

R S Thomas Literary Festival and Poetry Competition

25–27 September 2026



Walk, Talk and Tea

***Singing the Land* – Owen Shiers**

The Archbishop of Wales

R S Thomas's Early Writings

– Jason Walford Davies & Tony Brown

***Divine Landscape and Poetry* – Roger Wagner**

Concert: *Poems of Stillness*

***Reverence and Praise in Poetry* – Menna Elfyn**

Open Poetry Competition

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

EGLWYSFACH, CEREDIGION SY20 8SX

Friday 25 September 2026

2pm – **Walk, Talk and Tea** in the company of Richard Suggett, David Billingsley, Owen Shiers and Nicola Roberts.

Join us for an expert-led walk exploring the landscape that inspired R S Thomas during his time as vicar of Eglwysfach. The route takes in Ynys-hir, Furnace, and the rugged Foel Fawr, with historical insights and poetry readings along the way.

Please note that the walk includes uneven terrain and some steep sections. Participants are advised to wear suitable footwear and weather appropriate clothing. Tea and homemade cakes will be served in the Iron Room after the walk.

Ticket price: £10

6–7.30pm **Owen Shiers**

Singing the Land – Welsh Folk Poets & the Oral Tradition

Local musician and social historian Owen Shiers presents a musical “TED talk” which examines the connections between people, the land, poetry and song.

Ticket price: £10

Saturday 26 September 2026

11am – **The Archbishop of Wales**

The Most Reverend Cherry Vann will preach at this service of Morning Prayer which will be led by the Reverend Lynn Rees, Priest in Charge of Bro Padarn LMA. The service will be followed by a light lunch in the Iron Room.

