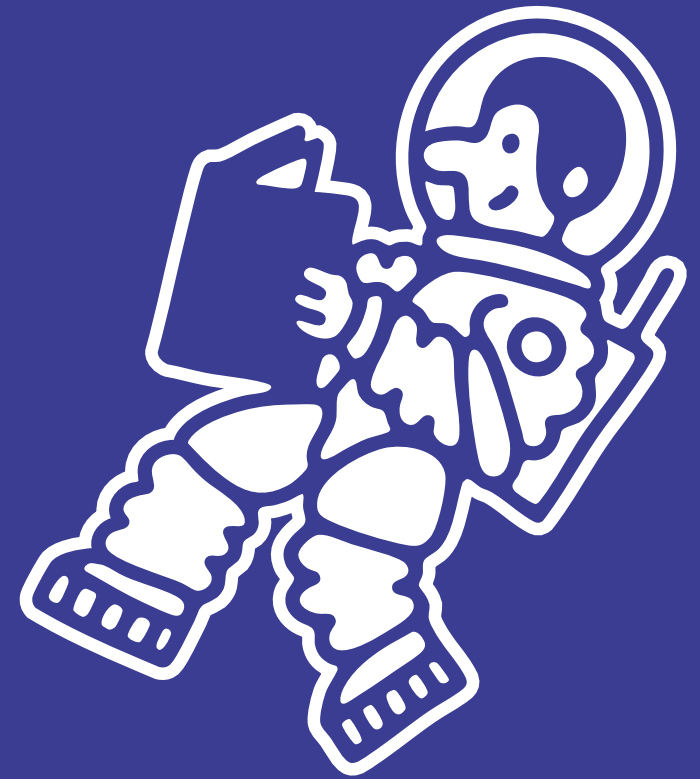


# English-language Shadowing Pack

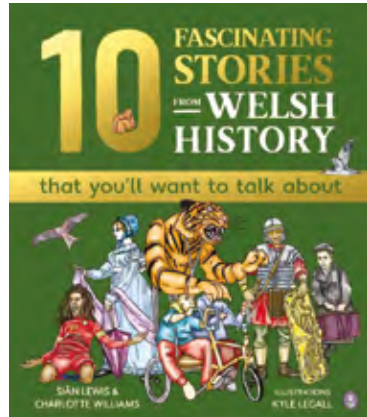
**GWOBRAU  
TIRNAN-OG  
AWARDS 2026**



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# THE SHORTLIST



## **10 Fascinating Stories from Welsh History (that you'll want to talk about)**

Welsh history

**Authors:** Siân Lewis and Charlotte Williams  
**Illustrator:** Kyle Legall  
(Dragon Press)

Come on a thrilling journey through Welsh history and meet the heroes and ordinary people whose actions helped shape Wales and the wider world. With each story, discover a timeline, map and vibrant illustrations.



## **Major and Mynah: Project Puffin**

Fiction

**Author:** Karen Owen  
(Firefly)

When Callie, Grace and Bo find puffins coated in waste oil dumped in the sea, they're in a race against time to save sea life and the coastline from pollution.



## **The Wicked Lies of Habren Faire**

Fantasy fiction

**Author:** Anna Fiteni  
(Harper Collins)

An irresistible dark fae romantasy, inspired by Welsh mythology and perfect for fans of Sarah J. Maas, *Faebound*, Leigh Bardugo and Holly Black's *The Cruel Prince*. Ceridwen Parry has run away with the fairies. But this is not her story.

Remember that some of the books are also available digitally as e-books. Visit your bookshop, local library, or our website [ffolio.cymru](http://ffolio.cymru) to find the above titles and more information.

# 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?



# ACTIVITIES

## 10 Fascinating Stories from Welsh History (that you'll want to talk about)

### 5-minute Activity

Pick a chapter of your choice. Read the timeline in the chapter. After reading, discuss in partners or pairs:

- Why do you think the authors chose to include this story?
- Why does this story matter to Wales?

