

Mapping Land Voices - Community-Mapping Intangible Cultural Heritage, Language and Climate Memory

Counter-Mapping Intangible Cultural Heritage against erosion of language and practical identities within multi-ethnic and small-nation communities.

Example: Mapping Land Voices/Mapio Lleisiau'r Tir (Wales)

OpenStreetMap Community Mapping has been used to map small businesses and heritage at the heart of wellbeing in other farming communities in the Cambrian Mountains of Wales. Under the [Mapio Lleisiau'r Tir](#) (Her Arfor) project, it has been used to recall and reinstate historic rural places and practice farms and ruins from tithe and other old maps available on OSM tools. Here is the Mapio Lleisiau'r Tir [Pecyn/Toolkit](#), (also available in Arabic and Italian/Sardo languages).

Elenydd communities carry clearly-remembered childhood memories of dwellings in thriving mountain settlements which now stand in ruins, forested-over by over-enthusiastic policy-makers less than two generations ago. Within living memory, community life has witnessed withdrawal of public transport, schools and social infrastructure from this once central heartland of cultural heritage, [now designated an area of mass deprivation].



Figure 4: Intergenerational Community Mapping in Wales - Placenames as Intangible Heritage

Rural depopulation, rural practices, technical aptitude and local resources are all challenges faced by young and older people in rural welsh communities. OpenStreetMap literally enables every member of the community to participate and collaborate from their own home or out and about, mapping the interests, needs and hazards around food production, provision, transport, and consumption.



Figure 5: Climate Memory and Rural Depopulation Mapping - Local Voices in Wales

Narratives of resilience have been mapped by community members onto OpenStreetMap, and ancient placenames, engineering features, holy wells, ancient worship sites, standing stones and endemic species have been mapped here as community memory. By relating social exclusion, foraging, footpaths, opening hours, and operational status

(functioning/non-functioning), lived experiences can be expressed as pop-up multilingual story-maps. Figure 4 shows a sample uMap displaying this method of highlighting and styling mixed data for curated narratives around geo-points and areas in Wales:

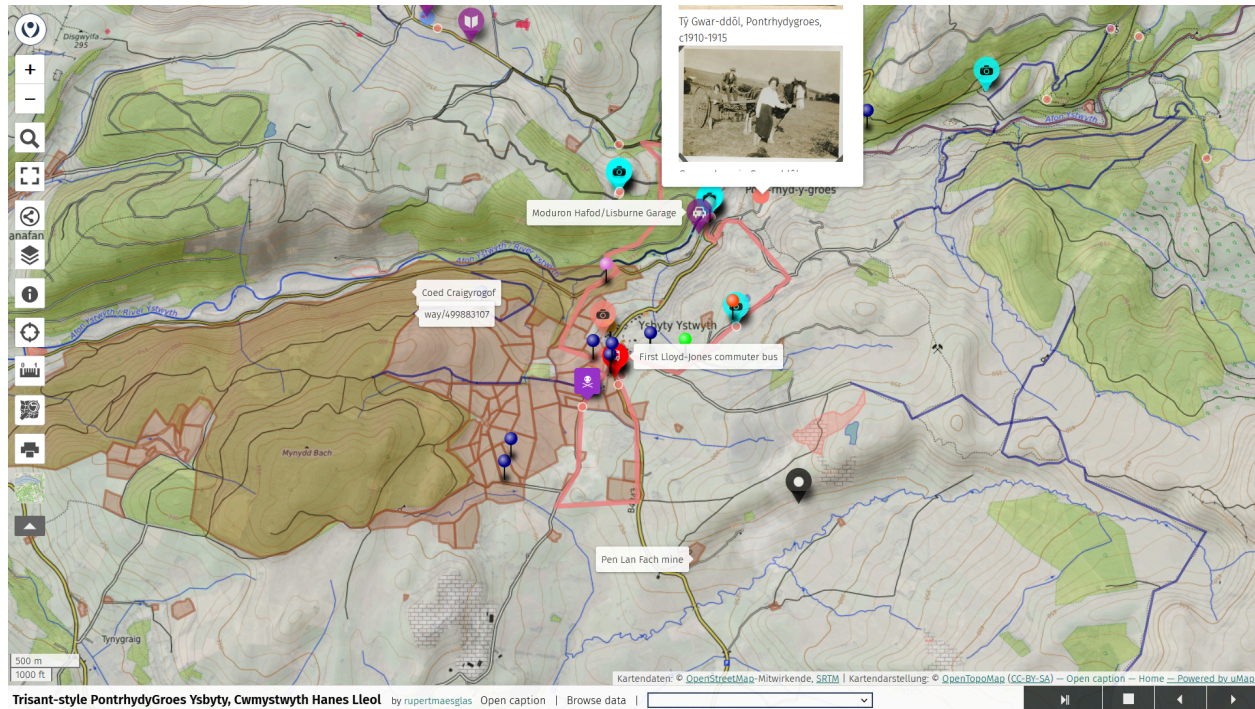


Figure 6: Placenames - Fields, buildings whose names carry the Intangible Cultural Heritage, unlocking intergenerational Community Climate Memory by reinstating indigenous placenaming. LINK: <http://u.osmfr.org/m/1143137/>

