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# Laura Jones- Hanes y Mwslimiaid yng Nghymru / The History of Muslims in Wales

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Gallech gael eich maddau am feddwl bod y berthynas rhwng Islam a Chymru dim ond yn dechrau yn yr ugeinfed ganrif. Ond, mewn gwirionedd, mae'r berthynas yn ymestyn yn ôl yn bellach na hynny. Yma, mae Laura Jones yn cyflwyno hanes Mwslimiaid yng Nghymru o'r cysylltiadau cynharaf â'r Brenin Offa i'r presennol. Mae Laura wedi cwblhau MA yn Islam ym Mhrydain Cyfoes (Islam in Contemporary Britain) ym Mhrifysgol Caerdydd yn 2017. O'r blaen, mae hi wedi hyfforddi a gweithio fel Caplan Mwslimaidd mewn prifysgol, ac wedi gweithio ar gyfer y Cyngor Mwslimaidd Cymru. Hefyd, mae hi'n ysgrifennu am y wefan [On Religion](#).

You could be forgiven for thinking that the relationship between Islam and Wales only starts in the twentieth century. But, in reality, the relationship stretches back much further than that. Here, Laura Jones traces the history of Muslims in Wales from the earliest links with King Offa in the 8<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. Laura completed an MA in Islam in Contemporary Britain in Cardiff University in 2017. Previously, she has trained and worked as a university Muslim chaplain, and has worked for the Muslim Council of Wales. She also writes for the website [On Religion](#).

## Cysylltiadau Cynnwr

Mae'r mwyaf o bobl yng Nghymru wedi clywed am [Glawdd Offa](#) sy'n rhedeg rhwng Lloegr a Chymru. Adeiladwyd y clawdd gan y Brenin Offa o Mercia yn yr wythfed ganrif. Ond efallai nad oeddch chi'n gwybod bod y Brenin Offa wedi bathu darn arian aur â'r gosodiad ffydd Islam yn Arabeg arno (sef bod un Duw yn unig a Muhammad yw'r negesydd Duw).

Fel arfer am ddarnau arian y Brenin, mae'r enw 'Offa Rex' arno hefyd a dydyn ni ddim yn siŵr pam mae'r gosodiad Islamaidd ar y darn. Mae rhai'n dweud bod Offa wedi trosi at Islam (ond dydy hyn ddim yn debygol) ond yn fwy tebygol, roedd Offa yn dynwared darn o wledydd Abasaidd. Y naill ffordd neu'r llall, mae'n dangos bod rhyw fath o gysylltiad rhwng Islam a Chymru hyd yn oed yn yr wythfed ganrif.

Daeth arwydd arall o'r cysylltiad rhwng Cymru ac Islam yn y ddeuddegfed ganrif yn ystod cyfnod y Croesgadau. Adeiladwyd [Abaty Nedd](#) ar y pryd a chafodd ei ddisgrifio fel "Yr abaty tecaf yng Nghymru gyfan" gan y bardd [John Leland](#). Ond, yn rhyfeud ddigon, adroddwyd mai pensaer yr abaty oedd Lalys, carcharor o Balestina y daeth i'r byd ag e i Brydain gan Richard de Granville. Mae'n ddiddorol hefyd bod llawer o gestyll Cymreig yn ymdebygu i hen gestyll yn y Dwyrain Canol, fel [Krak des Chevaliers](#) yn Syria. Er gwaethaf cyd-destun dychrynllyd y Croesgadau, roedd cyfnewid diwylliannau rhwng Islam a'r Gorllewin.

Hyd yn oed ar ôl y Croesgadau, mae'r berthynas yn parhau. Ym 1671, rydym yn dod o hyd i stori Cymro a elwid yn 'runagado' ym Mhapurau Wladwriaeth Mewnl Charles I – 'runagado' oedd y term am rywun sy wedi trosi at Islam ar y pryd. Yn anfodol, caffodd y dyn ei grogi o'i long ar ôl iddo fe golli brwydr lyngesol. Er bod trosi at Islam yn anghyffredin ar y pryd, roedd yn digwydd i raddau wrth i gysylltiadau lyngesol dyfu ar draws y byd.