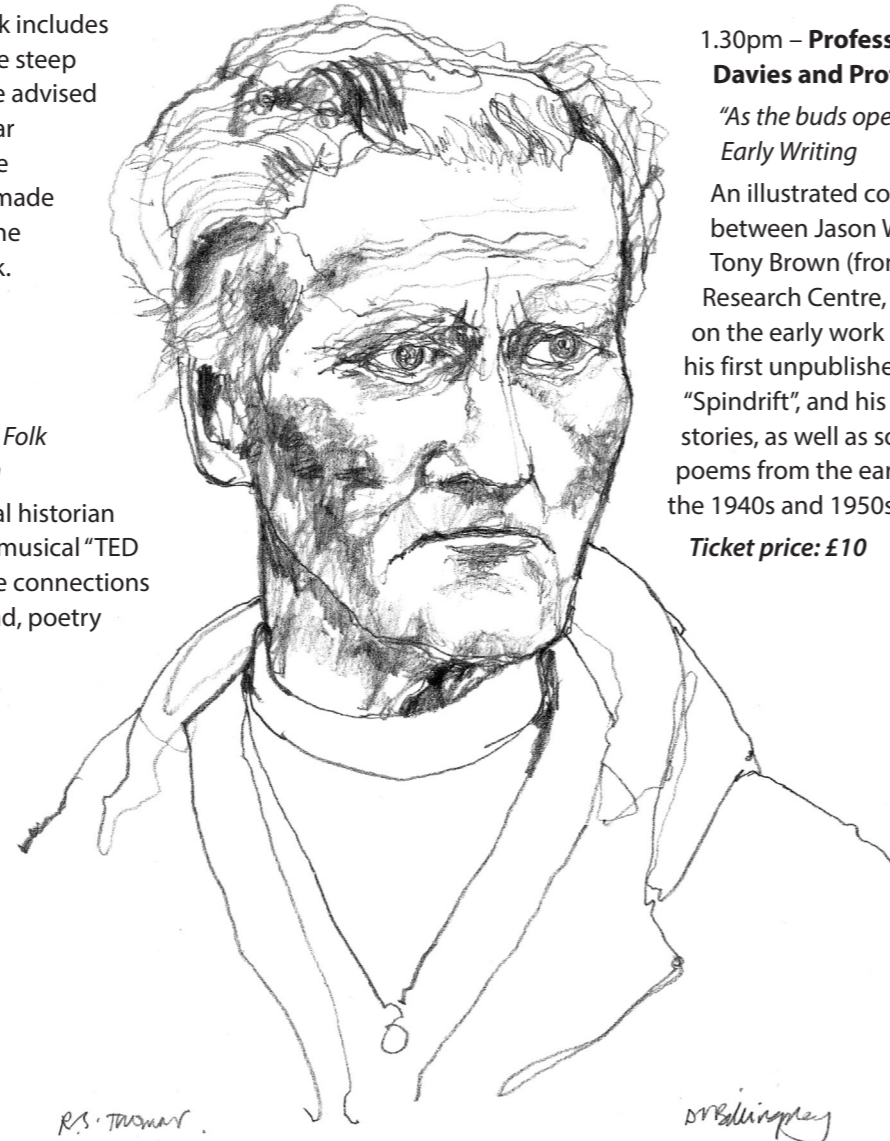
Free event, not ticketed

1.30pm – **Professor Jason Walford Davies and Professor Tony Brown**

“As the buds opened”: R S Thomas's Early Writing

An illustrated conversation between Jason Walford Davies and Tony Brown (from the R S Thomas Research Centre, Bangor University) on the early work of R S, including his first unpublished collection, “Spindrift”, and his unpublished prose stories, as well as some less familiar poems from the early collections of the 1940s and 1950s.

Ticket price: £10



3.30–4.30pm – **Roger Wagner**

Divine Landscape and Poetry

Artist and poet Roger Wagner will speak about the link between landscape and poetry, the theme of his recent book *The Farther Away: Poems and Images*.

Ticket price: £10

6pm – **Concert**

Poems of Stillness

The programme will include Hilary Tann's “Seven Poems of Stillness” featuring archive recording of R S Thomas reading his own poetry. The concert will be followed by refreshments in the church.

Sophie Rudge (soprano and harp), Daniel Davies (cello) and George Gibbon (counter tenor)

Ticket price: £10

Sunday 27 September 2026

9.30am – **Holy Communion**

A service led by the Reverend Lynn Rees

Free event, not ticketed

11am – **Menna Elfyn**

Parch a Bri mewn Barddoniaeth: Reverence and Praise in Poetry

Menna is a leading, award-winning Welsh poet, playwright, columnist and editor. She has published fourteen volumes of poetry, written plays for stage and radio and many books.

Ticket price: £10

Light refreshments and the Penrallt Bookstall will be available in the Iron Room Hall throughout the festival.

1.30–5pm **Open Poetry Competition**

First prize £250 • Second prize £100
Highly commended £40

Judges: Menna Elfyn, Tony Brown

Poets are invited to submit one or two unpublished poems of no more than c.30 lines each, taking inspiration from these quotations chosen by the competition judges. All poets will read their poems during the course of the afternoon. Please email your poem(s) to anita.heisterbach@gmail.com by 5pm on 27 August 2026. Entry fees for the competition must be paid in advance of the festival (see Tickets below).

What to do? Stay green.

Never mind the machine,

Whose fuel is human souls.

Live large, man, and dream small.

(‘Lore’, *Collected Poems* 114)

... a field trembles

With colour and goes out

In its turn; in one day

You can witness the extent

Of the spectrum and grow rich

With looking.

(‘The Small Window’, *Collected Poems* 202)

Enduring like a tree under the curious stars.

(‘A Peasant’, *Collected Poems* 4)

They were irreplaceable and forgettable,

inhabitants of the parish and speakers

of the Welsh tongue. I looked on and

there was one less and one less and one less.

(‘Drowning’, *Collected Poems* 464)

Language can be

like iron. Are we sure we can bend

the Absolute to our meaning?

(‘R.I.P. 1588–1988’, *Mass for Hard Times* 36)

Ticket prices:

For poets to enter the competition:

One poem – £10

Two poems – £15

For audience members attending the competition

– £5 (no charge for poets)

****Special weekend ticket for all events only £50****



All tickets are available in advance from Eventbrite. Booking fees apply. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/r-s-thomas-literary-festival-and-poetry-competition-2026-tickets-1984299523290>

Tickets will also be available for all events at the door.

