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### **Praise and performance : congregational and choral music in the Nonconformist chapels of North-east Wales and Liverpool during the 19th century**

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# **Praise and Performance**

**Congregational and choral music in the Nonconformist chapels  
of North-east Wales and Liverpool during the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

**Godfrey Wyn Williams**

**Volume 2**

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## Chapter Six

### From sacred to secular

'One good old primitive said that 'when that harmonium came over the Chester Bridge, the devil came with it'. When they got the instrument they had no-one to play but they surmounted the difficulty by appointing Miss Susie Shepperd, a little girl who had just begun to learn to play the piano'.

(Joseph Griffiths, Buckley)

It was the power of preaching that filled the unpretentious Dissenting meeting places during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the simple unadorned congregational music, limited as it was to psalmody, offered little distraction from pulpit oratory. Changes to the traditional pattern of worship began with the traverse from psalmody to hymnody and the introduction of the travelling singing teachers who inspired the formation of the *Ysgol Gân*. Although this development met with some resistance, it endured to shape the character of Welsh chapel music where spiritual fulfilment came through participation, unlike the restrained choral services of the Anglican Church in which the congregation took no meaningful part. Congregational singing undoubtedly contributed to the escalation of the Nonconformist causes especially from the mid-nineteenth century when the sight-singing phenomenon encouraged musical literacy and changed the course of Welsh congregational singing in north-east Wales and Liverpool. As for the use of musical instruments in Nonconformist places of worship, this was a contentious issue that would be resolved in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Instrumental accompaniment in the Established Churches of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was commonplace in England and Wales, but had no place in the Welsh Dissenting chapels, particularly the Calvinistic Methodists who loyally observed the edict of William Williams (Pantycelyn) who questioned the propriety of singing anything beyond the melody and felt that earthly things should not displace the human voice in the context of worship.<sup>1</sup> An extract from a letter written by Pantycelyn in 1762 confirms: 'When the blessed gift of the Holy Spirit came upon the people, the 'spirit within' was of itself sufficient to the whole man, body and soul, to praise the Lord without any musical instruments'.<sup>2</sup> It was this edict that established the mode of sung worship in the chapels where the mainstay of the service was the intoning of a *codwr canu* who pitched the tune and led the congregation on a line-by-line basis. By contrast, the Established Church maintained the more formal choral setting with organ accompaniment, as was the case in St Giles Church, 'here is Wrexham to be seen, much spoken of for a passing fair tower steeple that the

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<sup>1</sup> D. E. Parry Williams, 'Music and Religion', in Peter Crossley-Holland (ed.), *Music in Wales* (London, 1948), 53.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 54.

church hath, and the musical organs that be therein...'.<sup>3</sup> Proximate to the Wynnstay Estate of the Williams Wynn dynasty, the clergy of the Ruabon Church maintained that tradition, and in 1769 a deed of faculty for the building of an organ was drafted,<sup>4</sup> to be followed seven years later, by a new organ in Wrexham Parish Church, that was installed at a cost of £378,<sup>5</sup> and funded by public subscription.<sup>6</sup> Despite the more sophisticated instruments and choral structure of the Established Church, sung worship was not inclusive, whereas the music of the Dissenting chapels was participatory as the whole congregation united in praise.

A correspondent writing in the *Wrexham Advertiser* in 1854 commented: 'I think every stranger on attending service (sic) at Wrexham Church must be struck with the very slight share taken in the singing by the congregation, and the consequent lack of animation and interest in that part of the service'.<sup>7</sup> By contrast, congregational singing had become the defining characteristic of Nonconformist chapels according to one newspaper reader who compared the uninspired singing in churches to the free expression of chapel music, and suggested that the church should 'Look at the dissenting places of worship'.<sup>8</sup> Essentially, the chapel had democratised music through the *ysgolion cân* and it was from this outgrowth of the Sunday schools that the choral tradition evolved. Adding a further dimension to the upsurge in musical interest in north-east Wales was the interactive Temperance Movement that enlivened their campaigns with instrumental music,<sup>9</sup> and preoccupied the working class musicians that had few other outlets for their talent other than the tavern.

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<sup>3</sup> W. Camden, *Britain, or A Chorographical Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdoms, England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, 1637), 677, quoted in Peter le Huray, 'The Chirk Castle Partbooks', *Early Music History*, Vol. 2 (1982), 17.

<sup>4</sup> Denbighshire Record Office, DRO/PD/89/1/68, 'The Deed of Faculty for fitting pews, organ chamber and fitting organ', 1769.

<sup>5</sup> Denbighshire Record Office, DRO/PD/101/1/206, 'Faculty for installation of organ in Wrexham Church', 1776.

<sup>6</sup> A. H. Dodd, *History of Wrexham* (Wrexham, 1957), 247. Edward Randles (1763-1820), blind harpist and organist, and a former pupil of the blind virtuoso John Parry of Ruabon, was organist at Wrexham Church from 1788 until 1820, while his daughter, Elizabeth Randles, a two-year old prodigy, played the harp and piano on the stage of Wrexham Theatre c. 1802. See Gordon Ellis (*Silin*), 'Early parish church organs', *Wrexham Leader*, 18 November 1993, 12.

<sup>7</sup> 'Wrexham Church Music', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 30 December 1854, 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> The most commonly used instruments of the Temperance Movement were the 'Drum and Fife' bands, and in some cases, the accordion, although they later graduated to brass bands. See 'Drum and Fife Band', *Wrexham Advertiser*, 19 September 1857, 4; Advertisement, *ibid.*, 16 July 1864, 1.

While older forms of Nonconformity such as Baptists and Congregationalists were more hospitable to local musicians, the Calvinistic Methodists remained true to their ideology and stoically refused to condone the use of musical instruments on the premise that they demeaned the dignity and sanctity of worship. Instrumental music had yet to discard its association with the gaiety of the tavern, and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, unconvinced of its relevance to worship, had succeeded over the more elaborate services of the Established Church by allowing the congregation the freedom to express their praise through sung worship. In this denomination, preaching the Gospel took precedence over all else and the hostility towards the use of musical instruments in worship was not exclusive to Wales as the United Presbyterians of Scotland upheld the same Calvinistic prejudice.<sup>10</sup>

The uncompromising stance of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists on this issue was put to the test at a joint concert in December 1855 when the choir of Salem Baptist Chapel, Penycae, performed at *Capel Mawr Rhosllannerchrugog*.<sup>11</sup> Penycae choir were to be accompanied by a bass viol played by *Ab Alaw*,<sup>12</sup> but the *deaconiaid* of *Capel Mawr* forbade it to be played, as in their view, the use of a musical instrument was offensive in a place of worship.<sup>13</sup> The bass viol was common to most of the Baptist causes around the Ruabon coalfield, and in the chapel at Cefn Bychan, an adjunct of Cefn Mawr, 'cellist Enoch Morris of Trefynant accompanied the congregation while *codwr canu*, Thomas Jones-Brown, known locally as 'Tommy Brown', struck the key with a pitch-pipe.<sup>14</sup> Congregational singing in the Wesleyan chapels followed a similar pattern, and during a Methodist Conference at Sheffield in 1805 it was decreed: 'Let no instruments of music be introduced into the singers' seats, except a bass viol, should the principal singer require it'.<sup>15</sup> After the mid-nineteenth century, the Wesleyans modified this policy to allow the use of harmoniums to replace the string bands and the Congregationalists and Baptists followed the same pattern. For the Calvinistic Methodists, there were issues of greater importance than the acquisition of musical instruments, not least being the

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<sup>10</sup> 'Newyddion Crefyddol', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 22 Mai 1867, 5.

<sup>11</sup> John Owen Jones, *Hen Arweinyddion y Canu yn Salem, Penycae* (Colwyn Bay, 1911), 21.

<sup>12</sup> John Williams (*Ab Alaw*) was the son of John Williams (1806-1856), a Baptist minister in Rhos and Brymbo (1836-41) and Rhos and Penycae (1853-6).

<sup>13</sup> John Owen Jones, *op. cit.*, 21.

<sup>14</sup> Emlyn Davies, *Cefn Chronicle*, 5 February 1916, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Carlton R. Young, *Music of the Heart* (Carol Stream, 1995), 102.

debts incurred by the building of new places of worship as structural growth began to preoccupy every Welsh Nonconformist denomination.

Strained by years of concerted expansion, the north Wales Calvinistic Methodists were rightly concerned at the accumulation of debt accrued by the increase in the number of chapels built in the 1830-40s and in June 1846, at the North Wales Methodist Association meeting in Bala, Henry Rees proposed that no new chapel or renovations to existing buildings should take place until funding had been secured.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, ministers and preachers could refuse to preach in a chapel until outstanding debts had been cleared.<sup>17</sup> This proposal was unsustainable as population growth created a demand for new places of worship that brought numerous requests to the Association for permission and financial support to build chapels.<sup>18</sup> In June 1851, the Marcher areas asked to be excluded from *Deddf y Capelau* [The Chapel Rule] but were refused, although three years later, the Calvins of Rhyl were permitted to build a new place of worship and after the 1859 Revival, requests for chapel-building were so numerous that it was no longer feasible to sustain the Rule.<sup>19</sup> While the Calvinistic Methodists acquiesced on the issue of chapel debts, the question of instrumental accompaniment was beyond negotiation as they found no compelling evidence to prove its effectiveness, neither had it hindered the expansion of the denomination.

The first harmonium, manufactured by Alexandre Francois Debain (1809-1877)<sup>20</sup> of Paris, c.1842, was affordable and compatible to the average-sized chapel,<sup>21</sup> but the prospect of dispensing with the services of chapel instrumentalists summoned

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<sup>16</sup> Owen Thomas, *Cofiant y Parchedig Henry Rees, yn cynnwys casgliad helaeth o'i lythyrau*, Cyfrol I (Wrexham, 1890), 434.

<sup>17</sup> Edward Jones, *Y Gymdeithasfa: yn cynnwys Gweithrediadau Cymdeithasfa Chwarterol y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd yn Ngogledd Cymru, a'r Gymanfa Gyffredinol, ynghyda'r Ordeiniadau Gweinidogaethol, a'r Arholiadau Cymdeithasfaol yn y Gogledd a'r Deheudir hyd y Flwyddyn 1890* (Caernarfon, 1891), 276.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 275; Owen Thomas, *op. cit.*, 434.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>20</sup> Alexandre Dubain trained as a cabinet maker and was apprenticed to Charles Joseph Sax (1791-1865), a Belgian musical instrument maker and father of Antoine Joseph Sax, inventor of the Saxophone. See Percy A. Scholes, *The Mirror of Music 1844-1944*, Vol. II (London, 1947), 809. The Tonic Sol-fa Agency promoted M. Debain in an advertisement in *The Tonic Sol-fa Reporter* as '... the inventor of the Improved Harmoniums...' Quoted in Herbert Simon, *Song and Words - A History of The Curwen Press* (London, 1973), 29.

<sup>21</sup> Peter Williams and Barbara Owen, *The New Grove Musical Instrument Series: The Organ* (London, 1988), 240.

the fiercest resistance, particularly as they had been cast aside when the Established Church began to install mechanical organs. Unlike the Presbyterians, the Baptists, Congregationalists and Wesleyans in north-east Wales had accepted the use of the bass viol and string bands and had no wish to disrupt existing arrangements, not least because of the shortage of capable organists. Opposition did not, however, prevail and on 11 June 1854 at the Methodist New Connexion cause in Hawarden, Flintshire, Rev. Grundy of Oldham lectured on the theological and moral aspects of music and the potential of the organ to improve congregational singing.<sup>22</sup> At Pentrobin, in the parish of Hawarden, the local choir performed Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus' to the accompaniment of a Miss Baker on the harmonium and collections were made towards the cost of the instrument.<sup>23</sup> Two years later, the Penybryn Independent chapel in Wrexham launched their first fund-raising event on 28 October 1856 with a public 'tea meeting' in the Music Hall where 350 attendees were entertained by the Wern and Adwy'r Clawdd choirs accompanied by Mr. Powell of Summerhill on the harmonium.<sup>24</sup> The *Wrexham Advertiser* announced that: 'profits from the Tea would be appropriated to the purchase of an Harmonium for the chapel', and a number of local ministers willingly endorsed the benefits of acquiring such an instrument.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the plausible justifications for mechanical instruments it was the pressure of rivalry that compelled chapels to raise funds for the harmonium, and when they began to encroach on public generosity through populist secular entertainments, such as 'Tea Meetings', 'Bazaars' and concerts, the notion of profit entered the lexicon of Nonconformity. For instance, when Ruabon Postmaster, Edward Morris, presided at a concert in Cefn Mawr Baptist chapel in July 1856, he left the audience in no doubt of the financial objective: 'There is a new feature attached to concerts of late, and that is, the combination of pleasure with profit. I have heard of successful attempts to sing debts off chapels, and again of singing new chapels into existence; but on the present occasion the choir is going to sing a new burial ground into existence'.<sup>26</sup> In the neighbouring town of Llangollen, it appears that the

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<sup>22</sup> 'District News: Hawarden', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 24 June 1854, 3.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> 'Tea Meeting in the Music Hall', *ibid.*, 1 November 1856, 4.

<sup>25</sup> Multiple Advertisements & Notices, *ibid.*, 25 October 1856, 1.

<sup>26</sup> 'Concert at Cefn Mawr', *ibid.*, 26 July 1856, 4.



funds of the Wesleyan Methodists were equally strained to which the Wesleyan Choir, conducted by John Pugh, responded with a concert of classical music for the purpose of installing gas lights and fittings in the chapel.<sup>27</sup>

With fund-raising came the risk of compromising the sanctity of the tabernacles as they availed their auditoria to secular concerts in a vain attempt to challenge the growing popularity of the music halls that were addressing the demand for popular entertainment. The commercial potential of this facility looked promising and one of the first to respond to the opportunity was Richard Hughes, the influential Calvinistic Methodist and founder of R. Hughes and Son, the Wrexham publisher, who opened the Wrexham Music Hall,<sup>28</sup> a building of equitable size to the large chapels that had enjoyed a virtual monopoly of this sector. Events that would previously have been held in a chapel now had an alternative venue, and when the Total Abstinence Movement held a conference in Wrexham in April 1854, they assembled at the Music Hall,<sup>29</sup> as did the Temperance and Rechabite Festival that took place in September of that year.<sup>30</sup>

On the latter occasion, the audience of over 200 were entertained by the Adwy'r Clawdd choir who sang several choruses from Handel's *Judas Maccabeus*,<sup>31</sup> and judging by the reaction to the performance of sacred oratorio, the prospects for the new Music Hall seemed highly promising. With high expectation, the organisers announced that the Liverpool Glee and Madrigal Union were to perform on 21 April 1854,<sup>32</sup> but the 'Grand Concert' failed to capture the interest of the Wrexham public.<sup>33</sup> In an attempt to justify the disappointing response to the Liverpool performers the concert promoters claimed that the low attendance was due in no small part to the event at Hengler's Circus, Liverpool that 'drew together some hundreds of our townspeople, so that their purses must have been pretty well drained of shillings'.<sup>34</sup> (See Fig 6.1 over)

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<sup>27</sup> 'District News: Llangollen', *ibid.*, 14 February 1857, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Multiple Advertisements & Notices, *ibid.*, 9 December 1854, 1.

<sup>29</sup> 'Conference in the Music Hall', *ibid.*, 29 April 1854, 3.

<sup>30</sup> 'Temperance and Rechabite Festival at Wrexham', *ibid.*, 2 September 1854, 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Multiple Advertisements & Notices, *ibid.*, 1 April 1854, 1.

<sup>33</sup> 'Concert in the Music Hall', *ibid.*, 29 April 1854, 4.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

Fig. 6.1

MUSIC HALL, WREXHAM.

THE LIVERPOOL GLEE & MADRIGAL UNION

WILL GIVE A

GRAND CONCERT,

On FRIDAY, APRIL TWENTY-FIRST, 1854.

To commence at half-past Seven.

Miss SHARP, Miss E. GEORGE,
MESSRS. HAND, HASWELL, GRAHAM, SUDLOW,
WILLIAMS, LLOYD, & ARMSTRONG.
PIANOFORTE.....MR. SKEAFE.

PROGRAMME.

PART. 1.

MADRIGAL—"O'er desert plains" ... Walrent.
GLEE—"Breathe, my harp" ... Bishop.
SONG—"Smiling faces" ... Miss Sharp ... Glover.
FOUR PART SONG—"The Soldier's love" ... Kucken.
SOLO—Pianoforte ... Miss George
GLEE—"See the Chariot at hand" ... Horsley,
SONG—"My pretty Jane" ... Mr. Graham... Bishop.
DUET—... Miss Sharp & Miss George
MADRIGAL—"Come let us join" ... Beale

PART. 2.

MADRIGAL—"Who shall win my lady fair" ... Pearsall.
QUARTETT—"Lo' the early beam" ... Balfe.
SONG—"Phillip the falconer" ... Mr. Armstrong Loder.
GLEE—"By Celia's Arbour" ... Horeley.
FOUR PART SONG—"I know a maiden" ... Hatton.
DUET—"The Nightingale" ... Sudlow & Armstrong Hackel
GLEE—"Blow gentle gales" ... Bishop.
CHORUS—"Blessed be to home" ... Benedict

RESERVED SEATS, 2s. BACK SEATS, 1s.

TICKETS may be had of Mr. PAINTER, Mr. BAYLEY,
Mr. HUGHES, York-street; and Messrs. HUGHES
and SON.

\* \* Entrance to Reserved Seats from the Passage lead-
ing from Chester-street to Henblas-street.

There was an equally poor attendance at the 'Miscellaneous Concert' by the Misses Wemyss which brought a scathing rebuke in the press: 'We had hoped that genuine talent would be better appreciated and rewarded and unless we support merit, it will soon cease to visit us'.<sup>35</sup> That same lack of interest befell 'The Hungarian Band', who played to a select audience at the Wrexham Music Hall and convinced the concert promoters that the patronage was not sufficient to induce the ensemble to visit Wrexham a second time.<sup>36</sup> In an area more attuned to choral performances, orchestral music had a limited appeal, and the sparse attendances at the Music Hall reflected the poor judgement of the concert organisers in attempting to introduce an unfamiliar genre into an already established culture. While the orchestral ensemble was acceptable as a choral accompaniment, it failed to establish a following in its own right, although there were exceptions such as the concert by Welsh harpist, Ellis Roberts, who had delighted a sizeable audience at the Assembly Room in Denbigh in August 1854.<sup>37</sup> Because of its association with the *eisteddfodau* that had once convened in the taverns, the harp had been excluded even by the more liberal-minded Nonconformist fellowships, but when John Owen (*Owain Alaw*) of Chester gave a concert in December 1857 with Welsh harpist, T. D. Morris, on the melodies of England, Ireland and Wales, it was to a sizeable gathering.<sup>38</sup> That this was no coincidence was later confirmed when harpist, Ellis Roberts, performed at Wrexham in the following year to a substantial audience, particularly to that section of the hall where seats had been reserved for the working classes who were admitted at a reduced price.<sup>39</sup>

Public halls offered a venue for traditional music that had long been suppressed, particularly by the Presbyterian chapels, and the music halls stimulated the growth of instrumental music as the pursuit of cultural recreation became a signifier of the respectable, church-going classes of the mid-Victorian era. From the mid-1850s, chapels of all denominations began to challenge the attractions of the music halls and assembly rooms by convening competitive concerts, most of which were held on festival days to attract higher attendances. For example, Adwy'r Clawdd held its

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<sup>35</sup> 'The Misses Wemyss's Concert', *ibid.*, 14 October 1854, 4.

<sup>36</sup> 'The Hungarian Band', *ibid.*, 21 October 1854, 3.

<sup>37</sup> 'District news: Denbigh', *ibid.*, 19 August 1854, 3.

<sup>38</sup> 'Concert in the Music Hall', *ibid.*, 5 December 1857, 4.

<sup>39</sup> Advertisement, 'Music Hall Wrexham', *ibid.*, 23 January 1858, 3.

annual literary competition on Good Friday in April 1858, when William Lewis (*Llew Llwyfo*, 1831-1901)<sup>40</sup> adjudicated the solo performance of the secular song, 'The Friend', which was won by N. Jones (*Cynhafal*) of Holywell,<sup>41</sup> while Ieuan Gwyllt, an iconic figure in Welsh hymnody, adjudicated the composition for the best hymn-tune.<sup>42</sup> Doubtless, one of the reasons for inviting Ieuan Gwyllt was to enhance the status of the event and the reputation of Adwy'r Clawdd Chapel, and although the performance of secular music in the sanctuary may have conflicted with the Presbyterian ethic, such anxieties were eased by pecuniary gain. For example, when the Baptists of Rhosllannerchrugog were raising funds towards the building costs of a new chapel, they raised no objections to Owen *Cantwr* taking his chapel choir to perform at the Wrexham Music Hall.<sup>43</sup> (See Fig. 6.2 below).

Fig. 6.2

**MUSIC-HALL, WREXHAM.**  
 On MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1856,  
 A  
**GRAND SACRED CONCERT,**  
 Will be given in the MUSIC-HALL, by the  
**PEN-Y-CAE CHOIR, CONSISTING OF FORTY SINGERS,**  
 CONDUCTED BY MR. OWEN JONES,  
 TO COMMENCE AT SEVEN O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING.  
*TICKETS of ADMISSION:—Front seats, One shilling; Second seats, Sixpence. To be had at R Hughes & Son's, and Mr Bayley, Booksellers, Hope-st., Wrexham; and Mr Samuel Williams, shop-keeper, Brymbo.*  
 P R O G R A M M E:—  
 An Ode....."Spirit Leave"... ..*Fawcett.* and Chorus.."Who will give me the  
 Anthem....."Blessed be the Lord"... ..*Fawcett.* wings of the Dove ".....*Fawcett.*  
 Anthem... .."Celebration".....*Fawcett.* Missionary Herald .. ..*T. Jarmon.*  
 Chorus... .."From all that dwell" *Dr. Arnold.* An Ode .. .. "Ascension".....*Fawcett.*  
 An Ode....."....."*Fawcett.* Missionary Piece..... ..*Fawcett.*  
 Chorus... .."Praise the Lord" ..*Mr. O. Jones.* Chorus .. .. "Fear not O land" *G. Liege.*  
 Chorus....."Beaufort New" .. ..*Nichols.* Glee "An old Welsh Air" arranged by *Mr. O. Jones.*  
 A new favourite Anthem, Duet, Recit.,  
 The proceeds arising from the Sale of Tickets will be devoted to the augmentation of the fund~~ed~~  
 erecting a new Baptist Chapel, in Rhosllannerchrugog.

Advertisement, *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 20 September 1856, 1.

<sup>40</sup> Lewis William Lewis (*Llew Llwyfo*, 1831-1901) was a versatile litterateur, poet and journalist. He played a leading role in the 1858 Llangollen Eisteddfod as music adjudicator and was a colourful character on the eisteddfodic scene. See Owen Evans, *Dinbych yn ei Hynafiaeth a'i Henwogion* (Dinbych, 1907), 173-177.

<sup>41</sup> 'Adwy'r Clawdd Literary Competition Meeting', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register* 10 April 1858, 3.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Advertisement, *ibid.*, 20 September 1856, 1.

Clearly, the arguments against secular music were selective, and the rejection of the harmonium on the grounds that it was a worldly influence was disingenuous. From the mid-nineteenth century, attitudes were beginning to change and the bass viol in Bethlehem Congregational Chapel, Rhosllannerchrugog, was replaced by a small Alexandre harmonium,<sup>44</sup> which came into service on Sunday, 16 May 1858.<sup>45</sup> In that same year, a chapel in Brymbo acquired a small organ despite the fact that there was no organist. They resolved the problem by engaging a local church organist who played for the evening services until the parish vicar suggested, 'it would be difficult for the hands to play two instruments of such opposite principles without producing a disagreeable discord'.<sup>46</sup> The state of affairs in Brymbo was not uncommon and in a brief history of the Cefn Mawr Baptists, Emlyn Davies refers to the harmonium, gifted to Seion Chapel by a Mr. Connor of Manchester that was rejected by the 'puritan fathers', but heartily welcomed by the young people of Tabernacle.<sup>47</sup> In December 1861, it was moved from the vestry at Seion to the newly-built Tabernacle Chapel,<sup>48</sup> although there was no organist and the chapel relied on John Griffiths who walked from Rhos to play for each service,<sup>49</sup> until brothers Mark and Luke Bowen, both of whom were colliery winders, became proficient and played alternately.<sup>50</sup>

Seion Cefn Mawr, the founding cause in this Baptist stronghold, continued without a harmonium and relied on *codwr canu* Azariah Pritchard who led the singing with a two foot reed pipe,<sup>51</sup> until he was seconded to Tabernacle and succeeded by Edward Davies in 1860.<sup>52</sup> It was Azariah Pritchard who appointed eighteen-year

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<sup>44</sup> Gwynne Williams, *Dr. Caradog Roberts 1878-1935* (Abertawe, 1973), 8.

