

BALEDI CYMRAEG
WELSH BALLADS
LGC NLW



**MAE PAWB YN PRIODI OND
BILI A FI.**



BALEDI CYMRAEG

Y FALED YNG NGHYMRU

Chwaraeodd y faled Gymraeg ran amlwg ym mywyd Cymru o ganol y ddeunawfed ganrif hyd at ddiwedd y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg. Canodd rhai beirdd gerddi ar ffurf baledi yn yr ail ganrif ar bymtheg, ond yn ystod y ddeunawfed ganrif y datblygodd y faled Gymraeg a dod yn boblogaidd, a hynny'n bennaf yn nyffrynnoedd Clwyd, Dyfrdwy a Chonwy yng ngogledd Cymru. Yno roedd baledwyr fel Elis Roberts (Elis y Cowper), Huw Jones o Llangwm a Dafydd Jones o Drefriw yn brif gynheiliaid y traddodiad baledol. Cyhoeddwyd y baledi hyn ar ffurf pamffledi, gan amlaf yn wyth tudalen, yn cynnwys dwy neu dair o gerddi, ac fe'u hargraffwyd, fel rheol yng ngweisg y gororau, yn Amwythig, Caer a Chroesoswallt. Fe'u gwerthid wedyn gan faledwyr a chantorion yn y ffeiriau a'r marchnadoedd.

Does dim amheuaeth fod Cymry'r cyfnod yn fwy na pharod ar gyfer y baledi. Sicrhaodd Griffith Jones, Llanddowror, drwy gyfrwng ei ysgolion cylchynol, fod cynulleidfara barod lythrennog i'w chael ymhlith y bobl gyffredin. Hwn hefyd oedd cyfnod y diwygiadau crefyddol grymus, y rhyfeloedd yn erbyn America a Ffrainc, a'r cyfnewidiadau mawr mewn amaethyddiaeth a diwydiant. Er mai cerddi crefyddol a moesol, yn annog dynion i well buchedd yw corff mawr canu'r cyfnod hwn, dibynnai gwerthu baledi ar roi i'r cyhoedd ddigonedd o gyffro, a gwnaent hynny gyda cherddi am lofruddiaethau, digwyddiadau anarferol a rhyfeddodau, ac ambell gân anllad.

WELSH BALLADS

THE BALLAD IN WALES

The ballad played a prominent part in Welsh life from the mid eighteenth century until the end of the nineteenth century. Some poets sang poems in the form of ballads in the seventeenth century, but during the eighteenth century the Welsh ballad evolved and become popular, by and large in the valleys of Clwyd, Dee and Conwy in north Wales. Balladeers such as Elis Roberts (Elis y Cowper), Huw Jones of Llangwm and Dafydd Jones of Trefriw, were the mainstays of the traditional ballad. The ballads were published in the form of pamphlets, usually eight pages long, including two or three poems, and they were usually printed by presses on the English-Welsh border, in Shrewsbury, Chester and Oswestry. They were then sold by balladeers and singers in the fairs and markets.

There is no doubt that Welshmen of the period were more than ready for the ballad. Griffith Jones, Llanddowror, through his circulating schools, ensured that there was a ready audience available among the common people. This was also the period of the powerful religious reform, the wars against America and France, and the large fluctuations in agriculture and industry. Although religious and moral poems, that encouraged men to be better beings was the main body of the works of this period, the selling of ballads depended on providing plenty of excitement to the public, and they did this with poems about murders, unusual incidents and wonders, and the occasional obscene song.

Roedd y traddodiad baledol Cymraeg wedi hen sefydlu ei hun erbyn canol y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg. Roedd y ffefiriau yn dal yn eu bri, hyd yn oed wedi dyfodiad y rheilffordd, a daethant yn fannau cyfarfod cyfleus i bobl gymdeithasu â'u gilydd. Yno hefyd y câ'r baledwyr a'r cantorion eu cynulleidfa. Hon oedd oes aur y wasg Gymraeg yn ogystal, pan welwyd sefydlu swyddfeydd argraffu ym mhob tref bron yn y de a'r gogledd fel ei gilydd. Yn y man daeth Caernarfon, Trefriw, Llanrwst, Caerfyrddin, Aberdâr ac Ystalyfera yn ganolfannau pwysig i argraffu baledi Cymraeg, a dylifodd y baledi wrth y miloedd o'r gweisg hyn rhwng 1820 a 1880. Yn ystod y cyfnod hwn hefyd y daeth y faled pedwar tudalen yn boblogaidd, ond argraffwyd rhai ohonynt ar ffurf taflen (*broadside*) hefyd.

