

LLAFUR

Welsh People's History Society
Cymdeithas Hanes Pobl Cymru



LLAFUR: THE WELSH PEOPLE'S HISTORY SOCIETY.

WINTER 2015 EDITION

LLAFUR: CYMDEITHAS HANES POBL CYMRU.

RHIFYN Y GAELF 2015

CHAIR'S REPORT

Martin Wright

This is the first newsletter that we've sent out for a while, so I'll open by offering apologies for the lull in communication. The last year or so has been a difficult time for the Llafur committee. Due to a range of circumstances beyond our control, we have had fewer 'hands on deck' than usual, and some of our core activities have consequently been happening at a slower rate than we would have liked. I'm happy to say, though, that after a bit of re-organisation we are now up to full strength again, and that a lot is going on behind the scenes.

It's a pleasure to welcome Darren Macey to his new role as newsletter editor. This is the first of what I hope will be many newsletters edited by Darren. So, if you have anything to contribute to future newsletters – accounts of meetings, visits to archives, book reviews or opinion pieces – please don't hesitate to send it to Darren at the e mail address given elsewhere in this edition. I'd also like to convey the Society's thanks to Matt Eggerton for his work editing the newsletter and overseeing other aspects of our publicity over the last few years.

In addition to appointing a new newsletter editor, we are also in the process of organising an overhaul of the Society's publicity material and website. This has been a long and rather involved process. Our discussions on issues such as the images we wish to use in the publicity materials and the Society's logo have been complex and lively. I'd never have thought that there could be so many differing points of view about adopting a symbol to represent the Society, but the discussion has gone to the very heart of what we stand for. Although sometimes difficult, it has been a very interesting and thought-provoking process, which is now approaching completion. We are hoping to launch a new set of publicity materials and the new website before the Autumn is over, and we will then be considering a new membership campaign.

We've held several events during the course of the year, reports of which will be found within the pages of this newsletter. Particularly moving, to my mind, was the event we held in July at Big Pit, Blaenavon, in collaboration with the Women's

Archive of Wales, to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the 1984-5 Miners' Strike. The Strike was, of course, one of the pivotal events of modern Welsh and British history, and its presence continues to bear down on our consciousness with suffocating weight.

One of the themes to emerge from the day school, though, was the continuity of hope that survived the defeat of 1985. Indeed, we find ourselves again in a period when, despite the rather depressing 2015 General Election result, the continuity of hope is being reasserted. Regardless of one's view of Jeremy Corbyn, it is undeniable that the remarkable mobilisation that resulted in his election as leader of the Labour Party is making socialism an everyday word once again. I'm noticing this among my students, among previously apolitical friends who have suddenly become politicised and in the general tone of political debate around us. One thing is certain: for labour historians hope is one of the great continuities that connect us with the people and events of the past. As historians we have a critical role in both nurturing and tempering that hope with historical perspective.

Recent Llafur events



**'Let us face the future': the impact of the 1945
Labour Government on Wales**

Saturday 12 December 2015

at

**The Winding House, New Tredegar NP24 6EG
11am-4pm**

Report by Daryl Leeworthy

On a rather soggy day in mid-December, Llafur members gathered at the Winding House, New Tredegar, for the annual general meeting and a day school to commemorate the 70th anniversary year of the transformative 1945 Labour Government. With

a warming cup of tea in hand, Llafur Chair, Martin Wright, welcomed delegates to the Winding House with some of his own reflections on the legacy of the 1945-51 Labour government for his own generation and the evaporation of the post-war settlement since the 1980s.

The first session of the day school featured the personal recollections and reflections of Mary Macgregor who was then living above her father's chemist shop in Commercial Street, Ystrad Mynach, and Madeleine Williams, whose wartime childhood in Swansea was spent amidst its blitzed ruins. They both recalled the tremendous excitement at war's end and the election of the Labour government a few months later. And amidst the belief that, as Mary's father put it, 'well that's the end of the Means Test' (of the 1930s), there were the realities of life taking several years to gain the security. As Madeleine observed, her parents, who had faced unemployment in the 1930s, had to wait until the 1950s to gain the security they yearned for.

Next up was Alun Burge with a tremendous paper setting out more of his research into the much neglected history of the Cooperative Movement in Wales. Taking us back through the twentieth century, through history and the histories that have been written, Alun encouraged us all to reconsider the Labour Government and its focus on state planning and nationalisation, yet also consider the impact of the democratic voluntary association that had been such an obvious feature of social and political life in Wales before the 1940s. Alongside Aneurin Bevan, Jim Griffiths and Clement Attlee, delegates at the day school will surely remember Will Coldrick, Jack Bailey, Aneurin Davies, and Tom Allen.

After the AGM, it we heard from Steve Thompson about the making of the National Health Service and its relationship with the medical aid societies of South Wales. As Aneurin Bevan famously commented he wished to 'Tredegarise' healthcare provision across Britain but what did that really mean? Steve showed us the range of medical services available to members of the various medical aid societies, the differing nature of hospital and clinic provision in the major towns along the coast and those of the coalfield, and the effect of their

nationalisation in the late 1940s. As with Alun's paper, delegates came away with a sense of alternative possibilities.

These alternatives and the important legacy of the 1945-51 Labour Government were discussed in a roundtable, which brought the day school to a close. With darkness descending on the valley, delegates headed home with a new sense of the 1940s as they were lived, as we remember them in the history books, and as we might look at them afresh.

**Understanding the Miners' Strike in South
Wales: Women, Men and Support Groups in
1984/85
Big Pit National Coal Mining Museum,
Blaenafon,
4 July 2015
Report by Stephanie Ward**



Siân James addressing a rally during the Miners' Strike in 1984.

'In every defeat there is the possibility of reinvention' were the words which aptly set the tone and opened the highly successful day school reflecting on the events and aftermath of the 1984-85 Miners' Strike. Held jointly with the Women's Archive of Wales, the day school drew a good audience from both societies as well as some new faces. Within the fitting setting of Big Pit, speakers debated the memories and meanings of the strike. What made the day a particular success, was the opportunity to hear from those who had been at the forefront of events. However, this was not merely an opportunity for reminiscence and how histories of the strike can and should be presented were considered by all speakers.

ADRODDIAD Y CADEIRYDD

Martin Wright

Dyma'r cylchlythyr cyntaf i ni ei gyhoeddi ers tro, felly fe wna i gychwyn drwy ymddiheuro am y diffyg cyfathrebu. Mae'r flwyddyn ddiwethaf wedi bod yn gyfnod anodd i bwyllgor Llafur. Oherwydd amryw o amgylchiadau y tu hwnt i'n rheolaeth, roedd llai o ddwylo i helpu nag arfer, ac o ganlyniad mae rhai o'n gweithgareddau craidd wedi bod yn digwydd ar gyfradd arafach nag y byddem wedi hoffi. Ond rwy'n falch i ddweud, ar ôl ychydig bach o ad-drefnu, ein bod wedi cyrraedd ein llawn gryfder eto, a bod llawer yn mynd ymlaen y tu ôl i'r llenni.

Mae'n bleser croesawu Darren Macey i'w rôl newydd fel golygydd y cylchlythyr. Hwn fydd y cyntaf o lu o gylchlythyrau y bydd Darren, gobeithio, yn eu golygu. Felly, os oes gennych chi unrhyw beth i'w gyfrannu at gylchlythyrau yn y dyfodol - adroddiadau cyfarfodydd, ymweliadau ag archifau, adolygiadau llyfr neu erthyglau yn lleisio barn - mae croeso i chi ei anfon at Darren i'r cyfeiriad e-bost a nodir mewn man arall yn y rhifyn hwn. Hoffwn i ddiolch hefyd ar ran y Gymdeithas i Matt Eggerton am ei waith yn golygu'r cylchlythyr a goruchwyllo agweddau eraill ar ein cyhoedduswydd dros y blynnyddoedd diwethaf.

