

Cadw dy lygad ar y blymen

Y tri achlysur pennaf yng nghalendr yr ysgol ers talwm fyddai Ffair Calangaeaf, trip yr Ysgol Sul, a'r Gymanfa Ganu; a'r tri amgylchiad yn ddigon pwysig i ganiatáu gwyliau a chau'r ysgol. Cynhelid Cymanfa Ganu Annibynwyr Gogledd Ceredigion ar y dydd Mercher cyntaf ym mis Mai – yn Aberystwyth a Thal-y-bont bob yn ail. Byddai'r cantorion wrthi yn ymarfer eu lleisiau yn yr Ysgol Gân wythnosol a chynhelid dwy rihysal o'r holl eglwysi yn nechrau'r gwanwyn i feistrolï y tonau diarth ac i ymarfer yr anthem; wedyn i'r plant byddai digon o waith paratoi at yr arholiadau llafar ac ysgrifenedig, y cyfan yn rhan o weithgareddau'r gaeaf.

Cofiaf yn dda am un o'r cymanfaoedd hyn yn Nhal-y-bont. Dau fachgen ifanc, fel rheol wedi ennill ychydig brofiad, fyddai'n chwythu'r organ yn y bore a chyhoeddwyd y Sul blaenorol mai Deric a minnau a fyddai'r ddau chwythwr swyddogol yn y gymanfa honno. (Deric, erbyn hyn, yw'r Parchedig Frederick Morris Jones, Abertawe, a Chadeirydd Pwyllgor Gwaith yr Eisteddfod yno yn 1982.)

Saif yr organ y tu cefn i'r pulpud ac o'r astell uchaf un estynai braich fel megin gof tua phedair troedfedd o hyd a llenni o'i blaen rhag i'r gynulleidfa weld ystumiau ambell chwythwr gor-ddramatig. Uwch ben y fraich yr oedd pwt o blymen yn hongian wrth linyr main a dau farc tua naw modfedd oddi wrth ei gilydd. Cyngor pob hen law i'w brentis fyddai, 'Cofia gadw dy lygad ar y blymen,' a gem o gyngor oedd hwnnw! Pe chwythid yn rhy filain byddai sŵn y gwynt gwag yn rhuo fel taran wrth ddianc i'r gwagle yn y cefn ac os byddai'r chwythu yn rhy araf buan y clywid nodau'r organ yn gwanhau ac yn sydyn rhoddaï un pwff o ebychiad cyn tawelu'n gyfangwbl. Pan ddigwyddai hynny (nid yn aml mae'n wir) byddai'r tawelwch sydyn yn taro'r gynulleidfa fel sioc, gan amharu tipyn ar y canu ac yn sarhad ar ben y chwythwr druan.

Cofiaf bod y ddau ohonom yn ein lle yn gynnar y bore hwnnw a difyr oedd

Keep your eye on the plummet

The three main events in the school calendar in the old days were the All Saints' Day Fair, the Sunday School trip, and the 'Cymanfa Ganu'. The three occasions were important enough to allow holidays and the closure of the school. The North Ceredigion Independents' 'Cymanfa' was held on the first Wednesday in May – alternatively in Aberystwyth and Tal-y-bont. The singers practised in the weekly 'Ysgol Gân' and two rehearsals were held for all the chapels at the beginning of spring in order to master the new tunes and to practise the anthem. Then the children had a lot of work to do preparing for the oral and written examinations; all part of the winter activities.

I well remember one of these 'cymanfaoedd' at Tal-y-bont. Usually, two young boys who had gained some experience would blow the organ in the morning; it had been announced the Sunday before that Deric and myself would be the two official blowers at that particular 'cymanfa'. (Deric is the Reverend Frederick Morris Jones, Swansea, who was the Chairman of the National Eisteddfod Executive Committee there in 1982).

The organ is in the gallery behind the pulpit. From the highest ledge, an arm extended like a blacksmith's bellows – approximately four feet long and behind curtains so that the gestures of some over dramatic blowers were hidden from the congregation. Above the arm hanging on a thin piece of string, was a small plummet with two marks about nine inches apart. The advice of every experienced blower to his apprentice was, 'Remember to keep your eye on the plummet,' and that was priceless advice! If one blew too hard the sound of empty wind would rush like thunder as it escaped to the vacuum at the back and if one blew too slowly the organ notes would become weaker and would suddenly give one gasp before becoming completely silent. When that happened (not often it is true) the sudden silence would shock the congregation, interfere with the singing, and bring disgrace to the poor blower.

llygadu'r plant a ddeuai o'r gwahanol eglwysi, pob mintai fechan yn cadw'n glos at ei gilydd fel y Cymry ar wasgar yn eu seremoni yn yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol. Wedyn deuai'r oedolion a rhai o'r cewri ffyddlon a roddai ddiwrnod cyfan iddi:

John James, yr ysgrifennydd diwyd a gerddai o'r set fawr i'r drws yn nerfau i gyd, gan sicrhau nad âi dim o'i le, ei bocedi wedi'u stwffio â rhaglenni i'w gwerthu ar y funud olaf cyn y byddai'n esgyn i'w gôr ar y lloft i ymlacio a chanu.

