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HUMPHREYS

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Emyr Humphreys

Emyr Humphreys, born in 1919 in Prestatyn, north Wales, is one of the foremost Welsh novelists writing in English. He has published over twenty novels, which include such classics as *A Toy Epic* (1958), *Outside the House of Baal* (1965) and *The Land of the Living*, an epic sequence of seven novels charting the political and cultural history of twentieth-century Wales. He has also written plays for stage and television, short stories and poems. He was described by the poet R. S. Thomas as ‘the supreme interpreter of Welsh life’.

In the early 40s, as a conscientious objector and whilst studying history at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, he was sent to work on the land during the Second World War. He subsequently went as a war relief worker to the Middle East and then to Italy. In the mid-fifties, he joined BBC Wales as a drama producer, before taking a lectureship in Drama at the University of Wales, Bangor.

Among many honours, he was awarded the Somerset Maugham Award in 1958 for *Hear and Forgive*, the Hawthornden Prize for *A Toy Epic*, and he has also won the Wales Book of the Year Award in 1992 and 1999.

Ganed Emyr Humphreys ym Mhrestatyn yng ngogledd Cymru ym 1919. Mae’n un o nofelwyr mwyaf blaengar Cymru. Yn ystod ei yrfa lenyddol, cyhoeddodd dros ugain o nofelau, gan gynnwys clasuron megis *A Toy Epic* (1958), *Outside the House of Baal* (1965) a *The Land of the Living* – cyfres epig o saith nofel yn adrodd hanes gwleidyddol a diwylliannol Cymru yn yr ugeinfed ganrif. Mae hefyd wedi ysgrifennu dramâu ar gyfer y llwyfan a theledu, straeon byrion a chasgliadau o gerddi. Disgrifiwyd ef gan R. S. Thomas fel ‘the supreme interpreter of Welsh life’.

Yn ystod ei gyfnod yn astudio hanes ym Mhrifysgol Cymru, Aberystwyth, ymrestrodd yn wrthwynebwyr cydwybodol pan ddechreuodd yr Ail Ryfel Byd. Wedi iddo fwrw sawl cyfnod yn y Dwyrain Canol ac yn yr Eidal yn gweithio ym maes cymorth dyngarol, treuliodd gyfnod yn gynhyrchydd theatr ac yn ddarlithydd Drama ym Mhrifysgol Cymru, Bangor, cyn rhoi’i fryd ar ysgrifennu yn llawn amser.

Ymysg ei anrhyddedau mae’r Somerset Maugham Award ar gyfer *Hear and Forgive*, yr Hawthornden Prize am *A Toy Epic*, a gwobr Llyfr y Flwyddyn ym 1992 a 1999.

foreword

Emyr Humphreys: Welsh novelist supreme. He has been to Wales what that great Nobel-winner William Faulkner was to his American South: the cartographer of the mental country of a whole people.

During a marathon writing career spanning more than fifty years, Humphreys has seemingly produced a novel for almost every crucial aspect, phase and period of Wales' twentieth-century history.

The ominously turbulent decade of the thirties, riven by ideology, is captured in *A Toy Epic*. *Outside the House of Baal* traces the sad history of Welsh Nonconformity's terminal decline. The seven-novel *The Land of the Living* sequence is a saga of erratic Welsh progress over broken terrain throughout the last century. *Jones* captures the self-alienation and queasy exile that accompanies the fag-end of a way of life, while *The Shop* shows there can be no way back, however equivocal and uncertain the way forward.

All these aspects and more of our recent history Emyr Humphreys, our fiction laureate supreme, has enabled us the better to comprehend.

M. Wynn Thomas,

Chair of the Welsh Books Council

cyflwyniad

Emyr Humphreys: prif lenor Cymru. Gydol ei yrfa y mae wedi ceisio gwasanaethu Cymru yn y modd y gwasanaethodd William Faulkner, enillydd Gwobr Nobel, ei annwyl ardal ef, sef Deheudiroedd yr Unol Daleithiau. Fe luniodd ddelw ar ein cyfer yn ei nofelau o'n meddylfryd cymhleth ni fel cenedl.

