

English v Welsh: Which language is balderdash?

Video transcript – Welsh loanwords in English

Both Welsh and English, like many other languages in Europe and parts of Asia, are descended from a common ancestor – a theoretical language called Indo-European.

The Indo-European family of languages is divided into ten branches which have evolved into a variety of different languages.

Welsh belongs to the Celtic branch and English to the Germanic branch.

So English is more closely related to Swedish and Afrikaans than it is to Welsh.

Today, Welsh and English are distant cousins that have developed into two very distinct languages, but which inevitably share some similarities.

Everyday English words like *bard*, *truant* and *gull* have been borrowed from the Welsh *bardd*, *truan* and *gwylan*.

Cardigan is an anglicised form of Ceredigion.

The 7th Earl of Cardigan allegedly wore a cardigan-like jacket while leading the Charge of the Light Brigade in 1854.

The Romans borrowed the word *car* from a Celtic word for a wheeled vehicle.

This in turn was borrowed into English from the Latin loanword.

The surname *Floyd* from *llwyd*, meaning grey, and the dessert *flummery* from the Welsh *llymru*, both show a failed attempt to pronounce the unique *ll* sound in Welsh!

But that's just the tip of the iceberg. There's a sea of borrowings out there, just waiting to be discovered.