



Personalised Information Pack

Thank you for your interest in Swansea Bay.

We hope you enjoy finding out more about this fantastic holiday destination.

For expert help on planning and booking your dream holiday to Swansea Bay, contact:

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Our friendly and efficient staff will be delighted to help you with accommodation (locally and nationwide), ideas for places to visit, places to eat, things to do, local events, routes, maps, guidebooks, local souvenirs and gifts – plus a whole lot more!

A Brief History of Mumbles



Mumbles is a quaint Victorian seaside village situated on the western edge of Swansea Bay. It is believed that the name 'Mumbles' was taken from the Latin word for 'breasts' – 'mamma' and 'mammelles' in French, originally relating to the shape of the twin islets which sit off Mumbles head, and is now the name of the village itself.

During the 19th Century, Mumbles was home to over 700 people who spoke with a distinct South-Gower dialect and made their living from oyster dredging, farming and quarrying.

As time went by, these industries started to decline and tourism began to take their place. By the end of the Victorian era, Mumbles became a very popular holiday destination for visitors with its many attractions such as its popular pier and fairground, complete with a wide range of family attractions, stunning scenery and coastline.

Castles of Swansea Bay

Oxwich Castle

This 'castle by the sea' stands in a lovely spot on a wooded headland above Oxwich Bay on the Gower Peninsula. It is a castle in name only. Although probably occupying the site of an early fortification. Oxwich is a grand Tudor manor house built in courtyard style. Oxwich, the product of the peaceful and prosperous 16th century, was first and foremost intended to provide sumptuous accommodation.

Its creator, Sir Rice Mansel, gave his fine new home a mock military gateway (complete with family coat of arms), much in the way that the status-conscious industrialists of the 19th century created mansions for themselves in the shape of sham castles. Sir Rice's work, which was confined to the southern block, spanned the 1520's and 30's. He was succeeded by his son. Sir Edward Mansel, who proceeded to create the much grander multi-storeyed eastern range around 1560-80, which contained an impressive hall and elegant long gallery, a fashionable Elizabethan feature.

The south-east tower, which still survives to six storeys, would have provided extensive accommodation for the family and their many servants. For all its great aspiration, Oxwich was short lived. After the Mansels moved out in the 1630's their home gradually fell into disrepair, though the south range was used as a farmhouse. In 1949, Oxwich was rescued from demolition by Lady Apsley and placed into State care. After a long program of conservation and reconstruction, it is now maintained by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments.

Extracted from Cadw - For information tel. 01792 390359

Oystermouth Castle

This is the Gower Peninsula's finest castle, standing on a small hill with a magnificent view over Swansea Bay in the resort town of Mumbles. It is well-preserved, intricate and exciting to explore. This has everything a castle enthusiast could want; towers battlements, winding stairs, gloomy passages and haunted dungeons.

Early in the 12th century, Henry de Beaumont gave the manor of Oystermouth to his follower William de Londres lord of Ogmore and a Castle was built to defend his hold upon the territory. The site chosen was on the highest part of the hill, which acted as a natural motte, and with abundance of good building stone it is possible that the defences may have been of masonry from the start. Evidently William didn't think much of his castle's strength, for when a Welsh army attacked Gower in 1116, he sneaked off, leaving his possessions, livestock and soldiers behind!

By the 13th century Oystermouth has passed under the control of the main lords of Gower, and after another Welsh raid in 1215, the De Breos clan began an ambitious rebuilding

scheme. Edward I paid a brief visit here in December 1284. The de Braoses rebuilt the castle in stone, and most of what remains today is from that period.

'An old decayed castle' is how Oystermouth was described in 1650, and by the following century the site was beginning to draw visitors and antiquarians. Repairs were carried out in the first half of the 19th century by the owner, the Duke of Beaufort, and now, following further restoration work, Oystermouth is the most intact castle in Gower. It is also the most complex, as any visitor exploring the warren of rooms and towers will appreciate. The castle is open to the public during the summer months.

Extracted from 'Historic Gower' by Paul Davis

Swansea Castle

Swansea Castle is now so hemmed in by modern buildings and roads that it is hard to imagine its original surroundings, or indeed its original form. It stands on a clifftop, below which the river Tawe originally flowed, and its position was strategic: it commanded the lowest crossing of the river, the main east-west route in south Wales, and a good harbour. What is visible now is only a small part of the latest castle on the site.

