

Heritage of Dolen Cymru

[Digitised Dolen Cymru Archives](#)

[Dolen Cymru Newsletters](#)

[Dolen Cymru](#), the Wales-Lesotho link was officially launched in 1985, introducing the unique concept of nation-to-nation [twinning](#) which brought together schools, churches, hospitals, farmers, women, and more. Dolen Cymru will celebrate their [40th anniversary in 2025](#), and generations of young people and professionals Wales-wide have participated in formative exchanges between the two nations. Dolen today have their offices in the [Temple of Peace](#), and continue the work of building global partnerships.

But what was the inspiration behind the Wales Lesotho Link, and how did it come to fruition? This feature explores the origins of the idea, the campaigns, contributions and community projects that cemented the relationship between Wales and Lesotho over generations – by creating a narrative linking the wide-ranging archival materials that have come to light through research at the National Library and Temple Archives over Summer 2023. Much material has also been extracted from Paul Williams’ excellent book ‘History of Dolen Cymru’, published for the 30th Anniversary in 2014.



Wales-Lesotho Link (Taken by Craig Owen, 2008)

Origins and Inspiration, 1975 – 84

In the mid-1970s, there were a number of health and education projects spearheaded by the [Maseru Round Table](#) aiming to build classrooms for primary schools in Lesotho, which was funded through UNICEF in Wales. Hospitals were also renovated, and food and medical supplies were donated.



1980s. £90,000 was raised for the all-Wales UNICEF project in Lesotho.

In 1979, efforts across Wales to support the [UN International Year of the Child](#) (IYC) managed to fundraise campaigns for schools, social welfare, water, and health projects in Lesotho.

Over the course of several years, more and more Welsh organisations and individuals became directly involved in what were initially UNICEF and FFHC ([Freedom from Hunger Campaign](#))-driven projects. 1981 saw the launch of the [NFWI](#) (National Federation of Women's Institutes) Women and Water Appeal in Zimbabwe and Lesotho, which focused on providing a clean water supply to locals. This initiated a series of exchanges between Welsh and Basutho partners that led to a relationship building between two nations that seemed to have many interests in common.

- View a [project memorandum](#) and [summary of projects](#) by the Maseru Round Table.
- [List](#) of the FFHC campaigns.
- View the [1980 WCIA 7th Annual Report](#) which documents the IYC fundraiser.
- [The NFWI Women and Water Project](#)
- [UNICEF in Lesotho](#)

In 1982, people Wales-wide contributed to a series of dialogues exploring Wales' role internationally. How could Wales make a distinct contribution to developing nations in the global South, especially in impacting upon the scourge of poverty? The suggestion of Wales 'adopting' a small African country was raised as a [twinning proposal by Montgomeryshire UNA](#); stating that there needed to be sustainable and long-term action, where ties and friendships were put at the forefront and strengthened between nations.

Cymru a'r 'Tlotaf o'r tlawd'

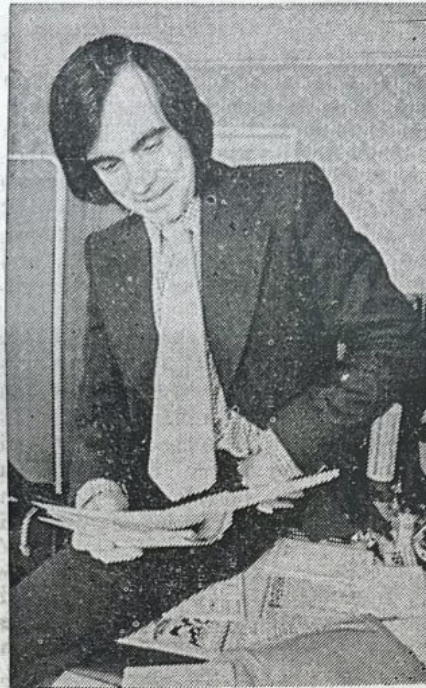
Bydd farw 200 plentyn o bob mil a enir yn y 31 gwlad leiaf datblygedig (G.L.L.D.) yn y byd yn ystod eu blwyddyn gyntaf, a 100 arall cyn cyraedd 5 oed, a 50 y cant yn unig sy'n goroesi hyd 40 mlwydd oed. Amcangyfrifir fod poblogaeth y 31 G.L.L.D. oddeutu 283 miliwn a'r rhai hynny wedi'u gwasgaru ledled y byd. Yng ngeiriau'r Dr. Kurt Waldheim, cyn-Ysgrifennydd Cyffredinol y Cenhedloedd Unedig, y bobl hyn yw'r 'tlotaf o'r tlawd'.

'Iechyd i bawb'

Edrydd Dr. Halfdan Mahler, pennaeth S.I.B. (Sefydliad Iechyd y Byd), hanes trin un afiechyd arfiliaidd ymhlith gweithwyr gwledig un o wledydd yr Affric a'r modd y cafwyd cynnydd arwyddocaol mewn cynnyrch amaethyddol o ganlyniad, a hyn yn ei dro yn esgor ar fantais economaidd lawer rhagorach na chost rheoli'r afiechyd. Gyda'r problemau hyn yn flaenaf yn eu meddyliau ym 1977 mabwysiadwyd yr uchelgais o "Iechyd i Bawb erbyn y Flwyddyn 2000" gan S.I.B.

