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Dublin Core

Title

The works of Richard Fenton, Part II | Gweithiau Richard Fenton, Rhan II

Subject

Richard Fenton

Antiquarianism

Fishguard

Creator

Sally Sadler

Publisher

Ports, Past and Present Project

Date

2023

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Relation

<https://perma.cc/YF8P-KFNC>

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Welsh

Coverage

51.99316163901425, -4.9638324060345935

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

Richard Fenton (1747-1821), travel writer, poet, lawyer and antiquarian, was a significant Welsh cultural figure who lived in Fishguard from 1793.

Lede (Welsh)

Llênor a hanesydd sylweddol bu Richard Fenton (1747-1821), a ddaeth i fyw yn Abergwaun ym 1793.

Story

Richard Fenton (1747-1821), travel writer, poet, lawyer and antiquarian, was a significant Welsh cultural figure who lived in Fishguard from 1793. One of his most influential publications was an edition of the writings of the Tudor historian George Owen of Henllys (1552-1613), which he produced from the manuscript owned by Fenton's great-grandfather, John Lewis of Manorowen.

In 1796 Fenton published a complete version of Owen's *A Description of Pembrokeshire*, making this important historical text accessible to the reading public for the first time, and shaping the direction of subsequent historical research in the county. Owen's ideas about Pembrokeshire's linguistic 'Landsker' line, for example, and about Flemish settlement, rapidly became part of the accepted history of the county.

But it was in the *Cambrian Register* for 1795 that Fenton gave readers a first taste of Owen's distinctive style, with a bloodthirsty account of the legendary north Pembrokeshire game of *knappan* (also spelt 'cnapan'). In Owen's day the game was still played around Easter in parishes up the coast north of Fishguard. Over several pages, he describes the 'unruly play' in all its ferocious detail, with men from competing parishes sometimes wounded or killed fighting over a wooden ball of 'box, ewe, crabb or holy-tree [...] boyled in tallowe for to make it slippery, and hard to be holden'.

And in this sorte you shall in an open feeld see 2000 naked people follow this boule backward and forward, Est, West, South, and North; soe that a straunger that casuallie should see such a multitude soe ranging naked, would thinke them distracted...in the furie of the chase, they respect neither hedge, ditch, pale, or walle, hille, dale, bushes, river, or rocke...

Fenton also drew on and shared Owen's writings when compiling his own copious *Historical Tour of Pembrokeshire* (1810/11). He also wrote two witty satires, *A Tour in Quest of Genealogy* (1811) and *Memoirs of an Old Wig* (1815), both published anonymously. He died at Glynamel in 1821 and was buried at Manorowen, where he is remembered with a plaque inside the church.

Story (Welsh)

Llênor a hanesydd sylweddol bu Richard Fenton (1747-1821), a ddaeth i fyw yn Abergwaun ym 1793: cafodd enw fel cyfreithiwr, hynafiaethydd ac awdur ysgrifau teithio. Ymhlith ei gyhoeddiadau mwyaf dylanwadol oedd golygiad o waith hanesyddol George Owen, Henllys

(1552-1613), a dynnwyd gan Fenton o lawysgrif yn nwylo ei hen dadcu, John Lewis, Manorowen.

Ym 1796 cyhoeddodd Fenton fersiwn gyflawn o'r *Description of Pembrokeshire* gan Owen, gan ryddhau'r testun pwysig hwn i ddarllenwyr ac ymchwilwyr am y tro cyntaf, ac yn dylanwadu'n sylweddol ar astudiaethau hanesyddol canlynol. Lledaenodd syniadau Owen am y terfyn ieithyddol (y llinell 'Landsker'), er enghraifft, ac am mewnfudiad cymunedau o Fflandrys, ymhlith haneswyr Sir Benfro ac eraill.

Ond yn y *Cambrian Register* ar gyfer y flwyddyn 1795 cyflwynodd Fenton lais George Owen i'w ddarllenwyr am y tro cyntaf, gan roi blas ar ei arddull bywiog gyda darn am y gêm enwog *knappan* ('cnapan'), oedd dal yn boblogaidd yng ngogledd y sir yn oes Owen. Bob blwyddyn adeg y Pasg cynhaliwyd y gêm yn y plwyfi arfordirol gogleddol i Abergwaun. Dros sawl tudalen ceir disgrifiad byrlymus a didrugaredd o'r 'unruly play', gyda manylion ysgytwol am sut byddai trigolion y plwyfi'n cystadlu'n erbyn ei gilydd. Byddant weithiau'n brifo neu hyd yn oed marw wrth ymladd dros bêl fach bren wedi ei gerfio allan o 'box, ewe, crabb or holy-tree [...] boyled in tallowe for to make it slippery, and hard to be holden'.

And in this sorte you shall in an open feeld see 2000 naked people follow this boule backwarde and forwarde, Est, West, South, and North; soe that a straunger that casuallie should see such a multitude soe ranging naked, would thinke them distracted...in the furie of the chase, they respect neither hedge, ditch, pale, or walle, hille, dale, bushes, river, or rocke...

Roedd gwaith Owen yn ffynhonnell bwysig wrth i Fenton gyfansoddi ei waith mawr ei hun, *An Historical Tour of Pembrokeshire* (1810/11). Cyhoeddodd yn ogystal ddau lyfr ffraeth a dychanol, *A Tour in Quest of Genealogy* (1811) a *Memoirs of an Old Wig* (1815), y ddau wedi'u cyhoeddi'n ddi-enw. Bu fawr Fenton yn Glynamel, Abergwaun ym 1821 a'i gladdu ym Manorowen, lle mae cofeb iddo tu fewn yr eglwys.

Factoid

Related Resources

Dillwyn Miles, 'Richard Fenton, Pembrokeshire Historian 1747-1821', *The Journal of the Pembrokeshire Historical Society* (1997, Vol. 7), <http://hdl.handle.net/10107/1166483>

Official Website

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