Yn ogystal â phenodi golygydd newydd i'r cylchlythyr, rydym hefyd yn y broses o ailwampio deunyddiau cyhoedduswydd a gwefan y Gymdeithas. Mae hon wedi bod yn broses hir ac eithaf dyrys. Mae ein trafodaethau ar faterion fel y delweddau yr hoffem eu defnyddio yn ein deunyddiau cyhoedduswydd a logo'r Gymdeithas wedi bod yn gymhleth ac yn fywiog. Fyddwn i byth wedi meddwl y byddai cymaint o wahaniaeth barn am fabwysiadu symbol i gynrychioli'r Gymdeithas, ond mae'r drafodaeth wedi mynd at wraidd yr hyn rydym yn sefyll drosto. Er iddi fod yn anodd ar brydiau, mae wedi bod yn broses ddiddorol iawn sydd wedi ysgogi'r meddwl, ac yn un sy'n dod at ei therfyn bellach. Rydym yn gobeithio lansio cyfres newydd o ddeunyddiau cyhoedduswydd a'r wefan newydd cyn diwedd yr Hydref, ac yna byddwn yn ystyried ymgyrch aelodaeth newydd.

Mae sawl digwyddiad wedi cael ei gynnal yn ystod y flwyddyn, a chewch fanylion amdanynt yn nhudalennau'r cylchlythyr hwn. Digwyddiad arbennig o gyffrous oedd yr un a gynhaliwyd yng Ngorffennaf yn y Big Pit, Blaenafon, mewn cydweithrediad ag Archif Menywod Cymru, i nodi tri deg mlynedd ers Streic y Glowyr 1984-85. Wrth gwrs, roedd y Streic yn un o'r digwyddiadau allweddol yn hanes Cymru a Phrydain fodern, ac mae ei phresenoldeb yn dal i bwysu'n drwm ar ein cydwybod.

Ond un o'r themâu a ddaeth i'r amlwg o'r ysgol ddydd oedd y gobaith parhaus a lwyddodd i oroesi gorchfygiad Streic 1985. Yn wir, rydym yn cael ein hunain unwaith eto mewn cyfnod lle, er gwaethaf canlyniad siomedig Etholiad Cyffredinol 2015, mae'r gobaith parhaus yn cael ei ailddatgan. Beth bynnag fo'ch barn am Jeremy Corbyn, does dim dwywaith bod yr ymgyrchu anhygoel a arweiniodd at ei ethol yn arweinydd y Blaid Lafur wedi gwneud sosiolaeth yn air bob dydd unwaith yn rhagor. Rwy'n sylwi ar hyn ymysg fy myfyrwr, ymysg ffrindiau a arferai fod yn anwleidyddol ond sydd yn sydyn iawn yn ymddiddori mewn gwleidyddiaeth, ac yn nhôn gyffredinol y dadleuon gwleidyddol o'n cwmpas. Un peth sy'n sicr: i haneswyr llafur, gobaith yw un o'r nodweddion parhaus mwyaf sy'n ein cysylltu â phobl a digwyddiadau'r gorffennol. Fel haneswyr mae gennym ni rôl hanfodol i'w chwarae o ran meithrin a chymedroli'r gobaith hwnnw gyda phersbectif hanesyddol.

Digwyddiadau Diweddar Llafur



'Gadewch i ni wynebu'r dyfodol': effaith

Llywodraeth Lafur 1945 ar Gymru

Dydd Sadwrn 12 Rhagfyr 2015

yn

Y Tŷ Weindio, Tredegar Newydd NP24 6EG

11am-4pm

Adroddiad gan Daryl Leeworthy

Ar ddiwrnod braidd yn wlyb yng nghanol mis Rhagfyr, daeth aelodau Llafur at ei gilydd yn y Tŷ Weindio, Tredegar Newydd, i gymryd rhan yn y cyfarfod cyffredinol blynyddol a'r ysgol ddydd i ddathlu 70 mlynedd ers y Llywodraeth Lafur drawsnewidiol ym 1945. Gyda phaned o de cynnes yn ei law, croesawodd Cadeirydd Llafur, Martin Wright, gynrychiolwyr i'r Tŷ Weindio gyda rhai o'i fyfyrddodau ei hun ar etifeddiaeth llywodraeth Lafur 1945-1951 ar gyfer ei genhedlaeth ei hun, a thynnodd sylw at y ffaith bod llawer o'r cytundebau a wnaethpwyd ar ôl y rhyfel wedi diflannu ers y 1980au.

Roedd sesiwn gyntaf yr ysgol ddydd yn cynnwys atgofion personol a myfyrddodau Mary Macgregor a oedd bryd hynny, yn byw uwchben fferyllfa ei thad yn Stryd Commercial, Ystrad Mynach, a Madeleine Williams, y

cafodd ei phlentyndod yn ystod y rhyfel yn Abertawe ei dreulio ymysg ei hadfeilion wedi'u bomio. Roedd y ddau yn cofio'r cyffro aruthrol ar ddiwedd y rhyfel, ac ethol y llywodraeth Lafur ychydig fisoedd yn ddiweddarach. Ac yng nghanol y gred, fel y dywedodd tad Mary, mai 'well that's the end of the Means Test' (o'r 1930au), roedd realitiâu bywyd yn cymryd nifer o flynyddoedd i ennill y sicrwydd. Fel y dywedodd Madeleine, bu'n rhaid i'w rhieni, a oedd wedi wynebu diweithdra yn y 1930au, aros tan y 1950au i gael y sicrwydd yr oeddent yn dyheu amdano.

I fyny nesaf oedd Alun Burge, gyda phapur aruthrol yn nodi mwy o'i ymchwil i hanes tra anghofiedig y Mudiad Cydweithredol yng Nghymru. Gan fynd â ni yn ôl drwy'r ugeinfed ganrif, trwy hanes a'r hanesion sydd wedi cael eu hysgrifennu, anogodd Alun bob un ohonom i ailystyried y Llywodraeth Lafur a'i ffocws ar gynllunio gwladwriaeth a gwladoli. Beth am y gymdeithas wirfoddol ddemocrataidd a oedd wedi bod yn nodwedd mor amlwg o fywyd cymdeithasol a gwleidyddol yng Nghymru cyn y 1940au. Ochr yn ochr â Aneurin Bevan, Jim Griffiths a Clement Attlee, bydd cynrychiolwyr yn yr ysgol ddydd yn siŵr o gofio Will Coldrick, Jack Bailey, Aneurin Davies, a Tom Allen.

Ar ôl y Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Blynyddol, clywsom gan Steve Thompson ynghylch creu'r Gwasanaeth Iechyd Gwladol a'i berthynas â chymdeithasau cymorth meddygol De Cymru. Roedd Aneurin Bevan yn enwog am ddweud ei fod yn dymuno 'Tredegareiddio'r' ddarpariaeth gofal iechyd ar draws Prydain, ond beth oedd hynny'n ei olygu mewn gwirionedd? Dangosodd Steve i ni'r ystod o wasanaethau meddygol sydd ar gael i aelodau'r amrywiol gymdeithasau cymorth meddygol, natur wahanol yr ysbytai a'r clinigau yn y trefi mawr ar hyd yr arfordir a'r rhai yn y meysydd glo, ac effaith eu gwladoli yn y 1940au hwyr. Fel gyda phapur Alun, gadawodd y cynrychiolwyr gydag ymdeimlad o bosibiliadau amgen.

Trafodwyd y dewisiadau hyn ac etifeddiaeth bwysig Llywodraeth Lafur 1945-51 ar ffurf bwrdd crwn ac yn dilyn hynny, daeth yr ysgol ddydd i ben. Gyda thywyllwch yn disgyn ar y dyffryn, aeth cynrychiolwyr am adref gyda synnwyr newydd o'r 1940au fel y cawsant eu byw, wrth i ni eu cofio yn y llyfrau hanes, ac fel y gallem edrych arnynt o'r newydd.

**Deall Streic y Glowyr yn Ne Cymru:
Menywod, Dynion a Grwpiau Cefnogi yn
1984/85**

Big Pit: Amgueddfa Lofaol Cymru

**Blaenafon,
4 Gorffennaf 2015
Adroddiad gan Stephanie Ward**



Siân James yn annerch rali yn ystod Streic y Glowyr yn 1984.

'Ym mhob gorchfygiad mae'r posibilrwydd o ailddyfeisio' - dyma'r geiriau oedd yn gymwys iawn wedi gosod tŷn ac agor yr ysgol ddydd lwyddiannus iawn ar ddigwyddiadau ac adladd Streic y Glowyr 1984-85. Wedi'i chynnal ar y cyd ag Archif Menywod Cymru, roedd yr ysgol ddydd wedi denu cynulleidfadau dda o'r ddwy gymdeithas yn ogystal â rhai wynebau newydd. O fewn lleoliad priodol y Big Pit, roedd siaradwyr wedi trafod atgofion ac ystyr y streic. Yr hyn a wnaeth y diwrnod yn un arbennig o lwyddiannus oedd y cyfle i glywed gan y rhai a fu ar flaen y gad yn y digwyddiadau. Fodd bynnag, nid cyfle i hel atgofion yn unig oedd hwn, ac roedd pob siaradwr wedi ystyried sut y gall ac y dylai'r hanesion am y streic gael eu cyflwyno.

