2025

Tir na n-Og Awards Shadowing Pack 2025 English-language category

Contents

The Shortlisted Books	2
Booktalk:	3
Conversation-sparking	
questions and discussion points	
Bookthoughts:	4
What about?	
Ideas to spark the imagination	
Meet the Author	
 Meleri Wyn James 	8
 Dafydd Watcyn Williams 	9
Claire Fayers	10
Liz Hyder	11
Meet the Judges	12
Judges' Comments	13
Notes Page	17
Marking Matrix	18
Voting Cards	10



The Shortlisted Books



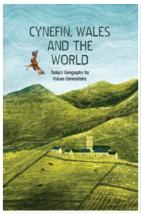


Fiction

Non-fiction











Megs (Y Lolfa)

Author: Meleri Wyn James

Megs is a mystery novel for 8–11-year-olds. Megs is a neuro-diverse 10-year-old girl, who lives with her mother and Mr Barker, the cockapoo, in the town of Aberystwyth.

Cynefin, Wales and the World

- Today's Geography for Future

Generations (Gwasg Carreg Gwalch)

Author: Dafydd Watcyn Williams

By starting at our feet and broadening our horizons, we can learn about the various elements of Geography, as well as identity, environment, nature and citizenship. Suitable for Key Stage 2–3 (11–14-year-olds).

Welsh Giants, Ghosts and Goblins (Firefly Press)

Author: Claire Fayers

A mix of stories about giants, ghosts and goblins from all parts of Wales, collected, retold and reimagined by Claire Fayers, with the character of Idris the giant weaving through the book as he collects stories on his adventure.

The Twelve (Pushkin Press)

Fiction

Fiction

Author: Liz Ryder

It's supposed to be a treat for Kit: a winter holiday by the coast with her sister Libby and their mum. But when Libby vanishes into thin air, and no one else remembers her, Kit is faced with a new reality – one in which her sister never existed.

Remember to visit your bookshop, local library, or our website www.gwales.com to find the above titles.

Booktalk







Conversation-sparking questions and discussion points

- What did you enjoy about the book?
- Describe your favourite part of the novel.
 Why is this your favourite part?
- Was the book easy to read?
- What questions do you have, having finished the book?
- Do you think that you will remember this story in a few months or years? Why?
- Was the book different to your expectations? If so, how?
- Were you happy with the ending of the story? Why?
- What didn't you enjoy about the book?
- What would you like to change about the book? Why? How would you change it?
- Would you like to read the book again? Why?
- What questions did you have while reading the book? Were they answered? If so, how?
- In your opinion, who is this book suitable for?
- What is your opinion of the cover?
- If you could be in the book, which events in the book would you like to experience yourself and why?
- Would changing the location of the story have an effect on the story? How?
- Do you think that the title of the book suits the story? Why? If not, which title would you give to the book?
- What surprised you in this book? How so?
- Did the book remind you of any other books, films, or TV programmes?
- If the book was made into a film or TV programme, who would you cast as actors for the main characters? Why?

- Would you like to read more books like this? Why?
- What is your opinion about the themes that are discussed in the novels?
- If you were to meet the authors, which three questions would you like to ask them?
- Describe the book in one sentence.
- Have you learnt anything from reading the books? If so, what?
- How many of the stories in the book were you familiar with before you read it?
- If you had three copies of the book to give as presents, to whom would you give them? Why?
- Which patterns or recurring themes did you see in the book?
- Is there anything else you would like to learn more about after reading these novels?
- If you could meet any character from the book, who would you like to meet and why?

















What about ...? Ideas to fire the imagination

Megs

by Meleri Wyn James

What about ...

Research

'Activism = to do something or to work for change' (page 37). 'Protesting' and 'making signs' are two examples of activism. What else can you find out about activism? Do you know of any famous activists? To complete your research, use books or information on the internet.

