

# DRAGONSONGS

*Being  
An account  
The Creation of Wales  
& her history  
Including  
The Ballad of Owen Glyndwr*

*Using a number of traditional bardic forms  
Being  
The Cywydd, Englynion, Awdl & Hir-a-thodhid*

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## Glossary - Welsh Terms

Aberffraw - The court of the Gryffyd  
Adar Llwhch Gwin - Magical birds  
Afanc - a gigantic monster that lives in Llyn-yr-Afanc in the River Conwy.  
Annwyn - The paradise of the Celts set in the Western Ocean  
Augustine - the saint who brought christianity to Britain  
Avignon - French capital of the Pope following the 14th Century schism  
Awen - The source of Bardic inspiration  
Bryn Glas - A defeat of the Saxons by the Welsh  
Cadair Idris - a fabled mountain where to spend a night upon its summit returns  
mad or poet  
Caerleon - Roman fort near Newport, South Wales  
Caractacus - Celtic hero who defied the Romans  
Catreath - An ancient defeat of the Celts by the Saxons  
Chiannon - the daughter of Hefydd Hen from the Mabinogi  
Cymru - The Welsh name for Wales  
Cynghuned - poetic harmony  
Deheubarth - Kingdom in South Wales  
Eryri - Snowdonia  
Eryllt the fair - A beautiful Welsh queen  
Gogynfeirdd - poets of princes  
Gorsedd - the modern 'Bards of the Isle of Britain'  
Gwygwy - An ancient defeat of the Saxons by the Celts  
Gwynedd - Kingdom in North West Wales, incorporating Snowdonia  
Iron Ring - Series of castles built around Snowdonia  
King's daughter - The largest cannon of its day  
Llewelyn - The last of the Welsh Princes  
Machynlleth - One of the towns where Glyndwr held his parliament  
Myrddin - The legendary Merlin  
Nodens - Celtic god of hunting & healing  
Offa - The Saxon king who built a dyke to keep out the Welsh marauders  
Ordovices - an ancient tribe of central Wales  
Pencerrd - Ancient poets such as Taliesin  
Powys - Kingdom in North Wales  
Pryderi - a character in the Mabinogi who helped Wales rise  
Strongbow - Edward I  
Sycarth - Lands owned by Owen Glendower  
Tywysogion - The Prince of Wales

## 1 DRAGONSONGS

*Their lord will they praise  
Their speech will they keep  
Their land they will lose  
Except wild Wales*

Talisein - prophecy

With promises do bards begin  
The telling of old taylor  
A soaring throng of dragonsongs  
Will celebrate wild Wales.

Britannia is a triple realm  
The Western seas bestride  
The Ocean Lord scabbards his sword  
& won her for a bride.

Three races prosper neath her gaze  
Three nations & three crowns  
Three parishers of Britishers  
From palaces to towns.

The Gaelic cheiftans brave the North,  
The Saxons seize the South,  
& in the West the Celts carress'd  
Her mountains mouth-to-mouth.

All thro her proud & native heart  
An ancient bloodline flows  
Where leek & law grew long before  
The thistle & the rose.

## 2 CELTICA

Come witness the Celtic conquerer  
This reckless, promiscuous drinker

Whose slave trains trudge, tether'd in terror  
Paving the waves in storm-wrack'd weather

From sea-rooted mists ragged shores rise  
Jagged precipices, falcon flies  
Soaring & shining thro wine-dark skies  
Unending woodland blends with her eyes

On the breeze the gold bees are humming  
Wing feathers flower stalks are strumming,  
Old Woden cries, "*The men are coming,*"  
& sighs, "*Trees hear their tribal drumming!*"

Men burst on Britain, height & heather  
Belong to a new song's minister  
As Woden slain by Nodens' valour  
Oak saplings huddle close together

### **3 New World Order**

Destined to echo right glorious  
Rome's valour arose imperious  
Hearts sturdy as stalwart Paulinus  
Conquering the Celtic conquerors  
With legionaires lithe & dangerous  
Nodens murder'd by Martian prowess!  
In whose wake spring up Rome's main bases  
Chester, Caerleon, Latin traces  
Linger still in language & faces  
Hot, scented baths, ampitheatres,  
Temples, walls & immense palaces,  
Singing to the world remember us,  
& so, beneath the caduceus,  
The Briton grew blithe & prosperous  
His good speech supple & sonorous,  
& when the wild Irish savages  
Threaten'd the West with their pillages  
The emperor Magnus Maximus  
Invited Cunedda, valourous  
Prince of Caledon, this to address  
& settle in Gwynedd's fastnesses  
Protecting the ocean borderers

Founding his line, forever famous,  
How Llywellyn prais'd his ancestors!

Ancestors bewailing tragedy  
Rome suffers an ailing century  
Choking on gothic hostility  
Recalls her last legions hastily  
To the defence of old Italy  
Left Britain a defenceless contree  
Soon the Scots & Picts & Gaels could see  
Fields fertile easily claim'd could be  
So made raids of great intensity  
Where Vortigern, great Celtic grandee,  
Thought it vital & necessary  
To send salutations cross the sea  
For Henghist, high Saxon majesty  
& his famous, mighty milt'ry  
To drive back their viscious enemy,  
But becoming lewd & land hungry  
He stripp'd them of precious liberty  
The lowlands are stolen brutally  
Saddest hour of all our history  
As battle by battle, key by key  
From onslaught hell-fraught Celtics flee  
To mountainside & mortal safety  
Where willing another Pryderi  
Men wait the day of Welsh destiny.

#### **4 The Battle of Chester**

Men fought a battle long ago  
Aslant Pendragon skies;  
Two armies met in weather wet  
Black crows crowding the skies

Druids gather, stone circles glow,  
Cast was a cryptic rune  
*"The time is nigh, a king shall die  
Beneath a mystic moon!"*

Dawn's glory shone, the Saxons rose  
With sword & spear & shield,  
Across the plain, in driving rain,  
The Welshmen block'd the field.

