

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Cast:

Kiri Pritchard-McLean

Esyllt Sears

Guests:

Reuben

Pip Gale

Joe Bickerton

[Pod of Wales Intro Music]

Kiri: Croeso i, welcome to Pod of Wales. I'm stand-up comedian and North Walian Kiri Pritchard-McLean.

Esyllt: And I'm Esyllt Sears, a stand-up and mid Walian or West Walian, I'm never really sure where Aberystwyth is.

Kiri: West right?

Esyllt: West.

Kiri: Well anyway.

Esyllt: Just one of the many conundrums we'll be solving on this podcast [laughs].

Kiri: [Laughs] We're two comedians from Wales and we decided that we would love to do a podcast where we travel around all the bits of Wales that are maybe we haven't seen, maybe they're a bit unsung and we see the delights that Wales has to offer.

Esyllt: It's very exciting because today we're in Llangollen and Wrexham. We are currently sat in the Pontcysyllte Chapel Tearooms.

Kiri: And it is full. We've got parquet flooring here, it is a proper gorgeous chapel tearoom.

Esyllt: It is yeah.

Kiri: Well we're going to go on a narrowboat right? We're going on a Seren Fach which goes across the...

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Esyllt: Pontcysyllte.

Kiri: That aqueduct which is incredibly high.

Esyllt: Yeah it looks amazing from the ground. Well I feel quite queasy looking at a postcard of it.

Kiri: [Laughs]

Esyllt: Which are 40p by the way. There's water on top of it, that's what I can't get my head around.

Kiri: Which is heavy, yeah.

Esyllt: Yeah [laughs].

Kiri: Famously heavy. So it's basically a big, long bath in the sky.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: Which I think is if you died, she's going to the big, long bath in the sky.

Esyllt: I'd love that. Kiri, do you know what Seren Fach is in Welsh?

Kiri: This is one of the few ones I will know actually.

Esyllt: Mm-hmm.

Kiri: Seren is star and fach which is the mutation of bach which is little. So little star.

Esyllt: Yeah.

Kiri: Which I know because that's what people shout when they see me in the street because I'm so petite.

Esyllt: [Laughs] I was about to give you a gold star and I'm going to take it away.

Kiri: No I just mean that I'm a giant burning ball of gas at most times, that's what I mean.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Kiri: So itinerary for today, we're going to start on the narrowboat the Seren Fach and then we're going to go to Wrexham, which is having a great year.

Esyllt: It really is isn't it?

Kiri: Yeah it is.

Esyllt: We're going to Ty Pawb which is lovely kind of market-y place with loads of shops and stalls.

Kiri: Is it one of those things that Wales specialises in where it's like you can buy a wooden keyring. You can do a drama class there. You can have a cup of tea. And there's some local art up.

Esyllt: I hope so yeah.

Kiri: Ah, they're my favourite places.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: I'm going to get a keyring, I can sense it, with a bit of slate.

Esyllt: Yes a slate coaster, I don't have enough of those.

Kiri: Yes please [laughs].

Esyllt: And then after that, we're going to go and see a match.

Kiri: What a day! So I have been obviously watching the Welcome to Wrexham documentary with Rob McElhenney and Ryan Reynolds and what's really interesting is I knew Rob McElhenney from Always Sunny and love Always Sunny and then Ryan Reynolds, I have never seen a Ryan Reynolds film. So I watched Welcome to Wrexham and loved it so much that I then went and watched all the Deadpools and so I think I'm the only person in the world who has come to Ryan Reynolds via the football club and not the other way around.

Esyllt: Yeah [laughs].

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Kiri: Because yes obviously two Hollywood stars bought the oldest football club in Europe I believe it is.

Esyllt: Yes.

Kiri: Wrexham AFC. And there's been this gorgeous documentary about it. A lot of celebration of Wales in there in a way that I haven't seen it celebrated, especially on that global platform.