Poets must pay their entry fee for the competition in advance of the festival. If there are any queries about this, please contact anita.heisterbach@gmail.com.

For all other queries, please contact Alison Swanson: alisonswanson7@icloud.com; Tel: 07834 884096.



The 2026 R S Thomas Festival at St Michael's Church, Eglwysfach, celebrates the legacy of its renowned former poet-vicar through three days of poetry, talks, walks, and music. Inspired by the wildlife and natural beauty of the Dyfi Valley, the programme brings together emerging and established poets for its popular poetry competition. This year's festival is held in fond memory of its founder, Joy Neal, who died in December 2024.

R S Thomas Gŵyl Lenyddol a Chystadleuaeth Farddoniaeth

25–27 Medi 2026



Cerdded, Sgwrsio a Phaned

Singing the Land – Owen Shiers

Archesgob Cymru

R S Thomas's Early Writings

– Jason Walford Davies & Tony Brown

Divine Landscape and Poetry – Roger Wagner

Cyngerdd: *Poems of Stillness*

Reverence and Praise in Poetry – Menna Elfyn

Cystadleuaeth Farddoniaeth Agored

EGLWYS SANT MIHANGEL

EGLWYSFACH, CEREDIGION SY20 8SX

Gwener 25 Medi 2026

2yp – **Cerdded, Sgwrsio a Phaned** yng nghwmni Richard Suggett, David Billingsley, Owen Shiers a Nicola Roberts.

Ymunwch â ni am daith gerdded o dan arweiniad arbenigwyr yn archwilio'r dirwedd a ysbrydolodd R S Thomas yn ystod ei gyfnod fel ficer Eglwysfach. Mae'r llwybr yn cynnwys Ynys-hir, Ffwrnais, a'r Foel Fawr garw, gyda mewnelediadau hanesyddol a darlenniadau barddoniaeth ar hyd y ffordd.

Sylwch fod y daith gerdded yn cynnwys tir anwastad a rhai rhannau serth. Cynghorir cyfranogwyr i wisgo esgidiau addas a dillad sy'n addas i'r tywydd. Bydd te a chacennau cartref yn cael eu gweini yn yr Ystafell Haearn ar ôl y daith gerdded.