## Sefydli Cymunedau

O'r bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg, rydym yn gweld arwyddion pellach o Islam yng Nghymru, yn enwedig yn ei berthnasau â chrefyddau eraill. Efallai eich bod chi'n gyfarwydd ag [Eglwys Llanbadrig](#) – eglwys mewn rhan anghysbell yng ngogledd Ynys Môn. Yn ôl y sôn, sefydlwyd yr eglwys gan Sant Padrig yn 440 AD ond ym 1884 roedd adnewyddiad mawr ar yr adeilad. Arweiniwyd y gwaith gan yr Arglwydd Henry Stanley. Roedd Henry Stanley wedi trosi at Islam, ac oherwydd ei serch a'i barch at eglyssi a Christnogaeth ar y cyfan, penderfynodd e ddarparu'r arian am yr atgyweiriadau. I gydnabod ei ffydd fel Mwslim, cynhwyswyd nodweddion Islamaidd ysgafn yn y bensaernïaeth fel patrymau geometrig ar y ffenestri gwydr lliw. Yn dal, mae'r nodweddion hyn yn cydfyw â'r bensaernïaeth fwy traddodiadol Gristnogol Celtaidd yr adeilad heddiw.

## Early Interactions

The majority of people in Wales have heard of [Offa's Dyke](#) which runs between England and Wales. The dyke was built by King Offa of Mercia in the eighth century. But perhaps you didn't know that King Offa minted a gold coin with the Islamic declaration of faith on it (that there is only one God and Muhammad is His messenger).

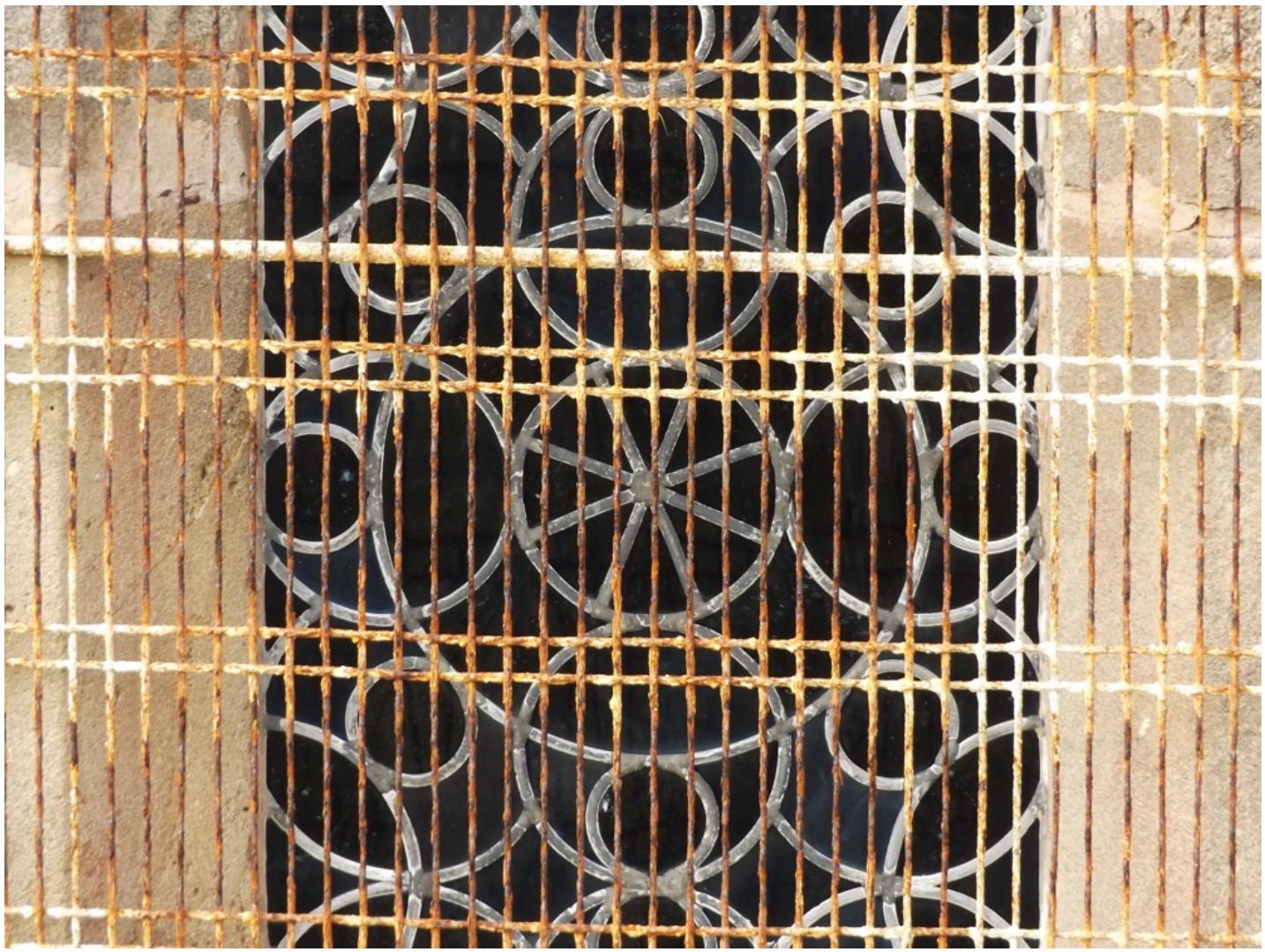
As usual for the King's coins, the name Offa Rex was also on it and we are not sure why there is an Islamic inscription on the coin. Some say that Offa had converted to Islam (but this is not likely) but more likely, Offa was imitating a coin from Abbasid lands. Either way, it shows that there was some sort of connection between Islam and Wales even in the eighth century.

