

# Report on the Welsh Language Project, Patagonia 2020

January - December 2020

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# 1 Overview of the Project

The Welsh Language Project was established in 1997 with the purpose of promoting and developing the Welsh language in the province of Chubut, Patagonia, Argentina.

Each year, three Language Development Officers from Wales spend a period of ten months - March to December - working in Patagonia. They develop the language in Welsh-speaking communities through formal teaching in classes for young people and adults, teaching classes in three bilingual primary schools and Spanish-medium primary and secondary schools and through informal social activities. A permanent Welsh Learning Coordinator with responsibility for the quality of teaching is also based in Patagonia.

The network of Welsh language tutors based in Chubut Province is another important aspect of the project. Many of these local tutors work for the Project after attending Welsh for Adults classes in recent years. By providing an opportunity for individuals to apply for scholarships which lead to opportunities to visit Wales to attend Welsh courses, the Project helps to maintain teaching standards and ensures that the latest teaching methodology is operative in Patagonia.

The Patagonia Welsh Language Project is a grant agreement and is operated by British Council Wales in conjunction with the Welsh Language Committee. The Committee is made up of members of the Welsh Government, British Council Wales, the Wales-Argentina Society, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Cardiff University's School of Welsh and the National Centre for Learning Welsh. The Project operates in three catchment areas in the province of Chubut: the Andes, Gaiman and Trelew, offering a wide range of courses from beginner level to proficiency courses and speaking sessions for fluent Welsh speakers. Lessons are also held in the nursery, primary, secondary and adult sectors under the auspices of the Project.

The Welsh Language Development Officers employed by the Project teach a variety of courses including Taster, Entry, Foundation, Intermediate, Advanced and Proficient courses. Until recently, adult courses adapted for Spanish and Welsh contexts were used - courses prepared by Learn Welsh Cardiff, Cardiff University. The Project has now begun to use new courses provided by the National Centre for Learning Welsh. In due course all the courses will be translated and adapted to the context of Y Wladfa.

The Project Committee recognises the generous and important contribution of the National Center for Learning Welsh to the work of the Project in Patagonia. This Project, part of the Welsh Government's International Education Programme, is jointly funded by the Welsh Government, British Council Wales and the Wales-Argentina Association. Support for the Project's work also comes from the National Centre for Learning Welsh, Cardiff, Aberystwyth and Bangor Universities as well as Urdd Gobaith Cymru.

It is not possible, however, for the relatively small funding of the Project to pay for every element of the work supporting Welsh language and culture in Y Wladfa. The financial and practical contributions of our partners are extremely important in providing a wide range of Welsh classes, services and activities in the province of Chubut.

Patagonia's Welsh Language Project pays for three Welsh Language Development Officers who work in Patagonia for ten months each year. In addition, part of the Project's funding is

used to pay for the service of the local tutors who teach the adult classes as well as classes in the bilingual schools.

### **Ysgol y Cwm**

Ysgol y Cwm is a bilingual Welsh-Spanish school in the Andes. The school opened in 2016 when 50 nursery children were welcomed into their new classes. Eventually, the school will accommodate 200 children.

### **Ysgol yr Hendre**

Ysgol yr Hendre was established in 2006, with 22 pupils. Over 150 pupils now attend the school and receive bilingual Welsh-Spanish education.

### **Ysgol y Gaiman**

Ysgol y Gaiman opened in 1993 and was granted official school status in 2015. Last year, a percentage of year 6 pupils left school for the first time.

### **Coleg Camwy**

Coleg Camwy is a secondary school in Gaiman, where Welsh is taught as a second language. Many pupils from the bilingual primary schools attend Coleg Camwy.

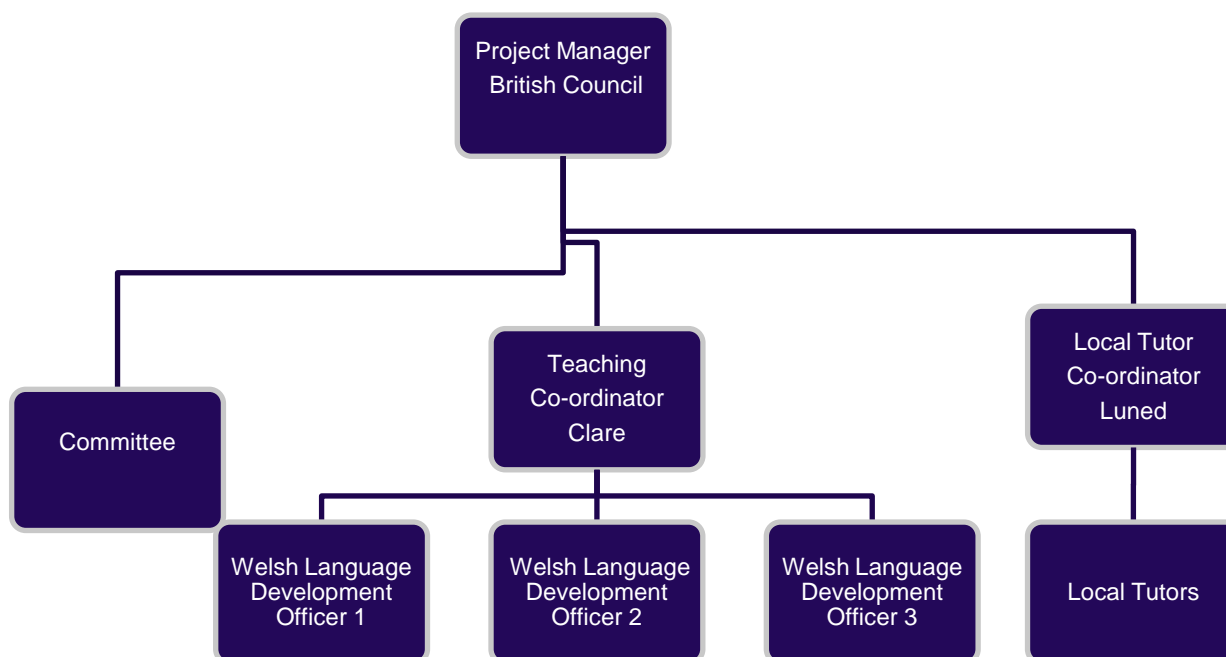
### **Spanish schools where Welsh is supported, in lessons or extra-curricular clubs**

|  | <b>School/institution</b> | <b>Area</b>   |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|
|  | Escuela 24                | Esquel        |
|  | Escuela N° 61 Bryn Gwyn   | Gaiman        |
|  | Ysgol Aliwen              | Dyffryn Camwy |

### **Centres offering lessons for adults**

|  | <b>School/institution</b> | <b>Area</b>   |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|
|  | Coleg Camwy               | Dyffryn Camwy |
|  | Canolfan Casa Toschke     | Porth Madryn  |
|  | Canolfan Trelew           | Trelew        |
|  | Canolfan Dolavon          | Dolavon       |
|  | Canolfan Esquel           | Esquel        |

## 2 Structure and Governance



The Project is operated by British Council Wales within its International Education Programme. The three Officers are managed by the Teaching Coordinator, with the Local Tutor Coordinator overseeing the network of Local Tutors.