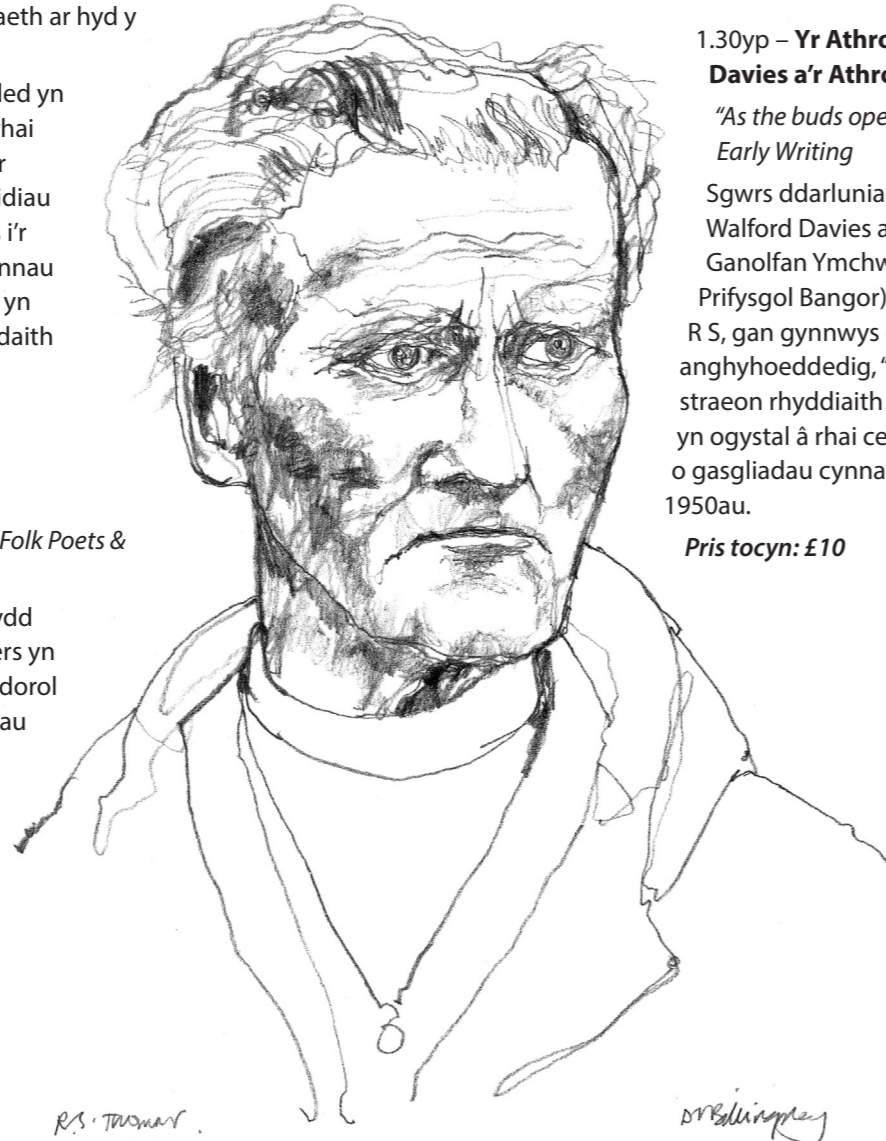
Pris tocyn: £10

6–7.30yp **Owen Shiers**

Singing the Land – Welsh Folk Poets & the Oral Tradition

Y cerddor lleol a'r hanesydd cymdeithasol Owen Shiers yn cyflwyno "TED talk" gerddorol sy'n archwilio'r cysylltiadau rhwng pobl, y tir, barddoniaeth a chàn.

Pris tocyn: £10



Sadwrn 26 Medi 2026

11yb – **Archesgob Cymru**

Y Parchediacaf Cherry Vann sy'n pregethu yn y gwasanaeth Gweddi Foreol hwn a fydd yn cael ei arwain gan y Parchedig Lynn Rees, Offeiriad â Chyfrifoldeb Bro Padarn LMA. Bydd cinio ysgafn yn dilyn y gwasanaeth yn yr Ystafell Haearn.

Digwyddiad am ddim, dim angen tocyn

1.30yp – **Yr Athro Jason Walford Davies a'r Athro Tony Brown**

"As the buds opened": R S Thomas's Early Writing

Sgwrs ddarluniadol rhwng Jason Walford Davies a Tony Brown (o Ganolfan Ymchwil R S Thomas, Prifysgol Bangor) ar waith cynnar R S, gan gynnwys ei gasgliad cyntaf anghyhoeddedig, "Spindrift", a'i straeon rhyddiaith anghyhoeddedig, yn ogystal â rhai cerddi llai cyfarwydd o gasgliadau cynnar y 1940au a'r 1950au.

Pris tocyn: £10

3.30–4.30yp – **Roger Wagner**

Divine Landscape and Poetry

Bydd yr artist a'r bardd Roger Wagner yn siarad am y cysylltiad rhwng tirwedd a barddoniaeth, thema ei lyfr diweddar *The Farther Away: Poems and Images*.

Pris tocyn: £10

6yp – **Cyngerdd**

Poems of Stillness

Bydd y rhaglen yn cynnwys "Seven Poems of Stillness" gan Hilary Tann gyda recordiad archif o R S Thomas yn darllen ei farddoniaeth ei hun. Bydd lluniaeth yn yr eglwys yn dilyn y cyngerdd.

