

## Prayer for a Gymanfa Ganu

God of all grace, we gather today grateful for the gift of music and for the chance to sing together. Let these hymns open our hearts, strengthen our faith, and draw us closer to You and to one another.

Bless every voice here and fill this place with Your peace and joy. May the songs we share remind us of Your love, guide us in our daily lives, and bring hope to our community.

Stay with us now and in the days ahead. Amen.

**Reid Memorial Church's** architectural and design significance lies in the way its **building were conceived as a unified work of early twentieth-century ecclesiastical design.** The church is widely recognised as a *superb example of 20th-century church architecture*, designed by **Leslie Grahame Thomson** and built between **1929 and 1933** in a meticulous **neo-Perpendicular** style. Its design extends beyond the sanctuary: Thomson planned the **church, hall, manse, loggia, and cloister** as a single architectural composition, creating a peaceful, enclosed environment unusual for an urban Edinburgh parish.

- **Stained glass by James Ballantine**, adding colour and narrative to the interior.
- **Woodwork by Scott Morton**, whose craftsmanship gives warmth and texture to the chancel and fittings.
- **Ironwork by Thomas Hadden**, known for finely wrought decorative metalwork.
- A painted **reredos of *The Last Supper*** by William R. Lawson, providing a focal point of devotional art.
- A **cloister court** with a carved panel of *Christ at the Well of Samaria* by Alexander Carrick, integrating sculpture into the spiritual landscape.

## The organ

The church's **pipe organ by Rushworth & Dreaper** is a central part of its design identity. As one of Britain's leading organ builders of the period, Rushworth & Dreaper produced instruments known for tonal richness and reliability. In Reid Memorial Church, the organ complements the building's acoustics and contributes to its reputation as a space designed for both worship and high-quality music-making.

The future: union with Marchmont St Giles this year to become the new united charge of Blackford and Grange Parish church

This afternoon we are taking you on a tour of Wales again - so if last year I didn't head towards a location that had meaning for you - perhaps I will this year! We will be looking at the places, towns and villages where the hymn writers were born or lived - as these surely must have provided inspirations in some form to their writing?

And just a few bits of interest for you (well I found it interesting!) over the past 7 gymanfas that Huw and I have chosen the hymns for, we have sung 39 different hymns. The 22 of these we have sung just once, 10 we have sung twice, 5 we have sung three times and only two hymns have we sung four times - including one that we will sing for the 4th time this afternoon. So once we have sung them all I will get you to guess- which one today was a 4th time, and which other hymn have we also sung 4 times.

### 333 (150) Gweddi Wladgarol

The tune for this was written by Caradog Roberts of Rhosllanerchrugog, so we are starting our journey in the north again. commonly known as **Rhos** developed primarily during the 19th century as one of Wales's most significant coal-mining communities. Its rapid expansion was driven by the growth of the Ruabon coalfield, which attracted workers from across the region and transformed what had been a scattered rural settlement into a densely populated industrial village. By the 1870s, Rhos had more than 6,600 residents, reflecting the scale of its mining economy and the social infrastructure that grew around it.

The village became a parish in 1844, marking its emergence as a distinct community with its own civic identity. Alongside mining, Rhos gained a reputation for nonconformist religious life, with chapels playing a central role in education, culture, and political organisation. The later establishment of the Stiwt Theatre, built by miners' subscriptions, symbolised the community's commitment to arts and collective life even as the coal industry declined

### 336 (152) Bryn Myrddin

#### John Morgan Nicholas

Port Talbot's history is shaped by the merging of **Aberavon, Margam**, and surrounding hamlets, which evolved from medieval estates into a major industrial centre. The town's transformation accelerated in the late 19th century with the creation of the **Port Talbot Docks**, enabling large-scale coal exports. Its defining chapter arrived in the mid-20th century with the rise of the **steel industry**, especially the vast Abbey Works, which became one of Europe's largest steel plants and shaped the town's working-class identity.