### The Committee

The Committee shares its knowledge, expertise and networks to take forward the work of the Project, supporting British Council Wales in practical ways, in particular:

- Develop the Project's aims by supporting the implementation of the Project
- Make British Council Wales aware of developments in the teaching and learning of Welsh in Wales and Patagonia
- Advise British Council Wales on the delivery of key elements of the Project
- Undertake specific tasks as agreed between the Welsh Government (as appropriate), British Council Wales and the Committee

The Committee's activities include the provision of assistance with:

- promoting opportunities offered by the Project to schools and individuals
- shortlisting candidates for teaching posts in Patagonia
- developing criteria for teaching posts in Patagonia, sit on the interview panel and advise on appointments in consultation with British Council Wales
- the recruitment of individuals to other posts as agreed and in accordance with British Council Wales' corporate guidelines, including placement of Welsh domiciled students and observers from Patagonia
- finding accommodation for visitors coming to Wales from Patagonia
- forging links between schools in Wales and Patagonia

## Committee Members

| Welsh Language Project Committee |                                    |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Luned Gonzalez                   | Local Tutor Coordinator            |
| Clare Whitehouse                 | Teaching Coordinator               |
| Marc Philips                     | Wales-Argentina Society            |
| Dr Iwan Rees                     | Cardiff University                 |
| Eryl Williams                    | Yr Urdd                            |
| Eiry Miles                       | National Centre for Learning Welsh |
| Rebecca Pugh                     | Welsh Government                   |
| Dr Walter Ariel Brooks           | British Council Cymru              |

In March, Rhisiart Arwel left his role as Academic Monitor. The responsibilities of the Academic Monitor were transferred to British Council Wales, with their Project Manager chairing the Committee temporarily for a year. Similarly, the responsibility of writing the annual report was transferred to the British Council Wales Project Manager, with Committee members contributing to the report.

A fortnightly meeting was arranged with the three Officers, the Teaching Coordinator, the Local Tutor Coordinator and the Adviser to ensure consistency across the Project. Officers were also asked to submit a quarterly report to British Council Wales to feed into the full International Education Programme Report.

### Welsh Language Development Officers 2020

Three Welsh Language Development Officers were appointed for the academic year 2020, all travelling to Argentina in February 2020.

Anwen Harris: Primary teacher specialising in the Foundation Phase. Located in the Chubut Valley.

Sally Ann Nicholls: Specialising in secondary education, Welsh second language (KS3 - KS5), seconded from her role as Language Officer with Mudiad Meithrin. Located in Esquel in the Andes.

Marian Broschott: Welsh for Adults Tutor. Based in the Chubut Valley to teach within the adult and secondary school sectors.

# 3 Effect of Covid-19

## Teaching

In February 2020, the three Language Development Officers travelled from Wales to Patagonia to begin their 10-month teaching placements. Although there was news about Covid-19 in the media, it was unclear how much of a threat it posed internationally. The three Officers continued to integrate into the communities they were working with and began to teach Welsh full time in accordance with their schedules.

As the weeks went on, it became clear that the Covid-19 situation was serious and officials were offered flights back to the United Kingdom by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Anwen and Sally, along with many of the teachers in schools, decided to accept the offer and by the end of May, they were both self-isolating in Wales. The schools were now closed on government advice and all face-to-face lessons for adults were stopped.

Moving lessons to an online format was a challenge, not only for the local officials and tutors but also for the learners, due to the fact that the internet infrastructure in the Chubut area is underdeveloped. Many learners live outside the main towns and subsequently rely on mobile phone data to connect to the internet. Due to other limitations, including a lack of ICT skills, a lack of appropriate hardware at home and at work as well as childcare implications, many learners were lost at the point of moving lessons online. However, it became apparent that a

number of new learners from areas outside Chubut were registering.

*The map shows the locations of learners on the adult courses, who joined the online lessons with the officers.*



### List of learners' locations (adults) 2020

#### Argentina

- Bahia Blanca
- Buenos Aires
- Chubut
- Cipolletti
- Comodoro Rivadavia
- Cordoba
- Esquel
- Gaiman
- Mar del Plata
- Mendoza
- Playa Union
- Puerto Madryn
- Rawson
- Salta
- Trevelin
- Neuquen

#### International

- Germany
- Uruguay
- Mexico

Adult lessons were held on Zoom, with many learners using it for the first time. Once they got used to Zoom, officers introduced additional platforms and apps to facilitate learning and teaching, including Kahoot, Quizlet and Flipgrid. Marian and Sally were very inventive during the lockdown period and engaged learners by holding informal sessions, including reading clubs and evenings spent practicing Welsh oral skills. They also encouraged learners to record videos about learning experiences during the lockdown period.

Marian, along with members of the Committee and the National Centre for Learning Welsh, spent time adapting the Centre's courses for Patagonian learners

*An example of a timetable for adult lessons - Marian Brosschot, Welsh Language Development Officer*

|          | Dydd Llun  | Dydd Mawrth                       | Dydd Mercher              | Dydd Iau            | Dydd Gwener  |                           |
|----------|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--|---------------------------|
| 8-9.00   |  |                                   |                           |                     |  |                           |
| 9-10.00  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PARATOI</b><br/> <i>paratoi gwersi, addasu adnoddau, cyfieithu, ffilmio, trefnu gweithgareddau menter, marcio gwaith a.y.y.b</i></p> |                                   |                           |                     |  | Cyfarfod Cyngor Prydeinig |
| 10-11.00 |  |                                   |                           |                     |  |                           |
| 11-12.00 |  |                                   |                           |                     |  |                           |
| 12-13.00 |  | Coleg Camwy MYNEDIAD 12.30-1.30pm |                           |                     | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PARATOI</b><br/> <i>paratoi gwersi, addasu adnoddau, cyfieithu, ffilmio, trefnu gweithgareddau menter, marcio gwaith a.y.y.b</i></p> |                           |
| 13-14.00 |  |                                   |                           |                     |  |                           |
| 14-15.00 |  |                                   | Coleg Camwy SYLFAEN 2-3pm |                     |  |                           |
| 15-16.00 |  |                                   |                           |                     |  |                           |
| 16-17.00 | Coleg Camwy CANOLRADD 4-5pm  |                                   |                           |                     | Sesiynau 1-1   |                           |
| 17-18.00 | MYNEDIAD 1 5.30-7pm  |                                   | MYNEDIAD 1 5.30-7pm       | MYNEDIAD 1 5-6.30pm | MYNEDIAD + SYLFAEN Madryn 6-8.30pm   |                           |
| 18-19.00 |  | Paned a Sgwrs/Sesiwn Sgwrsio      |                           |                     |  |                           |
| 19-20.00 | UWCH 7-9pm   | UWCH 7-8pm                        | MYNEDIAD 1 7-8.30pm       | MYNEDIAD 2 7-8.30pm |  |                           |
| 20-21.00 |  |                                   |                           |                     |  |                           |