Esyllt: Yeah it's nice I think because it's Northeast Wales as well which sometimes feels a bit overlooked.

Kiri: Yeah.

Esyllt: So I think it's lovely that that's been generated from this part of the world. But yeah it is getting a lot of attention at the moment. It's what my mum would call, and if she was referring to Wrexham as an up and coming Welsh star, she'd be calling them "overexposed" right now.

Kiri: [Laughs]

Esyllt: They're on everything [laughs].

[Interim Music]

Person: That's a disabled car park.

Kiri: And a tuckshop, I'm so excited! Wow this is lovely.

Esyllt: I get violently ill on moving things.

Person: Right.

Esyllt: It's very still right, it's very still?

Person: It's usually very still yeah.

Esyllt: I get the whole seasickness thing when I come off, so I'm fine on it, it's like my body adjusts.

Reuben: Good morning everyone, welcome aboard the Seren Fach, my name is Reuben and I've got my lovely assistant Lesley

here today with me. And we'll be here to answer questions and serve refreshments at the little café at the back. And for those of you who may not be aware, we are about to cross the tallest aqueducts in the UK and one side does not have any railings so it's an excellent opportunity if you'd like to take some pictures, maybe not so excellent if you're not too keen on heights.

Esyllt: Pont-cysyll-te

Kiri: Pont-cysyll-te

Esyllt: After Pont remember cy, Pontcysyllte.

Reuben: The place name, Pontcysyllte which in English means the bridge at the collecting place.

Kiri: I love the names of narrowboats, they're adorable.

Esyllt: Yeah.

Kiri: That one was called Knot Again but k-n-o-t.

Esyllt: Lovely.

Kiri: Another one was called Permanent Holiday.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: That's a Cerys there.

Esyllt: Aww.

Kiri: She's seen better days.

Esyllt: She has yeah.

Kiri: Like every Cerys I've ever known.

Esyllt: [Laughs] Yeah a lot of rust down below, mm-hmm.

Kiri: [Laughs]

Esyllt: God. I would have loved to have lived on a narrowboat.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Kiri: You are damp all the time. Like everything is damp all the time because you are living you know in a cup of water.

Esyllt: Yeah. OK. Maybe a retirement plan. Maybe that...

Kiri: It's all on one level isn't it. You can't fall.

Esyllt: [Laughs] Oh God.

Kiri: It's really peaceful. Very relaxing.

Esyllt: I imagine it's a nice community as well on the water. Probably? Yeah?

Kiri: Also because if you hate your neighbours you'd be like bump, bump, bump and just travel for two more days and you'll be somewhere else.

Esyllt: Is it Reuben?

Reuben: Reuben.

Esyllt: Reuben please may I ask you some questions?

Reuben: Yeah of course you can.

Esyllt: Do people hold like parties or events and stuff on these narrowboats?

Reuben: They can do. We've had a hand full of people that have birthday parties on here so people can book those out.

Esyllt: It would be great for a wedding wouldn't it? As in to go to...

Kiri: A really short wedding.

Esyllt: [Laughs] Yeah.

Reuben: Well I mean obviously there's an option for us to do a two hour trip which would go up to Chirk Marina and back.

Kiri: Wow.

Esyllt: What are you doing this weekend Kiri?

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Kiri: Getting married by the sounds of it [laughs] in Chrik. Always been my dream, finally I get to realise it.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Reuben: Do you attract a certain tourist as in from a certain part of the word who tend to...

Kiri: Sex tourist. Is that big around here? [Laughs]

Reuben: If you promise a wedding.

Kiri: [Laughs]

[Interim Music]

Kiri: This place is fantastic. So we are in Ty Pawb.

Esyllt: It's great.

Kiri: It's so nice.

Esyllt: It's got loads of stalls around it and a bar in the middle of it. It catches your eye as you come in doesn't it?

Kiri: Yeah loads of bright colours. There's loads of people here using it of all ages. And there's kind of a bit of everything, and all the stalls, all the shops feel very local.