### 10-minute Activity

In groups, create a story map showing:

- Key people
- Setting
- Problem / conflict
- Outcome
- Why the story still matters

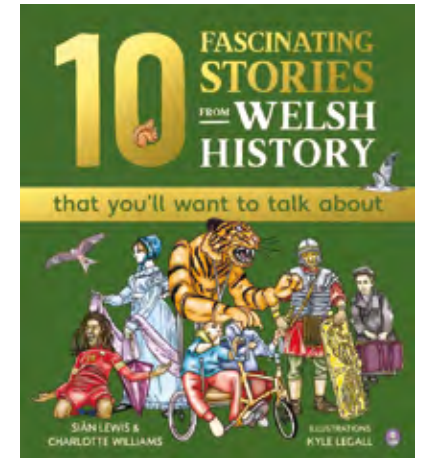
Present your story map as a poster or shared digital document.

### 30-minute Activity

Research a lesser-known Welsh historical figure, or one that isn't discussed in the book, and create a character profile, inspired by the style of the book.

Character profile to include:

- Name
- Lifespan
- Role in Welsh history
- Key achievements
- Challenges faced
- Personality traits
- Optional: illustration, map, symbol, or timeline.

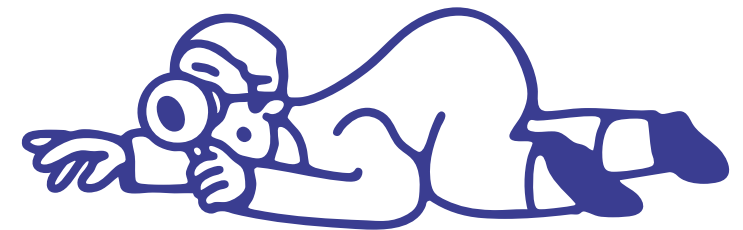


### Lesson-long Activity

In groups, turn a story from the book into a talk-show interview, assigning roles:

- Host
- Historical figure
- Witness or critic

Perform live or record short clips.



#### AREAS OF LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE

Expressive Arts, Languages, Literacy and Communication, Humanities.



# CHARLOTTE WILLIAMS

## Introduce yourself:

I'm Charlotte Williams and I live in Eglwys-bach in north Wales. I'm a university professor and I have always loved writing and reading. I've written a lot of books but this is my first book for children. I love exploring history and stories that too often have got lost or were never told. I've got seven grandchildren and I wanted to write something that would get them interested in Welsh history, so together with Siân Lewis we selected ten stories that tell a lot about Wales, past and present. When I'm not reading or writing, you'll find me riding my bike in the wild.

## Introduce your work:

Imagine what it was like to be a Roman boy living in Wales 2000 years ago... or imagine what it was like to be a small girl travelling from Africa to Wales at the turn of the last century. Who gets remembered in history and who gets left out? This book will take you on a journey of twists and turns that you'll just have to talk about.

Favourite childhood book?

Alice in Wonderland.

Favourite character from a children's book?

I love Elle Bibi-Imbele Ifie in Patience Agabi's *The Infinite*. Elle can time travel!

Favourite place?

Llandudno beach on the west shore.

Favourite food?

Sausage and mash (with cabbage).

Favourite film or show?

ZooTopia.

Superpower of choice?

Time travel.

What makes you smile?

My grandchildren - always.

If not an author what would you be?

A teacher!

Favourite word?

ZooTopia.

Top tip for budding writers?

You've got a story to tell so tell it! See where your words take you...



# CHARLOTTE WILLIAMS



## Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Llandudno. My mum was Welsh and Welsh-speaking and my dad was from Guyana in the Caribbean. As a child I often travelled to Africa where my father worked, so during my primary school years I spent some time in a school on the university campus in Ibadan, Nigeria and some time in Craig y Don school in Llandudno.

## What was the best/worst thing about your school?

Best thing – being with my friends all day. I learned such a lot from them. I loved school dinners and all the chatter at lunchtime and I loved doing sports. The worst thing – I didn't always feel I belonged. Even though I was from Llandudno people always used to ask me 'where are you from?'