For some it was a blushing morn  
Yet others fear'd the light  
Weapon's glisten, two lines listen  
For word to launch the fight

As flash-on-flash the weapons clash  
Behind the crashing fray  
With smoke & bells the druid spells  
Melt minds to disarray

The music of the battle rang  
Cross country shore-to-shore  
A legend born, no-one had known  
How cruel could be war

The Welshmen driven to their camps  
The sunset bled wound red  
The Saxons bring back to their king  
His foeman's sever'd head

For every head a stone was found  
& there a barrow built  
Into the mound with shrieking sound  
Men plunged great swords full hilt

The next day dawn'd, its beauty lost  
The gods of battle reign  
The air grew still, fog left the hill  
& settled on the plain

Two armies stood there paralyzed  
Three bees buzzed on the hush  
With startling cry & swords held high  
Mass'd men made angry rush

Kings & princes, fathers & sons  
All mingled for the fray

Death dips & darts, for many hearts  
This was their final day

Death after death, duel after duel  
The Saxons press their might  
Til at the line, midst forest pine  
Two princes met to fight

Aethefrith's son is Looe the strong  
Selyf bore Slainge the fair  
A lethal fray & to this day  
Looe's bones are buried there

King Selyf led them from the front  
This day held the land's fate  
Twas life & death, with striving breath  
They held the Cymric gate

& there the King is set upon  
Three javelins pierce his side  
He slew all three by wind-blast tree  
& there lay down & died

Slainge dropp'd his spear & paced alone  
Before the Saxon band  
He met the king & slid his ring  
Upon his handsome hand

His father buried neath the field  
His battle cairn grew high  
So many stones, so many bones  
Selyf shall reach the sky

So if you find yourself one night  
Aslant Pendragon skies  
Come cast a rune, sing to the moon  
& watch the spirits rise

## 5 EISTEDFODD

*It is the year 1370. Three bards flee the plague which is devastating Wales. They arrive at Conwy where they take refuge in the castle. Full of Awen they proclaim an Eistedfodd & recite songs concerning the great Princes of Wales. In the audience is a young Owen Glendower who is stirr'd by the tayles.*

High on the crown of Cadair  
Grand remnant of giant's chair  
Three poets shall spend a night  
    Basking in the starry light  
    As they slipt into a dream  
Watch the hounds of Annwyn stream  
Round the peak with fiendish howl  
    Faces taut with wild-eyed scowl  
    Only brave men could defy  
Those strange half-lights in the eye  
    Being bards & good, brave men  
Watch them fill with bright awen!

Goddess presses splendidly  
    Thro moon cycle silvery  
Fading for dawn oer Corwen  
Whose heavens rumble open  
Let loose a lightsome shower  
    To ease the thirsty flower  
    Pleasantly by Dee's soft side  
Glendower did check his stride  
Observing each splashing drop  
    Of the rainfall, & its flop  
When, running from Llangollen  
Come three of his father's men,  
    *"Sir, the ruthless killer strikes,  
    Bodies black block up the dykes  
    Phantom smoke cuts out the sun  
    Plague is coming, run, run, run!"*

Resourceful & foreseeing  
From th'unfair fiend fleeing  
Three names famous in poesy

Navigate to open sea  
Following the river bank  
Watching for the wild Afanc  
From the harbour at Llanrwst  
To the salt-shore zephyr kiss'd,  
& the foot of Conwy keep.

Warden woken from his sleep  
Neath that mighty fortress stood,  
Fair Gruffyd ap Maredudd,  
Madog Dwygraig & by him  
Clever Dafydd ap Gwylm  
Words twitter as morning bird  
*"Sir, we are the Gogynfeirdd!"*

In a flash them welcom'd in  
For the stories that bards spin  
Loved well in noble houses  
When cynghanned arouses  
Hearts to music & desire  
They were received by the squire  
Each was now a noble guest  
Welcomed in, nourish'd & dress'd  
& when night came on so fine  
As the bards quaff'd back their wine  
Dafydd sings, *"In sight of god  
We proclaim an Eisteddfodd!"*

In they walked thro the Kings hall  
& were welcom'd one & all  
By the guests of noble breath  
Avoiding the sable death  
Wardens of the land's power  
Like Denbigh & Glendower  
With their ladies listen'd there  
& a hearty banquet share  
Awaiting the awen spell,  
Beautiful, as bards do tell.

When these great Welsh wordsmiths meet  
& precious Pencerrds compete  
Musical montage arose  
Like the Conwy as she flows

Thro the golden swallow falls  
To the coast in calm & squalls  
    & then on into the sea  
Where the tall walls of Conwy  
Watch her beautiful passage  
    *"Welcome to the poet's stage!  
Ye shall hear three lilted dreams  
    On the very best of themes,  
    That is to praise the princes  
    Valourous, with best verses!"*  
As the great gogynfjird should  
Madog, Dafyd, Maredudd  
Sat together on their chairs  
With the proper bardic airs  
All those present saw them nod  
Starting off the eistedfodd.

