

Learning Activity Key Stage 3

This resource provides learning activities for your students using People's Collection Wales. It is one of a series of nine relating to Patagonia for KS3.

Establishment of the Welsh Settlement in Patagonia

The Voyage of the Mimoso, 1865

The Native Patagonians and the Welsh Settlers

Early days in Patagonia

'Crossing the Patagonian plains': from the Camwy Valley to Cwm Hyfryd

Dark times – Floods and Emigration

Early Schools in the Welsh Settlement - Patagonia

History of the Welsh Language in Patagonia

Chapels and Churches in Patagonia



**'Crossing the Patagonian plains':
from the Camwy Valley to Cwm Hyfryd**



By Culturenet Cymru

Introduction

Well, this is a lovely valley; 1885.

In the early 1870s some of the most adventurous Welsh settlers felt a desire to explore the extensive lands which surrounded the Settlement.

Tasks and learning objectives

1. Venturing into the west
2. Map of Patagonia
3. John Daniel Evans
4. John Daniel Evans's influence

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'Crossing the Patagonian plains': from the Camwy Valley to Cwm Hyfryd

'Well, this is a lovely valley!' 1885

In the early 1870s some of the most adventurous Welsh settlers felt a desire to explore the extensive lands which surrounded the Settlement. Although some individuals had ventured inland, they knew very little about the country and its resources. In 1870, Lewis Jones and two other settlers travelled north in the company of some indigenous people in the hope that they would discover a route to the town of Patagones. At the advice of the chief of the indigenous tribe, the three men returned to the Camwy Valley to avoid the intense heat of the summer months. The following year, Edwin C. Roberts led a small group of men to the west to search for gold. This was the furthest that any of them had ventured. They did not discover gold, but Roberts and his friends came across a long plain in the middle of the wilderness. The indigenous people called this plain 'Travesía Kela' but it was known to the Welsh as 'Hirdaith Edwin'.



Starting 1892 expedition to the Andes, Lake Fontana, Chubut

Before long, more adventurous and pioneering expeditions were organised. John Murray Thomas (1847-1924), a successful businessman and a member of the first group of settlers that sailed to Patagonia, played a prominent part in these pioneering expeditions. He led several expeditions in the late 1870s, one of which led to the discovery of Lake Colwapi (Colhue Huapi).

In the 1880s, the expeditions were driven by the need for additional land and the search for valuable ores and metals. Around the same time, the Argentine government began its 'conquest of the desert', which was effectively a war waged on the indigenous people. By extending the boundaries of the Republic and protecting them from the attack of the indigenous tribes, it was hoped that more settlers would be attracted to the country.

The need to secure new lands had become clear to the Welsh for some time, especially following a succession of failed harvests. During his visit to Patagonia, Michael D. Jones also suggested that better agricultural land was crucial to the future of the Settlement. In 1885, following a public meeting in the Gaiman, the Welsh settlers sent an official letter to Luis J. Fontana, Chubut's first Governor, which requested his support in their efforts to find suitable land for a new settlement in the foothills of the Andes.

Camwy Valley to Cwm Hyfryd

The expedition was also seen as an opportunity to search for valuable minerals and metals, such as coal and gold.



John Daniel Evans, 'El Baqueano' (1862-1943)

The expedition was to be led by John Daniel Evans (El Baqueano, 1862-1943). Evans had already been on several journeys to the interior and was renowned for his skilful guidance and thorough knowledge of the Patagonian plains. In 1884 he had a miraculous escape from the hands of indigenous people when he and three of his friends were attacked. The other three men were mutilated and killed, but Evans escaped on his horse, 'Malacara'. Following this incident, the place where they were attacked became known as 'the Valley of the Martyrs'.

The group began its long journey across the plains on 16 October 1885. Having searched the valley of Teca and climbed the foothills, they came across a beautiful valley. This valley became known by the Welsh as 'Cwm Hyfryd' or 'Bro Hydref', the latter being a rough translation of its official Spanish name 'Colonia 16 de Octubre'.

In 1886 Llwyd ap Iwan, son of Michael D. Jones, travelled to Patagonia. As a surveyor, he had a special interest in the unfamiliar landscape, as well as specialist knowledge which would be useful in mapping and measuring new lands. Between 1888 and 1897, he ventured on a series of expeditions across the plains and into the Andes. He kept detailed diaries during these expeditions, and in addition to being a record of his journeys, they contain interesting details about the landscape and wildlife.



Making the road into the Andes, near Hafn y Mynach, 1888

Camwy Valley to Cwm Hyfryd

In 1888, Llwyd ap Iwan joined the second expedition mounted with the support of Governor Fontana to select a location for the new settlement in Cwm Hyfryd. John Daniel Evans was chosen to guide the expedition and John Murray Thomas was also a member of the party. On their return, another expedition was organised, this time in order to escort a number of wagons and build a road across the plains to Cwm Hyfryd. John Murray Thomas took a number of photographs during this remarkable expedition, many of which can be seen on the website.