Dros gyfnod o hanner canrif a mwy y mae Emyr Humphreys wedi cyhoeddi cyfres hir o nofelau sydd, rhyngddynt, wedi llwyddo yn rhyfeddol i rychwantu holl brofiadau amlweddol a thymhestlog Cymru'r ugeinfed ganrif.

Y mae *A Toy Epic* yn crynhoi cyfnod cythryblus y tridegau. Yn *Outside the House of Baal* cynigiodd inni ddarlun cytbwys, amwys, cryno o nychdod diwylliant crefyddol y capeli. Y mae'r saith nofel yng nghyfres *The Land of the Living* yn dilyn hynt cenedl wrth iddi ymlwybro'n betrus drwy ddegawdau y ganrif ddiwethaf. Yn *Jones* ceir darlun cofiadwy o Gymro alltud sy'n gynnyrch trist diwylliant drylliedig. A dangosir yn *The Shop* nad oes dihangfa hawdd i'w chael i'r Cymry yn ôl i glydwch tybiedig y gorffennol.

Fe'n galluogwyd gan Emyr Humphreys, ein prif lenor, i adnabod ac i amgyffred y gweddau hyn oll ar ein hanes hynod fel pobl.

M. Wynn Thomas,

Cadeirydd Cyngor Llyfrau Cymru

fiction

Outside the House of Baal

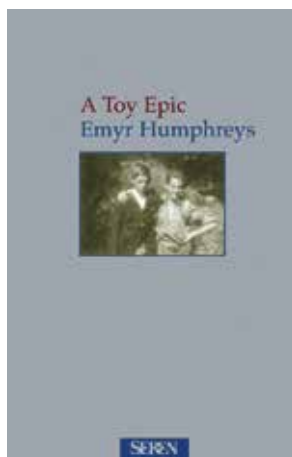
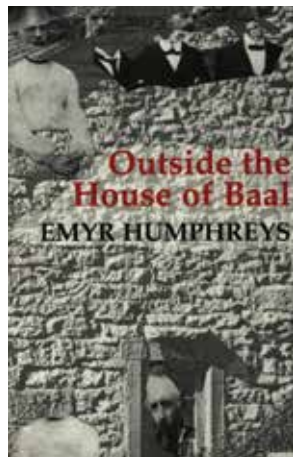
Emyr Humphreys

9781854111029

£9.99 pb

Seren

Spanning the twentieth century, this classic novel tells the story of two families who see many changes in Wales, cultural, economic and political. Many of these changes are seen through the eyes of J. T. Miles, a left-wing pastor and pacifist, who is very much concerned with the economic circumstances of his flock and endeavours to work hard to improve them, often at the expense of and to the disgust of his family. He is, of course, fighting a losing battle, as the Great Depression and later the closure of the mines lead to mass poverty and mass emigration.



Seren Classics: A Toy Epic

Emyr Humphreys

9781854110091

£8.99 pb

Seren

A novel about the friendship of three boys from differing backgrounds growing up in Flintshire in the 1930s. One lad, Albie, is a bus-driver's son and attracted to Communism; the second, the religious Iorwerth, is the son of a farmer; and the third, Michael, becomes a Welsh nationalist. The novel is about leadership, ambition and betrayal – constant themes in all of Humphreys' writing, set in the context of a Wales emerging from its Nonconformist past but trying to decide what should be retained and what abandoned.

Available as an e-book

The Woman at the Window

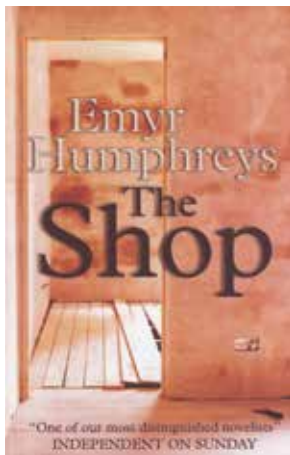
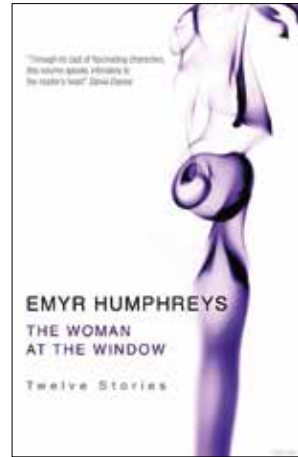
Emyr Humphreys