Create

Look at the illustrations in the book and on the cover. What do you think of the illustrations? What do they add to the story? Do you have a favourite? Why not recreate one of the illustrations or design your own from one of the scenes in the book using colouring pencils, paint, or using software on computers or tablets to create an animation?

Discuss

Two of the book's big themes are friendship and adventure. Why not split into two groups and discuss these themes in more detail? Can you find more examples from the book that exemplify these themes (for example: how does Megs try to help Mr B to make new friends)? How does the author showcase the themes of adventure and friendship? Do these themes cross over in the story, and if so, how and where?

Sgwrsio! Chat

There are three languages in the book: English, Welsh and Polish. Many languages are spoken in Wales. How many languages are spoken in your class or school? Learn how to say hello and introduce yourself in as many different languages as possible. Why not begin with Cymraeg?









Bore da	Good morning
Prynhawn da	Good afternoon
Noswaith dda	Good evening
Nos da Sut wyt ti?	Good night How are you?
(name) dwi i Dwi'n (insert age) oed	My name is (insert name) I am (insert age) years old
Dwi'n byw yng Nghymru	I live in Wales











What about ...? Ideas to fire the imagination

Cynefin, Wales and the World – Today's Geography for Future Generations by Dafydd Watcyn Williams

What about ...

Create

Why not collect various facts from the book – and some of your own – to create a fun quiz for the class? You can compete in teams and choose someone to ask the questions.

Perform

Create a list of questions inspired by the book (or a specific section of the book), and then choose one of the imaginary characters below to role play. Think about what kind of things are relevant and important to the people below. Then, you'll need to sit in the hot seat to answer the questions!

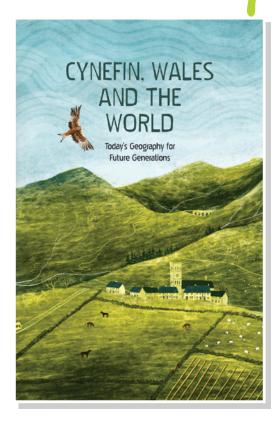
Possible characters:

- Geologist
- A politician
- Small business owner
- Farmer
- Choose a character

Write

This is a non-fiction book full of facts. Why not write a creative book review to recommend the book to other readers, or write down your answers to one or more of the following questions:

- What makes Wales unique?
- What does the word 'cynefin' / 'habitat' mean to you?
- . What have you learned from the book?







Discuss

Why not choose and use information from specific pages in the book to discuss in groups or pairs? Then, you can create an information sheet / pamphlet about a specific area or topic from the book.









What about ...? Ideas to fire the imagination

Welsh Giants, Ghosts and Goblins by Claire Fayers

What about ...

Discuss

These stories include characters that may be considered to be 'baddies'. Why do you think stories need baddies? Is it possible for people or creatures such as monsters, goblins, ghosts or giants to be perceived as baddies because of ignorance or fear? In groups, make a list of the baddies you can think of from books and TV programmes (including this book). What do these people / creatures have in common? You can also make a list of the 'goodies' and compare and contrast.

Create

"Stories change. Every time you hear or read a story and tell someone about it, you will change bits, and that's a good thing. The stories we tell should say something about us and the world we live in, and so we should put our imagination into them." (page 3)

In groups or in pairs, create your own ghost, goblin or giant story. You could then create your very own radio show and record yourselves reciting your stories. Remember to choose music to play in the background – we recommend something spooky if you choose to create a ghost story!

Perform

How about creating a performance inspired by your favourite scene in the book? You will need to re-read the scene, write a script, and assign characters. You can take turns to perform in front of your classmates or film your performances and add effects using video editing software. You can then have a cinema session and watch all your clips!



Research

These stories are inspired by other stories, myths and legends from all over Wales. Can you find any myths, legends or fairytales that are in your local area? Then, research a myth from another part of Wales. You can use Claire Fayer's introduction before each story to help you find inspiration — or from another part of the world and compare the two. What are the similarities and differences?







What about ...? Ideas to fire the imagination

The Twelve by Liz Hyder

What about ...

