

Y Bala Wildlife Audio Trail

Introduction:

Hello, and a warm welcome to the Bala Wildlife Audio Trail, an audio-guided journey brought to life by me; Sioned Edwards and me Iwan Edwards. Together, we will help you explore the unique wildlife, landscape, and culture of Y Bala. The trail has 15 audio points; although if you prefer a shorter walk, there are two optional routes suggested. As you go, be sure to consult the map and the directions in the audio guide for cues on where to play each audio point.

Along the way, we'll delve into the wonders of Bala Lake, explore the freshwater habitats of the River Dee and the River Tryweryn, and discover the rare and remarkable local wildlife. We'll pass through woodland and over moorland, dive into local folklore and introduce you to wonderful historical figures like Betsi Cadwaladr and Mary Jones, whose stories have left a lasting impact on the region and beyond.

Whether you're here to exercise, enjoy the scenery, or learn more about the local wildlife, we hope this guide adds depth and excitement to your experience in Bala's enchanting landscape. Pick the route that suits you and let's set off on an unforgettable journey into the heart of Bala!

1. Bala Lake

Welcome to the first stop on your audio trail: the stunning Bala Lake, or Llyn Tegid in Welsh, meaning "Lake of Serenity." This is Wales' largest natural lake, stretching over three and a half miles long, up to half a mile wide, and in some places, plunging more than 140 feet deep. Surrounded by the striking Y Berwyn, Yr Aran and the Arenig mountains, this beautiful valley draws both nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers alike. It's popular with swimmers, anglers, and fans of various watersports with a large range of boats available to hire at the foreshore. Whether you are here for hiking, birdwatching, boating, or simply enjoying a picnic as the steam train rolls along the eastern shoreline, Bala Lake truly offers something for everyone.

The lake is a protected site with special designations to preserve its unique habitats. Formed by glaciers during the last Ice Age, this ancient lake supports some of UK's rarest species. One of its most famous residents is the gwyniad, a type of whitefish that has been swimming in the depths of these waters ever since being trapped in the lake at the end of the last ice age, over 10,000 years ago. Equally scarce is the glutinous snail, one of Europe's most endangered species. With its fragile, translucent shell and jelly-like exterior, this tiny water snail is highly sensitive to water pollution. Bala Lake is now coincidentally the snail's last refuge in Europe - a testament to the good water quality here.

A haven for wildlife, the lake is home to a remarkable variety of bird species. As you follow the footpath with the lake to your right, take a moment to listen to the melodic calls of birds flitting through the lakeside vegetation, and cast your eyes across the water. You might catch sight of the elegant great crested grebe, which nests here in spring, or see pochard and goldeneye diving below the surface in search of food during winter. The surrounding woodlands can come alive in the breeding season with the songs of redstarts, pied flycatchers, and wood warblers.

So keep your eyes peeled, as the lake often holds surprises. You could spot an osprey soaring overhead, scanning the water for fish, or catch sight of a playful otter darting along the water's edge.

Legend has it, the lake's most elusive resident; a monster named Teggie also dwells in these depths. But so far, no one's been able to prove it... yet!

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Bala itself is a historic market town and a welcoming town, proud to hold 'Walkers are Welcome' status. Sitting at the northern tip of the lake, its name fittingly translates to 'the outlet of a lake,' as the River Dee begins its journey from here.

Continue along the footpath until you reach the bridge. Carefully cross the road, then pass through the gate and follow the path along the left-hand bank of the River Dee, our next audio point.

2. River Dee

Welcome to the River Dee - or Afon Dyfrdwy in Welsh. Its name is thought to derive from ancient Celtic origins, where the river was associated with a goddess and revered as sacred.

The Dee is the longest river in North Wales, stretching 70 miles from its source here to the Dee Estuary near Chester. It has long been a vital waterway supporting both wildlife and communities. Crucially, the river serves as a major source of drinking water, supplying millions of people in Wales and northwest England. Further downstream, you'll notice a sluice gate. For over two centuries, sluice gates like this have played a critical role in controlling the river's flow, preventing flooding and maintaining water levels for the Llangollen Canal. This canal feeds into the iconic Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, an UNESCO World Heritage Site completed in 1805, which stands as a triumph of engineering over the Dee.

