



Tunelines



Gwenynen Gwent / The Busy Bee of Gwent Welsh Traditional Tune, Arr. Helen Adam

This tune [on the next page] was named after Lady Augusta Hall, who was a notable figure in Welsh cultural history and whose bardic name was Gwennynen Gwent. Born in 1802 in Abergavenny she inherited the Llanofor estate in Monmouthshire. In 1823 she married Sir Benjamin Hall (after whom Big Ben was named, as he was Commissioner of Works at its inauguration). She had a life-long interest in Celtic studies and learnt Welsh, though was never a fluent speaker.

In 1828 the couple had Llanofor / Llanover Hall designed and built for them. It was always envisaged as a centre for the Welsh arts as well as a family home, and Lady Llanofor gave all her servants Welsh titles and Welsh costumes to wear, some of which she designed herself.

Heavily influenced by the bard Thomas Price, she encouraged music, especially triple harp playing, and dancing on her estate, as well as promoting the wider use of traditional Welsh wool and patterns, giving prizes for these at local Eisteddfods. She also founded the first Welsh language periodical 'Y Gymraes' (The Welshwoman). As a person of undoubted energy and influence and living at a time of an upsurge of interest in preserving folk traditions, she was responsible for helping to preserve Welsh customs but also to a certain extent to fashioning and codifying them in line with her own inclinations. Her work raises interesting questions about how we should protect and yet keep alive and vibrant our old traditions.

The tune itself is played to accompany a dance, and should move along at quite a lively tempo. In my second part I've tried to create the sense of a bee buzzing busily around the tune, above and below, and in constant motion. It works best played quite quietly with an accent on the first of each group of four quavers which has the effect of really bringing out the buzz! Any fiddle players who own mutes could try putting them on for this line as the slightly nasal quality this will lend your tune will fit very well. I am a huge fan of the work of composer and folk tune collector Béla Bartók one of whose arrangements of a Hungarian tune is called 'Mosquito Dance' and my version here of 'Gwenynen Gwent' is definitely inspired by this piece.

Helen Adam © February 2020

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Helen Adam is a freelance fiddle/violin player, singer, performer and composer living in beautiful West Wales. A prolific composer and songwriter, whose current project is a collection of duets to introduce more of the lesser known Welsh dance tunes to a wider audience. Also performing with George Whitfield as the **Fiddlebox** duo (George, accordion and vocals, and Helen, violin and vocals), a unique sound blending our varying influences and styles, including Klezmer, Rock, Classical, Celtic folk, Welsh dance music and song, Blues, Bluegrass, www.fiddlebox.net

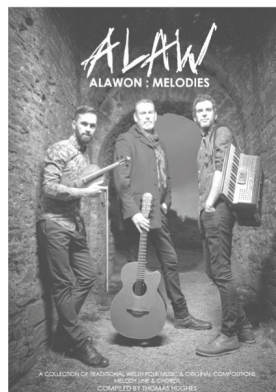


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Tom Hughes is a skilled music practitioner from Herefordshire and provides a variety of music services. He is the author of ALAWON and responsible for the transcription and engraving of the music and production of the book. Tom can offer special rates to folk musicians looking to release a music book. **For further information visit www.tomhughesmusic.co.uk.**

TUNELINES



Helen Adam

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**Gwynnyn Gwent / The Busy Bee of Gwent, Welsh Trad., Arr. Helen Adam**

First system of music (measures 1-4). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). Chords are indicated as G, Am, and D.

Second system of music (measures 5-8). The melody continues in the treble clef, and the bass line continues in the bass clef. Chords are indicated as G, C, D, G, and D. A repeat sign is present at the end of the system.

Third system of music (measures 9-14). The melody continues in the treble clef, and the bass line continues in the bass clef. Chords are indicated as G, D, G, C, and G. A crescendo hairpin (<) is present at the end of the system.

Fourth system of music (measures 15-19). The melody continues in the treble clef, and the bass line continues in the bass clef. Chords are indicated as D, Em, Dm, and C.

Fifth system of music (measures 20-21). The melody continues in the treble clef, and the bass line continues in the bass clef. Chords are indicated as D and Em.

Sixth system of music (measures 22-24). The melody continues in the treble clef, and the bass line continues in the bass clef. Chords are indicated as Am, D, and G. The system ends with a double bar line.



Cynefin's debut album 'Dilyn Afon' (Following A River). Owen Sheirs.

Astar Artes AARCD4041. CD + full colour 30 page booklet detailing the stories and history of the songs. **Available from website, www.Cynefinmusic.wales, £10.99**

Cynefin represents three years of research and work into Ceredigion tradition and folk song; this project, which maps the past and the present, is the brainchild of musician and Bath Spa University music graduate **Owen Sheirs**. Owen grew up in the Clettwr Valley, north of Aberystwyth, immersing himself in the sounds of his father's harp workshop. *Cynefin* is a Welsh noun with no direct equivalent in the English language; its origins lie in a farming term used to describe the well-worn hillside sheep tracks, deepening and changing to describe a very personal sense of place, belonging and familiarity. The artist Kyffin Williams described it as: *"The place of your birth and of your upbringing, the environment in which you live and to which you are naturally acclimatised."*

In 1973, author and poet **T Llew Jones** travelled up the Clettwr River for a BBC Wales documentary entitled *Dilyn Afon* – in translation, *Following a River*). One of the characters he met was the local ballad singer, Daff Jones, the last in a long line of balladeers, a tradition stretching back centuries. The balladeers had a spellbinding storytelling art that would have to make the enthralled community listen. In his copious bilingual booklet which is just

overflowing with old photographs, Owen writes that 45 years on, West Wales is struggling for breath against the tide of modernity: *"Economic decline, bubble-gum tourism and the lure of the good life has slowly unravelled the centuries-old social fabric, with oral traditions now the threadbare possessions of those few who are old enough to remember or alert enough to try and safeguard what is left. Since T Llew wandered up the Clettwr, native Welsh speakers have turned from the majority populace to a minority language group who are now struggling for their identity."*

Owen has worked as a musician, composer and engineer across a wide range of projects, including several album projects at Real World Studios and on the award-winning *Clychau Dibon* by Catrin Finch & Seckou Keita, alongside producer John Hollis, founder of the Astar Artes label, who has lent his keen ear and experience to this new project. Nominated for *Best Solo Artist* at the inaugural 2019 *Welsh Folk Awards*, *Cynefin* gives Owen a stage to demonstrate his impeccable arranging and guitar skills, while taking him right back to his roots. *Dilyn Afon* is an enthralling compendium and reference library, with a startlingly beautiful score to boot; he says that some of the traditional songs have not been sung for hundreds of years. The opening song, 'Cân O Glod I'r Clettwr' (*Song Of Praise To The Clettwr*) brings this comment from him: *"Were it not for T Llew Jones's original BBC Wales programme, this captivating song by Daff Jones would have disappeared forever – indeed, it sat in the BBC archives for over 40 years until it saw the light of day in 2016."* **© Mick Tams.**

Summary by Mick from his original review in **Folk Wales**; for Mick's more detailed review, see <http://folk.wales/magazine/?p=315#CYNEFIN>