Create

Why not create a Fact File for one of the characters or for the author which includes at least five important facts? If you choose the author, remember to read their Author Profile in this pack to help you.

Draw / Illustrate

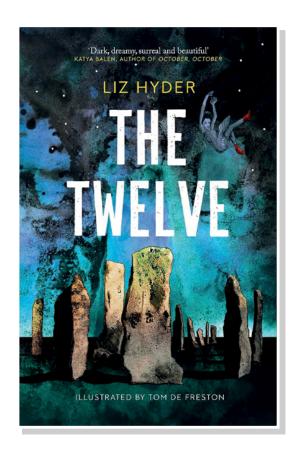
Why not draw a storyboard summarising the main events of the novel? You can include drawings / pictures or add words similar to the style of graphic novels. You can use the illustrations in the book to inspire your own creations.

Design

"I'm not at home at all, not in London but hundreds of miles away on the Welsh coast." (page 9). How do cities compare to rural areas? What are the major differences? Are there any similarities? Are there examples in the book? Make a venn diagram to showcase the differences and similarities. Split into two groups: one to represent the countryside / coast, and one to represent a city. Then, on paper or on computers, create your very own city or coastal village. You can create a map, place names and characters if you like.







Curate

Kit has the idea to visit the museum in Tenby on page 29 to help her solve her sister's mysterious disappearance. The job of a museum curator is to carefully select items for an exhibition. Why not play the part of a museum curator and think about the types of things that would be significant and important to you? Think of different themes – such as local history, fashion, nature, film, animals and transport – and then write either a paragraph describing your exhibition, or create a PowerPoint presentation to showcase your exhibition including words and images.





Meleri Wyn James







What was it like to write Megs?

I'm fond of Megs, and it was a pleasure to go on an adventure with her. But life for Megs isn't a bed of roses, and I felt for her when she was sad and afraid.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Llandeilo and brought up in Beulah, a village near Newcastle Emlyn and Aberporth.

What was the best or the worst thing about school?

I enjoyed all creative activities, and being with friends. I hated sports. I enjoy keeping fit now as an adult. It's important for us to keep fit for ourselves; it's not just about competing against others.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I've always wanted to be an author. I also wanted to be a jockey and a vet at one time.

What are your hobbies?

Running, socialising, travelling, fashion, sewing, and reading.

When did you start thinking about writing?

I can't remember a time when I wasn't writing. I began writing little stories when I was about 6 or 7 years old.

From where do you get your ideas?

I feel that there is something magical about writing. For me, ideas come from everyday life and from the news, and then the imagination takes over. That's when the fun begins.

Are there any themes or subjects which appeal to you?

A good story is what interests me. Recently, I've been writing about family and friendship. I have a daughter who is neurodivergent, and it's important to me that diverse people are represented in books from Wales.

What's the best thing about being an author?

Being able to disappear into the imaginary world. I love weaving stories and sharing them. I enjoy doing school visits and going to eisteddfodau to speak with children and young people about reading and writing and hearing their ideas. They're wonderful!

What's the worst thing about being an author?

I would like to see more focus on Welshlanguage books and more people reading them.





Quick fire Questions

What's your favourite childhood book?

It's difficult to choose just one. One of my favourite books was *Hogan y Plas* by Gweneth Lilly. I loved all types of mystery novels, and I was a fan of T. Llew Jones' novels. I remember him coming to school to speak to us about his books.

Who's your favourite character from a children's book?

Pippi Hosan-Hir. She could lift her horse with one arm. I also liked Jim Hawkins in *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson, because he always went on adventures.

What is your favourite place?

Home.

What's your favourite food?

I like healthy foods, so fresh seafood and salad.

What's your favourite film or show?

The original Star Wars trilogy. I also enjoy seeing people being creative on *The Great British Sewing Bee*.

What's is your favourite word?

Cwtsh.

What would be your superpower of choice?

The ability to use your imagination is a superpower.

What makes you smile?

Mischief!