9781854114891

£7.99 pb

Seren

Gentle but haunting, this selection of short stories takes a closer look at the importance of parental and filial love through the generations. His protagonists reminisce over the pattern of their lives, looking back as well as forward, for the chance to rekindle lost loves and find a home for themselves, either in Wales or in a sunny, but alien expat Europe. Many characters live with the ghosts of the past, but the memories and lingering regrets mix with a sharp sense that you are never too old for life to throw surprises at you: three comfortably retired men find their sedate reunion dinner turn into a conflict with a knife-wielding escaped prisoner in a pre-Celtic tomb; a trip to the site of their first meeting brings a married couple face to face with a corpse, and illusions are shattered when a retired head teacher meets again with his first love.



The Shop

Emyr Humphreys

9781854113900

£7.99 pb

Seren

Full of immense richness and subtle wit, this engaging novel examines the power of ancestral and cultural heritage and the impact such history has upon the present. As an intense young filmmaker, Bethan Mair Nichols seems to have total happiness until an unexpected legacy bearing the weight of family and communal expectations forces her to question her ambition, motives, and her very role in the world. Compassionate and moving, this novel is based on an ancient folktale from medieval Wales.

fiction

Library of Wales: A Man's Estate

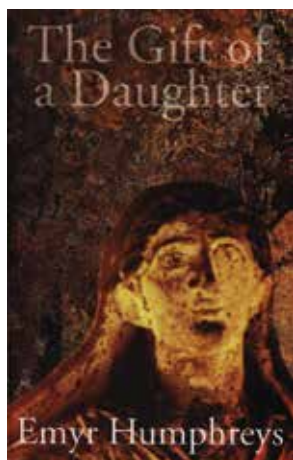
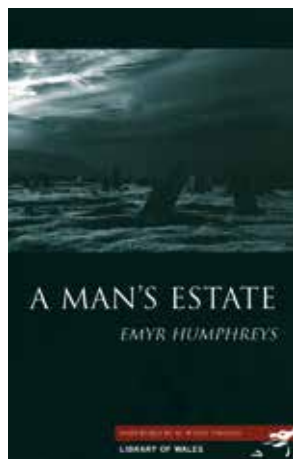
Emyr Humphreys

9781902638867

£7.99 pb

Parthian Books

Hannah Ellis is thirty-five, unmarried and still living at Y Glyn, the family farm in Wales where she has been brought up by her mother and stepfather, a forbidding man with a powerful hold on the neighbourhood. Loving her country yet resenting the egotism of her family, she yearns for the return of her long-banished brother Philip, believing that he will rescue her from this bleak existence. But Hannah little realises that Philip's arrival is imminent and is to herald enormous changes as he unwittingly ignites the passions and strengths of an unusually intertwined community.



The Gift of a Daughter

Emyr Humphreys

9781854112224

£10.95 hb

Seren

Archaeology lecturer Aled Morgan and his wife Marian flee to the home of old friends in Tuscany to escape a family tragedy. Yet even immersed in Etruscan culture, Aled finds that friendships aren't all they seem, and that his wife has become almost a stranger to him. In fact, he isn't even sure he knows himself any more. By the time he returns to his once idyllic home in Anglesey, Aled is sadder and more experienced, but in many ways no wiser. In charting Aled's journey of spiritual discovery, Emyr Humphreys has once again written an engrossing novel of the human condition.