Another sign of the link between Wales and Islam came in the twelfth century during the period of the Crusades. [Neath Abbey](#) was built at the time and was described as "The fairest abbey in all Wales" by poet [John Leland](#). But, surprisingly enough, it is reported that the architect of the abbey was Lalys, a captive from Palestine who was brought back to Britain by Richard de Granville. It is interesting also that many Welsh castles resemble old castles in the Middle East, like [Krak des Chevaliers](#) in Syria. Despite the appalling context of the Crusades, there was a clear cultural exchange between Islam and the West.

Even after the Crusades, the relationship continues. In 1671, we find a story of a Welshman who is called a 'runagado' in the Domestic State Papers of Charles I – 'runagado' was a term for someone who converted to Islam at the time. Unfortunately, the man was hanged from his ship after losing a naval battle. Although conversion to Islam was uncommon at the time, it was not unheard of as naval links around the world grew.

## Establishing Communities

From the nineteenth century, we see further signs of Islam in Wales, especially in its relationships with other religions. You might be familiar with [Llanbadrig Church](#) – a church on a remote, northern part of Anglesey. According to the stories, the church was established by St Patrick (from where it gets its name) in 440 AD, but in 1884 there was a major renovation of the building. The work was led by Lord Henry Stanley. Henry Stanley had converted to Islam, and out of his love and respect of churches and Christianity as a whole he decided to fund the restoration. To acknowledge his Muslim faith, subtle Islamic features were included in the architecture such as geometric patterns on the stained-glass windows. Even today, these features exist alongside the more traditional Celtic Christian architecture of the building.



Llanbadrig stained glass

Gwelwyd, yn y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg hefyd, symudiad nifer fawr o Fwslimiaid i Gymru oherwydd y diwydiant llongau ffyniannus, yn enwedig yng Nghaerdydd ac yn y Barri. Daeth y rhan fwyaf ohonynt o Yemen a Somalia i weithio ar y llongau. Ar y cychwyn, rodden nhw'n aros yng Nghymru am sbelau byr ond yn y pendraw, cyfanheddon nhw yng Nghymru yn creu'r cymunedau amlddiwylliannol rydyn ni'n gweld heddiw, er enghrafft yn Nhrebiwt a Bae Caerdydd.

Mae'n ddiddorol bod y berthynas rhwng Islam a Chymru yn cael ei chydnabod yn swyddogol hyd yn oed yn gynnar yn yr ugeinffed ganrif. Ar un ochr i Neuadd Dinas Caerdydd, a adeiladwyd ym 1906, mae seren a chilgant – symbolau Islam adnabyddus – uwchben draig. Does dim esboniad am y symbolau gan y dylunwyr, ond efallai fod e'n awgrymu twf y gymuned Fwslimaidd yn ystod y cyfnod.

Mae'n anghenreidiol yma, sôn am unigolyn a oedd yn allweddol am ffurfiô'r gymuned Fwslimaidd ar y pryd, sef Sieich Abdullah Ali al-Hakimi. Daethpwyd â fe o Yemen yn y 1930au i helpu adfywio'r ffydd y Mwslimiaid yng Nghaerdydd, ac yn wir, sbardunodd e drawsffuriad mawr i'r gymuned. Sefydloedd e fosg yn Peel Street, Caerdydd yn y triddegau, o bosib y mosg cyntaf yng Nghymru. Hefyd, sefydloedd e ddosbarthiadau Quran ar gyfer plant ac oedolion, gwasanaethau lles a chydráfododd e sefydlu'r safle claddu Mwslimaidd cyntaf yng Nghymru, sy'n dal yn bodoli yn Nhrelái hyd heddiw. Yn bellach, gwnaeth e berthnasau agos â'r gymuned ehangach, gan gynnwys gwleidyddion lleol, y cyfryngau ac arweinwyr crefyddol. Oherwydd hyn, pan gafodd y mosg yn Peel Street ei ailadeiladu ar ôl iddo fe gael ei bomio yn Y Blitz (1941), mynchodd Maer Caerdydd y seremoni ail-agor.