Esyllt: Yeah.

Kiri: And usually I use that a synonym for bad. Bit I actually think this is full of lovely stuff.

Esyllt: Yeah definitely. And it's a nice place I think as a family, because I'm often going places with my kids, you could happily let your kids runs riot in here and no one would mind. I think that's very important.

Kiri: It does seem very family orientated.

Esyllt: Yeah.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Kiri: And again usually I use that as a synonym for something bad but this is lovely.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: Just people out with their babies in buggies and families and Nains having a cup of tea and stuff, it's great. And what I really love is there's loads of like Welsh produce in the shops.

Esyllt: Yeah.

Kiri: Oh my gosh they've got a zero waste shop as well.

Esyllt: Wow.

Kiri: My God there's a whole vegan shop!

Esyllt: Wow.

Kiri: Called The Flatulent Frog.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: It is calling to me, let's have a look. It's right next to the Wing King so something for everyone.

Esyllt: So yeah you would go to the Flatulent Frog, I'd go to the Wing King.

Kiri: Look at that, you can get a bath bomb, some pick N mix, your hair cut and a vegan breakfast and genuinely all four shops next to each other. Incredible.

Esyllt: There's a gallery, can we go into the gallery there?

Kiri: Yes please.

Esyllt: Oh there's more crafts here. Everywhere I look there's like you know where you play games sort of on the N64 and the landscape will pop up in front of you? That's what it feels like here every time I swing around, I'm like there's



another bit of this. We've walked into the gallery and the first painting we've seen is one of Ryan Reynolds.

Kiri: Why not?

Esyllt: And Harry Hill.

Kiri: And Harry Hill. And the Queen. It's all my dinner party guests together.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: Oh it's lovely.

Esyllt: It's amazing because I think it is lots of local artists and again it shows you just like the stalls here, they're like, it's incredibly varied.

Kiri: Oh what's in here? Oh performers space.

Esyllt: Oh!

Kiri: Are we allowed to go and nose at that?

Esyllt: Yeah.

Kiri: Let's have a try. Oh and there's a makers space. Oh that's amazing.

Esyllt: This feels very Berlin. Have you been to Berlin?

Kiri: Oh my gosh it does, yeah.

Esyllt: Doesn't it? Where you'd have creative spaces.

Kiri: And then downstairs is a sex dungeon.

Esyllt: Yeah [laughs] And everyone's welcome.

Kiri: And there would be like a rave on weekends. It does feel like that.

Esyllt: It does yeah.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Kiri: Like a classroom space. A useful art space. My dad would argue that that doesn't exist.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: Can we have a quick peek around the door of the performance place? Oh my gosh it's proper. It's got like a raked, oh I've got to do a gig in here surely. That room is so perfect for comedy.

Esyllt: Yeah. Apparently there is a comedy night there.

Kiri: Really?

Esyllt: Yes every other month.

Kiri: Oh! Well if you're listening, why haven't you booked either of us? I'll do anything that's an hour away from home

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: I've just found out about it now. I'd do anything that's an hour away from home. Well I think we shopped 'til we dropped.

Esyllt: I know, I would love to just sit down and drink all afternoon now but I think we should go to the football.

Kiri: And drink all afternoon there instead.

Esyllt: Please.

Kiri: [Laughs]

[Clap Clap]

Kiri: We're at the racecourse, Clwb Pel-droed Wrecsam, Wrexham Football Club.

Esyllt: It's getting quite rowdy in here.

Kiri: They have been chanting solidly.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Esyllt: [Makes chanting noises] I think maybe in about half an hour let's ask them what the words are.

Kiri: Yeah [laughs]

Esyllt: Ask for some crib sheets.

Kiri: It's absolutely pumping in there.

Esyllt: It is, really looking forward to this.

Kiri: I've been to the rugby, I've never been to the football. But this is gorgeous, like everyone walking here, all walking on the pavement together, kids in full kits. Like you're not going to get called on mate, turn it in.

