afan valley?

Here is a great opportunity to create habitats around the school for every patch counts!

*Wildlife corridors can be linked, joining up isolated populations of our wild neighbours, strengthening their gene pools.

Q? Why must we plant native indigenous seeds from a supplier such as "Celtic Wildflowers" and not seeds from the supermarket?

Q? How do we involve pupils in hands on planting projects?

Q? How does a teacher have time within the school day to do this work?

Q? If all children are involved in a real growing project - **Idea***. A tray of chives, cress, garlic, etc. on a windowsill they all get to witness growing, taste, harvest sustainably - transplant into a larger pot- put outside the classroom- witness flowers being pollinated - save seeds - replant!



A mixture of real and wool hazelnuts, on sewn felt leaves made by various pupils of YBB

Funfact: A single bee can carry a pollen load up to 35% of its body weight! They carry this pollen on their hind legs in little pollen baskets called "corbicula"



Wild bumblebee foraging in a wild rose credit: Paula Denby

Q? What is sustainable foraging?

Before going into Ysgol Bae Baglan (YBB) I foraged on Mynydd Dinas and in my gardens wild hedges - for real flora for the children to look, smell, touch and hold.

Coppiced Hazel branches, wild mint leaves, hazel nuts and I think the star of the day a tiny wild strawberry who when compared to a supermarket strawberry surprised all...

'but it's the size of a raisin!'

WILD GARDEN

This field of flowers is one of my gardens,

for I have many.

I walk this one now, this beautiful

yellow, pink, red , green and all

the shades inbetween and I feel,

the bountiful bursting forth

of blooms and butterflies and moths.

Already the thistles move to seed and

yet, we're in high Summer yellow.

Already some of the leaves

come away from the trees

As the milk nuts on the hazels form.

I walk this field, this one of many

fields, that are my gardens.
The gardens that are free for us all.
Gardens full, of buzzing and humming
and song and hushshushing
of wind through leaves
and movement of clouds
unencumbered by buildings
As I stand in a field
On a mountain side
In Wales.

(Paula Denby)



Dexter, Gethin, Freddie & Jensen yr. 5/6 YBB



View from Mynydd Dinas looking South over Tata steelworks and the Sea beyond credit: Paula Denby

Migrant swallows, swifts and martins feed hungrily around Dinas Mountain, their first mountain stop as their numbers fly in across the sea at Aberafan. Mynydd Dinas holds the last recorded sighting of the Merlin hawk in old Glamorgan. What an aerobatic display between Merlin (predator) and swooping swallows (prey) that must have been.

Such an astonishing variety of different habitats, leads to an astonishing array of different species breeding and feeding - including the human foragers after the hazel canes and nuts, blackberries, wimberries and apples.

Q? What other use of the hazel wood would have occurred in Medieval times that is still in use today?



Hazel on Mynydd Dinas credit: Paula Denby

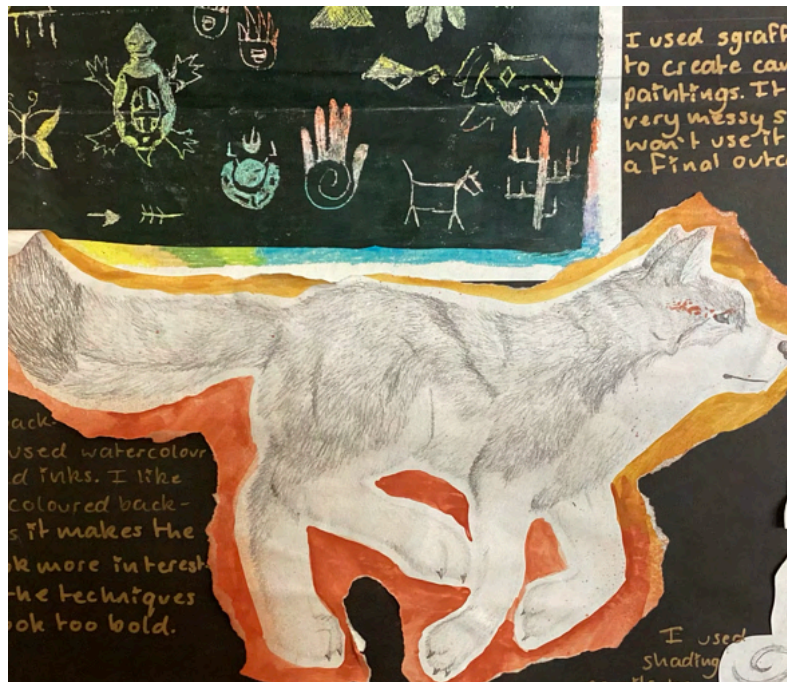
Q? Can you tell the age of a well coppiced hazel tree?

