



4/5 James Street, Porthcawl CF36 3BG (01656) 783962  
www.sustainablewales.org.uk twitter: @suswales

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## WELSH CHARITY IDENTIFIES CONTINUING THREATS TO GWENT LEVELS.

Tues. March 26, '24.

**Welsh charity 'Sustainable Wales' is adding its name to the long campaign to protect the Gwent Levels.**

It is organizing a public event at 'Le Pub', 1, Bridge Street, Newport NP20 4UT. This is a free event to the public. It will feature writers from Newport and the surrounding area, plus representatives from the RSPB.

Sustainable Wales believes its support for the Gwent Levels campaign is more necessary than ever, with the seeming backing for the proposed 'M4 extension' from new Welsh transport minister, Ken Skates.

Co-founder of Sustainable Wales, Robert Minhinnick said today:

"There has always existed an instinctive desire to protect this unique area. But we note the recent comments by Mike Webb, planning manager for Gwent Wildlife":

*'Despite having spent many years opposing development on the Gwent Levels, it came as a shock to me recently to realise that the Levels are a shadow of their former selves'.*

Sustainable Wales believes the appointment of Ken Skates to 'transport secretary' in the Senedd, can only deepen such gloom.

**Writers showing their support and reading work inspired by the Levels will include Alan Roderick, Lesley James, Laura Wainwright and Robert Minhinnick.**

Wainwright will use the event at Le Pub on April 16 to launch her new publication, 'Coedcernyw amongst Other Things', from Clutag Press.

Much of Laura Wainwright's writing and art stems from the Gwent Levels. (See attachments).

Painting: 'This Light is a Trick' by Laura Wainwright, inspired by the Gwent Levels.



Further details:

[robert.minhinnick@sustainablewales.org.uk](mailto:robert.minhinnick@sustainablewales.org.uk)

01656 773627

## **GWENT LEVELS CAMPAIGN**

Ten days before Christmas, 2023, I went with writer and artist Laura Wainwright to explore parts of the 'Gwent Levels', at Uskmouth. It was my first visit, although Laura is familiar with the area, sometimes taking her children walking there.

We went because the area is increasingly threatened by various developments. Only in the last four years has the Welsh government rejected plans for a new extension of the M4 motorway through parts of these wetlands.

The weather proved raw and blustery, but we were both delighted to encounter immediately some of the very particular wildlife that inhabits the area.

I saw my first ever reed bunting, and keen-eyed Laura identified a heron on the Severn mudflats, and thus we are writing, painting and sketching our expedition highlights.

This exploration occurred at the same time as the ongoing struggle between Israelis and Palestinians, especially in Gaza. Personally I found combining in my writing the situations in both Gwent Levels and Gaza, quite natural.

Some of this work will be performed at 7.30 pm, Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 'Le Pub', 19, High St., NEWPORT NP20 1FW.

This will be a live performance featuring spoken word, music and film.

The event is organized by Sustainable Wales Cymru Gynaliadwy.

Details for those who wish to perform or attend, from:  
<[robert.minhinnick@sustainablewales.org.uk](mailto:robert.minhinnick@sustainablewales.org.uk)>

## THE REEN

*a poem for two voices*

Or rhyne or rhewyn  
or simply ditch but even

*the word itself disappearing  
but nothing to be done, nothing to be done*

like the creatures  
we might have discovered there

*yet nothing can be done  
nothing can be done*

and I turn on the radio  
and over the ghettos of Gaza

in the ruined boulevards  
another child is weeping

*but nothing will be done  
nothing will be done*

- ah, the petrol-coloured dragonfly,  
the chevron of the demoiselle,

this one red, this one emerald -  
or an exhibit in the museum

of barbed wire  
with which we encircle the world,

*no nothing to be done*  
*nothing to be done*

voice of the reaper, song of the drone  
while the children must cry all night

in the rhyne and the rhewyn in the ditch in the reen  
but even the word itself disappearing

like the creatures we might  
have discovered there

- ghost of a yellowhammer  
glimpsed though gorse,

grass snake aswim  
in sedge beside the solar farm,

heron, a hermit holding on  
beside its JCB scrape -

*but nothing can be done*  
*nothing can be done*

so once again I turn on the radio  
and over the ghettos of Gaza

comes the harpies' music,  
the predator's sigh

when even the words are disappearing,  
rhyne or rhewyn or ditch or reen

because it is somebody else's language  
loved and lost

*but nothing can be done*  
*nothing can be done*

and then I am reminded  
that language is my own

*but there's nothing to be done*  
*nothing to be done*

but how memory maims  
and how all grief is someone else's guilt

while somebody else's country

is vanishing like pixels on a screen

*yet there's nothing to be done  
nothing to be done*

in the ditch and the rhewyn and the rhyne and the reen  
but nothing will be done nothing will be done

and now I am reminded by the same radio  
that the country is my own,

and the voice of the reaper, the song of the drone:  
they too are mine.

*Yet there's nothing will be done,  
nothing will be done...*

*(With thanks to Marwan Makhoul, poet born to a Palestinian father and a Lebanese mother in 1979  
in the village of Boquai'a in the Upper Galilee region of Palestine).*

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