Old People are a Problem

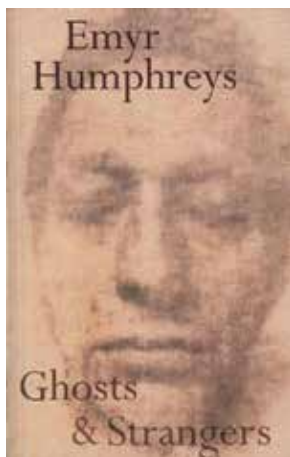
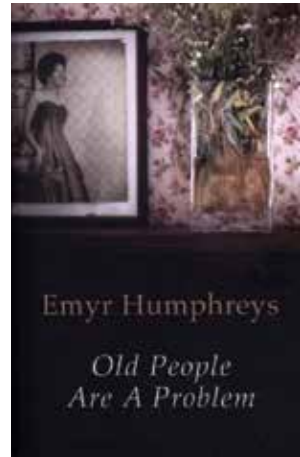
Emyr Humphreys

9781854113313

£6.95 pb

Seren

A collection of eight diverse stories for and about the elderly. Humphreys explores change: political, social and physical, and its effects on the individual and society. The stories also represent an exploration of what the experience of age can offer the twenty-first century, and how that century can accommodate the old and their ideas. They range across such issues as asylum-seeking, cultural nationalism in Wales and political nationalism in Europe.



Ghosts & Strangers

Emyr Humphreys

9781854112996

£6.95 pb

Seren

A collection of four short stories which explore the nature of human relationships. Wives and husbands, parents and children, lovers past and present, test and confirm the notion of love – the ingredient in life for which we all look. As the characters dance around each other, in France, Italy and Wales, Emyr Humphreys shows his considerable skills and draws on his long experience to produce subtle and intriguing fiction of the highest order.

fiction

Flesh and Blood

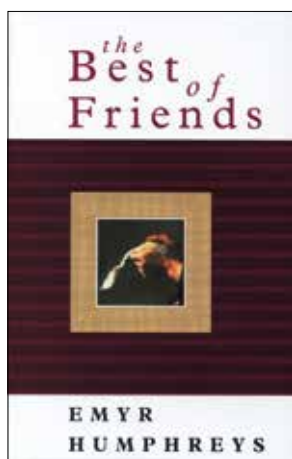
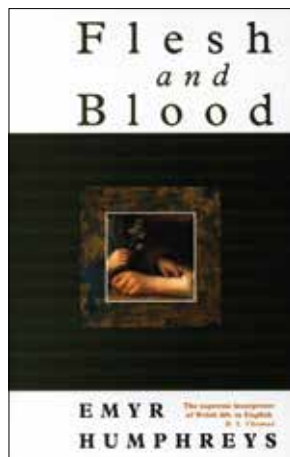
Emyr Humphreys

9780708315125

£7.99 pb

University of Wales Press

Flesh and Blood is the first of seven novels which make up *The Land of the Living* series of books. Amy Parry is the central character of the series, and it is her struggles, and the trials and tribulations of her family and friends, that provide the framework of a complex model of twentieth-century experience, centred for the most part on Welsh life.



The Best of Friends

Emyr Humphreys

9780708315651

£7.99 pb

University of Wales Press

The second of seven novels in the sequence *The Land of the Living*, following Amy Parry and her friend Enid as they embark on college life in the 1920s, nurturing an interest in nationalism, socialism and women's rights as they deal with lovers and seek a role in life.

Salt of the Earth

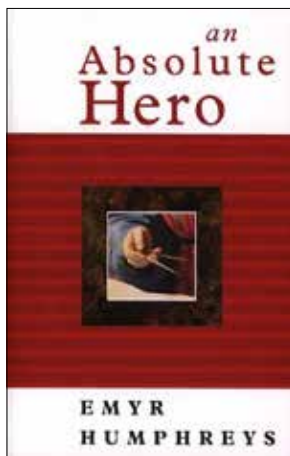
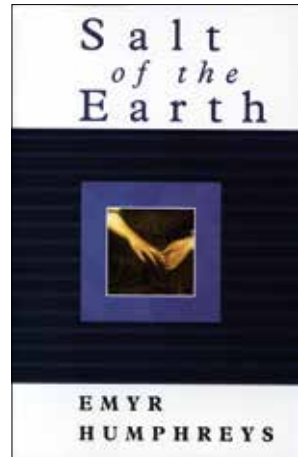
Emyr Humphreys

9780708315668

£7.99 pb

University of Wales Press

For Amy Parry, now a county school teacher, the cataclysms of the 1930s have taken their toll. Her love is split between two men, one offering the hardship and splendour of life in the mining valley and the political struggle of the distressed areas, the other a lifetime of devotion. But Amy has causes of her own, some universal, others more personal, as she searches desperately for the identity and purpose in an uncertain and increasingly fragmented world.