Madog Dwygraig first did stand  
Red wine flagon firm in hand  
Perfect tongue & good sentence  
    Carried to his audience  
    *"Awen unbounded set among  
Compact & a good clear song  
I shall now begin these taylor  
With Rhodri, first king of Wales  
    First son of freckl'd Merfyn  
Whom Gwynedd did ruthless win  
With men from Ynys Manaw (Isle of man)  
    Ending many years of war  
    Now his son brings to the fold  
    Deuhabarth with guile & gold  
    & when Viking longboats trail'd  
Round North Britain as they sail'd  
    To settle in Anglesey  
Reckon'd not them with Rhodri  
    Standing tall before the Danes  
Painted woad, sharp swords & manes  
    All in the wind-blast fluttering  
Charge! cried Horn, brave Danish king  
    Soon cut down by Rhodri's sword  
    Ever fled the Nordic horde!"*

Company applaud the deed,

Cupbearer pours out the mead  
So Madog Dwygraig went on  
*"Rhodri had a handsome son  
Blest with brains & royal blood  
His name, Hywel Dda, the good!  
As were falling Cornish kings  
Round his fame a contree springs  
First to collect Cymric crowns  
Building castles, founding towns,  
Beli's spear felt his valour,  
Radiant riches-giver,  
From his lodge a summons sent  
For the national parliament  
Where gather first men of Wales  
Wisdom & balance prevails  
Hywel set in stone the laws  
That to this day mine & yours  
Madog finish'd with flourish,  
Rhodri, Hywel, how I wish  
You were living in this age  
Fighting wars we Welshmen wage"*  
& wiping beads from his brow  
Madog Dwygraig bent in bow.

Conwy's company uprore  
Fill'd the room with warm applause  
As then in his turn upstood  
Smart Gruffyd ap Maredudd  
His long, blue buffalo horn  
Shards of silver raiment worn,  
*"Cupbearer, with foaming mead  
Help me bolster up each deed  
Of great exploits I shall boast  
To their fame let us now toast!"*  
As he rais'd his horn up high  
Owen dived into his eye  
Saw the ghosts of chiefs of old  
As their deeds on earth were told!

*"Company I shall begin  
With Gruffyd ap Llewellyn  
Raise the mead horns, quoff your wines  
High the truth of god's designs*

*High the virtue of his course  
As was won all Wales with force  
High the kins in the evening  
As he met the English king  
Rightly named the Confessor  
Born upon princely shoulder  
Tall between the river banks  
In the place where god gave thanks  
To Augustine's pure parley  
With Cymrus's glowing clergy!"*

*To a trance the room full drawn,  
Spiders scuttl'd cross the stone,  
"Tragic'ly from London came  
Harold, laird of England's fame,  
Bringing war to all our lands  
Soon to hold in blood-stain'd hands  
Prince Llewelyn's loveley head,  
He himself would soon be dead  
In an engagement of kings  
On the steep slopes of Hastings -  
So to Mona march Normans,  
Irrisistable weapons;  
Kite shields, mail-coats, helms & swords  
Block up the old Roman roads,  
Sweeping valley-on-valley  
Building many an abbey  
Where they go, stone castles grow,  
Towns spring up in each shadow;  
Cardiff, Swansea, Carmarthen,  
Fed on genepools of Devon,  
Birthplace of an English pale,  
Would the Welsh blood yet prevail?"*

*All the company grew hush'd  
Maredudd with true heart gush'd,  
"Then arose great warriors  
To fling back the invaders,  
Each a brave & knife-keen man  
Men like Gruffud ap Cynan  
& famous Rhys ap Tewddwr,  
Joining forces together  
Bringing Frenchmen to great harm*

*At the fray of Mynydd Crn,  
Men like Deuharbarth's Lord Rhys,  
Allied with the arts of Greece  
& the martial train of Rome,  
Drove the foemen from his home,  
When Henry offer'd battle  
With a host innum' rable  
On Berywyn's mountain range  
Our Welsh weather would derange  
An army lost on the moors  
Rain sodden & sick of wars  
So much that they fled in tears  
Peace to last a hundred years!  
So beneath the gaze of god  
Rhys proclaim'd an Eistedfodd,  
Where cynghanned first flew free  
Singing dulcet harmony!"*  
Ending his poetic flow  
With a deep bow, sweeping low,  
Maredudd did take his seat  
His recitation complete  
& as the applause appear'd  
How loudly Glendower cheer'd!

Conwy is a pretty place  
Where pink butterflies give chase  
To the zephyrs on the breeze  
& red berries hug the trees  
Full of pleasant, little streets  
Silver dancing moonlight greets,  
Skipping on the town's fair walls  
All around rises & falls  
Like the wide mountain landscape  
Pricking up the townsfolk's nape  
Neath the walls these folk appear  
Merry throng straining to hear  
Thro yon, lofty windows pour,  
Soft verses of bardic lore!

Eagerly the company  
Waits for matchless artistry  
Like the she-goats sense a ram  
The good son of Gwilym Gam

Daffyd ap Gwylm upstands  
Silencing with waving hands  
& plucking the fine harp strings  
Like a voice from heaven sings,  
    *"Cupbearers fill up the wine  
    As I praise the royal line  
    Born of Cynan's Irish blood  
    Him prais'd by fair Maredudd,  
    First, Llewellyn op Corwerth,  
    Bards were present at his birth,  
    Cherubs watch'd him as he grew  
    To a prince, noble & true  
Who won Wales thro feats of war  
    From his throne at Aberfraw,  
    Peace projected thro the land,  
At his whim stand castles grand,  
    Ewloe & Dolwyddelan  
    Testament to this great man  
    Firm, majestic overlord  
    Of many a gudeman sword  
Rushing from his warm homestead  
    For three rampant lions red  
    Proud army of kith & kin  
    Baring legs & javelin  
Drunk on war & drunk on mead  
    Wylde as wolf & swift as steed  
    Fearing not the mortal blade  
    Pure Walia on parade!"*

When these simple words were air'd,  
Sentiments his brethren shared  
    Higher flew the choral tone  
    Spider settl'd on the stone  
    & the poet canter'd on,  
    *"This Llewelyn had a son  
    Who in turn a boy did sire  
Born to found the Welsh empire,  
    & as his land prospers still  
With these words I lay my quill  
    As the last Llywellyn grew  
    Lord of all Deuhabarth's few  
Famous grew him thro these isles  
    For his gusto & his guiles*