## What did you want to be when you grew up?

I always wanted to teach. I used to teach everything when I was little – paper dolls, toys, my little sister, even the stones on the beach had a lesson.

## What are your hobbies?

Sewing and making things, swimming and cycling in the wild.

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

The best part is that you can use your imagination to make things up. If you start to write, the story often takes you somewhere you didn't know you were going. It's wonderful to let the words carry you away. And it's wonderful when people tell you they enjoy your stories.

But it can be tough. Sometimes you don't feel like writing. You have to spend a lot of time looking over things you have written and editing them, and sometimes even changing them altogether. Lots of stories or parts of stories end up in the wastepaper bin!

# SIÂN LEWIS

## Introduce yourself:

I'm Siân Lewis and I'm a writer and translator of children's books. I work from my office at home, often with the help of my cat, Paxton, who likes to put his paw on the keyboard and type out words. The words are in cat language, so I have to remove them, but don't tell him that.

## Introduce your work:

The book is called *10 Fascinating Stories from Welsh History*. It was great fun working with Charlotte Williams to bring those stories to life. So many people have played their part in making Wales what it is today, from Roman soldiers to coal owners, from African girls to sportsmen, from singers to kings. You'll play your part too, by reading these stories, remembering them, and maybe so much more.

**Favourite childhood book?**

*Bandit yr Andes*, about Welsh children in Patagonia.

**Favourite character from a children's book?**

A mouse called Lili. I still collect mouse ornaments because of her.

**Favourite place?**

Aberystwyth promenade.

**Favourite food?**

Eggs and apples, but not together.

**Favourite film or show?**

*Ratatouille*, because I like anything mousy.

**Favourite word?**

*Pilipala* (butterfly).

**What makes you smile?**

Reading the words my cat has typed.

**Superpower of choice?**

Being able to speak every language, especially ones where there are only one or two speakers left in the world.

**If not an author what would you be?**

A librarian.

**Top tip for budding writers?**

Have fun and share your work. I used to enjoy writing stories and sending them to my grandparents.



# SIÂN LEWIS

## Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Ceredigion, and still live there, though I have moved from time to time.

## What was the best/worst thing about your school?

The best thing about my first primary school was that my dad was the headteacher and we lived in a house next to the school. As soon as I hopped out of bed in the morning, I could go out and play with my friends in the yard. In the evenings, I liked to sneak into the school when the cleaner was busy and read the books in the library corner. It was a special time when I had that library all to myself.

## What did you want to be when you grew up?

When I was five, I wanted to run an ice cream shop. Later I wanted to be a ballerina. What I actually did was study French, then become a librarian. Those were just as much fun.

## What are your hobbies?

I like learning languages, doing crosswords and going out for walks.

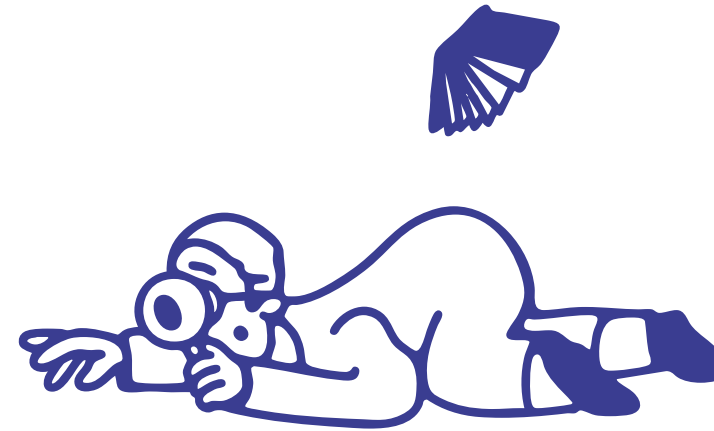
## What's the best / worst part about being an author?

The best part is creating your very own world, watching it take shape on paper and then sharing it with other people.



