

Audioscript
Listening
comprehension

*For items 1–10 listen to a talk on the radio about Welsh speakers in Patagonia, Argentina, and decide whether the statements (1–10) are **TRUE**, or **FALSE** according to the text you hear. You will hear the text twice.*

You have 20 seconds to study the statements.
(pause 20 seconds)
Now we begin.

Argentina is a country known internationally for the tango, gaucho cowboys and premium quality beef. To many people, therefore, it comes as some surprise to discover that in certain parts of Patagonia, in the south of the country, one of the 'musts' for any tourist is a visit to a Welsh tea house, a place where you can sip tea and enjoy delicious cakes, baked according to traditional Welsh recipes. Perhaps even more surprising, though, is the fact that some of the locals can actually be heard speaking in Welsh. Exactly how many native Welsh speakers there are in the region is not known, but most estimates put the figure at several hundred, a relatively high number, given that there are just under 600,000 speakers of the language in Wales itself.

But how did these Welsh speakers come to be there? The first wave of settlers arrived from Wales in 1865. Unhappy with conditions at home, they were looking for an isolated area to set up a colony, a place where their language and identity would be preserved intact and not assimilated into the dominant culture, as had already happened in the United States. The 153 colonists who landed on the east coast of Argentina included carpenters, tailors and miners, but no real doctors and just one or two farmers. This was rather worrying, since the Chubut valley where they settled was virtually a desert, and what they needed most of all were agricultural skills.

Against all the odds, though, they survived, overcoming droughts, floods and a succession of crop failures. They were also quick to establish friendly relations with the local Indians, who helped the Welsh through the hard times and taught them some of their ways, how to ride and how to hunt. Twenty years after their arrival, some of the settlers moved up into a green fertile region of the Andes mountains, an area which they named Cwm Hyfryd, meaning 'beautiful valley'. Indeed, quite a number of places in Patagonia still bear Welsh names: Bryn Gwyn which means 'white hill', Trevelin, meaning 'milltown' and Trelew or 'Lewistown', named after Lewis Jones, one of the founders.

The Welsh have left their mark in other ways, too. Their windmills and chapels can be found throughout the region and there are a number of cultural activities,

such as poetry readings, male voice choirs and the annual Welsh song and dance festival, a smaller version of the International Eisteddfod held in Wales each year. All of this helps to keep the language and traditions alive in a small corner of the world, 8,000 miles from the homeland. And so too does the fact that every year, as part of a programme administered by the National Assembly for Wales, groups of teachers come to Patagonia to teach the language to the growing number of people who are interested in learning it.

And then, of course, there are the Welsh teas. For my afternoon treat, I visit *Nain Ceri*, reputed to be one of the best tea houses in Gaiman, where the streets and houses are adorned with Welsh flags. Inside, *Nain Ceri* is decorated with prints and paintings of Wales and the music playing is that of a traditional all-male choir. I am about to order the cream-topped apple pie to accompany my tea, when I catch sight of an irresistible-looking chocolate cake and choose that instead. I am not disappointed – it is absolutely delicious.

You have 20 seconds to check your answers.
(pause 20 seconds)