*Westerly was his to wield  
Mona's corn & Powys shield  
Men of Paris knew his name  
Far off Danube felt his fame  
Man eager to shatter spears  
Sent wisdom beyond his years  
From his appropriate chair  
To the children in his care  
From headwaters of the Taff  
To Anglesey swept his staff  
This the jealous Longshanks knew  
Thinking Welsh homage was due  
But our prince was proud & bold  
Refused was the English gold  
Striking Longshanks to the bone  
& bestir'd him from his throne  
March'd his men on Wales to gaze  
First of all our tragic days  
As the foreign invaders  
Committed many murders  
& willing much death to cease  
Prince Llewelyn sued for peace  
As around his realm did spring  
Castles of the Iron Ring.  
Holding down the Welsh spirit  
Soon our seething cauldron lit  
Flying at the English flags  
Slew those sons of bald, grey hags  
With the fall of Hawarden  
Rose the great rebellion  
Rooted safe in Anglesey  
Set to spread thro the contree  
So Llewelyn did South ride  
"Fight for freedom!" wide he cried  
The dream was soon crashing real  
Fought for with sharp spear & zeal  
Freedom seem'd so sure to pass  
But dreams seldom thrive, alas!"*

Now the company drew pale  
Soon to hear a tragic taylor,  
Dafydd drew imagine in,  
"Woe betides Prince Llewelyn

*Fate brought him to the Irfon  
Where stood many a Saxon  
Blocking that black river's ford -  
Prince Llewelyn rais'd his sword  
& tho fifteen English slew  
His last breath he gasp'd & drew  
& then when the prince was dead  
Body parted from the head  
Emblem of our national state  
Winds rush'd wide without abate  
Oak trees shudder'd, adders stand  
Stars fall, dark waves lash the land,  
Nature weeping for her prince  
Has been weeping ever since  
Only we may stem the tears  
When the chosen one appears  
Who shall unite our contree  
To regain its liberty  
Til that day let us be strong  
For friends I now end my song"*

All who heard these violet tayles  
Struck by the legends of Wales  
& the gather'd host grew loud  
& outside a cheering crowd  
Some rare force did flow thro men  
Like Glendower of Corwen  
As Dafydd made graceful bow  
Owen then would make a vow  
To restore his native land  
As haunch'd up the bards did stand  
Declaring the name of god  
Concluding the Eistedfodd!

## 6

### The Ballad of Owen Glendower

*Owynus,*

*Dei gratia Princes Walliae*

**(i)**

Ocean Gods & River Kings - Lords of Streams  
The warbling thrushling sings  
Of famous saints' beginnings  
Offers falcon flutterings

The Welsh must serve an English king - or die!  
Chained by the Iron Ring  
Cross the land castles up-spring  
Bards bearded slain from singing

Harps, skylarks & poetry - winter's eve  
Believers prophesy  
The messiah's destiny  
Drive the Saxons to the sea

The front of heaven fire divine - strange shapes,  
Red grapes gave up their wine  
From the princely Powys line  
Baby born in starry shine

Owen of Glen of Dee water - mid pine,  
Gwynned in his father,  
Mother Deheubarth's daughter,  
Sweet lamb brought to the slaughter

From Rhyll to Patagonia - Swansea,  
'Gavenny & Bala  
Welsh psyche sewn together  
Men remember Glendower!

**(ii)**

Golden dawn of a century  
Now Bolingbroke is king  
Whose dynasty, majestically  
Accepts the Iron Ring

Great Owen of the Glen of Dee

Burns battle in his eye  
*"Our destiny to set Wales free!"*  
He rais'd his dragon high

Hearts melt as spring thaws mountain snows  
Men eager for the fray  
Camps of heroes, lamps & longbows  
Hill march both night & day

Owen rode trails his shepherds knew  
The foe bled ambush dry  
Electric blue his wizards drew  
Great storms across the sky

A sodden monarch leaves behind  
The winds & rains & hails  
Leaves spies to find the rebel kind  
& men to mind the vales

Re-awakened is the dragon  
Comets blaze starry skies  
With Henry gone North Wales is won  
By combat & surprise

**(iii)**

Upon the banks of old Dyfi  
Men heard Owen Glendower  
While we battle for liberty  
The English fight for power!

They storm a fine fortress that stands  
High-bluffed over singing sea  
Whose noble, tall turret commands  
All the coast of Ardudwy

Upon Harlech's tall battlement  
Flags of dragons flutter free  
Summoning his first parliament  
& envoys from over sea

A second Aberffraw hath pass'd

In this heavenly domain  
As envoys come on thick & fast  
From Italy, France & Spain

Golden gifts from the King of France  
Gilt-edged casque, cuirass & sword  
Princes & Kings shall share a stance  
Gin the common foe abroad

As from the soil of goodly bed  
There grows a lovely flower  
The crown is placed upon his head  
Resplendent in its power

## 7 PWYLL MELYN

*Being an account of the Battle of Pwyll Melyn & the events leading up to it, beginning with King Henry IV giving his son control of the army, its subsequent raising of the siege of Usk Castle & the pursuit to Pwyll Melyn. There Owen Glendower faced the English with his army & received a total & bloody defeat of his forces as his brother Tudur fell in the bloodshed*

*The battle marks the high water mark of the rebellion*

The harvesters shall reap their corn  
Cupbearer pour forth the mead horn  
Filling up this silver vessel  
I shall sing you of a battle  
The King summoned his son, Henry,  
"You won your spurs at Shrewbury  
& have been a delight to me  
My boy I give you Glendower  
Your princely realms to recover!"  
"My honour sir, strong beats my heart  
& on the morrow shall depart!"  
The summons spread across the land  
To form a bawdy, haughty band  
Whose gallant ranks of chivalry  
Were swiftly marched to Shrewsbury

Providence walks these fateful days  
When legends live life to amaze  
Far southerward two brothers stood  
The green rim of a bluebell wood  
Handsome Griffith & bold Tudur  
Sporting likeness of Glendower  
Before them in the darkling dusk  
Stood the castle commanding Usk  
Behind, five thousand firm faced men  
With mace & sword awaiting 'when'  
No logs were lit to keep surprise  
But whispers sometimes read the skies  
Discovered by some sharp, sharp eyes  
The secret flies to Shrewsbury  
Into the ear of Prince Henry...

