

Papur Pawb 1974–

Ar brynhawn poeth yng nghanol mis Mehefin 1974, a hynny mewn atig tŷ ym mhentref Tal-y-bont ym Meirion (ac nid yng Ngheredigion), y daeth y syniad i Gwilym Huws, Tŷ Gwyn, o sefydlu papur lleol i'r ardal hon. Roedd yno ar ran ei gyflogwyr yn chwilota trwy gasgliad preifat o lyfrau Cymraeg a Chymreig. Ond er bod yno nifer o gyfrolau prin a gwerthfawr iawn, yr eitem a dynnodd ei sylw yn fwy na'r un arall oedd cynnwys amlen fechan ddisylw. Yn yr amlen honno roedd rhifynnau cyntaf y cylchgrawn *Seren y Mynydd*, a sefydlwyd yng nghanol yr 1890au gan O.M. Edwards i wasanaethu trigolion plwyf Llanuwchllyn. O ran ei ddiwyg, roedd yn wahanol iawn i'n syniad ni o bapur newydd – nid oedd yn mesur ond rhyw 3" x 4" – ond o ran ei gynnwys roedd yn bur debyg. Wedi cael blas ar gynnwys *Seren y Mynydd*, bu'r syniad o greu cyhoeddiad tebyg yn troi yn ei feddwl am wythnosau lawer.

Os mai O.M. Edwards oedd biau'r weledigaeth, Robat Gruffudd sy'n haeddu'r clod am droi'r syniad yn ffaith. Roedd Gwasg y Lolfa eisoes wedi rhoi Tal-y-bont ar y map gyda'i rhaglen gyhoeddi fentrus ac arloesol ac yn llwyddo'n rhyfeddol i ddenu darllenwyr newydd i'r Gymraeg. Gwyddai Gwilym y byddai Robat yn sicr o gefnogi unrhyw ymgais i dorri tir newydd yn y maes cyhoeddi Cymraeg, ac wrth gwrs byddai ei brofiad helaeth fel argraffydd a chyhoeddwr yn amhrisiadwy. Mae'n cofio'n dda ei ymateb brwdfrydig i'r cynllun nad oedd tan hynny yn ddim ond breuddwyd ffôl. Mynnodd fwrw iddi ar unwaith, cyn i Gwilym gael cyfle i ailfeddwl, a galwodd gyfarfod gan wahodd Hefin Llwyd a Siôn Myrddin atynt i gryfhau'r tîm o ran nifer ac o ran syniadau. Erbyn hyn, roedd Gwilym yn chwilio am bob esgus dan haul i ohirio symud ymlaen rhag ofn i'r cyfan brofi'n fethiant trychinebus. Ond doedd dim troi'n ôl i fod, a chan nad oedd ganddynt yr un geiniog goch y tu ôl iddynt pe bai colled ariannol, cynigiodd Robat argraffu'r tri rhifyn cyntaf am ddim er mwyn rhoi sylfaen gadarn i'r fenter.

Wedi dadlau brwd ynghylch yr enw, ymddangosodd y rhifyn cyntaf o *Papur*

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It was on a sultry summer's day in mid-June 1974 in an attic in a house in the village of Tal-y-bont, Merioneth (and not Ceredigion) that Gwilym Huws, Tŷ Gwyn, first had the idea of establishing a local newspaper for this community. At the time he was rummaging through a private collection of books of Welsh interest on behalf of his employers when he spotted amongst many rare and valuable volumes a small, insignificant brown envelope. In the envelope he found several issues of a Welsh-language magazine, *Seren y Mynydd*, established in the mid-1890s by O.M. Edwards, a leading figure in Welsh literary and cultural life at the time, to serve the residents of the parish of Llanuwchllyn. Although its format was very different – measuring some 4" x 3" – in terms of its contents it was very similar to a modern newspaper. Having thoroughly enjoyed reading *Seren y Mynydd* on that warm afternoon, Gwilym mulled over the idea of creating something similar to cater for the village of Tal-y-bont and the surrounding area.