<sup>45</sup> 'Rhos: Independent Chapel', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register* 22 May 1858, 3.

<sup>46</sup> 'District News: Brymbo', *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Tabernacle Baptist Chapel, Cefn Mawr, was officially opened on 16 December 1860. See Advertisements, *Wrexham Advertiser*, 15 December 1860, 1. When Seion Chapel became too small for its congregation of 364 members, Tabernacle was built and 150 members joined the new fellowship in 1860. Bangor University Archive, MSS-14799 J.H. Phillips, 'Seion its Ministers and People -The History of the Seion Baptist Church Cefn Mawr' (1960), 2; R. Ellis, *Cofiant y diweddar Barch. E.Evans, D.D.* (Llangollen, 1866), 51.

<sup>48</sup> E.K. Jones, 'The Tabernacle Baptist Church & Chapel Seventy Years Ago', *Cefn Chronicle*, 28 March 1931, 8.

<sup>49</sup> Emlyn Davies, 'The History of the only two harmoniums that were ever in Tabernacl', 23 August 1954, Papers relating to the family of Davies the *Cantwr* of Cefn Mawr and District, in the private collection of Mrs. Rhiannon Grey-Davies of Garth, near Ruabon.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> J.H. Phillips, *op. cit.*, 17.

<sup>52</sup> Emlyn Davies, *op. cit.*

old Thomas Davies, *Cantwr* (1842-1900),<sup>53</sup> as precentor of Tabernacle Chapel, a role he fulfilled for over forty years<sup>54</sup> with the assistance of Thomas Hughes, the first harmonium player.<sup>55</sup> Despite the fact that other chapels in the locality were acquiring harmoniums shortly after the mid nineteenth century,<sup>56</sup> the Baptists of Salem, Penycae, having added a choir gallery in 1855 to accommodate eighteen singers, were reluctant to replace the bass viol which was considered adequate. When the matter of a chapel organ eventually came up for discussion it met with some resistance and one dissident threatened to throw the *Bocs Canu* [Singing Box] into the river.<sup>57</sup> Having overcome the objections, Salem Penycae purchased a harmonium in 1864 and William Evans (*Alaw Mabon*), *arweinydd y gân* became the first organist.

The adverse reaction to the introduction of chapel organs was not peculiar to Welsh denominations as there were many English causes similarly opposed to change, one such example being the Buckley Congregational Church where the singing was accompanied by clarinets, a serpent, a bassoon and a bass viol.<sup>58</sup> Chapel precentor, Joseph Griffiths (1828-1911), refers to the ructions amongst the members when the question of acquiring an organ was first mooted shortly after the mid-century:

I thought if you could get a harmonium it would lessen the labour and make the singing more agreeable, so I mentioned the matter which was met with a great deal of opposition, but I persevered, begged the money, and got an harmonium that cost £14.<sup>59</sup>

What is significant in the case of the Buckley Congregationalists and the Penycae Baptists was that while both approved the use of string bands and the bass viol in religious services, they objected to the organ, which suggests that the risk of vexing the families of chapel instrumentalists may have been relevant to the debate.

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas Davies was the father of well-known Cefn Mawr soloist, Emlyn Davies (1870-1960), and composer of hymn tune, 'Bryn Hywel' (66.66.88).

<sup>54</sup> D.Emlyn Evans, 'Ein Cerddorion: Mr. Emlyn Davies', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XIX, Rhif 227, Tachwedd (1907), 123.

<sup>55</sup> J. Owen Jones, 'Hen Arweinyddion Canu Cylch Cefn Mawr', *Cefn Chronicle*, 20 May 1916, 7. Thomas Hughes emigrated to America c. 1870.

<sup>56</sup> J. Owen Jones, 'Hanes Eglwys Salem, Penycae, Sir Ddinbych', *Seren Gomer*, Cyfrol XX, Rhif 2, Mawrth (1928), 63.

<sup>57</sup> John Owen Jones (1911), op. cit., 56-7.

<sup>58</sup> Denbighshire Record Office, Joseph Griffiths, op. cit., FRO/D/DG/53.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

For the larger, more ambitious town-centre citadels contemplating the purchase of a pipe organ, cost was a major consideration, although there were instances when the benevolence of a chapel member hastened the acquisition. Brynyffynnon Wesleyan Methodist Chapel at Wrexham was fortunate in having such a benefactor and commissioned a splendid instrument by the organ builders Gray and Davidson, through the generosity of Wrexham confectioner, James Ollerhead.<sup>60</sup> The elaborate two-manual organ was opened on 20 November 1857 and Brynyffynnon was one of the first English Nonconformist causes in north-east Wales to install a pipe organ.<sup>61</sup> The acquisition of this superior instrument placed the Wesleyans on a par with St.Giles Church, Wrexham, and no doubt quickened the decision of the town's Baptist Chapel to exchange the harmonium for a new pipe organ,<sup>62</sup> that was built by a Mr. Butterworth of Chester.<sup>63</sup> With no patronage forthcoming, the Baptists relied on chapel members to arrange a series of fund-raising activities and at the opening of the new instrument on 1 May 1859, collections were made in aid of the Organ Fund.<sup>64</sup> Seemingly indifferent to denominational rivalry, a press correspondent opined: 'The taste for instrumental music appears to be spreading amongst the different dissenting denominations, nearly all of whom now have their harmoniums or their organs'.<sup>65</sup> For those chapels that regarded concerts as an expedient fund-raising device the organ was no longer considered an option, but rather an essential requirement for the performance of concerts, *eisteddfodau* and other activities that not only satisfied the demand for entertainment, but reduced chapel debts.

While the various denominations subscribed to the social ideals of the Temperance Movement it was nevertheless a competitive faction with a similar objective to the Nonconformists in that it was eager to expand its following. Almost replicating the strategy of the chapels, the movement began to build Temperance Halls which they funded by public subscription, concerts and other attractions that would otherwise have been held in the local chapel. It was at this stage that the Band of Hope, a

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<sup>60</sup> 'Opening of the new Organ in the Wesleyan chapel, Brynyffynnon', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 21 November 1857, 4.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* For sample of organ installations see Appendix 5.

<sup>62</sup> 'Local News: New Organ', *ibid.*, 22 January 1859, 4.

<sup>63</sup> 'Baptist chapel, Chester Street, New Organ', *ibid.*, 7 May 1859, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Advertisements and Notices, *ibid.*, 30 April 1859, 4.

<sup>65</sup> 'Local News: New Organ', *op. cit.*, 4.

movement for young people, began to take root in the chapel Sunday schools and when a number of Nonconformist causes began to arrange their own Temperance activities. Adwy'r Clawdd had formed a Band of Hope in January 1859, and a year later they rallied in procession to *Lloffft Wen*<sup>66</sup> where medals and flags were distributed after which they marched to Rhos-Berse Common to enjoy several games.<sup>67</sup> The Band of Hope had also gained a hold in the Wrexham Ragged School where a number of the boys were trained to take part in a drum and fife band.<sup>68</sup> Monthly prizes of books and the much sought-after 'Band of Hope Review' were among the many incentives that stimulated the interest and attendance at the Band of Hope and Sunday schools.<sup>69</sup>

Through the Band of Hope initiative, Adwy'r Clawdd Chapel increased its appeal to young people while supporting temperance ideals to the extent that in December 1860, the *Wrexham Advertiser* reported: 'We are also glad to note a revival in the temperance cause, a new society having recently been organised called the Bersham and Minera, having its headquarters at the Adwy'.<sup>70</sup> Having accepted the Band of Hope as an addendum to the Sunday school, the Calvinistic Methodist chapels were compromised into permitting the use of musical instruments that were a characteristic of Temperance and Band of Hope activity, although this concession applied only to the chapel schoolrooms. By the 1860s, many of the denominations were installing harmoniums and in some cases, pipe organs with such enthusiasm that St. Mark's Church in Wrexham, better known for its predominant spire than its harmonium, hurriedly announced that a new organ was to 'be placed in its intended niche forthwith'.<sup>71</sup> The opening of the St Mark's Church organ did not, however, pass without incident as the decision to import singers from outside the area in preference to the church choir caused much ill-feeling.<sup>72</sup> In a letter to the local newspaper one complainant says: 'I cannot help thinking that if our amateur choir was capable of conducting the services all this while with a harmonium only, I

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<sup>66</sup> *Lloffft Wen* [White or Holy Loft] was the early meeting-place of the Calvinistic Methodists in Adwy'r Clawdd in the 1740s. See Griffith Owen, *Hanes Methodistiaeth Sir Fflint* (Dolgellau, 1914), 24.

<sup>67</sup> 'Adwy'r Clawdd', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 28 July 1860, 3.

<sup>68</sup> 'Annual Meeting of the Ragged Schools', *ibid.*, 11 August 1860, 3.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> 'Adwy'r Clawdd', *ibid.*, 29 December 1860, 4.

<sup>71</sup> 'Wrexham: St Mark's Church', *ibid.*, 18 June 1859, 4.

<sup>72</sup> 'Correspondence', *ibid.*, 30 July 1859, 3.



certainly consider that they were equally capable of opening the organ, and they ought to have had the preference'.<sup>73</sup> In the ecclesiastical stronghold of Wrexham the organ was perhaps the only advantage which the church could claim over the Dissenting chapels, and it was probably for this reason that the town-centre chapels were among the first in north-east Wales to introduce organ accompaniment in worship for no other reason than to compete with the Established Church.

It was in the rural districts of Wrexham that the Welsh Nonconformist causes found their greatest success as they exploited the remoteness of village churches by building their citadels close to the centres of population whereas the Churches of St Mark's and St Giles, both in close proximity to the Wrexham population, continued to dominate the township. Insofar as the Dissenting places of worship thrived in the heavily populated industrial settlements of Rhosllannerchrugog, Holywell, Mold and Buckley, the clamour for adherents was not as intense between church and chapel as it was between the rival Nonconformist denominations. Whereas the capacious chapel buildings had once been the outward expression of supremacy, the competitive agenda had moved forward as the chapel organ became the new secular attraction.

Bethlehem Congregational Chapel in Rhosllannerchrugog was one the first in the area to acquire a harmonium, and by 1862 they had purchased a pipe organ from J.D. Jones of Ruthin.<sup>74</sup> The minister and four deacons, one of whom was William Bellis, the maternal grandfather of Caradog Roberts (1878-1935),<sup>75</sup> made their way through deep snow to cart the instrument back to Rhos, while other members laboured on the building of a gallery to accommodate the organ and pipes.<sup>76</sup> This was probably the first pipe organ to be installed in a Welsh Nonconformist chapel in north Wales,<sup>77</sup> and some sixteen years ahead of the Congregationalists in Wrexham who sufficed with a harmonium until a variety of entertainments and bazaars were organised to raise the necessary funds for the installation of a pipe

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> W.M. Roberts, 'Ein Cerddorion: Caradog Roberts', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XX, Rhif 235, Gorphenaf (1908), 71.

<sup>75</sup> Marian Nelson-Jones, 'Cofio Dr. Caradog Roberts (1878-1935)', *Y Tyst*, 13 Ebrill 1978, 1.

<sup>76</sup> Gwynne Williams, *op. cit.*, 8-9.

<sup>77</sup> Tom Carrington, 'Dr. Caradog Roberts', *Y Genhinen*, Cyfrol I, Rhif 1 (1950-51), 26; 'Mr. Caradog Roberts', *The Musical Herald*, January (1912), 3.

organ in September 1878.<sup>78</sup> It is evident from the activity in Rhos and Wrexham that the Congregationalists were eager to expand the musical aspects of worship and the acquisition of a mechanical instrument was made easier by a democratic process through which decisions were made by chapel members.

By 1869, Thomas Jones (*Canrhawdfardd*), the Wesleyan Methodist musician had published *Moliant Israel*, a collection of congregational tunes and chants with simplified arrangements in 'compressed score', so that they could be played on the organ or harmonium.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, the proposal by Edward Stephen (*Tanymarian* 1822-1885)<sup>80</sup> that the congregation sing the main voice, allowing the handful of chapel singers to lead the harmony, 'supported by an organ or harmonium',<sup>81</sup> indicates that organs and harmoniums were commonplace in the Congregational chapels of north-east Wales and Liverpool by the 1860s. For example, when Thomas Gruffydd Jones (*Tafalaw, Pencerdd*, 1832-1898)<sup>82</sup> of Holywell lectured at the Bryn Seion Congregationalist Chapel, Brymbo, in September 1863 on the subject of religious and secular music, he accompanied himself on the harmonium, while the choir, led by Seth Roberts, sang several items to illustrate the lecture.<sup>83</sup>

Further evidence of the growth of instrumental accompaniment can be found in the preface to *Llyfr Tonau ac Emy nau*,<sup>84</sup> the Congregational hymnal compiled by *Tanymarian* and J.D. Jones (1827-1870) of Ruthin, in which specific instructions are given on the introduction of a hymn-tune. One recommendation specifies that the announcer should note the number and read all verses of the hymn, and 'if an organ or harmonium is used', the first section of the hymn should be played, while

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<sup>78</sup> Multiple Advertisements & Notices, *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 14 September 1878, 1.

<sup>79</sup> Thomas Jones (*Canrhawdfardd*), *Moliant Israel: sef crynhoad o Donau a Dyganau Cynulleidfaol, gwreiddiol a detholedig* (Coedpoeth, 1869).

<sup>80</sup> Edward Stephen (Jones), preacher, poet, lecturer, writer, and musician and composer of the oratorio, *Ystorm Tiberius*, the first oratorio of its kind written by a Welshman.

<sup>81</sup> E. Stephen, 'Canu Cynulleidfaol', *Greal y Corau*, Rhif X, 1 Ionawr 1862, 73.

<sup>82</sup> Son of a Congregational minister, Thomas Gruffydd Jones was born in Monmouthshire. In 1860, he became private secretary to Thomas Gee, before moving to Holywell to take charge of a poor school. He wrote six issues of a Musical Encyclopaedia, *Y Gwyddonydd Cerddorol*, and moved to Aberdare in 1863 to establish a printing business to publish his Encyclopaedia. He emigrated to America in 1866, and became a Congregational Minister. See M.O.Jones, *Bywgraffiaeth Cerddorion Cymreig* (Caerdydd, 1890), 60-61.

<sup>83</sup> 'Brymbo: An Evening with Tavalaw', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 19. September 1863, 5.

<sup>84</sup> Parch. E. Stephen a J.D. Jones, *Llyfr Tonau ac Emy nau* (Wrexham, 1868).

the entire congregation should stand ready to sing.<sup>85</sup> This suggests that a more formal mode of worship was being adopted in the chapels in contrast to the free expression of the early Dissenters, a transition that was reflected in the ornate architecture of the Nonconformist tabernacles. R. Tudur Jones in his *Hanes Annibynwyr Cymru* observes that between 1850 and 1900 there was more building and rebuilding of Nonconformist chapels in Wales than at any other period,<sup>86</sup> 'as the chapels began to adopt the sentiment and spirit of established churches'.<sup>87</sup>

Even though Welsh Presbyterians dogmatically rejected any form of instrumental accompaniment in worship, by the mid-1860s, exceptions to the rule were initiated to allow for *eisteddfodau* and other fund-raising events. Faced with competition from other denominations, the Presbyterians had little choice other than to accept compromise. For example, when the celebrated soloist, Megan Watts (1842-1907) performed at two grand concerts in *Capel Mawr*, Rhos on Christmas Day 1866 she was accompanied by the Cardiff pianist, Miss Gledrych,<sup>88</sup> and at the same concert, the *Capel Mawr* choir conducted by Hugh Griffith, the Adwy Choir led by James Beckett and the all male Tonic Sol-fa classes of Joseph Owen, were accompanied by Fred Owen (*Alaw Maelor*).<sup>89</sup> With ticket prices that ranged from 5s for a platform seat, to 1s for a floor seat in a building that accommodated almost 1,000 people, the concerts were undoubtedly a lucrative source of income.<sup>90</sup>

A number of years would pass before *Capel Mawr*, Rhos, began to accept musical accompaniment in a religious service, and that same resolve was as strongly observed in the Princes Road Chapel, Toxteth, a cathedral-like edifice built in 1865 at a cost of £19,633 to the glory of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism on Merseyside.<sup>91</sup> Despite the need for a powerful instrument, the trustees doggedly refused to consider the use of musical instruments in chapel worship and Eleazar Roberts observes: 'even in the 1870s a 'cathedral' of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism like Princes Road Chapel in Liverpool had no organ, and the large congregation relied

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, v.

<sup>86</sup> R. Tudur Jones, *Hanes Annibynwyr Cymru* (Abertawe, 1966), 233.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 36-7.

<sup>88</sup> Advertisements and Notices, *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 8 December 1866, 1.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> D. Ben Rees, *The Welsh of Merseyside in the Twentieth Century*, Vol. 2 (Liverpool, 2001), 134.

on a precentor (*dechreuwr canu* or *codwr-canu*) to pitch a tune'.<sup>92</sup> Resistance was nevertheless weakening and in 1871 the Welsh Presbyterians of Shaw Street, Liverpool announced the opening of a new pipe organ,<sup>93</sup> although their decision to break with tradition was made easier by the generosity of John Williams, a partner in the firm of coal merchants Lea, Williams and Pugh, who gifted the instrument to the fellowship.<sup>94</sup> Built by Gray and Davidson of Colquitt Street (Liverpool), the organ was elaborately painted to match the newly decorated chapel that was filled to capacity during a concert of sacred music to mark the opening of the instrument in October 1871.<sup>95</sup> Rev. John Pritchard of Birmingham, minister of *Capel Mawr*, Rhos from 1863 to 1871, lamented: 'chapel members tried to excel in inventing improvements and new adornments in their chapel, and their belief in beautifying a place of worship without sacrificing cost or labour'.<sup>96</sup>

For instance, when the members of Salem Chapel, Mold, decided to erect a larger Sunday school hall, their ambitions were made clear from the outset: 'That the proposed new school at Maesydre will soon be erected as another instance of the growing importance of the Calvinistic Methodists in this town there can be no doubt. The promoters are not backward in using every legitimate means in aid of this object – such as soliciting donations &c'.<sup>97</sup> The project began with the conversion of a burned-out cotton factory that a local builder had transformed into a 'tolerably comfortable "Assembly" room', which allowed the membership to satisfy populist demand without compromising the sanctity of the chapel. In common with other such schemes, the appeal began with a tea party that was followed by a concert during which the Tonic Sol-fa Society and the chapel choir presented a largely secular programme that concluded with *Cheer Cheer* (Spark), and the worldly doxology, 'God Save the Queen'.<sup>98</sup> With similar opportunism, chapels in the Rhos area laid aside their denominational principles in a rare gesture

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<sup>92</sup> Eleazar Roberts 'Hen Ddechreuwr Canu: John Edwards, Lerpwl', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol VIII (1896), 11-12.

<sup>93</sup> 'District News', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 28 October 1871, 6.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Adgofion Y Parch. J. Pritchard Birmingham am yr Eglwys yn Capel Mawr Rhosllanerchrugog o 1863 i 1871', *Cofnodau Eglwysig Capel Mawr, Rhosllanerchrugog, 1905-1909*, Tachwedd (1906), 64. [*O'r pryd hwn hyd heddyw, y maent yn ymorchestri mewn dyfeisio gwelliantau ac addurniadau newyddion ynddo, ac yn credu au holl galon mewn harddu lle fy nghysegr heb arbed unrhyw draul na thrafferth*].

<sup>97</sup> 'District News: Mold', *Cheshire Observer and North Wales Times*, 13 August 1870, 3.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

of unity and invited that giant of the nineteenth century pulpit, Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-92), to preach in the open air at Ruabon in 1869, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of chapels in the Rhos area. Two classes of ticket were issued, viz 2s. and 2s.6d., but Spurgeon rejected such discrimination and demanded that the space between the best seats and the ordinary seats be taken down.<sup>99</sup>

In the context of fund-raising, the grand pipe organ was probably an investment on account of its potential to enhance the use of the tabernacle as a concert venue when Public halls and Assembly Rooms were offering an alternative facility to chapel buildings, and many causes installed a superior instrument in the hope of gaining a cultural advantage in this new competitive milieu. Musical entertainment was undoubtedly the most expedient form of fund-raising, and as chapel trustees challenged the appeal of the Public Halls they began to adopt a more liberal attitude to the performance of secular music that would ultimately compromise the sanctity of the tabernacles. Doubtless there were exceptions to this secular inclination, but for the majority of chapels the worldly issue of accumulated debt and the need to justify ambitious building schemes outweighed the principles of the Dissenting fathers as fiscal propriety became a dominant factor. That chapels were conforming to the demand for entertainment is evidenced by the pastors, teachers and scholars of the 'various religious' bodies in Flint that marched in procession at the wedding celebrations of James Muspratt, son of a local industrialist: 'Singing hymns and anthems, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists being conspicuous by having a drum and fife band at their head'.<sup>100</sup> By the mid 1870s, glee parties and choral groups were answering public demand as winter entertainments became popular, such as those held in the Assembly Rooms at Rhosymedre, in the early 1870s, at which leading chapel singers took part.<sup>101</sup>

Congregational hymn-singing became a lesser priority from the 1870s as the competitive ethos stirred the ambition of precentors and choristers to perform more demanding works often for self-glorification rather than spiritual purpose. Oratorio began to take on an immense significance and many of the north-east Wales chapel

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<sup>99</sup> Advertisement, *Seren Cymru*, 14 September 1869, 213.

<sup>100</sup> 'Flint', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 23 August 1873, 7.

<sup>101</sup> Denbighshire Record Office, DD/GL/57, Programme of the Third Winter Entertainment, Rhosymedre, 7 November 1871.

choirs were familiar with the choruses of Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, although few were sufficiently accomplished to perform the whole work. It was the Established Church that took the initiative in 1871 when the *Wrexham Advertiser* carried the announcement that Edwin Harris, the organist of St. Mark's Church, Wrexham had 'definitely fixed Wednesday, the 11<sup>th</sup> January 1871, for the long looked-for performance of the *Messiah*: - 'We have often heard selections from Handel's masterpiece at our concerts, but this will be the first time it has been given in its entirety in Wrexham'.<sup>102</sup> The performance was accompanied by the orchestra of C.A. Stephenson, supported by Edwin Harris (harmonium) and Fred Owen (pianoforte) and the chorus of the Birkenhead Anglo-Cambrian Choral Society, conducted by William Parry.<sup>103</sup> Effectively, the cultural parameters had widened and two years later in 1873 came the announcement:<sup>104</sup> 'for the first time in the district, the *Messiah* was given as a whole', by the Cefn Mawr Choral Society, a choir of fifty voices under the leadership of R.E. Jones.<sup>105</sup>

After Presbyterian chapels such as *Capel Mawr*, Rhos, capitulated to instrumental accompaniment for concerts in the mid-1860s, their use was generally accepted by most other causes and the Cefn Mawr Baptists were no exception to this practice. On New Year's Day 1874, the Tabernacle Chapel was the venue for a concert featuring the Birkenhead Cambrian Choral Society, arguably one of the foremost mixed choirs of the day. Unexpectedly, the concert began with an apology from the conductor William Parry to the effect that: 'The good people who had so kindly allowed the chapel to be used for the occasion, for some reason or other of their own, would not allow the string band to be in attendance'.<sup>106</sup> William Parry commented: 'They would allow a string to be struck with a hammer (referring to the piano), but would not allow a man to draw one string across another. Of the harmonium, they would allow them to blow wind into a pipe with their foot, but would not allow them to blow wind into a pipe with their mouth'.<sup>107</sup> Had the situation arisen in a Calvinistic Methodist chapel, the reaction would have been

<sup>102</sup> 'Local News: The Messiah', *ibid.*, 17 December 1870, 5.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> 'The Performance of the *Messiah*', *ibid.*, 22 February 1873, 6; Emlyn Davies, 'Yr Wyfyn Cofio', *Seren Gomer*, Cyfrol XLV1, Rhif 2, Haf (1954), 68.