What makes you happy?

Being in the company of family and friends, and losing myself in a good story.

If not an author, what would you be?

In another world, I would open a shop.

What's your advice for budding writers?

Write more and worry less!

Dafydd Watcyn Williams







Tell us a bit about your book

This is a reference book full of interesting facts. We can read it at home or at school, and perhaps do a variety of activities based on sections of it. The book begins by looking at aspects of our 'cynefin' – the place that we feel we belong. The book then goes on to look at Wales' landscape and environment, and at the lives of the people who live and work here. This is done alongside other countries. Most importantly, the book considers these subjects with the future in mind. How will our 'cynefin' and country today affect the Earth for future generations?

How was the experience of writing the book?

I was a Geography teacher at one time. As part of the process, Gwasq Carreg Gwalch, the publisher, contacted several university specialists, teachers and educational practitioners. I led a panel of consultants and discussed and developed the contents of each chapter with the publisher. It was a very interesting experience, because there was something in the news every week, which we HAD to include in the book! This is the first book of its kind, and it was a pleasure to collate the variety of materials. I had to create diagrams and graphs, and collect illustrations and photographs of countries from around the world and then discuss each page with the designer. Input from teachers and learners was also important, and we were in regular contact with schools from across the country.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Llanidloes and then lived in Mold for a time.

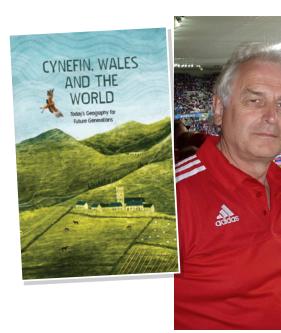
Where did you go to school?

Ysgol Glanyrafon and Ysgol Maes Garmon in Mold.

What was your favourite childhood book? Anything by T. Llew Jones.

What are your hobbies?

Football. I've been following Wrexham for nearly 60 years, and Wales. I enjoy mountain climbing and gardening.



Quick fire Questions

Favourite childhood book?

Y Ffordd Beryglus by T. Llew Jones.

Favourite character from a book?

Twm Siôn Cati from the above book.

Favourite place?

Y Cae Ras (home of Wrexham FC).

From where do you get your ideas?

From teachers.

Are there any themes or subjects which appeal to you?

Enriching pupils' knowledge of the geography of Wales.

Favourite food?

Curry.

What's your favourite film or show?

Match of the Day.

Favourite word?

Llonydd (peace and quiet).

What males you angry?

There are too many to list!

What makes you smile?

A win for Wrexham FC.



Claire Fayers





Page 10

Where did you grow up?

In Newport, south Wales

Where did you go to school?

Eveswell Primary School and then Hartridge Comprehensive (now Llanwern High School).

What was the best / worst thing about your school?

I loved my primary school. It was a small school with great teachers. I remember story times, with all of us sitting on cushions on the floor while the teacher read to us. It's where my love of stories started.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I didn't really have any clear idea of what I wanted to be. If I'd known that I could become an author and get paid for making up stories, I'd definitely have wanted to do that!

What are your hobbies?

I love music. I've just passed my grade 8 piano exam. I also love gardening, and cooking and trying out new recipes.

When did you consider being an author?

Not until I finished at university and realised there wasn't really anything else I wanted to do. Then I did some courses and started writing short stories, which gradually got longer and longer until I wrote my first book.

Are there any themes that appeal to you in particular?

I love humour and magic, and stories that take you out of your everyday world. I'm a huge fan of myths and legends, especially Welsh stories.

What advice can you give to budding authors?

Read a lot. Join your library if you can – libraries are great. Always write about the things you love. Try writing your own versions of stories you know. You are very welcome to use all the stories in my Welsh Giants, Ghosts and Goblins to make your own stories. When you've written a story, put it away for a few weeks, then read it and ask yourself if you can make it better. That's how all authors work. Look out for competitions and share your stories with your friends and family. And keep on trying.