Yn y sesiwn gyntaf cafodd Dr Hywel Francis ei gyfweled gan Dr Elin Jones ar ei fersiwn ef o'r streic yn ei lyfr sydd newydd gael ei ailgyhoeddi *History on Our Side*. Roedd Jones yn awyddus i gwestiynu Francis ar y posibilrwydd o chwedloni'r streic a dylanwad ei waith fel gweithredydd ar ei ysgrifennu. Mewn trafodaeth ddiddorol, soniodd Francis fod ei waith fel gweithredydd, hanesydd ac addysgwr wedi'i gydblythu, ac am ei rôl fel trefnydd cymunedol yn ystod y streic. Roedd Francis wedi annog haneswyr eraill i ysgrifennu hanesion o'r streic gan nodi pwysigrwydd casglu deunyddiau er mwyn parhau i bwysleisio sut y trawsnewidiwyd y mudiad llafur gan y streic.

Rhoddodd Siân James anerchiad pwerus iawn ar effaith y streic ar deuluoedd. Roedd James, fel cynifer o fenywod, wedi deffro'n wleidyddol yn ystod y streic ac am y rheswm hwn teimlai 'sut galla i ddweud ein bod ni wedi colli pan wnaethon ni ennill cymaint'. Er gwaethaf natur y diwydiant erbyn y 1980au roedd cloddio, dadleuai James, 'yn dal yn ein DNA'. Roedd y frwydr dros

Dr Elin Jones interviewed Dr Hywel Francis in the first session on his version of the strike in his recently reissued *History on Our Side*. Jones was keen to question Francis on the potential mythologizing of the strike and the influence of his work as an activist upon his writing. In a fascinating discussion, Francis spoke of how his work as activist, historian and educator were always intertwined and his role as a community organiser during the course of the strike. Francis urged for other historians to write histories of the strike and noted the importance of collecting materials to continue to draw out how the strike transformed the labour movement.

Siân James gave a very powerful talk on the impact of the strike on families. James, like so many women, found her political awakening during the course of the strike and for this reason felt that 'how can I say we lost when we gained so much'. Despite the nature of the industry by the 1980s mining was, James argued, 'still in our DNA'. The fight for the future of communities empowered women and James vividly described the

fraught conditions that women fought against to ensure solidarity. James celebrated the important role of a vibrant Welsh language culture and media in supporting the cause. James ended her talk by reflecting on how her story has been part of the recent *Pride* film. It is clear that thirty years on even after a successful career as a politician, James not only continues to be influenced by the events of those years, she is now positively influencing the lives of others because of that very experience.

The role of women in the strike was also discussed by Jen Wilson and Gail Allen who were members of the Swansea Women's History Group along with Ursula Mason. We then watched the superb documentary 'Smiling and Splendid Women' which the group created. The pioneering film captured the emotion, drama and politics of the South Wales Coalfield as the tumultuous events unfolded.

Dr Daryl Leeworthy and Daniel James Walters (a recent graduate of Aberystwyth University), both offered an historian's perspective on the events of 1984-85. Walters was interviewed by Hywel Francis on the role of the Wales Congress and he gave an excellent discussion of how the legacy of the Wales

Congress was the road to devolution. Leeworthy put the events in south Wales within a broader British and international framework. He argued that the unique political alliances in the strike make for a 'forward looking history'. Leeworthy offered a really thought-provoking discussion on the longer history of the strike. When Gwyn A. Williams ended his 1984 history *When Was Wales?* he spoke of the Welsh being 'nothing but a naked people under an acid rain'. For a time the Welsh, Leeworthy suggested, sheltered under a political tent until it appeared that the sun had come out. Now, he warned, it is perhaps time to find the tents again as we take shelter from another storm.

Will Kaufman's 'Woody Guthrie: Hard Times and Hard Travelin'

**University of South Wales, 24th March 2015,
Treforest Campus,**

Report by Darren Macey

Organised at University of South Wales in conjunction with Shelter Cymru, the Welsh charity for the homeless, this event sought to inspire a mixed audience of undergraduates, academics and the wider public to consider the transient nature of poverty and the creation of a societal and historical 'other'. Offering an enthralling historical perspective to the contemporary stigmatisation of poverty and migration, Will Kaufman's (pictured above) captivating 'live documentary' *Hard Times and Hard Travelin'* is framed around the songs of Woody Guthrie, and the Dust Bowl Migrants of the 1930s. A supremely talented singer and multi-instrumentalist, Kaufman is the Professor of American Literature and Culture at the University of Central Lancashire and a recipient of the Woody Guthrie Research Fellowship in 2008.

In my introductory comments, I pointed to the striking similarity in the tone and substance of the 'moral' judgements made at the expense of the homeless and destitute within our own society and the plight of the Dust Bowl migrants. After drawing this parallel and extolling the work of charities such as Shelter Cymru, I emphasised the challenge facing historians in presenting an understanding of the past

not solely in the context of its own time but also as a means of enlightening debate in present day society.

Kaufman's presentation rises to this challenge; in his musicality he illustrates new ways to engage with his peers and the public at large. He interprets the fruits of his extensive research into a history that is haunting and evocative yet, perhaps more importantly, relevant. Both Woody Guthrie's music and political activism are ingrained into the cultural psyche of the left-of-centre on both sides of the Atlantic. To that end, much of the historical and artistic 'raw material' presented by Kaufman would be relatively familiar to those with an interest in American protest singers, or even more generally a student of twentieth century labour history. This familiarity however has created a cultural fog surrounding Guthrie and who has been reconstructed as a myth frequently at the expense of any semblance of historical accuracy. In the small library of books published on Guthrie, texts have ranged from the highly parochial to more studious historical studies including Kaufman's own excellent book *Woody Guthrie, American Radical*.



The amalgamation of these two facets of Guthrie, the legend and the man that lies behind it, is Kaufman's skill, of all those who have written about Guthrie, Kaufman comes closest to amalgamating the legend and the man that lies behind it. He has the knack of appearing to have the freedom of a performer's artistic licence, yet he also operates within academic constraints. The power of Kaufman's presentation is a seemingly effortless ability to unify the images, ideas and music of not just Guthrie, but also the enduring tradition of radical American voices. The individuals who are interspersed throughout the presentation are a truly impressive group and include Sis Cunningham, Joe

Hill, Yip Harburg, Pete Segar, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen... the list is seemingly endless. Yet, while Kaufman's journey through American history certainly includes a good deal of tub-thumping and rebel rousing music, it is cleverly interspersed with both pathos and homespun humour. The presentation is quite clearly the result of meticulous attention to historical research and demonstrates that Kaufman, in addition to being an engrossing raconteur, gifted singer, and a wonderfully talented multi-instrumentalist, is primarily an academic.

Opening his presentation, Kaufman, dressed as if he had just stepped out of the 1930s in a leather jacket bearing the insignia of the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World or 'Wobblies' as he later refers to them) and a Stetson hat, started the presentation masterfully. Setting the tone for an enthralling performance Kaufman opened by playing a stirring rendition of Guthrie's 'Pastures of Plenty', with a montage of powerful images from the Great Depression flicking across the screen behind him.

The impact of these iconic images, including many of the most famous Farm Security Administration photographs such as Arthur Rothstein's 'Fleeing a Dust Storm' and 'Migrant Mother' by Dorothea Lange (pictured above), are hugely amplified by the power of Guthrie's lyrics and the passion imbued in them by Kaufman;

It's a mighty hard row that my poor hands have hoed

My poor feet have travelled a hot dusty road

Out of your Dust Bowl and Westward we rolled

And your deserts were hot and your mountains were cold

I worked in your orchards of peaches and prunes

I slept on the ground in the light of the moon

On the edge of the city you'll see us and then

We come with the dust and we go with the wind

Kaufman's template, the use of imagery, music and anecdotal evidence was repeated superbly throughout the presentation. He related a description of Guthrie's early years and the causes

ddyfodol cymunedau wedi grymuso menywod a rhoddodd James ddisgrifiad byw o'r amodau caled roedd y menywod wedi ymladd yn eu herbyn i sicrhau undod. Dathlodd James rôl bwysig diwylliant a chyfryngau bywiog Cymraeg wrth gefnogi'r achos. Daeth James â'i hanerchiad i ben drwy fyfyrto ar sut mae ei stori wedi bod yn rhan o'r ffilm ddiweddar *Pride*. Mae'n amlwg bod James, dri deg o flynyddoedd yn ddiweddarach a hyd yn oed ar ôl iddi gael gyrfa lwyddiannus fel gwleidydd, yn parhau i gael ei dylanwadu gan ddigwyddiadau'r blynyddoedd hynny, a'i bod yn cael dylanwad cadarnhaol bellach ar fywydau pobl eraill yn sgil y profiad hwnnw.