As lovely larks sung for the day  
These good young braves flung for the fray  
Slamming against the castle walls  
Battle echoing thro its halls  
Death falling from the murder holes!  
Black burning pitch, stones, barbed arrows  
The hearts of those defending grows  
Four long years since their last defeat  
Tudur Glendower calls retreat  
Yet more to die, the foe sally!  
Round limping Griffith men rally  
But, alack, cut back like rushes  
As the princely captive blushes  
On all sides his fallen flower  
*"Fie, Welsh dog, for you the Tower!"*

Tudur stood watching from the trees  
Saw his nephew beat to the knees  
& with a familial wrench  
Ice cool thoughts of vengeance entrench  
But naught could avert tragedy  
As newly rode from Shrewsbury  
Flow Henry's clanking cavalry  
This for the Welsh was the last straw  
Sick of battle & sick of war  
In wylde, defenceless haste they sped  
Leaving the English with their dead

Leaving the Ravens to grow red  
Prince Hal to Griffith sped & said  
*"When my army comes on behind  
We shall hunt down thy blasted kind!"*

Day growing seer with the hot sun  
The beautiful pursuit begun  
As goats are driven place-to-place  
Across nine dingles went the chase  
Owen greets his red-faced brother  
*"Today, Tudur & together  
Back to back upon the heather  
Pwyll Melyn shall be another  
Fantastic battle of Bryn Glas"*  
Slowly he drew the French Cuirass  
& held it glinting in the sun  
*"Bring on Prince Henry & his crew!"*  
Across his throat the blade he drew  
A little prick of blood soon dried  
Hopes for the morrow multiplied!

Prince Henry pierced the hills of Gwent  
& on a peak pitched his white tent  
Across the vale the Welsh stood proud  
With lusty vigor well endowed  
Fine spirited, winners of wives  
Alas! fine spirits shortens lives  
About him pitched his lusty force  
His archers & his thick mailed horse  
& in between his men-at-arms  
Down fell a lull, strangest of calms  
An eagle flew between the blades  
& all who saw shall join the shades  
Haunting the air while sunset fades  
To resting night on posing camps  
Two starry hosts of fires & lamps.

Dawn drove away the moony ghosts  
Lighting the lances of sworn hosts  
Like gentle stream amid the glade  
Among bare feet two sandals made  
A host of easy souls soon found  
The Celtic spears all gather'd round

*"Brave men that fall Annwyn shall bless  
With everlasting happiness -  
Brave men that fall in vital fight  
Shall sup well in Heaven tonight!"*  
Cheers greet the sweet words of the friar  
Full of the fire from his inspire  
Knowing it would be brave to die  
Across the way, weapons held high  
The flower of Glendower fly

Those serried ranks of murder crash  
Forming a mighty thunder flash  
The beauty of that massed melee  
Soon mangled-flesh & agony  
Like the hard fight at Gwygyr past  
Those hosts in slashing death held fast  
Tall in the midst of private wars  
There fought the captain of his cause  
Aggression etch'd into the face  
Smashing skulls with his awful mace  
His sons stood slashing by his side  
A father knows no greater pride  
But see! Dark rows, an arrow flies  
Tudur is holed, the battle sighs  
For this bold hero as he dies

Upon the flanks the English press  
Leech-red in bloody battle dress  
The friar tries to flee the net  
*"What of your heavenly banquet?"*  
*"I am fasting, I must admit!"*  
He in a flash the first to flit  
Behind implodes the poor Welsh wills  
Shields cast aside, shed weapon spills  
Men scatter madly for the hills -  
Crying black tears & shy of force  
Owen placed Tudur on his horse  
Consumed by grief & distracted  
He feeleth not the arrowhead  
& gallops up a briary steep  
A second Catraeth his to weep

## 8 Harlech Hall

The Halls are filled with fragrant spring  
The empire shrinking hill-by-hill  
Henry closes closer still

The Halls are fill'd with song & steel  
Cups of dark mead, suppers & tayles,  
Hearts of heroes beat for Wales

The Halls echo with shout & cry  
Battle brought to the castle walls  
Godless wounded haunt the halls

The Halls are growing wan & dark  
No faggots left for precious heat  
No water & naught to eat

The Halls run bleak with tears today  
Leaving dull orbs for loved one's eyes  
For the hills Glendower flies

The Halls are fill'd with English arms  
Henry receives the surrender  
*"Where is Owen Glendower?"*

*"His Halls are now the wide spaces  
Between the grandeur of our peaks,"*  
His wife eloquently speaks

## 9 LEGEND

Owen's revolt thunders ill-starr'd - still Wales  
Fills him with high regard  
Tho' deer feed in the churchyard  
& the market place grows hard

Cross countryside he dashes - sad return  
Sycarth burnt to ashes  
Memory tender flashes  
Reality soon crashes

Rampant english everywhere - he would go  
To Snowdon's lofty lair  
Auld lands of Epyllt the fair  
White eagles rise upon air

Amid the clean Llewellyn light - swift stags leap  
The steeps all aspect white  
Tho the icy harsh winds bite  
Still they carried on the fight

Spirit indomitable - cattle raids  
Laid at his cave's table  
Spurr'd on by poet fable  
Deliverance thro battle!