Ystyriai John Jones, yr argraffydd o Lanrwst, y talai'r faled fwy iddo na'r un cyhoeddiad arall, ac arferai argraffu dwy fil o gopiâu o bob baled ar y tro. Fe'u gwerthai i'r llyfrwerthwyr teithiol neu'r baledwyr am swllt y cant, i'w gwerthu wedyn yn y ffefiriau am geiniog yr un. Dywedir fod Richard Williams (Dic Dywyll) wedi gwerthu bron i ddwy fil o gopiâu o faledi mewn un diwrnod ym Merthyr Tudful.

Criw cymysg iawn, at ei gilydd, oedd nifer o'r baledwyr hyn. Roedd y mwyaf profiadol o'u plith, megis Abel Jones (Bardd Crwst), Owen Griffith (Ywain Meirion), Richard Williams (Dic Dywyll) a Dafydd Jones o Lanybydder yn canu baledi o'u gwaith hwy eu hunain. Cantorion yn unig oedd y baledwyr is eu stad, a byddai gan y rhain un neu ddwy faled o'u gwaith eu hunain, ond yn dibynnu gan fwyaf ar ganu a gwerthu baledi o waith baledwyr eraill. Wedyn roedd y pedlerwyr neu'r cardotwyr a ganai ac a werthai faledi pawb, ym mha le bynnag y gallent.

The Welsh ballad tradition had well established itself by the mid-nineteenth century. The fairs were still at their peak, even after the advent of the railway, and the stations became a convenient meeting place for people to socialize with each other; there, the singers and balladeers had an audience. This was also the golden age of the Welsh language press, which saw printing offices set up in each town, the north and south alike. Shortly after, Caernarfon, Trefriw, Llanrwst, Carmarthen, Aberdare and Ystalyfera became important centers for the printing of Welsh ballads, and ballads poured from the presses in their thousands between 1820 and 1880. It was during this period that the four-page ballad became popular, but some of them were also printed in the broadside format.

John Jones, the printer from Llanrwst, considered that the ballad was more profitable than any other publication, and used to print two thousand copies of each ballad at a time. He then sold them to booksellers or balladeers for a shilling per hundred ballads; they in turn, travelled around fairgrounds and sold them for a penny each. It is said that Richard Williams (Dic Dywyll) sold nearly two thousand copies of ballads in one day at Merthyr Tydfil.

The balladeers were a very mixed crew on the whole. The most experienced in their midst, such as Abel Jones (Bardd Crwst), Owen Griffith (Ywain Meirion), Richard Williams (Dic Dywyll) and Dafydd Jones of Llanbydder sang ballads of their own work. Balladeers of a lower standing would have a ballad or two of their own, but relied mostly on singing and selling ballads written by other balladeers. Then the peddlars or beggars would sing ballads and sold them to anyone and everyone, wherever they could.

Boddio chwaeth y dyn cyffredin am newyddion cyffrous a wnâi'r baledwyr yn bennaf. Yn gymdeithasol eu hapêl, yr oedd holl amgylchiadau bywyd yn destunau cân i'r baledwyr - y da a'r drwg, y parchus a'r anweddus, y trist a'r doniol, y pwysig a'r diniwed. Yn hyn o beth cyflawnt swyddogaeth debyg i eiddo'r wasg dabloid yn ein dyddiau ni. Dyna sy'n cyfrif paham mai cerddi am lofruddiaethau a dienyddiadau yw'r dosbarth mwyaf lluosog o blith y baledi, ac mai cerddi am ddamweiniau ar dir a môr yw'r nesaf atynt. Pan ddatblygodd y wasg newyddiadurol boblogaidd yn ystod wythdegau'r bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg, pallodd y galw am faledi a daeth y traddodiad i ben.