# ACTIVITIES

## Major and Mynah: Project Puffin



### 5-minute Activity

Choose one word to describe how each character is feeling on pages 46 & 47 and explain why.

### 10-minute Activity

Read chapter 9 as a class. Can you identify:

- What problem appears in this chapter?
- Who is affected?
- How serious is it?

Share answers in pairs.



### AREAS OF LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE

Health and Well-being, Science and Technology, Languages, Literacy and Communication, Humanities.

### 30-minute Activity

Choose a bird not featured in the book and create a fact file.

Fact File to include:

- Name of bird
- Threats
- Habitat
- 5 interesting facts
- Diet
- Hand-drawn sketch

### Lesson-long Activity

Secret Environmental Mission:

1. In groups of three, invent your own secret environmental mission inspired by *Project Puffin*.

Create your own Undercover Detective Agent File, based on the style used at the start of the book, including:

- Name
  - Age
  - Code name
  - Detective skills
  - Talents
2. Using your invented mission, create a Case File, modelled on the format used on page 122 of the book, including:
- Mission
  - Suspects
  - Action
  - Plan of action
  - Launch surveillance operation
  - Risks and challenges
3. In groups, write a Final Report – Case File Closed, inspired by the final page of the book (with the option to present to the classroom), including:
- Agents
  - Crime
  - Location
  - Action
  - Outcome

# KAREN OWEN

## Introduce yourself:

Reading and writing stories is my favourite thing in the world. I love playing in my imagination and creating stories that I wish I could take part in for real. I used to live in London but now I live in a small coastal town in Dorset.

## Introduce your work:

I've written lots of books for children, including the Disaster Dad series, and the Major and Mynah series. They're fun books, and they often have something serious to think about, too. Protecting our planet and the wildlife that shares it with us is one of my passions, which is why it was so important to me to write *Project Puffin*.

*Favourite childhood book?*

*The Faraway Tree* by Enid Blyton.

*Favourite character from a children's book?*

Paddington Bear.

*Favourite place?*

Skomer Island.

*Favourite food?*

Fish, chips, and mushy peas!

*Favourite film or show?*

*Mary Poppins.*

*Superpower of choice?*

Like Callie from my Major and Mynah books, I'd like to be able to hear and talk to birds.

*What makes you smile?*

Seeing the sea.

*If not an author what would you be?*

A librarian.

*Favourite word?*

Hippopotamus.

*Top tip for budding writers?*

Always ask What if...? Those two words can lead you anywhere in this world – or to another one!



# KAREN OWEN

## Where did you grow up?

In a small village in rural Kent, in the corner of England.

## What was the best/worst thing about your school?

It was in the countryside so we had three playing fields and lots of space to play. We had a large library too, so I got to indulge in one of my favourite hobbies!

## What did you want to be when you grew up?

An explorer. I was fascinated by the non-fiction books I read in the library and wanted to explore all the countries I read about.

## What are your hobbies?

Reading and hiking (but not at the same time!). It's my ambition to walk around the coastline of Great Britain (but not all in one go!).

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

The best is research. I get to visit lots of places and learn cool things! For *Project Puffin*, I spent a couple of days on Skomer Island (a tiny and remote island off the coast of Pembrokeshire) watching seals and puffins and other amazing birds. They were amazing!



# ACTIVITIES

## *The Wicked Lies of Habren Faire*



### 5-minute Activity

In her author profile, Anna Fiteni talks about visiting St Fagan's National Museum of History as a child growing up in Cardiff. The museum has over 40 reconstructed buildings from different centuries. If you could travel back in time, which era or period would you like to visit and why?

### 10-minute Activity

In pairs or groups, analyse the title, cover and blurb.

- Consider the importance of the title to the story.
- From reading the blurb, can you think of one question you'd like an answer to?
- What is the importance of the images on the cover?