Despite its industrial roots, Port Talbot has produced remarkable cultural talent. Legendary actor Richard Burton, Hollywood star Anthony Hopkins, and acclaimed actor Michael Sheen all hail from the town, each carrying its gritty, expressive character into their work

### 278 (583) Ellers

Composed in **1869** by **Edward John Hopkins** it was originally written as a "**hymn without words**" for organ or carillon. Now despite Hopkins being a Welsh name, and incidentally Huws grandmothers maiden name, Edward Hopkins was English! However the author of the words, Ben Davies was, thankfully for us today on our journey - Welsh. Cwmllynfell is a small village and community in the upper Swansea Valley and shaped by a blend of rural heritage and industrial history. With a population of just over **1,100** in the 2011 census, it remains a close-knit Welsh-speaking community where cultural identity and local tradition run deep. Cwmllynfell developed around farming settlements before expanding during the nineteenth century with the growth of **anthracite coal mining**. The nearby Cwmllynfell Colliery-opened in the early 1800s and active until 1959-played a major role in local employment and community life, drawing families into the area and helping shape its working-class character.

## 294 (611) Llanfair

**Robert Williams**

**Mynydd Ithel** is a modest but historically resonant hill in eastern Anglesey, rising above the rural landscape near Llanerchymedd. Its name is traditionally linked to Ithel, a figure associated with early medieval Welsh lineage, reflecting how the area preserves echoes of Celtic territorial boundaries. The hill sits within a landscape rich in prehistoric activity, and its surroundings contain traces of Bronze Age settlement patterns, including cairns and ancient routeways that once connected communities across the island.

During the medieval period, the region formed part of the estates linked to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd and other princes of Gwynedd, who relied on Anglesey's fertile interior for resources and defence. Though Mynydd Ithel itself is quiet today, it remains a vantage point over centuries of rural life, from early farming to the later parish networks that shaped the island's identity.

## (183) Penlan (In heavenly love abiding)

**David Jenkins**

**Trecastle** is a small but historically rich village in the former county of Breconshire, lying on the old route between Brecon and Llandovery. Its *name-Tre-castell*, meaning "town of the castle"-refers to the Norman motte-and-bailey built shortly after the conquest of Wales. This early fortification guarded a strategic pass through the upper Usk Valley and helped secure Norman influence in the region.

During the medieval period, Trecastle developed as a stopping point for travellers, drovers, and traders moving cattle along the Welsh drovers' roads. Its inns and farms became part of a wider rural economy that connected mid-Wales to English markets. The surrounding landscape, close to the Brecon Beacons, also shaped village life through agriculture and seasonal movement.

Though small today, Trecastle retains its medieval layout, earthwork castle mound, and a strong sense of continuity with its Norman and agricultural past.

## 464 Ebenezer

**Thomas John Williams**

**Pontardawe**, in the Swansea Valley, grew from a rural river crossing into a major industrial centre during the 19th century. Its *name "bridge on the Tawe"* reflects the early importance of the River Tawe as a transport route. The arrival of the Swansea Canal in the late 1700s accelerated development, enabling coal, iron, and later tinplate to move efficiently to Swansea's docks. By the mid-1800s, Pontardawe had become a centre of ironworking and tinplate production, drawing workers from across Wales. A key part of the town's cultural life was Ebenezer Chapel, founded in the 19th century as a Welsh Nonconformist chapel. It became a hub for worship, education, and community gatherings, reflecting the strong religious and social traditions of the valley.

## 837 (453) O na bawn I fel efe (Eleazar)

### Eleazar Roberts

**Pwllheli's** history runs far deeper than its modern marina and beaches suggest. The town's origins stretch back to medieval Wales, when it grew as a small coastal settlement within the Cantref of Llyn, an area long associated with early Christian pilgrims and monastic routes. By the 12th century, Pwllheli had become strategically important, and in 1355 it was granted a royal charter by Edward the Black Prince, formally establishing it as a borough. This charter helped shape the town's layout, markets, and civic identity for centuries.