Ym 1978 mewn Cynhadledd ar y oyd o Sefydliad Iechyd y Byd ac UNICEF yn Alma Ata yn Razakstan yn yr

Carl Iwan Clowes



(Y mae'r Dr. Clowes yn Uwch-gofrestrwydd gydag Awdurdod Iechyd Gwynedd)

gwledydd datblygedig gyfrannu symiau o'r fath.

Cyfraniad Cymru

Bu Cymru'n flaenllaw erioed yn diogelu buddiannau ei thrigolion ei hun. Ymgorfforwyd y gydwybod gymdeithasol hon ym mherson Lloyd George, pensaer y Pensiwn Henoed a gyflwynwyd ym 1908 a'r Cynllun Yswiriant Cenedlaethol a ddaeth i rym ym 1911. Yn ddiweddarach gwiredwyd breuddwyd Aneurin Bevan a droes haniaeth yn ddiriaeth gyda dyfodiad y Gwasanaeth Iechyd Cenedlaethol ym 1948. Yn ddi-amau, hefyd, yn ystod y flwyddyn olaf mawrygwyd enw da Cymru trwy gyfrwng penawdau cydwladol yn cyfeirio at y datganiad a wnaed ein bod bellach yn "wlad ddi-niwclear".

Mabwysiadu efaill-wlad

Bellach cawn gyfle i fabwysiadu agwedd adeiladol tuag at broblemau'r tlotaf o dlodion ein daear.

Ysgrifennwyd llythyr at Dr. Mahler, fel pennaeth S.I.B., yn awgrymu y gallai Cymru fabwysiadu un o'r G.L.L.D. fel efaill-wlad gan roi cymorth iddi o'r amser presennol hyd y flwyddyn 2000.

1982. Dr. Carl Iwan Clowes writes an article titled *Cymru a'r 'Tlotaf o'r tlawd'* ("Wales and the poorest of the poor").

The novel concept of nation twinning was given public voice in an article written by the founder and first chair of Dolen Cymru, Dr. Carl Iwan Clowes, featured in the Welsh magazine *Y Faner*. The [article](#) studied 31 of the *Least Developed Countries* (LDCs) and explored Wales' potential answer to the World Health Organization's (WHO) international call of "Health for All by the year 2000". Dr Clowes suggested Wales 'adopt' one of the LDCs in order to provide effective aid through a permanent and focused link of friendship and mutual understanding. This was proposed in a letter to the Director General of the WHO, which received an [encouraging response](#).

It was the third Dialogue at the Eisteddfod in Llangefni that pushed for action and allowed Dr. Clowes to expand on the idea; emphasis would be placed on community instead of material aid, and links would be formed at all levels — between people, societies and organisations, technical and social, medical and cultural. A Steering Committee was formed to research it further. Several [pamphlets](#) and [proposals](#) were produced outlining the link's aims to gather [support](#), and steps were taken to become a registered charity.

Four aims of the Wales Link were identified: to create a bridge across the divide between Wales and one of the LDCs, bring two different communities together, strengthen the link through mutual understanding of each country, and flourish into a multi-linking of people, groups, and institutions.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LLYTHYRAU

DOLEN CYMRU

Bridging the gap

SIR.—May I outline for your readers the idea behind "Wales Link" (Dolen Cymru), a new initiative that has been receiving increasing attention in Wales in the past few weeks?

A new dimension to twinning

May I outline for your readers the idea behind "Wales Link" (Dolen Cymru), a new initiative that has been receiving increasing attention in Wales in the past few weeks?

of numerous individuals and institutions. For example, a doctor with doctor-school, club with club, church, college with town.

Codi pont rhwng Cymru a'r trydydd byd

MAE CYNLLUN cyffrous ar y gwella i wledydd Cymru yn ei chryswth sg un o tal a chymorth ymferol naes o law.

syniadau nhw ynglŷn â'r wlad mwyaf addas ar gyfer dolen o'r fath. Bydd raid i'r wlad fod yn gymharol fach o ran tirosgaeth a phoblogaeth ac o fewn pellter rhesymol i Gymru.

What Wales Link is all about

SIR.—May I outline for your readers the idea behind "Wales Link" (Dolen Cymru), a new initiative that has been receiving increasing attention in Wales in the past few weeks?

link between Wales and one of the poorest countries of the Third World—a bridge can be thrown across the great North-South divide.

Day to day in Wales



IORWERTH ROBERTS

A Welsh link with the Third World

May I amplify a little for your readers the concept of Wales Link (Dolen Cymru) referred to in a small news item under the heading "Bridging the Gap" (Chronicle, December 29)?

For example, doctor with doctor, school with school, club with club, church with church, college with college and town with town.

wide contact is a vital part of the Welsh religious and a recently-formed church links hopes to establish a close association with one particular third country.

Bid to 'twin' Wales

A FORMER Archbishop of Wales is heading a bid to "twin" Wales with a small under-developed country.

By CLIVE BETTS

ing programme. Nationally, Wales's resources approximate to those of the major English and Scottish metropolitan authorities.

1984. News clippings on the concept behind Dolen Cymru and the potential of twinning with a LDC.

People from all over Wales were consulted directly through a press release on 19 December 1983, which encouraged people to send in their suggestions on which country might be best suited to become 'Wales' twin'. Dr. Clowes brings more attention to the link by attending a prime-time interview and writing another article in Y Faner discussing the new initiative. By February 1984, the Steering Committee had shortlisted four countries: Botswana, Malawi, Tanzania and Lesotho.