Do you have any rituals when you write?

I like to have a big mug of tea before I start work. I do some stretches too. My friend taught me some and they really help, as you can get very stiff sitting at a desk. It's good to move around a bit.

What's the best / worst part about being an author?

The best thing is being able to make up stories and share them with other people. I love visiting schools and libraries and making up new stories with people.

The worst thing is there are days when I get stuck and it's really hard to write. When that happens, I'll go for a walk, or read, or play the piano for a bit. It's happened with every single book, so if you ever get stuck on a story, don't worry.

Quick fire Questions

What's your favourite childhood book? Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

Who's your favourite character from a children's book?

Ember, from Flame Chasers by Julie Pike.

Where is your favourite place to write? At my desk with a big cup of tea.

What's your favourite food?

Salt and vinegar crisps.

What's your favourite film or show?

I recently watched Lilo and Stitch and loved it.

What's is your favourite word?

The Welsh word 'cwtsh', which means a nice cuddle.

What would be your superpower of choice?

I'd like to turn into a dragon.

Favourite social media network?

Instagram.

What makes you smile?

My cat.

If not an author what would you be?

A musician.

What's your advice for budding writers?

Read a lot, write often, and have fun.

Liz Hyder

Where did you grow up? North-east London.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

For a while, I wanted to run a horse-riding stable which is hilarious as I'm a bit scared of horses, but I grew up at a time when there were lots of books about girls riding ponies which clearly influenced my thinking! I then wanted to be a playwright

for a while, but that was more late secondary school after I got taken to the theatre by my drama teacher Miss Morrissey and fell in love with all things theatrical.

What are your hobbies?

I love reading but I also love stories in lots of other forms – theatre, music, films and television. I also like drawing and going for long walks in the middle of nowhere.

What was your favourite book when you were young?

Hard to pick just one but I loved *Quick*, *Let's Get Out of Here* by Michael Rosen, it's joyful, funny, thought-provoking and very relatable. I've given copies of it away to so many people over the years!

When did you consider being an author?

Not until I was an adult, really. My family didn't know any authors, we never met any, never had anyone come to our schools. I thought books were made up by people far away. I didn't realise anyone can write a book!

What advice can you give to budding authors?

Firstly, just get on and write! The more you write, the more you get to understand what sort of stories you want to tell and how you want to tell them. Secondly, ask yourself questions about the stories you're enjoying and the stories you don't. Why did you like it? Why didn't you like it? What would you have done differently if you'd written it? All of that also helps shape the sorts of stories you want to write.







What's the best / worst part about being an author?

The best part is walking into a bookshop and seeing your book on a shelf and thinking 'I wrote that!'

The other best part is getting to run workshops for young people which is just so much fun. The worst part is there's sometimes a lot of admin and emails when really I just want to write or think up some fun workshop ideas!

Quick fire Questions

What's your favourite childhood book? The Book of Three by Lloyd Alexander.

Who's your favourite character from a children's book?

Flossie Teacake.

Where is your favourite place to write?

At my desk. I wish I was the sort of person who could write in a café but I get too distracted by listening in to conversations.

What's your favourite food?

A masala dosa. It's a South Indian dish, like a thin crispy crepe with savoury spiced potato filling and comes with little pots of delicious chutneys and sambar...

What's is your favourite word?

Brilliant! Or amazing...

What would be your superpower of choice?

To to be invisible for a day!

Favourite social media network?

BlueSky but I like being able to share pictures on Instagram too.

What makes you smile?

Most things. Everything from seeing a butterfly on a flower to smiling at strangers and seeing them smile back. It's good to appreciate the joy of small things, as well as bigger things.

If not an author what would you be? Unemployed.

What's your advice for budding writers? Get writing!