BALEDI'R DDEUNAWFED GANRIF

I'r beirniad llên, yr ieithydd, y cerddor a'r hanesydd, mae baledi Cymraeg y ddeunawfed ganrif yn drysorfa o wybodaeth heb ei hail. Cynigia'r baledi dystiolaeth hygryw ynghylch y modd y gwerineiddiwyd y diwylliant barddol Cymraeg erbyn y ddeunawfed ganrif, ac y maent hefyd yn enghreifftio twf rhyfeddol llythrennedd yng Nghymru yn ystod yr un cyfnod, a'r modd y porthwyd hynny gan weisg argraffu yng Nghymru a'r Gororau. Mewn oes a oedd yn amddifad o'r cyfryngau torfol yr ydym ni mor gyfarwydd â hwy heddiw, y faled oedd un o'r prif gyfryngau ar gyfer lledaenu newyddion am ddigwyddiadau dramatig a llywio barn y cyhoedd, ac mae disgrifiad Alan Bold o'r faled yn Lloegr - 'Metrical journalism of the masses' - yr un mor briodol yn y cyd-destun Cymreig hefyd.

Yn ogystal â'r mynegai electronig a baratowyd gan Ysgol y Gymraeg, Prifysgol Bangor, Ysgol y Gymraeg, Prifysgol Caerdydd a Phwyllgor

Balladeers would mostly satisfy the tastes of the common man for exciting news. They socially appealed and the song texts concentrated on all the circumstances of life - the good and the bad, the decent and indecent, the sad and funny, important and the innocent. In this regard, they functioned in a similar fashion to that of the tabloid press of today. That's why poems about murders and executions are regarded as the largest class among the ballads, and poems for accidents on land and sea are also quite large in number. When the popular journalistic press developed during the 1880s the demand for ballads diminished and the tradition came to an end.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BALLADS

To the literary critic, linguist, musician and historian, the eighteenth century Welsh ballad is an unparalleled treasure trove of information. The ballads offered folk-song evidence on what Welsh bardic culture was like by the eighteenth century, and they also exemplify the remarkable growth of literacy in Wales during the same period, and how that was fed by the printing presses of Wales and the Borders. In an age which was devoid of the mass media we are so familiar with today, the ballad was one of the main mediums for disseminating news about dramatic events and inform public opinion. Alan Bold's description of the ballad in England - 'Metrical journalism of the masses' - was also equally appropriate in the context of Wales.

As well as the electronic index prepared by the Welsh School, Bangor University, Welsh School, Cardiff University and the Language and Literature Committee of the Board of Celtic Studies - www.e-gymraeg.org/cronfabaledi/

Iaith a Llên Bwrdd Gwybodau Celtaidd Prifysgol Cymru - www.e-gymraeg.org/cronfabaledi/ - y man cychwyn anhepgor i'r sawl a fynnai ymchwilio i faledi argraffedig y ddeunawfed ganrif oedd cyfrol J.H. Davies, *A Bibliography of Welsh Ballads Printed in the 18th Century*, (Llundain, 1908-11). Disgrifir 759 o lyfrynnau o faledi yng nghyfrol J.H. Davies. Dros y blynyddoedd daeth eraill i'r golwg. Ychwanegwyd manylion am dros gant o lyfrynnau yng nghopi anodedig Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru o gyfrol J.H. Davies, a'u rhifo drwy ychwanegu llythrennau at rifau - er enghraifft JHD 2b, JDH 24a, JHD 91c. Cadwyd rhifau'r Llyfrgell Genedlaethol ar gyfer yr eitemau hynny wrth baratoi'r mynegai electronig. Yn ogystal, wrth baratoi'r mynegai, daeth 132 o lyfrynnau eraill i'r golwg, ac fe'u rhifwyd yn JHD 760 hyd JHD 891. Yn y mynegai electronig, felly, ceir gwybodaeth am bron 250 o faledi nad oeddynt yn hysbys i J.H. Davies.

BALEDI'R BEDWAREDD GANRIF AR BYMTHYG

Ychwanegwyd yn ddirfawr ar werth y casgliad baledi gan lafur Tegwyn Jones a fynegeiodd oddeutu 12,000 o faledi i gyd, ond fel y dengys yn y mynegai, mae cyfartaledd uchel o'r rhain yn ddyblygion. Mae'r gronfa yn cynnwys tuag 8,000 o eitemau i gyd, ac amcangyfrifir bod y mwyafrif llethol o'r teitlau hyn ar gael yn y Llyfrgell Genedlaethol. Ceir cofnodion am y baledi hyn yn mhrif gatalog Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru - <http://cat.llgc.org.uk>.