The river itself holds a wealth of biodiversity. In autumn, as you approach the weirs beyond the bend, watch closely - as you might catch the powerful leaps of Atlantic salmon. These migratory fish return from the sea to spawn, using their extraordinary sense of smell to locate the very waters - and often the exact spot - where they were born. Their determined journey, overcoming obstacles in their way, is one of nature's most awe-inspiring spectacles.

The Atlantic salmon, along with the three species of lamprey, Eurasian otter, bullhead, and the rare floating water plantain, are some of the key contributors to the River Dee catchment's designation as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). A designation protecting habitats and species of European importance.

As you continue along the tarmac footpath, look out for dippers and swallows flitting along the riverbank. Dippers, recognisable by their chocolate-brown bodies and white throats, can often be seen bobbing on stones. They're the only songbirds that dive underwater to hunt for insect larvae like stonefly and caddisfly. Swallows, on the other hand, grace the skies above, darting and swooping in their hunt. These agile birds have travelled thousands of miles from Southern Africa to feast on the plentiful insects of the British summer, a vital fuel for their energetic aerial lifestyle.

The grass embankments along the river are maintained to prevent flooding by keeping the soil tightly packed to resist erosion. However, in certain spots, you'll find that the grass is left to grow, encouraging wildflowers that attract pollinators like bees and butterflies. Unfortunately, our pollinator numbers are in serious decline, but you can help to support them. By leaving parts of your garden to grow wild, planting nectar-rich flowers, or even building bee hotels, you can provide the vital food and shelter for pollinators throughout the year, helping to sustain their populations.

Keep your eyes peeled as you explore, you never know what wildlife surprises await! Your next audio point begins as you pass the steel bridge, now following the River Tryweryn.

3. River Tryweryn

Now we're following the River Tryweryn, which flows from Llyn Celyn reservoir and joins the River Dee. This river is home to some of the rarest creatures in the UK. Narrated by Joel Rees-Jones of the LIFE Dee River Project, this audio point explores the unique biodiversity and conservation efforts in the area.

Joel: One of these remarkable species is the freshwater pearl mussel, which has a fascinating and complex lifecycle. Adult mussels release millions of tiny larvae, called glochidia, into the water which attach to the gills of salmon or trout during a parasitic phase which lasts around 10 months before they drop off the gills of the host fish. These young mussels then settle on the riverbed, maturing into adults capable of filtering up to 50 litres of water daily. This filtration not only supports their survival but also improves the water quality for other species like otters and eels.

Despite their longevity - living for over 100 years - freshwater pearl mussels are critically endangered. They haven't bred naturally in Wales for decades due to pollution, habitat degradation, siltation and declining fish stocks. With aging populations and no younger generations to replace them, their numbers have declined dramatically.

Fortunately, there is hope on the horizon. Conservation initiatives, such as those led by Natural Resources Wales, include rearing juvenile mussels at the Clywedog hatchery using stock collected from the Tryweryn. These mussels are being prepared for reintroduction to rivers, aiming to restore self-sustaining populations.

Our work for the LIFE Dee River Project has been pivotal in improving conditions for species like the freshwater pearl mussel, who depend on healthy fish populations. By removing and adapting weirs throughout the Dee Catchment, we've enhanced fish migration and strengthened ecological connectivity. These efforts, combined with habitat restoration like gravel introduction and water quality improvements create the ideal environment for mussels, salmon, and other aquatic life to thrive.

The river also supports fascinating creatures like lamprey; jawless, eel-like fish that predate the dinosaurs. Brook lampreys, found in this area, live entirely in freshwater, feeding on organic matter during their larval stage. Meanwhile, river and sea lamprey migrate to the ocean, feeding parasitically on marine fish—earning the nickname "vampire fish." Their unique spawning behaviour, using sucker-like mouths to move stones and build nests, benefits other species like salmon by conditioning the riverbed for their eggs.