<sup>105</sup> Emlyn Davies, *ibid.*, 68, 71.

<sup>106</sup> 'Cefn & Rhosymedre: The Birkenhead Choir Concerts', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 3 January 1874, 8.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

understandable, but when Parry took his choir and string band to Adwy'r Clawdd on Good Friday 1876, there was no such opposition.<sup>108</sup>

To refuse permission for a string band was a strange decision by the Tabernacle Chapel trustees, and all the more surprising as twelve months prior to the concert by the Birkenhead Cambrian Choir, the Cefn Choral Union had performed Handel's *Messiah* in February 1873 to a packed congregation when the 'Hallelujah Chorus' was sung 'with full orchestral accompaniment'.<sup>109</sup> As the *deaconiaid* of Tabernacle were not obliged to offer an explanation for this extraordinary ruling, their actions remain a mystery, although it appears that local choirs were treated preferentially as the following press report infers:

The inhabitants of the district owe a debt of gratitude to the Cefn Choral Union for the great exertions they have made in raising themselves to the present prominent position, and in keeping together such a strong body of amateurs, who cannot possibly reap any pecuniary advantage, but are led solely by the love of music and a desire to provide for the entertainment of their neighbours.<sup>110</sup>

For the Cefn Choir performance the higher-priced seats in the gallery had been occupied by a 'highly respectable auditory', although no mention is made of the beneficiaries of the concert which is a departure from the norm as advertisements for chapel-based entertainment usually acknowledge the fiscal intent. Of no mean relevance to the controversial decision of the officials of Tabernacle Chapel was that Parry's concert had been convened for the purpose of raising funds for the building of a new Public Hall in Cefn Mawr,<sup>111</sup> a facility that would have provided the village with an alternative venue. A concert arranged by the Welsh Baptist friends at Tabernacle Chapel in March 1871<sup>112</sup> and described in the local press as 'Popular Entertainment', and the lively programme, better suited to a music hall jamboree than a place of worship, was typical of the many fund-raising activities that began to compromise the spiritual purpose of the sanctuary. After years of monopolising public space, chapels were beginning to face competition from non-denominational sources, not least of which was the Temperance Movement that

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<sup>108</sup> Advertisement, *ibid.*, 18 March 1876, 1.

<sup>109</sup> 'The Performance of the Messiah', *ibid.*, 22 February 1873, 6.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> 'District News: Cefn and Rhosymedre', *ibid.*, 3 January 1874, 8.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 March 1871, 6.

began to build assembly halls specific to their needs and they too resorted to concerts and competitive meetings as a means of funding their work. For instance, when the Brymbo Choir performed at the Grand Concert in the British School in 1869, it was an event 'promoted by the Brymbo and Broughton Temperance committee and the proceeds therefrom were applied to liquidate the debt on the temperance society'.<sup>113</sup>

Given that the chapel and Temperance choirs in north-east Wales were not yet able to perform oratorios in their entirety, they were nevertheless prominent on the concert circuit and at competitive meetings that coincided with religious festivals. Often, the significance of Christmas was lost in an extravaganza of concerts and tea parties that were unashamedly secular in content and specifically contrived to appeal to a populist audience. For example, the celebrations at Bethlehem Chapel, Rhosllannerchrugog, in December 1864 began with an organ recital by Fred Owen followed by a selection of secular works such as the *Prince of Wales Cantata* and solo items such as *Chime again Beautiful Bells* (H. Bishop).<sup>114</sup> The Calvinistic Methodists of Mold were similarly inclined and the Christmas programme of 1875 began with a tea party before the start of a test concert that was as favourably disposed towards popular music as it was sparing in the performance of sacred works.<sup>115</sup> Apart from the choral competition for the singing of a congregational hymn-tune and the prize for the best rendition of *Yr Hen 50ed*, the greater part of the evening was given over to a selection of test pieces that ranged from 'The Gipsy Star' (Verdi) to Maggie Roberts' performance of *She wore a Wreath of Roses* (Bayly).<sup>116</sup>

Contrary to the suspicions of the early Dissenters, it was not the harmonium that would secularise the holy places, but the concerts, competitive meetings and endless bazaars that demeaned the sanctity of the chapel as financial accountability began to overshadow spiritual fulfilment. Perhaps the most outstanding example of the harmonium as an instrument of praise was its prominent feature in the Gospel

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<sup>113</sup> 'Brymbo: Grand Concert', *ibid.*, 19 June 1869, 6.

<sup>114</sup> 'Rhosllannerchrugog: Concert at Bethlehem Chapel', *ibid.*, 2 January 1864, 5.

<sup>115</sup> 'Mold: The Annual Christmas Tea Party and Literary Meeting', *ibid.*, 2 January 1875, 6.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*



mission of Moody and Sankey that came to Liverpool in 1875<sup>117</sup> and challenged a bigotry that had no foundation in Christian teaching. Prior to the Liverpool crusade, the American evangelists had won the hearts and minds of the Scottish people, although the use of a portable organ caused concern 'for many of the Scottish churches still objected to the use of musical instruments, as well as hymns of human composure'.<sup>118</sup> John Spencer Curwen claimed: 'The influence of Sankey led to a growing acceptance of organs in Scottish churches',<sup>119</sup> and after the visitation of the American evangelists a correspondent in *Y Drysorfa* commented that the use of harmonium and organ was becoming more commonplace.<sup>120</sup>

Shortly after the Moody and Sankey crusade, the English Presbyterian church on Princes Road, Liverpool commissioned Wadsworth and Sons to install a pipe organ which was installed in June 1877.<sup>121</sup> The fact that the English Presbyterians had broken the long-standing prejudice against the use of musical instruments in the chapel heartened the young people of Chatham Street, Welsh Presbyterian Chapel in Liverpool, who petitioned for an organ on the premise that it would improve congregational singing.<sup>122</sup> It was clear that the Presbyterian attitudes to musical accompaniment were giving way to a more liberal approach when the Calvinistic Methodists of Stanley Road Chapel, Bootle acquired a harmonium in 1879.<sup>123</sup> Driven by the imperatives of denominational rivalry, the Welsh Congregationalists in Park Road, Liverpool entrusted Messrs. Forster and Andrews to install a two-manual pipe organ in September of that same year,<sup>124</sup> while their brethren at Great Crosshall Street were convening 'A Grand Concert of Welsh and English Music to be held in the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool, on St. David's Day

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<sup>117</sup> J. Hughes Morris, *Hanes Methodistiaeth Liverpool*, Cyfrol 1 (Liverpool, 1929), 173.

<sup>118</sup> David W. Music, 'Instruments in Church', *Studies in Liturgical Musicology*, No. 7 (1998), 155.

<sup>119</sup> Quoted in David W. Music, *ibid.*, 159. David W. Music is Professor of Church Music at Baylor University in Texas, America, and author of *Christian Hymnody in Twentieth-Century Britain and America: An Annotated Bibliography* (2001), *Instruments in Church: A Collection of Source Documents* (1998), and *Hymnology: A Collection of Source Readings* (1996). See Baylor School of Music website, [http://www.baylor.edu/music/church\\_music/index.php?id=46844](http://www.baylor.edu/music/church_music/index.php?id=46844), accessed 16 November 2010.

<sup>120</sup> 'Offerynau Cerdd mewn Addoliad', *Y Drysorfa*, Rhif 544, Llyfr XLVI, Chwefror (1876), 66

<sup>121</sup> 'Local News', *Liverpool Mercury*, 6 June 1877, 6.

<sup>122</sup> 'Capel Chatham a'i Organ Newydd', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 11 Tachwedd 1896, 4. Although Chatham Street Chapel may have possessed a harmonium, it was not until 19 years later that a new organ was installed in November 1896.

<sup>123</sup> Hugh Evans, *Camau'r Cysegr: Sef Hanes Eglwys y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd Stanley Road Bootle* (Lerpwl, 1926), 41.

<sup>124</sup> 'Local News', *Liverpool Mercury*, 5 September 1877, 6.

1877, for the purpose of liquidating the chapel debts'.<sup>125</sup> The outward facade of Welsh Nonconformist prosperity and respectability often hid a crisis of debt, and cultural events such as concerts and *eisteddfodau* that masqueraded as 'literary meetings' served a dual purpose in that they contributed to the financial burden and justified the existence of such large buildings.

Bearing little comparison to the elaborate organs that were being installed in the Nonconformist chapels throughout Liverpool and north-east Wales was the tiny instrument used to such meaningful effect by the American evangelist, Ira D. Sankey, which had proved adequate for the thousands that filled the Victoria Hall in Liverpool in 1875. Sankey's use of a portable organ, manufactured by Mason & Hamlin, had not escaped the notice of the enterprising London agent, Metzler & Co., who aggressively advertised the American cabinet organs in the *Liverpool Mercury* throughout the month-long evangelical Crusade.<sup>126</sup> The advertisement was worded in such a manner as to imply that the Mason & Hamlin organ was superior to other instruments on the grounds that it had been endorsed by Ira D. Sankey. In due course, suspicion was aroused as to whether Sankey had a vested interest in the product. (See Fig. 6.3 below).

Fig. 6.3

#### PROMOTION OF MASON & HAMLIN'S CABINET ORGANS

**MASON & HAMLIN'S CABINET  
ORGANS.**

TO THE EDITORS OF THE LIVERPOOL MERCURY.

Gentlemen,—We deem it necessary to say that the instrument used at the religious meetings of Messrs. Moody and Sankey is one of the cabinet organs made by Messrs. Mason and Hamlin, Boston, U.S., and we are the appointed agents for the United Kingdom.

**METZLER & CO.,**  
37, Great Marlborough-street, London, W.,  
Feb. 17, 1875.

Advertisement from *Liverpool Mercury*, 22 February 1875, 3.

<sup>125</sup> Public Announcement, *ibid.*, 28 February 1877, 1.

<sup>126</sup> Advertisements and Notices, *ibid.*, 22 February, 1875, 3; 'Messrs Moody and Sankey Visit to Liverpool', *ibid.*, 26 March 1883, 6.

Such effrontery was alien to the principled Sankey who was disinterested in commercial gain and responded to the effect: 'The enemy were also saying that they (Sankey and Moody) were making a great deal out of the sale of organs. They were not selling organs, nor were they hired by any organ society or company to represent them'.<sup>127</sup> What cannot be dismissed is that Sankey's critics may have confused him with the American organist and hymn writer, Lowell Mason (1792-1872), father of Henry Mason, who was the co-founder of the Mason and Hamlin firm.<sup>128</sup> Ira D. Sankey was no stranger to the strict Presbyterian edict that 'any kind of musical instrument to accompany the voices of the singers was wicked and worldly', a bigotry which had kept the harmonium out of the chapels.<sup>129</sup> In his autobiography,<sup>130</sup> he refers to his home-town of Newcastle, Pennsylvania, where 'The twanging of an old tuning-fork on the back of a hymn-book was not objected to, nor the running of the whole gamut in subdued voice to find the proper key, nor the choir trying to get the proper note to their respective parts in the never-to-be-forgotten "Do, Mi, Sol, Mi, Do," before beginning the hymn'.<sup>131</sup>

The views of the eminent English Baptist minister, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, on the subject of instrumental accompaniment are well documented in his *Treasury of David*,<sup>132</sup> particularly the commentary on Psalm 33, verse 2, *Praise the Lord with harp*, in which his feelings on the subject are made clear: 'There is no instrument like the human voice. As a help to singing, the instrument is alone to be tolerated, for keys and strings do not praise the Lord'.<sup>133</sup> During his twenty year ministry at The Metropolitan Tabernacle, Spurgeon only once allowed the use of a musical instrument during a service, and that was on the occasion that Ira D. Sankey visited the fellowship in 1879.<sup>134</sup> Sankey was invited to meet Spurgeon who asked him to

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<sup>127</sup> 'The American Revivalists in Liverpool', *ibid.*, 8 February 1875, 6.

<sup>128</sup> Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, *Harmonium: The History of the Reed Organ and its Makers* (Newton Abbot, 1986), 162.

<sup>129</sup> Ira David Sankey, *My Life and the Story of the Gospel Hymns and of Sacred Songs and Solos* (Philadelphia, 1905), reproduced by BiblioBazaar (Charleston, SC, 2009) 14-15.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon's *Treasury of David* (London, Edinburgh, 1870) is a comprehensive commentary on the Book of Psalms. It appeared as a weekly supplement over twenty years in *The Sword and Trowel*, the London Metropolitan Tabernacle's periodical. See 'The Spurgeon Archive', [www.spurgeon.org/treasury/treasury.htm](http://www.spurgeon.org/treasury/treasury.htm), viewed 29 June 2010.

<sup>133</sup> C.H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, Vol. II, (London & Edinburgh, 1870), 115.

<sup>134</sup> Ira David Sankey, *op. cit.*, 173.

be present at the evening service and requested that he should sing 'Hold the Fort' at that meeting:

I replied that I would gladly comply with his wish if I could have a small organ to accompany myself upon. This I supposed that he would not have, as he did not approve of organs at public worship but he replied that 'when I arrived at the meeting there would be an instrument on the platform for me'. In the evening, at the close of his address he announced that I was present and would sing "Hold the Fort;" and he asked them all to join heartily in the chorus. At the conclusion of the service Mr. Spurgeon exclaimed, 'There now, I think our roof will stay on after that!'<sup>135</sup>

While Spurgeon may have questioned the place of the organ in worship, his view was not shared by the Welsh Baptists at Tabernacle Chapel in Brymbo, that were probably one of the first of that denomination in north-east Wales to install a pipe organ,<sup>136</sup> the opening of which coincided with the publication of the Baptist hymnal, *Llawlyfr Moliant*, in 1880.<sup>137</sup> The neighbouring Wesleyan cause at Bethel, with a larger congregation, did not progress beyond a harmonium, and neither did the musically adept Congregationalists of Harwt Bryn Seion, Brymbo. The Bryn Seion choir, led by *codwr canu* Seth Roberts until 1888, performed the most ambitious works with a small string band and a harmonium, a tradition that continued under his successor Peter Williams (1855-1919), who fulfilled the role from 1888-1919.<sup>138</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that the grand organ improved congregational or choral singing as that could only be achieved through the instruction of the *arweinydd y gân*, as was the case with the Seion Baptists of Cefn Mawr,<sup>139</sup> whose membership consisted mainly of coalminers, quarrymen and iron workers.<sup>140</sup> Seion had one of the finest choirs of that denomination in north-east Wales and waited until 1880 before acquiring their first harmonium,<sup>141</sup> although evidence suggests that chapel precentor, Edward Davies, did establish *Seindorf*

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<sup>135</sup> Ira David Sankey, *op. cit.*, 173.

<sup>136</sup> 'Society Notes', *Bwletin Cymdeithas Emynwyr Cymru*, Cyfrol 2, Rhif 10 (1987-8), 342.

<sup>137</sup> J.H. Roberts, *Llawlyfr Moliant: casgliad o emynau a thonau at wasanaeth cynulleidfaoedd y Bedyddwyr / detholedig gan Bwyllgor dros Gymanfa Arfon, y tonau wedi eu cynghaneddu a'u trefnu gan J. H. Roberts* (Bangor, 1880).

<sup>138</sup> E.K. Jones, *Harwt a Bryn Seion - Hanes Eglwys Annibynnol Brymbo 1802-1940* (Llandysul, 1941), 95. Peter Williams spent his working life of 55 years with the Brymbo Iron and Steel Works during which time he became a director and general manager of the company. A lifelong member of Bryn Seion Congregational chapel, Brymbo, he played a leading role as precentor, and was conductor of Brymbo and Broughton United Choir. See E.K. Jones, *ibid.*, 62-80.

<sup>139</sup> Emlyn Davies (23 August 1954), *op. cit.*

<sup>140</sup> Bangor University Archive, MSS-14799, J. H. Phillips, *op. cit.*, 17.

<sup>141</sup> Emlyn Davies (23 August 1954), *op. cit.*

*Dannau Seion* (Seion's String Band).<sup>142</sup> Similarly, *Capel Mawr*, Rhos, equally renowned for its congregational singing did not purchase a harmonium until January 1882, and the chapel accounts show that the proceeds of £4. 16s. 11d. from the 1881 Christmas concert helped to defray the debt of £43.0s. 6d.<sup>143</sup>

For the chapels with neither funds nor the space for a pipe organ, the American manufacturer, Mason & Hamlin, offered a substitute, and by the 1880s they had developed a two-manual instrument with a full pedal board.<sup>144</sup> European reed-organ builders, such as the German manufacturer, Trayser & Cie,<sup>145</sup> were also becoming popular in the region and found favour with Pryce Roberts (1865-1896) of Rhosymedre, near Ruabon, organist of Gorphwysfa Wesleyan Chapel, Cefn Mawr.<sup>146</sup> He drew up the specifications for a new instrument only to find that it was too large for the doorway, a difficulty that was resolved by removing one of the windows.<sup>147</sup> Following his untimely death, the chapel failed to find a successor and Roberts' harmonium was sold and replaced by a simpler one 'in order to tempt organists to fill the empty chair'.<sup>148</sup> Such was the élitism attached to chapel organs that many of the larger reed organs were fitted with 'dummy' pipes in order to give the appearance of a pipe organ, a vainglorious trait on which the manufacturers of reed organs capitalised; in the Mason & Hamlin catalogue of October 1884 is featured a two-manual instrument with a dummy pipe top that was almost indistinguishable from a small chamber pipe organ.<sup>149</sup>

Indubitably, the pipe organ had become a status symbol, and the egotism of chapel organists was not lost on a north-east Wales organ builder who realised the potential for a competitively priced pipe-organ. Thomas Casson (1842-1910) of

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<sup>142</sup> 'Cefn Mawr', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol I, Rhif 11, Tachwedd (1889), 120. A decade later, a more powerful instrument was purchased from Mr. W.H. Thomas of Cefn. See 'District News: Cefn and Rhosymedre', *Wrexham Advertiser*, 5 July 1890, 8.

<sup>143</sup> Record from Account Book Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog, January 1882

<sup>144</sup> Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, *op. cit.*, 50.

<sup>145</sup> Philip Trayser established his business in 1847, having served an apprenticeship with Alexandre in Paris. The company folded in 1903. See Phillip and Pamela Fluke, *Victorian Reed Organs and Harmoniums* (1985). See Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, *op. cit.*, 46.

<sup>146</sup> 'Cefn Mawr Psalmody Festival', *Cefn Chronicle*, 6 February 1936, 2.

<sup>147</sup> L. Newton Wright, 'Local Personalities and Their Works', *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, *op. cit.*, 50.

Denbigh,<sup>150</sup> a retired banker, began to manufacture a range of 'Positive' organs which incorporated various devices that could produce melodic and bass effects from a single manual instrument. Casson invited the renowned organist William T. Best (1826-97)<sup>151</sup> to demonstrate the instrument at the opening recital on the Casson organ in St. Mary's Church, Denbigh on 29 July 1884,<sup>152</sup> and he endorsed the single manual organ, 'which gives the effect of a two-manual organ'.<sup>153</sup> This instrument was well-suited for pianists with limited organ-playing experience and with prices ranging from £45 to £300,<sup>154</sup> it found favour with smaller chapels in the Wrexham area, such as the English Presbyterian Chapel in Acrefair, the Welsh CM Chapel in nearby Froncysyllte and the English Wesleyan Chapel in Cefn Mawr.<sup>155</sup> Sales were no doubt enhanced by reports in the Denbigh-based *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, which recommended Cassons' Patent as an alternative to the larger American organ,<sup>156</sup> and a variation of this instrument was available from John Roberts of Rhosymedre who became the local agent for the Positive Pipe Organ.<sup>157</sup>

From the 1880s, chapels were being rebuilt and extended to accommodate pipe organs that according to Rhidian Griffiths were 'often more for reasons of prestige rather than for their musical value, but perhaps the greatest single obstacle to be overcome was sheer musical ignorance'.<sup>158</sup> *Cymanfaoedd canu* and other 'big meetings' were a plausible reason for adding galleries and majestic organs, and the *persona* of grandeur became symptomatic of the obsessive materialism that began

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<sup>150</sup> Thomas Casson was the author of *The Modern Organ, a Consideration of the prevalent Theoretical and Practical defects in its Construction* (published by T. Gee & Son, Denbigh, 1883), dedicated to W.T. Best. See Percy A. Scholes, op. cit., Vol. II (London, 1947), 585.

<sup>151</sup> Carlisle-born William Thomas Best spent most of his musical life in Liverpool, where aged 14 he was the first organ appointment at Pembroke Baptist chapel, Liverpool. In 1848 he became organist to the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, and after three years in London, he returned to Liverpool in 1855 as borough organist at the St. George's Hall which had opened in September 1854. He held this position for nearly forty years (1855-94). See Obituary, *Liverpool Mercury*, 11 May 1897, 7.

<sup>152</sup> 'A New System of Organ Building', *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 25, No. 499, 1 September 1884, 520; Percy A. Scholes, op. cit., Vol. II (London, 1947), 585.

<sup>153</sup> 'Hysbysiadau', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XVI, Rhif 181, Ionawr (1904).

<sup>154</sup> 'Y Positive Organ', *ibid.*, Cyfrol XIV, Rhif 161, Mai (1902), 53.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> 'Organau Mr. Casson', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 7 Chwefror 1900, 4. The Harmonium and Reed Organ are often referred to as 'American organ' and share the same technology as the aforementioned with air being sucked over the reeds as opposed to being blown. Arthur W.J.G. Ord-Hume, op. cit., 108.

<sup>157</sup> 'Hysbysiadau', *ibid.*, Cyfrol XVI, Rhif 181, Ionawr (1904).

<sup>158</sup> Rhidian Griffiths, 'Welsh chapel music: the making of a tradition', *Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History*, 6 (1989), 39.

to symbolize the growing 'establishmentarian' character of Nonconformity.<sup>159</sup> For instance, when the congregation moved from Bedford Street to the new Princes Road CM Chapel in Liverpool in 1868,<sup>160</sup> described as 'possibly the most beautiful chapel ever built by the Welsh',<sup>161</sup> its members adopted a superior stance and it became customary to use Mr. and Mrs. as a form of address.<sup>162</sup> The likes of John Edwards *y Teiliwr* (tailor) or John Hughes *y Crydd* (cobbler) became Mr. Edwards and Mr. Hughes, a practice deplored by the old stalwarts who lamented the loss of the family camaraderie.<sup>163</sup> Eleazar Roberts recollects the annual Whit Monday Association meetings when the ladies, dressed in new clothes and bonnets, found it obligatory to hire a cab: 'Every cabby in Liverpool knew about the big Welsh meeting on Whit Monday'.<sup>164</sup> Alun Tudur summarises the social prerogatives of the chapels thus: 'As the Nonconformist bodies developed, respectability, gentility, cleanliness and formality became part of their culture ... a reflection of the characteristics of the Victorian era',<sup>165</sup> while Merfyn Jones analogizes the chapel-going Liverpool Welsh to 'the rustle of silk'.<sup>166</sup> For those able to afford the pews there was the self-satisfaction of being seen to have aspired to a higher social status, while the lower earning classes were patronised by the provision of poor seats and stripped of their dignity.

As the Welsh chapels began to exude the pomp and formality of the Anglican churches they once despised, Dissent changed to the more respectable sounding descriptor of 'Nonconformity' and lost its spiritual relevance to the working classes. It was into this elevated chapel-going society that the Salvation Army made its appearance to an unwelcoming north-east Wales region to disturb the spiritual complacency of what had become, by the 1880s, a conforming body. General Booth's Army signed a one-year agreement with the directors of the Public

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<sup>159</sup> William Griffith, 'Religion and Irreligion 1880-1906', School of History and Welsh History, Bangor University, 2007.

<sup>160</sup> 'Opening of the Welsh Presbyterian chapel Prince's Road', *Liverpool Mercury*, 16 March 1868, 6.

<sup>161</sup> J. Roberts, Salford, 'Adroddiad Capel Newydd Prince's Road, Liverpool', *Y Drysorfa*, Cyf. XLII (1872), 437-8. '... y capel godidocaf a godwyd gan Gymry erioed, fel y tybiwn'.

<sup>162</sup> J. Hughes Morris, *op. cit.*, 243.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> Eleazar Roberts quoted in John Hughes Morris, *op. cit.*, 211.

