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Dublin Core

Title

Holyhead Celebrates St David's Day in 1829 | Caergybi'n Dathlu Dydd Gŵyl Dewi ym 1829

Subject

Celebrations

Dathliadau

Traditions

Trathodiadau

Creator

Rita Singer

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Relation

<https://perma.cc/T72L-GU88>

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Welsh

Coverage

53.310670236272735, -4.633100725510168

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

St David's Day is a big public affair for Welsh people anywhere in the world today, but this was not always the case.

Lede (Welsh)

Mae Dydd Gŵyl Dewi'n fater cyhoeddus mawr i Gymry ledled y byd heddiw, ond nid felly roedd hi bob amser.

Story

Although Dewi Sant, or Saint David, has been recognised as the Welsh patron saint at least since the twelfth century, public celebrations of his feast day are a fairly recent tradition. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, the habit of patriotic festivities on his feast day seem to have originated in London in the early eighteenth century. Here, the Honourable and Loyal Society of Ancient Britons was known to hold annual processions through the city with much aplomb and fanfare as a public display of Welsh patriotism. Following the parade, the members of the society would assemble for a banquet until late in the night and raise many toasts, not just in honour of Wales and Dewi, but also to the monarch. By the early nineteenth century, this habit of patriotic feasting had also caught on in Holyhead where the elite of local society would gather annually at the King's Head Inn, which at the time also doubled up as Excise Office.

In 1829, the *North Wales Chronicle and General Advertiser* reported in greater detail about the Holyhead celebrations organised by the Association for the Prosecution of Felons. This was not the first time that the Association held a banquet at the King's Head in honour of the national patron saint, but the report notes that celebrations that year were undertaken 'with more than usual conviviality'. Although Captain Morris M. Goddard had left the society in a pickle by resigning his post as chairman at the eleventh hour, Edmund Roberts, Esq. stepped up to the plate and took over the role as ceremonial master in front of a richly assembled crowd that evening.

The newspaper article goes on to praise the quality of the dinner, although it remains unclear whether Wales's national dish cawl formed part of the menu. Instead, the reporter goes into greater detail about the many and varied toasts raised over the course of the evening. Among the recipients were, naturally, St David, but also King William IV, several members of the aristocracy, as well as local nobility and gentry such as Henry Paget, 1st Marquess of Anglesey, and the Stanleys of Penrhos. The Duke of Wellington and Robert Peel also had a glass raised in their honour but, to the reporter's dismay, the assembled guests were suddenly overcome by a collective coughing fit. Most importantly, however, the party drank to the health of their annual hosts, Mary Parry and Edward, the landlady of the King's Head Inn and her son.

The celebrations were not entirely dedicated to drinking and dining, but also included another favourite Welsh pastime: recitation of poetry. At some point during the evening, the

local *poet laureate*, John Bates presented his latest annual contribution to the festivities in the shape of a praise poem to the patron saint and country:

Hail! first of March – to *Britons* dear,
Be this thine own – thy native lay;
First, fairest, happiest of the year,
Art thou, divine *Saint David's Day*.

At last, the party retired around midnight 'highly delighted with their entertainment, and the occasion which brought so many good friends together'.

Story (Welsh)

Er bod Dewi Sant wedi'i gydnabod yn nawddsant Cymru ers y ddeuddegfed ganrif o leiaf, traddodiad cymharol ddiweddar yw dathlu'r ŵyl. Tipyn o syndod o bosibl yw deall mai yn Llundain ar ddechrau'r ddeunawfed ganrif y dechreuodd yr arfer o gynnal dathliad gwladgarol ar ddydd gŵyl Dewi. Yno, rydyn ni'n gwybod bod Cymdeithas Anrhydeddus a Theyrngar yr Hen Frythoniaid yn cynnal gorymdeithiau blynyddol drwy'r ddinas gyda llawer o rwysg a ffanffer fel arddangosfa gyhoeddus o wladgarwch y Cymry. Ar ôl yr orymdaith, byddai aelodau'r gymdeithas yn ymgynnull i wledda tan yn hwyr y nos ac yn codi llawer llwncdestun, nid yn unig i anrhydeddu Cymru a Dewi, ond hefyd y brenin. Erbyn dechrau'r bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg, roedd yr arfer hwn o wledda gwladgarol hefyd wedi cydio yng Nghaergybi lle byddai boneddigion lleol yn ymgynnull yn flynyddol yn nhafarn y King's Head, a oedd yn gweithredu ar y pryd fel Swyddfa'r Ecséis hefyd.