Lesotho kept popping up as an ideal choice: previous campaigns by UNICEF and FFHC were successfully held there, and it held many significant similarities to Wales – from coal mining to sheep farming, and the dominance of a neighbouring nation with a very different global outlook! (during the 1980s, Lesotho neighboured Apartheid South Africa and Wales and its mining communities faced Margaret Thatcher). In April 1984 the Committee confirmed their final decision on Lesotho and the link was kick-started.

- View the proposal for the Dolen Cymru Lesotho — Wales Lesotho Link.
- O. T. Sefako, the High Commissioner of Lesotho, gives his support for the link and calls the Committee for a meeting.
- Dr. Clowes reaches out to the Gwynedd Health Authority in the interest of developing health links and receives a response exploring the possibility of hosting visitors from Lesotho.

- Wales [welcomes its first visitors](#) from Lesotho at the Gwynedd — three School Secretaries of the largest church denominations in Lesotho — in December 1984.

Official Launch of Dolen Cymru, 1985

The ‘Live Aid’ movement of 1984 – still one of the highest-profile humanitarian ‘moments’ in UK history – catapulted development in Africa to the forefront of public consciousness and interest. In Wales, the question being raised was “how can we make a distinct contribution?” Beyond giving money to celebrity drives, the proposal to develop a country-to-country twinning link with Lesotho was given [further momentum](#), and Dolen Cymru was founded at a meeting in the Temple of Peace in 1985.

The launch event was held just over the road from the Temple of Peace in the Welsh Office, seat of the UK Government in Wales, and was attended by Lesotho High Commissioner Mr. O.T. Sefako.



1985. The link is officially launched at the Welsh Office in Cardiff on the 12th of March.

Efforts were taken to increase awareness of the link through a visit to Lesotho [by Emeritus Professor Robert Steel](#), who was active with the British Council’s international work. Various people were contacted and briefed, including King Moshoeshoe and Queen ‘Mamohato. Major key areas of the link were identified, which included health, education, agriculture, churches, and women’s organisations. [By July](#), there were already nine active school links, links between the Young Farmers Club in Wales and Lesotho, and possibilities of Welsh involvement in healthcare, water resource, and environmental protection.

Bydd sêr y Byd Roc Cymreig yn canu yn rhad ac am ddim ar gyfer apêl y newyn

ARIAN BYW!

Brodyr-y-ffin!
Bwchadanas!
Derec Brown
a'r Racaracwyr!
Dinas Naw!
Ficar!
Geraint Jarman!
Geraint Lovgreen
a'r Enw Da!
Jim O'Rourke
a'r Hoelion Wyth!

Louis a'r Rocyr!
Maffia Mr Huws!
Manna/Pererin!
Maraca!
Meic Stevens!
Pethma!
Ray Jones a'i Fand!
Rhiannon Tomos!
Steve Eaves
a'i Driawd!

a Sankomota! o Lesotho, Affrica

DYDD SUL 11 AWST 1985
Y Pafiliwn, Maes yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol, Y Rhyl

10am–hanner dydd:
Cymanfa Ganu, oedolion a phlant
(rhoglen 50c)

1pm–6.30pm:
Cyngerdd Roc **Arian Byw!**
(mynediad drwy gyfraniad o £3)

8pm–10pm:
Cymanfa Ganu, oedolion
(rhoglen £1)

GALL PAWB OHONOM GYNORTHWYO

- ☉ trwy sefnogi **Arian Byw!**
- ☉ trwy wyllo darlledir y Cyngerdd Roc ar S4C (3–6pm), pigion o Gymanfa Ganu'r Plant (6–7pm) a Chymanfa Ganu'r Oedolion (8–9.45pm).
- ☉ trwy wrando darlledir **Arian Byw!** ar Radio Cymru drwy'r dydd.
- ☉ trwy gynnig arian dros y ffôn. Ffônïwch Rhuddlan (0745) 591616 neu 591659, neu Caerdydd (0222) 378711 rhwng 10 bore Sul a hanner dydd dydd Llun.
- ☉ trwy anfon arian drwy'r post at **Arian Byw!** Swyddfa'r Eisteddfod, 15 Stryd y Farchnad, Y Rhyl. Archebion post neu sieciau, wedi eu croesi, yn daladwy i **Arian Byw!**
- ☉ trwy ddefnyddio ffurflen gyfrannu gyda cherdyn Access, Barclaycard, American Express.
- ☉ trwy fynd at eich cangen leol o Fanc y National Westminster gan nodi cyfrif **Arian Byw!** d.s. Caer y cyfrif ddydd Gwener 23 Awst 1985.

**Arian Byw i rannu bwyd
I fydd a amddifadwyd**

Arian Byw! Swyddfa'r Eisteddfod, 15 Stryd y Farchnad, Y Rhyl, Clwyd

1985. Poster for the 'Arian Byw' concert held on the 11th of August.

In August, Wales excitingly had its first musical taste of Lesotho through the well-known band 'Sankomota', who performed at the [Arian Byw](#) concert that took place at the Rhyl National Eisteddfod, which was intended to gather funds for the Ethiopian famine appeal. The NFWI had also raised £50,836 to fund the [Rural Sanitation Project in Lesotho](#) which aimed to [improve the water supply](#). By [September](#), the Young Farmers Club and the Council of Churches in Wales were playing an active part in the link, and more developments were made in areas of forestry and agriculture.