His dragon helm is polisht still - fine tayles  
Wales basks with freedom's will  
Banners fly from hill to hill  
Dragonhearts to ever thrill

## **10 Agincourt**

*Being an account of the battle of Agincourt & good account given by the archers of  
Wales, making up the lions share of the army of Henry V*

Friends, grapple with your mind  
Come, leave your times behind,  
To when the fates design'd  
A battle royal  
When steel & iron ring  
As London's mighty king  
Did face the Dauphin sting  
On Gallic soil

With phoebus shining sheer

Picture the Hampton pier  
Where stands a man held dear  
By all of England  
His ordinance complete  
Saint George bedecks the fleet  
Brave men fill every street  
Noble five thousand!

Fair stood the wind for France  
When sails in rows advance  
Nor now to prove the chance  
Longer will tarry;  
So putting to the main  
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,  
With all his martial train  
Landed King Harry

Friends hear my humble lay  
Hal's army made good way  
Upon the chevauchee  
Fell the five thousand;  
Earning six pence a day  
Half of those in his pay  
*"The best,"* most men would say,  
*Bowmen of England!"*

But English these men weren't  
Hearts by Cambria burnt,  
A reputation earnt,  
As rare as Roman;  
Since the days of David  
When slain was King Offid  
The world has known their bid  
To be great bowmen

But woe strikes their campaign?  
Harfleur saw many slain  
Thro never-ending rain  
The army marches;  
The loaves of bread soon went  
Meat slivers almost spent  
With backs buckl'd & bent  
Trudged Harry's archers

For they were made to make  
The snorting horses break  
Each cut a heavy stake  
From woods near Corbie;  
Uncertain with the war  
They march'd a week or more  
Marching to Agincourt  
For death or glory!

When worse the crude rain fell  
King Harry gave a yell  
Made camp at Maisoncelle  
His men grew ready  
Close by they heard the noise  
As the Dauphin employs  
Masses of peasant boys  
& knights so steady

Before the morning rose  
King Harry called the cause  
For Saint George & the wars  
That they were fighting,  
With cloudless morning born  
They view'd a vale of corn  
& steeds France did adorn  
With lance alighting.

Thick eaves lay to the fore  
By woods of Tramecourt  
& little Agincourt  
Then stood King Harry  
*"Dismount & form a line  
As straight as Northern pine  
& bowmen stern in spine,  
The day shall carry."*

Now with a bright fanfare  
Light sennets fill the air  
& every man did share  
The great occasion  
When like a wylde dragon  
The Gallic host came on

With weapon on weapon  
For brash abrasion

Then as the foemen came  
Beneath the Oriflame  
King Harry felt his fame  
From heav'n descending  
& of his happy few  
Saint George in glory threw  
Upon them of Cymru  
Honour ne'er ending.

*"Montjoie!"* climbing the skies  
The Welsh now keen their eyes  
Like devils in disguise  
They bent the bowstring,  
To fill the sky with wood  
To soak the soil in blood  
Wingless whistle & thud  
& men were screaming.

As arrows rose & fell  
Boldly men rode and well,  
Into the jaws of Hell,  
The nobles blunder'd  
Arrows the right of them,  
Arrows the left of them,  
Arrows in front of them  
On still they thunder'd

*"Release!"* Hal's captains cry,  
Loose to an open sky  
Forests of arrows fly  
To murder calling  
& every steep arrow  
Join'd hundreds in their flow  
So thick it seem'd like snow  
Was awful falling.

*"L'attaque!"* The French reply  
Theirs' but to do or die  
As destriers still fly  
Into the slaughter

The pounded earth did shake  
Into a wall of stake  
Great waves of lances break  
Like roaring water

& so the Frenchmen fail'd  
Their horses hard impaled  
Their riders now regaled  
By Harry's army  
Prowess 'gin prowess pits  
Daggers jabbing eye-slits  
So bloody as befits  
Steel, blade & fury

Welsh bows to ground they threw  
& forth their bilbos drew  
& on the French they flew  
Not one was tardy,  
Arms from the shoulders sent  
Scalps to the teeth were rent  
As down those peasants went  
The Welsh were hardy.

Warwick in blood did wade  
Oxford the foe invade  
Gloster such slaughter made  
As Owen Tudur  
Was fighting bravely there  
His king's burden to share  
Who hugg'd him like a bear  
& like a brother

The French soon flush with dread  
Ten thousand lying dead  
The field forever fled  
Dishonour linger'd  
For cross an open grave  
Where weeping widows rave  
The Welshmen whoop & wave  
Salutes two-finger'd

Frenchmen bereft of breath  
What fellowship of death;

Fauconberg, Delabreth  
Marle, Foix & Roussi  
The Duke of Alencon,  
Burgundy, Chatillon,  
Beaumont & Vaudemont  
Died for their duty

Now on the other side  
But barely thirty died  
Forever puffs the pride  
Of Harry's battle  
When shorn of strategy  
Was worn a victory  
Forever the glory  
Of bowman's mettle.

*"Harken!" King Harry speaks,  
"Men from the Western peaks  
In this garden of leeks  
Ye did good service  
So come Saint Crispin's day  
Wear one! & hail the fray!  
When bodkins battle sway  
For there thy verve is!"*

Striding the channel foam  
Nigh five thousand glide home  
Riding from dawn til gloam  
Their deeds rejoicing  
A victor leaves London  
For Powys & Brecon  
To practice his weapon  
For future fighting!