Sophie Rudge (soprano a thelyn), Daniel Davies (soddgrwth) a George Gibbon (gwrth – denor)

Pris tocyn: £10

Sul 27 Medi 2026

9.30yb – **Cymundeb**

Gwasanaeth o dan arweiniad y Parchedig Lynn Rees

Digwyddiad am ddim, dim angen tocyn

11yb – **Menna Elfyn**

Parch a Bri mewn Barddoniaeth: Reverence and Praise in Poetry

Mae Menna yn fardd, dramodydd, colofnydd a golygydd Cymreig blaenllaw ac arobryn. Mae wedi cyhoeddi pedair ar ddeg o gyfrolau o farddoniaeth, ac wedi ysgrifennu dramâu ar gyfer y llwyfan a'r radio a llawer o lyfrau.

Pris tocyn: £10

Bydd lluniaeth ysgafn a stondin lyfrau Penrallt ar gael yn Neuadd yr Ystafell Haearn drwy gydol yr ŵyl.

1.30–5yp **Cystadleuaeth Farddoniaeth Agored**

Gwobr gyntaf £250 • Ail wobwr £100
Cymeradwyaeth Uchel £40

Beirniaid: Menna Elfyn, Tony Brown

Gwahoddir beirdd i gyflwyno un neu ddwy gerdd heb eu cyhoeddi o ddim mwy na thua 30 llinell yr un, gan gymryd ysbrydoliaeth o'r dyfyniadau hyn a ddewiswyd gan feirniaid y gystadleuaeth. Bydd pob bardd yn darllen eu cerddi yn ystod y prynhawn. Anfonwch eich cerdd(i) drwy e-bost at anita.heisterbach@gmail.com erbyn 5pm, 27 Awst 2026. Rhaid talu ffioedd mynediad ar gyfer y gystadleuaeth cyn yr ŵyl (gweler Tocynnau isod).

What to do? Stay green.

Never mind the machine,

Whose fuel is human souls.

Live large, man, and dream small.

(*'Lore', Collected Poems 114*)

... a field trembles

With colour and goes out

In its turn; in one day

You can witness the extent

Of the spectrum and grow rich

With looking.

(*'The Small Window', Collected Poems 202*)

Enduring like a tree under the curious stars.

(*'A Peasant', Collected Poems 4*)

They were irreplaceable and forgettable,

inhabitants of the parish and speakers

of the Welsh tongue. I looked on and

there was one less and one less and one less.

(*'Drowning', Collected Poems 464*)

Language can be

like iron. Are we sure we can bend

the Absolute to our meaning?

(*'R.I.P. 1588–1988', Mass for Hard Times 36*)

Pris tocynnau:

I feirdd gymryd rhan yn y gystadleuaeth:

Un gerdd – £10

Dwy gerdd – £15

I aelodau'r gynulleidfa sy'n mynychu'r gystadleuaeth

– £5 (dim tâl i feirdd)

****Tocyn penwythnos arbennig ar gyfer pob**

digwyddiad – £50 **



Mae pob tocyn ar gael ymlaen llaw ar Eventbrite. Codir ffioedd archebu. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/r-s-thomas-literary-festival-and-poetry-competition-2026-tickets-1984299523290>

Bydd tocynnau hefyd ar gael ar gyfer pob digwyddiad wrth y drws.

Rhaid i feirdd dalu eu ffi mynediad ar gyfer y gystadleuaeth cyn yr ŵyl. Os oes gennych unrhyw ymholiadau am hyn, plis cysylltwch gyda **anita.heisterbach@gmail.com**. Am bob ymholiad arall, cysylltwch â Alison Swanson: **alisonswanson7@icloud.com**; Tel: 07834 884096.



Mae Gŵyl R S Thomas 2026 yn Eglwys Sant Mihangel, Eglwysfach, yn dathlu gwaddol ei chyn-fardd-ficer enwog ar ffurf tri diwrnod o farddoniaeth, sgysiau, teithiau cerdded a cherddoriaeth. Wedi'i hysbrydoli gan fywyd gwylt a harddwch naturiol Dyffryn Dyfi, mae'r rhaglen yn dod â beirdd newydd a beirdd profiadol ynghyd ar gyfer ei chystadleuaeth farddoniaeth boblogaidd. Cynhelir gŵyl eleni er cof annwyl am ei sylfaenydd, Joy Neal, a fu farw ym mis Rhagfyr 2024.