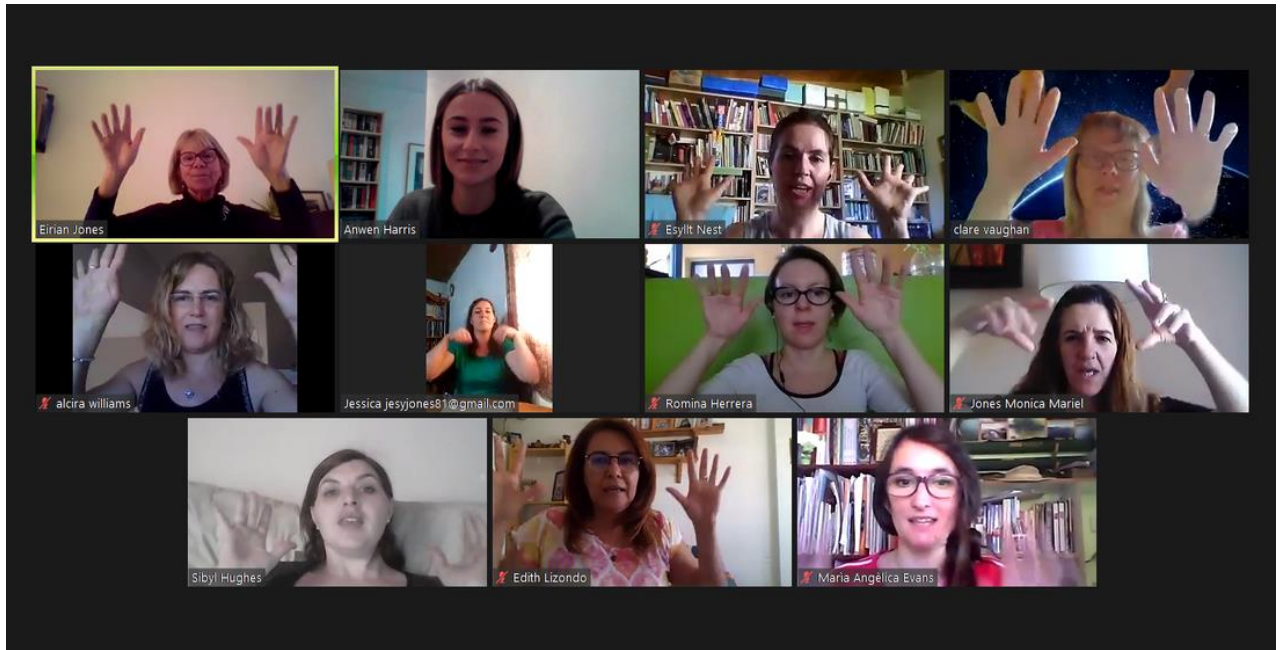


Google Apps became the main method of presenting lessons in schools. Anwen Harris worked mainly with Ysgol y Gaiman, but also held sessions with Coleg Camwy learners and provided some lessons for adults. At Ysgol y Gaiman, Anwen and teachers at the school used Google Classrooms from Monday to Friday to set written work and to show video clips as well as to present resources to accompany the work. They would mark and assess the work on a weekly basis and give each child personal feedback on their work. Every Tuesday and Thursday, live lessons were held on Google Meet. This was the best opportunity for the pupils to practise their Welsh.

Another element of Anwen's work was to present Tric a Chlic lessons to develop learners' understanding of recognising and learning letter phonics. As a Foundation Phase specialist, Anwen decided to organise Tric a Chlic training for three of the teachers in the bilingual primary schools. Peniarth offered to train the teachers free of charge.

### Anwen Harris's timetable

|               | Dydd Llun   | Dydd Mawrth   | Dydd Mercher                                       | Dydd Iau   | Dydd Gwener   |
|---------------|---|---|--|--|---|
| 08:00 – 09:00 |   |   | Cyfarfod Staff Ysgol y Gaiman (bob yn ail wythnos) |  |   |
| 09:00 – 10:00 | Patrwm Iaith yr Wythnos (adolygu)<br>Google Classrooms<br>Gwaith 4 oed<br>Gwaith Titw Tomos Las | Paratoi<br>Paratoi gwersi, gwaith menter ac addasu adnoddau | Coleg Camwy  | Dosbarth Plant 4 oed<br>10:30 – 11:15  | Cyfarfod Cyngor Prydeinig                                   |
| 10:00 – 11:00 |   |   |  |  |   |
| 11:00 – 12:00 |   | Paned a sgwrs   |  |  |   |
| 12:00 – 13:00 |   |   |  |  |   |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Ysgol Gymraeg Y Gaiman  | Ysgol Gymraeg Y Gaiman MEET – Grŵp 1                        | Ysgol Gymraeg y Gaiman                             | Ysgol Gymraeg Y Gaiman MEET – Grŵp 1   | Ysgol Gymraeg Y Gaiman MEET – Gwasanaeth cahu 14:30 – 15:30 |
| 14:00 – 15:00 |   | Ysgol Gymraeg Y Gaiman MEET – Grŵp 2                        |  | Ysgol Gymraeg Y Gaiman MEET – Grŵp 2   |   |
| 15:30 – 16:00 |   |   |  |  |   |
| 16:00 – 17:00 |   | Cyfarfod Staff Ysgol y Gaiman                               | Plant TRELEW ZOOM                                  | Paratoi<br>Paratoi gwersi, gwaith menter ac addasu adnoddau<br>HER- Clwb yr URDD | Paratoi<br>Paratoi gwersi, gwaith menter ac addasu adnoddau |
| 17:00 – 18:00 | Cwis – 2 waith y mis.<br>Paratoi gwaith menter.   |   |  |  |   |
| 18:00 – 19:00 |   |   | Siaradwyr Tŷ Camwy                                 |  |   |
| 19:00 – 20:00 |   |   |  | Gwaith Menter  | MYNEDIAD + SYLFAEN Madryn 18:30 – 20:30                     |
| 20:00 – 21:00 |   |   |  |  |   |



*Primary school teachers receive Tric a Chlic training from Canolfan Peniarth*

## Number of Learners

There has been a significant reduction in learner numbers compared to previous years. Covid-19 has had a major impact on the numbers of learners in the schools, as interventions, clubs, and extracurricular opportunities have disappeared, along with teachers from Wales. With fewer educators, there have been fewer opportunities. There was also a slight decrease in the number of adults attending the lessons, but the important role of the Local Officers and Tutors in mitigating the impact of Covid-19 on the number of adults in lessons must be acknowledged. This was done by offering lessons to adults outside of working hours and ensuring that learners did not have to travel to the local centre for lessons.

|                   | <b>Numbers in 2019</b> | <b>Numbers in 2020</b> |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Nursery           | 194                    | No data available      |
| Primary           | 615                    | 277                    |
| Secondary/college | 423                    | 207                    |
| Adults            | 179                    | 139                    |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>1411</b>            | <b>623</b>             |

## The work of Menter Patagonia

The work carried out by local tutors and teachers as well as the Project Development Officers in the classrooms is very important. This is when the linguistic foundations are being established and the first steps taken on the journey of becoming fluent in Welsh. As language is a medium of communication, it is necessary to create contexts and opportunities to use Welsh and locations to speak it. The contribution of the Project's Officers in socialising the language in the communities is extremely important, and some would argue that it is as important as the work that goes on in taught classes. In 2008, Menter Patagonia's objectives were set out as follows: Real efforts must be made to normalise the use of the language in a cross-section of social situations - to extend its social use. The aim should be to arrange a wide variety of situations, events and activities for using the Welsh language.

- *Activities for nursery children and their parents. This could be an opportunity to engage parents and get them to attend a Welsh class - at least one session a week.*
- *Activities for primary school children - sports, crafts, painting and handicrafts, games, nature and environment, folk dancing, singing/acting groups, Saturday morning playgroups, holiday clubs, hobbies etc. (two different age groups meeting twice a week).*
- *Activities for children of secondary school age – Aelwyd yr Urdd, sports, outdoor activities, cultural activities, social activities (two sessions a week whenever possible).*
- *Regular social activities for adults - quiz, fashion show, cooking, tasting different types of food, discussion or debate groups, chat groups, different hobby groups, computer lessons for beginners, walking clubs, cycling, mountaineering, skiing, lunch club, 'nosweithiau llawen', talks and lectures, folk dancing, picnics, outings, movie nights and so on.*
- *Work closely with local Welsh organisations to inspire them - such as the eisteddfod, competitive meetings, chapels.*
- *Seek to extend visual use of Welsh locally - radio, museums etc.*
- *In recent years, Development Officers have been dividing their time between teaching and the work of Menter.*

Unfortunately, there were no opportunities for the Officers or Local Tutors to organise face to face activities. Due to the constraints, online resources have been used to promote the work of Menter within the Project. A variety of virtual activities and events were organised (see table below), with numerous opportunities for learners in Patagonia to connect with fluent Welsh speakers from Wales.

| <b>Event</b>  | <b>Description</b>   |
|---------------|--|
| Paned a Sgwrs | Weekly hour of online chat. Usually, Tuesday morning at 11 o'clock. A mix of people who are learning and people who are fluent Welsh speakers. People from Wales joining too. Chatting |