Together, the freshwater pearl mussel, Atlantic salmon, and lamprey highlight just how interconnected life in this river really is. Each species plays a role in maintaining the delicate balance of the ecosystem, underscoring the importance of conservation projects like LIFE Dee River, so future generations can enjoy the beauty of rivers teeming with life.

Bala Bridge marks the end of the accessible Lake and Rivers Walk. From here, you can either retrace your steps or return through the town to your left. Along the way, you can enjoy audio point 14, finishing on point 15 at the lake foreshore.

To continue your audio trail, follow the path under the bridge where you can start audio point 4 on your route alongside the river. Please be aware that cattle may be present in the field ahead, so keep dogs on a lead or consult your map for an alternative route.

4. Invasive Non-Native Species

During warmer months, you might notice the bright pink blooms of Himalayan balsam on the riverbanks. Although eye-catching, this invasive plant is a serious environmental concern. As the tallest growing annual species in the UK, it rapidly spreads along riverbanks, outcompeting native flora and reducing habitat for local wildlife. When Himalayan balsam dies back in the winter, it can leave riverbanks bare and prone to erosion and even flooding. Its exploding seed pods are highly prolific and can project seeds up to seven meters away, making control challenging. Fortunately, its hollow stems make it easy to uproot and trample, but disturbing the plant from September onwards must be avoided to prevent the spread of its seeds.

Further along, beyond the gate, you might also spot the bamboo-like stems of Japanese knotweed. This invasive plant causes damage to both wildlife and infrastructure and is even known to break through concrete. It spreads by rhizomes sending out roots and shoots, and by broken fragments of stem, making it extremely difficult to control once established.

Managing these invasive non-native species (or INNS) is crucial for protecting our rivers and the surrounding ecosystem. The North Wales Wildlife Trust actively works to combat their spread within the River Dee Catchment. For more information, visit the North Wales Wildlife Trust website.

We encourage everyone to use the 'INNS Mapper' app to report sightings of INNS. For those also going out to survey and manage INNS, such as local action groups and volunteer groups, INNS Mapper is the tool to report and share survey and management information, which will help coordinate effective INNS management.

Exit through the far pedestrian gate, and as you near the old Woollen Mill House straight ahead, turn left into the field, then right to follow the waymarked path where you can begin audio point 5.

5. The Old Woollen Mill

As we pass the old Woollen Mill House, let's step back in time to the days when Bala was bustling with wool production. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Bala was famed for its wool trade, particularly the knitted stocking industry. By the 1830s, this town was turning out around 32,000 pairs of stockings and 5,500 pairs of woollen mittens each year! King George III even insisted on wearing stockings made in Bala, which he believed helped soothe his rheumatism. Prince Albert later joined the trend, further cementing Bala's reputation for quality woollen goods and their reputed healing qualities.

The woollen trade was essential for local livelihoods and helped Bala's fame spread beyond Wales. While the mill here has been rebuilt, you can still see the old leet, or mill race, that once powered the mill wheel.

For those seeking an adrenaline rush, the National Whitewater Centre, located just upstream near Frongoch, offers a thrilling change of pace. As one of the UK's top spots for whitewater rafting and kayaking, it benefits from controlled water levels via an upstream dam, which keeps the River Tryweryn exhilarating all year round. Rain or shine, if you're looking for an unforgettable adventure, get ready to embrace the thrill of the rapids!

Audio Point 6 begins within the woodland as the path descends toward the river ahead.

6. Woodland

As you step into this small woodland overlooking the river, take a moment to appreciate the variety of trees around you, with each tree playing their own role in supporting a thriving ecosystem. Alders, recognisable by their small brown cones, have a special affinity with water. They flourish in damp conditions, stabilising riverbanks to prevent erosion and improve water quality. Their roots even host nitrogen-fixing bacteria, which enriches the soil, benefiting themselves and nearby plants.