Trafodwyd rôl menywod yn y streic gan Jen Wilson a Gail Allen hefyd oedd yn aelodau o Grŵp Hanes Menywod Abertawe ynghyd ag Ursula Mason. Yna gwylwyd y ffilm ddogfen wych *'Smiling and Splendid Women'* a gafodd ei chreu gan y grŵp. Roedd y ffilm arloesol yn dal emosiwn, drama a gwleidyddiaeth pyllau glo de Cymru wrth i'r digwyddiadau terfysglyd fynd rhagdynt.

Cynigiodd Dr Daryl Leeworthy a Daniel James Walters (sydd newydd raddio o Brifysgol Aberystwyth) bersbectif yr hanesydd ar ddigwyddiadau 1984-85. Cafodd Walters ei gyfweled gan Hywel Francis ar rôl Cyngres Cymru a chafwyd trafodaeth wych o waddol Cyngres Cymru a arweiniodd y ffordd at ddatganoli. Rhoddodd Leeworthy y digwyddiadau yn ne Cymru o fewn fframwaith Prydeinig a rhyngwladol ehangach. Dadleuodd fod y cynghreiriau gwleidyddol unigryw yn y streic yn creu 'hanes sy'n edrych at y dyfodol'. Cynigiodd Leeworthy drafodaeth oedd yn ysgogi'r meddwl ar hanes hwy y streic. Pan orffennodd Gwyn A Williams ei hanes 1984 *When Was Wales?* siaradai am y Cymry fel 'dim byd mwy na phobl noeth o dan law asid'. Am gyfnod, awgrymai Leeworthy, roedd y Cymry yn cysgodi o dan babell wleidyddol hyd nes iddi ymddangos bod yr haul wedi dod allan. Nawr, rhybuddiodd, efallai ei bod hi'n bryd cael hyd i'r pebyll eto wrth i ni gysgodi rhag storm arall.

**'Woody Guthrie: Hard Times and Hard Travelin'
Will Kaufman**

**Prifysgol De Cymru, 24 Mawrth 2015, Campws
Trefforest,**

Adroddiad gan Darren Macey

Wedi'i drefnu gan Brifysgol De Cymru ar y cyd â Shelter Cymru, elusen ddigartrefedd Cymru, ceisiai'r digwyddiad hwn ysbrydoli cynulleidfau gymysg o israddedigion, academyddion a'r cyhoedd i ystyried natur fyrhoedlog tloedi a chreu 'arall' cymdeithasol a hanesyddol. Gan

gynnig persbectif hanesyddol gafaelgar ar y stigmatiddio cyfoes o dlodi a mudo, mae 'rhaglen ddogfen fyw' hudolus Will Kaufman (yn y llun) *'Hard Times and Hard Travelin'* wedi'i fframio o gwmpas caneuon Woody Guthrie a mudwyr Bowlen Lwch y 1930au. Yn ganwr hynod ddawnus sy'n chwarae mwy nag un offeryn, mae Kaufman yn Athro Llenyddiaeth a Diwylliant America ym Mhrifysgol Canol Swydd Gaerhirfryn a enillodd Gymrodoriaeth Ymchwil Woody Guthrie yn 2008.

Yn fy sylwadau agoriadol, cyfeiriais at y tebygrwydd amlwg yn rhôn a sylwedd y barnau 'moesol' sy'n cael eu llunio ar draul y digartref a'r amddifad yn ein cymdeithas ni a helyntion mudwyr y Fowlen Lwch. Ar ôl tynnu sylw at y gyfatebiaeth hon a chanmol gwaith elusennau fel Shelter Cymru, pwysleisiais yr her sy'n wynebu haneswyr wrth iddynt geisio cyflwyno dealltwriaeth o'r gorffennol nid yn unig yng nghyd-destun ei gyfnod ei hun ond hefyd fel ffordd o oleuo trafodaethau yn y gymdeithas fodern.

Mae cyflwyniad Kaufman yn codi i'r her hon; yn ei gerddgarwch mae'n dangos ffyrdd newydd o ymgysylltu â'i gyfoedion a'r cyhoedd. Mae'n dehongli ffrwyth llafur ei ymchwil helaeth i hanes cythryblus ac atgofus ond sydd eto i gyd, ac efallai'n bwysicach, yn berthnasol. Mae cerddoriaeth a gweithredu gwleidyddol Woody Guthrie wedi ymwreiddio yn seice diwylliannol y chwith o'r canol ar ddwy ochr yr Iwerydd. I'r diben hwn, byddai llawer o'r 'deunyddiau crai' hanesyddol ac artistig a gyflwynwyd gan Kaufman yn weddol gyfarwydd i'r rhai sydd â diddordeb mewn caneuon protest America, neu hyd yn oed yn fwy cyffredinol i fyfyrwr hanes llafur yr ugeinfed ganrif. Fodd bynnag, mae'r cynefindra hwn wedi creu niwl diwylliannol o gwmpas Guthrie, dyn sydd wedi cael ei ailwampio fel myth yn aml ar draul unrhyw arlliw o gywirdeb hanesyddol. Yn y llyfrgell fach o lyfrau a gyhoeddwyd ar Guthrie, mae testunau wedi amrywio o'r rhai hynod blwyfol i astudiaethau hanesyddol mwy academiaidd, gan gynnwys llyfr gwych Kaufman ei hun *Woody Guthrie, American Radical*.



Uno dwy o nodweddion Guthrie, y chwedl a'r dyn sydd y tu ôl iddi, yw dawn Kaufman, ac o'r holl bobl hynny

sydd wedi ysgrifennu am Guthrie, Kaufman sy'n dod agosaf at uno'r chwedl a'r dyn ei hun. Mae ganddo'r ddawn o roi'r argraff o gael rhyddid a thrwydded artistig y perfformiwr, ond mae hefyd yn gweithredu o fewn cyfyngiadau academiaidd. Grym cyflwyniad Kaufman yw'r gallu sy'n ymddangos yn ddiymdrech i uno delweddau, syniadau a cherddoriaeth nid yn unig Guthrie, ond hefyd traddodiad oesol lleisiau radicalaidd America. Mae'r unigolion sydd wedi'u gwasgaru trwy'r cyflwyniad yn grŵp trawiadol iawn ac yn cynnwys Sis Cunningham, Joe Hill, Yip Harburg, Pete Segar, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen... mae'n teimlo fel rhestr ddiddiwedd. Ond er bod taith Kaufman trwy hanes America yn sicr yn cynnwys llawer iawn o gerddoriaeth bwrw twba a chyffroi'r gwrthryfelwyr, mae hefyd wedi'i britho'n fedrus â dwyster a hiwmor syml. Mae'r cyflwyniad yn amlwg yn ganlyniad i ymchwil hanesyddol manwl ac yn dangos bod Kaufman, yn ogystal â bod yn storiwr gafaelgar, yn ganwr talentog ac yn offerynnwr lluosog arbennig o ddawnus, yn academydd yn y bôn.

Ymddangosodd Kaufman wedi'i wisgo fel pe bai newydd gamu allan o'r 1930au mewn siaced ledr gyda bathodyn yr IWW arni (Gweithwyr Diwydiannol y Byd neu 'Wobblies' fel y cyfeiriai atynt yn ddiweddarach), het stetson, a chafwyd agoriad meistrolgar i'r cyflwyniad. Gan osod y dôn ar gyfer y perfformiad gwefreiddiol dechreuodd Kaufman drwy chwarae fersiwn bywiog o gân Guthrie *Pastures of Plenty*, gyda chyfres o ddelweddau pwerus o'r Dirwasgiad Mawr i'w gweld ar y sgrin y tu ôl iddo.

Mae effaith y delweddau eiconig hyn, gan gynnwys nifer o ffotograffau enwocaf y Farm Security Administration fel *Fleeing a Dust Storm* gan Arthur Rothstein a *Migrant Mother* gan Dorothea Lange (yn y llun uchod), yn cael ei dwysáu gan eiriau grymus Guthrie ac angerdd canu Kaufman.