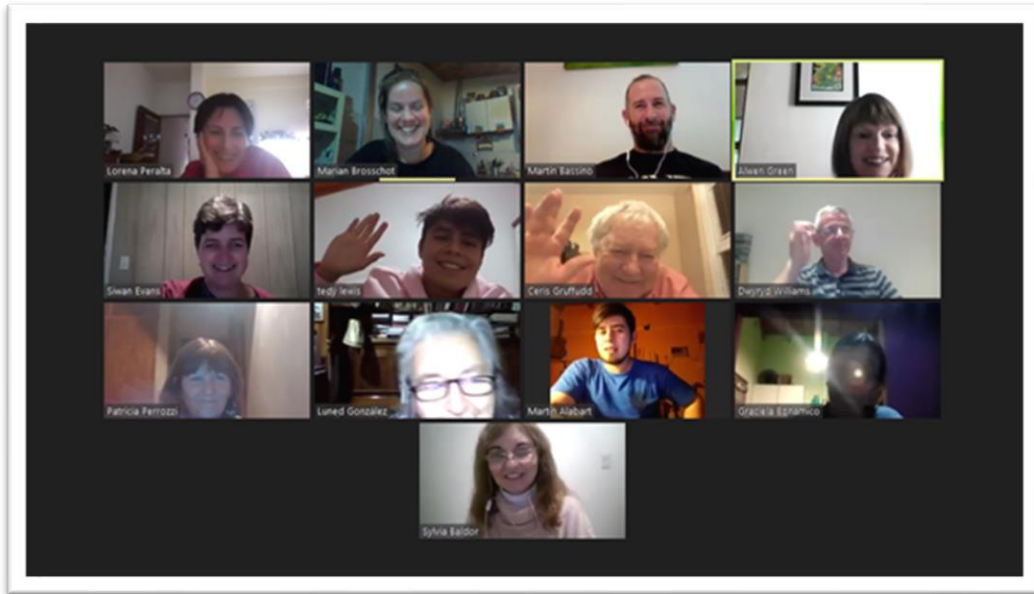
|  |   |
|--|---|
| (A cuppa and a chat)   | as a large group and dividing into small groups (in rooms) to converse within a smaller group for a while. Prepare weekly questions or theme.   |
| Cwrw a Chlonc<br>(Beer and chat)                                 | An opportunity to chat informally in the evening with a small beer. Online via Zoom. Usually, chatting as one large group depending on numbers (two groups if the number is too large for one group). Held fortnightly at 7 o'clock on a Thursday evening.  |
| Ras Eirfa Fawr (Big vocabulary race)                             | A session of about an hour for Entry level learners to practice conversation. Divide into small groups and change groups three times. One Advanced/fluent Welsh speaker/person from Wales volunteering to help in each group. Three sessions have been held so far, with the last two sessions being held on August (14th) and September (21st). Preparing questions and modeling answers in advance. |
| Gwin a Sgwrs<br>(Wine and chat)                                  | An opportunity to chat informally with a little wine and connect with people across Patagonia and other places in Argentina.  |
| Cwisiau<br>(Quizzes)   | Each officer takes turns to arrange a quiz, approximately twice a month. Fun, different themes, new people joining in every time. Between 15-20 people attending, from Wales and Argentina.   |
| Noson Lawen<br>(Evening of Welsh entertainment)                  | The event was held on the 1st of May 2020. There were performances by people in Patagonia and Wales including Gwilym Bowen Rhys and Alejandro Jones.  |
| Patrwm Iaith yr Wythnos<br>(Language Pattern for the week)       | Using video to share the Language Pattern for the Week on social media. Encourage the use of basic sentence patterns and to promote the Welsh language among learners of Ysgol Gymraeg y Gaiman. An opportunity for parents to practise with their children at home.  |
| Sgwrs gyda Tedy Lewis (Zoom)<br>(A chat with Tedy Lewis on Zoom) | 26/11/2020: Tedy Lewis gave a talk over Zoom about his experiences living in Wales for 8 months during the pandemic. Presentation with pictures and questions at the end.   |
| Sesiwn coginio Dysgu Cymraeg<br>(Welsh Learning Cookery Session) | Cooking Christmas pudding live from Plas y Coed tea house, Gaiman with Ana Chiabrande for Learning Welsh in Wales. Live session on Zoom but also available on Learn Welsh on Youtube.   |
| Diwrnod S'mae/Shwmae Day   | 15/10/2020: Collecting videos of learners introducing themselves and sharing them throughout the day on Menter Patagonia's Facebook page.   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Paned a Sgwrs<br>Pan-Americanaidd<br>(Pan-American<br>cuppa and chat) | 15/10/2020 a 13/11/2020: Zoom talk session with learners from various countries in the Americas. The first session was especially for beginners and the second session was open to all. The second session was attended by 30 people: Welsh learners and speakers from Canada, USA, Uruguay, Mexico, Argentina and Wales. |
| Un mes de galés   | July 2020: A month of daily Welsh lessons by Marian for complete beginners (Spanish speakers from Patagonia) on YouTube.  |
| Otro mes de galés   | The second series of 25 videos for beginners learning Welsh. One video per day posted throughout October and early November. Available on Menter's YouTube.   |








<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70i1BrzfzRM&t=1s>

*A month of Welsh lessons for beginners through the medium of Spanish. The first video was watched by over 2,000 learners.*



Screenshot of the Gwin a Sgwrs (Wine and Chat) session 18/09/2020

|  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| <b>SESIWN 1 – DYSGU CYMRAEG</b><br>CYFARCH / RHIFAU / LLIWIAU / AMSER PANED  |   | <b>Lliwiau</b><br>Pa liw?   | <b>Colores</b><br>Qué color?  |
| Helo<br>S'mae /Shwmae<br>Bore da<br>Prynhawn da  | Hola<br>Que tal?<br>Buenos días<br>Buenas tardes                  | Coch<br>Glas<br>Gwyrdd<br>Melyn<br>Oren<br>Brown<br>Pinc<br>Porffor / Piws<br>Gwyn<br>Du  |  Rojo<br>Azul<br>Verde<br>Amarillo<br>Naranja<br>Marrón<br>Rosado<br>Violeta<br>Blanco<br>Negro |
| Pwy wyt ti?<br><b>Elin</b> ydw i   | Cómo te llamas?<br>Me llamo <b>Elin</b>                           | <b>Amser paned</b><br>Wyt ti isio / eisiau ...?<br>Dw i isio / eisiau ...<br>paned<br>coffi<br>llefrith / llaeth<br>siwgr<br>diod<br>dŵr<br>bisged / i<br>ffrwyth | Queres...?<br>Quiero...<br>una taza (de algo)<br>te<br>café<br>leche<br>azúcar<br>una bebida<br>agua<br>galleta/s<br>fruta  |
| <b>Rhifau</b><br>Un<br>Dau<br>Tri<br>Pedwar<br>Pump<br>Chwech<br>Saith<br>Wyth<br>Naw<br>Deg   | <b>Números</b><br>1<br>2<br>3<br>4<br>5<br>6<br>7<br>8<br>9<br>10 |   |   |
|  |   | <b>Amser mynd adref</b><br>Hwyl fawr!<br>Ta tal<br>Tan yfory!   | Adiós!<br>Chau!<br>Hasta mañana!  |
|    |   |   |   |

Vocabulary poster to accompany Access level chat session

## Officers' Comments:

*Menter's work has been very challenging. I spent a short time in Argentina before the lockdown and then travelled back to Wales. Socialising in Argentina takes place very late in the evening and due to the time difference, this was challenging. I would have enjoyed getting to know the people better, in order to know what they enjoy doing. On the other hand, many events and celebrations have taken place online and we have definitely had fun doing activities such as quizzes and cuppa and chat.*

- Anwen Harris

*All of Menter Patagonia's activities were digital in 2020, but this enabled people from Wales to attend the social evenings and take part in the activities as well. The unfortunate situation caused by the pandemic has strengthened the relationship between Welsh speakers in both countries.*

- Sally Ann Nicholls

## 4 Scholarships

The Centre for Welsh Learning's main contribution to the Project usually takes the form of the provision of funding for three scholarships for learners from Patagonia, which enables them to follow a month-long Welsh course in Wales. Due to the pandemic, it was not possible for scholarship holders to come to Wales in 2020 and their scholarships were deferred for a year. At present, there are no guarantees that the courses will run in 2021, so we will have to wait and see how the three successful learners can be supported and how the Centre's funds can be used effectively. Similarly, neither the scholarships funded by the Urdd nor the Cardiff University/Santander scholarship took place in 2020 due to international travel restrictions.