BALEDI CYMRU AR-LEIN

Mae Baledi Cymru Ar-lein yn cynnwys tua 4,000 o faledi wedi'u digido, yn dyddio yn

- the indispensable starting point for anyone wishing to investigate the printed ballads of the eighteenth century was J.H. Davies' book, *A Bibliography of Welsh Ballads Printed in the 18th Century*, (London, 1908-11). It contained descriptions of 759 booklets of ballads. Over the years others were found and details of over one hundred booklets were added to the National Library of Wales' annotated copy of J.H. Davies's book; they were indexed by adding letters to numbers - for example JHD 2b, JDH 24a, JHD 91c. In preparing the electronic index, the National Library's numbers were kept. In addition, while preparing the electronic index, a further 132 ballads were found, and were indexed and numbered from JHD 760 to JHD 891. The electronic index, therefore, contains information on nearly 250 ballads that were not known to J.H. Davies.

NINETEENTH CENTURY BALLADS

The value of the collection of ballads was greatly added to by the labour of Tegwyn Jones, who indexed around 12,000 ballads in total, but as shown in the index, a high proportion of these are duplicates. The database contains approximately 8,000 items in all, and it is estimated that the vast majority of these titles are available at the National Library of Wales. The index to the ballads are available on the National Library of Wales's main catalogue - <http://cat.llgc.org.uk>.

WELSH BALLADS ONLINE

Welsh Ballads Online includes around 4,000 digitised ballads, mainly dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from the collections of the National Library of Wales and Cardiff University Library. The ballads were digitised as a joint project

bennaf o'r ddeunawfed a'r bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg, a hynny o gasgliadau'r Llyfrgell Genedlaethol a Llyfrgell Prifysgol Caerdydd.

Digidwyd y baledi hyn fel prosiect ar y cyd rhwng Prifysgol Caerdydd a'r Llyfrgell Genedlaethol, gyda chefnogaeth Prifysgolion Abertawe, Bangor a Phrifysgol Cymru Llanbedr Pont Steffan. Ariannwyd y cynllun gan JISC fel rhan o'r rhaglen Cyfoethogi Adnoddau Digidol.

Mae modd chwilio a gweld delweddau digidol o'r baledi trwy gatalog y Llyfrgell Genedlaethol - www.llgc.org.uk/baledi.

RHAI O'R BALEDWYR

LEVI GIBBON

Brodor o Gwmfelin-mynach, sir Gaerfyrddin. Ganed tua 1807. Colodd ei olwg trwy ddamwain pan oedd yn 25 mlwydd oed a threuliodd weddill ei oes yn cyfansoddi baledi a chrwydro'r wlad yn eu canu. Tywysid ef o gwmpas gan ei ddwy ferch, a byddai un ohonynt yn cyfeilio iddo ar y ffidil. Dyn tal a chydnerth ac o bryd tywyll. Bu farw yn Awst 1870 yn 63 mlwydd oed.

OWEN GRIFFITH (YWAIN MEIRION)

Ganed yn Y Bala yn 1803. Dyn cydnerth ond heb fod â llais mawr. Enwog am ei ddonioldeb a'i ddigrifwch. Ymwelai â ffeiriau led-led Cymru i ganu a gwerthu ei faledi. Gwisgai het silc bob amser ac ynddi weithiau, cariai ei faledi. Yr oedd ei ddiwyg yn fwy cymen nag eiddo'r baledwyr yn gyffredinol, ac oherwydd hynny credir ei fod yn weddol gyfforddus ei fyd. Anghywir oedd hyn, oherwydd pan fu farw yn 1868, ac yntau'n

between Cardiff University and The National Library of Wales, with the support of the Universities of Bangor and Swansea, and University of Wales Lampeter. The project was funded by the JISC as part of its Enriching Digital Resources programme.

You are able to search the catalogue and view images of the ballads by searching the National Library's catalogue – www.llgc.org.uk/ballads.