Ym 1829, rhoddodd y *North Wales Chronicle and General Advertiser* ddisgrifiad manylach o ddathliadau Caergybi a drefnwyd gan y Gymdeithas Erlyn Ffeloniaid. Nid dyma'r tro cyntaf i'r Gymdeithas gynnal gwledd yn nhafarn y King's Head i anrhydeddu nawddsant Cymru, ond mae'r adroddiad yn nodi bod dathliadau'r flwyddyn honno wedi'u cynnal 'with more than usual conviviality'. Er bod y Capten Morris M. Goddard wedi creu anawsterau i'r gymdeithas drwy ymddiswyddo fel cadeirydd ar yr unfed awr ar ddeg, dyma Edmund Roberts, Ysw. yn camu ymlaen i lywyddu dros y seremoni o flaen cynulleidfa doreithiog ar y noson.

Mae'r erthygl yn mynd ymlaen i ganmol safon y cinio, er ei bod yn dal yn aneglur a oedd saig genedlaethol Cymru – cawl – ar y fwydlen ai peidio. Yn hytrach, mae'r gohebydd yn manylu'n am y nifer fawr o lwncestunau amrywiol a godwyd yn ystod y noson. Roedd y testunau'n cynnwys Dewi Sant yn naturiol, ond hefyd y Brenin William IV, sawl aelod o'r bendefigaeth, yn ogystal â boneddigion lleol fel Henry Paget, Ardalydd Cyntaf Ynys Môn, a Stanleys Penrhos. Cafodd gwydrau eu codi hefyd i anrhydeddu Dug Wellington a Robert Peel ond, er siom y gohebydd, cafodd y gwesteion eu taro'n sydyn gan ffit pesychu ar y cyd. Yn bwysicaf oll, fodd bynnag, yfodd y parti i iechyd eu gwesteiwyr blynyddol, Mary Parry ac Edward, perchennog tafarn y King's Head a'i mab.

Nid yfed a bwyta yn unig oedd y dathliadau hyn: roedden nhw hefyd yn cynnwys un arall o hoff ddifyrion y Cymry: adrodd barddoniaeth. Rywbryd yn ystod y noson, cyflwynodd bardd Saesneg lleol o'r enw John Bates ei gyfraniad blynyddol diweddaraf i'r dathliadau ar ffurf cerdd o fawl i'r nawddsant a'r wlad:

Hail! first of March – to *Britons* dear,
Be this thine own – thy native lay;
First, fairest, happiest of the year,
Art thou, divine *Saint David's Day*.

Tua chanol nos, daeth y dathlu i ben o'r diwedd a'r gloddestwyr i gyd 'highly delighted with their entertainment, and the occasion which brought so many good friends together'.

Factoid

The King's Head Inn in Market Street appears to have been demolished at some time in the nineteenth century, so no precise location can be identified.

Mae'n ymddangos bod yr King's Head Inn yn Market Streed wedi'i ddymchwel rywbyrd yn y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg, felly does dim modd nodi'r union leoliad.

Related Resources

'St. David's Day at Holyhead.' North Wales Chronicle and General Advertiser. 12 March 1829. *Welsh Newspapers Online*. National Library of Wales. <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4461105/4461108/19/>

Rhys Kaminski-Jones. "'Where Cymry United, Delighted Appear": The Society of Ancient Britons and the Celebration of St David's Day in London, 1715-1815." *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion*. 2017. 23: 56–68. archived at <https://perma.cc/5W7R-EV23>

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