Swansea Castle's history was a turbulent one: it suffered in many Welsh raids, and changed hands many times. It was a [Norman castle](#) first mentioned in 1116 as being attacked by the Welsh. It was established by Henry I's friend Henry de Beaumont, first earl of Warwick, as the seat of administration of the marcher lordship of Gower, which Henry bestowed on him in about 1106. This first castle was of [motte and bailey](#) type, and nothing of it remains above ground. The west side of its deep ditch has been excavated to the north of the present remains. It was rebuilt in stone on the same site, probably after being razed by the Welsh in 1217. Nothing remains above ground of this stage either, but the west side of the curtain wall has been found, together with a mural tower. To the south-west of this small castle, called the 'Old Castle', a large roughly rectangular outer bailey was walled in stone late in the 13th century.

The 'New Castle', of which the present-day remains were part, lay in its south-east corner, built on the site of an earlier graveyard. This castle dates from the late 13th to early 14th century, by which time [Edward I's](#) pacification of Wales had deprived it of any military importance. It continued as an administrative center, but at a reduced level. Its holders, then the de Braoses, preferred to live at [Oystermouth Castle](#), and inevitably decline set in. Stripped of their usefulness, the various gates and towers of the bailey were sold off in the early 14th century.

The visible remains consist of the north and south blocks, probably the work of William de Braose III, connected by a short stretch of much-altered curtain wall. The well-preserved south block, which occupied most of the south side of the castle, is the most spectacular part,

with its picturesque arcaded parapet on top of the outside walls. This was almost certainly the work of Henry de Gower, bishop of St. Davids (1328-47), and recalls similar features in his palaces at Lamphey and St. Davids itself. Swansea may thus have served as an episcopal palace for some time. This view has, however, recently been challenged. Some authorities now believe it is the work of the de Mowbray lord of Gower, using the bishop's masons, employed at that time elsewhere in Swansea. Two large windows on the south side are the windows of the first floor hall, and below them are the narrow windows of three barrel-vaulted chambers. In the angled wing to the east was a sub-basement with great battered walls, from which there was access to the river. On the first floor was a solar, or private chamber, reached by steps on the west side. At the west end of the block is a spectacular circular garderobe tower standing to its full height, and in the south-east angle is a small turret with an arrowslit.

The small rectangular tower to the north has been much altered in post-medieval times, but retains a few original features, such as cross arrowslits. On the ground floor are three vaulted chambers, with four rooms above them inserted in the late 18th century when the block was turned into a debtor's prison. It had probably been used as a prison for a long time before, and still has grim air. Other usable parts of the castle had very heterogeneous uses at the beginning of the 19th century - as a town hall, poor-house, a new market house, store cellars, a blacksmith's and other shops, a Roman Catholic chapel (in the hall) and a dovecote.

Today, the surviving tower stands defiantly at the heart of city life, dominating Castle Square's amphitheatre and fountains where the original city market traded over five hundred years ago.

Extracted from Cadw website

Weobley Castle

This unusual historic site has one of the most atmospheric locations in Wales. It stands in a lonely spot on the lowlying northern coast of the Gower Peninsula, overlooking an eerie, bleak expanse of saltings and marshland.

Weobley contains an impressive layout of integral chambers centred around a stone courtyard and a stately banqueting hall dominated by an oak gallery. It was built by the de la Bere family and dates from the early 14th century.

A few generations later more buildings were added around the courtyard, including a solar, chapel and gatehouse. All the main buildings are two storeyed with the principal rooms on the upper floors over stores and basements. There is clearly a strong element of domestic comfort here, with all the residential apartments well provided with garderobes, fireplaces and spacious windows overlooking the Loughor estuary. However, glass being such an expensive commodity in the Middle Ages, only the upper part of the windows were glazed and the remainder was shuttered to keep out the draughts.

(Historic Gower by Paul Davis)

By the middle of the 16th century Weobley was no longer the abode of wealthy and powerful lords, but merely a tenanted farmhouse, and by 1666 it had degenerated to the unenviable status of 'a decayed castle'.