Meet the Judges





Page 1

Elizabeth Kennedy

Chair of the Panel, School librarian

There is truly no better job in the world than to encourage children to read and develop the same love for reading that I have. I devoured books as a child and



was frequently found reading by torchlight when I was meant to have been asleep. I had ridden polar bears in the Arctic, joined an academy for witches, eaten snozzcumbers, flown with dragons, jumped down rabbit holes and enjoyed secret gardens – all before secondary school! It is my aim to encourage and support every child in their reading journey, whether it is with a graphic novel, magazine, nonfiction book, manga, classic novel, young adult fiction or an e-book. I was delighted to be asked to be a Tir na n-Og panellist as I never say no to reading new books. Being asked to read and explore books with a Welsh background and connection is a pleasure.

Karen Gemma Brewer Poet and bookseller

As a poet, bookseller and joint organiser of Gŵyl Lyfrau Aberaeron Book Festival, books are my life and livelihood. As someone who's never mastered



the art of growing up, children's books are always a large proportion of my reading pile. I was an early reader and quickly moved on from *Mr Nobody* and *The Cow Who Fell in the Canal* to the Paddington books, *The Borrowers* and Roald Dahl, while lately my adventures have been with blue books, floating pumpkins, wishful candles and clockwork crows. Wales has a wealth of imaginative writers, publishers committed to a diversity of literature, and a government keen to put books in children's hands. Add the phenomenon of social media, and the result is more and more youngsters at our shelves with a clear idea of the sort of book they want. So, I'm excitedly looking forward to bringing those views to the Tir na n-Og judging panel.

Kate Wynne

Academic librarian

As a child I was an avid reader, devouring all books from Dahl to Blyton to Dick King-Smith. This love of reading led me to an English Literature degree



where I undertook modules in Welsh writing in English and children's literature. After university, I started working in libraries and decided this is where I wanted my future to be. As an academic librarian at Cardiff University, I witness the impact being a reader has on a person's academic career, from enhancing their vocabulary to increasing their general knowledge, as well as the benefits reading brings to mental well-being.

As a mother of two children who have inherited their mother's love of reading, I have revisited my childhood favourites, and discovered a few more along the way. Sharing books we love is a joy, and the bedtime reads are still an important part of our day as a family.

I love being able to recommend books to friends and family as I fully believe a love of reading starts in childhood. I'm incredible excited to be on the judging panel for the Tir na n-Og Awards.

Imogen Davies

Masters student

My bilingual upbringing in Welsh and English sparked an early passion for languages that led to a degree in French, Spanish, and Catalan at Durham University.



My enthusiasm for literature led to a ten-month internship with Honno Welsh Women's Press after graduating from Durham University in 2023, and as editorial and marketing assistant I contributed towards the promotion of literature by Welsh women. I am currently undertaking a Masters in Modernist Literature at the University of Edinburgh, specifically interested in feminine consciousness.

I grew up reading books in Welsh and English, some of which still inspire me, and I treasure my copy of *Llyfr Mawr y Plant* to this day. Literature can leave a lifelong impression, and that's why I think it's important to be selective about which books we introduce to children and young people. I believe that the previous shortlist and winners of the Tir na n-Og Awards provide the best examples of the books Wales has to offer. I'm honoured to be on the judging panel for the 2025 Tir na n-Og Awards.







This is a book that invites empathy and compassion.

A must read.

Beautifully illustrated, this is a compassionate story of friendship and kindness. Can Megs and her faithful canine, Mr Barker, save the day?







An engaging story about a neurodiverse child who is trying to navigate a busy incomprehensible world and find her missing friend.







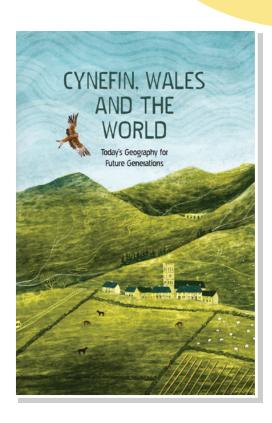


An engaging book that puts Wales under the spotlight for all ages.

An exceptional and engaging non-fiction book which deserves its own special place on every school bookshelf.