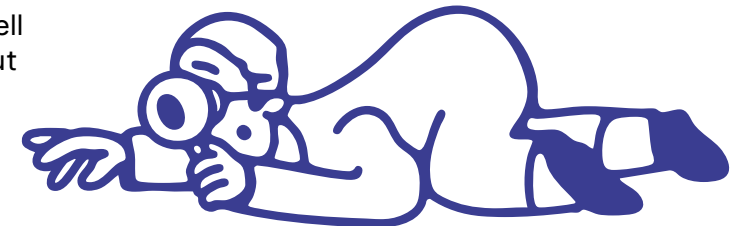
### 30-minute Activity

Can you find any myths, legends or traditional tales that originate from your local area? Then, research a myth or legend from another part of Wales, or from another part of the world and compare the two. What are the similarities and differences between these tales?



### Lesson-long Activity

The book is set in 19th-century Wales (as well as the Fairy World). What do you know about this historical period? What do you think it was like to live in Wales during this time?



#### AREAS OF LEARNING AND EXPERIENCE

Humanities, Languages, Literacy and Communication.

# ANNA FITENI

## Introduce yourself:

I'm Anna, I'm 28 and I'm an author. I've lived in Cardiff all my life, aside from when I went to England for university, and when I've gone backpacking. I had an amazing time at university, but I got homesick for Wales, which I didn't expect, because I thought Wales was so boring when I was young. I missed home, so I wrote this book while I was training to be a teacher to remember how I felt when I was a kid, going to St Fagan's and visiting castles with my sister.

## Introduce your work:

*The Wicked Lies of Habren Faire* is a YA Fantasy book about Sabrina Parry, a very rude, argumentative, but clever sixteen-year-old girl growing up in 1840s Wales. When her sister disappears into the woods behind their house, Sabrina is determined to bring her back, which is when she discovers that Gwlad y Tylwyth Teg – Fairyland – is real, and she just can't see it. Sabrina makes a deal with a fairy called Neirin, who offers her a dangerous bargain in exchange for his help to save her sister.

**Favourite childhood book?**  
His Dark Materials.

**Favourite character from a children's book?**  
Lyra Belacqua, from His Dark Materials.

**Favourite place?**

St Fagan's when it's sunny, or wherever my PS5 is when it's raining.

**Favourite food?**

Curry and naan.

**Favourite film or show?**

Lord of the Rings: Return of the King.  
Favourite show – an anime called The Apothecary Diaries.

**Favourite word?**

Obelisk.

**What makes you smile?**

Being with my family and friends, learning something new, and realising I have leftovers in the fridge.

**If not an author what would you be?**

An archaeologist.