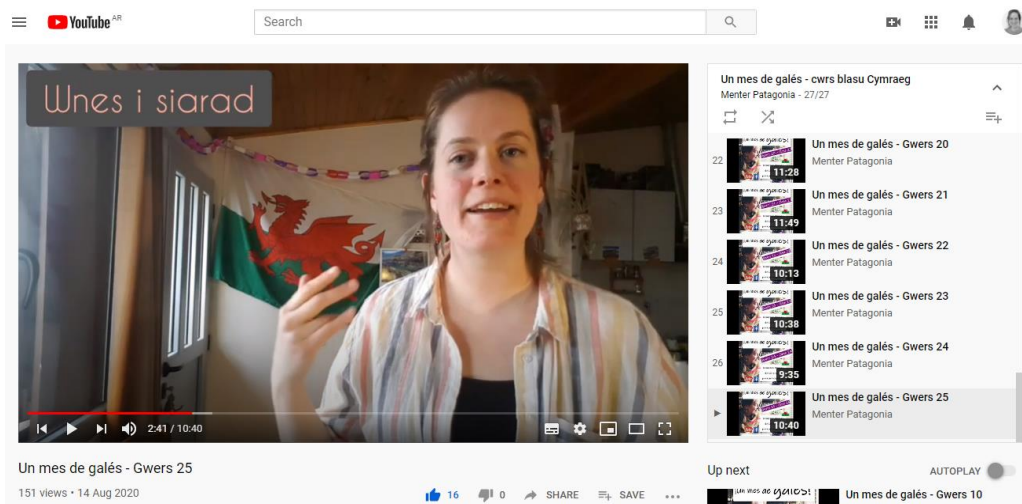
## 5 Stakeholder Consultation

The Project has never experienced a year similar to 2020. The impact of Covid-19 has been felt worldwide, especially in the education sectors. The Project does not want to lose the face-to-face element, but this year has shown that the effectiveness of technology must be harnessed, especially when considering those learners who have accessed the Project from outside Chubut Province, the original home of Y Wladfa; in places like Santa Fe, Buenos Aires, Mendoza, Neuquen, and even Salta in the north.

As well as adapting to the changes due to Covid-19, 2020 brought a change to Project's governance, with the end of the Academic Monitor's role. The British Council was keen to listen to the needs of learners, educators and local communities in Y Wladfa, as well as discuss how we can continue to strengthen Y Wladfa's links with Wales.

In order to gather this information, key stakeholders submitted questionnaire responses. Three main themes emerged from the questionnaires:

- Continue to provide opportunities for new learners to access lessons by offering online lessons, especially to those learners from outside the province of Chubut
- Strengthen the social element online by offering learners opportunities to connect with Welsh speakers from Y Wladfa and from Wales
- Make links with schools in Wales, with a focus on multilingualism
- Continue to support learners who leave school
- Support the local communities in their work of promoting the Welsh language, as well as the unique culture of Patagonia





# Appendices

## Officers' Reports

### Anwen Harris

I'm Anwen and I'm the Welsh Language Development Officer for the Valley area. I went out to Argentina in February to take up my job developing the Welsh language for ten months. The welcome was amazing and I met some lovely and friendly people.

Unfortunately, after a month of freedom and then being in the job for only two weeks, we were all suddenly under lockdown. This had a huge impact on the schools and the community. Despite the situation, we evolved to learn online. I met many children for the first time online and this was very challenging. After eight weeks in lockdown, I flew back to Wales. I have been working and teaching in Argentina but doing this from Wales. Technology is amazing!

I've been working mainly with primary school children but I've also been teaching secondary school children, taking part in Welsh speaking sessions and a couple of adult sessions. I taught classes at Ysgol y Gaiman and Year 1 at Coleg Camwy. I have also been running and supporting Menter activities. We organised quizzes, videos of Patagonian people speaking Welsh, language pattern for the week and a weekly cuppa and chat.

This year has been a very different year to that we expected. It has definitely been a challenging year, but also a year full of experiences and I have learned so much.

Many positive aspects have emanated from this year. We have held training for the first time between the teachers of Patagonia and the Tric a Chlic scheme in Wales. The teachers in Patagonia were using this scheme but had never received training on its use. The training ensured that teachers made effective and accurate use of the scheme to develop the standard of Welsh. This was very successful. This year has opened doors to technology and strengthened links between Y Wladfa and Wales. This would not have happened in a normal situation.

Sharing PowerPoint presentations and documents with the pupils has been another positive aspect. The children were able to watch video clips, listen to music and read stories during our lessons. This would not have happened in a face-to-face classroom due to a lack of resources.

Online learning has allowed us to be more flexible. We have been teaching the primary pupils in smaller groups, so the children have been getting more attention and support during the lessons. As a result, this has led to pupils being much more talkative. In terms of professional development, I've managed to improve my technology skills this year. This is vital to keep pupils interested and ensure that lessons are not repetitive. This year has made me think creatively and experiment with technology. I've created activities and video clips on Quizlet, Kahoot, Wordwall, iMovie and Padlet.

In addition, I have improved my language skills, learning more language patterns and mutations. Repetition is vital when learning Welsh as a second language. Learning and

improving my language skills is vital. Not only have I improved my Welsh language skills, but I've also learned many Spanish words and sentences and I will continue to learn Spanish.

The highlight of the year was hearing the Welsh National Anthem being sung every day in primary school. This would send a chill down my spine - seeing children of all ages sing the anthem, miles from Wales. This was amazing! I only had two weeks in school and every second was precious. I enjoyed every second!

Unfortunately, Covid happened and the school closed quickly. This was a huge disappointment! I missed all the important events like joining a local choir and all the school celebrations, eisteddfodau, the Glaniad Festival and singing festivals. Educating the children on screen was quite frustrating and seeing the pupils not being able to mix with their friends for such a long time was very difficult for me. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to meet the amazing people of the Chubut Valley. Unfortunately I didn't arrive in the Andes, but I've met people online and look forward to visiting them when the situation improves.

When the Covid situation improves I will definitely return to Argentina to see everyone and meet the Andes people face-to-face. In the meantime I am returning to my post at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Castell Nedd.

## **Sally Ann Nicholls**

I was born in Pentre'r Eglwys near Pontypridd and grew up in the historic town of Llantrisant, Rhondda Cynon Taff. I went to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llantrisant and Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari. I loved studying languages at school and my favourite subject was Welsh, of course!

I studied at the University of Wales, Lampeter and gained an honors degree in Welsh. After I graduated I completed a teaching practice course at the University of Wales Institute Cardiff. I was a teacher for twenty years and taught Welsh as a second language to 11-18 year olds. I was also head of department at three schools.

In 2015, I started working as a Welsh for Adults Tutor at Cardiff University and in 2016 I started studying an MA in Bilingualism and Multilingualism Studies. I graduated this year and my dissertation was based on primary school parents' awareness of the intellectual and cognitive benefits of bilingual education for their children.

Since 2017 I have been working as a Croesi'r Bont Officer for Mudiad Meithrin and since September 2019 I have been chief officer in the south east. I have piloted and developed a language scheme called 'Croesi'r Bont' and now the scheme has developed nationally. My hobbies are travelling, learning about minority languages, running and Welsh literature. My favorite author is Kate Roberts and her work has inspired me greatly. I have had many adventures whilst travelling the world. I took a sabbatical year in 2020 and have been working as a Welsh Language Development Officer in the Andes in Patagonia. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic I had to return to Wales but I have continued with the teaching and social activities on Zoom.

