

## Press Release

This week sees the release of 'Hiraeth a mark – marc' by Liz Riley Jones. Hiraeth a mark is a fast-paced, action-packed story of love, magic and struggle and is the first book of the Hiraeth trilogy.

### **Synopsis from book cover**

*Mona Jones has been on the run all her life without knowing why. Her parents were murdered when she was a teenager, and now at twenty-one her uncle and protector is dead too. This chain of events compels her to spend time amid a Welsh-speaking community in Moelfre, Anglesey. Here, her Druidic ancestry begins to emerge, though it is spotted more quickly by those around her. She is branded by an enemy Druid and finds herself at the center of a Druid civil war.*

*"The mark" unleashes Mona's power, but she also has a terrible weakness. She finds herself drawn to the warrior Cai, but they are separated when the community's fleet is lured out to sea by the threat of an Irish attack. The Welsh Druids are convinced there is a spy in their midst and both Mona and Cai become suspects. When Mona is attacked, her uncontrolled power explodes for a second time. The Druids must decide if she is their saviour or their destroyer.*

Hiraeth is a Welsh word that can be translated to mean "a homesickness for a home to which you cannot return, a home which may never have been. It is the nostalgia, the yearning, the grief for the lost places of your past".

Set in contemporary Britain, Hiraeth chronicles the exploits of Mona Jones from her home in Kent to a hidden world of Druids across the Celtic Lands: Wales, Ireland, the Isle of Man, the Scottish Hebrides and Cornwall. These are some of the most beautiful and rugged landscapes on these islands and their remoteness suspends them between the modern world and that of the mid 20th century.

Ynys Môn (Anglesey) plays a central role in this book. Steeped in ancient Celtic tradition and magic, it is here that Mona meets the Welsh-speaking Druids that will alter her life for ever.

The story also explores the issues of cultural and genealogical identity. Mona is sent to Wales in search of family connections, but remains the outsider - a girl from Kent trying to make sense of her new reality in a strange land. "Mona's modern take on life contrasts sharply with the conservative Druid community." Liz explained. "Mona is a forceful, independent character bringing a strong sense of female empowerment to the series."

Intrigued by her Welsh roots, Liz drew from her family connections in Anglesey, and wove them around Celtic themes: the Mabinogion, music, Celtic mythology, history and texts.

The struggle and survival of the Welsh language is a constant refrain in the Hiraeth story. Inspired by the author's ten-year battle with the language, it has morphed into something of a homage to it. "Learning Welsh has altered the way I think about language." Liz explained. "When your mouth has to move differently to make a correct sound, it alters your brain. Speaking Welsh is speaking poetry."

'Hiraeth a mark – marc' is the first book of the trilogy, followed by 'Hiraeth a burden – baich' and 'Hiraeth a loss – colled' next year.

## About the author

Liz Riley Jones is the pen name of Sam Holland, a sculptor who lives and works in Kent. It was the sculpture that Sam made of Dic Evans, an RNLI hero from Moelfre, Anglesey that reunited Sam with her family roots on the island.

Thomas Idwal Jones, her grandfather, was one of Dic's lifelong friends, yet it was a chance phone call from the Moelfre Partnership over ten years ago that took Sam to Anglesey and changed her life.

Inspired by her newfound Celtic roots, Sam started learning Welsh and studying Celtic mythology, history and identity. This work has culminated in the story of Hiraeth - a mixture of personal experience, fantasy and homage to the great Celtic tales of the Mabinogion and the Irish Ulster Cycle.

The first book of the Hiraeth trilogy:

**Title: Hiraeth a mark - marc**

Paperback: 408 pages

Publisher: Matador

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1784621315

ISBN-13: 978-1784621315

Available at all UK book shops, including [Waterstones](#), [WH Smith](#) and [Amazon](#)

[Ebook](#) available now, an audio book will be available soon.

For further information please view the media page of the Hiraeth web site:

<http://hiraeth.me/media.html>

or contact Liz Riley Jones

Email: [liz@hiraeth.me](mailto:liz@hiraeth.me)

Tel: 07989 476991