



# Tunelines



## Gwynnynen Gwent / The Busy Bee of Gwent Welsh Traditional Tune, Arr. Helen Adam

West Wales fiddler and composer Helen Adam is sending in Welsh tunes for FW, based on her latest project, [www.tunelines.com](http://www.tunelines.com)

This is an **interactive site**, in which you click on a map, and it shows you the tune or tunes that is named after the place you've clicked on. And you can hear or download the tune as dots. Take a look! Helen will be featuring a different Welsh place each time, with the tune, and counter melody and harmony, and talking about it a little.

This tune [on the next page] was named after Lady Augusta Hall, who was a notable figure in Welsh cultural history and whose bardic name was Gwynnynen Gwent. Born in 1802 in Abergavenny she inherited the Llanofor estate in Monmouthshire. In 1823 she married Sir Benjamin Hall (after whom Big Ben was named, as he was Commissioner of Works at its inauguration). She had a life-long interest in Celtic studies and learnt Welsh, though was never a fluent speaker.

In 1828 the couple had Llanofor / Llanover Hall designed and built for them. It was always envisaged as a centre for the Welsh arts as well as a family home, and Lady Llanofor gave all her servants Welsh titles and Welsh costumes to wear, some of which she designed herself.

Heavily influenced by the bard Thomas Price, she encouraged music, especially triple harp playing, and dancing on her estate, as well as promoting the wider use of traditional Welsh wool and patterns, giving prizes for these at local Eisteddfods. She also founded the first Welsh language periodical 'Y Gymraes' (The Welshwoman). As a person of undoubted energy and influence and living at a time of an upsurge of interest in preserving folk traditions, she was responsible for helping to preserve Welsh customs but also to a certain extent to fashioning and codifying them in line with her own inclinations. Her work raises interesting questions about how we should protect and yet keep alive and vibrant our old traditions.

The tune itself is played to accompany a dance, and should move along at quite a lively tempo. In my second part I've tried to create the sense of a bee buzzing busily around the tune, above and below, and in constant motion. It works best played quite quietly with an accent on the first of each group of four quavers which has the effect of really bringing out the buzz! Any fiddle players who own mutes could try putting them on for this line as the slightly nasal quality this will lend your tone will fit very well. I am a huge fan of the work of composer and folk tune collector Béla Bartók one of whose arrangements of a Hungarian tune is called 'Mosquito Dance' and my version here of 'Gwynnynen Gwent' is definitely inspired by this piece.

Helen Adam © February 2020

[helenadamfiddle@gmail.com](mailto:helenadamfiddle@gmail.com)

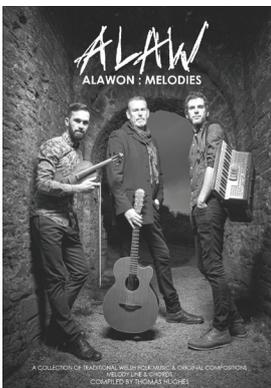
Helen Adam is a freelance fiddle/violin player, singer, performer and composer living in beautiful West Wales. A prolific composer and songwriter, whose current project is a collection of duets to introduce more of the lesser known Welsh dance tunes to a wider audience. Also performing with George Whitfield as the **Fiddlebox** duo (George, accordion and vocals, and Helen, violin and vocals), a unique sound blending our varying influences and styles, including Klezmer, Rock, Classical, Celtic folk, Welsh dance music and song, Blues, Bluegrass, [www.fiddlebox.net](http://www.fiddlebox.net)



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**Tom Hughes** is a skilled music practitioner from Herefordshire and provides a variety of music services. He is the author of ALAWON and responsible for the transcription and engraving of the music and production of the book. Tom can offer special rates to folk musicians looking to release a music book. **For further information visit [www.tomhughesmusic.co.uk](http://www.tomhughesmusic.co.uk).**

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Helen Adam

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