<sup>165</sup> Alun Tudur, 'Yr Ysfa Adeiladu', *Y Cofiadur*, Rhif 65, Mai (2002), 13.

<sup>166</sup> R. Merfyn Jones, 'The Liverpool Welsh', in R. Merfyn Jones and D. Ben Rees (ed.), *Liverpool Welsh and their Religion* (Liverpool and Llanddewi Brefi, 1984), 24.

Hall in Wrexham, for Sunday services and secured the Temperance Hall for weekly meetings which were scheduled to begin on Sunday, 23 October 1881.<sup>167</sup> Booth was no stranger to the area as he had preached at Chester and had realised the effect of the Moody and Sankey crusade on the spiritually disenfranchised working classes of Merseyside and north-east Wales who had crowded the meetings at the Victoria Hall, Liverpool. In the wake of the spiritual awakening of 1875, the Liverpool Young Men's Christian Association and other evangelical causes had continued the work of Moody and Sankey, but Booth's Salvation Army was a more intense evangelical force that sang and preached the Gospel on the streets and made their intentions clear in a press report which stated:

The class which the Salvation Army wishes to reach are those which, unfortunately, the churches and chapels of the country, and even of our own town, fail to reach. Captain Munns and her subordinate have succeeded admirably so far in reaching them, for the congregations are largely composed of that class, and we are glad to say that their order and attention has been admirable.<sup>168</sup>

In many respects, the Salvationists resembled the early Dissenters in that they reached out to the masses, regardless of denominational hindrance and in doing so suffered the same persecution as their forebears. Indifferent to their efforts to reach the spiritually untouched, Wrexham Council ordered the Salvation Army Band to stop playing in the streets on Sundays, while at the same time allowing civic processions to the church to be led by a Military Band.<sup>169</sup>

A religious census in Liverpool in 1881 revealed that 488,000 persons attended no place of worship, and a Methodist preacher commented that his followers had become too proud and therefore the Salvation Army had to take up the work: 'They set a noble example to the ministers in the town, whom I trust will emulate their example, and go and do likewise'.<sup>170</sup> Concurrent with the Liverpool census was the survey of religious activity in the populated borough of Wrexham, c.12,333, where the Salvation Army, after three months in the town, were already commanding the largest attendances, as shown in the following chart: (See Fig. 6.4. over).

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<sup>167</sup> 'Local News', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 15 October 1881, 5.

<sup>168</sup> 'The Salvation Army', *ibid.*, 29 October 1881, 5.

<sup>169</sup> 'Notes and Queries: Town and Country', *ibid.*, 12 July 1884, 8.

<sup>170</sup> Correspondence, *ibid.*, 12 November 1881, 9.



Fig. 6. 4

ATTENDANCES AT PLACES OF WORSHIP IN WREXHAM, 1881

PLACES OF WORSHIP	Accommodation provided	Attendances		
		Morning	Evening	Total
St. Giles Parish Church	1200	503	755	1258
St. Mark's Church	700	403	219	622
St. James' Church, Rhosddu	250	212	215	427
Iron Church, Hightown	200	93	121	214
Welsh Church, Savings Bank	100		55	55
Baptist Chapel, Chester Street	350	102	144	246
Congregational Chapel, Penybryn	290	84	156	240
Congregational Chapel, Chester Street	550	177	163	340
Church of Christ, meeting in King Street	120	38	40	78
Mission Chapel, Beast Market	80		39	39
Presbyterian Chapel, Hill Street	320	103	137	240
Primitive Methodist Chapel, Talbot Road	200	105	148	253
United Methodist Free Church, Rhosddu	160	39	23	62
Welsh Baptist Chapel, Temperance Hall	250	25	81	106
Welsh Calvinistic Chapel, Regent Street	740	165	236	401
Welsh Calvinistic Ebenezer, Rhosddu	150	84	115	199
Welsh Independent, Queen Street	500	95	163	258
Welsh Wesleyan Chapel, Brook Street	168	66	96	162
Wesleyan Chapel, Brynyffynnon	520	208	278	486
St. Mary's Catholic Church	400	460	180	640
Salvation army, Public Hall	1200	467	1455	1922
	8358	3429	4819	8248

'Wrexham Religious Census December 4, 1881', reproduced from the *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 10 December 1881, 5.

News of the Salvation Army crusade in Wrexham soon reached the cathedral city of Chester where they planned to establish a mission which incited a furious response from the Chester weekly newspapers that stirred public opinion to such an extent that members of the Salvation Army were despised before they entered the city gates. The *Cheshire Observer* issued a salutary warning to its readers that forewarned of the persecution that was to follow:

There are rumours in the air that that dubious body, the Salvation Army, intends to "invade" Chester. It is sincerely to be hoped, in the interest of religion and public decency, that the report is incorrect... The Salvation Army is an affliction from which Chester may fervently hope to be delivered.<sup>171</sup>

<sup>171</sup> Editorial, *Cheshire Observer*, 1 October 1881, 4

Undaunted, the crusading Salvationists braved the prejudice and began their campaign on Sunday, November 27, by which time the local press, having realised that they were not speaking for the whole populace,<sup>172</sup> conceded: 'Public opinion seems to be rather divided on the subject of the army and its works... some speak of them as useful labourers in a neglected department of religious work'.<sup>173</sup> Rev. H.W. Price, addressing the Queen Street Literary and Debating Society at Chester, stated that the Salvation Army 'was not meant for educated people, but for the lower classes... and that hundreds were drawn into their meetings who would never enter any other place of worship'.<sup>174</sup> Within a matter of ten weeks, the spacious Chester Pavilion Skating Rink was filled with an eager and earnest congregation,<sup>175</sup> as was the second station at the Linenhall Circus, Chester, that opened its doors on 22 January 1882, and 'on the evening of that day, both places were crowded to overflowing'.<sup>176</sup> Utilitarian in their meeting places with the most frugal of musical instruments, Booth's Army perpetuated the evangelical crusade of Moody and Sankey that contrasted with the grand temples and imposing pipe organs of a Nonconformist establishment that had ceased to evangelize.

At the Methodist Ecumenical Conference in 1881, Rev. T. H. Bainbridge was critical of the fact that: 'Organisation seemed to have occupied too much, and evangelism too little', and he referred to the old Methodist hymns which had been discarded by the body that were now being sung by the Salvation Army.<sup>177</sup> Effectively, the Salvationists had exposed the evangelical ineptitude of the established denominations that had digressed from their founding mission. Rev. W. Laycock, addressing the Evangelical Church Conference at Birkenhead in 1882, alluded to the secularisation of the church and condemned the bazaars and raffles that funded their futile vanity when he remarked: 'Then brotherhoods, Sisterhoods, guilds were everywhere; all must work and everybody must be in office ... which was right and proper when it assisted in religion, but wrong when it was directed to the gaining of money'.<sup>178</sup> The architectural splendour of the Nonconformist

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<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 November 1881, 5.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> 'Local Intelligence', *ibid.*, 3 December 1881, 6.

<sup>175</sup> 'The Salvation Army', *ibid.*, 28 January 1882, 5.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> 'The Methodist Ecumenical Conference', *Liverpool Mercury*, 17 September 1881, 6.

<sup>178</sup> 'Evangelical Church Conference at Birkenhead', *ibid.*, 15 June 1882, 7.

temples signified the material excess of the chapel buildings so often described in the superlative, but in such stark contrast to the rented rooms of the Salvation Army in the deprived slums of Scotland Road.<sup>179</sup> Taking the Gospel to the people was the first priority of the Salvationists and the make-shift bands depended on whatever instruments were to hand while many chapels, overawed by the pomp and ceremony of the Anglican Church, installed pipe organs for reasons of prestige rather than worshipful praise. Congregational singing had given the Dissenters a distinct advantage over the restrained choral performances of the Anglicans, but this gain was squandered when Nonconformist causes began to favour the more formal structure of chapel choirs which partially justified the use of a superior instrument.

When the Tabernacle Congregational Chapel on Netherfield Road, Liverpool, installed a pipe organ in 1883, it was described as 'one of the finest in the city',<sup>180</sup> and what was once regarded as an irreverent detraction from the pulpit was now considered a necessity for the accompaniment of *cymanfaoedd canu* and the performance of oratorios and cantatas.<sup>181</sup> Such renditions called for an instrument with sufficient power and compass to do justice to the work, as observed by Ebenezer Prout in the *Music Record*: 'It is well known that at the performance of his works Handel himself conducted and played the organ'.<sup>182</sup> A more ambitious choral repertoire became the means of attracting a more affluent class of people while congregational singing continued to be a lesser priority, and in some chapels, an afterthought. Addressing the eighth meeting of the Cymmrodorion Society in 1890 on 'The Development of Welsh Music', D. Emlyn Evans remarked:

Congregational singing, not withstanding the prevalence of 'Cymanfaoedd canu', is at present by no means in a high state of efficiency. This is largely due to the neglect of the leaders of the churches, who look upon music as a thing tolerated rather than encouraged, forgetful that song also is praise, and as such should be of the first and best procurable possible.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> 'Attack on the Salvation Army in Liverpool', *ibid.*, 23 May 1881, 6.

<sup>180</sup> 'Llythyr Lerpwl', *Y Genedl Gymreig*, 12 Medi 1883, 8.

<sup>181</sup> See C.W.Pearce, *The Organist*, March (1906), 251, on the method of playing orchestral accompaniments to oratorios, etc., on the organ.

<sup>182</sup> See Ebenezer Prout, *Monthly Music Record*, March (1883), 54, on the combination of the organ with the orchestra.

<sup>183</sup> 'The Cymmrodorion Society, Mr. D.Emlyn Evans on "The Development of Welsh Music"', *Byegones*, 11 June 1890, 386.

As the music of the chapel evolved from its primary function, the boundaries that divided the sacred from the secular became blurred and a number of musicians, one of whom was D. Emlyn Evans, argued strongly in favour of preserving the sanctity of chapels that were used for purposes other than religious services.<sup>184</sup> While accepting the fact that few rural areas in Wales had buildings large enough to accommodate a sizeable congregation, Emlyn Evans was rightfully dismayed by the performance of irreverent secular music which he thought was better suited to the dancing saloons.<sup>185</sup> He felt that it was difficult to maintain a worshipful spirit on the Sunday following a raucous, hand-clapping, feet-stamping exhibition in the same venue on a Saturday, often with an inappropriate repertoire, and he suggested that a committee should oversee every concert and *eisteddfod* programme held in a chapel building to assess its suitability.<sup>186</sup>

Too many congregations were using their places of worship for purposes other than thanksgiving and praise,<sup>187</sup> and in 1882, David Jenkins made a fervent plea for the return to spiritual values when he commented: 'No power has ever influenced the Welsh so much as music, except religion. The heart of the whole nation vibrates at her magic touch'.<sup>188</sup> This view found accord with John Thomas (1821-1892), minister of the Tabernacle Chapel, Liverpool, who likewise expressed his anxiety in 1890 that 'spiritual religion' in the chapels was being endangered by the 'secularisation of the Gospel'.<sup>189</sup> Many of the chapels had become insular bodies that conformed to one class of society while the working-classes found spiritual solace in the frugal and less formal meeting halls of the evangelical missions.

By 1889, few religious services in the Liverpool and north-east Wales chapels were conducted without a musical instrument,<sup>190</sup> and even the Calvinistic adversaries at Princes Road Chapel, Liverpool, were having second thoughts as the standard of

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<sup>184</sup> D. Emlyn Evans, 'Y Gyngerdd a'r Capel', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol I, Rhif 12, Rhagfyr (1889), 123.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>188</sup> David Jenkins, 'The Working Classes and Music in Wales', *National Eisteddfod Association Report* (1882), 81.

<sup>189</sup> *Y Tyst*, 14 November 1890, 9. *Y Tyst* [The Witness] was the national newspaper of the Welsh Independent denomination and was edited by Rev. John Thomas jointly with *Gwilym Hiraethog* until 1872 when he became sole editor until 1892. The publication appeared under various titles, *Y Tyst Cymreig* 1867-1870, *Y Tyst a'r Dydd* 1871-1875, *Y Tyst* 1875-1915. He also edited *Y Gwerinwr* (a monthly), 1855-6; *Yr Annibynwr*, 1857-61 and published *Traethodau a Phregethau*.

<sup>190</sup> D. Jenkins, 'Ein Cymanfaoedd Canu', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol I, Rhif 7, Gorphenaf (1889), 63.

congregational singing began to decline after the resignation of the precentor, John Edwards (1819-1900).<sup>191</sup> The question of acquiring a chapel organ as a means of reviving the singing was raised,<sup>192</sup> although the decision was pre-empted when the congregation arrived one Sunday morning in 1888 to unfamiliar sounds from the gallery, and realised that a group of younger members had moved the harmonium from the schoolroom.<sup>193</sup> The die was cast, and after much fund-raising activity, the *Liverpool Mercury* reported: 'Up till now the psalmody in the church has been led by a precentor, and the new mode of aid to praise is the subject of considerable conversation among the members of the Welsh Presbyterian community'.<sup>194</sup> On 26 January 1894, a magnificent Norman and Beard organ was installed in Princes Road Chapel and, in the usual competitive rhetoric of Welsh Nonconformity it was described as being second only to the organ at Liverpool Cathedral.<sup>195</sup> Conversely, there were other large chapels that were ambivalent to this trend, one being the imposing, twin-turreted Seion Chapel in Wrexham, built in 1867 to accommodate a congregation of 800 that waited until 1891 before installing a small reed organ,<sup>196</sup> and the Fitzclarence Street Chapel in Liverpool that voted in 1899 for an American organ instead of a piped organ.<sup>197</sup>

While congregational singing depended largely on the musical ability of the *codwr canu* rather than the organ, oratorio performances and the accompaniment of *cymanfaoedd canu* demanded an instrument of greater power, and it may have been for this reason that Mynydd Seion Congregational Chapel, Ponciau, near Rhos, installed a pipe organ in 1896 at a cost of almost £200.<sup>198</sup> It was in this chapel that Caradog Roberts became assistant organist to Joseph Griffiths, whose eyesight was failing, and whom he succeeded in 1893 at the age of fifteen.<sup>199</sup> He was born into a musical family and during his formative years he was taught through the medium

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<sup>191</sup> John Hughes Morris, op. cit., 264.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> 'Day to Day in Liverpool', *Liverpool Mercury*, 22 January 1894, 6.

<sup>195</sup> John Hughes Morris, op. cit., 264.

<sup>196</sup> D.T. Morgan, *Braslun o Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd yn Wrecsam* (Caernarfon, 1976), 62.

<sup>197</sup> 'Lerpwl: Eglwys Fitzclarence Street', *Rhos Herald*, 4 March 1899, 4.

<sup>198</sup> C. Morgan, Anerchiad II, 'Yr Ymdrech Ariannol', *Cyfarfod Jiwibili Mynydd Seion, Ponciau*, 31.

Rhagfyr 1919 a 1 Ionawr 1920, 4. An organ chamber was added to the organ in 1902.

<sup>199</sup> Jonathan Griffiths, Anerchiad III, 'Caniadaeth y Cysegr', *Cyfarfod Jiwibili Mynydd Seion, Ponciau*, 31 Rhagfyr 1919 a 1 Ionawr 1920, 7.

of Tonic Sol-fa,<sup>200</sup> by his uncle, Dan Roberts (1871-1938), an accomplished Tonic solfaist, who was the precentor at Bethlehem Chapel, Rhosllannerchrugog. The singing meetings at Ponciau were arranged after the morning service and the repertoire included 'Mor fawr ydyw'r dyfnder', ['The Heavens are Telling'] from Haydn's *The Creation* and Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus' that were regularly performed at chapel services.<sup>201</sup> With a competent organist and a superior instrument, the chapel choir were now able to perform oratorios in their entirety which encouraged the people of Rhosllannerchrugog to appreciate the higher forms of Western European classical music. Congregational singing was undoubtedly enhanced by a well-trained choir and the powerful instrument, although the overall standard of congregational singing was dependent on the ability of the *codwr canu*.

During a *cymanfa ganu* in *Capel Mawr*, Rhosllannerchrugog, in 1890, Richard Mills, conductor of the mixed choir, opined that congregational singing would not be what it should be until an organ or an orchestra supported the singing.<sup>202</sup> Mills' reference to the possible improvement in congregational singing differs from that of David Jenkins (1848-1915), who conducted the *cymanfa ganu* at *Capel Mawr* on 13 November 1893 and praised the high standards attained: 'No other chapel belonging to any denomination in Wales can claim such a spectacle ... Nothing is acknowledged as *big* in Rhos except the *chapel* and the *cause*'.<sup>203</sup> David Jenkins conducted a number of other *cymanfaoedd canu* in the Rhosllannerchrugog district, and his praise for the singing at *Capel Mawr* suggests that the standards of congregational singing depended on the ability of the *codwr canu* rather than instrumental accompaniment. This view concurred with that of the *Wrexham Advertiser*: 'With an amassed choir of 700 voices under Robert Davies' leadership the annual psalmody festival at *Capel Mawr* is rightly considered in this neighbourhood as one of the chief musical treats of the year'.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> 'Mr. Caradog Roberts', *The Musical Herald*, January (1912), 3.

<sup>201</sup> Manuscript in private collection of Capel Mynydd Seion, Rhosllannerchrugog. Thomas Griffiths, 'Adgofion ar Ddathliad Canmlwyddiant Mynydd Seion, Ponciau, Eglwys yr Annibynwyr' (1920), 20.

<sup>202</sup> 'Hanesion: Rhosllannerchrugog', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol II, Rhif 18, Mehefin (1890), 70.

<sup>203</sup> David Jenkins, 'Cymanfa Ganu Rhosllannerchrugog', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol V, Rhif 60, Rhagfyr (1893), 142. *Ni cheir y fath olygfa o fewn unrhyw gapel yn perthyn i unrhyw enwad yn Nghymru... Does dim yn cael ei gydnabod yn fawr yn y Rhos ond y capel a'r achos.*

<sup>204</sup> 'Psalmody Festival at Capel Mawr', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 18 November 1893, 8.

Ultimately, it was the view of Richard Mills that prevailed, and the decision of the *Capel Mawr* deaconate to install a pipe organ put the acceptability of instrumental accompaniment in Welsh Presbyterian chapels beyond doubt. In 1896, on the advice of Bangor Cathedral organist, Roland Rogers (1847-1927), the chapel trustees instructed Nicholson and Co. of Worcester to build a two-manual pipe organ for the sum of £530.<sup>205</sup> A local apprentice carpenter was in the process of fitting the organ bench at *Capel Mawr*, Rhos when Dr. Roland Rogers arrived to practise on the new instrument, and while the virtuoso retired for a brief rest, the young tradesman, Caradog Roberts, began to play Guilmant's *Grande Fugue in D major*,<sup>206</sup> which brought Rogers hurrying back from the vestry. From this chance meeting, the apprentice was persuaded to abandon his trade to follow a career in music.<sup>207</sup> As a fourteen year-old, Caradog Roberts had won the prize for both the junior and the open pianoforte competition at the Corwen Eisteddfod (1892), and adjudicator Emlyn Evans predicted: 'No doubt Caradog would become one of the finest pianists in Wales'.<sup>208</sup> So convinced was Roland Rogers of Caradog's talent that he prevailed on William Davies, the Rhosllannerchrugog-born tenor, to persuade the young musician's parents to allow him to pursue a career in music rather than carpentry,<sup>209</sup> which he duly did.<sup>210</sup>

In most cases, the grand opening recitals were performed by organ scholars from the Anglican Cathedrals at Bangor, St Asaph or Chester who were also called on to give advice on the building and installation of such instruments as they had a superior understanding of the pipe organ than their Nonconformist counterparts. Dr. Roland Rogers was a virtuoso organist with a profound grasp of the range and compass of such instruments and it was he who returned to *Capel Mawr* in 1897 to perform the opening recital on the new organ while Richard Mills conducted a selection of choruses from Handel's *Messiah*, performed by the 'Messiah Choir'.<sup>211</sup> (See Fig. 6.5. over).

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<sup>205</sup> 'Rhosllannerchrugog: The Organ for Capel Mawr', *ibid.*, 27 June 1896, 8.

<sup>206</sup> 'Dr. Caradog Roberts', *The Musical Herald*, 1 January 1912, 3.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*; Alun Davies 'Dr. Caradog Roberts (1878-1935)', *Welsh Music*, Vol. VI, No. 1, 51.

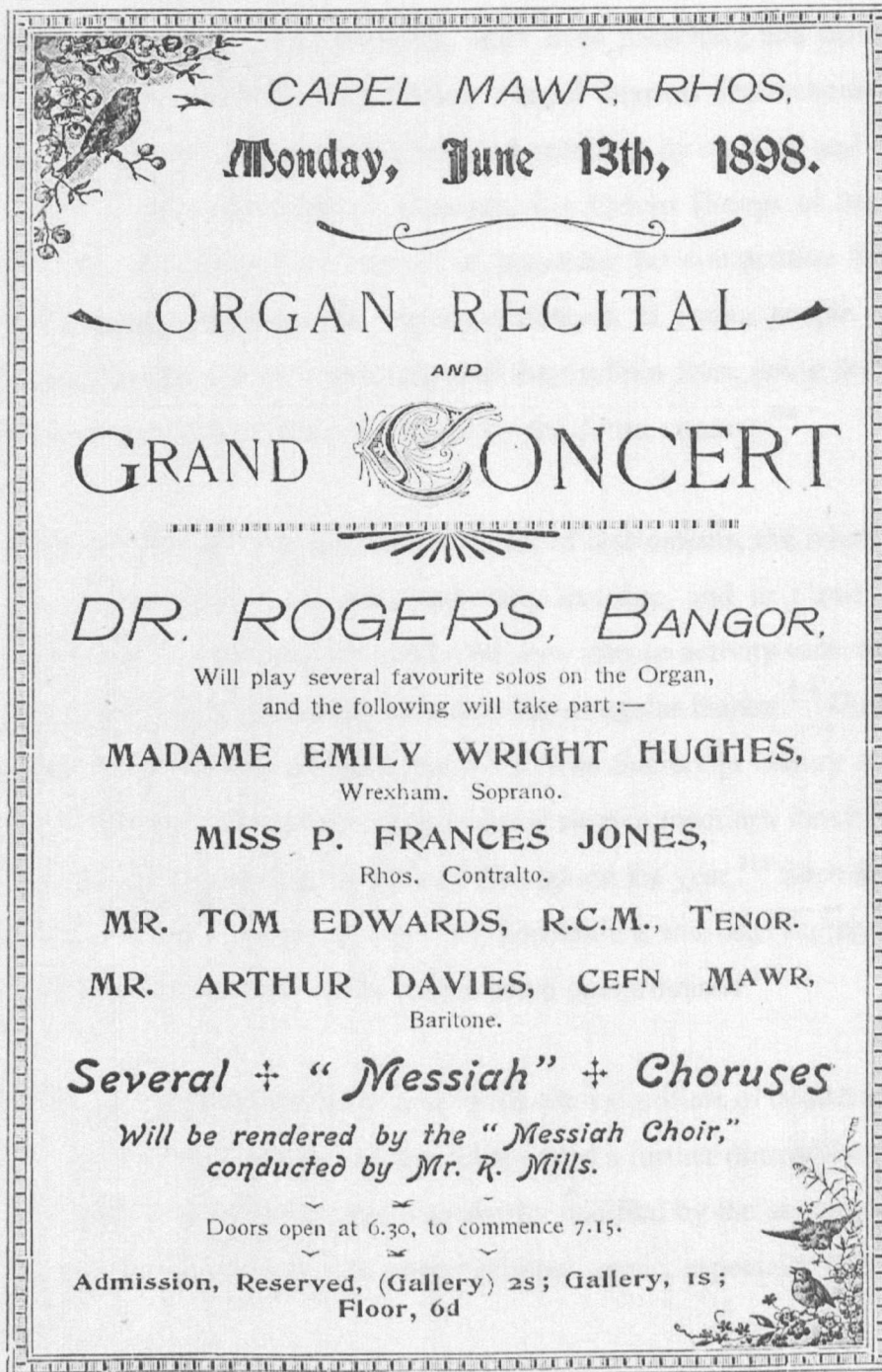
<sup>209</sup> 'Dr. Caradog Roberts', *op. cit.*, 3.

<sup>210</sup> Llewelyn Bowyer, 'Y Diweddar Ddr. Caradog Roberts', *Y Dysgedydd*, Cyfrol 115, Rhif 5, Mai (1935), 143.