Weobley is a substantial building open to the public and carefully preserved for posterity by CADW (Welsh Historic monuments). One of the rooms also contains an exhibition on the archaeological sites and monuments of the Gower Peninsula.

***Weobley Castle*, Diane M. Williams, Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, Cardiff, 1995**

Gower Smuggling History

Gower is a land steeped in legend and the history of its coastline is particularly fascinating. The heyday of the smuggler in these parts was in the 18th and first half of the 19th Century. The main cargo being shipped out of Swansea at the time was coal destined for other ports in England. However, many of the ships would not reach their intended destination but instead would cross the often treacherous Irish Sea to Waterford and Wexford, where their cargoes would be disposed. The weather was often blamed for this diversion but it was more probably to do with the higher price for coal in Ireland, and the opportunity to stock up with soap and salt. These products were then smuggled back in through Swansea and sold at a high profit. Similarly, those vessels that carried coal to Bordeaux and other French ports nearly always returned with cargoes of wine and brandy, which they slipped ashore on the first dark night.

Gower's coast, with its coves and desolate bays, was ideal for smuggling, particularly since the local customs office was inadequate. The smugglers around Gower were so successful and unhindered in their activities that they tended to look on it as legitimate business. However, with the advent of the coastguard in 1822 and with an effective blockade of the English Channel by the navy at the same time, the smuggler was virtually put out of business.

Pwll Du on Gower was undoubtedly used more than any other creek in the Bristol Channel for the landing of smuggled goods. Once landed, the cargo was hauled by pack horse about halfway up the Bishopston Valley. From here, they would then take the lane (today known as Smuggler's Lane) leading up to their headquarters at Great Highway and Little Highway farms. These houses were home to the most successful smuggling gang ever to have operated in South Wales.

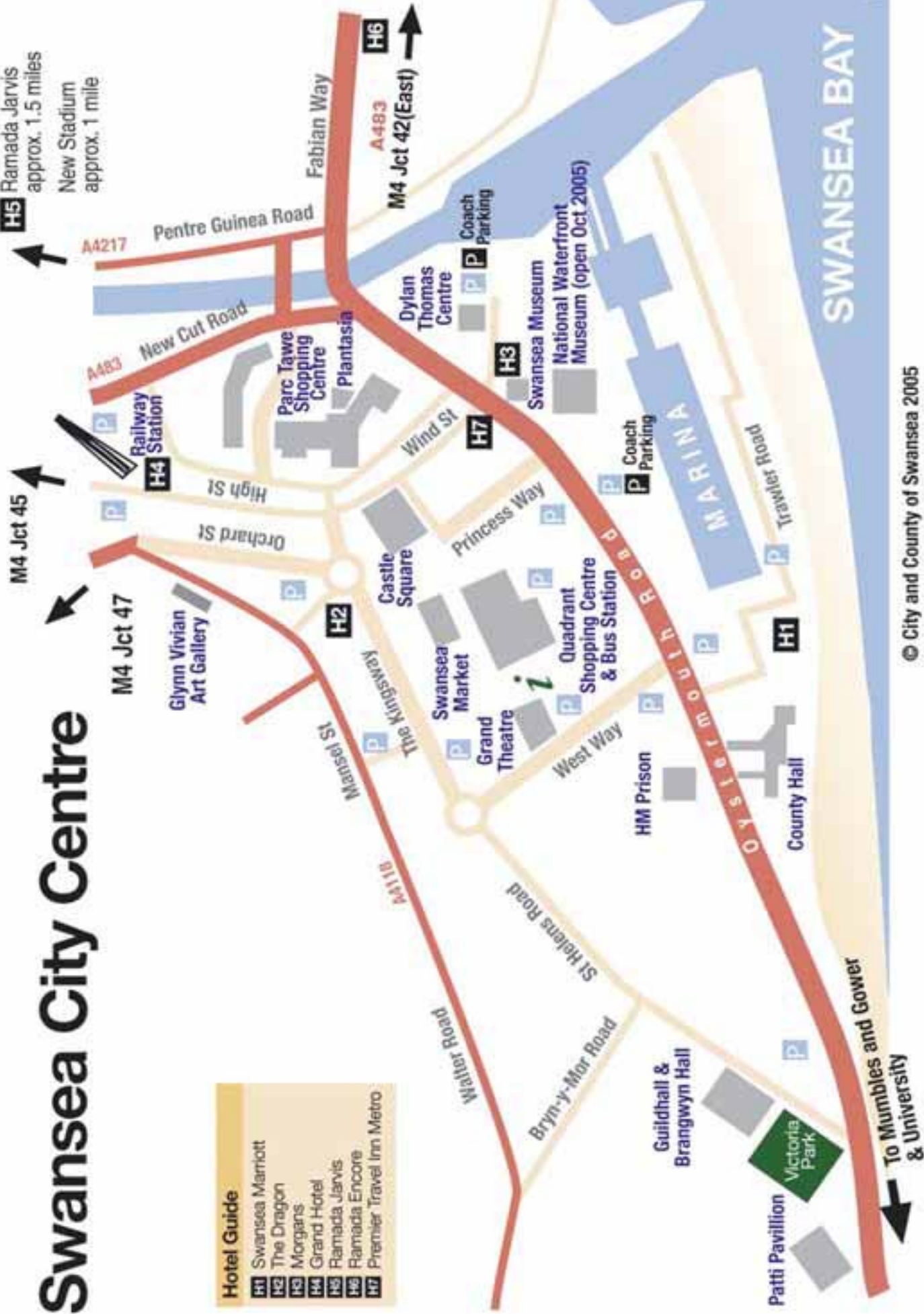
The Beaufort Inn in Pwll Du is now a private dwelling but its exterior appearance remains much the same as it would have in the days of the smugglers, who used to frequent the premises. It is said that the landlord would never have bought brandy or wine but received both from the smugglers in return for the use of his cellars for storage. The smugglers would earn a nice living from the proceeds of their well stocked cellars, replenishing the neighbouring parishes upon demand when liquor stocks were seen to be running low.