The settlers reached Cwm Hyfryd in November 1888. Martin Underwood was appointed as the Argentine representative for the area, and, as the story goes, the Argentine flag was raised and the national anthem was sung. Some members of the group returned to the Camwy Valley, but others stayed in Cwm Hyfryd over the winter to make the necessary preparations for the arrival of the families in the spring.



Families en route to Cwm Hyfryd, Chubut, early 1890s

Sources

R. Bryn Williams, *Y Wladfa* (Cardiff, 1962)
E. MacDonald, *Yr Hirdaith* (Llandysul, 1999)

Camwy Valley to Cwm Hyfryd

Task 1. Venturing into the west

Why did the settlers want to venture into the west?

Record your answers on worksheet 'Venturing into the West'

Task 2. Map of Patagonia

Look at a map of Patagonia. Estimate the distance from Trelew to Cwm Hyfryd.

Record your answers on worksheet 'From Trelew to Cwm Hyfryd'

Task 3. John Daniel Evans

Investigate the life of John Daniel Evans (El Baqueano). Summarise his achievements in the form of an obituary.



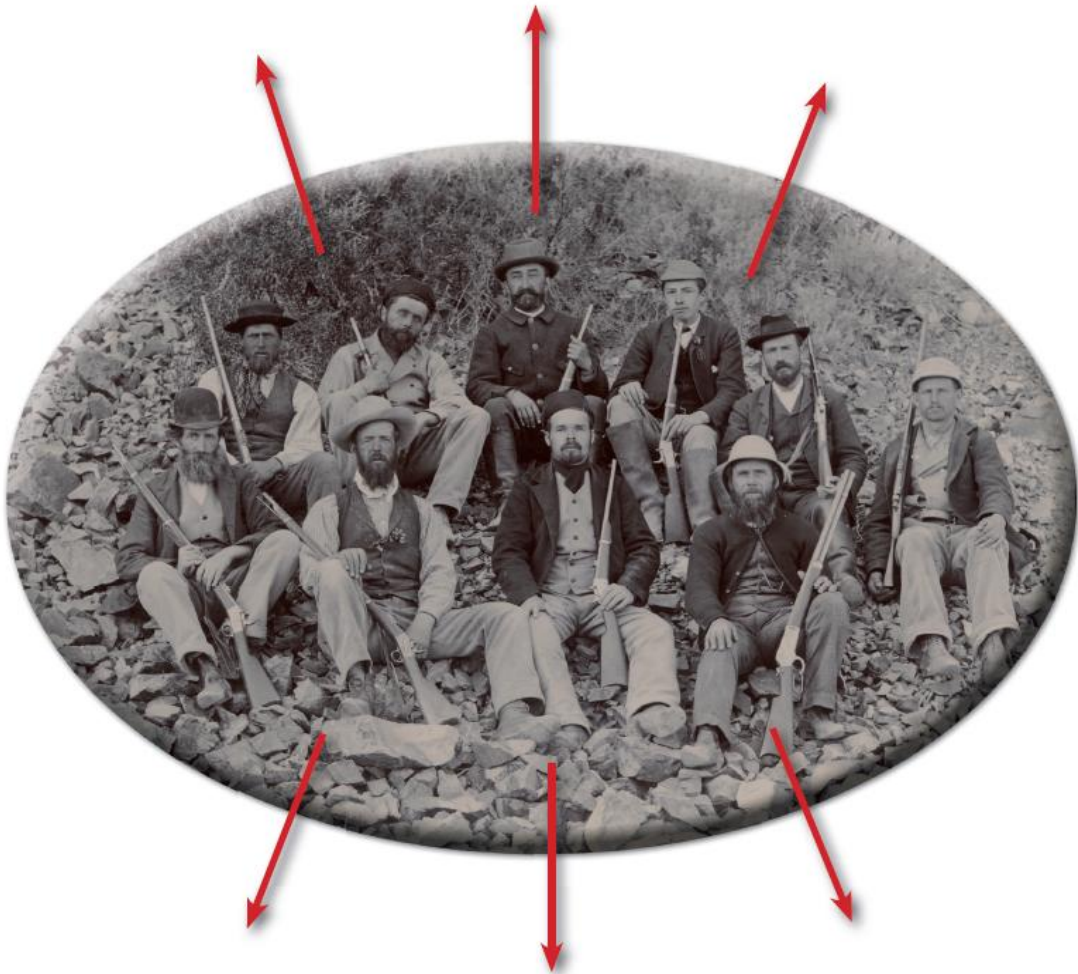
John Daniel Evans, 'El Baqueano' (1862-1943)

Record your answers on worksheet 'John Daniel Evans'

Task 4. John Daniel Evans's influence

Do you think that John Daniel Evans influenced the development of the Welsh settlements in Patagonia?

Venturing into the West



From Trelew to Cwm Hyfryd

Estimate the distance - you may use modern maps for assistance



A map of Patagonia from 'Llawlyfr y Wladychfa Gymreig' (1862)

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John Daniel Evans

OBITUARY

John Daniel Evans
(El Baqueano)
1862 - 1943