Before the fresh spring leaves obscure your view, it's a great time to spot nuthatch and treecreeper, two birds distinctly adapted to living in trees. The elusive treecreeper as its name suggests, is a small bird with a unique feeding style. It slowly spirals up tree trunks to probe the bark for insects with its curved bill. When it reaches the top, it swoops to the base of another tree and begins again. Unlike the treecreeper, its woodland companion the nuthatch is the only British bird that can descend headfirst down tree trunks, aided by its powerful feet and beak as it hunts.

So pause and listen to the bird song overhead. You might pick up on the simple yet distinctive "chiff chaff" call of the chiffchaff as it sings from the tree canopy, or the more melodic song of the robin. Fiercely territorial year-round, robin redbreasts defend their patch with surprising aggression, filling the woodland with their unmistakable sound.

If you catch a flash of electric blue and orange, it's certain to be a kingfisher darting by. These colourful birds live by rivers and streams, often seen sitting on low branches above the water, diving in sharply to catch small fish.

Woodlands are ideal habitats for some of Britain's larger mammals, like foxes and badgers, though they're most active at night and rarely seen during the day. Instead, look for signs of their presence.

Foxes leave narrow trails through undergrowth and small, oval paw prints with visible claw marks in soft mud. You might also spot their twisted droppings, often left on paths or prominent spots, containing fur or bones.

Badgers create underground setts with multiple entrances, marked by well-worn paths, piles of fresh earth, or latrines—small pits for marking territory.

Even if you don't see these animals, looking for these clues can give you a fascinating glimpse into the lives of woodland wildlife!

After exiting the woodland, you will arrive at the main road. Cross carefully, then bear left, continuing until you reach a pedestrian gate beside a lay-by. From here, follow the hedge line on your left towards the field corner. Continue ahead through the narrow cutting - the house on the right is Penrhiw, the cue for our next audio point!

7. Betsi Cadwaladr

As we pass through the narrow cutting, the house on the right is Penrhiw. Once the home of Betsi Cadwaladr, a pioneering Welsh nurse born here in Bala in 1789.

Whilst I reveal her story, if you desire to keep moving, bear left and immediately turn right onto the waymarked footpath.

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At the age of 65, Betsi volunteered to serve in the Crimean War and was assigned to work alongside the renowned Florence Nightingale. However, Betsi quickly grew frustrated with the inefficiencies of hospital bureaucracy. Taking matters into her own hands, she ensured that soldiers received the urgent care they desperately needed, often bypassing red tape to focus on saving lives. Her legacy continues today through the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, which provides healthcare across North Wales. The health board honours her name and embodies the values she stood for: dedication, compassion, and putting patients first.

From her modest beginnings here in Bala to her fearless work in the challenging conditions of war, Betsi is celebrated as a true pioneer and a symbol of courage and care—a legacy that continues to inspire generations.

Continue along the waymarked path over the field to a corner gate. Just beyond you'll discover audio point 8 'the caves'.

8. Craig-y-Fron 'The Caves'

Welcome to Craig-y-Fron, locally known as "the caves." The stone from this former quarry was used to build many of Bala's structures, including Bala College.

Geologically, the caves are carved from tuff, a rock formed from compacted volcanic ash, which speaks to the area's fiery origins over 400 million years ago. The tuff layer sits between mudstone above and siltstone below. If you look closely at the mudstone ceiling, you'll notice ripple marks—a sign that this rock formed underwater millions of years ago.

Beyond the quarry, Bala's surrounding landscape tells a story of farming. For generations, the valleys and hills have been shaped by pastoral traditions, with sheep farming at their heart. The rugged uplands, lush grasslands, and generous rainfall make this terrain perfectly suited to this enduring way of life.