Esyllt: Yeah [laughs] I haven't been to a club game in years and it's a very different feel to like an international.

Kiri: It's a what? [Laughs]

Esyllt: I can't wait.

[Crowd cheering, jeering, applauding]

[Kiri and Esyllt sing Another Night together]

Esyllt: Very '90s track.

Kiri: It is right. This is my first ever football game. Halftime.

Esyllt: How's it going? How do you feel?

Kiri: It's great.

Esyllt: Isn't it?

Kiri: Yeah I don't know if we've got particularly good seats. We're at the end with all the action because we're at the Farnborough goal end. And Wrexham have been absolutely like on their tails the whole time.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Esyllt: Yeah it's really interesting when you're watching a game where you have no vested interest in a team, you can actually just relax and enjoy it as a sport.

Kiri: Yeah.

Esyllt: Whenever I've gone abroad, I have always tried to go and see like a game of whatever sport is big in that country. Like I've been to the United States and gone to an ice hockey game. I think it's a nice thing to do when you go somewhere.

Kiri: Yeah.

Esyllt: Because I do think you get a feel for the people, the culture.

Kiri: Yeah there is like such a community feel here that I've never really felt at a game of anything before. And it's really sort of like, even though at the moment it's 0-0 halftime everyone is still having a very lovely time.

Esyllt: Yeah, yeah.

Kiri: Which I really like.

[Cheers/ applause/singing as Wrexham score]

Esyllt: 4-1 it finished to Wrexham.

Kiri: Yeah.

Esyllt: And I know I said in the half that I didn't have a vested interest in it but the more Wrexham got into the game the more I was really behind them.

Kiri: Yeah I think glory hunter is the phrase, yeah.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: But also I'm so glad that Farnborough scored because otherwise it would have been too sad and they would have made themselves underdogs in my heart and then I would

have been supporting them so it was a great mix of everything.

Esyllt: Yeah. I don't think 20 years ago, 15 years ago, you would have heard much Welsh in games like that either but it was completely bilingual.

Kiri: Yeah.

Esyllt: So it was really nice I think, especially if you're not used to hearing bilingual commentary and stuff.

Kiri: Yeah I know people have come and had holidays here, when there from outside Wales, they love hearing Welsh. And even parts of Wales where you don't hear Welsh as much, they're like 'Oh it's so cool that you hear the language.' And you're like yeah because that's what Wales is now. And what I wasn't expecting was the commentators and things to be so like 'Let's give them a massive round of applause for coming all the way and this is how many of you are here and we really.' The last thing on the screens was 'Thank you for supporting us' which just feels lovely.

Esyllt: Yeah it's really nice. Because it's a two-way thing. Like with us in comedy, it's you and the audience. And it's exactly the same as supporters and football clubs. You know it's a two-way relationship and so showing some appreciation is really nice.

Kiri: Yeah someone always brings a flare and a drum.

Esyllt: Yeah [laughs].

Kiri: It's just like comedy.

Esyllt: I love a flare at a gig I'd absolutely love it. Even though I didn't kick a single ball I'm actually quite hungry now.

Kiri: Oh yeah, I'm absolutely starving.

Esyllt: Yeah.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Kiri: I would love to go somewhere cosy now and warm myself through.

Esyllt: Yeah.

[Interim music]

Bar staff: What can I get for you?

Esyllt: I will go for the pork belly please.

Kiri: Can I have poke bowl with tofu

[Tapping of a glass]

Kiri: Iechyd da

We are in Llangollen, we're in a beautiful pub called Gales where we're also staying tonight.

Esyllt: Yes. And we finally have some wine in front of us.

Kiri: Yes.

Esyllt: It feels like we deserve this.

Kiri: Yeah and we've had some delicious food.

Esyllt: Yes.