By November, Dolen Cymru's [first-ever newsletter](#) documents:

- ☐ Sixteen active school links.
- ☐ The formation of a Lesotho-Wales Link Committee.
- ☐ Five Lesotho students taking courses in Wales.
- ☐ Correspondence made with the National Council of Women in Lesotho.
- ☐ The funding of a Lesotho Health and Population Project between 1986-90 by the World Bank.
- ☐ [Discussion](#) with a British Council representative in Lesotho on the ways the link could be supported.

By the [end of the year](#), there were already twenty-five school links, with further enthusiasm shown from churches, Young Farmers, women's groups, Rotary, The University of Wales and health organisations. With 1986 approaching (also Lesotho's 20th anniversary of independence), Dr. Clowes called for greater commitment to the link from Wales.

The Founding Decade, 1985 + ...

Notable events and projects spanning the years 1986-1995 are detailed below. For more details of Dolen Cymru's campaigning activities and the strengthening relationships between Wales and Lesotho, explore the [digitised archives](#) and their [bi-annual newsletters](#). The original documents can be viewed in the Temple of Peace Archives, and in the National Library of Wales.

1986. Pamphlet distributed for the Blanket Appeal.

1986

- Collection of surplus medical equipment from Welsh hospitals in response to [a call for related equipment](#) from the District Hospital in Mohale's Hoek and St. James Hospital in Mantsonyane.
- Dr. John Kolane, High Commissioner of Lesotho, [visits the National Eisteddfod](#) in Fishguard.
- Bangor parish of St. Davids and St. James links with the Anglican Parish of Maseru.
- Wrexham-Maelor Borough Council joins Dolen Cymru in hopes of linking with a district in Lesotho.
- Appeal by the Maseru Rotary Club for aid in a series of water well projects in Lesotho.

- The 'Blanket for Lesotho' appeal was [launched](#) and coordinated with the Women's Royal Voluntary Service in Wales (WRVS).

1987

1987. Peace and Goodwill Message of the Youth of Wales.

- Dr. Clowes and Paul Williams visit Lesotho in February.
- Special concert performed by the Maseru Teachers' Choir to Dolen Cymru visitors.
- 4,350 blankets [successfully collected](#) for the Blanket Appeal.
- Two of Dolen Cymru's committee visits Lesotho in May to strengthen educational links.
- [Peace and Goodwill Message](#) prepared by Ysgol Morgan Llywd.
- Release of the '[Lesotho-Cymru](#)' record, a collection of songs from Wales and Lesotho.
- [Donation of a fire engine](#) to Lesotho by the Clwyd Fire Service.
- Mr Julius Tebello Metsing, First Counsellor at the Lesotho High Commission, attends Dolen Cymru stand at the National Eisteddfod.



- Dolen Cymru meets with the heads of the Highland Water Scheme in Lesotho for discussion of Welsh involvement.
- Professor Glyn O. Phillips visits Lesotho in August, drawing up a training programme for the Highland Water Scheme.
- Bangor Primary Pupils appeal for school books for their twin school in Lesotho.
- Nurses at Llandudno General send a large parcel of baby clothes and cot blankets to twin ward at Mohale Hoek's District Hospital.
- HTV film crew visit Lesotho to shoot a series of programmes on the link.



1988. The Maseru Teachers' Choir at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod; featured in the Western Mail.

1988

- BBC Wales Controller Gareth Price visits Lesotho to [report](#) on the development of broadcasting.
- The [Sallie Davies Memorial Competition](#) is held in order to contribute funds to a UNICEF project in Lesotho. View the outcome in the [WCIA](#) and [Dolen Cymru](#) newsletters.
- First TV documentaries on the link airs in April.
- A representative of Dolen Cymru meets with Queen 'Mamohato in London.
- Desks donated to Mopeli High School by Ysgol Morgan Llwyd.
- The Teachers' Choir from Maseru give performances all [throughout Wales](#), most notably at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod.
- Rt Rev Philip Mokuku has a 10-day visit to Wales in August.
- Collected medical equipment from Welsh hospitals arrive in Lesotho in September.
- View [a table of the visits](#) made from the years 1985-88 in the No. 3 newsletter.

1989

- Anglesey links with Mafeteng, becoming the first local Welsh authority to twin with a South African district.
- Radio Lesotho Music Producer Molefe Sello visits the National Youth Eisteddfod at the [invitation of Dolen Cymru](#) and plans for similar competitions in Lesotho.
- Lesotho's Minister of Education makes visit to Wales in September.
- Lesotho makes textbook plea for Secondary forms one to five.
- The Lesotho Homemakers Association links with Merched y Wawr.



1990. The members of Cantorion Coedpoeth; featured in the Wrexham Leader.

1990.