Even if O.M. Edwards can lay claim to the idea of producing a Welsh-language community newspaper during the last decade of the nineteenth century, it is Robat Gruffudd who deserves the credit for turning this idea into reality in this area during the 1970s. The Lolfa had already put Tal-y-bont on the Welsh-language publishing map with its exciting and innovative publishing programme, achieving great success in attracting a new generation of readers to the Welsh language. Gwilym was confident from the outset that Robat would give his wholehearted support to any initiative in breaking new ground in Welsh-language publishing and, of course, his experience of printing and publishing would prove invaluable. Gwilym recalls Robat's immediate enthusiasm for the project and his insistence that a meeting be called without delay to discuss the idea with Hefin Llwyd and Siôn Myrddin. By this time, Gwilym was becoming more cautious about the idea and was looking for reasons to postpone, or even abandon, the project in

Pawb (ac nid *Ehedydd y Mynydd*, neu *Amserau Ceulan a Chlettwor!*) ym mis Medi 1974. Rhoddwyd gair o esboniad yn y rhifyn cyntaf am swyddogaeth *Papur Pawb*, sef 'anelu i adlewyrchu pob agwedd ar fywyd cymdeithasol a diwylliannol y cylch mewn gair ac mewn llun. Bwriadwn i bawb feddwl am y papur fel gwasanaeth sy'n perthyn i'r gymdeithas gyfan, megis neuadd bentref neu ysgol, ac nid rhywbeth sy'n perthyn i grŵp bychan o fewn yr ardal yn unig.' Fe'i gwnaed yn glir hefyd mai'r unig ffordd i sicrhau llwyddiant y papur oedd trwy gael cydweithrediad y darllenwyr 'trwy wneud awgrymiadau ynglŷn â'i gynnwys a thrwy anfon cyfraniadau o ddiddordeb lleol i'w cyhoeddi ynddo.' Gosodwyd patrwm a naws y papur yn y rhifyn cyntaf – stori flaen yn tynnu sylw at ddiwyddiad neu fater llosg lleol; dyddiadur y mis; tudalen Pobl a Phethau yn cofnodi genedigaethau, priodasau, pen-blwyddi arbennig a llwyddiannau unigolion; adroddiadau am weithgareddau sefydliadau a chymdeithasau lleol; colofnau rheolaidd; hanes lleol a chwaraeon ac, yn goron ar y cyfan, digon o luniau.

Ar y dechrau roedd y pwyslais ar lunio adroddiadau cryno, ac er bod nifer y tudalennau fesul rhifyn wedi codi'n araf o'r 4 tudalen gwreiddiol i 8-12 yn ystod y 1990au, ac elfennau eraill megis Croesair a Chornel y Plant wedi eu hychwanegu, bach iawn ar y cyfan fu'r newidiadau yn natur y papur ac eithrio cynnwys erthyglau nodweddiadol hirach neu gyfres o erthyglau o atgofion neu hanes lleol.

Rhoddodd y croeso brwd a gafodd y rhifyn cyntaf sioc fawr i'r sylfaenwyr. Yr awgrym cyntaf oedd argraffu 200 copi ond, yn ôl ei arfer, doedd Robat Gruffudd ddim yn barod i wrando ar weddill y criw a dewisodd argraffu 400 – a theimlad braf oedd deall bod pob un o'r rheiny wedi eu gwerthu o fewn dyddiau; oddi ar hynny mae rhyw 500 copi'n cael eu gwerthu'n fisol. Ar y dechrau, yn siopau Tal-y-bont, Taliesin a Thre'rddôl yn unig y gellid prynu'r papur (ar wahân i'r Dole, lle y byddai'r diweddar Huw Huws yn ei ddosbarthu o ddrws i ddrws). Ond yn fuan iawn daeth galw amdano gan siopau o Fachynlleth i Aberystwyth, ac ymhell cyn diwedd y flwyddyn gyntaf roedd nifer o deuluoedd oedd wedi symud i fyw i rannau eraill o Gymru, Lloegr a'r Alban

case it proved to be a disaster. But it was too late for cold feet, especially when Robat offered to print the first three issues free of charge to give the paper a chance to become established. This was an offer too good to refuse, as the paper was launched without any other financial backing.

After much debating regarding the name, the first issue of *Papur Pawb*, appeared in September 1974. It contained a brief statement explaining the paper's mission, i.e. that its aim was 'to reflect all aspects of the social and cultural life of the area through words and pictures. We want everyone to view the paper as a service which belongs to the whole community, much in the same way as we perceive a village hall or school, rather than a newsletter owned by a small group of people'. It was made abundantly clear at the outset that the secret of a successful community newspaper was to obtain the co-operation of its readers 'for suggestions about the content and by sending contributions of local interest to be published in its columns'. The nature of the content was established in the first issue – a lead story of a local event or burning issue; a diary of events; announcements of births, marriages, special birthdays and anniversaries; reports on the activities of local organisations and societies; regular columnists; local history; various sporting achievements and, of course, plenty of photographs.

