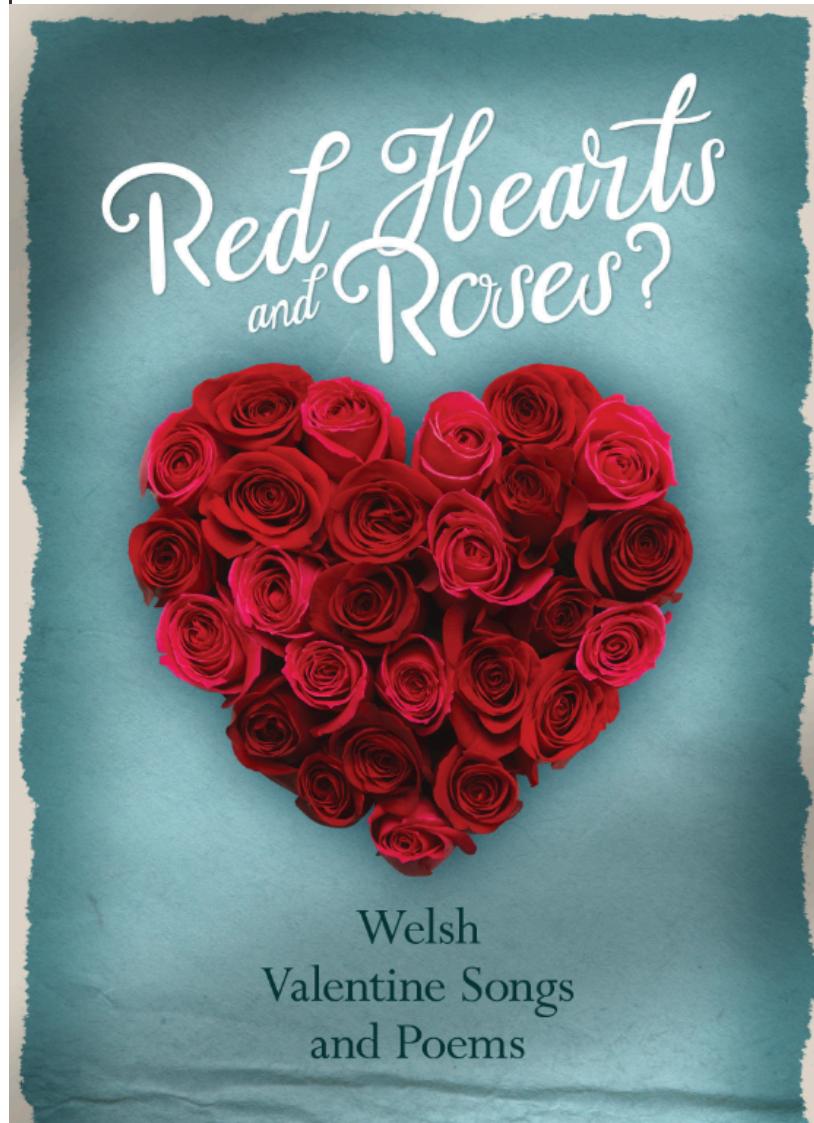


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Rhiannon Ifans: Red Hearts and Roses? Welsh Valentine Songs and Poems

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Mae enw Sant Ffolant, neu Valentine, wedi ei gyflysu am byth â chariadon o bob cenedl a chenhedaeth, ac ato ef mae'r rhan fwyaf o'r byd yn troi pan mae saethau Ciwpid yn pigo. Mae Sant Ffolant wedi cynnig cyngor a chydymdeimlad i gariadon Cymru hefyd dros ganrifioedd lawer, er mai Santes Dwynwen a ystyri heddiw yn wir santes cariadon Cymru.

Ond pwy oedd Sant Ffolant, y sant a roddodd ei enw i âwl y cariadon? Ac yn fwy dyrys, pam mai sant gafodd y faint honno? Sut mae rhosod coch a chalonnau yn rhan o'r dathlu?

