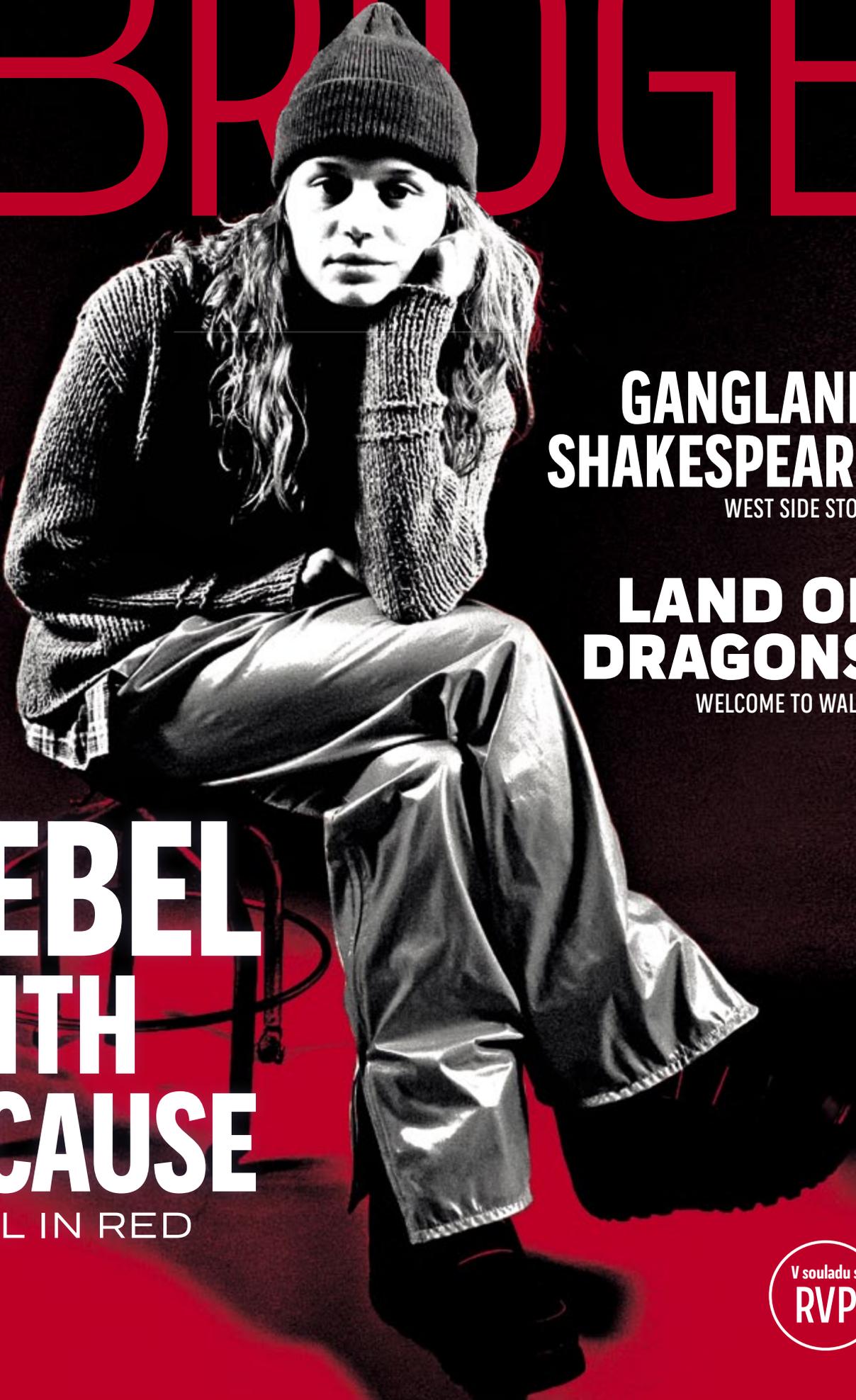


BRIDGE



**GANGLAND
SHAKESPEARE**
WEST SIDE STORY

**LAND OF
DRAGONS**
WELCOME TO WALES

**REBEL
WITH
A CAUSE**

GIRL IN RED



SOCKS AND SNOWBALLS

FUNNY ENGLISH CHRISTMAS



What does the traditional Christmas in the UK look like? Read the article and fill in the gaps to practise Christmas vocabulary.

Joanna Coleman (UK)

PRESENTS IN SOCKS

As you surely know, the English don't have baby Jesus but **1** _____, a big fat man who rides a sleigh across the sky led by reindeer. On Christmas Eve (that's the 24th) you might find children pinning up* old socks as a place for Father Christmas to leave their presents. We call this "hanging their **2** _____". The presents left here are mainly little extra gifts – even Father Christmas can't get things like Xboxes and bikes into a sock. No matter how big your feet are.