An Absolute Hero

Emyr Humphreys

9780708315934

£7.99 pb

University of Wales Press

Amy Parry is bereft of her best friend Enid who has died in childbirth, unable to marry Val Gwyn who is seriously ill with TB, and determined not to choose poverty and struggle with her former lover Pen Lewis. When she marries John Cilydd More, companionship and motherhood bring her security and some fulfilment. But her peaceful existence is invaded by the turbulence of striking miners and hunger marchers, and her content is shattered when Pen Lewis returns.

fiction

Open Secrets

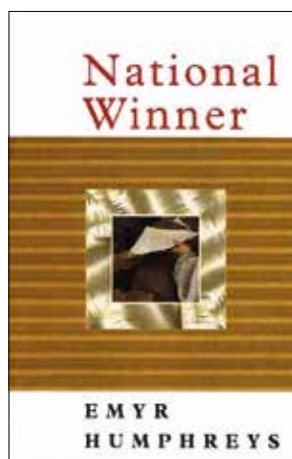
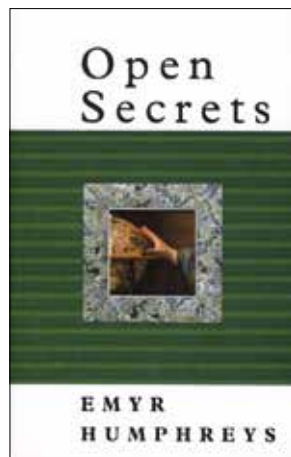
Emyr Humphreys

9780708316269

£7.99 pb

University of Wales Press

Amy Parry and her husband, the poet John Cilydd More, are confronted with not only the destruction and desperation of the Second World War, but also the strain of conflicting political beliefs on their marriage. As Amy struggles to balance her loyalty to her family with her own independent ambitions, she becomes involved with the welfare of German refugees, the Labour movement and war work in ways that find little favour with her husband, and even less with Nanw, her jealous sister-in-law. Their compelling story unfolds against the turmoil of a radically changing world.



National Winner

Emyr Humphreys

9780708316511

£7.99 pb

University of Wales Press

Amy Parry appears to have reached a summit of affluence and influence. As Lady Brangor, the widow of her third husband, she plans to create a cultural centre for women at Brangor Hall. These ambitious plans are impeded by the obsession of her youngest son, Peredur, with the mysterious death of his father, John Cilydd More, Amy's first husband and the poet and National Winner of the title. Her devoted stepson, Bedwyr, and her other son Gwydion, each with his own agenda and concerns, are also resistant to Amy's enthusiasms and practised charm. This is a family that has emerged from a tightly knit and recognisable society: each now in his or her own way, despite obstacles, seeks a path to fulfilment in a post-war period of unprecedented change.

Bonds of Attachment

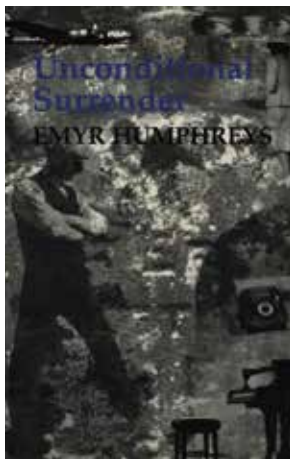
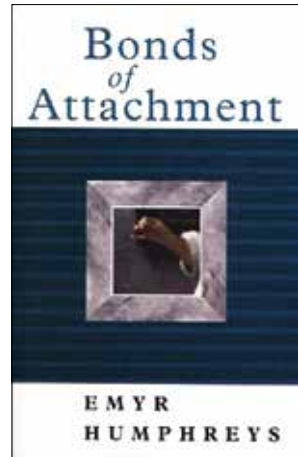
Emyr Humphreys

9780708316252

£7.99 pb

Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru

In the final part of *The Land and Living*, Peredur defies both his mother's hostility and his brothers' lack of concern to seek out the truth of his father's death and to take part in a protest against the 1969 Investiture that goes violently wrong. Only at the end when Amy Parry faces death can reconciliation be achieved.



