

Each month we will focus on an inspiring author based in or writing about Wales! You'll have an introduction to their latest book, what inspires them to write, and any advice they have for young writers!

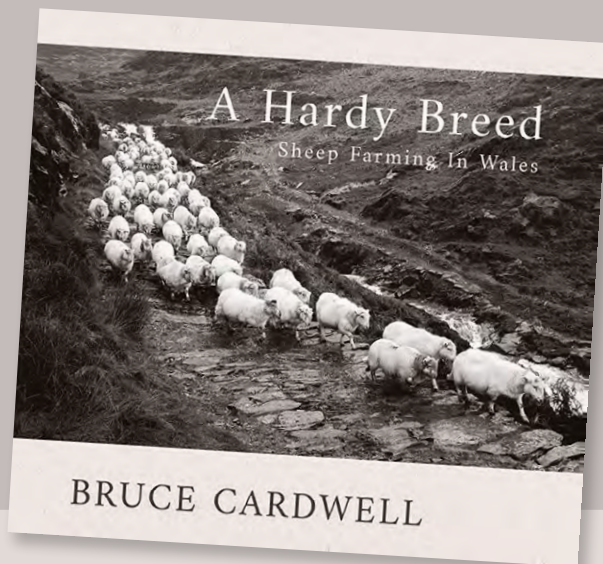
Get to know

Bruce Cardwell



Bruce Cardwell is a folk musician and photographer from Northern Ireland, long resident in West Wales. He is committed to recording the communities and livelihoods of his adopted homeland. He is the author of *Hoofpicks: The Horse in Wales*, *Noteworthy: Acoustic Music in Wales*, and *The Harp in Wales*.

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Summary:

A Hardy Breed is both a celebration and a record of the shepherds and sheep farmers of Wales, a community which has formed one of the key strands of Welsh identity across the centuries. The collection of photographs selected for this book show a mutual respect and affection. They are a snapshot of a way of life at a certain moment in our history, but also carry deeper social, political and environmental truths. The collection was published July 24, 2023.

Congratulations Bruce, and thank you for agreeing to share a little about yourself and your new book *A Hardy Breed* with us. Tell us about your background... your upbringing, education...

I was born in Belfast, and as my father was in the Air Force we travelled extensively in Singapore, Germany and the UK. I came to Wales in 1981 to do a university degree at Aberystwyth in English, Welsh, and Irish. Subsequently I did a Postgraduate Certificate in Countryside Management at Bangor. During my education as a teenager in Belfast, I was very impressed by two of my teachers who became BBC producers, Douglas Carson and Davey Hammond, and from them I absorbed a love of literature and traditional music, both of which became life defining interests.

Tell us a little about *A Hardy Breed* what inspired you to produce the book, and what do you hope readers will take away?

It became apparent to me that with the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union there were going to be seismic upheavals in the Welsh countryside as a result of changing priorities in government subsidy to

the agricultural sector. The most likely to be dramatically affected appeared to be shepherding and sheep farming; so I contacted an old friend who is also an expert shepherd, Erwyd Howells, and he kindly introduced me to the world of shepherding in Wales.

I had thought that I was quite familiar with the country after 40 years of residence, but the process of photographing for that project provided me with a further education. The importance of sheep farming to the rural economy in Wales is so historically ancient and deep that any sweeping changes will have profound implications socially and culturally. I was concerned that this should be taken into account in any proposed restructuring of the financial infrastructure of our countryside, and if I have a single aspiration, it is that a nuanced and flexible approach should be employed to avoid accidental collateral damage.

Do you have a quote that inspires you?

My Father used to assert, "Success is ten percent inspiration, and ninety per cent perspiration."

At this point in my life, I can see what he was getting at...