

The Mabinogion and Other Welsh Tales!

Note: This Event Postponed until 2021 Due to Covid19

For this year's epic storytelling event, the **Seattle Storytellers Guild** has joined forces with the **Puget Sound Welsh Association** to present the Welsh epic: **The Mabinogion and other Welsh Tales**.

The Mabinogion contains the earliest stories of all of the literature of Great Britain that continues to inspire us today! The manuscripts in which these tales are found in two manuscripts, *The Red Book of Hergest* and *The White Book*, which were written around 1350. The stories existed way before that as the oral tradition and artistry of Welsh and Celtic storytellers. They wandered Britain and beyond, swapping these stories for board and lodging. These tales offer drama, philosophy, romance, tragedy, fantasy and humor with classic hero quests and glimpses of a far off age. Some of the stories are pre-Christian, with glimpses of magicians and the old Celtic gods. They're set in a magical landscape which corresponds geographically to Wales, sometimes even with specific place names. The stories are full of giants, talking animals, dastardly and kind rulers, shape shifters, heroic men and intelligent women. Some tales portray a very different King Arthur from the later popular versions, but all agree that these first tales of Arthur arose in Wales! Also included is the legend of one of the most famous bards of Wales, Taliesin.



The Mabinogi consists of the four "Branches of the Mabinogi" – Each is a separate tale with distinct protagonists : Pwyll – Prince of Dyfed; Branwen – Daughter of Lyr; Manawydan – Son of Lyr and Math – Son of Mathonwy. Each tale ends with ". . . and thus ends this branch of the Mabinogi." What is interesting is Pryderi, the son of Pwyll and Rhiannon appeared in all four tales, from his birth in the first tale, to his death in the last of the Branches, yet is never the main character in any of the tales. The first and third tale centers on the kingdom of Dyfed to the south in Wales, while the second tale was set in Britain England, ruled by Bran and in Ireland. The last tale was concentrated around the northern kingdom of Wales, ruled by Math. First translated into English in 1838-49, **The Mabinogion** includes other tales and romances as well. Some of our tellers are using the published translations of Patrick Ford and Sioned Davies in preparing their tales for this Epic.

Special Guest Tellers include two from the UK:



Hugh Lupton, from England, is an award-winning storyteller, performer, poet, lyricist and author of numerous books; and most recently, *The Assembly of the Severed Head* which narrates the Mabinogi within a medieval novel framework.. His work spans over 35 years,

working on both solo projects and partnerships with other artists, writers, musicians, illustrators and performers. He has toured both the length and breadth of Britain and internationally. His work with the **Company of Storytellers** from 1985 to 1997 was instrumental in stimulating a nation-wide revival of interest in storytelling.



Peter Stevenson is a storyteller, book illustrator, folklorist, film maker, crankie maker, purveyor of Magical Lantern Shows, concertina and banjo player and has authored numerous books including *Ceredigion Folk Tales* and *Welsh Folk Tales*. Peter was a major catalyst in a revival of creative interest in the Mabinogi over the last few years with the two Mabinogi based festivals in 2015 and

2017 at the **Aberystwyth Arts Centre** in Wales where visual artists, academics, storytellers, story lovers and musicians mixed, mingled and laughed in a great bubbling cauldron of contemporary creativity.

Our storytellers will also include Erin Graham and Melanie Ray from Canada, and also local storytellers: Jane Valencia, Allison Cox, Mary Lynne Evans, Barry McWilliams, Margaret Read MacDonald, Tasara Jen Stone, Eric & Sally Bowen, Laura Lovell, Margie Hunt, Rebecca Teeters, Fern Zimmerman, Marilyn Grevstad, Anne Brendler, Leslie Evans, Lenore Jackson, Gwen Weinert and Joel Ware. All the storytellers and musicians are volunteering time and their performances to our epic.

Music will be interwoven between the tales! Refreshments will likely include Welsh goodies!

A warning to parents – these tales are for a mature audience, not for children and younger teens.

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Check seattlestorytellers.org for pricing and other information as they become available.

* this event is a sole production of the Seattle Storytellers Guild and the Puget Sound Welsh Association, not affiliated with HLUMC