History also runs deep here. Nearby, at the southwestern end of the lake, lies the remains of Caer Gai, a Roman auxiliary fort that served as a strategic outpost along vital trade and military routes at the end of the first century. Adding to the mystique, some legends link this region to King Arthur, suggesting that battles tied to the legendary figure were fought near these hills. While such tales remain speculative, they add a fascinating mythological layer to Bala's already rich heritage.

Keep following the waymarkers, keeping the fence line on your right. When you reach the road ahead, you have two choices:

To finish the Bramble Ramble trail, turn left. It's a gentle 1.5km stroll back to Bala Lake, which will take around 20 minutes. Along the way, you can enjoy audio point 14, finishing on point 15 at the lake foreshore.

Or, if you're up for more adventure, turn right to continue along the Red Kite Hike trail for an additional 4km. This section will take around 1 hour 30 minutes, taking you across moorland and through peaceful woodland. Just be careful when crossing the moorland as some spots can get quite boggy, waterproof boots are advised, especially during the wet winter months!

Keep following the road until you reach the bridleway signpost, turn left and the next audio point will start at the standing deadwood tree.

9. Deadwood

Ahead of you stands the remains of a mature beech tree. A striking figure against the moorland. This towering deadwood may look lifeless, yet it sustains an array of life in its decay.

Deadwood like this is crucial to an ecosystem, recycling nutrients back into the soil, while offering vital habitat for many species of bryophytes, lichens, fungi, insects, and birds. In fact, around 650 beetle species in the UK rely on deadwood at some stage of their life cycle. You might even spot a woodpecker tapping into the tree, looking for larvae hidden beneath its bark.

Take a closer look within this tree's crevices, and you'll notice it's adorned with a bracket fungus known as 'the artist's fungus'. The name relates to its creamy white underside that once scratched reveals a darker layer, being able to create intricate designs. We kindly ask you to admire this fascinating fungus without touching it to help preserve its natural state.

The brown powder you might see consists of billions of spores that have been released. These spores will only germinate if environmental conditions are favourable, requiring the right combination of moisture, temperature, and surface to grow into new organisms.

On sunnier days, watch for common lizards that could be basking on the fallen limbs. These small reptiles love soaking up the warmth, using the sun's heat to regulate their body temperature.

[As you make your way across the moorland \(our next audio point\), continue straight towards the farm ahead.](#)

10. Gwastadros Moorland

As you walk across the moorland, the landscape opens, offering breathtaking views of Moel Emoel to your left, the Berwyn Mountains ahead and the Aran Mountains to your right.

The moor is open access land, recognised as an Area of Natural Beauty and designated an International Dark Sky Reserve—an ideal spot for stargazing with minimal light pollution allowing for brilliant views of the night sky.

The ground here is uneven and damp, especially in the wetter months, so watch your step. The path may also be faint, so keep a steady line toward the nearby farm.

The plants here are mostly low-growing, ankle-high varieties, with Cotton Grass as one of the most noticeable. Its soft, white tufts sway gracefully in the breeze during spring and summer, giving a lively touch to this quiet landscape.

The moor also holds layers of peat. The peat in the ground acts like a sponge, soaking up rainwater and storing carbon, which helps to regulate the climate. In the wetter patches, you might even see the occasional newt darting between pools of water, hiding amongst the sphagnum moss, so tread lightly.

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The small patches of white foam clinging to plants is called 'Cuckoo Spit.' Despite the name, it's not related to the bird. Instead, it's created by froghopper nymphs—small, sap-sucking bugs that use the foam as a protective layer from predators.

Speaking of predators, keep an eye on the skies—this is an ideal spot to catch sight of Wales' National Bird, the red kite. With its unmistakable forked tail, it gracefully glides and steers through the air. This is also one of the few places you can still hear the haunting call of a curlew, a sound deeply tied to the moors but now tragically fading. Once abundant, these tall wading birds with their distinctive down-curved bills face severe threats, including habitat loss, predation, and changes in farming practices. Their alarming decline has made them the UK's most urgent bird conservation priority. Their plight is reminiscent of the red kite, which was once persecuted to the brink of extinction. Thanks to focused conservation efforts, the red kite has made a remarkable recovery. Now, similar attention is turning to curlew recovery, and working to protect the small, fragile populations that remain, in hopes of securing their future.