<sup>211</sup> Organ Recital and Grand Concert Programme, Capel Mawr Rhos, 13 June 1898.

Fig. 6.5

ORGAN RECITAL AND GRAND CONCERT PROGRAMME



CAPEL MAWR, RHOS,  
Monday, June 13th, 1898.

— ORGAN RECITAL —  
AND  
GRAND CONCERT

DR. ROGERS, BANGOR.

Will play several favourite solos on the Organ,  
and the following will take part:—

MADAME EMILY WRIGHT HUGHES,  
Wrexham. Soprano.

MISS P. FRANCES JONES,  
Rhos. Contralto.

MR. TOM EDWARDS, R.C.M., TENOR.

MR. ARTHUR DAVIES, CEFN MAWR,  
Baritone.

Several † "Messiah" † Choruses  
Will be rendered by the "Messiah Choir,"  
conducted by Mr. R. Mills.

Doors open at 6.30, to commence 7.15.

Admission, Reserved, (Gallery) 2s; Gallery, 1s;  
Floor, 6d

(R. Mills, Printer, Herald Office, Rhos.)

Title page of Organ Recital Programme, Capel Mawr Rhos, 13 June 1898.



While much thought had been given to the design of the instrument, little heed had been paid to the appointment of a suitably qualified organist, most of whom were in the service of the Anglican Church. It was to this resource that the officers of *Capel Mawr* turned and Dan Evans, a local church organist was appointed to the post. The seemingly endless fund-raising activities came to an abrupt end with the decision of elders and officials in October 1898 to refuse any request to hire the chapel to hold concerts or other meetings, apart from preaching and services of worship.<sup>212</sup> In April 1899, the *Capel Mawr* chapel deacons recommended that singing practices should be regarded as religious meetings by opening and closing in prayer so as to spiritually enhance *Caniadaeth y Cysegr* [Songs of Praise].<sup>213</sup> The officers also discouraged the custom of preparing for competitive meetings and *eisteddfodau* on a Sunday and expressed concern at young people singing hymns in inappropriate places, requesting that they refrain from doing so for the sake of the local reputation and out of respect for the divine context.<sup>214</sup>

Having rebuilt the chapels and installed the finest of instruments, the return to the spiritual purpose of music in worship was long overdue, and in *Capel Mawr*, Rhosllannerchrugog, the period from 1898-1904 saw intense activity each weekday evening when *cyfarfodydd canu* were re-instated as a regular feature.<sup>215</sup> During the winter months, from October to March, the *Ford Gron* Society [a literary meeting] replaced the Solfa classes, although congregational singing meetings for children at 6.30 p.m. and adults an hour later continued throughout the year.<sup>216</sup> Such activities took place in the chapel schoolroom where the harmonium was used during weekly meetings, to avoid the 'sanctity' of the chapel being compromised.<sup>217</sup>

If the architectural excess of the 1860s and 1870s were signifiers of denominational superiority, then the 'organ mania' of the 1890s added a further dimension, and the expense of acquiring such instruments was usually justified by the assurance that a powerful pipe organ would improve congregational music, especially the singing

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<sup>212</sup> Cofnodion Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog (1898-1904), Hydref (1898), Folio no.17.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., Ebrill (1899), Folio no.8.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Cofnodau Eglwysig Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog (1905-09), 15 Ionawr 1906, 42.

of chants and anthems.<sup>218</sup> Such optimism was derided in 1894 by David Jenkins and D.Emlyn Evans, joint editors of *Y Cerddor*, who criticised the chapels that opted for organs that were too large, costly and competitive, while ignoring the need for better trained organists,<sup>219</sup> a view shared by R.D.Glyn Roberts of Liverpool, who also stressed the importance of engaging proficient organists.<sup>220</sup> Their comments may well have applied to the rebuilt Capel Seion, Llanrwst that opened for services in the town in February 1883 with accommodation for 800 persons, a singer's gallery, and a lecture hall.<sup>221</sup> A large organ was installed there in 1889, and *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* reported it to be the first pipe organ to be inaugurated in a Calvinistic Methodist chapel in north Wales.<sup>222</sup> In February 1900, the following advertisement appeared in *The Musical Times*: 'Organists. - Required at once, a Professional Organist for Seion C.M. Chapel, Llanrwst. Applications, with testimonials stating salary required, to be made to Mr.T.R.Jones, The Harp, Llanrwst'.<sup>223</sup>

While David Jenkins and D. Emlyn Evans had argued in favour of paying a stipend to organists and precentors,<sup>224</sup> the call for a 'professional organist' suggests that the aspirations of the Llanrwst deaconiaid went beyond the primary function of accompanying congregational singing. Likewise, the preference for a William Hill organ was perhaps more than a passing coincidence as the same firm had been entrusted with the installation of the organ at Bangor Cathedral.<sup>225</sup> When J. Herbert Roberts M.P. presided at a concert in Llanrwst in 1900, for the purpose of raising funds for the organ, he congratulated all concerned on having secured such a fine

<sup>218</sup> David Jenkins, 'Yr Organ a'r Capel', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol VI, Rhif 66, Mehefin (1894), 61.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> R.D.Glyn Roberts, 'Chwareuwy'r Offerynnau yn Addoldai ac Eglwysi Cymru', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol V, Rhif 60, Rhagfyr (1893), 135.

<sup>221</sup> William Williams, 'Dechreuad a Chynnydd Methodistiaeth yn Nhref Llanrwst', *Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd*, Cyfrol XII, Rhifyn 1, Mawrth (1927), 23.

<sup>222</sup> 'Llanrwst', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 31 Gorffennaf 1889, 13.

<sup>223</sup> Advertisement, *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 1 February 1900, 79. By 1914, at a cost of £1000, the Seion Chapel organ was replaced by one of the last instruments to be built by the reputable firm of William Hill and Son (London) before their amalgamation with Norman and Beard of Norwich. See Hugh Davies, 'Hill Walking in North Wales', British Institute of Organ Studies Annual Residential Conference held at Denbigh, Report, *The British Institute of Organ Studies Reporter*, Vol. XXIV, No. 4, October (2000); The National Pipe Organ Register (NPOR) of the Royal College of Music website, <http://www.npor.org.uk/Reporter/oct20/c1020.htm>, viewed 2 June 2010.

<sup>224</sup> David Jenkins, op. cit., Mehefin (1894), 61; D.Emlyn Evans, 'Yr Organ a'r Côr Mawr', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol VII, Rhif 77, Mai (1895), 45.

<sup>225</sup> 'Organ News', *The Musical Standard*, 16 August 1873, 104.

instrument as an aid to congregational worship, but he also reminded the gathering of the controversy of previous years when the organ had proved 'a rock of offence'.<sup>226</sup> Referring to 'the true relation that existed between beautiful pipe organs and public worship', he referred to the dangers 'of looking on refined organ playing and singing as an object, rather than as a means of worship'.<sup>227</sup> When the Welsh Presbyterians finally accepted instrumental accompaniment in worship, it seems that chapel organs were designed to reflect the status of the most powerful denomination in north-east Wales and Liverpool, rather than the enrichment of congregational singing.

In *Capel Mawr*, Rhosllannerchrugog the installation of a pipe organ was no substitute for the *codwr canu* and the importance of this function is confirmed in a lengthy reference in the chapel records of 1901 following the death of Robert Davies *Cantwr*, who was described as having raised the standard of congregational singing in Rhos to a higher level.<sup>228</sup> He had led the singing since 1872 and continued the tradition of introducing the verse two lines at a time and repeating,<sup>229</sup> although it was his unique understanding of metres combined with the ability to match words to a hymn-tune that captured the mood of the text.<sup>230</sup> Robert Davies *Cantwr*, a miner with no formal musical training other than a primary instruction by Susannah Jones of Ponciau<sup>231</sup> and the Tonic Solfa classes of Joseph Owen, regarded songs of praise as the high point of congregational worship.<sup>232</sup> He was described by Richard Mills as possessing 'a wonderful voice and a magnetic personality ... that could inspire a congregation to such a pitch of enthusiasm and *hwyl* in church praise'.<sup>233</sup> (See Fig. 6.6. over)

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<sup>226</sup> J. Herbert Roberts quoted in 'Organs in Welsh Chapels', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 18 August 1900, 3; 'Comments and Opinions', *The Musical Standard*, 18 August 1900, 100.

<sup>227</sup> J. Herbert Roberts, *ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> Cofnodau Eglwysig Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog (1898-1904), Ionawr (1901), Folio no.1. 'Mae yn sicr iddo godi y canu yna i fod yn un o'r goreuon, os nad y gorau yn Ngogledd Cymru'. Robert Davies *Cantwr* served the chapel for 29 years.

<sup>229</sup> W. Phillips, 'Pregethau a glywais ddechrau'r ganrif', *Llyfr Lloffion Capel Mawr*, Rhosllannerchrugog, 73.

<sup>230</sup> William Phillips, *Rhosllannerchrugog – Atgofion* (Caernarfon, 1955), 70.

<sup>231</sup> 'Presentation to Mr. Robert Davies, Precentor at Capel Mawr', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 5 December 1891, 3.

<sup>232</sup> Griffith Owen, *Hanes Methodistiaeth Sir Flint* (Dolgellau, 1914), 64.

<sup>233</sup> Richard Mills, 'History of Musical Rhos', reproduced in *Rhos Herald*, 6 August 1894, 4.

Fig. 6.6

**"CARU GELYN"—(Hen Alaw.)**

*Cenid yr Alaw isod gan yr hen Susan Jones, Ponkey, yr hon  
a'i dysgodd i'r diweddar R. Davies (Cantwr).*

Cynghaneddwyd gan TOM POWELL, Rhos.

Doh B <sub>1</sub> .				D.C.			
{	$m_1.m_1$	$l_1.l_1:-.t_1.d$	$:t_1.d,t_1$	$l_1.l_1:-.t_1.t_1$	$d.r:d.,t_1$	$:l_1.t_1,d$	$t_1:-$
	$m_1.m_1$	$m_1.m_1:-.se_1,l_1$	$:se_1.-,se_1$	$m_1.m_1:-.se_1,se_1$	$l_1.l_1:l_1,se_1$	$:ba$	$se_1:-$
	$d.d$	$d.d:-.r,m$	$:r.m,r$	$d.d:-.m,m$	$m.f:m$	$:re$	$m:-$
	$l_1.l_1$	$l_1.d:-.t_1,l_1$	$:m_1.-,m_1$	$l_2.l_2:-.m_1,m_1$	$l_1,r_1:l_1,t_1$	$:d.t_1,l_1$	$m_1:-$

Draw mi wel - af ry - fedd - od-au, Dyfnion bethau Tri yn Un,  
Cyn bod Ed - en ardd na chodwm, Grisol fwriad Duw at ddyr:

{	$d.d$	$r.m:-.f.,m$	$r_1.m:-.r.d,t_1$	$l_1:-.d.r,t_1$
	$m_1.m_1$	$s_1.s_1:-.l_1.,s_1$	$l_1.se_1:-.-$	$l_1:-.m_1.f_1,f_1$
	$d.d$	$t_1.d:-.d.,d$	$l_1.t_1:-.-$	$d:-.d.t_1,r$
	$l_1.l_1$	$s_1.d:-.f_1.,s_1$	$f_1.m_1:-.-$	$l_1:-.l_1.se_1,se_1$

Ethol Meichiau cyn bod -dy-led, Trefnu

{	$l_1.l_1:-.se_1,l_1,f_1$	$m_1:-$	$l_1,t_1,d,t_1$	$l_1.l_1:-.t_1.d,t_1$
	$m_1.m_1:-.m_1.-,r_1$	$t_2:-$	$l_1,t_1,d,t_1$	$l_1.l_1:-.t_1.d,t_1$
	$d.d:-.t_1.d,l_1$	$se_1:-$	$l_1,t_1,d,t_1$	$l_1.l_1:-.t_1.d,t_1$
	$l_1.l_1:-.m_1.d_1,r_1$	$m_1:-$	$l_1,t_1,d,t_1$	$l_1.l_1:-.t_1.d,t_1$

Meddyg cyn bod clwy', Car - u gelyn, Car - u

*cres.*

{	$l_1.l_1:-.t_1.t_1$	$d.r:-.-.d,t_1$	$l_1:-.d.d$	$r.m:-.f.,m$
	$l_1.l_1:-.se_1,se_1$	$l_1.l_1:-.-.se_1$	$l_1:-.s_1.s_1$	$s_1.s_1:-.l_1.s_1$
	$l_1.l_1:-.m.m$	$m.f:-.-.m,r$	$d:-.d.d$	$t_1.d:-.d.,d$
	$l_1.l_1:-.m_1.m_1$	$l_1,r_1:-.-.m_1$	$l_1:-.m_1.m_1$	$s_1.d:-.f_1.,s_1$

gelyn, Caru gel-yn Caru gelyn heb un

{	$r.m:-.r.d,t_1$	$l_1:-.d.,r$	$m.,r:d.,t_1$	$l_1.t_1$	$d.t_1:l_1:-$	
	$l_1.se_1:-.-$	$l_1:-.s$	$s_1.f_1$	$m_1,se_1:l_1.l_1$	$l_1.se_1:l_1:-$	
	$l_1.t_1:-.-.d,r$	$d:-.d.,t_1$	$d.l_1$	$l_1.r$	$d.f$	$m.r:d:-$
	$f_1.m_1:-.-$	$f_1:-.m_1.,r_1$	$d.,r_1$	$m_1$	$f_1.r_1$	$m_1.m_1:l_2:-$

haedd-iant, Fe gaiff y clod tragwyddol mwy.

*Arwydda ..... i'r llythren gario yn mlaen ar y gair "YN" yn llinell olaf  
y penill diweddaf.*

Ironically, it was Richard Mills who was persuaded to accept the post of *arweinydd y canu* at *Capel Mawr*, Rhosllannerchrugog, in 1902,<sup>234</sup> but according to William Phillips: 'he did not meet with success in the two years he undertook the role'.<sup>235</sup> It was largely through his persistence that the chapel had invested in the grand organ, and it was inequitable that his efforts should be undermined by a letter of resignation from the organist, Daniel Evans, in April 1902,<sup>236</sup> although this matter was amicably resolved when the deaconate agreed to a salary of £15.<sup>237</sup> Mills passed away in 1903 and was succeeded by Joseph Dodd of Church Street, Rhos, who was elected *arweinydd y gân* on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1904,<sup>238</sup> but tensions soon arose between Dodd and the high-minded organist, who claimed that his extensive experience with precentors of the calibre of Robert Davies *Cantwr* and Richard Mills justified his right to select the hymns. Dan Evans felt that if this was not granted, it would be better if he resigned, while precentor Joseph Dodd was willing to do anything for the good of the cause<sup>239</sup>

The installation of sophisticated instruments into the temples of Welsh Nonconformity signified the new priorities of the chapels as congregational strength and cultural probity took precedence over spiritual purpose. In retrospect, the prescience of those who resisted the introduction of musical accompaniment into the chapel was predicative, as pipe organs became a symbol of pride that placed the Nonconformist chapels on a par with the Established Church. Perhaps the good old Primitive was correct in thinking that the Devil had indeed come over the Dee Bridge with the harmonium,<sup>240</sup> as it inevitably graduated to the grand organ that satisfied the predilection for power but heaped coals on the fires of denominational rivalry that distorted the spirituality of the founding Dissenters.

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<sup>234</sup> Cofnodau Eglwysig Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog (1898-1904), 5 Ionawr 1902.

<sup>235</sup> R.G.Hughes (gol.), *'Jerusalem' Eglwys y Capel Mawr Rhosllannerchrugog – Llawlyfr y Daucanmlwyddiant 1770-1970* (Caernarfon, 1970), 48.

<sup>236</sup> Cofnodau Eglwysig Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog (1898-1904), 22 Ebrill 1902.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 Gorphenaf 1902, Folio no. 11.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 Mai 1904.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 Hydref 1905, 19.

<sup>240</sup> Flintshire Record Office, FRO/D/DG/53, Joseph Griffiths, 'A History of Buckley Congregational Church' (1894).

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Singing for glory**

'A strange paradox regarding congregational singing in Wales in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century is this – whilst choral singing was flourishing in every part of the country in the wake of the rapid rise of the Eisteddfod and the Temperance Movement, congregational singing in the churches and chapels lacked lustre'.

(A.Tudno Williams)

According to W. R. Allen, a lecturer in voice production at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 'no importance was attached to choral singing, until the Merthyr eisteddfod of 1825, when prizes were offered to choir and composer alike.'<sup>1</sup> Gareth Williams maintains: 'Welsh choralism was a recent and sudden phenomenon, for it can safely be said that in the early nineteenth century Wales was musically in a state of torpor'.<sup>2</sup> Brinley Richards makes a similar observation when he points to the fact that there was no choir at the Beaumaris *eisteddfod* of 1832<sup>3</sup> while John Graham says: 'The most remarkable thing in Welsh history is the sudden rise of choralism ... real choralism began a generation later than 1820'.<sup>4</sup>

Arguably, music was not in a state of torpor, but rather in developmental mode as *Yr Ysgol Gân* was establishing the foundations of a choral tradition in the chapel schoolrooms in north-east Wales that would later develop into Musical Societies. David Russell refers to a parallel in the West Yorkshire textile district when he says: 'Several later Victorian writers and indeed even a few recent historians, have tended to view the century before about 1840 as a musical wasteland but such a picture hardly stands up to scrutiny'.<sup>5</sup> Choral singing in north-east Wales prior to the 1840s was confined to the chapel for the purpose of improving congregational singing, as was the case in Adwy'r Clawdd where *codwr canu*, Jonathan Jones, 'the father of musicians' in that district, led a 50-strong choir in the 1830s and held singing meetings every Sunday afternoon at half-past five.<sup>6</sup>

Population inflow to parishes in the industrialised areas raised the level of musical activity and concurs with the observation of Percy M. Young: 'For the most part, choral music thrived in industrial communities and among the members of the new nonconformist societies'.<sup>7</sup> In Flintshire, economic migration had inflated the

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<sup>1</sup> W. R. Allen, 'The Choral Tradition in Wales' in Peter Crossley-Holland (ed.), *Music in Wales* (London, 1948), 31. Allen was also the Conductor of the Montgomeryshire County Festival, the Aberystwyth Borough Choir and organist and choirmaster at St Michael's Parish Church, Aberystwyth.

<sup>2</sup> Gareth Williams, *Valleys of Song: Music and Society in Wales 1840-1914* (Cardiff, 1998), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>4</sup> John Graham, *A Century of Welsh Music* (London, 1923), 4.

<sup>5</sup> David Russell, *The Popular Musical Societies of the Yorkshire Textile District, 1850-1914: a Study of the Relationship between Music and Society*, Ph.D. thesis (University of York, 1979), 33

<sup>6</sup> H. Llewelyn Williams (gol.), *Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd yn Adwy'r Clawdd (1747-1947)* (Wrecsam, 1947), 60.

<sup>7</sup> Percy M. Young, *The Choral Tradition - An Historical and Analytical Survey from the Sixteenth Century to the Present Day* (London, 1962), 191.

population of the Holywell district and enabled the choir of William Jacob to thrive, as was the case in the communities around the Ruabon coalfields where healthy chapel membership provided the human resource on which the choral tradition in Rhosllannerchrugog and Cefn Mawr was built. Initially, choral singing was not a competitive art, but rather an act of worship and chapel members, particularly those of the Calvinistic persuasion, were discouraged from taking part in *eisteddfodau*, although there were those such as William Williams (*Caledfryn*, 1801-1869)<sup>8</sup> who rebelled. As a young member of the Calvinistic Methodist cause in Denbigh, he attended a local *eisteddfod* in 1827<sup>9</sup> against the advice of the precentor, John Roberts (?-1840),<sup>10</sup> and after being reprimanded, *Caledfryn* joined the Congregationalists,<sup>11</sup> which suggests that other denominations may not have been as dogmatically opposed to *eisteddfodau* as the Calvinistic Methodists.

That same hostility prevailed in Liverpool, and in April 1838, the Bedford Street Calvinistic Methodist Chapel issued an ultimatum to the effect that any member attending *eisteddfodau* risked the indignity of being excommunicated, and indeed, many suffered that humiliation.<sup>12</sup> Competitive events were regarded as having a tendency to nurture self-importance,<sup>13</sup> and chapel records from 1838 to 1840,<sup>14</sup> meticulously written by Samuel Jones (1789-1875), a deacon at Bedford Street Chapel, refer to chapel members being warned against taking part in bardic *eisteddfodau*.<sup>15</sup> Members were also prohibited from joining 'secret' societies such as the Oddfellows, Foresters, Rechabites and Freemasons,<sup>16</sup> and had it not been for the Temperance Movement that came in the mid-1830s, choral societies may have been similarly restricted. It was the necessity to engage the working classes in worthwhile pursuits that inspired the formation of inter-denominational choral

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<sup>8</sup> Owen Evans, *Hanes Cychwyniad a Chynnydd Methodistiaeth Calfinaidd yn nhref Dinbych* (Dinbych, 1897), 20.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> John Roberts, often referred to as 'Cantwr mawr y Gogledd' on account of his strong voice and although he did not understand the art of music, he was considered a good singer and precentor. See *Y Drysorfa*, Awst (1854), 255; Owen Evans, *op. cit.*, 19.

<sup>11</sup> Owen Evans, *op. cit.*, 20.

<sup>12</sup> John Hughes Morris, *Hanes Methodistiaeth Liverpool*, Cyfrol I (Liverpool, 1929), 167.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> See NLW MS 11301A, Samuel Jones, 'Llyfr Coffadwriaeth', 1833-1874.

<sup>15</sup> John Hughes Morris, *op. cit.*, 167.

<sup>16</sup> Edward Jones, *Y Gymdeithasfa: yn cynnwys Gweithrediadau Cymdeithasfa Chwarterol y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd yn Ngogledd Cymru, a'r Gymanfa Gyffredinol, ynghyda'r Ordeiniadau Gweinidogaethol, a'r Arholiadau Cymdeithasfaol yn y Gogledd a'r Deheudir hyd y Flwyddyn 1890* (Caernarfon, 1891), 86.



unions that prepared the ground for the cultural transformation which began in the 1840s as the interest in music literacy was beginning to take hold. Thwarting the progressive approach of the Temperance Movement, the Methodist Association meeting at Denbigh in 1840 passed a resolution that no member was to frequent *eisteddfodau* on account of their corrupting and immoral influence - a harsh restriction that exiled music and the literary arts to the tavern.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike the Calvinistic Methodists, the Congregationalists and Baptists were more tolerant, as evidenced by the pro-Baptist journal *Seren Gomer* which gave coverage to provincial *eisteddfodau*, regardless of the fact that they were often supported by the gentry and the Established Church.<sup>18</sup> Essentially, literary festivals such as the Gordofigion Eisteddfod at Liverpool in 1840<sup>19</sup> resisted the introduction of choral competitions for fear that they would overshadow all else, and John Graham observes: 'Eisteddfodwyr (bardic) have objected to the prominent place of choral music as long as I can remember'.<sup>20</sup> The Liverpool Eisteddfod of 1840 promised to 'equal, if not surpass, not merely the *eisteddfodau* which have been previously held in that town, but those which have been celebrated in the principality itself'.<sup>21</sup> Merseyside was already claiming the cultural high-ground by 1836 when the Liverpool Festival Choral Society became the first chorus in England to perform the major portion of Mendelssohn's oratorio, *St. Paul*, to a large audience during the Liverpool Festival.<sup>22</sup> In like manner, the Liverpool Welsh community was also extending its cultural activities and Welsh chapel singers were probably among the members of the Festival Choir that contributed to the reputation of Liverpool as a cultural metropolis.

Liverpool Welsh Congregationalists were more amenable towards *eisteddfodau* which is hardly surprising as they had attracted a number of Welsh litterateurs and musicians to Tabernacle Chapel, not least being the minister of that cause William

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Hywel Teifi Edwards, 'Gŵyl Gwalia', *Yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol yn oes aur Victoria 1858-1868* (Llandysul, 1980), 59.

<sup>19</sup> 'Hanes Prif Eisteddfodau y Ganrif Bresenol: 1840 - Lerpwl', *Transactions of the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales Cardiff 1883* (Cardiff, 1884), 247-8.

<sup>20</sup> John Graham, op. cit., 2.