During my year as an Officer I have taught a number of classes at Entry, Foundation and Intermediate levels. Apart from the formal teaching and lessons, I have been responsible for organising many of Menter Patagonia's activities such as quiz nights, bingo nights, Noson Lawen and coffee mornings. The virtual activities outside the classroom have enabled learners to use and practise their Welsh language skills, and this year we were able to invite people from Wales to take part in the activities as well.

The post has enabled me to learn more about the Welsh language and culture in Patagonia. The year has been an unforgettable experience and the experience of living and working in Chubut for a short time was unique. I have learned some simple words and phrases in Spanish and would like to continue learning the Spanish language. I have learned many new teaching skills, especially how to deliver virtual lessons and use technology to communicate with the learners on a regular basis. In a very short space of time, I had to adapt my live lessons and deliver them on a virtual platform rather than presenting them in a classroom.

My use of the target language and the way I communicate with learners during lessons have also been strengthened. I have experimented with some very different teaching methods and methodologies and regular communication with other Welsh tutors has helped to develop my skills and teaching style. I have learned how to use programs such as Kahoot and Wordwall to create games and language resources.

As part of the job I've been responsible for updating and sharing things on social websites to promote and promote the work of the Project, learning new skills in the process.

The highlights were definitely the opportunity to live and work in Patagonia for a short time, and to be part of a unique community in Chubut. I took the opportunity to make many new friends and to learn more about the Welsh language and culture in Patagonia.

I loved teaching classes and it was a great pleasure to see the learners making progress. They were all very enthusiastic and very passionate about the language.

The biggest disappointment was that the pandemic prevented me from doing all the things I had hoped to do while I was in Argentina. After three weeks of living there, the country was placed under stringent lockdown and the Welsh schools and centres closed immediately. Unfortunately, I didn't get the chance to travel around South America to educate the students face-to-face or socialise at all. I was looking forward to going to the eisteddfodau and to celebrating the Glaniad Festival while I was there, but unfortunately I had to return to Wales in May. The intention was to return to Argentina in September, but unfortunately the situation worsened due to the pandemic.

My intention is to keep in touch with everyone and with a bit of luck I will be able to return to Chubut in the near future when the situation has eased in terms of the pandemic.

I have continued to communicate with learners since the official lessons ended and they appreciate the opportunity to use their Welsh. It's really nice to compare the weather and different celebrations in the two countries!

## Marian Brosschot

My name is Marian Brosschot and I come from Botwnnog on the Llŷn Peninsula in North West Wales. I went to live in Trelew in February 2020, just a month before the stringent quarantine started in Argentina. I delivered one lesson in a classroom with about half of my groups before starting everything online.

My role as an Officer was to teach Welsh courses at all levels, encourage people to use and learn Welsh and organise Menter Patagonia's social activities for people to use Welsh. This year I had about 12 groups, most at Entry level. Also, I was helping with groups in Porth Madryn and giving free one-to-one lessons to people who couldn't or didn't want to attend group classes.

To encourage people to use the Welsh language, we organised quizzes, cups of tea and chat (once a week), chat sessions to Entry level in particular, language games (Quizlet live) and kept in regular contact with learners through Whatsapp and Menter Patagonia's Facebook page, so that they can use Welsh to communicate as well, e.g. by sending voicemails on Whatsapp and filming themselves speaking in Welsh and posting the videos online.

In order to support learners who could not attend online classes and widen the opportunities for people to learn the Welsh language, I filmed two courses of 25 lessons, each of 10 minutes' duration on YouTube and shared them on Menter's Facebook page. Menter Patagonia's Facebook page has been busy this year with all sorts of activities and games and many people have been able to take part, who couldn't attend a class.

Personally, I have gained a lot of confidence in my ability to adapt to difficult situations and to think creatively when working from home and online, in a new country and culture. I've learned a lot about technology and the best use of technology to connect with people and help them learn. The pandemic has also given me some freedom to experiment with new things e.g. YouTube videos. I've gained a lot of confidence talking to a camera and recording myself, but the pandemic has also highlighted the importance of talking to people in general and keeping in touch, as well as the importance of face-to-face lessons in a real class.

This year has had a very positive impact on the technological side of the work and my development as an online Welsh tutor. I have learnt how to use many computer programs and gained recording, adapting, presenting as well as filming skills. Also, I have learnt how to prepare short lessons for filming, explaining without the aid of props in a classroom and thinking creatively about how to adapt pair or group work for an online class. It has been great to be able to work with tutors from other areas, e.g. the Andes, which we would not have been able to do during a normal year. Similarly, when collaborating with local tutors by sharing classes and using online resources.

The success of the 'Un mes de galés' course was certainly a highlight, because I noticed how important it was to have something like this for first language Spanish speakers. It's clear from the number of people who have viewed the videos and left comments, as well as from the messages I've received directly, that there is a need for this sort of thing and that people appreciate it and want more of it. It has been a real achievement, especially in the circumstances which were prevalent during 2020, because everyone was at home and increasingly turning to technology for solutions.

It was also wonderful to see so many new learners joining the online course in August, because it shows how much interest there is and that people are keen to learn Welsh. It's great that most of those who started the course online, have carried on with the course.

My biggest disappointment was that I didn't get to travel anywhere and didn't get to meet a lot of people face-to-face and to have a real relationship with them. I also couldn't attend all the important events like the eisteddfodau and the Glaniad Festival.

I anticipate that classes will resume online in March and we will have a similar year ahead or we expect the first half of the year at the very least to be quite limited. Classes will continue in the same way and new classes will be available for people to resume or start at the levels appropriate to them. I will have the opportunity over the next couple of months (Jan/Feb 2021) to adapt and prepare online resources to make them ready for the new season. The Access and Foundation courses will have been translated and hopefully ready for use.

There will be a need to think about combining classes and restructuring the timetable for new classes, some of which will be completely new or new to me as a result of taking Sally's groups.

Returning to Argentina will be challenging because I will be returning there on my own and so much will depend on the situation in relation to the pandemic and how much freedom there will be to move around and meet people.

## **Local Tutors**

### **Luned Gonzalez**

The Project has already supported a network of Local Tutors, who provide Welsh-medium lessons within the schools in Patagonia, as well as lessons for teenagers and adults. In primary schools, the Project contributes towards the salary of teachers in schools and is dependent on the contribution of local government.

To ensure support for the Local Tutors during the Covid-19 lockout period, a number of tutors within the network received training to develop their teaching skills. Fortnightly, the Learning Co-ordinator would set up a training session on aspects of ICT and language improvement, with the help of the Officers. These sessions were called the 'Teachers' Room'. As many within the network lacked confidence in providing virtual lessons, it was decided that the Local Tutors needed to be supported to ensure they were able to deliver online lessons effectively.

In the absence of officers and teachers from Wales, the tutors in Patagonia were officially trained. Anwen Harris secured training for 4 members of staff from each of the three bilingual primary schools in Chubut. In addition, WJEC provided virtual training for 4 Local Tutors on the 'Dechrau Dysgu' programme - an official WJEC qualification for Welsh tutors. Bangor University paid for 4 tutors to complete the course.

## National Centre for Learning Welsh

### Eiry Miles

In 2020, work continued on adapting the new Centre for Welsh Language Learning course books for learners in Patagonia. A translator was appointed in Wales to finish adapting the Access course, but due to the difficulties of the first lockdown, she was unable to continue with the work. Therefore, the responsibility for this work was transferred to the Project's tutors in Patagonia, who are working with Dr Iwan Rees of Cardiff University to ensure that the course includes vocabulary and linguistic patterns that are part of the rich dialect of Y Wladfa.