- Three Welsh church leaders represent the Council of Churches in Wales in a visit to Lesotho in a friendship mission.
- The city of Maseru links with Cardiff; view the [twinning proposal](#).
- The Mayor of Maseru and the new High Commissioner of Lesotho, Mr. Kenneth Tsekoa, visit Cardiff.
- Welsh choir Cantorion Coedpoeth visit Lesotho for a two-week tour in April.
- Mid Glamorgan Health Authority [awarded with £500,000 contract](#) to undertake work in the Lesotho Health Service.
- Anglesey Borough Council invites senior official of the Mafeteng District Development Council to Wales.
- Link starts between the Maseru Swallows Football Club and Cardiff City.
- Dolen Cymru donates trophies to the Lesotho Music Association (LMA) as prizes for the National Choral Music Competitions.
- Lecturers from the North-East Wales Institute of Higher Education (NEWI) begin work at Lerotholi Polytechnic to upgrade courses at Lesotho's only polytechnic.
- Mrs. Malikeleli Mokokoane, President of the Lesotho Homemakers Association, visits Wales in October to strengthen ties between the women's organisations.

1991. Children taking part in the Nursery Schools Festival; featured in the Bangor Chronicle.

Voicing help for Lesotho



YOUNGSTERS from the area Playgroups sang songs for the African country of Lesotho last week.

The children, who were taking part in a nationwide appeal to help raise money for play schools in Lesotho, dressed up in international costumes to sing the hymns and nursery rhymes.



Pictures by
DAVID DAVIES



● An international theme at Llanfairfechan Ysgol Feithrin.



● Coed Mawr Ysgol Feithrin, Bangor, at their concert.

1991

- The Nursery Schools Festival of Mudiad Meithrin (the Welsh Nursery Schools movement) has its focus on the children of Lesotho and raises money for Nursery Education in Lesotho through sponsored singing in schools.
- Dolen establishes a new Youth Sub-Committee in May.
- Lesotho-Wales Link recognised as a Non-Government Organisation (NGO) in Lesotho.
- Dolen Cymru has its [first annual lecture](#).
- Dr. Clowes joins AIM (Action in International Medicine) as Dolen's representative.
- Wales Young Farmers' Clubs raise funds for a Landrover for the Lesotho Homemakers following Mrs. Mokokoane's visit.
- An inter-school musical competition inspired by the Urdd Eisteddfod takes place in Lesotho in August.
- Dolen reconstitutes a Church Sub-Committee and plan to invite four Lesotho Church Leaders.
- [UNA IYS Workcamps Exchanges](#) take place, sending volunteers to help with projects in Lesotho.
- Dolen Cymru's stand at the National Eisteddfod at Mold wins best display in the field.

1992. Head of humanities at Ysgol Morgan Llwyd, Glyn Owen visits Lesotho to promote educational links; Daily Post feature.

1992

- Merched y Wawr call for the organisation of a sponsored knit, where the funds will go towards helping women in Lesotho through sending sewing machines and other items.
- Dolen Cymru and Skillshare Africa cooperate to benefit Lesotho in publicising opportunities for volunteers to work in Lesotho.
- Anglesey's local government sponsor the education of two boys from the Mafeteng region for five years.
- Refiloe Mofolo, Co-ordinator for Early Childhood Education in Lesotho, visits nursery schools in Wales.
- Lesotho Homemakers receive a Landrover from the Wales Young Farmers' Clubs.
- The Chairman of Dolen's Schools Sub-Committee, Glyn Owen, visits Lesotho in October to boost school linking.



□ Teacher Glyn Owen: Trip to Lesotho

1993

- The leaders of two of Lesotho's main church choirs spent a month in Wales to see how music was taught in Welsh schools.
- Merched y Wawr's '[sponsored knit' campaign](#) raises £13,000 to send hand-operated sewing machines to Lesotho.
- Mrs. Ceinwein Davies, Deputy Director of the Welsh Nursery Schools Association visits Lesotho to familiarise herself with progress in Early Childhood Education in Lesotho.
- Mrs. L. Phachaka, an adviser on children's 'special needs' to the Lesotho Ministry of Education, spends the month of April in Wales [studying provision for children with disabilities](#).
- Two principal chiefs from the Mafeteng district visit Anglesey in May as guests of the Borough Council's Twinning Committee.
- Three Lesotho Church Leaders visit Wales in May, organised by the Welsh Church Leaders and Churches Together in Wales.
- UNA Wales invites Elliot Mohapi, Project Officer of the Lesotho Workcamps Association, to Wales.
- Dolen Cymru, in partnership with NEWI, appoints Sioned Harries as its first new Education Officer.



1993. Members of Merched y Wawr with knitted blankets.

1994

- Welsh conductor and Senior BBC Music Producer Gwyn L. Williams leads music workshops in major districts of Lesotho.
- *Y Ddolen Air / Kopano Ke Gauda*, a joint book of Welsh and Lesotho folk tales, are published by Merched y Wawr.
- Five youth leaders from different churches in Lesotho visit Wales in September to meet their counterparts.
- Dr. Raditapole, the Minister of Health for Lesotho, [visits the Powys Health Care NHS Trust](#) to reinforce medical links.
- Student Elin Haf Davies visits Lesotho in September to start an assignment with the Lesotho Save The Children Fund.
- Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod receive an [application from the Maseru Youth Choir](#) to compete.
- Dr. Heather Snidle and Father Paul Kinsey visit Lesotho to assess what care and educational needs had arisen from the issue of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa.
- T'sabo Patrick Pelea, an officer of the Lesotho Workcamps Association, visits Wales to help disadvantaged Welsh children enjoy a seaside holiday.