Engaging with their physical surroundings, contributors create a data layer of lived experience; of service delivery, access to resources, community assets, and exposure to community risks such as climate-related loss of livelihoods, public transport, and rural depopulation.

Here, the connections with practical, rural horseback life are still strongly evident. Abandoned villages litter these mountain areas, standing in ruins as testimony to multiple displacements. Land features are still-used, and still 'mappable'.

As well as geospatialising a history layer on the brink of being forgotten, cultural traditions and welsh-language names are recorded and preserved in a desilo-ed, endlessly sustainable 'wiki'-style environment. This safeguarding of community memory provides insights for better small produce-related land-management, and encourage community-ownership.

Example: Mapping Climate Memory: Restorifying Al Azraq (Jordan) - UNESCO

Jordan is one of the world's driest countries, and water resource management is a national priority. USAID reports specify that large amounts of water are lost through technical problems which are site-specific. These sites are also locations of traditional practices linked to cultural identities.

In Al Azraq, the famous and once-verdant desert oasis has dried to mud and dust within living memory. Insights into regeneration solutions still exist as community memory. Community archive-building is taking place to record and preserve this, making a case for reviving traditional practices on an intergenerational basis.¹



Figure 7: The Black Desert - Example of ‘Mapping Climate Memory in a parallel project in Jordan, where again, community-derived data can be visualised as “clickable” pop-up points on a story-map: LINK:
<http://u.osmf.org/m/1016874/>

These settings commonly carry stories of mining, dynamite, camel-racing and community toponymy. In each context, intergenerational memory is embedded, bound-up in the practices, coping mechanisms and adaptations of multiple cultural approaches and languages.

¹ Al Azraq: Royal Scientific Society - UNESCO project:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NxeIcAP8Exb7-Qtu84U9FWkHGMtampwpsD-xrPME9o/edit?tab=t.0>

Community Open-Mapping: Summary

Mapping Land Voices @Gwerin.Tech

Led by Rupert Allan, gwerin.tech train, coach and support communities to have their say, and decide how they want their lands, businesses and cultural practices to be seen by the outside world. This is done through changing, editing and updating the global wiki-map (OpenStreetMap).

“Few people have even heard of OpenStreetMap, despite the fact that hundreds of millions of people rely on it during any given month. If you’ve ever opened Snap Maps or Apple Maps or Bing Maps or even just peeked at the dash of your obnoxious neighbor’s new Tesla...you’ve used OSM.” (Morrison; 2023)

OSM operates in Welsh as well as all other local languages worldwide, and Rupert’s team have been working internationally since 2014.

Cultural Resilience Mapping:

Since 2019, our team have coached communities and organisations to map businesses, heritage, health, wellbeing, and food deserts in the South ([NHS-Public Health](#)), West ([Mapio Lleisiau'r Tir](#) and [UNESCO Heolydd Heddwch](#)), and North ([PMP](#)) of Wales.

Reinstating names of historic buildings, farms and ruins, this intergenerational community-mapping, preserves rural practice, cultural fabric, ‘climate memory’ and language into the OpenSource public domain for free, for future generations. The English/Welsh [Pecyn/Toolkit](#) is currently available in Arabic, Italian/Sardo and certain african languages.

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History:

Gwerin.tech methodologies in many *OSM Community Mapping* projects, enable measurable analysis of site-specific ‘affect’, visualising community insight through geospatial difference. The technique (overlaying ‘intangible’ elements - media, memory, affect, sensory data - on top of physical geography) has been highly successful in contextual public health, epidemiological and wellbeing contexts, with non-identifiable anonymous data - whether in private secure maps or public and open layers. Because OpenStreetMap data are anonymous and geographical, they arguably have no capacity for personal data breach.²

² With OpenData, challenges are not data ethics (all data is public and anonymous from the start), but the problem of de-institutionalising collaborators (and community leads) and educating them in the efficacy of community data

ownership: Creative Commons, OpenData, Creative Commons, are all in the public domain, but gdpr misinformation is pervasive in institutions.