Kiri: So now we've inhaled that, it was embarrassing.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: To the point where I felt like I should hide my head under a towel so God couldn't see how I ate it. We're going to find out about wine with our new friend.

Pip: Hello. Pip Gale, this is Gale's wine bar which is the oldest wine bar in Wales. We've been here for 45 years, my father set it up. So in general if someone doesn't like red wine they are averse to tannins and tannins are that furry feeling that you would have in your mouth if you had a really strong cup of tea. This wine doesn't do that. A

Beaujolais, they are basically attached to Burgundy which is the most expensive wine region ever but they use a different grape. And they've got this bad name but they make exceptional wine. So this is a shiraz, hopefully people who like red wine like myself are going to love this and also if you're kind of weaning...

Kiri: I'll just say philistine I'm right here.

Pip: ...weaning yourself onto it, this would be a cool way to go.

Kiri: So what should I taste? Or am I allowed to taste it and then tell you what I think I taste?

Pip: I prefer it that way anyway. When we get some tasting lessons so we can do it properly.

Esyllt: Didn't know there was different glasses.

Kiri: Oh yeah so there's little and narrow.

Pip: These are ISO glasses, so they're International Standard Organisation glasses, it's the same one we have every time when we taste wine.

Kiri: Thank you so much.

Pip: There we go.

Esyllt: Can I smell it first?

Pip: Yeah, yeah definitely. You're meant to look, smell, and then taste.

Kiri: It doesn't taste horrible.

Esyllt: The aftertaste is quite mellow.

Pip: Mm-hmm, yeah.

Kiri: I don't know what mellow tastes like but I normally go like this after red wine [makes strange noise].

Esyllt: Black currant?

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Pip: Yeah.

Esyllt: Yeah when I breathe out I can taste my grandmother's black currant jam.

Pip: Yeah it's very Vimto-y isn't it?

Kiri: You got me a Vimto wine, I'm so pleased. That was my criteria.

Pip: [Laughs] So often with Beaujolais it can just be, and I mean in the best possible way, a nothing wine you know, it just goes away. This does, I mean you're still tasting it long after you are. You can feel it all over and in all parts of your mouth. But again not in that way which is aggressive and tricky. So it's particular because it's a shiraz I wouldn't really jug it down normally but for the sake of what we're trying to do here.

Esyllt: Yeah.

Kiri: I love the way that you're going 'For the sake of what we want to do' which is like allow this pig to drink some Vimto and find out it's wine.

Pip: [Laughs]

Kiri: This is so nice, it's lovely.

Pip: And everybody knows where Llangollen is, it's signed-posted from absolutely a million miles away.

Kiri: Yeah you know you see those stone road signs at the side of the road, Llangollen is nearly always on those.

Pip: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And because of the international Eisteddfod this hotel allows me to meet lots of interesting characters, not just the ones from Llangollen but from all over the world, particularly through the Eisteddfod period

Kiri: Have you ever entered the Eisteddfod, bit of clog dancing? Something like that?



## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Pip: No.

Kiri: [Laughs] I could see you extinguishing a candle from a bottle with your heels. And I don't say that about everyone Pip.

Pip: Until they have like a blind wine judging thing I'm going to stay well clear. Uh yeah. The International Eisteddfod was a setup to work out a way to bring the world together. So Wales did a competition, an Eisteddfod, much like the national Eisteddfod where competition would bring everybody together. We've had amazing concerts here but what's more important is amazing people who are in arranged choirs or dancing and they come here and they visit the town and they stay in people's homes. And it's just the most amazing thing. And we have our own Fringe as well which has kept comedians coming here and incredible musicians, for about one month we have just so much going on in July here. I get it all, I get to live in a wonderful small town where I get to know everybody but literally the world does actually come here. We've had a comedy gig every month here for about 18 years and lots of them have stayed here in the wine bar.

Kiri: The first gig my parents ever saw me at was in Llangollen.

Esyllt: Really?