It's a mighty hard row that my poor hands have hoed

My poor feet have travelled a hot dusty road

Out of your Dust Bowl and Westward we rolled

And your deserts were hot and your mountains were cold

I worked in your orchards of peaches and prunes

I slept on the ground in the light of the moon

On the edge of the city you'll see us and then

We come with the dust and we go with the wind

Ailadroddwyd templed Kaufman, y defnydd o ddelweddau, cerddoriaeth a thystiolaeth anecdotaidd yn fedrus trwy'r cyflwyniad. Rhoddodd ddisgrifiad o flynyddoedd cynnar Guthrie ac achosion ac esblygiad y Fowlen Lwch. Wrth sôn am ddechrau'r ymadawiad i'r gorllewin, rhoddodd Kaufman ddehongliad ofnadwy o eironig o *'So Long, It's Been Good to Know Yub'*, gan ddisgrifio cyfarfod cyntaf Guthrie â Sis Cunningham, a fyddai'n gyd-aelod o'r Almanac Singers. Gan ddyfynnu Cunningham a Guthrie, soniodd Kaufman am eu dicter cynyddol yn erbyn bancwyr cyfalafol, planhigfawyr California a chontractwyr llafur oedd yn ecsploetio mudwyr y Fowlen Lwch.

Wrth drafod gwleidyddia Guthrie yng ngwersylloedd mudwyr California, rhoddodd Kaufman esboniad ardderchog o'r mudiadau llafur cynharach, yn arbennig y Wobblies a cherddoriaeth Joe Hill. Esboniodd Kaufman fod y gweithredydd undeb Hill, a gafodd ei ddiennyddio ar honiad amheus o lofruddiaeth yn Utah yn 1915, wedi cael effaith fawr ar Guthrie. Roedd templed Hill o lapio 'dwrn caead' o anfonlonrwydd a dicter o fewn maneg felfed o hiwmor wedi llunio steil Guthrie ei hun. Mae Kaufman yn rhoi blas o'r steil hwn i'r gynulleidfa yn ei gynnig nesaf, sef parodi cerddorol Guthrie o'r *Bum blockade* gan heddlu a gwleidyddion California. Mae *'Do Re Mi'* yn ymosodiad ffyrnig ar y ffordd y cafodd mudwyr y Fowlen Lwch eu trin, a defnyddiodd Kaufman hwn i arwain at ddisgrifiad o'u trawsffurfiad yn niwylliant poblogaidd America o fudwyr economaidd i 'Okies', sef is-ddosbarth oedd bron yn is-ddynol.

If you ain't got the do re mi, boys, you ain't got the do re mi,

Why, you better go back to beautiful Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Georgia, Tennessee.

California is a garden of Eden, a paradise to live in or see;

But believe it or not, you won't find it so hot

If you ain't got the do re mi.

I gloi'r cyflwyniad, trafododd Kaufman natur ymateb Guthrie i'r gyfalafiaeth gignoeth ormesol hon. Yn hytrach na cherddoriaeth anobaith fel *Brother can you spare a dime* gan Yip Harburg neu wladgarwch ddall *God Bless America* gan Irving Berlin, roedd caneuon Guthrie yn adlewyrchu ei gred y dylai America gael ei dychwelyd i'w phobl. I'r diben hwn daeth Kaufman â'r cyflwyniad i ben gydag ymwrthodiad Guthrie o gân safonol Berlin, *'God Blessed America'* a delwedd o eiriau mewn llawysgrifen wreiddiol o'r hyn a fyddai'n cael ei adnabod

and evolution of the Dust Bowl. Illustrating the beginning of the exodus West, Kaufman gave a wickedly ironic interpretation of Guthrie's 'So Long, It's Been Good to Know Yuh' and described Guthrie's first meeting with Sis Cunningham, a future co-member of the Almanac Singers. Quoting Cunningham and Guthrie, Kaufman related their raging resentment at the exploitation of the Dust Bowl migrant by capitalist bankers, Californian planters and labour contractors.

In discussing the politicising of Guthrie in the migrant camps of California, Kaufman gave an excellent explanation of earlier labour movements particularly the Wobblies and the music of Joe Hill. Union activist Hill, who as Kaufman explained was executed on a dubious murder charge in Utah in 1915, had a huge impact on Guthrie. Hill's template consisting of wrapping a 'clenched fist' of discontent and anger within a velvet glove of humour shaped Guthrie's own style. Kaufman gives the audience an illustration of this style in his next offering, Guthrie's musical parody of the 'Bum blockade' by California's police and politicians. 'Do Re Mi' is a scathing attack on the treatment of the Dust Bowl migrants which Kaufman used to lead into a description of their transformation in American popular culture from economic migrants into 'Okies', an almost sub-human underclass.

If you ain't got the do re mi, boys, you ain't got the do re mi,

Why, you better go back to beautiful Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Georgia, Tennessee.

California is a garden of Eden, a paradise to live in or see;

But believe it or not, you won't find it so hot

If you ain't got the do re mi.

In the conclusion of the presentation, Kaufman discussed the nature of Guthrie's response to this oppressive raw capitalism. Rather than the music of despair such as Yip Harburg's 'Brother can you spare a dime' or the blinkered patriotism of Irving Berlin's 'God Bless America', Guthrie's songs reflected his belief that America should be returned to its people. Kaufman to this end concluded with Guthrie's repudiation of Berlin's standard, Guthrie's

'God Blessed America.' Kaufman closed the presentation by displaying an image of the original handwritten lyrics of what would become 'This land is your land' before performing the song including the normally unused 'lost lyrics.'

Down in your cities, in the shadow of the steeple,

by the relief office, I saw my people and as they stood hungry,

I stood there wondering about God Bless America for me?

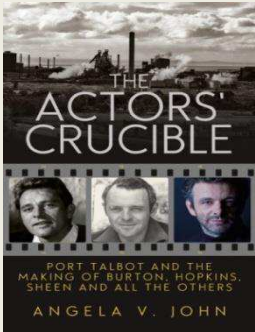
Kaufman's presentation threaded a narrative of working-class struggle in the face of oppressive capitalism from Joe Hill, through Guthrie, Cunningham and Segar to Dylan and Springsteen. In retracing the musical odyssey of radical American protest music, he demonstrated the often violent reactionary nature of American twentieth century history. His presentation revealed the methods used by the forces of reaction from the economic exploitation of the bankers and planters, to the murders, both fictional and real, of Steinbeck's character Preacher Casey and union activist Joe Hill. As Kaufman explained it, quoting from Guthrie's 'Pretty Boy Floyd,' 'Some will rob you with a six-gun, and some with a fountain pen.'

I left the presentation once again struck by the startling similarities in the rhetoric, bigotry and moral judgements imposed on the 'Okies' in the 1930s and those aimed at the countless thousands of 'migrants' making an even more perilous journey west across Europe in 2015.

As G. M. Trevelyan's maxim describes it, 'if historians neglect to educate the public, if they fail to interest it intelligently in the past, then all their historical learning is valueless except in so far as it educates themselves.' I would suggest that it is our moral duty to wherever possible take up Trevelyan's entreaty and in doing so challenge these recurring xenophobic cultural constructions.

Members Publications

Rightfully counted amongst the worlds most renowned and gifted actors, Richard Burton, Anthony Hopkins and Michael Sheen, also share a common heritage. Amazingly, these three luminaries of stage and screen hail from the relatively small south Wales steel town of Port Talbot. In her latest publication *The Actors' Crucible*, Angela V. John asks what it is about this much-maligned industrial community that has produced such superstars.



In answering this central question, John succeeds in putting at centre-stage the shifting fortunes of a town, its actors and its enablers. She provides a refreshing way of looking at the history of a community and a profession as well as casting unexpected and new light on the backgrounds of its most famous stars. John, a widely published historian and biographer, originates from Port Talbot herself and as such offers the reader a unique insight into the prodigious acting talent forged in the town. She examines the stories and individuals behind the facade of fame, focusing on exploring their lives *before* their celebrity and presents their emergence as part of a rich culture and commitment to drama long embedded in the town's history. She demonstrates the importance of unsung heroes who helped to nurture talent through schools, youth centres and youth theatre.