Unconditional Surrender

Emyr Humphreys

9781854112132

£5.95 pb

Seren

In the months between May and August 1945 the world is both winding down and changing forever. The European war over, Britain looks to the future and prepares for a general election. Unknown to all but a few, life is about to be pitched into the atomic age. The story is told through two voices – the local rector and a German countess in his care as a displaced person. A young conscientious objector and a gifted German prisoner of war contest the love of the rector's idealistic daughter, while the two narrators and their families negotiate the fall of fascism and nationalism and the effects of winning the war on older, established relationships.

poetry

Collected Poems

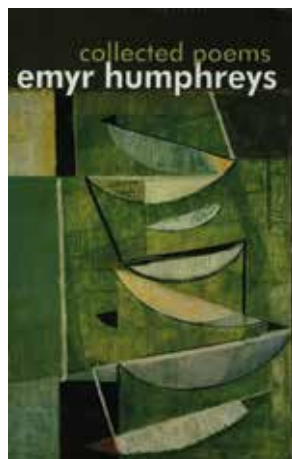
Emyr Humphreys

9780708315118

£9.99 hb

University of Wales Press

An elegant collection of published and unpublished poems, of which a dozen are in Welsh, with minor revisions to some early works, largely presented in chronological order. The poems reflect on Wales and its language, on art and the conflicts found in all humans.



Shards of Light

Emyr Humphreys

9781786833518

£11.99 pb

University of Wales Press

Shards of Light is a collection of previously unpublished poems by Emyr Humphreys, and this newly discovered collection has all the sharpness and incisiveness of thought as if the poems had been written today. Humphreys scrutinises life with a wry humour, coloured by the experience of his great longevity and grounded in Wales. With a sharpness of thought and a sparseness and frugality of expression – a hallmark of his work – the poems contain a profundity which challenges us to think more deeply about the nature of our being.

Available as an e-book

The Rigours of Inspection

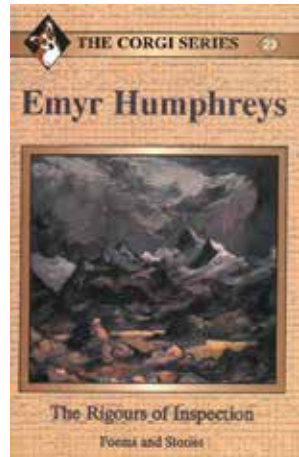
Emyr Humphreys

9780863817236

£0.99 pb

Gwasg Carreg Gwalch

A compact selection of poems and short stories. Humphreys' poems explore the Welsh identity, particularly as placed within the rest of Europe. His writing is a careful balance between poetic visual imagery and an academic approach – there are often references to ancestors and their conversation, and the words of the dissident.



biography

Writers of Wales: Emyr Humphreys

M. Wynn Thomas

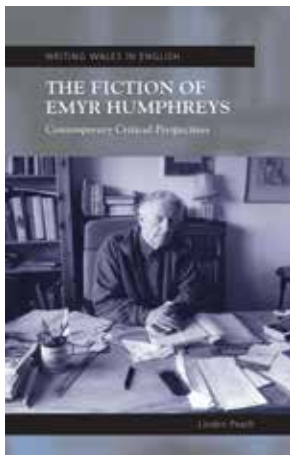
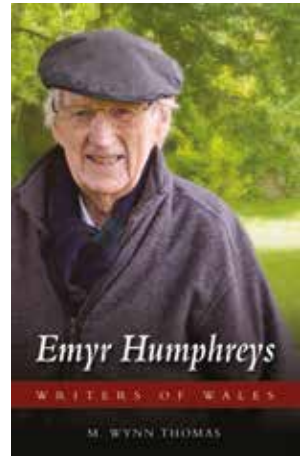
9781786832962

£16.99 pb

University of Wales Press

Published to mark the centenary of his birth, this is the first comprehensive and authoritative study of the life and work of this major Welsh writer, excluding only his work for television.