**Superpower of choice?**

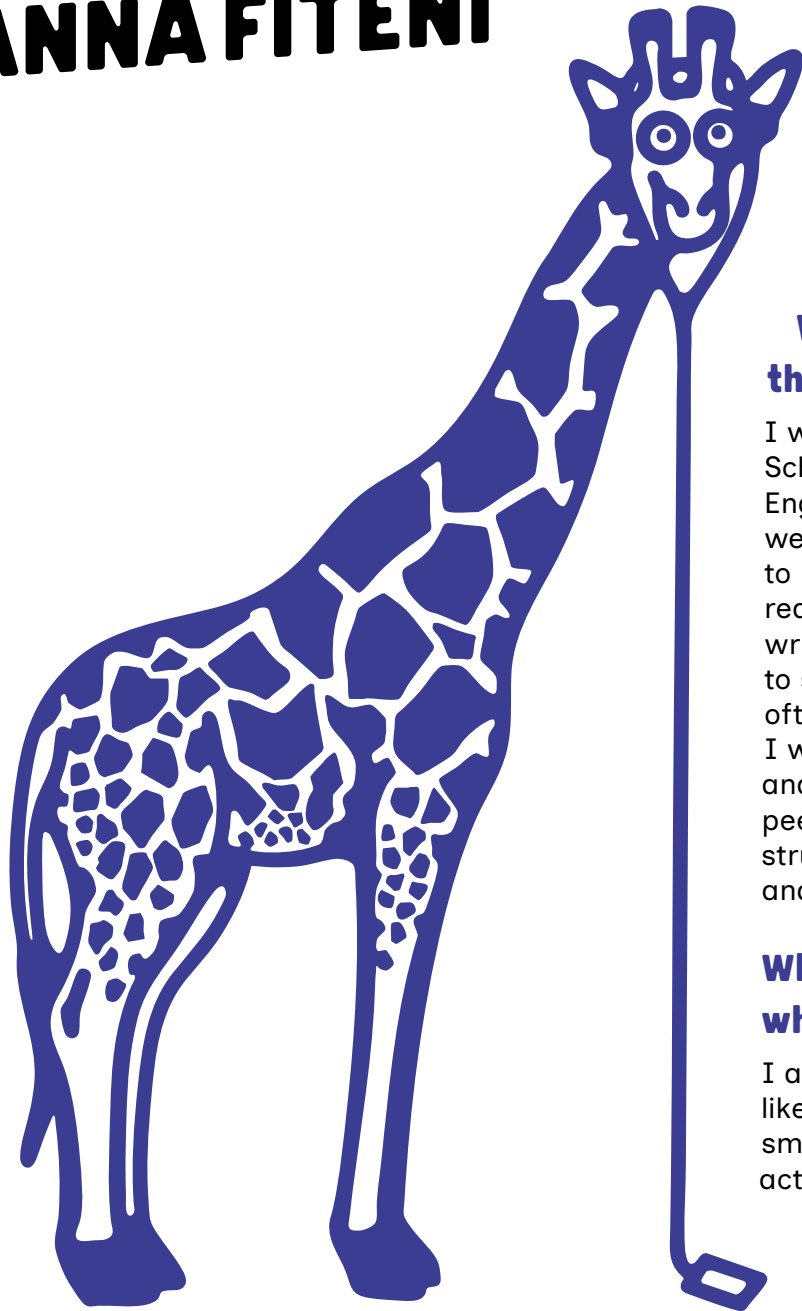
Time travel.

**Top tip for budding writers?**

Share your work with other people, to help get used to criticism and improve; most importantly, it's really nice to see people be excited about your work.



# ANNA FITENI



## Where did you grow up?

In Splott, Cardiff.

## What was the best/worst thing about your school?

I went to Corpus Christi High School. We had an incredible English department. The teachers were so supportive, and they used to recommend me extra books to read off the syllabus, read my early writing, and always encouraged me to speak my mind. This, however, often got me in trouble, because I was known for being a bit odd, and I struggled to connect with my peers – this was probably the thing I struggled with most at school. That and PE. I hated PE.

## What did you want to be when you grew up?

I always wanted to be an author. I liked playing pretend when I was small and when I realised I couldn't actually be a knight or a princess I realised the next best option was writing, so that I could spend all my time in my imagination.

## What are your hobbies?

I travel a lot. I recently got back from a trip to Japan, and a couple months ago I backpacked around Vietnam and Cambodia, which was amazing. I do embroidery and I play A LOT of video games with my friends. I'm also really interested in fashion and movies, and going to museums and concerts as much as I can.

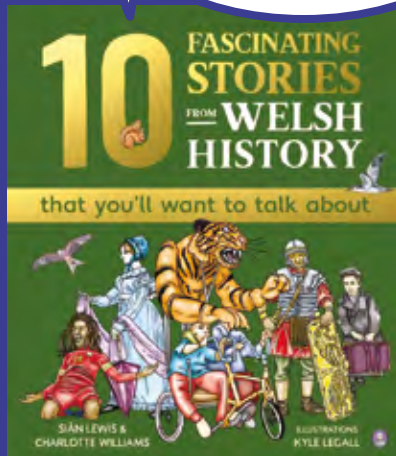
## What's the best / worst part about being an author?

The best part is that I'm not just writing for myself anymore. I get to work with a whole team at my publisher who are interested in reading my stories, and want to help me make my books as good as they can be. I basically get to daydream all day! It's also amazing being my own boss, but that's a big responsibility. The worst part is probably that, because I'm my own boss, I work from home, so it can be a bit lonely sometimes and it's hard to explain my job to my friends and family.