1994. The visit of Lesotho's Minister of Health to Powys' community hospitals, featured in the Newsletter of NHS Wales.

1995

- Dr. Clowes and his wife visit Lesotho in March to celebrate Dolen Cymru's tenth-year anniversary.
- A work pack about family and rural life in Lesotho is distributed throughout primary schools in Lesotho.
- A leading youth choir in Lesotho, the Maseru Vocal Waves, begin their tour in Wales with a performance at the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod.
- Lesotho High Commissioner Kenneth Tsekoa visits Cardiff and attends the National Eisteddfod to mark the link's ten-year anniversary.
- The National Council of Merched y Wawr votes to donate £13,00 to aid a new Vocational Training Centre by their sister organisation in Lesotho.
- Dr. Heather Snidle and Rev. David Yeoman [head workshops to train church-based groups](#) in the care for people with HIV/AIDS.



AFRICAN COLOUR: Lesotho choir members in traditional dress won the applause of many in the crowd

Pictures: IOLO WILLIAMS

1995. Members of the Maseru Vocal Waves at the Llangollen Eisteddfod; featured in the Western Mail.

Explore Dolen Cymru's Digitised Archives


Working in partnership with WCIA's Heritage Team at the Temple of Peace, over Summer 2023 volunteers have digitised over 120 archives and curated these for national posterity via People's Collection Wales, the National Library's digital hub. [Download Archives Spreadsheet](#)

Year	Month	Archive Materials	Theme	Link	Newsletters (1985 onwards)	Download Link
Launch and 1st 5 years of Dolen Cymru						
1985		UK High Commissioner Sefako - Lesotho Authorities have approved link				
1985	1	with Wales		https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2022391f3xywh=-628%20-1%202312%201480		
1985	3	Lesotho Visit report Prof Robert Steel		https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2022331		
1985		Letter on links developing in links in the areas of agriculture, churches, water, and healthcare		https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2022316		
1985	8	Poster - Arlan Byw concert ('money for life') at end of Rhyll National Eisteddfod		https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2022371		
1985		Report on NFWM Women and Water projects	W	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2022346		
1985		Report on Health Education Project (Lesotho Govt)	H	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2022331		
1985	9	Ragj (Aberystwyth SU) Student Fundraising proposal for Dolen Cymru	O	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2022301		
1985	9	Press Release - British Council Lesotho Rap visit to Cardiff	O	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2022361		
1985	12	1st NEWSLETTER of DC Link	O	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/202431	1st NEWSLETTER of DC Lin	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/202431
1985		2nd Newsletter TBC			2nd MISSING	
1986	1	Press Release calling for more School Links in New Year	E = Educal	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2022381	3rd Newsletter (1986)	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2024871
1986		High Commissioner letter re Link Developments - puts forth areas of the link (healthcare, water, 'aid zone') which need more support to develop	H	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2021121		
1986	3	link (healthcare, water, 'aid zone') which need more support to develop	H	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2021121		
1986		Blanket for Lesotho' Appeal Document	W	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2027041		
1986	10	Blankets for Lesotho' appeal leaflet	W	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2027006		
1986	5	Lesotho Ministry of Health letter re Health Link priorities	H	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2027056		
1986		Maseru Teachers' Choir - Letter suggesting visit to Wales	C	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2027071		
1986	10	Blankets for Lesotho Appeal - Organisers Briefing	W	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2027086		
1986	10	Hospital Equipment requests letter - Mohale's Hoek District Hospital	H	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2027101		
1987		Press Release, launch of 'Lesotho Cymru' record	C	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2023691	4th Newsletter (Spring 1987)	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2024451
1987	5	Youth Peace & Goodwill Message	C	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/522008	5th Newsletter (Late 1987)	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2028866
1988	7	Maseru Teachers' Choir flyer for Cardiff performance	C	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2034776	6th Newsletter (Spring 1988)	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2024551
1988		Broadcasting Report for Wales Lesotho Link	G	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2034721	7th Newsletter	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2008901
1989		Capital Cities Twinning Proposal Cardiff-Maseru	G	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2034891	8th Newsletter	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2024836
1989					9th Newsletter	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2008941
1990s - Dolen establishes itself in both Wales and Lesotho						
1990					10th Newsletter	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2024606
1991					11th Newsletter	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2008976
1991		6 UNA Lesotho Workcamps Association report (International Youth Service)		https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2035056	12, summer 1991	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2009046
1992		PHOTO - Sponsored Kriit, Merched y Wawr Anglesey		https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/627506	13, late 1991	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2009011
1992		Newsletter 14 TBC			14 MISSING	
1992					15, late 1992	https://www.peoplescollection.wales/items/2024896

Dolen Cymru Wales-Lesotho Link - Newsletters (1985 - 1996)

This archive draws together the bi-annual newsletters that were released by Dolen Cymru from its founding in 1985 - the world's first 'country to country' twinning. It charts the growth of relationships between Wales and Lesotho in sectors such as health, education, agriculture, governance, culture and music, as well as the many personal relationships that developed through this fascinating story from Welsh internationalist history. In 2025, Dolen turns 40 and Lesotho itself celebrates its 200th anniversary!


There are 21 items in this collection



(No. 1, 1985-1986) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review...

31 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(No. 3, 1986) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review...

15 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(Spring 1987) Dolen Cymru Newsletter

17 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(No. 5, 1987) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review...

45 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(Spring 1988) Dolen Cymru Newsletter

15 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(No. 7, 1988) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review...