SOME OF THE BALLADEERS

LEVI GIBBON

A native of Cwmfelin-mynach, Carmarthenshire. He was born in around 1807. He lost his sight in an accident when he was 25 years old and spent the rest of his life composing ballads and wandering the country singing them. He was guided around by his two daughters, one of whom would accompany him on the violin. He was a tall and resilient man of dark complexion. He died in August 1870, aged 63.

OWEN GRIFFITH (YWAIN MEIRION)

He was born in Bala in 1803. A resilient man, but he did not possess a big voice. He was famous for his wisdom and his humor. He visited fairs throughout Wales singing and selling his ballads. He always wore a silk hat in which he carried his ballads. He dressed more neatly than the general balladeer, and because of this it was believed that he was

digwydd bod yn Llanbryn-mair ar y pryd,
claddwyd ef ar gost y plwyf. Ysgrifennwyd ei
englyn beddagraff gan Fynyddog:

Baledwr heb waelodion – i'w ddoniau
Oedd hwn; mae'i wlad dirion
Yn weddw'n awr am y ddawn hon
Yn marw Ywain Meirion.

ABEL JONES (Y BARD CRWST)

Brodor o Lanrwst. Ganed ym 1830. Un
llygad oedd ganddo, a chyfrid ef yn dipyn
o gymeriad. Crwydrai ffeiriau Cymru yn y
De a'r Gogledd i ganu ei faledi. Bu farw yn
Wyrwys Llanrwst yn 1901, yn 71 mlwydd
oed.

DAFYDD JONES, LLANYBYDDER (DEWI MEDI, DEWI DYWYLL)

Ganed yn Llanybydder yn 1803, yn fab i saer.
Dechreuodd ganu baledi a mynd o gwmpas
y wlad i'w gwerthu wedi iddo gollu ei olwg.
Roedd ganddo lais cryf a chras, a gwisgai het
ac iddi gantal fawr bob amser. Yn Llanbedr
Pont Steffan y trigai wedi iddo briodi, ac yno
y bu farw yn 65 oed yng Ngorffennaf 1868.

RICHARD WILLIAMS (BARDD Y GWAGEDD, DIC DYWYLL)

Gogleddwr a aned tua 1790 oedd, ond
treuliodd y rhan helaethaf o'i oes ym Merthyr
Tudful. Gŵr dall eto. Canai ei gerddi ei
hun gan fwyaf, a dywedir iddo unwaith
werthu gwerth £8 o un o'i faledi yn ystod un
diwrnod ym Merthyr. Dyn cymharol fach
heb fod yn meddu ar lais mawr. Gelyn i'r
mudiad dirwest ac i'r llwyr-ymwrthodwyr.
Bu farw tua 1862.

fairly comfortably off. This was incorrect,
because when he died in 1868, when he
happened to be in Llanbryn-mair, he was
buried at the cost of the parish.
His epitaph poem was written by Fynyddog:

Baledwr heb waelodion – i'w ddoniau
Oedd hwn; mae'i wlad dirion
Yn weddw'n awr am y ddawn hon
Yn marw Ywain Meirion.

ABEL JONES (Y BARD CRWST)

He was a native of Lanrwst and born in
1830. He had only one eye, and he was
generally regarded as quite a character. He
wandered to fairs in South and North Wales
singing his ballads. He died in the workhouse
in Llanrwst in 1901, aged 71 years.

DAFYDD JONES, LLANYBYDDER (DEWI MEDI, DEWI DYWYLL)

He was born in Llanybydder in 1803, the son
of a carpenter. He began singing ballads and
travelling the country to sell them after he lost
his sight. He had a strong and crisp voice,
and he always wore a large Chantal hat. After
he married he lived in Lampeter, and he died
there aged 65, in July 1868.

RICHARD WILLIAMS (BARDD Y GWAGEDD, DIC DYWYLL)

A Northwalian born in around 1790, he spent
most of his life however in Merthyr Tydfil.
He was another blind man. He sang his own
poems mostly, and it is said that he once sold
the value of £8 of one of his ballads during
one day in Merthyr. A modest man who
did not possess a big voice, he was an enemy
of the temperance movement and the fully-
abstained. He died in around 1862.

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