# JUDGES' COMMENTS

The Chair of the panel judging the English-language books with an authentic Welsh background in 2026 was Karen Gemma Brewer. She was joined by Kate Wynne, Ben James and Molly Tidy. Here's what they had to say about the shortlisted books:

This book took me on a thrilling journey through the history of Wales, capturing my imagination with timelines, maps and fantastic illustrations.



A fast-paced and engaging detective story which addresses environmental and conservation issues whilst exploring themes of friendship and adventure.

Well-written and pleasingly quirky, this is a dark fantasy full of dangerous bargains, sisterly love and fairy romance with roots deep in Welsh mythology.



# MARKING MATRIX

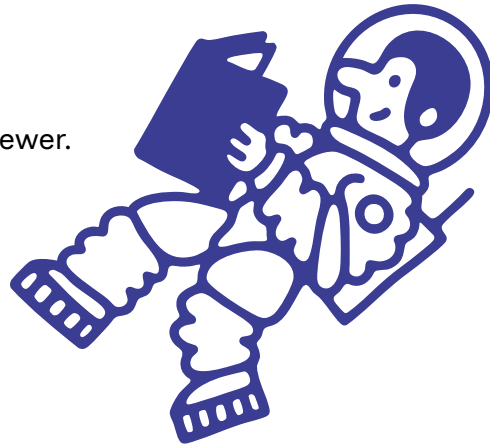


Scoring the books might help you decide which book is the best in your opinion.

Book	Title Blurb /5	Cover Appearance /5	Style Language /5	Maintain interest /5	Characters /5	Total /25
Questions	<p>Does the blurb attract you to read the book?</p> <p>Does the blurb make it clear what kind of book it is?</p> <p>Is the title of the book suitable/effective/appealing?</p> <p>Does the blurb say enough/too much about the book?</p> <p>Do you like the title?</p>	<p>Do you like the cover?</p> <p>What do you think is most special about the cover or the way the book looks?</p> <p>Does the cover add to the story?</p> <p>Do you think the cover is playful/exciting /interesting?</p> <p>Does the cover attract your attention?</p>	<p>What kind of language has the author used? e.g. dialect, descriptions, rhymes.</p> <p>What are the characteristics of the author's style?</p> <p>Was the language too easy or too difficult?</p> <p>Did you understand the language?</p> <p>Was the language and style interesting?</p>	<p>Did you enjoy the book?</p> <p>What kept you interested? e.g. humour, adventure, characters, information.</p> <p>Were you keen to read the whole book?</p> <p>Is the book going to stay in your memory?</p> <p>Is the book original?</p>	<p>What kind of characters are in the book?</p> <p>Are the characters interesting/believable?</p> <p>How would you describe the characters?</p> <p>Did the characters appeal to you?</p> <p>Were you able to identify or empathise with the characters?</p>	-
<b><i>10 Fascinating Stories from Welsh History</i></b>						
<b><i>Major and Mynah: Project Puffin</i></b>						
<b><i>The Wicked Lies of Habren Faire</i></b>						

# NOTES

Use this page to write any notes you may have on these books.  
Photocopy this page for each reviewer.



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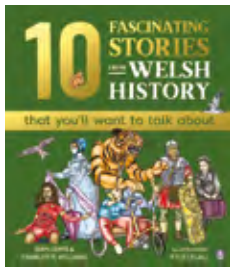
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# VOTING CARDS

Now that you've read and discussed the books shortlisted for the 2026 Tir na n-Og Award, here's your chance to vote for which book your group thinks is the best. Put an X in the box to mark your winner.



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

**10 Fascinating Stories  
from Welsh History**

**Major and Mynah:  
Project Puffin**

**The Wicked Lies of  
Habren Faire**

**10 Fascinating Stories  
from Welsh History**

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Habren Faire**

**Why not share your  
shadowing experience  
on social media?**

Remember to tag us:

@gwobrautirnanogawards

and use the hashtags:

#LoveReading

#TNNO2026

#TNNO2026ShadowingScheme