39 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(1989) Dolen Cymru Newsletter

14 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(No. 9, 1989) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review...

37 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(Summer 1990) Dolen Cymru Newsletter

12 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(No. 11, 1990) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review...

38 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(Summer 1991) Dolen Cymru Newsletter

39 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(No. 13, 1991) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review...

35 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(No. 15, 1992) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review...

22 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(Summer 1993) Dolen Cymru Newsletter

15 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(No. 17, 1993) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review...

17 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(Summer 1994) Dolen Cymru Newsletter

12 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(No. 19, 1994) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review...

15 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(Summer 1995) Dolen Cymru Newsletter

14 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(No. 21, 1995) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review...

17 + save/collect


[Wales for Peace](#)



(Summer 1996) Dolen Cymru Newsletter

12 + save/collect

[Wales for Peace](#)



(No. 23, 1996) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review...


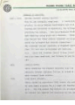





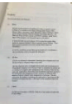
















































16 + save/collect

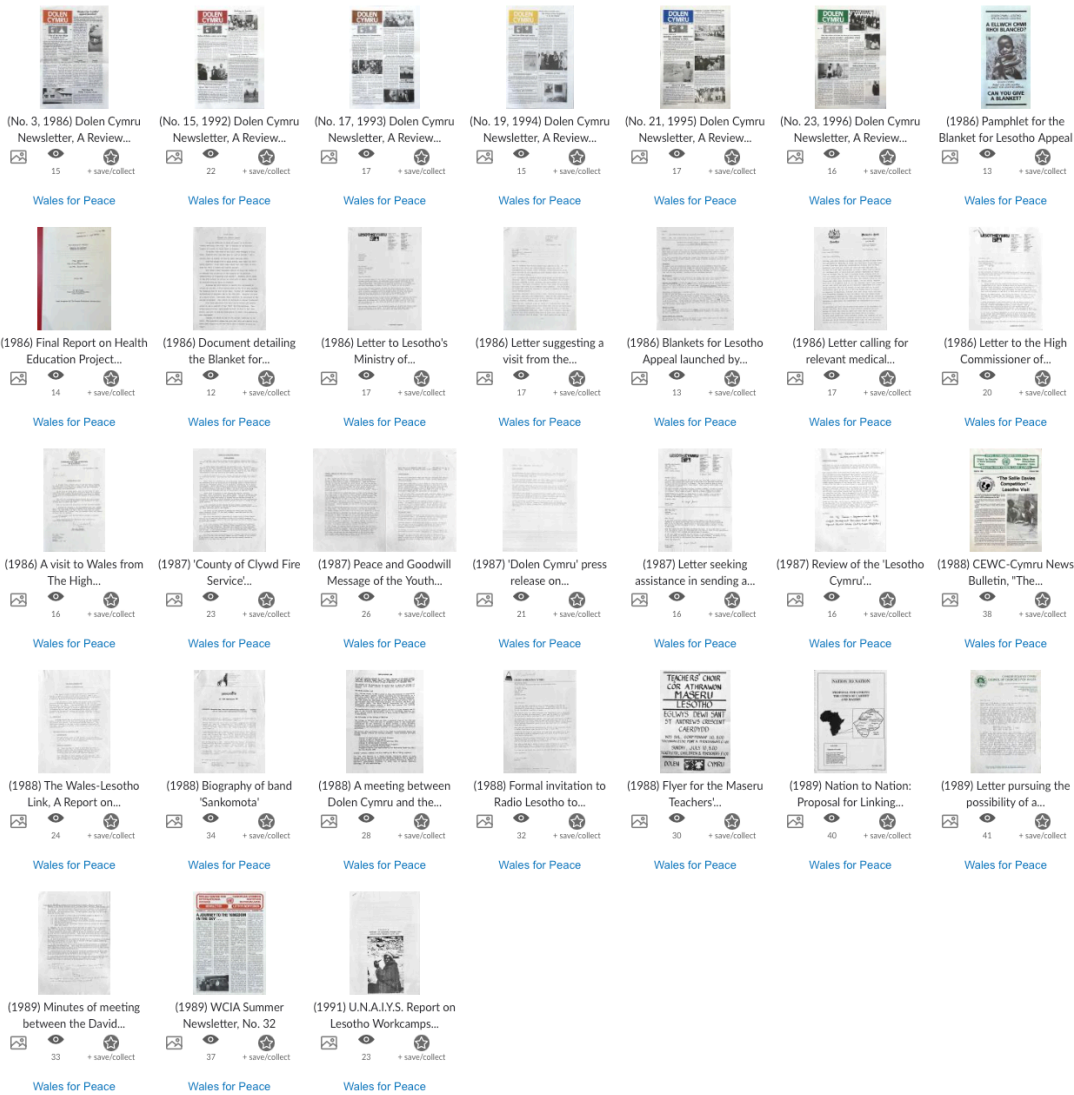
[Wales for Peace](#)

Dolen Cymru Wales-Lesotho Link - archives from the early years

This archive draws together materials from the founding of Dolen Cymru, the Wales Lesotho Link in 1985 - the world's first 'country to country' twinning. It also draws in materials from the years preceding Dolen's establishment, with relationships developed through Welsh UNICEF and Freedom from Hunger campaign projects; and also archives charting the growth of relationships between Wales and Lesotho in sectors such as health, education, agriculture, governance, culture and music, as well as many personal relationships develop through this fascinating story from Welsh internationalist history. In 2025, Dolen turns 40 and Lesotho itself celebrates its 200th anniversary!