In the nineteenth century also, we see the migration of a large number of Muslims to Wales because of the thriving shipping industry, especially in Cardiff and Barry. Most of these came from Yemen and Somalia to work on the ships. Initially they stayed in Cardiff for short periods but eventually they settled in Wales, which can still be seen today, for example, in the multicultural communities living across Butetown and Cardiff Bay.

It is interesting that the relationship between Islam and Wales seems to be recognised officially even in the early twentieth century. On one side of Cardiff's City Hall, which was built in 1906, there is a star and crescent – well-known symbols of Islam – above a dragon. There is no explanation from designers about the symbols, but it perhaps suggests the growth of the Muslim community during this period.

It is essential here to mention an individual who was instrumental in shaping the Muslim community at the time, namely Sheikh Abdullah Ali al-Hakimi. He was brought from Yemen in the 1930s to help revive the faith of Muslims in Cardiff, and indeed he initiated a big transformation in the community. He established a mosque in Peel Street, Cardiff in the thirties, possibly the first mosque in Wales. He also established Quran classes for children and adults, welfare services and he negotiated the establishment of the first Muslim burial site in Wales which still exists in Ely today. Moreover, he built relationships with the wider community including local politicians, media and religious leaders. Because of this, when the mosque in Peel Street was rebuilt after it was bombed in the Blitz (1941), the Mayor of Cardiff attended the re-opening ceremony.

## Mwslimiaid Cymreig Heddiw

Mae'r perthnasau sy wedi'u dechrau gan Sieich Abdullah Ali al-Hakimi yn parhau yn y cymunedau Mwslimaidd yng Nghymru heddiw. Erbyn hyn, mae mwy na phum deg mosg dros Gymru a llawer o sefydliadau Mwslimaidd eraill, gan gynnwys gwasanaethau lles, grwpiau ieuencid a sefydliadau addysgol. Mae **Cyngor Mwslimaidd Cymru** (sefydliad ymbarél i grwpiau Mwslimaidd) yn chwarae rôl bwysig mewn cynnal perthnasau ag arweinwyr lleol mewn gwleidyddiaeth a chrefydd trwy ddigwyddiadau rhng-grefyddol blynyddol, ymgyrchoedd, a gweithgareddau eraill

Ond y dyddiau hyn, mae grwpiau llai, lleol yn cymryd rhan mewn gweithgareddau 'adeiladu-pontydd' (bridge-building) hefyd. Enghraifft berffaith o hyn yw 'Diwrnod Ymweld â fy Mosg' ('Visit My Mosque Day') sy'n cael ei gynnal yn 2018 ar y 18fed o Chwefror. Am un diwrnod, bydd mosgiau dros Gymru (11 o addoldai o Fangor i Gasnewydd) ar agor i'r cyhoedd er mwyn eu croesawu ac i esbonio beth sydd yn mynd ymlaen mewn mosgiau dros y wlad.

## Welsh Muslims Today

The relationships which were started by Sheikh Abdullah Ali al-Hakimi continue in Wales' Muslim communities today. Currently there are over 50 mosques in Wales and numerous Muslim organisations including welfare services, youth groups and educational organisations. The **Muslim Council of Wales** (an umbrella body of Muslim groups) plays a big role in maintaining relationships with local leaders in politics and faith through its annual inter-faith events, campaigns, and other activities.

But nowadays smaller, local groups are engaging in bridge-building activities too. A prime example of this is 'Visit my Mosque Day' which this year is being held on 18th February 2018. For one day, mosques across Wales (11 places of worship from Bangor to Newport) will be open to the public to welcome them in and explain what goes on in mosques across the country.

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Erbyn hyn, mae mwy na phum deg mosg dros  
Gymru a llawer o sefydliadau Mwslimaidd  
eraill, gan gynnwys gwasanaethau lles,  
grwpiau ieuencid a sefydliadau addysgol.

Os ydych chi wedi mwynhau dysgu am hanes hir Mwslimiaid yng Nghymru, efallai hoffech chi fynd i gael blas o brofiad bob-dydd Mwslimiaid heddiw. Am fwy o wybodaeth, ewch i [muslimcouncilwales.org.uk/visit-mosque-day-2018](http://muslimcouncilwales.org.uk/visit-mosque-day-2018) neu [facebook.com/events/2097644900449790](https://facebook.com/events/2097644900449790).

If you've enjoyed learning about the long history of Muslims in Wales, perhaps you might want to visit to get a taste of the everyday experience of Muslims today. For more information go to [muslimcouncilwales.org.uk/visit-mosque-day-2018](http://muslimcouncilwales.org.uk/visit-mosque-day-2018) or [facebook.com/events/2097644900449790](https://facebook.com/events/2097644900449790).