Continue straight across the moor and through the farm. Pass the cattle sheds to reach two metal field gates. Go through the right hand one and turn right across the farmland. This is a great spot to hear the raucous chatter of various corvids amongst the nearby trees, or a watchful grey heron beside the pond.

Pass through the next field gate and follow the hedge line. At the field's far-right corner, you'll find a pedestrian gate where your next audio point 11 will begin. Be aware that cattle could be in the fields ahead, so please stick to the hedge line and ensure dogs are on leads throughout.

11. Meadow

As you listen, head downhill and left towards the oak woodland, your next audio point.

In the summer, this field is buzzing with bumblebees, butterflies, and the lively chorus of grasshoppers. Each step may send craneflies lifting from the grass as you make your way through.

Unlike the previous field, where the land is agriculturally improved, the character of this field means it's less favourable for farming and is instead used for grazing. Because the land is left largely untouched, biodiversity flourishes here with a variety of wildflowers. Look out for the tall, tubular pink flowered foxglove. Like many of our native plants, they are an excellent source of nectar for bumblebees, moths and honeybees.

Below the buttercups, and beneath your feet, an unseen mycorrhizal network connects plant roots, enabling them to share nutrients and water. In autumn, look for the interesting fungi sprouting up. These fruiting bodies are the visible signs of the hidden, thriving life below.

12. Oak Woodland

Upon entering this delightful woodland, notice the soft green carpet of moss blanketing the woodland floor, especially beautiful in spring when bluebells bloom amidst the trees.

The trees here are predominantly oak and hazel. Symbols of strength and longevity, oaks are considered a keystone species, vital for biodiversity. They provide shelter and sustenance for over 2,300 species, from the tiny beetles that burrow into the bark, to the 31 species of mammals attracted by their fallen acorns.

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As oaks age, they become even more valuable habitats, providing shelter for larger creatures such as bats roosting in crevices and owls nesting in their hollows.

Keep an ear out for the loud harsh screeches of the jay, known as "Screch y Coed" in Welsh, or "screecher of the woods." Jays play a crucial role in spreading oak trees by burying acorns for winter food; those that are forgotten have the chance to grow into new trees.

Running alongside this tranquil scene is Aber Gwenwyn-Feirch, which translates to the Stream of the Poisoned Horses. Legend has it that in 1645, during the English Civil War, a local man named Rowland Fychan was pursued by Oliver Cromwell's soldiers. His friends threw yew leaves into the stream, poisoning the soldiers' horses and allowing him to escape. Exploring the meanings behind Welsh place names often reveals fascinating stories.

Follow the woodland path and as you exit through the gate, head straight and slightly left to follow the road downhill. This will lead you to the main road, where you'll carefully cross over. On the other side, you'll find yourself at the lakeside, with the Mary Jones Pilgrim Centre just ahead, your next audio point.

13. Mary Jones

As we pass the Mary Jones Pilgrim Centre, Mel Hill of the Bible Society narrates the incredible story of a little Welsh girl, Mary Jones, whose determination inspired a global movement.

Mel: In 1800, at just 15 years old, Mary had saved for six years to purchase her own Welsh Bible – a rare treasure at the time. She undertook a 26-mile journey from her home in Llanfihangel-y-Pennant to the home of the Reverend Thomas Charles in Bala, only to find that no Bibles were available. Moved by her unwavering faith and perseverance, Thomas Charles arranged for her to lodge in Bala until new stock arrived. When they did, he sold Mary three Bibles for the price of one.

Mary's story became the catalyst for Thomas Charles to found the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804. Now known as Bible Society, this organisation sparked a movement that now includes over 157 Bible Societies across 240 countries, sharing the Bible worldwide.