It is hoped that the new course books will have a positive impact on the learning and teaching of Welsh in Y Wladfa for the following reasons:

- The new courses have been carefully designed, drawing on the latest research in the field of language learning. There has been a thorough consultation and piloting process to ensure that the courses are of a high standard and present the Welsh language in a clear and logical way
- Each unit is accompanied by many supplementary resources and detailed guidance, which means much less preparation for the tutor. This will be particularly important in Y Wladfa, where resources are scarcer, and wages are lower than in Wales
- Courses are accompanied by high quality digital materials, enabling learners to practise listening skills at home and in the classroom
- The professionally designed course books and content and themes are fresh and modern. Because of this, it will be a smoother and more interesting experience for learners

Many of the Centre's other resources were shared with the tutors in Patagonia, e.g. training on online learning and Access course PowerPoint presentations. In addition, the Centre assisted in securing places for four of the tutors on the Dechrau Dysgu training course, the Centre's qualification for Welsh tutors, delivered by Dysgu Cymraeg in North West Wales and accredited by WJEC.

The main contribution to the Project by the Centre for Learning Welsh is to provide the finance for three scholarships for learners from Patagonia, which enables them to follow a month long Welsh course in Wales. As a result of the Pandemic, it was not possible for scholarship holders to come to Wales in 2020 and their scholarships were deferred for a year. At present, there is no guarantee that the courses will run in 2021, thus we will have to wait and see how the three successful learners can be supported and how the Centre's funding can be utilised effectively.

# The Teaching Coordinator's Report

**Clare Whitehouse**

There is no need to explain that 2020 has been an unusual year and there is no need to elaborate on the reasons for this! Suffice to say that the Learning Welsh Project has faced many challenges and that both positive and negative elements have emerged. I would like to emphasise 'working as a team' as the one absolutely fundamental aspect that has enabled us to face the situation this year and has allowed us to continue with the work of educating and promoting the Welsh language and culture. Three people with the relevant skills were appointed for the requirements of the posts and although the appointment of teachers from Wales with the appropriate skills to work in Y Wladfa is always a challenge, this has been achieved successfully this year. The work of forming a team that would not only work together but also work with local tutors and teachers on the ground began back in Wales in January at a briefing meeting between the three officers, the Teaching Coordinator and the Consultant at British Council Wales. We spent a whole day preparing the three officers for the work ahead, creating a strong sense of belonging to the Project and being an integral part of it from the beginning.

The officers going out to Patagonia have always been expected to accept the requirement to be flexible in responding to the needs of the communities in Y Wladfa, but this year this has become even more important. There was a need to cope with the disappointment of not being able to do things that had been planned and adjusting to a whole new way of working, and although this has been an experience of learning on the job, new ways of working have certainly ensured that this has carried on under difficult circumstances. The new elements will need to be taken into consideration in order to see what will benefit the Project in the future, and at a time when there was a need to analyse the Project to see what needed to be done to improve it. These experiences will undoubtedly form the basis of useful evidence in relation to the Project's future.

In early 2020 we were starting to organise the year's activities, and everyone involved in the project was enthusiastic. The officers had arrived, schools had opened their doors, teachers appointed to the three schools had arrived and the extra-curricular lessons had begun; but within a month Argentina was under a stringent lockdown period and everything was closed. In some cases the officers had not even met the students they were supposed to teach. In the case of Coleg Camwy, the secondary school in Gaiman, where lessons are officially workshops, these had not even been organised before the lockdown period came into effect.

There was then a period of two to three weeks during which people waited to see how things would develop. Maybe everyone would be back at work and school before the end of the month. When it became clear that the situation was not going to be resolved easily, we started to look at ways to work online and when it became clear that the virus was only just beginning, Argentina's borders were closed. Special flights were offered and two out of the three officers took advantage of the offer to return to Wales, provided they continued to work for the Project.

This was a new situation for everyone, working in a virtual way with the team that had started to form on both sides of the Atlantic. It was obvious that everyone needed a lot of support during this time and regular meetings were held online. Due to illness, the Teaching Co-ordinator was off work for some months during the new normal, but by the winter holidays she was well enough to return to work and to co-ordinate the second half of the year.

### **The Teaching Coordinator's regular activities**

- **Trevelin Advanced group's weekly class**  
Before the lockdown, the group was working through the Advanced course, but things changed because of the situation with Covid-19. By now, they have started reading a novel, looking at a relevant news story, studying a poem... any excuse to meet on Zoom and speak Welsh!
- **Regular contact with the Coordinator in Gaiman**  
We are in regular contact by email and speak when necessary. We discuss practical issues such as officers' daily lives, educational issues such as the courses and also organisational issues such as payments to tutors.
- **Meetings every other week with the British Council Adviser and officials**  
When the situation became confusing and officers needed more support, we started having meetings on Zoom to see how the work was progressing and to have an opportunity to discuss the work, if necessary.
- **Weekly/bi-weekly conversation with officers**  
This is an important part of my job as I am the coordinator who is familiar with life in Y Wladfa, but also because I am Welsh, I can understand how someone from Wales views the situation. As we have been in regular contact, I believe that we have been able to develop a positive working relationship and that I have been able to offer guidance on the issues that arise at work as a tutor here in Y Wladfa. This year this has become even more important as the need to make major decisions has arisen and that one of the officers is still in Patagonia while the other two are home in Wales, but continue to work for the Project.
- **One-to-one talks to discuss issues with tutors as they arise**  
This year, I've had talks with tutors about the changes to the WJEC Welsh for Adults oral examination, talks about online learning methodology, talks about new resources, to name only a few.
- **Keeping in touch with the Adviser at the British Council**  
Another important element of my work is keeping in touch with the British Council and making sure that there is clear communication between Y Wladfa and Wales on whatever issues arise, e.g. sharing British Council's consultation questionnaire and encourage local committees to respond.



- Weekly/fortnightly sessions in Patagonia's Virtual Room

For a long time, I wanted to see an element of language improvement and tutor training. Y Wladfa is a large place, 700 km from end to end and even when I was able to travel from the Andes to the Chubut Valley, it was impossible to get tutors and teachers together because of the long distances involved and their working patterns. Teachers can be working in the mornings, afternoons and evenings, therefore the working day is long. People who work in an office finish at 2pm and get a siesta, but not teachers. If an individual is studying, they study from 6 in the evening, thus getting people together is very difficult.

One of the benefits of the lockdown period was that people were at home working and were more flexible in terms of their time. An average 18 people have been attending my sessions regularly, most in the Friday morning group and others not available on a Friday morning attending on a Tuesday afternoon. This has led to the creation of a WhatsApp group where tutors can ask questions to each other, myself and other officers and this has been a successful way of keeping in touch. It has also enabled one of Comodoro Rivadavia's teachers to attend, even though it's 375 km from Trelew and 600km from the Andes!

In preparation for these sessions I had to start looking for programs and games that could be used in the online sessions, in the hope that the tutors and teachers would get the experience of using them and thus gaining the confidence to use them in their own teaching as well. One of the Virtual Teacher Room sessions was led by the officers and they shared ideas about what they have found useful this year when working online.

It would be great to be able to continue the sessions in 2021 and include more elements of sharing good practice and training in second language learning; it must be remembered that a percentage of tutors who are learning Welsh have no formal teaching qualifications. In early 2021, the new Access course which is currently being adapted for Spanish will need to be looked at to ensure that tutors know how it works as there are more interactive elements available than with the previous courses.