Q? What species thrive on this special mountain today that may have been there when the Princes walked her slopes?

Q? We know there were deer on the mountain, what predator besides humans might have also existed and hunted the deer?

Funfact: There is an old place name on Dinas that gives us a clue....

'Cae Rhiw Blaidd'



Wolf by Mia Ashford-John YBB

Q? What is a predator?

Q? What other mammals do you think the Princes ate?

Q? Do we eat the same creatures today?

Q? Are wild deer being sighted in the Afan valley today?

Q? Where do you think they may have originated from?

Today graceful swans swim on the Afan are they the descendants of Medieval swans once hunted now admired today for their beauty?

For lots of creatures like to return to their home territories to mate and raise young.

Q? What does the word "hiraeth" mean?

Funfact : Today, amongst the many plants growing on Mynydd Dinas there are many "wound" herbs, such as yarrow and selfheal with that pain relieving aspirin inspiring willow tree growing nearby.



selfheal on Mynydd Dinas. credit: Paula Denby

Q? What do we mean by the term a "wound herb"?

On the battlefield healers and their medicines were needed. The Welsh mountains are generously populated with all sorts of wild medicines known to modern herbalists and local people through their oral history of what heals and what harms.

The Physicians of Myddfai revisited
Ardd Fotaneg · Botanic Garden

In 2017 the National Botanic Garden of Wales will relaunch its Apothecary's Garden, originally planted in 2002.

I have been using the Garden's library to get a clearer picture of the work of the apothecary and have been pleased to rediscover the story of the Physicians of Myddfai (Meddygon Myddfai), whose work will also come into focus with the redevelopment of the new garden.

Myddfai is a village in north east Carmarthenshire. It was here that the first of the physicians practiced. His name was Rhiwallon and his descendants are said to have continued his work, in an unbroken hereditary line, until the eighteenth century.

Q? Who were the Physicians of Myddfai?

Q? Who was their mother?

Idea* 🌿. The National Botanical Garden of Wales is a wonderful place to visit for a day out or a school trip.

Funfact: Flowers in a local meadow near Ysgol Bae Baglan, provided the inspiration for the architect who based the colours of the schools walls on them!



Coutyard view of Ysgol Bae Baglan. credit: Paula Denby

TIR DIFFAITH

'This is the field of battle

but it wasn't glorious.

The air was rent

with screams and cries

of men, women and children

Fighting

for their lives

On both sides...'

(Paula Denby)

Excerpt taken from a long poem written after "Y Frwydr". Sadly though a narration poem describing the aftermath of a battle amongst many fought in Cymru throughout the centuries. It is as true today as it was then.

War is war in any age and any part of this planet

UN BYD.

In this modern age where an email can be sent, as if by magic, as an instant letter to the other side of the world - a feat of communication our letterbearing, horsebackriding ancestors would not believe possible! I have to admit it still baffles me how it is achieved?



It is my hope that as the internet reveals the horrors of wars happening around the world today - horrors that once were able to be concealed - that this revelation will become a fertile ground in which to sow the seeds of Peace.

I recently worked in a school, where I met an elegant Teaching Assistant supporting a Ukrainian pupil who spoke no English. She was translating my lesson for him to be able to participate. She revealed to me that she had been a Maths teacher in Ukraine before this recent war against Russia.

Q? How is Peace to become a reality on Earth?

Q? Can Peace be taught as a subject within our schools?

Q? Can this and subsequent generations of humans be taught skills that enable them to be Peacemakers?

Self, Family, Neighbour, Community (Tribe), Nation (Country), Continent, World.

Q? When has peace been successfully achieved throughout history?

Q? When have peace negotiations failed throughout history?

Q? How did The Princes of Afan secure allies?

Q? Who were these allies?

Different languages and cultures - differences are known to be bridged when faced with a common enemy. For example in Welsh history we have Rhodri the Great joining forces with Alfred the Great to fight the Danes. In British history we have the terrible World wars.

Q? Who were the greatest allies to the Princes of Afan?

Q? How many current wars are being fought today?

Q? Will history keep repeating itself or can humanity change?

TIR DIFFAITH

'Epilogue

What a waste war is

Waste land recovers

After industry, after battles

but not before

Many many lives

Are destroyed.