Throughout the Middle Ages and into the early modern period, Pwllheli thrived as a market and trading centre. Its coastal position made it a natural hub for fishing, shipbuilding, and maritime commerce. The town's weekly market - still running today - is one of the oldest in Wales, a living reminder of its medieval roots. Pwllheli also played a role in the Welsh wool trade, with goods transported by sea to larger ports across Britain. However, Eleazar actually moved to Liverpool aged 2 months old. The Welsh community in **Liverpool** has played a defining role in shaping the city's character for more than two centuries. Large numbers of Welsh migrants arrived during the 18th and 19th centuries, drawn by work in construction, dock labour, and later in industry. Their influence became so strong that Liverpool was once nicknamed "the capital of North Wales." Welsh chapels dominated the city's religious landscape, with more than 90 at their peak, serving not only as places of worship but as cultural centres where the language and traditions thrived.

Welsh speakers helped establish schools, choirs, and literary societies, ensuring that cultural life flourished far from home. The city also hosted several National Eisteddfodau, reflecting its importance to Welsh identity. Although the community has dispersed over time, its legacy remains visible in place names, surviving chapels, and the continued presence of Welsh cultural groups that keep the language and heritage alive

## 796 (413) Rhys

### William John Evans

**Aberdare**, located in the Cynon Valley of south Wales, has a history shaped by industry, migration, and a strong cultural identity. Originally a small rural settlement, Aberdare changed dramatically during the 19th century with the rise of the coal and iron industries. The discovery of rich coal seams in the valley turned the town into one of the fastest-growing communities in Wales. By the mid-1800s, thousands of workers from across Wales and beyond arrived to work in the collieries. Aberdare became one of the valley's major centres, but it was part of a much larger industrial corridor stretching from Hirwaun in the north to Mountain Ash and Abercynon in the south

This rapid growth brought social and cultural change. Aberdare became known for its vibrant nonconformist religious life, with chapels playing a central role in education, music, and community organisation. The town gained a reputation for choral singing and produced several notable musicians and preachers. In 1861, Aberdare hosted the National Eisteddfod, reflecting its importance in Welsh cultural life

## 814 (431) Mae d'eisiau di bob awr

Translated by Ieuan Gwyllt (John Roberts)

**Caernarfon** is one of Wales's most historic and symbolically important towns, shaped by centuries of political power, cultural identity, and strategic geography. Its story is dominated by Caernarfon Castle, the monumental fortress begun in 1283 by Edward I during his conquest of Wales. Built to impress and intimidate, the castle's polygonal towers and coloured stonework were inspired by imperial Roman architecture, reflecting Edward's desire to project authority. Around it, he established a walled town that became the administrative centre of his new dominion. Yet Caernarfon's history stretches back further. The area was a stronghold of the early Welsh kingdom of Gwynedd, and nearby Segontium was a Roman fort on the outskirts.

## 429 (198) Sanctus

John Richards ('Isalaw')

**Bangor** is one of the oldest cities in Wales, with origins stretching back to the early medieval period. Its name comes from the Welsh word for a wattle fence, referring to the enclosure surrounding the monastery founded here in the 6th century by Saint Deiniol. This early religious settlement grew into a major centre of Christian learning and laid the foundations for Bangor Cathedral, which still stands today as one of the oldest cathedral sites in Britain.

During the Middle Ages, Bangor developed as a small but influential ecclesiastical city, closely linked to the princes of Gwynedd. Its position near the Menai Strait made it strategically important, and the surrounding region became a focal point of Welsh resistance to English rule. The 19th century brought dramatic change. The arrival of the Chester-Holyhead railway in 1848 transformed Bangor. The slate industry in nearby Bethesda and Llanberis also contributed to rapid growth, with Bangor serving as a commercial and administrative hub.

In 1884, the founding of Bangor University cemented the city's reputation as a centre of education and Welsh culture

That is the end of our musical journey - so the first question is which one of these hymns was the hymn that was on its fourth singing? (A. *Sanctus*)

And which other one do you think we have sung four times? (A. *Cwm Rhondda*)