The enthusiastic reception given to the first issue came as a pleasant surprise to its founders. Originally, the intention had been to print 200 copies, but as usual Robat Gruffudd was not prepared to listen to other members of the group – he went ahead and printed 400 copies! It was extremely satisfying to learn that all 400 were sold within days; since then some 500 copies have been sold each month. Initially the paper was sold in the shops at Tal-y-bont, Taliesin and Tre'rddôl (with Huw Huws selling from door to door in Dole). Before long, however, there was a demand for the paper elsewhere and it began to be stocked in several shops between Aberystwyth and Machynlleth, and long before the end of the first year a number of families who had moved to other parts of Wales, England and Scotland had arranged to receive it by post.

Although *Papur Pawb* was originally

wedi trefnu i'w dderbyn trwy danysgrifiad post.

Er mai criw bychan iawn oedd y tu cefn i sefydlu *Papur Pawb* yn y lle cyntaf, ni fyddai wedi goroesi mwy nag ychydig fisoedd heblaw am gymorth parod nifer o golofnwyr rheolaidd (e.e. R.J. Thomas, J.R. Jones a J.H. Griffiths) ynghyd â rhwydwaith o ohebwyrd ardal megis Hilda Thomas (Bontgoch), Huw Huws (Dole), Myfanwy Rowlands (Taliesin), Gwen Davies (Tre'rddôl), Eleri Huws (Tal-y-bont), Dilys Morgan (Parsel Henllys) ac, yn ddiweddarach, pan ehangwyd dalgylch y papur i gynnwys plwyf Ysguborycoed, Avarinah Jones (Eglwysfach). Roedd pob un yn gofalu bod newyddion o bob math o'u hardal yn cyrraedd 'swyddfa'r papur' yn ddi-dor fis ar ôl mis. Yn y blynyddoedd hynny, cyn bod neb wedi clywed am brosesyddion geiriau, heb sôn am gyhoeddi 'pen bwrdd', Aileen Williams a Rita Llwyd fyddai'n teipio'r deunydd am yn ail, a hynny mewn colofnau tair modfedd o led. Roedd y colofnau hyn wedyn yn cael eu torri'n sribedi hir cyn cael eu gosod – ynghyd â'r penawdau, y lluniau a'r hysbysebion – ar gardfwrdd o faint arbennig a'u gludio i lawr gyda 'Cow Gum' (melys atgofion!) yn barod i'w hargraffu gan Y Lolfa.

Am sawl blwyddyn, Gwilym ac Eleri Huws fu'n casglu'r newyddion gan y gohebwyrd, yn ysgrifennu llawer o'r testun, yn gosod y deunydd yn barod i'r wasg, yn danfon copiâu i'r siopau a'r tanysgrifwyr, ac yn cadw'r cyfrifon. Gwnaed hyn i gyd ar fwrdd y gegin gyda 'help' dau o fechgyn bach direidus – yr ieuengaf ohonynt yn ddim ond 6 mis oed pan sefydlwyd y papur – oedd wrth eu boddau yng nghanol y torion papur a'r glud drewllyd bob mis! Cafodd Eleri siars, ddiwedd Awst 1978, i sicrhau nad oedd genedigaeth eu trydydd plentyn yn amharu ar drefniadau rhifyn mis Medi ac, yn wir, cyrhaeddodd Branwen mewn da bryd i alluogi i'w mam gyfrannu fel arfer, ac i'r teulu gyhoeddi ei genedigaeth yn y papur!

Er mor gyffrous oedd blynyddoedd cynnar y papur – yn arbennig felly frwdfrydedd yr ardalwyr a chlywed bod ardaloedd eraill ledled Cymru yn dilyn esiampl *Papur Pawb* trwy sefydlu eu papurau bro yn eu hardaloedd eu hunain – daethpwyd i sylweddoli bod cynnal papur

established by a small group it would have stood no chance of survival beyond those first few months except for the willing support of a number of regular columnists (e.g. R.J. Thomas, J.R. Jones and J.H. Griffiths) together with a network of area reporters such as Hilda Thomas (Bontgoch), Gwen Davies (Tre'r ddôl), Myfanwy Rowlands (Taliesin), Eleri Huws (Tal-y-bont), Huw Huws (Dole), Dilys Morgan (Parsel Henllys) and later, after the area of the paper was extended to include the parish of Ysguborycoed, Avarinah Jones (Eglwysfach). Each one of these would see to it that all manner of news from their area would be sent to the paper's 'office' month after month. In the early years, before anyone had heard of word processing and DTP packages, Aileen Williams and Rita Llwyd alternately typed the text in three inch columns. These would then be cut into long strips before being pasted, along with headings, pictures and advertisements, on cardboard of a certain size with Cow Gum (happy memories!) ready for printing at Y Lolfa.

