

# Welsh Cakes & Wellies

FAMILY ADVENTURE, MUNCHING AND MULCHING ACROSS SOUTH WALES AND BEYOND!

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POPULAR POSTS

## Much Ado About Nothing at Bryngarw Park – with Rain or Shine Theatre

The first time I saw a Shakespeare play was when I was in the 6th Form, which is longer ago than I'd like to admit. I was studying English Literature and our A-Level teacher took us to see an amateur production of Antony and Cleopatra. It was so bad he actually apologised for taking us as he thought it might put us off Shakespeare for life. Strangely enough I hadn't seen another Shakespeare play since. But then I found myself invited to see Much Ado About Nothing at Bryngarw Park by Rain or Shine Theatre Company.

As the name suggests the event goes on whether it is rain or shine, and they even sell ponchos at the event in case you are unlucky enough to have a shower. There are a number of Outdoor Theatre events planned at Bryngarw Park this summer. If you haven't already been I would 100% recommend going. This is the second one I have been to at Bryngarw, having seen Peter Pan there with the kids a few weeks ago, which was also fantastic.

I must confess when it came to going to Much Ado About Nothing, I felt like bailing. After a day of running around after the kids I really wasn't in the mood for a night of high brow entertainment. I could have easily slipped into my pjs and stayed at home with a glass of wine. But I had roped my friend into coming with me and so there was no turning back.

Being an evening performance, we took along our camping chairs, several layers and a cosy blanket to keep us warm. We arrived about a half an hour before the performance was due to start and managed to secure a nice spot not far from the stage. The whole area started to fill up really quickly so we were glad we got there early. Many had taken a picnic and some wine, but we weren't that organised. Luckily they were selling some light refreshments on the lawn. We got some coffee and a millionaires shortbread and settled down for the show to start.

### Our Review of Much Ado About Nothing - By Rain or Shine Theatre Company

Much Ado About Nothing, written between 1598 and 1599 is Shakespeare's most frequently performed comedy. Despite that, I had never seen it before and I wasn't familiar with the plot.

The story starts with a group of soldiers returning from the war. Rain or Shine Theatre had changed the setting of the play to World War One, which is a fitting tribute to mark its hundredth anniversary.

Don Pedro (Anthony Young), bachelor Benedick (Peter m Smith) and his friend Claudio (Jamie Littlewood) return to the village of Messina in the Cotswolds. They are met with Mistress Leonato (Jayne Lloyd), her daughter Hero (Jasmine Raymond) and her niece Beatrice (Pippa Meekings).

Whilst Claudio and Hero fall madly in love, Benedick and Beatrice bicker and try and out do each other with their sarcastic wit. Until of course they have to admit that they are in love with each other after all. But in usual Shakespeare style, does anything really go to plan?

The reference to the Great War meant that the costumes and music were all of that era. I particularly enjoyed Youngs rendition of 'Sigh No More Ladies' with Littlewood on the guitar.

The whole cast were amazing. Really speaking I should be listing everyone of them as they were all brilliant. How they inter-change between the multiple roles they have to play is seriously impressive.



Our Family Getaway at Clydey Collages – A Review



Immersion Theatre Present Peter Pan at Bryngarw Country Park

The leads, Meekings and Smith, were both equally exceptional. Their comic timing, facial expressions and the way they played off each other was fantastic. Between them they guaranteed much laughter and chuckling from the crowd.

Without the use of microphones, the voices of the cast were as clear as crystal. Their vocal projections reaching out right to the back of the audience. This was particularly utilised in the hilarious scenes with Young as a deaf shouting horse, which again resulted in lots of laughter from the audience.

I have to say I preferred the first half, which was more comedic than the second. The second half was more romantic and at times much more forlorn. But that of course is down to Shakespeare rather than Rain or Shine production. Of course it might also have had something to do with the fact that it was getting considerably colder. Tip for anyone going, take even more layers than you think you will need.

## Our Verdict of Much Ado About Nothing - Outdoor Theatre Wales

The cast didn't get the standing ovation they deserved, but I think that was more down to everyone being too cold to get up from under their blankets rather than anything else. They certainly got lots of applause and there was plenty of laughter and giggles throughout. Both my friend and I loved it. The production was seamless throughout with plenty of humour and perfect comic timing. It even reignited my love of Shakespeare.

I have now been to two of the Outdoor Theatre events at Bryngarw Park and they have both been amazing both in terms of both the venue and the productions themselves. There is something about watching theatre outdoors in the fresh air under the stars. Unfortunately I'm away next week otherwise I'd be booking in to see *Pride and Prejudice* too!