Children and parents will enjoy this beautiful volume. Pick up and dip in to discover Wales – not just the land, but the history, language and literature.







A collection of magical Welsh retellings that every child would want on their shelf.







This beautiful book entices you in by its appearance, then ensnares you with the entertaining and enchanting collection of stories.

Dive into the mystical world with stories full of colourful characters. The old tales have been given a new spin ready to welcome new readers.









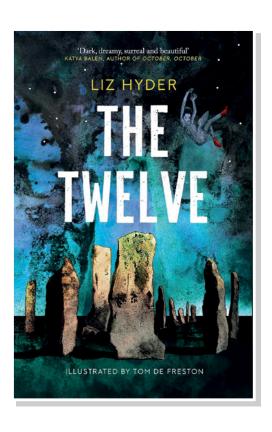


My younger self would have devoured this book in one sitting.













A missing sister, a monstrous wolf, time travel, deep magic and a rich history of the past. Prepare to be entranced.

Travel through time with this enchanting story. This deep magic adventure will grip you from the very first page.





Notes Page





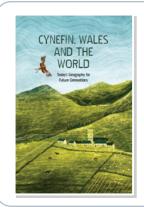


Use this page to write any notes you may have on these books.

Photocopy this page for each reviewer.



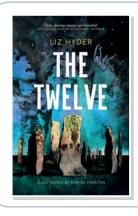












#LoveReading

Marking Matrix

Giving the books a rating may





Page 18

elp you choose your favourite.	Meus	AND THE WORLD	GIANTS GHOSTS GOBLINS	THE
Book	Meleri Wyn James			J. Wall
Title / Blurb /5				
Does the blurb attract you to read the book? Does the blurb make it clear what kind of book it is	2			
Is the title of the book suitable/effective/appealing?				
Does the blurb say enough/too much about the book				
Do you like the title?				
Cover / Appearance /5				
Do you like the cover?				
What do you think is most special about the cover or the way the book looks?				
Does the cover add to the story?				
Do you think the cover is playful/exciting/interesting	g?			
Does the cover attract your attention?				
Style / Language /5				
What kind of language has the author used?				
e.g. dialect, descriptions, rhymes.				
What are the characteristics of the author's style?				
Was the language too easy or too difficult?				
Did you understand the language?				
Was the language and style interesting?				
Maintain interest /5				
Did you enjoy the book?				

Characters What kind of chara

Is the book original?

characters, information.

Were you keen to read the whole book? Is the book going to stay in your memory?

/5

What kind of characters are in the book?
Are the characters interesting / believable?
How would you describe the characters?
Did the characters appeal to you?
Were you able to identify or empathise with the characters?

Total /25

What kept you interested? e.g. humour, adventure,

Voting Cards





Page 19

Now that you've read and discussed the books shortlisted for the 2025 Tir na n-Og Award, here's your chance to vote for which book your group thinks is the best. Put an \mathbf{X} in the box to mark your winner.

Remember to vote in the Readers' Choice category: this is a special trophy awarded by children and young people who take part in the Tir na n-Og Shadowing Scheme.

You can place your vote here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/N25QC6Z

Voting Card	Voting Card	Voting Card		
Megs		Megs		
Cynefin, Wales and the World – Today's Geography for Future Generations		Cynefin, Wales and the World Today's Geography for Future Generations		
Welsh Giants, Ghosts and Goblins		Welsh Giants, Ghosts and Goblins		
The Twelve		The Twelve		
Voting Card		Voting Card		
Megs		I _I Megs I		
Cynefin, Wales and the World – Today's Geography for Future Generations		Cynefin, Wales and the World Today's Geography for Future Generations		
Welsh Giants, Ghosts and Goblins		Welsh Giants, Ghosts and Goblins		
The Twelve		The Twelve		



Why not share your shadowing experience on social media?

Remember to tag us:

@LlyfrDaFabBooks

and use the hashtags:

#LoveReading

#TNNO2025

 ${\it \#TNNO2025S} hadowing Scheme$





