

## **The Wren's feast**

Before the feast begins...

- The set of wrens that are tied up in the cage need to be hidden by the Arts Facilitator either around an area of the school grounds ( If it is not raining) or within the room that the feast will take place in.
- The two piñata need to be tied up in different areas of the room and the nest containing the coloured eggs placed in the centre of the room.

The feast begins with 'The Oracle' (Facilitator) being ceremonially enrobed in the cloak of many feathers

The Oracle speaks

*Our story takes place, back in the day... when the great granny died and left us all...*

*...Before the invention of the X box... and the Nintendo DS... and the Wii and Playstation 3*

*Before the twin towers fell*

*...And my mum was born*

*... And Elvis died*

*...And a man walked on the moon*

*Before our most famous son, the children's author, T.Llew Jones, born in Pentrecwrt on 11 October 1914, had won the double... with the poetry chair at the National Eisteddfod in 58 and 59.*

*Our story takes place between the two world wars*

*...When we'd never see bananas, or oranges and lemons*

*...When the Teachers were strict and just a bit scarier than they are now*

*...And children used to leave the school at 14, if not before, to go to work*

*...When food was local, homemade and simple like the little oatcakes in the pinky bluey greeny yellow egg. ...Please pass them round and as you taste them travel back in time...*

*...Travel back to when the children of our town would go down to the woods in Pont Tyweli along the banks of the fast-running Teifi, to hunt for wrens, before calling door to door and asking for a shilling..*

The recording is played and the sound of the children chanting the wren-hunting song is heard.

The oracle speaks

*28 wrens are hidden ... ( in the room/ around the grounds)...find them and we will hang them in the ragged cage ... for our shilling*

The wren hunt takes place

When the children return the wrens are tied in a bundle upside down and hung from the roof of the cage.

The oracle speaks

*For more than one hundred years, on St Stephens Day we hunted wrens, but then, one day in May, 4 blind ravens flew through Llandysul and changed all that...calling the birds together for a feast... that is still commemorated on this day, the 27<sup>th</sup> May.*

The children are invited to open the bluey-greeny-purple egg, containing the blind raven masks. The oracle invites 4 children to wear the blind raven masks, which are tied on so that they cannot see. In turn, they will each have three hits of the large golden piñata with the golden stick. When each child's turn of three hits is complete, their mask is removed and passed on to a new child, who takes their place in the queue to have a go at hitting the piñata.

When the piñata is broken the contents (a set of 22 bird masks) are shared amongst the children and the children are transformed into birds (The two black masks can be worn by the teachers)...those that were wearing the blind raven masks when the piñata

was broken open continue to wear these, but can lift them up more like hats so that they can see.

The oracle speaks to the birds

*Birds of Llandysul, the 4 blind ravens have called us together, to make a feast to save the wrens.*

*Before we set out on this task we will must gain strength by feeding from the Blue piñata egg.*

The second piñata game is played until the food that the birds must eat to enable them to prepare the wren's feast is revealed.

The flock of birds is split into 4 groups each led by one of the four blind ravens. Each of the groups will have a set of eggs within which are the ingredients and instructions for their contribution to the wren's feast.

Group 1: Three green and two yellow eggs

Group 2: Two purple eggs

Group 3 : One golden egg

Group 4 : Two red eggs

The groups, still masked as birds, set about creating their element of the feast. Once complete it is set out on the feasting tables, which should be decorated with the silk runner that can be found in the nest.

The oracle speaks

*Birds of the forest;*

*Birds of the field;*

*Birds of the sea;*

*And from beyond the sea;*

*Birds that herald the dawn with song;  
And those that silently stalk the night;  
The wren's feast is prepared;  
Our job is done;  
It is time for us to return home.*

All the birds remove their masks and return to being themselves apart from the four blind ravens.

The feast consists of four mini courses; an aperitif, a salad, a main course and a sweet. Each course begins with an introduction by its blind raven leader who will explain what it is and what it represents before it is consumed in turn:

**Aperitif : The flowered cordial**

**Salad : The herbed mini-tomatoes**

**Main Course: The glittering eggs**

**Sweet : The popping fruits**

When the feast is concluded the oracle speaks the lesson of the wren's feast

*Y neb a dorro nyth y dryw, Ni chaiff iechyd yn ei fyw*

*(Whosoever robs the wren's nest shall never have health in his life)*

The wrens are ceremonially released from their cages into the individual care of each of the children.

Any spare felt wren's, the cage, nest, eggs table cloth, cloak etc can all be saved if needed for the *Out of the Box* exhibition, along with all the bird masks, which eventually will be returned to the children from Llandysul who made them.

## **Group 1: The flowered cordial**

To prepare the cordial for the feast it must be watered down with either sparkling or still water. Each cup can be prepared in advance with a slice of lemon and orange or lime, an individual lemon balm leaf, and a tiny bunch of elderflowers.

The fruit, herbs and flowers should all be washed.

When the rest of the feast has been prepared and is ready to begin, the cordial can be mixed with either fizzy or tap water.

The Blind Raven introduces the Cordial

*This flowered cordial is made from Elderflowers picked from the hedgerow that have been steeped for four days in a sugar syrup, flavoured with lemons and oranges from warmer climes.*

*The cordial brings a message from the hedgerow reminding us that we are all part of Mother Nature, and must each do our bit to care for her.*

## **Group 2 : The herbed mini-tomatoes**

Each of the tomatoes needs to be washed along with the herbs.

Each tomato then needs to have the top sliced off and the centres scooped out with a teaspoon.

The cream cheese should be divided into four bowls and each portion should be mixed with one **finely** chopped herb: Basil, fennel, mint or chives. The tomatoes should each be filled with one of the cream cheese mixtures, then topped with a small piece of the herb in the cheese.

The tomatoes should be presented as a mixed selection on plates.

The Blind Raven introduces the herbed salads

*These mini tomatoes have been filled with soft cheese and herbs some of which are from Llandysul school garden –*

*They invite us to experiment and try new things in our lives*

### **Group 3: The glittering eggs**

These quails eggs have been hard boiled. They need to be shelled and individually coated with one of the glitter paints from the vials, using the paintbrushes provided. The eggs should then be presented as a mixed selection of colours on plates, which can be decorated with herbs.

The Blind Raven introduces the glittering eggs

*These hand-decorated quail eggs have been shelled and painted with edible paint*

*They bring a message from the birds to the people, that they are happy to give us eggs and in return expect us to treat them with respect.*

#### **Group 4 : The popping fruits**

Prepare the strawberries by washing them and putting them onto a skewer. The chocolate can be melted in a bowl in a microwave. Empty the popping candy into another bowl. Then dip each strawberry first into the chocolate and then into the popping candy.

The Blind Raven introduces the popping fruits

*These local strawberries have been coated in fair-trade chocolate and dipped in popping candy— as they explode in your head the sound will remind us that food can be fun and full of surprises.*