

Patagonian visitor helps youngsters to learn Spanish



Martin Iwan from Patagonia visited Ysgol Eifionydd and was greeted by pupils from different schools, teacher Carys Lake and fellow Patagonian Erica Roberts, who now lives in Tremadog

A TEENAGER from Argentina is spending seven weeks in Porthmadog teaching children Spanish through the medium of Welsh.

Martin Iwan, 18, is currently teaching children aged 11 – 14 Spanish at the Canolfan Iaith Uwchradd Gwynedd in the town.

Martin, who has lived in Trevelin in Patagonia all his life, decided to visit Porthmadog to improve his Welsh and learn more about the country's history.

The centre's teacher, Carys Lake, who helped found the language centre at Ysgol Eifionydd, said they are there to encourage children who come into the area to learn Welsh.

Mrs Lake says the children are extremely taken with Martin and have been interested in learning about Patagonia's history.

Mrs Lake said: "I am delighted that Martin has come here to visit us and spend time teaching the children, they think he's brilliant.

"He has spent some time teaching them about the history of Patagonia and also teach-

ing them Spanish in Welsh, which I think is amazing.

"We have a lot of different children from different backgrounds who come here to learn the language, we have children from Bulgaria, Thailand, Lithuania and Poland so there is lots of different languages being spoken. The kids have found it very interesting that Welsh is also spoken in another country, which I'm sure many of them didn't know before.

"I want to thank Martin for visiting us and what he is doing with the kids. He is very focused on the Welsh language and has even kept his surname, Iwan, from one of his relatives. It's been a pleasure having him here."

Canolfan Iaith is the only school of its kind for teaching Welsh to English speakers and Mrs Lake was awarded an award for Wales' best at encouraging language in 2008.

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