## **11 Tudor Rose**

*Being an account of the life of Henry Tudor & his quest to end the Wars of the Roses.  
Therin he is crown'd King of England & Wales, founding a dynasty that will  
eventually merge with the crown of Scotland, thereby uniting the British Isles.*

As did old carpenters of song - come sing  
Wings carry us along  
Tudur clansmen growing strong  
Cymric mortals set among

Bloodline yields Owen, fine & lean - life's lust  
Illustrious & keen  
Marries England's widow'd queen  
Two young boys soon their's to ween

Being Edmund & Jasper - friends of fate  
Great house of Lancaster  
Edmund marries his lover  
Their son call'd Henry Tudur

The War of the Roses broke - beheaded  
By Edward, Prince of York,  
Owen's corpse neath gypsy cloak  
Sons vanishing thro the smoke

Edward swiftly seizes crown - evil stunt  
Hunts the pretenders down  
Ends Edmund's mortal renown  
Son smuggl'd from Pembroke town

The lad moved from place-to-place - loyal realm  
True helmsman of his race  
Noble, tall & fair of face  
Fox-hunt swift & man with mace

Jasper takes charge of Henry - fate's edict  
His hand-pick'd company  
Watch the pathways to safety  
Til his galley leaves Tenby

By golden calm & crude gale - southerly  
For Brittany they sail  
Land upon the Gallic shale  
Celtic Noblemen regale

England sends dreadful tiding - Henry heard  
A third Richard is King  
Mysterious murdering

Discontent soon set to spring

Cambrian bards proclaim the cause - upsprung  
Their young Lancaster rose  
Locking horns with Yorkist boars  
Draws an army for the wars!

He set off with three thousand souls - proud force  
Set true course thro the squalls  
A soft, southern wind befalls  
Sunshine lights the dancing shoals

Milford Haven offers accord - full of thanks  
He anchors in Dale Road  
Kisses soil & raising sword  
Sings, "*Be thou my judge, O lord!*"

His army marches five abreast - proud hearts  
Depart Haverfordwest  
Thro Prescelli quickly press'd  
At Machynlleth succor rest

North & South true welshmen wing - loyal arms  
A royal gathering  
Show fealty to their king  
Soon to face the reckoning

The news to Nottingham swift flies - such blow!  
Red grows King Richard's eyes  
*"Fetch my soldiers!"* panic cries  
Black ravens darken the skies

Henry marches thro sun & rain - hills fade  
Invades the Saxon plain  
Shrewsbury invites his reign  
Lichfield feeds his martial train.

On Bosworth Field stood babes-in-arms - blood's guests  
From forests, guilds & farms  
Shining trumpets broke the calms  
Charges battle's rage embalms

What thick trial of war so bloody - hellsong!  
Death's prolonged agony,  
Feats of Spartan bravery  
Brotherhood of Gallilee

Richard's nobles spurn the fray - destiny!  
Guests of a vital day  
The usurper's throne betray  
Hunchback king cries in dismay

But royal blood is noble still - rare kind!  
Finding his deepest will  
Richard charges down the hill  
Like a lion scents the kill

The king consumed by blade & rage - horse-thrown  
Dawn of the Tudur age  
Swordpoints pierce his helmets cage  
Naked corpse exits the stage

& so the Welsh shall have their king - great quest  
Westminster watches crowning  
Centuries of suffering  
Banish'd as the valleys sing

The House of York provides a queen - true love  
Removes the bitter spleen  
Their princess a pretty teen  
Scottish king now lusts her keen

Their kin unite an island - thro proud vein  
Flows Spain, Ireland, Scotland,  
The Saxon blood of England  
& the Welsman's Celtic strain

## **12 Walia Moderna**

### *Voyagers*

Arise Britannia, Queen of Albion

How proudly does thy spirit sit upon  
The majestic back of Cymric dragon  
That in a flame-flash brighter than the sun  
Reveals future orizon - mystic spell  
To tell the tayles of Wales that time hath spun

### *The Welsh Bible*

First let us hear her beautiful language  
Now cast immortal on the holy page  
By pearly priesthood & the saintly sage  
When every parish church shall be her stage  
In perfect pitch & tone to guage - so soft,  
The lofty feeling of the holy age

### *Brave New World*

Cambrians feel sectarian terror  
Up from this court of sessions at Bala  
Grave threats shall galvanise the poor Quaker  
To settle in a new America  
& pleasant Pennsylvania - rich earth  
Birth of the starry-child of Britannia

### *Copperopolis*

From Kowloon Bay to awesome Cape Horn gales  
The seas are teeming with the Swansea sails  
Following one back to her native Wales  
We find the copperopolis prevails  
Great port the globe avails - metal basket  
From musketballs to tinroofs, pots, & nails

### *New Welsh Bards*

Welsh essence fades with ever passing time  
With England permeating here sublime  
Bards deem their song's enfeeblement a crime  
Restore the sacred metres of their rhyme  
Cyghannedd's delicious chime - great Gorsedd  
Whose eistedfodd grows hearts of leafy lime

### *Britain's Last Invasion*

Seven centuries since the Hastings fray,  
Small fleet of French forces finds Fishgaurd Bay  
Twelve hundred rascals ransacking their way  
Oer Pembroke soil, but by the fall of day,  
Simple folk make them pay - hail Jemima!  
*"Invading foes our soul shall never slay!"*

### *Industrial Revolution*

The inception of monstrous industry  
Marks the dawn of an awesome century  
Coal drives great wheels of steaming enginery  
From Merthyr Tydfil to the Taff Valley  
Canals carve bargeways to the sea - impress'd  
Josiah Guest builds his first factory.

### *Reform Riots!*

More common folk of Wales breathe Merthyr's air  
From poverty, prosperity to share  
Alas this paradise more lion's lair  
Industrial unrest the proud chests wear  
Tartan rows oppose those who dare - much strife  
Life gladly lost for reform full & fair.