Her journey is celebrated here at the Mary Jones Pilgrim Centre, where visitors can learn more about her legacy and the impact of Thomas Charles on Wales' spiritual and cultural history. Her story is a testament to how one individual's commitment can change the world.

The availability of the Welsh Bible, alongside the growth of Christianity, played a vital role in shaping Wales as a nation. It helped preserve the Welsh language – now one of the oldest living languages in Europe – ensuring it remains an enduring part of Welsh identity and culture today.

Head left to continue the trail, you can either return to Bala Lake's car park alongside the road, or there is another option. Just a short distance along the road on the right is a small car park. Head down the steps and turn left. So long as the lake is not at high water, you'll be able to follow a path through the narrow belt of woodland back to the car park. Just heed caution as sometimes the stone pathway can be slippery. Listen to your next audio point as you head back to the lake foreshore.

14. Folklore

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For generations, the enchanting landscapes of Snowdonia have sparked the imagination, giving rise to enduring myths and legends woven into the very fabric of the land. Nearly every mountain, river, and lake is steeped in stories passed down through the ages. Among them is the tale of Tegid Foel and the legend of how the lake came to be, shared here by storyteller Andy Harrop-Smith.

Andy: A long time ago, the lands around Bala were once ruled over by a prince, his name was Tegid Foel, and he was notorious for his cruelty, greed and wickedness. He treated his people with contempt and cruelty. He exploited them, taxed them and held lavish feasts in his sumptuous palace, southwest of the old town of Bala where the lake now ripples gently in the sunlight.

On the birth of his first grandchild the prince laid on a grand banquet and invited 100s of guests, all cruel and wicked like himself. A Druidic Bard, the greatest harpist in the land was invited to play at the feast. As with many Druids, he was reputed to have magical powers, including being able to understand the language of birds.

On the night of the banquet a great storm blew up. Thunder clapped, lightening flashed and heavy rain poured down incessantly.

The feasting, merriment and laughter soon turned into a night of drunken debauchery.

As the Bard played, a small bird, a Wren perched on his harp and began to sing a beautiful song. Of course, the Bard could understand it's meaning, 'Vengeance will come' it was singing, 'Vengeance will come'. Outside the storm raged on and the rain poured down.

He knew that the bird was giving him a warning. Leaving his harp behind he followed the bird as it flew out of the hall, out of the palace, through the driving rain and into the mountains. They eventually came to a cave in which to shelter, and the Bard slept until daybreak. When he awoke, he looked out. The rain had stopped, and the sun was shining. The Bard looked down to where the palace had once stood. But now there was no sign of the place, it had been flooded, and a vast lake, Llyn Tegid, now rippled gently on the spot where the palace had been. There were no survivors, all had drowned.

His harp, the only thing left, floated on the surface of the water. Vengeance had indeed come.

Some say that a ghostly harper haunts the shoreline on moonlit nights, and if you listen carefully, you may hear the beautiful sounds of a harp drifting across the water, and the whispered words, 'Vengeance will come'. Listen to the breeze blowing across the waters...can you hear anything?

Your final audio point will begin when you arrive back at the lake foreshore car park.

15. Biosecurity

You will now find yourself back at the Bala Lake car park. Before you leave, you'll see a blue framed information board positioned next to the lake. This is the North Wales Wildlife Trust's boot washing station. Please hold onto the edges of the sign and use the brushes below to thoroughly clean underneath and around the sides of your shoes.

Thank you —you've just helped protect nature!

As advertised on the board; by following the check-clean-dry method for any clothing, footwear, and equipment like fishing gear or boats, you're reducing the risk of spreading invasive non-native species.

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This important action is known as biosecurity. We encourage everyone to practise biosecurity before leaving any site you visit.

That marks the end of our audio trail. We hope you've enjoyed discovering the diverse habitats, incredible species, and fascinating stories that make this area so remarkable. From bustling rivers and rich woodlands to open moorlands and meadows, Bala is truly a haven for wildlife and testament to the natural beauty of Wales. Thank you for walking with us, and we hope to see you out in nature again soon!