Drawing on extensive interviews, John explains how and why Port Talbot has historically generated not just these three acting giants, but also a succession of other famous faces, including Ronald Lewis and Ivor Emmanuel. As John describes it "John Gielgud said that Burton came from nowhere. He didn't come from nowhere. He came from an extremely rich cultural background in Port Talbot – the town of stars and steel, and the actors' capital of Wales." She describes how Port Talbot's legacy continues to be reaffirmed with the emergence of more recent performers such as Rob Brydon, Di Botcher and the current cluster of exciting young actors

beginning to make their mark on both London's West End stage and the big and small screen.

To that effect she investigates what these 'big names' have put back into Port Talbot with a particular emphasis on the rejuvenation of Port Talbot's civic pride initiated by The Passion, Michael Sheen's spectacular three-day immersive theatrical experience of Easter 2011.

Her beautifully crafted account, *The Actors' Crucible*, arrived on our shelves on 10 November, coinciding with the 90th anniversary of Richard Burton's birth, and is priced at £20 and published by Parthian in hardback.

Angela John is a vice-president of Llafur and is also an Honorary Professor at Swansea University. Her previous publications include the award-winning *Coalmining Women* (Cambridge University Press), *Elizabeth Robins: Staging A Life 1862-1952* (Routledge and The History Press) and *Turning The Tide: The Life of Lady Rhondda* (Parthian).

Render the Chartists Defenceless: John Frost's Voyage with Dr McKechnie to Van Diemen's Land in 1840 by Les James



In 1840, three Welsh Chartists were sentenced to death for High Treason. They were charged with conspiring and leading a rebellion in south Wales that ended on November 4th 1839 at Newport, when more than twenty men fell to the gunfire of the 45th Regiment. Due to public outcry, the Cabinet set aside the death penalty. John Frost, Zephaniah Williams and William Jones were transported for life to Van Diemens Land (Tasmania).

When all three received full pardons in 1856, only Frost returned to Britain. Aged 72 and seeking to regain the political life he had 'lost' 17 years earlier, Frost refused to be silenced. Invited by Ernest Jones to help revive a declining Chartist movement, he toured the country demanding the implementation of the Peoples Charter and scorning the aristocratic landed elite. At Primrose Hill, London he addressed 20,000 supporters.

fel *'This land is your land'*, cyn perfformio'r gân gyda'r 'geiriau coll' sydd heb eu defnyddio fel arfer.

Down in your cities, in the shadow of the steeple,

by the relief office, I saw my people and as they stood hungry,

I stood there wondering about God Bless America for me?

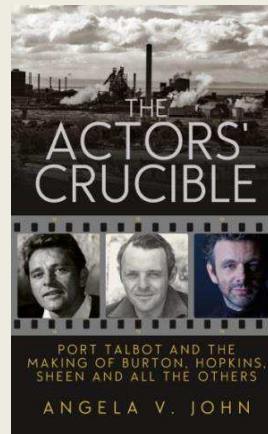
Roedd cyflwyniad Kaufman yn gwau naratif o frwydr y dosbarth gwaith yn wyneb cyfalafiaeth ormesol o Joe Hill, drwy Guthrie, Cunningham a Segar i Dylan a Springsteen. Wrth olrhain taith cerddoriaeth brotest radicalaidd America, dangosodd natur adweithiol dreisgar gyffredinol hanes America yn yr ugeinfed ganrif. Roedd ei gyflwyniad yn dangos y dulliau a ddefnyddiwyd gan rymoedd adwaith, o ecploetio economaidd y bancwyr a'r planhigfawyr, i'r llofruddiaethau, rhai ffuglennol a go iawn, o gymeriad Steinbeck, Preacher Casey a'r gweithredydd, undeb Joe Hill. Fel yr esboniodd Kaufman, gan ddyfynnu o *'Pretty Boy Floyd'* gan Guthrie, 'Some will rob you with a six-gun, and some with a fountain pen.'

Gadewais y cyflwyniad unwaith eto wedi fy syfrdanu gan y tebygrwydd trawiadol yn y rhethreg, y rhagfarn a'r barnau moesol a osodwyd ar yr 'Okies' yn y 1930au a'r rhai a anelwyd at y miloedd lawer o 'fudwyr' sydd ar daith hyd yn oed fwy peryglus ar draws Ewrop yn 2015.

Fel y disgrifia gwireb G M Trevelyan, 'os nad yw haneswyr yn addysgu'r cyhoedd, os nad ydynt yn llwyddo i ennyn ei ddiddordeb yn y gorffennol mewn ffordd ddeallus, yna mae eu holl addysg hanesyddol yn ddiwerth ac eithrio cyn belled ag y bônt yn addysgu hwy eu hunain'. Byddwn yn awgrymu ei bod hi'n ddyletswydd foesol arnom, lle bynnag y bo'n bosibl, i weithredu ar erfyniad Trevelyan a herio'r dehongliadau diwylliannol senoffobig ailadroddus hyn.

Cyhoeddiadau Aelodau

Fel rhai a ystyrir yn haeddiannol felly ymhlith actorion enwocaf a mwyaf dawnus y byd, mae Richard Burton, Anthony Hopkins a Michael Sheen hefyd yn rhannu etifeddiaeth gyffredin. Yn rhyfeddol ddigon, mae'r tair seren o'r llwyfan a'r sgrin yn hanu o dref ddu weddol fach yn ne Cymru, Port Talbot. Yn ei chyhoeddiad diweddaraf *The Actors' Crucible*, mae **Angela V John** yn gofyn sut mae'r gymuned ddiwydiannol hon, sydd wedi'i pharhduo gan lawer, wedi cynhyrchu'r fath ddoniau.



Wrth ateb y cwestiwn canolog hwn, mae John yn llwyddo i roi ffawd newidiol y dref, ei hactorion a'i galluogwyr wrth wraidd ei chyfrol. Mae'n edrych o'r newydd ar hanes cymuned a phroffesiwn, yn ogystal â thafu goleuni annisgwyl a newydd ar gefndiroedd ei sêr enwocaf. Mae John, sy'n hanesydd ac yn fywgraffydd llawer o gyfrolau,

yn hanu o Bort Talbot ei hun ac felly mae'n cynnig golwg unigryw i'r darlennydd ar y talentau actio a gafodd eu meithrin yn y dref. Mae'n ystyried y straeon a'r unigolion y tu ôl i wyneb yr enwogrwydd, gan ganolbwyntio ar archwilio eu bywydau *yn* iddynt fod yn enwog, ac yn cyflwyno eu datblygiad fel rhan o ddiwylliant cyfoethog ac ymrwymiad i ddrama sydd wedi'i wreiddio ers amser yn hanes y dref. Mae'n dangos pwysigrwydd yr arwyr diglod sydd wedi helpu i feithrin dawn trwy ysgolion, canolfannau a theatrau ieuencid.

Gan dynnu ar gyfweiliadau helaeth, mae John yn esbonio sut a pham y mae gan Bort Talbot hanes o gynhyrchu nid yn unig y tri chwâr actio yma, ond hefyd cyfres o wynebau enwog eraill, gan gynnwys Ronald Lewis ac Ivor Emmanuel. Mae'n disgrifio sut mae gwaddol Port Talbot yn parhau i gael ei ail-ddatgan gyda dyfodiad perfformwyr mwy diweddar fel Rob Brydon, Di Botcher a'r garfan bresennol o actorion ifanc cyffrous sy'n dechrau gwneud eu marc ar lwyfan y West End yn Llundain ac ar y sgrin fawr a bach. Mae hefyd yn archwilio beth mae'r 'enwau mawr' hyn wedi ei roi yn ôl i Bort Talbot, gyda phwyslais arbennig ar adfywio balchder dinesig Port Talbot trwy gynnal The Passion, profiad theatrig trawiadol cyfareddol Michael Sheen dros dri diwrnod y Pasg 2011.

Cyrhaeddodd ei chyfrol oedd wedi'i saernio'n brydferth, *The Actors' Crucible*, ein silffoedd ar 10 Tachwedd, gan gyd-fynd â 90fed pen-blwydd geni Richard Burton. Pris y llyfr clawr caled yw £20 a'r cyhoeddwy'r yw Parthian.

Mae Angela John yn Is-lywydd Llafur a hefyd yn Athro Mygedol ym Mhrifysgol Abertawe. Mae ei chyhoeddiadau blaenorol yn cynnwys y gyfrol arobryn *Coalmining Women* (Gwasg Prifysgol Caergrawnt), *Elizabeth Robins: Staging A Life 1862-1952* (Routledge and The History Press) a *Turning The Tide: The Life of Lady Rhondda* (Parthian).