### **Other activities**

- Making the courses available to tutors and officers  
It is vital that our learners have access to new courses that are developed in Wales, as we have been calling for suitable courses for some years. The first half of the Access course was initially translated and adapted but the format was unsuitable and the second half of the course needed to be translated and adapted. As one of the officers stayed in Y Wladfa and was unable to travel at all during the winter holidays, she set about working on the second half of the materials and we have been discussing some elements of the work to ensure that the new course reflects the language of Patagonia. Officers need to complete courses, as they carry the heaviest burden of adult learning. Also, local tutors need copies of these courses and it would be nice if for all adult tutors to receive a memory stick containing all the courses at the beginning of 2021, so that they can work on the computer or print the course. The officer has now decided to return to Argentina for a further year and has set about completing the work during Y Wladfa's summer

holidays, to ensure that a full Access course for tutors is available for the 2021 academic year.

The collaboration with Eiry Miles, who is on the Project's committee but also works for Learning Welsh, has also been beneficial as we have received draft copies of the courses being taught in Wales. One thing that needs to be done next year is to finish adapting and translating where necessary, so that all the courses are suitable for the audience here in Patagonia.

The online materials are very useful for tutors, officers and learners and we would like to be involved in any training plans for teaching the new qualifications. An important development in this regard is the fact that Learning Welsh in Wales has offered four of Patagonia's adult tutors a place on the course that will lead to the Welsh adult learning qualification. As the teaching will be online, all four will be able to attend the theory sessions and mentors who will have links with Y Wladfa will mentor and help them, once they have started the teaching practice aspect. We hope this will be a successful experiment and there will be an opportunity for others to attend in the future.

- Supporting officers as they lead Menter's activities  
This year, as it has not been possible to hold activities in schools etc, many activities have taken place online so it has been possible for me to attend a virtual Noson Lawen that brought together the talents of Wales and Y Wladfa, and also quizzes, Cuppa and Chat events, etc. It must be said that these activities were successful and brought together learners from all over the world! It's been great to see people from Wales and Y Wladfa chatting on the same screen! On two occasions, screen contact was made between learners in Patagonia, Wales, the United States and Canada! This has started a connection that we hope will grow during 2021.
- Organising exams  
This year, 47 learners were registered to sit one of the WJEC adult examinations! This demonstrates the importance of emphasising the status of the language by offering standardised examinations from Wales and provides individuals with the opportunity to prove what they have learned and is also a way of encouraging learners to progress from one level to another.

Many of the potential candidates are students at Coleg Camwy and have had the opportunity to sit exams for adults starting at Entry level and moving on to Intermediate level. Of course, due to the global situation, it might well be difficult for learners to sit an exam this year, as this depends on when the examinations will be held. Due to the academic year beginning in February and running until December, some of the learners will have moved on to university. The exams are now likely to be offered online in 2021, so the potential candidates will have to be pursued to start preparing for the June 2021 exams in a completely new and experimental way!

### **Positive elements of 2020**

One way to get on with the work this year is to focus on the good things that have arisen from the situation and try not to pay too much attention to the negative aspects! This has

been an important part of the role of the two coordinators in the past in mentoring the officers who come to live in South America and have to cope with a new way of life in a new country under pressure of work, but this year every one of us has been learning to live with a new way of life and subsequently the mentoring has been very different.

- **Working as a team**  
This year the emphasis was on the idea that the officers would be working as a team: with the British Council, coordinators and tutors and local communities. I believe that this worked due to the goodwill of the officers and the belief of the other shareholders in the value of the Project.
- **Going far with few resources**  
The fact that the work has carried on has been to the detriment of people who live where there is no reliable web connection or who are not as tech-savvy as other people. Because geographical location was not important, individuals interested in learning the Welsh language were able to do so by joining the classes on the internet. This has also given the language status, by showing that we are just as ready to experiment with other languages as with English, even though we receive much less funding!
- **Learning new skills**  
We have all been forced to look for new ways of working and the emphasis on online learning has been challenging but also rewarding. Back in April none of us had heard of Zoom, and our use of programs like Quizlet or Kahoot was very limited due to the limitations of the web in the centres where classes are held. We have now found our way around the new world. By learning on our own, by asking each other and by doing research, we have adopted new skills and begun to use materials that are suitable for a new world of education.
- **Working together**  
With less emphasis on geographical boundaries, we have been able to come together in a way that never existed before. This has meant that those who were outside the boundaries due to the need to travel long distances within Argentina have been able to come into contact with their fellow learners or tutors and this benefits everyone.
- **The dedication of local tutors**  
It is a fact that most local tutors contribute to the Project because of their love of the Welsh language and culture and not because of the financial recognition! Most of them have carried on with the courses they taught, adapting to the need to work online and with technology. Some groups have disappeared due to age-related demographics and a reluctance to adapt to using the technology, but for the most part the work has progressed, whether with children in schools or as extracurricular courses for adults.
- **Sharing ideas**  
The officers have been good at sharing their experiences and if anything was working well in a class, they have been willing to share it with each other and other

team members; this is something that was not always the case in the past due to all of the tutors being very much attached to their geographical areas.

- **New courses**

Many new courses have started due to online learning and some have attracted many learners. Entry level is the most popular for beginners, but chat groups have also been popular with many students who are keen not to lose their language during the difficult times.

### **Negative elements of 2021**

It must be acknowledged that living through such a challenging year was not all sweet and it must be acknowledged that negative elements have hampered the attempt to keep going.

- **An inability to make full use of the three officers' skills**

The three officers have different skills that suited the areas where they were sent, but unfortunately things happened that meant that their skills could not be used to their full potential.

- **Lower numbers**

The growth in the number of people learning Welsh in Y Wladfa, mainly due to the growth in bilingual (Spanish-Welsh) schools, has been something to celebrate for many years. A relatively small percentage of adults are learning a second language and this year fewer have continued because of an inability or unwillingness to adapt to the demands of using technology. Some are at an age in which they do not respond to change very well and have therefore ceased to attend online classes, while others feel that it is impossible to continue learning a language while at home with the family. Some have no reliable web connection in the house. It is also fair to say that some have found the situation more suitable for language study and have taken advantage of the extra time they have at their disposal because there is no need to travel to work and so on.

- **The effect of learning a second language on children and young people**

With the outbreak of COVID-19 in Argentina, the country closed down suddenly and went into stringent lockdown. Since April, no face-to-face classes have been held in schools, although the three bilingual schools have continued with online classes. This is due to weak internet connections and low speeds in the province, which are at best unstable. In some homes there is only one computer and siblings have to share it with parents who work away from home.

At first, the teachers and the children were groping in the dark as they had to face a situation that they were not trained to face, but because good teachers were creative, they began to sort things out step by step. Unfortunately, research shows that young children are unable to learn with such success online and that it is an unsuitable way to teach them, while teens and adults benefit from online lessons. Therefore, the numbers attending online classes are very uneven and another

challenge is that the families themselves cannot speak the language we are trying to teach and so the children have lost out on a year of Welsh language teaching and learning.

- Lack of visits from Wales

There are usually a number of visits from groups from Wales, including regular travellers throughout the year, teachers who come to work in the three bilingual schools, Project-funded officers, Santander bank undergraduate students and the crew of the Urdd. Only one of the officers stayed out in Y Wladfa to work this year. Their presence is an important link between Y Wladfa and Wales and they highlight the links that exist and give a valid reason for teaching Welsh to young and not so young students. Who knows when these visits can be resumed?

- Lack of scholarships

For obvious reasons this year, it has not been possible for learners or teachers from Y Wladfa to travel to Wales to improve language and learn new teaching skills. This is also an important element in the work of the Project.

### Balancing the pros and cons

2020 will be a year to remember, not only because of the negative effects of the pandemic that has dominated the world. It is not easy to learn or teach a second language wherever you are, but Wales and Y Wladfa's joint commitment to learning Welsh this year has been nothing short of a miracle! We are aware that only a small percentage of the population work hard for the language and culture and that they have an incredible impact through their dedication and perseverance.

A gemstone does not always shine brightly until it is polished, and in a strange sort of way, this year has shown the real value of the Project. We should all be proud of the small part we have played in ensuring that there are plenty of positive features to celebrate as we approach the end of the year.