There are 87 items in this collection

 (1976) Lesotho Primary Schools Project... 50 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1977-1979) Summary of Lesotho Projects ... 40 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1979) Progress Report on Schools Project ... 47 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1979) Report on Mafeteng Hospital Work Party... 29 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1979) Report of meeting with UNICEF on the 7th... 31 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1979) Brief profile of Lesotho's economic... 26 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 Freedom From Hunger Campaign 1978-1997 Area... 53 + save/collect Wales for Peace
 Overview of projects in the Freedom from Hunger... 43 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 1980 WCIA 7th Annual Report 348 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1981) UNICEF Projects in Lesotho 23 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 Cymru a'r 'Tlotaf o'r tlawd (Y... 48 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1982) Response from the WHO on the twinning... 18 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1983) Wales Twinning Proposal... 25 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1983) Aims of the Wales Link -- Dolen Cymru 24 + save/collect Wales for Peace
 (1983) Letter by W. R. Davies in support of the... 22 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1983) 'Dolen Cymru' Press release on... 21 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1984) Dolen Cymru Wales Link Proposal 24 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1984) Dolen Gobaith, 'Y Faner' 21 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1984) 'Dolen Cymru' news clippings... 17 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1984) Document confirming the link between... 18 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1984) Reply from O. T. Sefako to Dolen Cymru... 23 + save/collect Wales for Peace
 (1984) Lesotho Country Report, The Courier no. 86 27 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1984) Letter to Gwynedd Health Authority in... 19 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1984) Response from Gwynedd Health Authority... 16 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1984) 'Dolen Cymru' press release... 24 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1984) Dolen Cymru Lesotho -- Wales Lesotho... 20 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1985) Letter by the High Commissioner of... 27 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1985) Letter from Merlin Film & Video... 18 + save/collect Wales for Peace
 (1985) Robert Steel's visit to Lesotho in... 18 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1985) Letter detailing developments of the... 21 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1985) Poster for 'Arian Byw' 30 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1985) Lesotho Band 'Sankomota' - LP... 23 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1985) National Federation of Women's... 24 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1985) Letter to the Rag Fund Committee asking... 15 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1985) British Council Representative in... 20 + save/collect Wales for Peace
 (1985) 'Dolen Cymru' press statement... 23 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (No. 1, 1985-1986) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review... 31 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 The message of peace and goodwill of the... 890 + save/collect Yr Urdd	 (No. 5, 1987) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review... 45 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 1988 WCIA 15th Annual Report 345 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (No. 7, 1988) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review... 39 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (No. 9, 1989) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review... 37 + save/collect Wales for Peace
 (No. 11, 1990) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review... 38 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (No. 13, 1991) Dolen Cymru Newsletter, A Review... 35 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (Summer 1991) Dolen Cymru Newsletter 39 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 Merched y Wawr Capel Iwan Branch, Sponsored... 1,027 + save/collect Merched y Wawr	 A collection of photographs of Merched y Wawr... 469 + save/collect Merched y Wawr	 (March 13-26, 1996) Visit to Africa (Zimbabwe... 42 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (Spring 1987) Dolen Cymru Newsletter 17 + save/collect Wales for Peace
 (Spring 1988) Dolen Cymru Newsletter 15 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (Summer 1990) Dolen Cymru Newsletter 12 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (Summer 1993) Dolen Cymru Newsletter 15 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (Summer 1995) Dolen Cymru Newsletter 14 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (Summer 1994) Dolen Cymru Newsletter 12 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (Summer 1996) Dolen Cymru Newsletter 12 + save/collect Wales for Peace	 (1989) Dolen Cymru Newsletter 14 + save/collect Wales for Peace

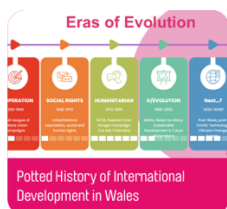
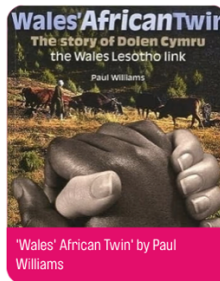


Heritage Resources on WCIA's Peace Heritage pages - www.heddwch.cymru (search 'Dolen')

Dolen Cymru today: looking to the 40th Anniversary and beyond

Dolen Cymru have gone from strength to strength, and the human experience of participating in people-to-people links with Lesotho has shaped the minds and world outlook of multiple generations of Welsh and Basutho participants.

View, contribute and get involved with the links ongoing work today via the [Dolen Cymru website](#).



#Dolen40 Today: Marking the 40th Anniversary and Beyond

Dolen Cymru have gone from strength to strength, and the human experience of participating in people-to-people links with Lesotho has shaped the minds and world outlook of multiple generations of Welsh and Basutho participants.

View, contribute and get involved with the link's ongoing work today via the [Dolen Cymru website](http://www.dolencymru.org) at www.dolencymru.org.



RARE RELATIONSHIP: Ten years of an African initiative



SIGNING IN: Kenneth Tsekoa, High Commissioner of Lesotho, with the Mayor of Cardiff Ricky Ormonde at City Hall

Hand across the globe

1995. Dolen Cymru's ten-year anniversary of its unique link featured in the Western Mail.