Render the Chartists Defenceless: John Frost's Voyage with Dr McKechnie to Van Diemen's Land in 1840 gan Les James



Ym 1840, cafodd Siartwyr Cymru eu dedfrydu i farwolaeth am Deyrnfradwriaeth. Cawsant eu cyhuddo o gynllwynio ac arwain gwrthryfel yn ne Cymru a ddaeth i ben ar 4 Tachwedd 1839 yng Nghasnewydd, pan gafodd mwy nag ugain o ddynion eu saethu gan y 45ain Gatrawd. Oherwydd y brotest gyhoeddus, ni roddodd y Cabinet y gosb eithaf. Cafodd John Frost, Zephaniah Williams a William Jones eu hanfon am oes i Van Diemens Land (Tasmania).

Pan dderbyniodd pob un o'r tri bardwn llawn ym 1856, dim ond Frost a ddychwelodd i Brydain. Bellach yn 72 oed ac yn ceisio adennill y bywyd gwleidyddol yr oedd wedi ei 'gollu' 17 mlynedd yn gynharach, gwrthododd Frost gael ei dawelu. Cafodd wahoddiad gan Ernest Jones i helpu i adfywio mudiad dirywiol y Siartwyr, a bu'n teithio'r wlad yn mynnu bod Siarter y Bobl yn cael ei roi ar waith ac yn dirmygu'r tîrfeddianwyr aristocrataidd elitaidd. Anerchodd 20,000 o gefnogwyr yn Primrose Hill, Llundain.

Roedd Frost yn ystyried yr Arglwyddi Palmerston, Normanby, John Russell a'i wrthwynebwyr hynaf, y teulu Morgan o Barc Tredegar (Casnewydd), yn gyfrifol am ei gamdriniaeth, am ei alltudio ac am ei rwystro rhag dod adref. Difriodd eu 'haSiântau', megis Syr John Franklin, Llywodraethwr Van Diemen's Land a Chaptan Booth, y cadlywydd ym Mhorth Arthur. Er ei fod fyth yn sôn am ei enw, y llawfeddyg arolygol (Dr. Alexander McKechnie RN) ar fwrdd y Mandarin oedd ei brif darged.

Wedi gwella ar ôl salwch môr, roedd Frost yn edmygu proffesiynoldeb McKechnie, ac roedd yn falch o gael ei annog i ysgrifennu adref. Erbyn diwedd y fordaith bedwar mis i Hobart, roedd Frost yn ofidus iawn. Roedd bellach ar ei ben ei hun. Roedd y bondiau rhwng y tri Siartydd yn torri. Roedd McKechnie yn casglu gwybodaeth ac yn

ymyrryd â'u post. Ni chyrrhaeddodd llythyrau a ysgrifennwyd i Morgan Williams, arweinydd Siartwyr Merthyr a Feargus O'Connor, perchennog y papur newydd *Northern Star*, fyth eu cyrchfan. Ni chwrddodd Frost â'r Meddyg fyth wedyn, ond pensyniodd dros yr hyn a oedd wedi digwydd ar y *Mandarin* ac wedi hynny. Oedd yr awdurdodau eisiau iddo farw? Oedd McKechnie wedi llunio plot gwrthryfela i'w dwyllo? Roedd Frost yn pendroni dros beth oedd McKechnie wedi ei gasglu gan Williams a Jones am y gwrthryfel ofer yn Ne Cymru.. Ar sail ffynonellau ar y rhyngwrwyd, mae Les James wedi creu bywgraffiad hanesyddol disgrifluniol o ddyn oedd hyd yn hyn yn anhysbys. Cafodd McKechnie ei ddirychafu i swydd uchel yng ngwasanaeth meddygol y Llynges Frenhinol, yn Ysbyty Haslar, Portsmouth, ond mae ei gymeriad yn parhau i fod yn 'ddirgelwch'. Ni adawodd unrhyw ddyddiadur, na dim llythyrau, papurau, ysgrif goffa na phortread - dim ond dau gyfnodolyn meddygol amheronol (sydd bellach yn yr Archifau Cenedlaethol).

Cynllwynio, drygioni, llithio - roedd Frost yn ddiodefwr ysbiwyr, hysbyswyr ac *agent provocateurs*, hyd yn oed ar ôl iddo ddod yn ffigwr cenedlaethol amlwg dros y Siartwyr ym 1839. Mae Les James yn cysylltu straeon gorgyffyrddol o leoliadau ar draws y byd- yn Llundain, Lloegr, Awstralia ac ar fwrdd y *Mandarin*, ac yn datgelu elit gwleidyddol ymerodrol oedd yn barod i **Wneud y Siartwyr yn Ddiamddiffyn** yn ddiostur. Daethpwyd â darlithoedd gwleidyddol Frost i ben yn sydyn ym 1857, drwy ladd ar ei gymeriad yn y papurau newydd a blacmel gwleidyddol, lle chwaraeodd Octavius Morgan AS rôl arwyddocaol.

Michael Sheen, yr actor llwyfan a sgrîm, sydd wedi ysgrifennu'r rhagair, sy'n myfyrio ar frwydrau'r Siartwyr yng nghyd-destun y brwydrau sy'n cael eu hwynebu gan lawer heddiw. Limited edition, 350 numbered copies. Buckram cover, 80 pages with one photograph and one map. Price £10.00, including postage and packaging (U.K.).

Mae **Render the Chartists Defenceless** yn costio £10, ac mae'n cael ei gyhoeddi gan Three Imposters, Casnewydd.

Gellir prynu'r ddau lyfr o Siop Lyfrau Llafur drwy anfon e-bost at enquiries@llafur.com

Frost held the Lords Palmerston, Normanby, John Russell and his oldest antagonists, the Morgan family of Tredegar Park (Newport), responsible for his mistreatment, exiling him and obstructing his return home. He lambasted their 'agents', such as Sir John Franklin, the Governor of Van Diemen's Land and Captain Booth, the commandant at Port Arthur. Although he never mentions his name, the superintendant surgeon (Dr. Alexander McKechnie RN) aboard the *Mandarin* was his main target.

Through Frost's letters and speeches, Les James explores Frost's changing view of McKechnie. Cured of sea sickness, Frost admired McKechnie's professionalism and was pleased to be encouraged to write home. By the end of the four month voyage to Hobart, Frost was deeply troubled. He was now alone. The bonds between the three Chartists were breaking. McKechnie was gleaning intelligence and interfering with their mail. Letters written to Morgan Williams, leader of the Merthyr Chartists and Feargus O'Connor, owner of the *Northern Star* newspaper, never reached destination. Frost never met the Doctor again, but brooded on what had happened on the *Mandarin* and afterwards. Did the authorities want him to die? Had McKechnie set up a mutiny plot to trick him? Frost was puzzled to know what McKechnie had gleaned from Williams and Jones about the abortive south Wales rising. From internet sources, Les James has created an 'identikit' historical biography of a hitherto anonymous man. McKechnie climbed to a top post in the RN medical service at Haslar Hospital, Portsmouth, but his character remains a 'mystery'. He left no diary, letters, papers, obituary, portrait - only two impersonal medical journals (now at the National Archives).

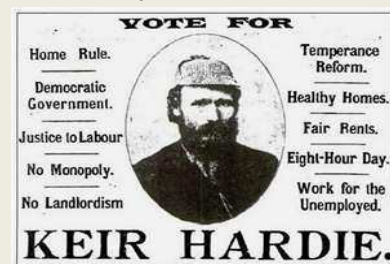
Intrigue, skulduggery, entrapment – Frost was the victim of spies, informers and *agent provocateurs* ever after he became a prominent, national Chartist figure in 1839. Les James relates overlapping stories from locations across the world - in London, Wales, Australia and aboard the *Mandarin* and reveals an imperial political elite prepared to ruthlessly Render the Chartists Defenceless. Frost's political lectures were brought to an abrupt end in 1857 by newspaper character assassination and political blackmail, in which Octavius Morgan MP played a significant role.

Michael Sheen, stage and screen actor, has written the foreword, reflecting on the challenges raised by the Chartists' struggle for today. Limited edition, 350 numbered copies. Buckram cover, 80 pages with one photograph and one map. Price £10.00, including postage and packaging (U.K.).

Render the Chartists Defenceless is priced at £10 and is published by Three Imposters, Newport.

Both books are available from the Llafur Bookshop via enquiries@llafur.com

Date for the diary...