Swansea City Centre

Hotel Guide

- H1** Swansea Marriott
- H2** The Dragon
- H3** Morgans
- H4** Grand Hotel
- H5** Ramada Jarvis
- H6** Ramada Encore
- H7** Premier Travel Inn Metro

H5 Ramada Jarvis
approx. 1.5 miles
New Stadium
approx. 1 mile



Worm's Head, Gower

Worm's Head at Rhossili is a spectacular serpent-shaped promontory on the Western tip of Gower, extending approximately one mile into the Irish Sea. The earliest sailors to the region likened its appearance to that of a dragon from which it takes its name ('wurm' meaning dragon in Old English).

One of Wales' most striking viewpoints, Worms Head is a nature reserve with a diverse and colourful variety of wild flowers and seabirds. It has recently gained wider recognition by being featured in Tourist Board advertisements promoting Wales on English television. Welsh viewers will also recognise 'the Worm' from the Hyder plc (Welsh Water) advertisements.

Rhossili can be reached in less than 40 minutes from Swansea City Centre, and more adventurous visitors can take the mile long hike out to the Outer Head of the Worm. However, this is only possible at ebb tide when the causeway between the Inner Head and the mainland begins to be exposed, allowing 5-6 hours to explore the furthest tip. The walker is rewarded with superb views over the bay and excellent opportunities to spot seabirds. The walk is not difficult, but between the Inner and Middle Heads, there is a fifty metre barrier of sharp rocks which may present a problem for less able walkers. A bridge of rock known as 'Devil's Bridge' connects the Middle Head to the Outer Head where an active blow hole frequently performs for passing visitors.

CAUTION: Please check times of tide with coastguard or in local press prior to walking out on to Worms Head. Walkers must leave for their return journey to the mainland no later than 3.5 hours before the next high water.

Swansea Old Town Remembered

**Fancy a night-on-the-town, 1930s style?
One 'Swansea Jack' remembers how it used to be.**

"To know Swansea, in the 1930s, long before it attained the grand status of a city, was to know a township of crowded buildings of an assortment of styles flanking main roads and narrow streets, where cobbled stone was much in evidence and pavements became a resting place for water in wet weather.

"Swansea was a town that, on weekends in particular, came into its own and showed off its many features. The flamboyance of a Friday and Saturday night gave way to the austerity of a Sunday, where for many, especially non-churchgoers, time stood still.