### *The Coming of the Railways*

Now as the civic anger dissipates  
On marches progress thro industry's gates  
Locomotion gliding on steely skates  
Bares coal to where little Cardiff awaits;  
Marquess du Bute celebrates - downing wine  
*"This town shall soon be number'd with the greats!"*

### *Australia*

Steering her dragon-flight Britannia flew  
Oer oceans vast until at last she drew  
To Britain's continent of convict hue  
South Walia ready to start anew  
Fed on Cymfanu Ganu - native lips

As thro the townships Cymric customs grew

### *South America*

She swept across the blue Pacifica  
To the rugged tip of Argentina  
A place that men named Patagonia  
Six hundred Welsh folk cluster'd together  
Contented agriculture - bellies fed  
They spread thro the Andean area

### *World War One*

Britannia scents the smoke of global fire  
When peace becomes the people's pariah  
More bloodshed to protect Britain's empire  
As young men of Welsh villages entire  
Toss'd on the brutal pyre - Europa's hope  
Gropes blindly forward thro the jagged wire.

### *David Lloyd-George*

Alas men rage, this age of gas & gun  
No friend of men dying by division  
Step forward the member for Caenarvon  
Joining the allied arms in unison  
Driving back the bested hun - blasted earth  
Behind, the birth of modern europe won.

### *World War II*

Flame billows from the dragons steaming snout  
The global wars are played out round about  
Bombs burn the vibrant heart of Swansea out  
But crying with vengeant, accented shout  
The welsh advance in stoic pout - blood thick  
Of victory the British have no doubt.

### *Modern Eistedfodd*

As Britannia mops the brow of liberty

The singing valleys fill for victory  
Awakening their native melody  
Now harpers play & bards say poetry,  
Fair Llangollen's victory - songs well sung  
By a young Luciano Pavarotti

### *Aberfan*

Of all Britannia's tragedies, alas  
None severs heartstrings as the poor Paintglas  
Small school with laughter fluffing every class  
Now snuff'd out by the slag heaps sweeping pass  
Orphan'd maths book on the grass - no birds sing  
Just digging thro a terrible morass

### *Plaid Cymru*

Britannia rests her steed upon Snowdon  
A pretty seething region looks upon  
The songs of Wales marching neath the Triton  
Fine cause flowing thro the polling station  
Merionydd & Carnaervon - quenching thirst  
First members sent to bench with the nation

### *Revival of the Tongue*

Now all about is rising to the sky  
The tongue of Wales, bard throated lullaby  
Ressuscitated, refusing to die,  
Carves her proud niche in television's eye  
Whitchurch to Dolgellau - sublime profit  
As Britannia's bilingual songbirds fly

### *Devolution*

The dragonsteed is steer'd toward the sea  
Oer Brecon Beacons to a great city  
How Cardiff has prosper'd for her country  
Behold her proud national assembly  
Pretty donjon of liberty - petal'd dome  
Settles her affairs for futurity

### *Fond Farewell*

The pride of Wales still ringing in her ears  
    Britannia sheds a sea of happy tears  
Her oldest prince still young despite the years  
    Partner in all her fortune & her fears  
        As Europa appears - great continent  
    Especial scent of independence nears

# DRAGONSONGS

*Being*

*An account*

*The Creation of Wales & her history*

*Including*

*The Ballad of Owen Glyndwr*

*Using a number of bardic forms*

## *Being*

### *The Cywydd, Englynion, Awdl & Hir-a-thodhid*

#### **Glossary - Welsh Terms**

- Aberffraw - The court of the Gryffyd  
Adar Llŵch Gwin - Magical birds  
Afanc - a gigantic monster that lives in Llyn-yr-Afanc in the River Conwy.  
Annwyn - The paradise of the Celts set in the Western Ocean  
Augustine - the saint who brought christianity to Britain  
Avignon - French capital of the Pope following the 14th Century schism  
Awen - The source of Bardic inspiration  
Bryn Glas - A defeat of the Saxons by the Welsh  
Cadair Idris - a fabled mountain where to spend a night upon its summ return  
mad or poet  
Caerleon - Roman fort near Newport, South Wales  
Caractacus - Celtic hero who defied the Romans  
Catreath - An ancient defeat of the Celts by the Saxons  
Chiannon - the daughter of Hefeydd Hen from the Mabiongi  
Cymru - The Welsh name for Wales  
Cynghanned - poetic harmony  
Deheubarth - Kingdom in South Wales  
Eryri - Snowdonia  
Esyllt the fair - A beautiful Welsh queen  
Gogynfeirdd - poets of princes  
Gorsedd - the modern 'Bards of the Isle of Britain'  
Gwygwy - An ancient defeat of the Saxons by the Celts  
Gwynned - Kingdom in North West Wales, incorporating Snowdonia  
Iron Ring - Series of castles built around Snowdonia  
Kings daughter - The largest cannon of its day  
Llewelyn - The last of the Welsh Princes  
Machynlleth - One of the towns where Glyndwr held his parliament  
Myrddin - The legendary Merlin  
Nodens - Celtic god of hunting & healing

Offa - The Saxon king who built a dyke to keep out the Welsh Marauders  
Ordovices - an ancient tribe of central Wales  
Pencerrd - Ancient poets such as Talisien  
Powys - Kingdom in North Wales  
Pryderi - a character in the Mabinogi who helped Wales rise  
Strongbow - Edward I  
Sycarth - Lands owned by Owen Glendower  
Tywysogion - The Prince of Wales

## DRAGONSONGS

*Their lord will they praise  
Their speech will they keep  
Their land they will lose  
Except wild Wales*

Taliesin - prophecy

With promises do bards begin  
The telling of old tales  
A soaring throng of dragonsongs  
Will celebrate wild Wales.

Britannia is a triple realm  
The Western seas bestride  
The Ocean Lord scabbards his sword  
& won her for a bride.

Three races prosper neath her gaze  
Three nations & three crowns  
Three parishers of Britishers  
From palaces to towns.

The Gaelic chieftans brave the North,  
The Saxons seize the South,  
& in the West the Celts carress'd  
Her mountains mouth-to-mouth.

All thro her proud & native heart  
An ancient bloodline flows

Where leek & law grew long before  
The thistle & the rose.