

EXPRESSIONS WITH FIXED POSSESSIVE PRONOUN Y

Title of An Hobys Chapter 1

Kyffewy heb y wetyas

Kyffewy is a plural noun, literally meaning ‘partygoers’. Compare Latin *convivium* ‘party’; both words built to the root for ‘living’ (compare English slang ‘living it up’).

Strict grammar would suggest the title should be **Kyffewy heb *aga* gwetyas**. But that would be rather pedantic. **Heb y wetyas** is an example of a phrase that need not be so adjusted.

There is no hard-and-fast rule for when a phrase can be used with fixed possessive pronoun **y**. The more common the expression, the more likely it will be regarded as fixed. Here are some candidates from the same stable to which you can apply your own judgement.

heb y barusy kyns ‘ex tempore’

heb y bryntya ‘unprinted’

heb y dacla ‘unkempt, scruffy’

heb y dempra ‘untempered’

heb y dhendyl ‘unearned, undeserved’

heb y dhervyn ‘unmerited’

heb y dhova ‘untamed’

heb y dùchya ‘untouched’

heb y dy ‘without beating about the bush’

heb y nôtya ‘unheeded’

heb y radna ‘unpartitioned’

heb y spêna ‘unspent’

heb y studhya ‘off the cuff’

heb y sythla ‘unfiltered’

heb y whythra ‘off hand’

heb y wodhvos ‘unwitting’

There is, however, one phrase that *always without exception* employs fixed possessive pronoun **y** – namely, **y gela**. First State *kela* is never found – the word only exists in the phrase **y gela** itself; though comparison with Welsh *cilydd* allows us to reconstruct an original sense of ‘fellow, companion’. The phrase **y gela** is generally found in conjunction with pronoun **eyl** (‘one of two’). The meaning may be reciprocal as in, for example, **an eyl gans y gela** ‘with each other’. But it’s important to appreciate that this sense of reciprocity comes from the context rather than the words themselves. So **an eyl** and **y gela** may also be used where no reciprocity is involved. There may instead be a contrast: for example, **wàr an eyl tu ... wàr y gela** ‘on the one hand ... on the other [hand]’. Compare **wàr an tu aral** ‘on the other hand’ where a contrast is made *without* setting one thing *explicitly* against another. But we can also encounter **y gela** without an accompanying **an eyl** – for example, **Nyns yw hebma dâ genef; gwell genef yw y gela** ‘I don’t like this one; I prefer the other one’ – here **y gela** is interchangeable with **an aral**. But **y gela** always has *singular* reference, so **Nyns yw hebma dâ genef; gwell genef yw an erel** is the only way to say ‘I don’t like this one; I prefer the others / other ones’.

If there is feminine reference, the phrase **hy ben** may *optionally* be substituted for **y gela**. In **ben** we have the original unsuffixed form of **benyn** – it’s easier to see without the suffix that the word is ultimately related to English ‘queen’ and Greek-derived words like ‘gynecology’).