For several years, Gwilym and Eleri Huws were responsible for collecting the news items from the area reporters, writing much of the copy, pasting the work ready for printing, distributing copies to the readers through the shops and by post and overseeing the accounts. All of these tasks were performed on the kitchen table, with the 'help' of two mischievous little boys – the younger of whom was only 6 months old when the paper was founded – who were so happy amidst the paper cuttings and stinking glue every month. At the end of August 1978, Eleri was warned not to let the birth of their third child spoil the arrangements for the September issue, and in the event, Branwen arrived in good time for her mother to contribute as usual, and for the family to announce her birth in the paper!

Although the early years of the paper were very exciting – especially the enthusiastic reception from the local people and the fact that many other areas throughout Wales were sufficiently inspired by *Papur Pawb*'s example to establish their own Welsh language community newspapers – it became apparent that producing a monthly newspaper by means of voluntary effort was a heavy

misol yn gyfrifoldeb trwm. Ym 1980, wedi i Gwilym ac Eleri fod yng ngofal y papur am chwe blynedd a hanner, fe drosglwyddwyd baich golygyddol *Papur Pawb* i Gwyn a Falyri Jenkins. Yn fuan wedi iddynt hwy gymryd at yr awenau, fe osodwyd y papur ar sylfaen llawer cadarnach trwy ychwanegu'n sylweddol at y tîm o weithwyr a gyfrannai i'r papur mewn rhyw ffordd neu'i gilydd. Yn yr un flwyddyn fe ffurfiolwyd y fenter ymhellach trwy sefydlu Cymdeithas Papur Pawb i fod yn gyfrifol am gyhoeddi'r papur, gan gynnwys gofalu am yr agweddau ariannol yn hytrach na bod y baich i gyd yn disgyn ar ysgwyddau'r golygyddion. Pan gasglwyd y gwrfioddolwyr gweithgar hyn i gyd at ei gilydd o flaen y Neuadd Goffa i dynnu llun ar achlysur dathliadau pen-blwydd *Papur Pawb* yn ddeng mlwydd oed ym 1984, roedd hi'n syndod gweld bod pymtheg ar hugain o bobl yno – ond mewn gwirionedd byddai'r rhif wedi bod yn nes at hanner cant petai pawb oedd â chysylltiad â'r papur wedi medru bod yn bresennol pan dynnwyd y llun. Yn ddiweddarach fe ffurfiwyd rhagor o dîmau golygyddol i fod yn gyfrifol am rifynnau o'r papur yn eu tro. Heblaw am y ffaith bod y Gymdeithas wedi derbyn y penderfyniad hwn i rannu'r baich golygyddol, does dim amheuaeth o gwbl na fyddai *Papur Pawb* byth wedi gallu goroesi hyd ddiwedd yr ugeinfed ganrif.

O'r cychwyn cyntaf, rhoddwyd pwyslais ar ofalu bod y papur yn ddeniadol o ran ei ddiwyg trwy gadw'r adroddiadau'n fyr a thrwy ddefnyddio penawdau breision a lluniau niferus. Yn hyn o beth buom hynod o ffodus, o ddiwedd y 1970au hyd ganol y 1990au, i gael gwasanaeth ffotograffydd proffesiynol o'r radd flaenaf, sef Arvid Parry-Jones, i dynnu a datblygu lluniau'r papur. Does dim amheuaeth bod ansawdd y diwyg a'r lluniau yn ystod y cyfnod hwn yn gymorth mawr i'r gwerthiant o fis i fis. Rhaid cyfeirio hefyd at gyfraniad nodedig Carys Briddon, sydd wedi teipio bron bob gair a ymddangosodd yn y papur yn ystod yr ugain mlynedd diwethaf. Ym mlwyddyn olaf yr ugeinfed ganrif fe wireddwyd breuddwyd arall, sef taflu'r siswrn a'r past o'r neilltu a chysodi'r testun a'r lluniau'n ddigidol gyda'r bwriad ar ddechrau'r milflwydd newydd o gyhoeddi'r papur yn fisol ar y We Fyd-eang.

