

Rare Welsh tongue-twister turns up in a remote corner of Nigeria

Jenny Rees

Education Correspondent
jenny.rees@wme.co.uk

THE double ll sound that makes Welsh special, yet so difficult for others to pronounce, is not so unusual after all.

It has now emerged the tongue-twisting sound is also used in a Nigerian language.

Dr Paul Tench of Cardiff University's Centre for Language and Communication Research, has been working with minority groups in north-east Nigeria.

The Tera people haven't had their own literature since 1930, and even then only a few Bible passages were ever written down.

But in recording the language for a new orthography, to be used for education and translation, and to help safeguard the language for future generations, he realised it had its own ll sound.

"I was amazed to find it," he said. "But they were just as surprised that a white Western man could come along and pronounce their words without any trouble."

Dr Tench explained that the Tera people have used the dominant Hausa language, but he now hopes to get the next generation reading and writing in their own mother tongue in primary schools.

"There is a parallel with Wales 50 or 60 years ago, where there was very little Welsh-medium education," he said.

"In the last five years or so there has been an upsurge in interest and they are asserting their own identity through language and culture and in some ways they are saying, although they are speaking Hausa, they are not Hausa, and there are parallels with people who may not speak Welsh, but see themselves as Welsh not English.

"A small team of us devised the pronunciation of the language which is being used for a new orthography and one young man has made an alphabet chart, similar to those that would have been embroidered in old Welsh homes."



LITERATURE DRIVE Tera elders, above, support the new effort in writing their language, and below, Dr Paul Tench, centre, discusses linguistics

A ll lesson in Tera

How Nigerians would write it/ how the Welsh would write it/ its English meaning

- tlyna/ llyna/ work
- tluga/ llwgw/ knife
- tlebi/ llebi/ side (of something)
- potll/ poll/ unripe
- gutll/ gyll / ant hill
- datll/ dall/ to sharpen

Dr Tench added, "I'm now hoping to find other languages that have the Welsh ll.

"I know of some South African Zulu languages that have it, as well

as Alaska, but it's a relatively rare sound and I don't know of anywhere in Europe that has it."

Dr Tench visited Nigeria after the region's Anglican Bishop of Gombe, Rt Rev Henry Ndukuba, contacted American charity the Seed Company, which offers help for communities by planting a seed that they can develop.

"After an intensive three weeks we were able to work out a working orthography for the Tera language, which is the basis for getting more literature in the language," said Dr Tench. "I'm particularly interested in governments developing literature for primary school education."



£1m bid to cut tests on animals

RESEARCHERS from across the UK, including Cardiff, have been given £1m in funding to try and help find alternatives to testing on animals.

Eight universities and company projects will benefit from the cash, which comes from an agency set up last year by the Government to look into ways of reducing animal experiments.

They include projects that are using new human cell methods to test drugs and carry out research in areas which currently involve the use of animals, often mice.

Lord Turnberg, board chairman of the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research, said the grants were "an excellent start" for the organisation, which was set up less than a year ago.

But he accepted that dreams of a situation where animals were completely excluded from medical testing were a long way from becoming reality.

He said, "Most people in science would not use animals if they could, the problem is that animal experiments remain an important part and in many ways the only way of doing a particular part of research.

"We recognise that for the foreseeable future animal testing will be a requirement - indeed it is a legal requirement in some cases."

One team will use their grant to further research into leg ulcers suffered by diabetics, an area which sometimes suffered from "sub-standard" testing using animals, according to one scientist.

Dr Phil Stephens, from Cardiff University, said his team hoped to develop techniques of medical research based on using human cells from ulcer sufferers. "We are looking at ways to 'immortalise' these cells so that we have a continuing stock of cells for development," he said.

Folly Farm Tickets TO BE WON



Folly Farm family adventure park is the big four-in-one day out, with fun for all the family whatever the weather! A day at Folly Farm means four kinds of fun, with the spectacular zoo, friendly farmyard, adventure play and enormous indoor funfair!

See Henry Horse and friends in Folly Farm's Jolly Barn, where you can meet the adorable farm animals, bottle-feed baby goats, milk a cow and watch a magnificent show! Cuddle a cute rabbit or guinea pig in the Pet Centre under the supervision of Folly Farmers, or view the latest baby animals on display there. Throughout the season there is also a variety of spectacular entertainment in Folly Farm's theatre.

Meet and learn about many exciting species of exotic animal in Folly Farm's children's zoo. There are even a number of endangered species belonging to the European breeding programme including mountain bongo, Arabian oryx, and Brazilian tapir!



Relive the fun of yesteryear at Folly Farm's vintage funfair - the biggest undercover fairground in Europe! Rekindle the spirit and nostalgic atmosphere of bygone days, with rides for both young and old.

To be in with a chance of winning one of ten family tickets to Folly Farm, simply send your answer to the question below on a postcard together with your full contact details to: **Folly Farm Competition, Western Mail, P.O. Box 325, Cardiff, CF10 1EJ.** Closing date is **Friday, July 15, 2005.**

Q. Name any of the endangered species you will find at Folly Farm?

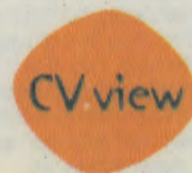
Folly Farm has plenty to offer, including restaurants, burger bar, gift shop and much more. Heading north from Tenby on the A478

towards Narberth you will find Folly Farm less than a mile from the Kilgetty roundabout.

At Folly Farm the fun never stops, regardless of the weather! Call us for more information on 01834 812731 or check out the website at www.folly-farm.co.uk.

Western Mail

RECRUITING? Why look further than your keyboard?



cv.view is a unique online recruitment service that offers employers the chance to access thousands of CVs to find the right person for the job FAST!

cv.view is an exclusive service to advertisers, so call now to find out more.

Find out what CV.VIEW can do for your business
call recruitment now on: **029 2031 4600**

