

AWAY AT HOME

Imagine the fear desperation and anxiety
Of those innocent souls
Having to leave their homes
To flee the bullets and bombs
Loss and pain their tragic song

A displacement not of their making
But love isn't for forsaking
And Cymru opened its calon
And said
Croeso
Bienvenidas
And as the fascists burned their land
The children carried their soil in their pockets
And planted the ancient seeds that made them
In the rain soaked fields of Caerleon

When we are lost what guides us
Home
Is what we know
Like landing lights in the darkest night
And as the children slowly awoke
They followed the scent on the breeze
To the football fields away from the fight
A holy communion of silent connection
And drank the universal nectar of grass,
lime and wooden post
A strange semaphore that salved the sadness
A gentle resurrection

Where passes became hands
And the magic sponge, a Mother's smile
As the children found their sanctuary
On a patch of earth
Untouched by hatred, fear and lies

A safety blanket of worn jerseys
As their boots ran in the sun drenched streets of
memory
Bringing back the places they'd left behind
Away at home but safe in this country



Patrick Jones is a well known Welsh poet born in Tredegar and raised in Blackwood, who has published 11 books of poetry and 8 plays covering a wide range of topics.

On the final day of the events in Caerleon in July 2022, Patrick delighted us with readings of several of his poems including the working draft of the above poem, which is dedicated to those refugee children who came to Caerleon and especially remembering the importance of football for them.

Where leather meets leather
And mud, skin
There is a language that doesn't need words
Just beats deep within
Transcending space and time
Maybe in '37 they told of the future
Together, Stronger,
And Stronger, together
And that
Unedig Unida United
Is not just a football club with a million pound sponsorship deal
But a way of being
To act
And live as a team
Where borders fade
And hearts grow
Bienvenidas
Croeso



(Right to left) Patrick Jones - poet, John L Thomas - harpist, Irantzu Garamendi and Asier Berrojalbiz - musicians