"The town was a mixture of old and new, tramcars competing with buses, horse-drawn vehicles vying with motorised transport. There were sailing ships in the docks, the trains were powered by monster steam engines, and the much-lamented Mumbles Train swayed and rolled on its journey along the sea front to-and-fro the Mumbles.

"Shops were ablaze with light in the winter evenings, oil lamps, gaslight and electric providing a variety of illumination to the wealth of goods waiting to be purchased - if you had the money. It was a town bulging at the seams; at holiday times, a vast influx of valley-folk descended like locusts to cart away to the mountainside those things a small township or village could not supply.

"Well groomed gentlemen of wealth and substance paraded on the main streets, ladies flaunted their fashionable finery jostling with those from the poorer quarters, men with traditional flat caps and mufflers, womenfolk with shawls draped across their shoulders. It was a wide-ranging populace, their class status clearly defined. The chatter from shoppers, allied to the noise of slowly moving transport, the clank-clank of tram cars and the strident sound of motor horns, seemed to reverberate around the closely packed thoroughfare, the hustle and bustle of a thriving town at work and play."

Extracted from BBC Website.

The Welsh Revival

A century ago, Wales was gripped by one of the most powerful religious movements in history: the Welsh Revival, led by the much-celebrated Evan Roberts.

Evan Roberts was a young man from a humble background with a servile, praying heart. He left the life of a coalminer and blacksmith to devote himself to serving God, believing he had been called to take part in the Lord's plan to bring revival to Wales.

He shared his spiritual experience with the young people of his own church, Moriah Loughor, and encouraged them to be open to God's Spirit.

Evan Roberts travelled the country conducting revival meetings, which often broke the conventional and bypassed the traditional.

The Revival storm that hit the hills and the valleys of Wales in 1904 soon became a hurricane that affected the world.

The spiritual intensity and social transformation produced by the Revival of 1904-5 was a divine intervention that drastically changed life in churches, homes, mines, factories, schools and even places of leisure and entertainment.

The Welsh Revival began in November 1904 and lasted until the summer of 1905. As many as 152,000 people were converted to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was about 8% of the 1.7 million people who lived in Wales at the time.

Learn Welsh in 10 seconds with Linkword©

The Linkword© method of learning Welsh is a revolutionary memory technique developed in Swansea by world-renowned learning expert, Dr. Michael Gruneberg. It effortlessly teaches hundreds of words and grammar at an amazingly fast rate, and dramatically reduces the most time consuming part of learning the Welsh language...actually memorizing vocabulary and grammar.

Instructions: The Linkword© method quickly locks a word into your memory. First you see the word, you read its phonetic pronunciation and then an image is described to you which combines the word and associates it with its Welsh equivalent. If you vividly imagine that image for 10 seconds, the word will lock in your memory!

Why not see for yourself and try learning the following words

The Welsh word for **CHEESE** is **CAWS** (pronounced **COWSE**) – just imagine **COWS** producing **CHEESE**.

The Welsh word for **DOG** is **CI** (pronounced **KEY**) – Imagine a **DOG** carrying a **KEY**

The Welsh word for **SHIRT** is **CRYS** (pronounced **CREESE**) – Imagine putting a large **CREASE** in your **SHIRT**

The Welsh word for **DONKEY** is **ASYN** (pronounced **ASIN**) – Imagine hitting a **DONKEY** is **A SIN**

The Welsh word for **PIG** is **MOCHYN** (pronounced **MOCKIN**) – Imagine **MUCKING** out a **PIG** style

The Welsh word for **ROOF** is **TO** (pronounced **TOE**) – Imagine you put your **TOE** through the **ROOF**

The Welsh word for **HEAVY** is **TRWM** (pronounced **TROOM**) – Imagine you are carrying a **HEAVY DRUM**

The Welsh word for **YELLOW** is **MELON** (pronounced **MELIN**) – Imagine a **YELLOW MELON**

The Welsh word for **RED** is **COCH** (pronounced **COOCH**) – Imagine you **COOK** lobsters until they are **RED**

For more details you can visit the following website <http://www.linkwordlanguages.com>