Mae'r gyfrol Saesneg hon yn trafod cwestiynau o'r fath. Ond fy mhrif nod oedd trafod y farddoniaeth Gymraeg a ysgrifennwyd dros y canrifoedd ar âwl Sant Ffolant ar 14 Chwefror. Dyma'r tro cyntaf i'r rhan fwyaf o'r cerddi hyn weld golau dydd, ac rwy'n eu cyhoeddi yma gyda chyflieithiad ohonynt i'r Saesneg, a chyda cherddoriaeth lle mae hynny'n briodol. Dyma ganeuon telynegol hyfryd, yn llawn mynegiant rhamantus, ac mae nifer ohonynt mewn cynganedd.

Rwyf wedi cymryd diddordeb yn y cerddi hyn ers blynnyddoedd lawer, ac roeddwn am eu cyflwyno i bobl sydd tu allan i'r diwylliant Cymraeg ei iaith, yn y gobaith y byddant yn mwynhau cael golwg ar yr hen ffordd Gymreig o ddenu cariad.

Saint Valentine's name has become synonymous with lovers in every age and nation, and it is to him that they turn when Cupid's arrows are at their most piercing. Although it is the fifth-century Saint Dwynwen who is nowadays considered to be the patron saint of Welsh lovers, Saint Valentine has certainly handed out aid and sympathy to Welsh lovers too over many centuries.

But who is this saint who gave his name to the festival of lovers? And slightly more perplexing, why was it a *saint* that was given this honour? Where do red hearts and roses fit in?

This book discusses such questions. But my main aim was to focus specifically on the previously unpublished Welsh poetry written over the centuries on the feast day of Saint Valentine on 14 February. I wished to provide a rich collection of Welsh songs for the first time in their original language, translated into English and with musical notation. Far from resembling anything else on offer in any other part of the UK, these Welsh songs are lyrical, expressive, and often in *cynghanedd* (which is the concept of sound-arrangement within a line).

I have been enchanted by these songs and poems over many years, and I wished to share this tradition and this poetry with readers who are at present outside the Welsh-language culture, and to showcase the old Welsh way of attracting a sweetheart and of consolidating a relationship.

Ar âwl Sant Ffolant (Vernon Jones, 1997)

O na bai fy mhen yn feipen
Fel y gallet dan fy nhalcen
Lunio llyged, trwyn a gwefus
Sydd wrth foddy dy gusan melys.

O na bait yn llyn o gyrr
Llawn o sbewis a ffrwythau lyfli,
Llosgi nghorff a llosgi nhafod
A byth yn blino byta gormod.

O that my head were a turnip
So that you could, under my forehead,
Craft eyes, nose and lip
That are pleasing to your sweet kiss.

O that you were a lake of curry
Full of spice and lovely fruit,
Burning my body and burning my tongue
And never tiring of eating too much.

Mae Dr Rhiannon Ifans yn Gymrawd Dyson yng Nghyfadran y Dyniaethau a'r Celfyddydau Perfformio, Prifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi Sant. Llenyddiaeth Gymraeg ganoloesol yw ei phrif faes ymchwil. Mae ganddi hefyd ddiddordeb ymchwil ym maes y carolau, y baledi, y theatr Gymraeg (yn enwedig anterliwtiau'r ddeunawfed ganrif), a'r bywyd a'r diwylliant gwerin Cymraeg yn ei amryfal arweddau. Yn awdurd Ilyfrau i blant fe'i gwobrwywyd droeon am ei gwaith, ac mae'n cymryd rhan yn rheolaidd mewn cynadleddau rhyngwladol, gwyliau, mewn ysgolion ac mewn sefydliadau addysg uwch. Mae'n Ysgrifennydd Cyffredinol Cymdeithas Alawon Gwerin Cymru, ac yn olygydd y cylchgrawn *Canu Gwerin / Folk Song*.

Dr Rhiannon Ifans is Dyson Fellow in the Faculty of Humanities and Performing Arts, University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Her main field of research is medieval Welsh literature. Other research interests include Welsh folk life and folk culture, carols, ballads, and Welsh theatre (with special reference to the eighteenth-century interludes). An award-winning children's author, she is a regular participant at international conferences, festivals, in schools, and in higher education institutions. She is General Secretary of the Welsh Folk Song Society, organiser of the Society's Annual Conference, and edits the annual journal *Canu Gwerin / Folk Song*.

