

I cannot get rid of the impression that many people involved in Welsh language matters in Caerdydd merely want the Welsh language (Cymraeg) to die quietly.

I came to Caerdydd on 10/10/2015 hoping to travel around Cymru and even learn a little bit of Cymraeg. I already knew some things about the history of Cymru and Cymraeg.

Much of this information was a shock for me, when I found it: the castles, extortion, discriminatory policies applied towards the Welsh, Welsh Not etc.

Even the word Welsh or Welch. The Welch regiment.

- "To swindle (a person) out of money laid as a bet (see welsher). Hence welshing and Racing".

- "To fail to carry out one's promise to (a person); to fail to keep (an obligation)".

Welsher or welcher:

- "A bookmaker at a race-meeting, who takes money for a bet, and absconds or refuses to pay if he loses".

My Oxford English Dictionary. I even developed an idea of translating a Lithuanian poem. I am a Lithuanian-English translator/interpreter. Just a literal translation, no poetry.

Lithuanian and Cymraeg have some historical parallels. Lithuanian was also once a sublanguage, a language of commoners, not worthy, looked down, frowned upon.

I lived in London for more than ten years and it became somewhat boring. I had visited all the places that I wanted. I did not even go out much in the last years.

It did make financial sense to move out of London, too: higher pay in some places outside London and smaller rent. Better quality of life.

I chose Cymru. It's closer. It's mostly unknown to me, unlike Alba. It's a good place to spend a few years before going back to Lithuania.

Learning a little bit of Cymraeg was a glitch. I knew that Caerdydd was not the most Welsh place in Wales. I knew about general attitude to languages and foreigners in the UK.

I am a foreigner myself. Lithuanians may still be the second most criminalised by London Metropolitan Police nation after Jamaica and ahead of Ireland.

The best-paid interpreters in the UK make less money than an unskilled labourer in construction with a full-time job.

Language Show in London has no place for any language apart from seven or eight imperial languages, be it a language from the British Isles or a language of immigrants.

Many interpreters are women and foreigners. Two factors that would affect any income. Women and foreigners, just like the majority of sex workers.

It was unpleasant that most people in Caerdydd who I met did not want to know anything about Cymraeg.

What I did not expect was the attitude that I encountered with the Cymraeg speakers. Cymraeg is not a priority and what not.

In London there are plenty of free classes to study English. There are some in Caerdydd too.

I inquired where I could find some people who are learning Cymraeg and where I could learn some Cymraeg too.

The library (Llyfrgell Caerdydd) gave me a brochure with a few quite expensive classes, but my intention wasn't to gain a degree or anything.

I simply wanted to learn a little. Menter Caerdydd was another lead. It did not get me very far though. Indeed my entire journey could have ended there.

I visited Menter Caerdydd web site. It's not very intuitive. I clicked on "Adults" in the end and found Welsh Learners' Coffee Morning ("The Mochyn Du") and Clonc yn y Cwtsh.

Once you click on any of these two links, there is an option to phone Menter Caerdydd for more information, which I did.

I was immediately convinced that unless I was ready to part with a substantial amount of money, there would be no Cymraeg for me.

I was told that Welsh Learners' Coffee Morning and Clonc yn y Cwtsh were for people who are already proficient in Cymraeg and that there were no self-help groups for people like me.

I did not want an education class; I merely wanted to find some people who speak Cymraeg, who are learning to speak Cymraeg, who like Cymraeg.

It felt extremely lonesome without knowing anyone who did. How would I practice my Cymraeg?

I visited Welsh for Adults in Cardiff University, Y Mochyn Du, Clonc yn y Cwtsh, a Cymraeg group in Theatr Sherman, a group in Whitchurch or Yr Eglwys Newydd.

I found some groups where I could meet with some people speaking Cymraeg. I did not find any free classes.

I live in Y Rhath and on Newport Road we have Canolfan Y Drindod (Trinity Centre Cardiff), a wonderful place that provides support for refugees and asylum seekers.

Including free English classes. As far as I am concerned free Welsh or Cymraeg classes would make a perfect sense. "Everyone has the right to a nationality" (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, Article 15 (1)).

The Equality Act states that no one should be treated less favourably than another just because of his or her nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion, religious or philosophical belief or absence of religion or belief.

I shared my idea about free Cymraeg classes with others in the above mentioned groups and I even visited Canolfan Y Drindod. They have a very busy schedule.

Some others did not think that Cymraeg was a priority. For a while I give up.

Picture:

<https://www.npted.org/schools/elrs/Examples/Forms/DispForm.aspx?ID=72>



Caerdydd, occupied: <https://www.facebook.com/caerdyddoccupied/>