<sup>21</sup> 'Liverpool Cymreigyddion Society', *North Wales Chronicle*, 25 June 1839, 4.

<sup>22</sup> 'Brief Chronicle of the Last Month: The Philharmonic Concert', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 2, No. 36, May (1847), 95.

Rees (1802-1883, *Gwilym Hiraethog*)<sup>23</sup> who succeeded William Williams (1781-1840, *Williams o'r Wern*)<sup>24</sup> as minister of Tabernacle Chapel, Great Crosshall Street, in 1843.<sup>25</sup> *Hiraethog* was an outstanding literary figure and founder-editor of the first weekly Welsh newspaper *Yr Amserau* (The Times),<sup>26</sup> a radical broadsheet that served to awaken political consciousness in Wales.<sup>27</sup> William Ambrose (*Emrys*, 1813-1873), destined to become one of Wales' renowned poets, was also a member of the Tabernacle Chapel and it was he who introduced his cousin, John Ambrose Lloyd (1815-1874) into the fellowship where he became chapel precentor some time after he had composed the iconic hymn-tune, 'Wyddgrug' [Mold], that was first sung in public in 1831.<sup>28</sup> It was in this wider cultural community that John Ambrose Lloyd had the opportunity to hear world-class performances by the Liverpool Festival Choral Society that performed Handel's oratorio, *Solomon*, 'the first time of its representation in Liverpool', at the Musical Hall, Bold Street.<sup>29</sup>

When the Liverpool Philharmonic Society was inaugurated on 10 January 1840,<sup>30</sup> Ambrose Lloyd joined the chorus and soon after, having left Tabernacle to become precentor at the new Salem Congregational Chapel, Brownlow Hill, he formed a youth choir and taught the rudiments of music so that every member was able to read at first sight.<sup>31</sup> He began holding musical *soirées* at his home and it was from these informal gatherings that he formed the Liverpool Welsh Choral Society in

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<sup>23</sup> William Rees, although raised as a Calvinistic Methodist, was appointed Independent minister at Mostyn in 1832, before moving to Swan Lane, Denbigh in 1837. He remained in Liverpool from 1843 until his resignation in 1875.

<sup>24</sup> *Williams o'r Wern* served as Independent minister in Wern and Harwd (Brymbo area) from 1808 until his move to the Tabernacle in Liverpool in 1836. Under his ministry he established new chapels in Rhosllannerchrugog, Ruabon and Llangollen, and became renowned as one of the three 'giants of the pulpit', linked with John Elias and Christmas Evans. Ill-health forced him to return to Wern in 1839.

<sup>25</sup> Elfed (cyfieithydd a gol.), C. Francis Lloyd, *Cofiant John Ambrose Lloyd* (Wrecsam, 1921), 45.

<sup>26</sup> G. Jones, 'Deg o Enwogion Cymreig: Parch. William Rees, D.D', in William R. Owen (ed.) *Transactions of the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales, Liverpool, 1884* (Liverpool, 1885), 628. William Rees was editor of *Yr Amserau* from 1843 until 1852.

<sup>27</sup> Through the popular series, 'Letters of an Old Farmer', Rees expounded strong views on controversial subjects such as the Corn Laws, elementary education, the abolition of church rates and the Oxford Movement and their effects on the poor and oppressed Welsh people.

<sup>28</sup> Elfed (cyfieithydd a gol.), C. Francis Lloyd, op. cit., 16. 'Wyddgrug' was first published in *Y Gwladgarwr* in April 1835.

<sup>29</sup> 'Brief Chronicle of the Last Month: Liverpool', *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 1, No. 7, December (1844), 55.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>31</sup> Elfed (cyfieithydd a gol.), C. Francis Lloyd, op. cit., 38.

1846 and became its first conductor.<sup>32</sup> This was probably one of the first chapel choirs to evolve into an independent choral society and it served as a catalyst for the development of competitive choirs in north-east Wales. In November of that year, a social event was held at Salem Chapel, Brownlow Hill, during which a presentation was made to Ambrose Lloyd in recognition of his work, 'by the members and friends of the choral society connected to the Welsh Independents'.<sup>33</sup> During the evening, the choir sang 'a number of original Welsh anthems and some of Handel's choruses',<sup>34</sup> and the reference to 'Welsh Independents' substantiates the assumption that the ensemble was a chapel choir before adopting the title of the Welsh Choral Society.<sup>35</sup>

Some time elapsed before the choirs in north-east Wales ventured beyond the chapel, although the Adwy Choir, led by John Jones,<sup>36</sup> were by now a competent ensemble and during his stewardship from 1840-44 he conducted the chapel choir in a performance of Handel's *Messiah* in Wrexham Town Hall.<sup>37</sup> The process of change began during the 1840s when *Yr Ysgol Gân* began to develop into inter-denominational singing meetings, and towards the end of that decade, says Hoppen 'the chapels – partly in reaction to the Blue Books affair, began to embrace the *eisteddfodau* as worthwhile institutions as the movement entered into the mainstream of Nonconformist consciousness'.<sup>38</sup> Prys Morgan concurs that by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a 'rapprochement between the chapel and the bardic institution ... probably as a result of the furore of the Treason of the Blue Books'.<sup>39</sup> Welsh choirs remained a constituent of the chapel structure some time after the mid-nineteenth century,<sup>40</sup> when chapel *eisteddfodau* and test concerts began to provide a stage for working-class choirs while the 'grand eisteddfod', preserved its literary status and confined musical performance to the traditional art of *penillion*

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>33</sup> 'Presentation to Mr. J.A.Lloyd of the High School, Liverpool Mechanics' Institution', *Liverpool Mercury*, 13 November 1846, 10. The commissioned portrait was painted by artist, R. Norbury.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> John Jones was a nephew of Jonathon Jones, Adwy'r Clawdd. When he left the district in 1845 to train as a teacher, his brother Robert took over as choirmaster for 8 years. See H. Llewelyn Williams, (gol.), op. cit. 61.

<sup>37</sup> H. Llewelyn Williams (gol.), op. cit., 60-1.

<sup>38</sup> K. T. Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886* (Oxford, 1998), 535.

<sup>39</sup> Prys Morgan & David Thomas (eds.), *Wales: The Shaping of a Nation* (Newton Abbot, 1984), 202.

<sup>40</sup> W.R. Allen, op. cit., 31.

singing with harp accompaniment. It was the chapel *eisteddfodau* that nurtured the competitive temperament of Welsh choralism, although this initiative was part of a wider agenda that was designed to challenge the growth of secular activity. It was also a powerful reminder that cultural interaction was a coveted characteristic of a Nonconformist ideology that was intent on retaining its influence over the social preferences of its flock. That is not to suggest that the new-found enthusiasm for *eisteddfodau* was unanimous, as there were a number of chapel ministers fervidly opposed to the *eisteddfod*, and one old pastor made clear his views when he quipped: 'Only fools appear on the eisteddfod stage'.<sup>41</sup>

Contributing to the more enlightened views on *eisteddfodau* was the mediatory effect of the Temperance Movement which provided an alternative to the tavern and often set the poetry of abstinence to secular songs as a means of spreading the ideals of a sober society. Employers and community leaders eagerly subscribed to the reforming principles of the Temperance Movement and their mission to occupy the leisure time of the working classes in more worthwhile cultural endeavours that offered a pathway to self-improvement. Singing classes fed the interest in sight-singing and enabled chapel choirs to become musically literate so that they were able to perform more ambitious works, the most popular being Handel's *Messiah*, which Percy Young aptly depicts as having 'democratised' music:

It is, indeed, doubtful whether any other single type of music, virtually the work of one composer, ever achieved so much; for Handelian oratorio democratised music. Not only did it bring great music to a vast part of the population previously disfranchised but it involved a great cross-section of the community in the practice of music.<sup>42</sup>

Handel's *Messiah* and Haydn's *The Creation* were long-standing choral favourites in north-east Wales and Liverpool and performances of these oratorios increased when music publisher Vincent Novello introduced sixpenny editions and by 1847, Handel's *Judas Maccabeus* and *Dettingen Te Deum* had been added to the series.<sup>43</sup> The impact of Novello's contribution to the spread of musical knowledge was not lost on the literary critic of the *Liverpool Mercury* who observed: 'These works are

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<sup>41</sup> 'Gweinidogion yr Efengyl yn ymwrthod â'r Eisteddfod', *Cenad Hedd*, Cyfrol IV, Rhif 46, Hydref (1884), 318.

<sup>42</sup> Percy M. Young, *A History of British Music* (London, 1967), 315.

<sup>43</sup> 'Reviews', *Liverpool Mercury*, 23 August 1850, 3.

now completed and will go far to advance the present music-extension movement, by familiarising all classes with the works of the great masters'.<sup>44</sup> Novello's initiative was critical, not only to the success of classical music performances, but to the formation of choral societies, and the highly professional renditions of Handel's *Messiah* by the Liverpool Philharmonic Society had a profound impact on the aspirations of amateur choristers in north-east Wales.

Chain migration had swelled the population of the Liverpool Welsh community and for the musically-inclined there were frequent performances of sacred and secular classical works, such as those that took place at the Mechanics' Institution when pupils from its day schools joined with the Choral Society to illustrate the lectures on sacred music by Dr. Gauntlett.<sup>45</sup> The Institute's curriculum went beyond the performance of classical music, as evidenced by the tutorial of Mr. and Miss Vandenhoff and the readings of *Antigone* at which the choruses of Mendelssohn were performed under the superintendence of J. Zeugheer Herrman, leader of the Liverpool Festival Choral Society.<sup>46</sup> Among the many initiatives that were contrived to stimulate interest in choral music was that of H. V. Lewis who proposed a series of concerts which he creatively described as: "Invisible Amateur Concerts", (from the performers being unobserved by the audience) the object being to bring forward and foster the musical amateur talent of the town'.<sup>47</sup> It was in this buoyant musical atmosphere that Ambrose Lloyd began to establish himself and he made the acquaintance of a number of well-respected musicians in the town, one of whom was William Thomas Best (1826-1897), organist of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, in 1848.<sup>48</sup>

The Liverpool Welsh Choral Society was in its third year when a social gathering was convened at the Music Hall on Bold Street, Liverpool, and the newly-formed chorus of 140 voices performed a selection of sacred music that included a new

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Public Announcement, *Liverpool Mercury*, 31 October 1845, 1.

<sup>46</sup> 'Local Intelligence', *ibid.*, 22 December 1848, 816.

<sup>47</sup> 'Brief Chronicle of the Last Month: A New Mode of Giving Concerts', *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 1, No. 13, June (1845), 98.

<sup>48</sup> Elfed (cyfieithydd a gol.), C. Francis Lloyd, *op. cit.*, 49. Best became city organist at St George's Hall in 1855 and also inaugurated the organ at the Royal Albert Hall in 1871.

Welsh anthem, *Molwch yr Arglwydd*,<sup>49</sup> by John Ambrose Lloyd.<sup>50</sup> During the proceedings, the conductor explained to the audience that the choir had delayed its first public appearance at the Collegiate Institution earlier that year, owing to ‘great difficulty in getting music translated into the Welsh language’. Furthermore, said Ambrose Lloyd, the Society needed to purchase a larger organ, as the present instrument was so low in tone that it was drowned out by the choir, and the lack of a suitable instrument was detrimental to the progress of the society.<sup>51</sup> The audience was sympathetic to the conductor’s plight and a collection was made to purchase a new organ, although it did not augur well that after three years and so few public performances, such pithy frustrations should be aired in public. Prior to the ‘Grand Concert of Sacred Music in aid of the funds for the Welsh charity schools’ at the Mechanics’ Institution on 10 April 1850, it was announced that William Sudlow, conductor of the Philharmonic Choral Society, would lead the 130-strong Welsh Choral Society.<sup>52</sup> However, on the evening of the performance, Sudlow was indisposed and it was Edward William Thomas (1814-1892),<sup>53</sup> a London-born Welshman and principal violinist of the Philharmonic Society who led the choir.<sup>54</sup>

Edward Thomas conducted the choir’s sixth public performance, described in the press as, ‘this young but improving society’ with upwards of 100 choristers that performed selections from the works of Handel, Beethoven and Pergolesi. It was on this occasion that Handel’s *Samson* was first sung in the Welsh language,<sup>55</sup> and Thomas was still at the helm for the seventh public performance, which took place at the Mechanics’ Institution in January 1851.<sup>56</sup> Within months of being appointed as principal violinist of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in January 1850,<sup>57</sup> E.W.Thomas had replaced Ambrose Lloyd as conductor of the Welsh Choral

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<sup>49</sup> An undated manuscript of J. Ambrose Lloyd, *Molwch yr Arglwydd* is held at the National Library of Wales. According to C. Francis Lloyd: ‘It was published in *Caniedydd yr Ysgol Sul* (Novello & Co. 1899), but we cannot discover that it has ever been published in separate form’. See C. Francis Lloyd, op. cit., 142.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Liverpool Welsh Choral Society’, *North Wales Chronicle*, 16 October 1849, 2.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Public Announcements, *Liverpool Mercury*, 9 April 1850, 1.

<sup>53</sup> E.W. Thomas was a professional musician and classically-trained violinist who had studied at the Royal Academy of Music (London), following which he became a teacher of the violin and a member of the Royal Italian Opera. See D. Emlyn Evans, ‘Y Diweddar E.W. Thomas’, *Y Cerddor*, Awst (1904), 86.

<sup>54</sup> ‘The Welsh Charity Schools’, *Liverpool Mercury*, 12 April 1850, 6.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Local Intelligence’, *ibid.*, 20 September 1850, 6.

<sup>56</sup> Advertisements and Notices, *ibid.*, 10 January 1851, 1.

<sup>57</sup> ‘The Philharmonic Concert’, *ibid.*, 15 February 1850, 112.

Society during which time, Lloyd had moved to Bwlch Bach, near Conwy and it was here that he composed the iconic anthem, *Teyrnasoedd y Ddaear*,<sup>58</sup> before moving to Chester, in 1852, for the sake of his children's education.<sup>59</sup> Edward Thomas had entered the territory of self-taught musicians, and the ingress of a classically-trained violinist with radical ideas on choralism had yet to be accepted by the musical establishment. Uplifted by the choir's success at the three-day Tremadoc Eisteddfod in October 1851,<sup>60</sup> Thomas was already confident in his ability as a chorus master and publicly announced his recommended formula for success that was to take the form of a massed choral concert which he would conduct, and in a letter to the *North Wales Chronicle* he outlines his plan:

Ever since I joined the Liverpool Welsh Choral Society as their conductor, I have anxiously wished to see choral societies established all through Wales, and taught on the same system that I adopt, so that on some grand occasion, such as an Eisteddfod, they might unite together under one conductor ... As I believe the Liverpool Welsh Choral Society to have been the first regularly organised and disciplined association of the kind established, I should wish it to be the parent society...<sup>61</sup>

Scarcely in his second year as conductor of the Liverpool Welsh Choral Society and as yet unproven, Thomas nonetheless inferred that he was the most suitably qualified musician to conduct the massed choir, despite a cautionary footnote from the editor of the *North Wales Chronicle* to the effect that: 'the idea has often been suggested in these columns'.<sup>62</sup> This presumptuous notion, made worse by his condescending advice to other choral leaders, 'that I might initiate them into the mysteries of conducting', was an indiscretion that blighted the project from the outset. Defeated by the vagaries of Welsh choralism, Thomas' enthusiasm waned and at the Liverpool Eisteddfod of 1851, while he officiated as music adjudicator and performed a selection of violin solos, the choir for which he had once held great hope, performed only a minor role when 'several members of the Welsh

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<sup>58</sup> Adjudicators, Revs. E. Stephen (*Tanymarian*) and J.D. Edwards, awarded *Teyrnasoedd y Ddaear* (Bethesda, 1852) the first prize in the 1852 Bethesda Eisteddfod. It became Ambrose Lloyd's best-known anthem and was described by Joseph Parry as 'the finest Anthem ever written to Welsh words'. See C. Francis Lloyd, *op. cit.*, 145.

<sup>59</sup> *Elfed* (cyfieithydd a gol.), C. Francis Lloyd, *op. cit.*, 73.

<sup>60</sup> 'Tremadoc Eisteddfod', *ibid.*, 14 October 1851, 812.

<sup>61</sup> Letter from E.W. Thomas, *North Wales Chronicle*, 23 October 1851, 4.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

Choral Society sang choruses and glees during the interval'.<sup>63</sup> In keeping with tradition, *eisteddfodau* were primarily confined to the literary arts, although the Liverpool Eisteddfod that commenced on 9 September 1851, in the Concert Hall on Lord Nelson Street did make a concession by introducing a choral performance, albeit as a brief interlude.<sup>64</sup> Little, if anything was heard of the Liverpool Welsh Choral Society after that event, which suggests that it disbanded towards the end of 1851, by which time Thomas had embarked on a new venture: 'Mr E.W.Thomas' Cheap Classical Concerts' at the Philharmonic Hall.<sup>65</sup>

As a competitive choir, the Liverpool Welsh Choral Society had achieved little, and as a concert choir it made little impression in a city that had grown accustomed to world-class performances, particularly as Liverpool set its sights on becoming a cultural capital, second only to London. For example, in 1850, through the exertions of William Sudlow of the Liverpool Philharmonic Choral Society, the world-famous Swedish opera singer, Jenny Lind (1820 –1887),<sup>66</sup> had agreed to perform her last two concerts at the Philharmonic Hall before departing for America.<sup>67</sup> In the race for cultural supremacy, this was indeed a coup as the famous soprano had declined invitations from the London opera houses, and a review in the *Liverpool Mercury* described the rendition of Handel's *Messiah* as 'one of the most perfect and satisfactory, hitherto afforded by the Liverpool Philharmonic Society'.<sup>68</sup> With obvious satisfaction, the local press reported:

That Mad'lle Lind should have been induced to refuse all metropolitan offers previous to her departure for America, and grant her invaluable assistance to the Liverpool Philharmonic Society, is a fact which, in future years, will occupy no inconsiderable place in our musical annals. The interest excited throughout the kingdom by these concerts is unparalleled ... places having been secured by residents in most of the principal towns.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> 'The Liverpool Eisteddfod', *Liverpool Mercury*, 12 September 1851, 2.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Classified Advertisement, *ibid.*, 28 January 1853, 76.

<sup>66</sup> Jenny Lind, 'The Swedish Nightingale' performed Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at Birmingham and F.G.Edwards says: 'It may be mentioned that Mendelssohn wrote the soprano part of *Elijah* especially for the 'The Swedish Nightingale' and told her that he had remembered her F sharp when writing the soprano part of 'Elijah' ('Hear Ye Israel'). See F.G.Edwards, 'First Performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*', *Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 32, 1 September 1891, 527

<sup>67</sup> 'Philharmonic Concerts', *Liverpool Mercury*, 20 August 1850, 8.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*



With the advent of rail travel from the mid-nineteenth century, Liverpool became more accessible to the people of north-east Wales and the regular sailings to Merseyside from Holywell and Mostyn gave Flintshire concert-goers easier access to professional performances of familiar oratorios that raised the levels of interest in choral music. Such was the impact of the Liverpool cultural scene on north-east Wales that a number of choirs enhanced their status by incorporating the descriptor, 'Philharmonic', into their title as typified by the Holywell Philharmonic Society that performed at the Flint National Eisteddfod in August 1851.<sup>70</sup> Shortly after, the Llangollen Philharmonic Society was established in 1851 by a local mill-owner,<sup>71</sup> that later became the Dee Mill Philharmonic Society, a title it took from the flannel mill owned by its conductor, Edward S. Jones (1814-1883).<sup>72</sup> By 1855, the Mold Choral Society had been established, and it is highly likely that this ensemble was an outgrowth of a chapel choir as their second concert, which took place on 14 May 1857, dedicated the first part of the programme to sacred music while the latter half was of a secular nature.<sup>73</sup> Choral singing was accepted as a respectable leisure pursuit, and Percy Young takes the view that: 'Choral music in the nineteenth century was not entirely an end in itself but some expression of social aims and political sentiment as well as of religious fervour'.<sup>74</sup> What further strengthens this assumption is the fact that the majority of choral concerts were performed in places of worship, with of course, the exception of Liverpool.

In terms of cultural status, Liverpool was second only to London, and it was here that the Welsh were introduced to the higher art forms that fired the enthusiasm of choral societies in north-east Wales. Supplementing the musical curriculum of the chapel Sunday Schools were organisations such as the Mechanics' Institutes, the motto of which was 'To make the man a better mechanic, the mechanic a better man.' Contrary to its nomenclature, the institute included vocal and singing tuition in the curriculum, as evidenced by Mr. Russell's 'vocal music class in which the

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<sup>70</sup> Huw Williams, *They Lived in Flintshire* (Wrexham, 1960), 128; 'Flint Eisteddfod', *Liverpool Mercury*, 19 August 1851, 6.

<sup>71</sup> 'Concert', *Llangollen Advertiser*, 4 February 1870, 4; 'District News: Concert', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 5 February 1870, 6.

<sup>72</sup> Denbighshire Record Office DD/DM/233/1, Poster for Dee Mill Philharmonic Society, Llangollen, 14 December 1859.

<sup>73</sup> 'District News', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 23 May 1857, 3.

<sup>74</sup> Percy M. Young (1962), *op. cit.*, 198.

lecturer employs the syllables do, re, mi'.<sup>75</sup> By the 1850s, violinist Henry Lawson, the superintendent of the Institute's singing classes had introduced 'a simple method of reading music at sight by means of figures' which suggests that the Waite numerical system may have been the preferred method.<sup>76</sup> It is clear, therefore, that the Institute was responding to the popular demand that had been created by the well-publicised pedagogic systems of Mainzer, Hullah and Waite that raised the level of interest in music literacy and choral music.

Numerous musical societies were emerging at the mid-century, one of which was the Liverpool Sacred Harmonic Society that was formed c.1852, 'for the exclusive cultivation of sacred music, the improvement of congregational singing, and the opening of a free vocal school for the working classes'.<sup>77</sup> The conductor, Charles Danvers Hackett, Mus.Bac.,Oxon., offered free vocal classes for elementary instruction with a view to forming an amateur chorus of five hundred performers, an intention that was met 'with the most liberal encouragement from the clergy, gentry, and other influential classes in the town'.<sup>78</sup> Sacred oratorios were extremely popular, and performances of *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, the two major oratorios chosen to celebrate the opening of the Liverpool St George's Hall in 1854, were fully subscribed well before the event.<sup>79</sup> Prominent in this competitive milieu was the Liverpool Festival Choral Society which claimed to be the longest established choir in Liverpool, and in a bid to protect that status, they issued the following disclaimer: 'Notice. The LIVERPOOL FESTIVAL CHORAL SOCIETY (established in the year 1828, under the patronage of the festival committee) HAS NO CONNECTION whatever with the SACRED HARMONIC SOCIETY'.<sup>80</sup> In the rivalry for audiences through the columns of the local press it appears that the querulous trait of Welsh choral and congregational singing, *y cythraul canu*, had migrated from north-east Wales to settle its mischief on Merseyside.

There is no doubt that the Welsh diaspora were highly regarded for their musical aptitude and this was clearly demonstrated when Liverpool Wesleyans presented a

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<sup>75</sup> 'Vocal Music', *Liverpool Mercury*, 7 July 1843, 8.

<sup>76</sup> Advertisements and Notices, *ibid.*, 25 March 1857, 1.

<sup>77</sup> Advertisements and Notices, *ibid.*, 16 June 1854, 3.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> 'Opening of St. George's Hall', *Cheshire Observer*, 16 September 1854, 2.

<sup>80</sup> Advertisements and Notices, *ibid.*, 23 May 1856, 1.

Welsh and English Sacred concert in the Hope Hall to raise funds for a new chapel in the north end of the town. The audience was 'principally composed of Welsh congregations',<sup>81</sup> and the appreciation for the high standard of Welsh singing is confirmed in the following extract:

The Welsh choir consisted of the choir from the Welsh chapel in Benn's-gardens and the Welsh Zion chapel in Chester street, and the amateurs of the English choir were from that of the Wesleyan Brunswick chapel, augmented by professional vocalists ... The Welsh choir throughout sang with nice precision and regularity ... as having had all the advantage resulting from previous united practice and rehearsals'.<sup>82</sup>

The ceaseless migration to Merseyside and the need to provide a spiritual abode for their adherents had placed denominations under financial strain and the Wesleyans, in common with other Welsh causes found musical performances to be the most expedient way of subsidising the contributions of its members. Invariably, public concerts were sustained by a chapel choir and it was perhaps for this reason that the development of choral ensembles began to overshadow congregational singing. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the efforts of the *codwyr canu* were absorbed by the choir and the *Ysgol Gân*, rather than the congregation.