Let us learn now

Let us say ~ as a Human race

Enough...'

(Paula Denby)



Un Byd 2012 (detail) © Paula Denby 2024

'Into my home village flows Heavens starry river'

(JapaneseHaiku)

"Un Byd" was an Arts & Nature project that twinned Afan Forest Park in Wales with the C.W. Nicol Afan Woodland Trust in Japan and involved many school children from the Afan Valley and their teachers - working with Godo Utaka (a Japanese artist) and myself.



Afan Woodland memorial plaque, Shinanomachi, Nagano Prefecture, July 16, 2021 (David Spurr)

A Modern Ancestor of Afan Wallia

Inspirational! What a tale for the children - how one South Wales man could achieve such a lasting legacy because he never forgot the greening of the post industrial Afan valley and sought to establish peaceful bonds of friendship and the sharing of knowledge, forestry educational projects, using horses not machines in the forests to do the work

more sensitively. I imagine that the effect on land from heavy machinery and heavy battle isn't too dissimilar.

"Uncle Nic" and Dick Wagstaff (Afan Argoed's Manager at that time) created many wonderful projects incorporating Nature and the Arts enabled through their friendship and the twinning of the Japanese and Welsh woodlands.

Q? Where is the Japanese Garden in Afan Forest Park?

Q? Do you think it should be restored?

Q? Was twinning a Japanese and a Welsh woodland a good or a bad idea?

Q? Can you think of any other projects that involve twinning to create friendships?



Be proud of who we are
because we rest on the achievements
of those who came before
Us..

(Paula Denby)



Coloured pencil drawing by Sadie age 10. (YBB)

Additional Links

[Peace Schools - Welsh Centre for International Affairs \(wcia.org.uk\)](http://wcia.org.uk)


[The Welsh Women's Peace Petition - National Library of Wales](#)

[Academi Heddwch Cymru HOMEPAGE - Welsh Centre for International Affairs \(wcia.org.uk\)](http://wcia.org.uk)




Academi Heddwch Cymru HOMEPAGE - Welsh Centre for International Affairs

Academi Heddwch's aim is to extend Wales' strong tradition of peace-making and peace-promotion, by developing an...

 You Tube channel with more of my art, songs & poetry "The Singing Paintbrush" link as follows:

UCOHeI8NhwweZJS5FFgOLg_g

 For support and advice with wildlife projects within NPT contact:

biodiversity@ npt.gov.uk

Acknowledgements

I hope that you find these ideas useful and enjoy seeing the images I've used to illustrate them.

I am grateful to be a part of this work with "Calon Afan" to bring our local history to life.

Special thanks to Adam John, Dawn Noonan and the various pupils of Ysgol Bae Baglan for embracing and supporting this work.

We hope this pack will inspire that great human quality

'curiosity'

Paula Denby has almost 40 years experience working within Education and the Arts.

Early on in her career whilst working inside a secure unit for young offenders she designed and delivered an arts programme for the teenagers recognizing their need to express themselves creatively. Later her work as Head of Art in a residential school for pupils with emotional and behavioral difficulties saw her utilizing the Arts cross curricular with great success for her pupils.

On her return to Wales she immediately founded and managed a volunteer environmental conservation group "The Friends of Mynydd Dinas" working closely with Afan Forest Park with whom she secured a ten year contract. Volunteers were given training and skills development in habitat management and surveying amongst other benefits.

Born in Port Talbot, Paula has witnessed first hand the degradation of natural habitats through industry and human demand. This has influenced both her professional and personal work practices.

In 2006 she founded "EirlysArts", creating Nature and Art workshops for schools, forest centres and communities. These workshops reflect the unique combination of naturalist, teacher, artist, poet, singer and storycreator/teller that is Paula Denby.

2012 saw publication of "The White Bird" book with its anti-nuclear message and glorious illustrations. It initially toured Swansea libraries developing a keen following and continues to travel throughout the world.

July 2021 saw the birth of "The Singing Paintbrush". Paula started using social media channels to showcase her personal art practice which in her own words is 'a biography of my life'

There have been exhibitions and awards her favorite being the first in 1985 in Margam Orangery where for the first time she revealed to the public her poetry alongside her paintings and etchings.

Today, she continues to be involved with projects she cares about and believes are important - whilst working to establish a protected status for Mynydd Dinas.



(Paula Denby in 2023)

Be proud of who we
are

because we rest on
the achievements

of those who came
before

Us



Ysgol Bae Baglan nestled at the foot
of Mynydd Dinas. credit: Paula Denby