Kiri: Yeah it was quite new and oh God it was in the pavilion but not in the big, it was in a little room. I didn't have a good one. And I remember my dad said to me, and I used to have this quote on posters he says 'I don't find you funny but I'm sure what you're trying to do is very clever.' And I was like ouch.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: So I realised, why is Llangollen so significant to me? Because I got that quote from it. So yeah we'll have to come back and do Llangollen Fringe.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Esyllt: Yeah I would love that.

Pip: You are obviously more than welcome [laughs].

[Interim Music]

Esyllt: How are you feeling this morning?

Kiri: Yeah all right, I had a really good night's sleep.

Esyllt: I'm so happy for you.

Kiri: [Laughs]

Esyllt: [Laughs] I had one glass of wine too many.

Kiri: Oh really?

Esyllt: I shouldn't have had that last one.

Kiri: Is that why I heard the smashing sound was you just like wrecking the joint?

Esyllt: [Laughs] Yeah, I ate all the biscuits in the room.

Kiri: [Laughs]

Esyllt: Yeah.

Kiri: But you had a great breakfast wasn't it?

Esyllt: Ah it was lovely, Shakshouka, please.

Kiri: And I had a vegan breakfast so I'm feeling absolutely full of slow release energy. I'm feeling ready for a walk.

Esyllt: Yes.

Kiri: Which is a good job that we have Joe here. Hi Joe.

Joe: Hiya morning.

Kiri: So Joe you're going to take us on a big walk right?

Joe: I am yes. About an hour up to Dinas Bran Castle.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Esyllt: Oh lovely.

Joe: So we should get views right across the Dee Valley from above Llangollen.

Esyllt: Oh wow.

Kiri: It's very exciting. And we've got your dog Milly with us as well.

Joe: We have. Milly's really excited, I think she's kind of itching to go now.

Esyllt: I know look at her back legs!

Kiri: Yeah back legs trembling, like mine actually at the thought of walking for an hour but yeah.

Joe: [Laughs]

Kiri: And the weather has held out so it's a good bright morning for it. Is this what normal people do on a Sunday?

Esyllt: Yeah I think so.

Kiri: You're taking care of what I normally do and that's be hungover [laughs].

Esyllt: I love the sound of running water, it's so relaxing.

[Walking sounds and chatter]

Esyllt: This is stunning.

Kiri: A little cute town in the valley, it's lovely.

Esyllt: It's amazing.

Joe: Little white building down there is where Gales is, so yeah

Kiri: Oh no way!

Joe: Yeah so just below the church you've got the River Dee and then on the other side of the river is the Llangollen Steam Railway.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Esyllt: Oh so it's a working steam train then?

Joe: It is yeah. Yeah very popular and they have restored carriages on there and they do a lot of theme days which is great.

Esyllt: I love a steam railway, I really do. Because I love the fact that you come off it and there's always soot in your hair. I love that, I love it.

Kiri: [Laughs] I've never been on one.

Esyllt: Have you not?

Kiri: No there's one in Penrhyndeudraeth near Portmeirion and I always see it and I think Machynlleth has got one as well.

Esyllt: Yeah.

Kiri: But no I've never been on one. They're really charming whenever you see them.

Esyllt: Yeah really nice.

Kiri: Like oh is this what people think Britain is?

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: And also people will always wave at a steam railway train.

Esyllt: Yeah.

Joe: Steam railways and campervans.

Kiri: Yes.

Joe: Yes we hired a campervan last summer to go to Anglesey and everyone was beeping and waving at us and we thought we had a bumper hanging off or something so yeah.

Kiri: I used to drive a Citroen 2CV which is like those French Beetles.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Joe: Yeah.

Kiri: And everyone waves at that.

Esyllt: Really?

Kiri: And other 2CV drivers really get excited when they see you.

Esyllt: [Laughs] Brilliant.

Joe: And then just above the town is a place called Plas Newydd which is where the Ladies of Llangollen lived.