In 1856, a letter in *Y Diwygiwr*,<sup>83</sup> one of the most influential periodicals of its day, appealed for the reform of congregational singing and blamed 'those chapel musicians' who chose tunes and anthems that were too complicated for most of the congregation.<sup>84</sup> Furthermore, the critic compared the ability of chapel choirs to sing works by Handel, Mozart and other composers with reasonable accuracy, to the dull laborious congregational singing during Sunday worship.<sup>85</sup> The *codwyr canu*, on the other hand, were of the opinion that it was difficult to sustain interest in the *Ysgol Gân* without learning new, joyful tunes,<sup>86</sup> a defence which brought a

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<sup>81</sup> 'Welsh and English Sacred Concert', *ibid.*, 28 January 1858, 6.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Y Diwygiwr* [The Reformer], a Congregationalist monthly journal, was founded in Llanelli in 1835 by Congregational minister, David Rees, and continued until 1912 when it was incorporated in *Y Dysgedydd* [The Instructor] Apart from religious tracts and literary reports, it included musical commentary and hymn-tunes. In 1841 John Ambrose Lloyd gave advance notice of his forthcoming collection of hymn-tunes and invited readers to send in their recommended tunes. See *Y Diwygiwr*, Ionawr (1842), 18.

<sup>84</sup> 'Llythyr at Cyfaill Cerddorol', *Y Diwygiwr*, Cyf. XXI, Rhif 253, Awst (1856), 245-6.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

caustic rebuttal from Rev. Caleb Rees. He maintained that only a dozen or so new congregational tunes had been sung over a nine-year period,<sup>87</sup> despite there being a singing school which followed the *Seiat* every Sunday evening and again during the week.<sup>88</sup> Such practice, claimed Rees, appeared not to benefit congregational singing but merely provided an opportunity to learn choral pieces in order to gain *eisteddfodic* prizes or to hold benefit concerts and tea-parties.<sup>89</sup> Although singing classes provided a forum for young people, Rees was of the opinion that they were 'a source of mischief and bad behaviour', a presumption that invoked a raft of correspondence, some of which misconstrued his concern as having been fuelled by envy.<sup>90</sup>

Jealousy was not the motive of Caleb Rees' disquiet, and he was right to question the priorities of the singing classes as they focussed on the chapel choir and concert performances to the detriment of the original purpose, which was to improve congregational singing.<sup>91</sup> That the Salem Congregational Chapel choir of John Ambrose Lloyd became a concert party, and later a competitive entity, was sufficient to warrant Rees' apprehension that choral music was digressing from its prime aim as an expression of worship to the vanity of a performing art. Despite his anxiety, a precedent had been set and choral concerts were an expedient means of fund-raising with chapel choirs making a useful contribution to the debts accrued by the architectural excesses of the Welsh denominations. The inevitable outcome was that the competitive ambitions of chapel choirs would lead ultimately to the development of independent choral societies over which the denominations would have no control. For instance, the first public performance of the Birkenhead Welsh Choral Society,<sup>92</sup> established by Liverpool-born Welshman, William Parry (1827-1888), a former *codwr canu* and a past member of the Liverpool Welsh Choral Society c.1851, was at Oliver Street Welsh Independent Chapel, Birkenhead, in March 1852; the concert was 'devoted to the liquidation of the debts of the various chapels in the Liverpool and Birkenhead district'.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> 'Pa beth am y Canu?', *ibid.*, Cyf. XXI, Rhif 254 (Medi 1856), 367.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 368.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> 'Canu unwaith eto', *ibid.*, Cyf. XXI, Rhif 257 (Rhagfyr 1856), 358-9.

<sup>91</sup> 'Y Canu', *ibid.*, Cyf. XXII, Rhif 265 (Awst 1857), 238-9.

<sup>92</sup> 'Liverpool Notes', *North Wales Chronicle*, 17 June 1876, 4.

<sup>93</sup> 'Welsh Independent Jubilee', *Liverpool Mercury*, 26 March 1852, 6.

The development of choirs in north-east Wales was concurrent with the growth of Welsh Nonconformity from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, while the introduction of choral competitions in *eisteddfodau* prompted the formation of new societies throughout the region and M.O.Jones says that competition became the main motivator to progress.<sup>94</sup> Additionally, the improved mobility from the mid-nineteenth century played an equally effective role by affording easier access to *eisteddfodau* which, in turn, raised attendances. For example, the success of the Llangollen Eisteddfod in 1858 was due in no small measure to the fact that the Great Western Railway Company were intending to run trains from Liverpool, Birkenhead, Chester and Shrewsbury, 'at very low fares' during the event.<sup>95</sup> It was at this Eisteddfod that choral singing was first accepted as a competitive class and a £10 prize was offered for the 'best choir in Wales', of not less than twenty voices.<sup>96</sup> The test pieces, *The Song of David*, the *Old Hundred* and *Hanover* would have been familiar to chapel choirs, although only two Llangollen choirs competed – the Glan yr Afon Independent Chapel choir of 40 voices and the Wesleyan chorus with 38 members that took the first prize.<sup>97</sup> The Dee Mill Philharmonic Society did not compete on that occasion, although they did present their second public concert during the following year with an ambitious and challenging repertoire.<sup>98</sup> (See Fig. 7.1 over)

Competitive singing was in its early stages when choirs from Gwersyllt, Ruabon, Adwy, Wern and Rhos competed for the best performance of Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus' at the Wrexham Eisteddfod in 1859, and it is likely that this choir was a combination of chapel choirs that unified for the sole purpose of competing.<sup>99</sup> By contrast, the Denbigh National Eisteddfod in 1860, found little denominational support and despite a first prize of ten guineas for the choral competition it attracted only three local choirs - Denbigh Choral Society, Dyserth Wesleyan Choir and 'a choir from the vicinity of Denbigh'.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> M. O. Jones, 'Cynydd Caniadaeth Gorawl yn Nghymru', *Y Cerddor*, Cyf. VII, Rhif 84, Rhagfyr (1895), 130.

<sup>95</sup> 'District News', *Wrexham and Denbighshire Advertiser*, 28 August 1858, 3.

<sup>96</sup> 'Rhestr Testunau a'r Gwobrau' *Y Brython*, 16 Gorphenaf 1838, 62.

<sup>97</sup> 'Eisteddfod Llangollen', *Baner Cymru*, 18 Awst 1858, 516.

<sup>98</sup> Denbighshire Record Office DD/DM/233/1, Poster for Dee Mill Philharmonic Society, Llangollen, 14 December 1859.

<sup>99</sup> 'Multiple News Items', *Wrexham and Denbighshire Advertiser*, 7 May 1859, 4.

<sup>100</sup> 'Brief Chronicle of the Month: Denbigh', *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 1 September 1860, 336. The Denbigh Choral Society won the competition.

# DEE MILL PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY, LLANGOLLEN.

The above CHOIR will give their SECOND

# CONCERT

AT THE

NATIONAL SCHOOL ROOM,  
LLANGOLLEN,

ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1859,

CONDUCTOR:

# MR. EDW. JONES.

### PROGRAMME.

1. CHORUS	Swell the full Chorus, (Solomon)	HANDEL.
2. ANTHEM	I will Arise,	Rev. RICHARD CECIL.
3.	Motett,	Ludwig Heulwig.
4. ANTHEM	Thine O Lord,	KENT.
5. ANTHEM	Who can Express,	From "Ceinion Cerddoriaeth".
6. ANTHEM	Arise shine O Zion,	DR. GREENE.
7. ANTHEM	Mawl ath Erys,	Robert Davies, St. Asaph.
8. ANTHEM	Praise The Lord O Jerusalem,	JOHN SCOTT.
9. ANTHEM	In Jewry is God known,	J. CLARKE WHITFIELD.
<b>INTERVAL OF TEN MINUTES. PART 2.</b>		
10. ANTHEM	Cenweh i'r Arglwydd,	Eos Llechyd.
11.	Waterloo, Loud as Thunder,	T. PURDAY.
12. DUETT	A. B. C.	J. PARRY.
13. GLEE		
14.	Tickling Trio	MARTIN.
15. GLEE		
16.	God save The Queen,	V. NOVELLO.

Doors open at 7 o'clock, to commence at half past. Tickets of Admission, First Class 1s. Second Class 6d., may be had of Mr. Monk, Bookseller, and also at the Doors.

CHARLES MONK, PRINTER, LLANGOLLEN.

The apparent lack of interest in the Denbigh Eisteddfod of 1860 should not, however, be taken as a reliable indicator of choral activity in the north-east Wales region as there were numerous choirs that chose not to compete, but reserved their talent for concerts. Take for instance, the seventy-strong Holywell Choral Society that performed in concert on 1 October 1860 under the baton of John Williams (*Ab Alaw*) and performed such demanding works as the Sanctus from Mozart's *Twelfth Mass* in addition to compositions by the Ruthin musician J.D.Jones, and *Owain Alaw* of Chester.<sup>101</sup> This was not an isolated example as similar activity was evident in Buckley according to local historian, Dennis Griffiths, who points out that, 'By 1860, Buckley choirs included most of the popular works of Handel in their repertoires...'.<sup>102</sup>

There were numerous small choirs across north-east Wales, but not one of sufficient strength to enter a major choral contest, and it was this void that inspired John Ambrose Lloyd to propose the idea of a massed choir to represent the north Wales region.<sup>103</sup> The society was inaugurated in 1861 as the Cambrian Choral Union,<sup>104</sup> conducted by John Owen (*Owain Alaw*)<sup>105</sup> with Edward W. Thomas of Liverpool leading the instrumental band, and it was resolved that 'a respectful invitation be given to the choirs of south Wales to join the institution'.<sup>106</sup> There is no evidence of enthusiasm from the choirs beyond north-Wales and the sheer size of the ambition cast doubt on the practical outcome. Nevertheless, a preparatory rehearsal was arranged in June 1861 for the first performance which was to be a great musical festival at Caernarfon Castle in September 1862,<sup>107</sup> 'in which several thousand singers are to take part',<sup>108</sup> but there is no report of the concert having taken place, or that the grandiose scheme even survived the planning stage.

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<sup>101</sup> 'Holywell Choral Society', *Wrexham and Denbighshire Advertiser*, 6 October, 1860, 3.

<sup>102</sup> Dennis Griffiths, *Out of This Clay* (Denbigh, 1960), 79.

<sup>103</sup> 'The Cambrian Choral Union', *North Wales Chronicle*, 1 June 1861, 2.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Chester-born composer, John Owen (*Owain Alaw*, 1821-1883), was a close friend of J. Ambrose Lloyd (See. D. Emlyn Evans, *Y Geninen* (1885), 306. At the Madog Eisteddfod in 1851, adjudicators John Mills and J.D. Edwards were in favour of awarding first prize for the best music for *Gweddi Habacuc* to J. Ambrose Lloyd. Dr. Wesley, on the other hand, favoured John Owen as the winner. At Ambrose Lloyd's request, the prize was shared between them. See. M.O.Jones, *Bywgraffiaeth Cerddorion Cymreig* (Caerdydd, 1890), 83. In 1860, Owen published *Gems of Welsh Melody* (Ruthin, 1860), a bilingual compilation of popular Welsh songs.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Advertisements & Notices, *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* 12 June 1861, 1.

<sup>108</sup> The Cambrian Choral Union', *op. cit.*, 2.

By contrast, the Birkenhead Choral Society was an established competitor, and at the Caernarfon Eisteddfod in 1862, William Parry was persuaded by compatriots from Liverpool and Birkenhead to form the Birkenhead Cambrian Choral Society which was destined to become one of the most successful choirs in Welsh choral history.<sup>109</sup> Hywel Teifi Edwards claims that during the 1860s, there were no outstanding choirs in north-east Wales to compare with Parry's Cambrian Choir, or indeed those in the industrial enclaves of Merthyr, Dowlais and Aberdare,<sup>110</sup> all of which were more densely populated than north-east Wales, and therefore the comparators were not relevant. John Pyke Hullah was of a different view and maintained that the lack of quality choral singing in the 1860s was due to the amateur choir leaders who practised with no accompaniment, a criticism echoed by Henry Brinley Richard.<sup>111</sup>

By 1863, a choir had been established in Rhosllannerchrugog under the baton of farmer, Hugh Griffiths of Penycae,<sup>112</sup> who taught through the medium of Old Notation, although it was Richard Thomas (*Risiart Alaw*) who led the Rhos Choral Society at the 'Eisteddfod Fawreddog' at Rhosllannerchrugog in 1866.<sup>113</sup> In the more populated villages, chapel choirs began to extend their activities when choral societies developed from Tonic Sol-fa classes such as those tutored by Joseph Owen that graduated into two Sol-fa choirs with a combined membership of 130.<sup>114</sup> The transition from chapel choir to choral society was a gradual process, as evidenced by the inclusive titles of such ensembles as the Brymbo Glee Party and Wesleyan Choir, and the renowned Cefn Tabernacle Choir that later abbreviated to The Cefn Choir. Similar activity was rife in Adwy'r Clawdd under the leadership of James Beckett, and in the populated area of Brymbo, where *codwr canu*, Edward Humphreys, conducted the Tonic Sol-fa choir.<sup>115</sup> In Holywell, for instance, the Wesleyan Chapel choir led by Samuel Nuttall<sup>116</sup> formed the basis of the Holywell

<sup>109</sup> Own Correspondent, 'Liverpool Notes', *ibid.*, 17 June 1876, 4.

<sup>110</sup> Hywel Teifi Edwards, *op. cit.*, 276.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 270, 277-8.

<sup>112</sup> *Souvenir Brochure - Rhos Male Voice Choir* (1966), 8.

<sup>113</sup> 'Eisteddfod Fawreddog Rhos', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 30 June 1866, 3.

<sup>114</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: Joseph Owen, Amwythig', *Y Cerddor*, Mawrth 1909, 26; 'Cronicl Cerddorol: Rhosllannerchrugog', *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, Tachwedd (1866), 85.

<sup>115</sup> 'Tea Meeting and Concert at the Lodge Calvinistic Chapel', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 25 May 1867, 6.

<sup>116</sup> 'Cronicl Cerddorol: Treffynnon', *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, Rhif 49, Cyf. III, Mawrth (1865), 22.



Choir, and in Buckley, the Sol-fa class of Isaac Hopwood (1827-1888) became the Buckley Tonic Sol-fa Choral Society.<sup>117</sup> The aforementioned settlements typify the overwhelming interest in choral singing as Sol-fa raised the aspirations of *y werin* as they began to embrace oratorio, although it is open to question as to whether this trend enriched congregational worship or merely fulfilled the ambitions of chapel choirs. That the organisers of the Birkenhead Eisteddfod of 1864 introduced a contest for congregational choirs<sup>118</sup> implies that chapels had already succumbed to the competitive ethos that digressed from the spiritual purpose of sung worship.<sup>119</sup>

While chapel choirs in the north-east Wales region built their reputations through concerts and local *eisteddfodau*, Parry's Birkenhead Cambrians were measured against the high standards set by the leading choral societies of Liverpool, and at the 1864 National Eisteddfod at Llandudno,<sup>120</sup> and the Birkenhead Eisteddfod of the same year,<sup>121</sup> it was Parry's choir that performed at the opening concert. During the following year, the choir performed John Thomas' cantata, *Llewellyn*, at the Birkenhead Workman's Hall, in October 1865, by which time the chorus had grown to 80 voices.<sup>122</sup> (See Fig. 7.2 below)

Fig. 7.2

**WORKMAN'S HALL, BIRKENHEAD.**  
**BIRKENHEAD CAMBRIAN CHORAL SOCIETY.**  
**GRAND CONCERT.**  
**TO-MORROW (TUESDAY) EVENING, 24TH INSTANT.**  
**MISS EDITH WYNNE,**  
**MISS KATE WYNNE,**  
**MR. HIRST,**  
**MR. W. ROBERTS.**  
**ORCHESTRA OF EIGHTY VOICES.**  
**'LLEWELLYN,' AND A MISCELLANEOUS SELECTION**  
**ACCOMPANIMENT..... Mr. SKELF.**  
**CONDUCTOR..... Mr. W. PARRY.**  
**To Commence at a Quarter to Eight o'clock.**  
**Admission, 2s., 1s., and 6d. 21oc24**

Advertisements and Notices, *Liverpool Mercury*, 23 October 1865, 1

<sup>117</sup> 'Concert at Coed Talon, *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 6 May 1871, 6.

<sup>118</sup> 'Eisteddfod at Birkenhead', *Cheshire Observer and North Wales Times* 31 December 1864, 7.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> 'Epitome of News', *ibid.*, 28 August 1869, 3.

<sup>121</sup> 'Birkenhead Eisteddfod', *Liverpool Mercury*, 27 December 1864, 6.

<sup>122</sup> 'Brief Summary of Country News', *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, Vol. 12, No. 274, December (1865), 187.

Only a representative ensemble of the Anglo-Cambrian Choral Society (as Parry's choir was often referred to) competed in Rhosllannerchrugog at the *Eisteddfod Fawreddog* for the best performance of Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus', although 47 choristers occupied the stage as compared to the 27-strong Rhos Choral Society.<sup>123</sup> That there was no choral society in north-east Wales of comparable volume accounts for the fact that the Birkenhead Cambrian Choir was the first and obvious choice for the opening concert at the National Eisteddfod at Chester in 1866.<sup>124</sup> Effectively, it was Parry's Choir that carried the reputation of choral singing in north-east Wales and Merseyside into the national music press and prompted the correspondent of the *Liverpool Mercury* in January 1867 to ask why Liverpool had no Welsh Choral Society:

It has always been a matter of surprise to me that Liverpool (with so many Welsh inhabitants) does not possess a Welsh choral society; it cannot be for the want of neither practical members ... nor can it be for the want of audiences, for when we have a Welsh concert in the town it is always well patronised.<sup>125</sup>

The Liverpool Cambrian Choral Union came into existence in 1869 under William Parry's leadership,<sup>126</sup> and the chorus of 300 began the task of learning Handel's *Messiah*, but poor sight-reading was the decisive factor that reduced the size of the choir to c.100 members.<sup>127</sup> From 1869, Parry conducted two major choirs,<sup>128</sup> the newly-formed Liverpool Cambrian Choral Union and the Birkenhead Cambrians, which signified a *renaissance* in Welsh culture and reflected the confidence of the Liverpool Welsh community. Ieuan Gwyllt felt that choral societies were a secular outgrowth of congregational singing and writing in *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, he insisted that the role of the Welsh choirs ought to be a moral force in the country and that

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<sup>123</sup> 'Eisteddfod Fawreddog Rhos', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 30 June 1866, 3.

<sup>124</sup> 'National Eisteddfod at Chester', *ibid.*, 5 September 1866, 6.

<sup>125</sup> 'To Correspondents: Cymro', *Liverpool Mercury*, 14 January 1867, 6.

<sup>126</sup> W.M. Roberts, 'Ein Cerddorion: Mr. Llew Wynne', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XXIV, Rhif 281, Mai (1912), 51.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.* There is, however, evidence of another Welsh choir c.1870 conducted by Daniel Daniels, and accompanied by a Mr. Skeaf, that met every Wednesday evening in New Jerusalem Church, Bedford Street North. See 'Cronicl Cerddorol', *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, Rhif 117, Tachwedd (1870), 87. *Y Cerddor Cymreig* also carried a long report of its performance in the Concert Hall, Nelson Street, Liverpool, and was highly critical of the conducting ability of Daniel Daniels, after which time little more was heard of this party. See 'Cronicl Cerddorol', *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, Rhif 131, Ionawr (1872), 2-3.

<sup>128</sup> 'Liverpool Notes', *North Wales Chronicle*, 17 June 1876, 4.

conductors and singers should be Sunday school members and abstainers.<sup>129</sup> He was critical of Welsh Musical Festivals, claiming that while Wales boasted singing talent – bass and tenor voices in north Wales, sopranos in the South - its choirs could not compete with the best of London choirs as they lacked musical education and training.<sup>130</sup> Equally disparaging, was his cynical response to the appointment of William Parry as conductor of the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union:<sup>131</sup>

... another attempt to set up a Welsh musical society in Liverpool - The Welsh Choral Society had a successful season conducted by J. Ambrose Lloyd, after which time the Welsh Harmonic Society was formed which gained success under Ieuan Gwyllt's leadership until he left Liverpool; presently, there is another attempt under William Parry's leadership, conductor of Birkenhead Music Society. The meetings are held in Salem, and it is understood that 200 members have enrolled.<sup>132</sup>

Notwithstanding the alleged success of Ieuan Gwyllt's choir, there is no reference to the Welsh Harmonic Society in the newspapers that circulated in Liverpool or north Wales, despite the fact that the *Liverpool Mercury* diligently reported the minutiae of cultural activity. That is not to suggest that the Welsh Harmonic Society did not exist, although its success is open to question, whereas the Birkenhead Cambrian Society was rarely out of the news as it became one of the leading choirs in the region. Contrary to Gwyllt's indifference, the 80-strong Liverpool Welsh Choral Union, unlike its forbears, made a grand entrance at the Philharmonic Hall and shared the stage with a number of distinguished Welsh vocalists.<sup>133</sup> In March 1871, for example, they celebrated St David's Day with a performance at the Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street to a capacity audience where a Welsh version of *The Marseillaise* was sung by T.J.Hughes.<sup>134</sup> Ieuan Gwyllt had underestimated the ability of William Parry, whose triumphant Birkenhead Cambrian Choir took first prize at the Holywell Eisteddfod of 1869 when they competed against the Dee Choral Society of Bagillt, Grosvenor Choral Society of Halkyn and 'Caradog and party' from Rhosllannerchrugog, and in a munificent gesture, Parry returned the prize for the benefit of the association.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Ieuan Gwyllt, 'Y Côr', *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, Rhif 62, Ebrill (1866), 29.

<sup>130</sup> Ieuan Gwyllt, 'Cylchwylliau Cerddorol Cymru', *ibid.*, Rhif 103, Medi (1869), 65.

<sup>131</sup> 'Liverpool Notes', *op. cit.*, 17 June 1876, 4.

<sup>132</sup> 'Cronicle Cerddorol: Liverpool', *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, Rhif 95, Ionawr (1869), 6.

<sup>133</sup> Advertisements & Notices, *Liverpool Mercury*, 5 March 1870, 1.

<sup>134</sup> 'St. David's Day', *ibid.*, 2 March 1871, 3.

<sup>135</sup> 'Holywell Eisteddfod', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 4 September 1869, 6.

By the 1870s, the Birkenhead Cambrians had built an enthusiastic following in north-east Wales, as indeed had the popular baritone soloist, T.J.Hughes (1831-1880) who appeared in their concert programme as the soloist in the Good Friday concert in Leeswood, near Mold.<sup>136</sup> The Birkenhead choir were to perform Haydn's *The Creation* at the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel with T.J.Hughes, but unbeknown to William Parry, the much-feted baritone had already agreed to sing in a concert with the Leeswood choir at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on that same afternoon.<sup>137</sup> That the dates conflicted and the name of T.J.Hughes appeared in the programmes of both concerts can only have been an oversight, but the reaction of the Calvinistic Methodists provides a clear illustration of the denominational tensions that surfaced in the contest for the 'big names' that could draw a capacity audience. Local *eisteddfodau* and literary meetings had primed the competitive ethos and concerts presented an opportunity for community choirs that were often overshadowed by the larger Birkenhead Cambrian Choral Society.

By c.1873, Rhos Choral Society had re-grouped under the direction of Richard Mills who had conducted choirs at Wrexham, Broughton, and Bangor Isycoed before confining his efforts to the Rhosllannerchrugog choir.<sup>138</sup> In close proximity was the Cefn Choral Union, conducted by R.E.Jones, and Pentre Cristionydd Choir<sup>139</sup> led by John Owen Jones, both of which had developed from the Baptist chapel choirs of Ebenezer, Cefn Mawr and Salem Penycae.<sup>140</sup> Migration to the Ruabon coalfields had provided a sufficient population for the formation of competitive choirs, and from the early 1870s the choral geography of north-east Wales was virtually settled. At the Mold National Eisteddfod in 1873, the choirs of Rhosllannerchrugog (R.Mills), Pentre Cristionydd (J.O.Jones), Holywell Orpheus Glee Society (Samuel Nuttall) and John Daniels' Holywell choir competed in the

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<sup>136</sup> Llanfyllin-born T.J.Hughes, son of Wesleyan minister, Lot Hughes, became a well-respected baritone in the concert and eisteddfodic circles of Liverpool and north Wales. He was a member of J. Ambrose Lloyd's Liverpool Choral Union, along with William Parry. See 'Lerpwl', *Y Genedl Cymreig*, 4 Tachwedd 1880, 8.