Lloyd, yr ocsiwnier, gŵr tal, llydan ei ysgwyddau a ffraeth ei dafod pan ynghanol ffermwyr ond gwnâi yn siwr na fyddai'r un ocsiwn na mart yn cyd-daro a dydd y Gymanfa.

Wedyn, Defi John Edwards, y masnachwr glo lleol, yn daclus fel pin mewn papur, mewn siwt ddu a streipiau gwynion a phâr o gufflincs yn sgleinio fel dwy sofren, yn eistedd ar flaen y galeri a'i lais yn sylfaen diogel i'w gyd faswyr.

Cofiaf mai'r Dr Haydn Morris oedd yr arweinydd gwadd ac aeth y cyfan ymlaen yn ddigon hwylus yn yr hanner cyntaf, nes cyrraedd at yr egwyl pryd y try'r gymanfa ganu yn gymanfa siarad. Cafwyd anerchiad hir gan y Llywydd, aed trwy restr faith o fuddugwyr yn yr arholiadau llafar, y cyhoeddiadau a'r diolchiadau manwl. Erbyn hyn yr oedd Deric a minnau yn cynnal seiat fach ein hunain ac wedi anghofio'r cyfan. Yr arwydd cyntaf a ddaeth â ni yn ôl at ein cyfrifoldeb oedd gweld Defi John ar ei draed yn saethu'i fys tuag atom, 'Rhowch chi dipyn o wynt i fyny fan'na, os gwelwch yn dda.' Un naid hir cyn bod y ddau ohonom a'n dwylo ar y fegin ac yn chwythu'n ddidrugaredd. Mae'n debyg bod y siarad drosodd ers tipyn, yr arweinydd ar ei draed wedi cyhoeddi a darllen yr emyn nesaf; ei law a'i fatwn yn chwifio yn yr awyr ac wedi gofyn ddwywaith, 'Chord, plis' ond yr organ yn fud.

Tu ôl i'r llenni brown y bu'r ddau ohonom y bore hwnnw yn cuddio mewn cywilydd ac euogrwydd. Bu digon ar y diwedd yn barod a'u tynnu coes a'u dwrdio diniwed ond chwarae teg i'r hen Miss Jenkins garedig a ddaeth i'n hamddiffyn yn ei llais dwfn, 'Ro' nhw wedi enwi pawb yn y diolchiade ond y ddau hogyn oedd yn chwythu ac fe weloch nad oedd yr organ na'r arweinydd yn dda i ddim hebddynt.'

I remember both of us being in position early that morning, and it was amusing to watch the children who came from the various chapels, every small group keeping closely together like the 'Cymry ar Wasgar' in their ceremony at the National Eisteddfod. The adults followed and some of the faithful stalwarts who were there for the whole day were:

John James, the diligent secretary who walked from the big seat to the door, all nerves, making sure that nothing went wrong, his pockets stuffed with programmes to be sold at the last minute, before going upstairs to his pew in order to relax and sing.

Lloyd, the auctioneer, a tall broad shouldered man, glib of tongue when amongst farmers, but who made sure that no auction or mart clashed with the Gymanfa Day.

Then, Defi John Edwards, the local coal merchant, as neat as a pin in paper in his black pinstripe suit and a pair of cufflinks that shone like two sovereigns, sitting at the front of the gallery with his voice a safe lead for his fellow bass singers.

I recall that the guest conductor was Dr Haydn Morris and all proceeded well during the first half, until the interval when the 'cymanfa' became a talking 'cymanfa'. The President gave a long address, a tedious list of those who had succeeded in the oral exams was read out, the announcements and thanks were made. By now, Deric and I were holding our own little fellowship meeting and were oblivious to everything else. The first sign to remind us of our responsibility was seeing Defi John on his feet pointing his finger at us, 'Let us have some wind up there, please.' We jumped to attention and placed our hands on the bellows and blew mercilessly. It appears that the talking had long finished, the conductor was on his feet after announcing and reading the next hymn; his hand and baton were waving in the air and he had asked twice for, 'Chord please' but the organ was silent.

Both of us stayed behind the brown curtains that morning, hiding in shame and guilt. At the end many were ready with leg pulling and harmless scolding but fair play to the kindly old Miss Jenkins who came to our defence in her deep voice, 'They thanked everybody except the two boys

Ein Canrif – Our Century

Manweb sy'n gofalu am ysgyfaint yr organ ers blynyddoedd lawer bellach. Mae cenhedlaeth newydd wedi codi ac mae chwythu organ mor ddiarth iddynt a goleuo kannwyll frwyn.

J.R. Jones

who did the blowing and you saw that the organ and the conductor were good for nothing without them.'

For many years now Manweb has been taking care of the organ's lungs. There is now a new generation and blowing an organ is as unfamiliar to them as lighting a reed candle.

J.R. Jones