Esyllt: Oh OK.

Joe: And that's a place with a lot of history attached to it.

Kiri: What are the Ladies of Llangollen?

Joe: The Ladies of Llangollen are two ladies that lived here. They were two friends that were very entrepreneurial and they came here and built the beautiful mock Tudor house, little beautiful gardens. They were very famous in Llangollen for bringing business to the town whether or not they lived in a bit of secrecy with two ladies living together.

Esyllt: Yeah.

Joe: But they made a life for themselves here.

Esyllt: Didn't they have a big art collection?

Joe: They did actually yeah. When you actually go inside the house you'll see a lot of their kind of art collection and it's been very well preserved and everything from the architecture and the oak beams inside there through to the collections.

Kiri: Wow so collecting art and getting things done, it does sound like lesbians.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Esyllt: It does [laughs].

Kiri: Yeah. How many cats were in the property?

Esyllt: [Laughs] Right shall we carry on?

Kiri: Let's do it.

Esyllt: So what are those mountains over there?

Joe: That's the Berwyn range. So that Berwyn range goes all the way down to Lake Bala. Pretty much starts again and extends to the Clwydian Range.

Esyllt: The Clwydian Range is massive right?

Joe: Yeah it goes all the way over to the coast at Rhyl.

Esyllt: Wow.

Joe: So pretty much most of Northeast Wales is covered by the AONB quite a massive area. And hopefully in the next few years that will become a national park as well.

Kiri: Oh wow.

Esyllt: What's the process to get that status then?

Kiri: Are you talking about outstanding natural beauty, are you going to go for it?

Esyllt: [Laughs] I don't need a certificate...

Kiri: [Laughs]

Joe: So becoming a national park would give us more scope to make sure that sustainable tourism is at the heart of everything we do. So that's not just from footpaths and signage, it's about making sure that there's more local food on plates.

Esyllt: I think that food element is really important. And to know that it's locally sourced. Tourists are very savvy about stuff like that these days.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

- Kiri: Yeah Wales is getting really good at that. So I'm vegan but there's a world in which I won't be forever because it's almost better to have carbon neutral local stuff almost from you know within your postcode, that is a much more sustainable way of living than a lot of the processed vegan stuff I have that's grown in South America and things.
- Esyllt: Is that what this podcast is going to be now? Your journey to becoming a meat eater again?
- Kiri: It's every time I also watch Chris Roberts'...
- Esyllt: Oh yeah.
- Kiri: Anytime he's like 'Yo! Yo! Yo!' it's got like half a sheep I'm like oh my God let me go back.
- Esyllt: Kiri made me order pork belly last night just so she could watch me eat it.
- Kiri: Yeah it's quite creepy.
- Joe: [Laughs]
- Kiri: The national park thing is really interesting because I think we're one fifth covered at the moment between Snowdonia and Brecon which is we're only behind Brazil in the world.
- Joe: Wow.
- Kiri: As a percentage. So I reckon if you get it over the line we'll be the most densely national parked country in the world which would be amazing.
- Esyllt: And we're only a float in that carnival.
- Kiri: Yeah.
- Joe: Imagine the summit thing for that because one thing I haven't mentioned yet is that we're classed as a dark skies reserve as well for people who just want to escape. You think where we are now, we're an hour from Liverpool,

Manchester, Birmingham, so many city dwellers. You know they don't see the stars and that's such a shame. But when you come here and you camp or you stay in one of the hotels you know people are just amazed in terms of just how beautiful the sky above the Clwydian Range becomes.

Kiri: Yeah it's so special. It's such an expanse and you feel so lucky to be able to see it.

Esyllt: My kids love it and they're learning about space in school and you know anytime they see a really bright star they're constantly going 'Yeah so which planet is that?' We're massively privileged that we live somewhere that we are able to do that. So if you can give that experience to people I think it's invaluable really.