Available as an e-book



The Fiction of Emyr Humphreys – Contemporary Critical Perspectives

Linden Peach

9780708322161

£18.99 pb

University of Wales Press

An introduction to the work of Emyr Humphreys, highlighting his impressive contribution to Welsh writing in the English language, and to contemporary critical and cultural agendas such as issues of identity, nation, feminism, environment and religious conflict.

Available as an e-book

literary studies

Emyr Humphreys – A Postcolonial Novelist?

Diane Green

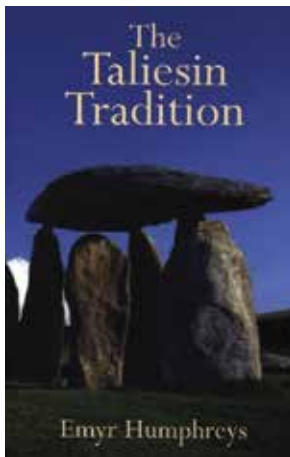
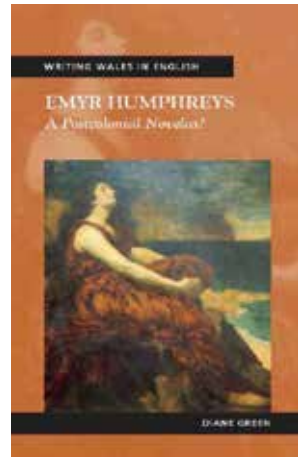
9780708322178

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University of Wales Press

An analysis of the novels of Emyr Humphreys in the light of his ideas on Wales: Welsh history, Welsh culture and the importance of a separate Welsh identity. It explores Humphreys' practice in the light both of his own theories of culture and fiction and of a variety of models derived from postcolonial theory.

Available as an e-book



The Taliesin Tradition

Emyr Humphreys

9781854112460

£8.95 pb

Seren

A study of the rich literary heritage of Wales from the sixth to the twentieth century, tracing the inter-relationship of prose and poetry with history, religion and national identity, noting especially the durability of the Welsh language through the ages.

literary studies

Dal Pen Rheswm – Cyfweliadau gydag Emyr Humphreys

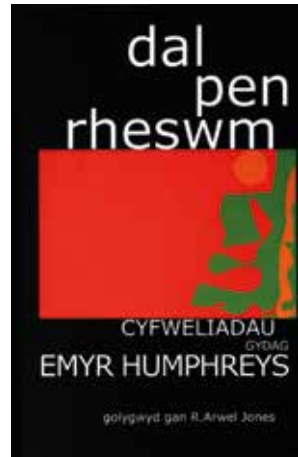
Gol. R. Arwel Jones

9780708315613

£12.99 cm

Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru

Casgliad o bum cyfweliad gydag un o lenorion mwyaf amryddawn a thoreithiog Cymru yn ystod yr ugeinfed ganrif, a rhan o ddathliad o'i fywyd a'i waith wrth iddo gyrraedd ei ben-blwydd yn bedwar ugain oed.



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Emyr Humphreys – Conversations and Reflections

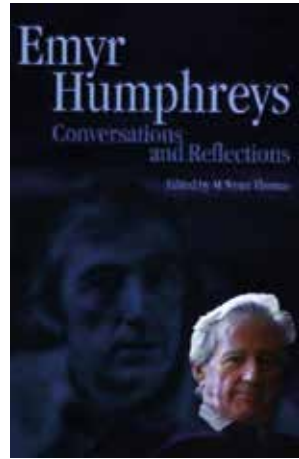
Ed. M. Wynn Thomas

9780708317358

£9.99 pb

University of Wales Press

A fascinating collection of distinguished essays published by Emyr Humphreys over a 50-year period, together with four interviews reflecting the wide range of his literary, cultural and political interests which have influenced his creative writings.



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Emyr Humphreys

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A Change of Heart

Emyr Humphreys

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The Anchor Tree

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Jones

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