**Keir Hardie Day School
on Saturday 6 February 2016 10am-3pm**

Llafur will be holding a Day School jointly with WEA Cymru in the Old Town Hall in Merthyr Tydfil on Saturday 6 February 2016.

Speakers include Huw Williams, Deian Hopkin, Joe England, Martin Wright and Daryl Leeworthy.

Further information is available from Huw Williams Huw.williams@weacymru.org.uk

Membership details

People's history is concerned with the history of ordinary people: their work, their politics, their culture and their everyday lives. It is concerned with the experiences and institutions of the working class, and the role of ordinary people in making history. It is the property of everyone, and *Llafur*, the Welsh People's History Society exists to promote the study of the People's History of Wales.

Please pass on this message to friends, relatives and colleagues, our membership is open to everyone with an interest in Welsh people's history. As a member of the Society, you will be part of a network of like-minded people with an interest in people's history. Members include professional and amateur historians, trade unionists, students, museum, library and archive staff, workers in the public and private sectors, members of all political parties and none. Just to remind you, members also receive the following;

- a copy of the annual journal, Llafur
- have the opportunity to attend the Annual General Meeting and influence the Society's policy
- get the chance to participate directly in the running and development of the Society

Annual membership costs just £20 (for waged member), £10 (for unwaged members) and £20 (for organisations and overseas members). Subscriptions are due on 1 October each year.

Society News

On 9 January 2016 a month-long exhibition opens at the Rhondda Heritage Park Museum to commemorate the bicentenary of the day of the first trial of Sir Humphrey Davy's adaptation of the miners' lamp at Hebburn Colliery. The exhibition launch will be marked with a day school concentrating on Davy and the continuing development of safety lamps and mine safety. Talks will include my own paper, an investigation of the contentious nature of Davy's invention, and Brian Davies's exploration of the evolutionary nature of safety lamps in the South Wales coalfield.

If anyone would like to offer something to the debate on Davy, the wider implications of the introduction of safety lamps or, indeed, mine safety throughout the ensuing two hundred years, please contact me at as soon as possible darren.macey42@gmail.com.

Newsletter

Once again, thank you for your understanding concerning the extended wait for this newsletter, I can only hope that you have found it to be in some way enlightening and informative. If that is not the case, well as this is my first effort the only way is up!

A parting shot.....

Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.

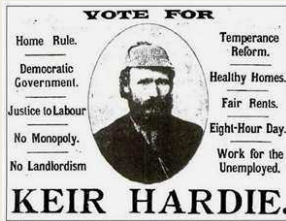
George Orwell, 1984

Mindful of Orwell's words, if you would like to contribute a book review, article or have any ideas and suggestions concerning the direction and content of the newsletter, please contact me at darren.macey42@gmail.com.

In addition to the newsletter this call is also extended to members who feel able to speak at or help organise day schools and all upcoming Llafur events so please feel free to get in touch with any ideas or suggestions. You can contact either myself, our Events Secretary Owen Collins (owenroycollins@gmail.com) or to be added to our email mailing list please contact Siân Williams (s.f.williams@swansea.ac.uk)

Darren Macey

Ysgol Ddydd Keir Hardie
Dydd Sadwrn 6 Chwefror 2016 10am-3pm



Ddydd Sadwrn 6 Chwefror, 2016, bydd Llafur yn cynnal Ysgol Ddydd ar y cyd â WEA Cymru yn yr Hen Neuadd y Dref ym Merthyr Tudful.

Bydd y siaradwyr yn cynnwys Huw Williams, Deian Hopkin, Joe England, Martin Wright a Daryl Leeworthy.

Mae'r digwyddiad am ddim, ac mae croeso cynnes i bawb. Os hoffech ragor o wybodaeth, anfonwch e-bost at Huw.williams@weacymru.org.uk

Manylion aelodaeth

Mae hanes pobl yn ymwneud â hanes pobl gyffredin, eu gwaith, eu gwleidyddiaeth, eu diwylliant a'u bywydau bob dydd. Mae'n ymwneud â phrofiadau a mudiadau dosbarth gwaith, a rôl pobl gyffredin mewn hanes. Mae'n eiddo i bawb, ac mae *Llafur*, Cymdeithas Hanes Pobl Cymru, yn bodoli i hyrwyddo astudio Hanes Pobl Cymru.

Mae croeso i chi gyfleu'r neges hon i ffrindiau, perthnasau a chydweithwyr ac mae ein haelodaeth yn agored i unrhyw un sydd â diddordeb yn hanes pobl Cymru. Fel aelod o'r Gymdeithas, byddwch yn rhan o rwydwaith o bobl o'r un meddylfryd sydd â diddordeb yn hanes pobl. Mae aelodau yn cynnwys haneswyr proffesiynol ac amatur, undebwyr llafur, myfyrwyr, staff amgueddfeydd, llyfrgelloedd ac archifau, gweithwyr yn y sector cyhoeddus a phreifat, aelodau o bob plaid wleidyddol a dim plaid wleidyddol. I'ch atgoffa, mae aelodau hefyd yn derbyn y canlynol:

- copi o'r cyfnodolyn blynyddol, *Llafur*
- cyfle i fynychu'r Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Blynyddol a dylanwadu ar bolisi'r Gymdeithas
- cyfle i gymryd rhan uniongyrchol wrth redeg a datblygu'r Gymdeithas.

Y tâl aelodaeth blynyddol yw £20 (aelodau cyflogedig), £10 (aelodau digyflog) a £20 (sefydliadau ac aelodau tramor). Mae tanysgrifiadau yn daladwy ar 1 Hydref bob blwyddyn.

Newyddion y Gymdeithas

Ar 9 Ionawr 2016 mae arddangosfa sy'n para mis yn agor yn Amgueddfa Parc Trefnadaeth Cwm Rhondda i ddathlu deucanmlwyddiant diwrnod cyntaf treialu addasiad Syr Humphrey Davy o'r lamp glowyr ym Mhwl Glo Hebburn. Caiff yr arddangosfa ei lansio gydag ysgol ddydd yn canolbwyntio ar Davy a datblygiad parhaus lampau diogelwch a diogelwch pyllau glo. Bydd yr anerchiadau'n cynnwys fy mhapur fy hun, ymchwiliad i natur ddadleuol dyfais Davy, ac archwiliad gan Brian Davies o natur esblygol lampau diogelwch ym mhyllau glo de Cymru.

Os hoffai unrhyw un gyfrannu at y ddadl ar Davy, y goblygiadau ehangach o gyflwyno lampau diogelwch neu, yn wir, diogelwch pyllau glo dros y ddau gan mlynedd wedi hynny, cysylltwch â mi cyn gynted â phosibl ar (darren.macey42@gmail.com).

Y Cylchlythyr

Unwaith eto, diolch i chi am eich dealltwriaeth ac am aros mor hir i gael y cylchlythyr hwn. Dwi ond yn gobeithio eich bod wedi ei gael yn gyhoeddiad diddorol ac addysgiadol. Os nad dyna'r achos, gan mai hon yw fy ymdrech gyntaf, yr unig ffordd i fynd yw i fyny!

Y gair olaf.....

Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.

George Orwell, 1984

Gan gadw geiriau Orwell mewn cof, os hoffech gyfrannu adolygiad llyfr, erthygl neu os oes gennych unrhyw syniadau ac awgrymiadau ynghylch cyfeiriad a chynnwys y cylchlythyr, cysylltwch â mi drwy anfon e-bost at darren.macey42@gmail.com. Mae'r cynnig hwn yn cael ei estyn hefyd i aelodau sy'n teimlo y gallant siarad mewn ysgol ddydd neu helpu i drefnu ysgolion dydd a holl ddigwyddiadau Llafur sydd i ddod, felly mae croeso i chi gysylltu gydag unrhyw syniadau neu awgrymiadau.

Wrth gwrs, estynnir y gwahoddiad hwn i aelodau sy'n teimlo y gallant annerch neu helpu i drefnu ysgol ddydd i bob un o ddigwyddiadau *Llafur* sydd ar ddod, felly mae croeso i chi gysylltu gydag unrhyw syniadau neu awgrymiadau. Gallwch gysylltu â mi, neu ein Hysgrifennydd Digwyddiadau Owen Collins, (owenroycollins@gmail.com) neu i gael eich ychwanegu at ein rhestr e-bost cysylltwch â Siân Williams (s.f.williams@swansea.ac.uk)

Darren Macey