Joe: Yeah absolutely I totally agree. And I think the sense of not having to go and do the same thing every weekend. So I've been talking today about the walks, about the steam railway, about the canal and hiring boats. There's something to do all year around here.

Esyllt: And really I think we get a sense of that as well because we're here for two days and it feels packed already with all the stuff we're doing. But people keep suggesting other things we should be doing.

Kiri: Yeah.

Esyllt: So we're definitely going to have to come back.

Kiri: Yeah.

Esyllt: Definitely.

Kiri: Absolutely. Even just to try some of the other wines [laughs].

Joe: [Laughs]

Esyllt: Right, less chatting. We're nearly there.



## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Joe: We're nearly there.

Esyllt: It's like the last stretch.

Kiri: It's so close, right.

Amazing. The view is unreal. I can't believe you can see the, hold on. Pontcysyllte?

Esyllt: Yeah.

Kiri: Yeah?

Esyllt: Yeah.

Kiri: Aqueduct and then you can see the river and the canal going along to it, it's amazing that you can see so far.

Esyllt: Yeah. You get a real sense of the area and it's lovely because we've been to Pontcysyllte you look around and you think, yeah we've been there you know.

Kiri: Oh my old stomping ground.

Esyllt: Yeah [laughs].

Kiri: I've had vertigo over there, don't you worry. No it's magic isn't it?

Joe: Yeah I also think the wonder up here is just how it was constructed in such a remote location as well. So the feat of engineering in this whole area is incredible.

Esyllt: Yeah because when we were walking up here, because it's a hill, I mistakenly thought it would be kind of a round design castle. But actually looking at the artist's impression of it, it's really long and square.

Kiri: You can make out all the archways. There's some great stuff for the gram is what I'm trying to tell you.

Esyllt: [Laughs]

Kiri: There's some lovely backdrops here.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Esyllt: Oh yeah the arches are beautiful.

Joe: If you want that perfect selfie to say, I'm in Wales, come up here.

Kiri: [Laughs]

Esyllt: Yeah.

Kiri: And it's being maintained at the moment as well. The actual ruins themselves are being repointed.

Esyllt: I mean it's hard to think isn't it? Because as a tourist attraction and sort of big part of history, you want people to feel that they can touch it and that they can interact with it because you don't want it to just be somewhere that people just have to look at from afar.

Kiri: Yeah.

Esyllt: But it's also trying to preserve it and keep it here for other generations.

Joe: Yeah absolutely our history is something to be celebrated and we want people to come and appreciate it and be within the walls of it. You know touch it, experience it, take photographs. And come away understanding a bit more about our Welsh history and culture as well.

Kiri: Joe thank you so much.

[Bark!]

Kiri: And Milly, thank you. You're right I was about to forget you! Thank you so much for taking us up here and giving us some of your knowledge.

[Bark!]

Yes Milly we'll go soon. And thank you for volunteering to give me a piggyback all the way down to the bottom.

Esyllt: [Laughs] I can't wait to see that.

## Pod of Wales- Wrexham and Llangollen

Joe: [Laughs]

Kiri: [Laughs] Do you remember the episode when Kiri made a man slip a disc?

Esyllt: [Laughs] It's for tourism though. This has been us in Llangollen and Wrexham and I feel like even though I've been to certain areas here before, it feels like I've been absolutely bathed in it this time.

Kiri: Yeah.

Esyllt: And I love it and I will rave about this place for months to come. Really enjoyed it.

Kiri: So this has been Pod of Wales. We'll be travelling around other beautiful parts of Wales, all the hidden gems that this fantastic country has to offer. Come and have a listen to those episodes.

Esyllt: Thank you so much to everyone in Wrexham and Denbighshire and everyone who has spoken to us, they've really sold this place.

[Outro Music]

Kiri: I've been Kiri Pritchard McLean.

Esyllt: And I've been Esyllt Sears.

Kiri: This has been a Little Wander Production in association with Visit Wales.

[End of Podcast]