LET'S DECORATE THE PLACE

All right, let's get on to the tree. In England you decorate it with **3** _____ ("Christmas balls" in America) and **4** _____ (the shiny string that hangs everywhere). If you're in the kissing mood, **5** _____ is what we call the white-berried plant under which you get a friendly kiss. **6** _____ is the small evergreen tree with spiky* green leaves and red berries, and **7** _____ is the leafy plant that wraps around trees. In England we even have a lovely carol about these two plants.



YUM, YUM?

Christmas dinner is eaten at lunchtime on Christmas Day, the 25th. The traditional meal is turkey with **8** _____ (a mixture of herbs, spices, nuts and potatoes), roast potatoes, **9** _____ (the little green cabbages) and **10** _____ (a brown sauce made from meat juices). How about dessert? Many people are shocked when they learn about the typical English **11** _____, which you prepare weeks or even months before Christmas. It isn't that bad, especially if it's homemade and served with plenty of brandy butter*. But if you're not brave enough to try what looks a bit like boiled dog food, why not go for a nice mince **12** _____? Although mince is a word for mashed-up meat, these have nothing to do with meat. They are filled with sweet fruits and nuts and are really delicious.

DRUNK AVENGERS

Next to your plate you will find decorated cardboard* tubes called **13** _____. Etiquette* says you should link arms with the person next to you and pull one end of the tube. It will explode and you get to wear a funny hat, keep the little toy that's fallen into your meal and tell the silly joke that's landed in your snowball (a drink made from egg liqueur and drunk with lots of cherries on top, similar to what the Americans call eggnog). If there have been lots of snowballs drunk, you might get persuaded to play **14** _____. This is a very English game where you have to mime* the title of a film, book or play and everyone else has to guess. You'll be laughing so hard at someone's uncle's attempt to act The Avengers you'll have trouble keeping down your turkey.



GLOSSARY*

to pin up – to attach with a pin
spiky [ˈspɪki] – with sharp points
brandy butter – butter mixed with sugar and brandy
cardboard [ˈkɑːdbɔːd] – thick paper
etiquette [ˈetɪkət] – a set of rules how you should behave
to mime [maɪm] – to act without speaking

DRAGONS AND LOVE SPOONS

WHAT YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT WALES

Rough hillsides wrapped in a blanket of fog, steep mountains, old castles, rocky coastlines leading out to windswept waters – this is Wales.

Mark Wheeler (UK)

Welcome to Wales

Wales (*Cymru*, [kumˈri] in Welsh) is a small country on the island of Great Britain. It is one of the historic Celtic lands, alongside Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall, the Isle of Man and Brittany (the northwestern corner of France). Wales keeps closely to its Celtic heritage through its language, literature and its poetic song traditions. Today, there are about 800,000 Welsh speakers in Wales (about 25% of the population). The Welsh language is experiencing a great resurgence (= new growth), however, and the Welsh government hopes to have a million Welsh speakers in 2050.

Welsh Cities

Cardiff is both the largest and capital city of Wales. It has many historic and architectural landmarks and is the most-visited destination in the country. Swansea, the second-largest city, is noted for its location on the beautiful Swansea Bay. It is very old, with some sites dating back to the Stone Age, some 20,000 years ago or



more. Newport, once the most important port in Wales, is the third-largest city.

Of special note: St Davids, in southwestern Wales, is the smallest city in the UK, with a population of just 1,600. (In medieval times, towns with a cathedral were often granted city status.)

The Prince of Wales

Just why is the heir to the throne of the United Kingdom (currently Prince Charles) called the Prince of Wales? According to legend, in 1301, King

Edward I promised the Welsh chieftains (= tribal leaders) that if they stopped fighting him, the next king of England would be a Welsh prince who could not speak a single word of English. They agreed, thinking he meant that one of them would become king. Instead, he showed them his own son, who'd been born in Wales and who could not speak English – because he was just a few weeks old! This story is probably not true, but the tradition of the Prince of Wales does date from Edward's time as a way for the kings of England to keep direct control over Wales.

DID YOU KNOW?



There are more **castles** per square kilometre in Wales than anywhere else in the world.



The **red dragon** is used as a symbol for all things Welsh, from the national flag to the emblems of town councils, schools and sports clubs. In legend it is associated with King Arthur.

The dish known as **Welsh rarebit** was originally called Welsh rabbit. This may have been a joke made by English travellers about Welsh hunters, as Welsh rabbit contains no meat. It is a blend (= mixture) of cheese, mustard and ale (= beer) spread on thick slices of toast.



There are three **sheep** for every person in Wales, which is more than anywhere else in Europe.



A village in Wales has **the longest place name in Britain**. Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch means "The church of Mary of the pool of the white hazels near the fierce whirlpool and the church of Tysilio of the red cave". Most people just call it "Llanfairpwll". I wonder why?



Decorative **love spoons** were traditionally carved from wood by a man to be given to his sweetheart.