Dechreuwyd ar y fenter yn 1974 trwy

responsibility. That is why, in 1980, after co-editing *Papur Pawb* for six and a half years, Gwilym and Eleri Huws relinquished this responsibility to Gwyn and Falyri Jenkins. Soon after this change of editorship, the future of the paper was set on much firmer foundations with the addition of a much larger team of volunteers who contributed in various ways to the paper's production and distribution. In that same year, the *Papur Pawb* Society was established to be responsible for publishing the newspaper and for all the financial arrangements so that all the responsibilities did not rest too heavily on the editors' shoulders. When all the volunteers involved with the paper were gathered together for a group photograph on the occasion of *Papur Pawb's* tenth anniversary in 1984, it was remarkable that there were thirty-five in attendance, but had everyone been able to be present, the number would have approached fifty. Later on additional 'editing teams' were formed to take responsibility in turn for issues of the paper. Had this change to sharing the editorial load of the paper been rejected, there is no doubt that *Papur Pawb* would not have survived to the end of the twentieth century.

From the outset, the emphasis was on ensuring that the design of the paper was attractive in appearance by limiting the length of articles, using large headlines and a large number of photographs. In respect of the latter, *Papur Pawb* was very fortunate from the late 1970s until the mid-1990s to have the services of Arvid Parry-Jones and family to take and develop most of the paper's photographs. There is no doubt that the attractiveness of the layout and the quality of the photographs contributed significantly to the monthly sales figures. Another key figure in preparing *Papur Pawb* is Carys Briddon who, single-handedly, has typed almost every word that has appeared in the paper for the past twenty years. During the final year of the 20th century, another dream was realised when the scissors and paste were finally discarded and the paper produced digitally with the intention, at the start of the new millennium, to publish the paper monthly on the World-wide web.

Although the first three issues of *Papur Pawb* were published rather apprehensively and as an experiment back in 1974, by 1999

gyhoeddi tri rhifyn arbrofol yn unig – a hynny'n betrusgar a nerfus tu hwnt – ond erbyn blwyddyn olaf y ganrif roedd achos i ddathlu cyhoeddi rhifyn 250 ac mae pob arwydd yn awgrymu y bydd *Papur Pawb* yn parhau am flynyddoedd lawer i ddod. Pam, tybed, y cydiodd y syniad o bapur bro yn yr ardal hon, gan roi hyder ar yr un pryd i gymunedau eraill ledled Cymru ddilyn ein hesiampl – a hynny mewn cyfnod a welodd ddirywiad enbyd ym mywyd cymdeithasol cefn gwlad a'r iaith Gymraeg? Carem awgrymu mai'r prif reswm am ei hirhoedledd yw bod nifer dda o'r trigolion wedi ysgwyddo'r baich o'i gynnal am eu bod yn credu'n angerddol ei fod yn rhywbeth llawer mwy na phapur newydd. Rhaid deall mai gwir arwyddocâd *Papur Pawb* yw ei fod ymhlith y gweithgareddau allweddol hynny sy'n cyfrannu tuag at warchod iaith, diwylliant a chymdogaeth dda ein hardal trwy groniclo ysblander ei gorffennol, cofnodi llawenydd a thristwch ei phresennol a rhoi mynegiant croyw i ddyheadau ein pobl ifanc am ei dyfodol ac am barhad ein haith a'r gwerthoedd hynny sydd ynghlwm â hi.

'Er gwaethaf pawb a phopeth, rŷn ni yma o hyd.' Hir y parhaed felly.

Eleri Huws

the paper was still going strong and there was good reason to celebrate the 250th issue and there is every indication to suggest that *Papur Pawb* will last for many years to come. Why did the idea of a community newspaper take hold in this area at that time, giving confidence to other Welsh communities to follow suit – particularly at a time when the Welsh language and rural life were in steep decline? We would like to suggest that the main reason for its longevity is that a large number of residents have shared the burden of producing the paper because they believe that it has far more to offer to the local community than simply delivering news. The true significance of *Papur Pawb* is that it is a key part of a range of activities in the village that help to sustain the language, the culture and the community spirit of the area by chronicling the glories of the past, recording the highs and lows in the lives of the local people and giving a clear expression to the aspirations of our young people for the future and for the survival of the Welsh language, together with all its associated values.

'Despite everyone and everything we are still here.' Long may it remain so.

Eleri Huws