<sup>137</sup> 'Leeswood', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 23 April 1870, 6.

<sup>138</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: Richard Mills, Rhos', *Y Cerddor*, Cyf. XV, Rhif 175 Gorphenaf (1903), 74-5.

<sup>139</sup> This Choir took its name from Pentre Cristionydd which formed part of the ancient parish of Ruabon. For further information of choral activity see Appendix 6.

<sup>140</sup> 'The Annual Eisteddfod Cefn Mawr', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 30 December 1871, 6.

contest for smaller ensembles of 30 or more voices.<sup>141</sup> The Holywell Choir, a 'scratch choir' conducted by John Davies, had been formed specifically to compete in the Mold Eisteddfod, and according to one newspaper report: 'The majority of the leading vocalists of the neighbourhood have joined this society'.<sup>142</sup>

The adjudicator, Brinley Richards, shared the first prize between Mills and Nuttall, and commended them on a performance which 'reminded him of the south Wales choirs, and he did not think he could pay them a greater compliment'.<sup>143</sup> In the contest for 80 voices and over, the only choir from north-east Wales was the 90-strong Maelor (Wrexham) Choral, an amalgam of Wrexham, Rhos, Adwy, and Brymbo choirs.<sup>144</sup> The Maelor Choir held a rehearsal concert at *Capel Mawr*, Rhos, on 6 August 1873, and to a 'fair audience' they sang *The Star that Lights*, by Liverpool-born opera singer and composer, W.H.Weiss (1820-1867), in the dim glow of borrowed house and shop lamps as the gas lighting in the chapel had failed.<sup>145</sup> Despite this valiant effort, they were no match for the Birkenhead Cambrian Choir of 85 voices that took the gold medal and first prize of £50 at the Mold Eisteddfod of 1873.<sup>146</sup>

William Parry's Cambrian Choral Society had already won the £20 prize money for choirs of not less than 40 voices and were due to compete for the £40 prize in the choral category for 'North Wales choirs only'.<sup>147</sup> Despite objections, Parry's choir were allowed to enter the contest, a decision which infuriated the Welsh choirs who protested vehemently and eventually refused to sing.<sup>148</sup> The matter was resolved when William Parry withdrew the Birkenhead choir from the competition, but not before reminding the organisers that 'every man in the choir belonged to North Wales'.<sup>149</sup> It transpired that the Birkenhead Choir had confirmed its right to compete in a letter from Brinley Richards which stated: 'I beg to inform you that

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<sup>141</sup> 'Grand National Eisteddfod at Mold', *Liverpool Mercury*, 23 August 1873, 6.

<sup>142</sup> 'Holywell: The Mold Eisteddfod', *ibid.*, 26 April 1873, 6.

<sup>143</sup> 'Grand National Eisteddfod at Mold', *ibid.* In his adjudication, Brinley Richards criticised 'the forcing of the voices of the young boys – enthusiastic young Marios, roaring as if they were calling for a railway ticket on a hot day'.

<sup>144</sup> 'Rehearsal Concert', *ibid.*, 9 August 1873, 6.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> 'Grand National Eisteddfod at Mold', *ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> 'The Welsh Eisteddfod', *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 24 August 1873, 1.

<sup>148</sup> 'Eisteddfod y Wyddgrug', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 27 Awst 1873, 11.

<sup>149</sup> 'Grand National Eisteddfod at Mold', *op. cit.*, 7.

the prize is open to all Welsh choirs in North Wales, including *bona fide* Welsh choirs in Liverpool, Birkenhead and Manchester, as the purpose for which the prize is offered is the encouragement of choral music in North Wales'.<sup>150</sup>

One of the first to pull out of the competition was the mid-Wales choir from Newtown, on the basis that they had been assured by one of the organisers, S. Allen Jones of Mold that the Birkenhead Choir would not compete. This petition was supported by John Henry Mills, conductor of the Llanidloes Choir and his elder brother Richard Mills, who led the Maelor Choir that to all intents had been formed for the sole purpose of competing at the Mold Eisteddfod. Owen Griffiths, who conducted the Waenfawr Choir, responded admirably when he announced that he was not afraid to compete, and furthermore, he was willing to confirm that the Birkenhead Choir was composed entirely of Welshmen.<sup>151</sup> It was John Henry Mills who took the prize back to Llanidloes while Richard, his elder sibling, abandoned the Maelor Choir and any thought of a future challenge to the mighty Birkenhead Cambrians. From 1873, Mills confined the Rhos Choir to the contests for smaller ensemble in the National Eisteddfod and to local *eisteddfodau* where they stood a greater chance of success.

Within a month of the Mold Eisteddfod of 1873, a second attempt was made to form a choral union for north Wales with the intention of competing at the Crystal Palace choral competition.<sup>152</sup> The ambitious notion of amalgamating north Wales choirs into a massed competitive chorus was first attempted in 1861 by John Ambrose Lloyd with his Cambrian Choral Union,<sup>153</sup> although this had failed before its first concert. At the magistrates' room in Bangor, representatives of several choirs met with their compatriots from the Welsh communities of Liverpool, Birkenhead and Manchester and agreed that these choirs should be recognised as belonging to north Wales.<sup>154</sup> A letter of support for the venture came from Brinley Richards who welcomed the fact that north Wales was to follow the example of the south Wales choirs, and 'he trusted that they might be so fortunate as to find

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> 'Formation of a North Wales Choral Union', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 27 September 1873, 6.

<sup>153</sup> 'The Cambrian Choral Union', *North Wales Chronicle*, 1 June 1861, 2.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

someone like Caradog,<sup>155</sup> for an immense deal of their success would depend upon their conductor, whom he hoped, would be selected solely on the grounds of ability and experience'.<sup>156</sup>

The nominees were William Parry, John Ambrose Lloyd, D.Emlyn Evans of Newtown, Owen Humphreys Davies (*Eos Llechid*), music tutor at Bangor Normal College, John Jones (*Eos Bradwen*), choral director at St. Asaph Cathedral, Edward Stephen (*Tanymarian*), S. Allen Jones, the leader of the Mold Eisteddfod Choir, John Owen (*Owain Alaw*) of Chester and Rev. John Roberts (*Ieuan Gwyllt*), who later withdrew.<sup>157</sup> From this highly esteemed gathering of accomplished musicians, there was but one contender of comparable experience to Caradog, and that was the Birkenhead maestro, William Parry who was elected by an overwhelming majority.

The committee of the newly-established Choral Union decided to audition members of existing choirs throughout north-Wales and Merseyside and the selection process began in November 1873 at the Wrexham Town Hall under the scrutiny of John Richards (*Isalaw*) of Bangor, the appointed music secretary.<sup>158</sup> Applicants were required 'to demonstrate their range of voice and to sing at sight a short piece of music', and it was said that 'a considerable number of candidates came forward from the neighbourhood of Broughton and Brymbo'.<sup>159</sup> The challenge of arranging a convenient location for rehearsals was daunting, and an application for discounted rail travel was rejected by the London and North Western and the Great Western Railway Company, both of which stated that the proposal for the issue of cheap tickets to members of the Choral Union for the purpose of attending rehearsals was virtually impracticable.<sup>160</sup> By December 1873, the deputation of members assigned to the task of auditioning singers had travelled the whole constituency and examined 1,280 candidates from which 1,144 were accepted as illustrated in the following table. (See Fig. 7.3 over)

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<sup>155</sup> Griffith Rhys Jones, 'Caradog' took the South Wales Choral Union to victory at the Crystal Palace in 1872. See Gareth Williams, op. cit., 35

<sup>156</sup> 'Formation of a North Wales Choral Union', *Liverpool Mercury*, 13 October 1873, 6

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> 'Local News: Formation of a North Wales Choir', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 29 November 1873, 4

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> 'North Wales Choral Union', *ibid.*, 7 May 1874, 6

Fig 7.3:

### THE NORTH WALES CHORAL UNION.

The following table shows the result of the examinations up to the 31st of December, 1873 :

Place.	Passed Standard of Admission.	Doubtful.	Total examined.	Examiners.
Llanberis .....	47	14	61	Ieuan Gwyllt, Eos Llechid, Isalaw, and E. W. Thomas
Rhyl .....	25	2	27	Isalaw and C. P. Morgan
Denbigh .....	36	16	52	Eos Llechid, Isalaw, and T. Casson
Carmarvon .....	45	9	54	Ieuan Gwyllt, Eos Bradwen, E. W. Thomas, and W. Haydn
Penygroes .....	37	13	50	Ieuan Gwyllt, Eos Bradwen, Isalaw, & E. W. Thomas
Ruthin .....	8	0	8	Eos Llechid, Isalaw, and T. Casson
Corwen .....	16	10	26	Ditto ditto
Pwllheli .....	24	3	27	Ieuan Gwyllt, Eos Bradwen, and E. W. Thomas
Portmadoc .....	23	3	26	Ditto ditto
Llangollen .....	29	3	32	Eos Llechid, Isalaw, and T. Casson
Ruabon .....	14	1	15	Isalaw
Bethesda .....	145	18	166	Ieuan Gwyllt, Eos Llechid, Eos Bradwen, Isalaw, and E. W. Thomas
Ectwsycod .....	26	2	28	Ieuan Gwyllt, Eos Bradwen, and E. W. Thomas
Conway .....	41	4	45	Ditto ditto
Wrexham .....	79	1	80	Isalaw and R. Mills
Holyhead .....	29	0	29	Ieuan Gwyllt, Eos Bradwen, and E. W. Thomas
Bangor .....	59	2	61	Ieuan Gwyllt, Isalaw, and E. W. Thomas
Llangefni .....	37	0	37	Eos Bradwen and E. W. Thomas
Festiniog .....	27	9	36	Ieuan Gwyllt and J. Roberts
Holywell .....	29	5	34	J. Roberts and C. P. Morgan
Llanerchymedd .....	31	8	39	Ieuan Gwyllt, Eos Bradwen, and E. W. Thomas
Amlwch .....	43	10	53	Ditto ditto
Liverpool .....	78	2	80	Eos Llechid, Isalaw, and T. Casson
Birkenhead .....	101	0	101	Ditto ditto
Mold .....	30	0	30	Ditto ditto
Portdinorwic .....	30	1	31	Ieuan Gwyllt, Isalaw, and E. W. Thomas
Ebenezer .....	18	0	18	Ieuan Gwyllt and E. W. Thomas
Waenfawr .....	34	0	34	Ditto ditto
	1144	136	1280	



At a meeting of the Union in March 1874, it was resolved that divisional practices for all choirs from Denbigh eastward should take place at Chester on 8 May,<sup>161</sup> even though the Crystal Palace meeting had been postponed. The Bangor and Caernarfon area concerts, supported by the Birkenhead Cambrian Choir and string band, took place in Moriah Calvinistic Methodist Chapel in Caernarfon on Saturday May 23, for which Parry had selected between 500 and 600 voices from the north-west Wales contingency.<sup>162</sup> By July 1874, the organisers realised that the membership was unwieldy, and following Brinley Richards' advice, the choir was reduced from 1,100 to a more manageable 500 that would represent the union at the Crystal Palace competition.<sup>163</sup> Indebted to its bankers for £100, the Choral Union blamed its plight on the 'indifferent public support it received last year',<sup>164</sup> and the plan to compete in the National Music Meetings at the Crystal Palace was subsequently abandoned.<sup>165</sup>

With hindsight, 'The *North West Wales* Choral Union' may have been a more appropriate descriptor as the dominant characters were Gwyllt, Edward.W.Thomas and John Richards (*Isalaw*), all of whom had strong links to Caernarfonshire, as the list of examiners confirms. Richard Mills and Thomas Casson, the Denbigh organ builder, were the only north-east Wales representatives and played a derisory role in the grand scheme that was doomed to fail. Arguably, the unification of choirs in north-east Wales would have been sufficient to challenge the Birkenhead Cambrian Choir in the major choral contests had not parochial pride and the enlarged egos of local conductors prohibited any such coalition. Richard Mills had turned his back on the National Eisteddfod and instead raised his chances of victory by competing in the smaller *eisteddfodau* such as the Dyffryn Maelor Eisteddfod where the major choral competition was confined to local choirs of no less than 40 voices. This restriction effectively narrowed the field to three ensembles – Rhos, Minera Choral Union and Nuttall's Orpheus Glee Society of Holywell - and the first prize of fifteen shillings was awarded to the Rhos Choir, conducted by Richard Mills.<sup>166</sup> In the contest for the best rendition of 'He saw the lovely youth' (Handel) for choirs

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<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 March 1874, 6.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 May 1874, 3.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 July 1874, 6.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 March 1875, 6.

<sup>165</sup> 'Waifs', *Musical World*, 21 March 1874, 184.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

of not less than 50 voices, only Rhos and Minera competed and Mills won by default when the Minera Choir, realising the futility of competing against the Rhos Choir, 'gave up the contest' after launching into 'Lovely youth'.<sup>167</sup> In all probability, the anxiety of losing was exacerbated by the menace of a disparaging adjudication and many choirs preferred to withdraw from a competition rather than risk humiliation.

Eisteddfod rules were often contrived to eliminate serious contenders through the cynical practice of limiting geographical boundaries and the size of competing choirs. Perhaps the best illustration of this deception was the absurd announcement of the Tryddyn Eisteddfod committee which appeared in the *Wrexham Advertiser*: 'We are requested to state that the circle of the competition of the above Eisteddfod is limited to eight miles, and not seven as appeared in the advertisement last week'.<sup>168</sup> The outcome of this unwelcoming notice was that there were no competitors, and it was left to the Tryddyn Wesleyan Chapel choir to perform the appropriate test piece, *The Dying Christian* (Edward Harwood).<sup>169</sup> It was this same dubious practice that disqualified the Birkenhead Cambrian Choir from many local *eisteddfodau*, one of which was the Dyffryn Maelor Eisteddfod Gadeiriol, a three-day event at Coedpoeth in July 1874.<sup>170</sup> This was an important *eisteddfod* with a substantial pavilion designed to accommodate over 4,000, a choir of 200 voices conducted by James Beckett with a full orchestra, and one of the first in north-east Wales to include a competition for a male chorus of not more than fifteen singers which was won by a party from Richard Mills' choir.<sup>171</sup>

The restrictions imposed by local *eisteddfod* committees brought only false victory, particularly as test pieces were invariably confined to well-rehearsed excerpts from oratorio or compositions by local musicians, all of which had a negative effect on the growth of the choral repertoire. For example, at the Rhos Eisteddfod in the Baptist Chapel on Good Friday 1875, when the Penycae choir of John Owen Jones

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> 'District News: Tryddyn Eisteddfod', *ibid.*, 26 September 1874, 5.

<sup>169</sup> 'Tryddyn: The Annual Eisteddfod', *ibid.*, 3 April 1875, 6. Edward Harwood (1707-1787) was an English composer of hymns and his setting of Alexander Pope's *The Dying Christian* was widely performed.

<sup>170</sup> 'Eisteddfod at Coedpoeth', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 4 July 1874, 8.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

sang *Y Gwlaw* by Richard Mills, they were the only choir to compete in the category for over twenty voices.<sup>172</sup> For the Choir of not less than 30 in number, the Rhos Choir assembled 90 choristers on stage to take the prize of £5 and added to their success by winning the competition for the choir of not less than 40 for the best rendition of 'We never will bow down' from *Judas Maccabaeus* (Handel), although they were the only choir to compete for the £10 prize. That the Penycae Baptist Choir sang Mills' composition may account for the fact that they were not challenged, and as the proceeds from the event were devoted to liquidating the debt on the Rhos Baptist Chapel, they ensured that the Rhos Choir were the only contenders for the major prizes.<sup>173</sup> Gareth Williams refers to the despair of David Jenkins who 'frequently berated the suffocating money-making ethos of the chapel eisteddfod and what he called *teganau eisteddfod* (eisteddfodic baubles)'.<sup>174</sup>

In the year prior to the National Eisteddfod at Wrexham in 1876, it was reported that an attempt was being made in Ruabon to establish a choir to compete at the Eisteddfod and William H. Davies, headmaster of the Cefn Board Schools from 1874-76,<sup>175</sup> appealed to the Rhos and Cefn Choirs to combine their resources to enter the chief choral competition.<sup>176</sup> 'Will the leading choir of the county stand idly by, while her sisters are struggling in an unequal contest?' asked Davies.<sup>177</sup> That there was merit in this suggestion had been adequately proven by Edward Jones, conductor of the Dee Mill Philharmonic Society whose choir had depleted to approximately 24 singers before a meeting in Rehoboth Chapel in December 1869, voted to amalgamate the four existing Llangollen chapel choirs into a re-organised Philharmonic Society, as a result of which c.100 choristers attended the practice meetings.<sup>178</sup> William Davies' plea for unity was not so successful, which suggests that members of the Rhos Choir were confident of success in the competition for

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<sup>172</sup> 'Rhosllanerchrugog: The Eisteddfod', *ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> Gareth Williams, *op. cit.*, 166.

<sup>175</sup> William Hugo Davies left the teaching profession to study medicine and became a Medical Practitioner in his home village of Brymbo, where he successfully combined the choirs of Broughton and Brymbo and also established the first male-voice choir in the Wrexham area. See E.K.Jones, *The Story of Education in a Welsh Border Parish or the Schools of Cefn Mawr 1786-1933* (Cefn Mawr, 1934), 102.

<sup>176</sup> 'A United Choir for Ruabon', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 23 October 1875, 7.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> 'Concert', *Llangollen Advertiser*, 4 February 1870, 3. The choirs in question were those of Rehoboth Chapel, Castle Street, Zion and Glan'rafon, two of which had competed at the 1858 National Eisteddfod.

smaller ensembles, particularly as this contest excluded choirs from beyond the Principality.<sup>179</sup> With a larger combined choir, the Rhos and Cefn Choirs could have challenged the mighty Birkenhead Cambrian Choir that won the £100 prize for the major choral contest, albeit to the disappointment of the crowd:

The award did not give the satisfaction desired, for the large audience had been so carried away by the splendid and fervid singing of the Bethesda choir, that when the prize was awarded to the Birkenhead Cambrian Choral Union, a general disappointment was felt throughout the pavilion.<sup>180</sup>

Although the masterly rendering and finished style of the Birkenhead Cambrians fully entitled them to the prize, Parry's Choir was now a source of envy rather than admiration, and after the furore at the Mold Eisteddfod of 1873, the competition for choirs of less than 75 voices was restricted to choirs from Denbighshire and Flintshire, which effectively disqualified the Birkenhead Cambrian Choir.<sup>181</sup> In this category, the Broughton and Rhosllannerchrugog Choirs sang Benedict's difficult chorus from *St Peter*, 'The Lord be a lamp', for which the Rhos choir, led by John Denbigh Jones, the deputy conductor, claimed the first prize of £50 and Broughton, conducted by Edwin Cunnah, took the second prize of £30. In previous years, the Birkenhead Cambrians had formed the principal chorus at the closing concert of the Eisteddfod, but it was Richard Mills who conducted the Wrexham Eisteddfod choir of 300 voices in the finale: 'It must be very gratifying to the conductor Mr. Mills, to find that after a long and laborious training the choir have given entire satisfaction, and added considerably to the interest of the Eisteddfod of 1876'. Even more gratifying to Richard Mills was that the Rhos Choir had won two major prizes that took their winnings to a total of £100.<sup>182</sup>

On the final day of the National Eisteddfod at Wrexham, choirs of no less than 30 and no more than 50 voices contended for the £20 prize on the test pieces *Yr Uchel Dyrau* (Stevens) and the *Sailors Chorus* (Joseph Parry). There were no local competitors in this category as male choirs were in the early stages of development in north-east Wales and the prize was divided between the Liverpool Vocalists Union and the Caernarvon Glee Club. This result was not, however, conclusive as

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<sup>179</sup> 'The Welsh National Eisteddfod at Wrexham', *Cheshire Observer*, 26 August 1876, 8.

<sup>180</sup> 'The Music at the Eisteddfod', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 2 Sept. 1876, 5.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

the Liverpool Choir objected on the grounds that the Caernarvon Choir had breached the competition rules by exceeding the specified number of choristers, and the complaint was carried in favour of the Liverpool Choir that were awarded the prize of £20.<sup>183</sup> At the Birkenhead Eisteddfod of 1878, only two male voice choirs competed on the test pieces, *Father of Heroes* (Joseph Parry) in English or Welsh, and Joseph Skeaf's English language arrangement of *The March of the Men of Harlech*, and again it was the Liverpool Vocalist Union that claimed the prize.<sup>184</sup>

Thomas Cilcen Jones, the founder conductor of the Liverpool Vocalists Union, established c.1870 was among the first to realise the potential of progressing beyond a glee party to a male voice choral society,<sup>185</sup> and for the greater part of that decade he faced little competition. By c.1879, however, S.Allen Jones had formed the forty-strong Mold United Male Voice Choir which he conducted at the second grand annual concert in the town's Assembly Room, alongside such distinguished artistes as Madame Edith Wynne<sup>186</sup> and John Thomas, (*Pencerdd Gwalia*), harpist to the Queen.<sup>187</sup> If it was the intention of Allen Jones to compete at the forthcoming National Eisteddfod at Holywell, his plans came to nought, as a meeting convened in Holywell to review the arrangements for the National Eisteddfod reported that organisational issues had not been satisfactorily addressed and the lack of interest was sufficient reason to postpone the Eisteddfod.<sup>188</sup> As a consequence, the formal proclamation of the Welsh National Eisteddfod for 1880 was made at Caernarfon, even though the town had hosted the festival only three years earlier in 1877.<sup>189</sup>

The 'choral day' at the Caernarfon Eisteddfod was deemed a rousing success and in the major contest for no less than 100 voices, the adjudicators were unanimous in awarding the first prize to the Birkenhead Cambrian Choral Union.<sup>190</sup> Two choirs from north-east Wales competed in the competition for smaller ensembles and both were commended by the composer, John Stainer, who remarked that:

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> 'The Welsh National Eisteddfod', *North Wales Chronicle*, 21 September 1878, 7.

<sup>185</sup> 'Local News', *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 December 1873, 6.

<sup>186</sup> See biography in Ch. 3.

<sup>187</sup> 'Mold: Mr. Allen Jones' Concert', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 18 September 1880, 8.

<sup>188</sup> 'Holywell', *Cheshire Observer*, 8 March 1879, 8.

<sup>189</sup> 'The Welsh National Eisteddfod', op. cit., 1 November 1879, 5.

<sup>190</sup> 'The Welsh National Eisteddfod', *The Musical Standard*, 4 September 1880, 145.

'Llangollen deserved praise for correctness and excellence of singing, and Acrefair deserved a word of praise'.<sup>191</sup> The Acrefair Philharmonic, conducted by John Thomas Gabriel (1856-1945),<sup>192</sup> had won the competition for choirs of not less than 60 voices (from Wales, Monmouthshire and the border towns) at the Birkenhead Eisteddfod of 1878, and *Llew Llwyfo* had reminded the audience that the winners had been taught by a coal worker who had never had a lesson from a professional teacher in his life.<sup>193</sup> Gabriel's mastery of musically demanding test pieces such as *Teyrnasoedd y Ddaear* (J. Ambrose Lloyd), *Pa fodd y cwmpodd y cedyrn* (D. Emlyn Evans) and 'O great is the depth' (from Mendelssohn's *St Paul*), were a tribute to the achievement of self-taught musicians in north-east Wales.

The Rhos Choir were set to challenge the Acrefair Philharmonic Society for the best performance of the chorus 'The Night is Departing' (Mendelssohn) at the 1878 Christmas Eisteddfod in the Tabernacle Baptist Chapel, Cefn Mawr, but for some reason, they failed to appear.<sup>194</sup> The prospect of losing to a neighbouring choir may have influenced the abstention of the Rhos Choir, and awarding the £12 prize, the adjudicator, J. H. Roberts (*Pencerdd Gwynedd*) remarked that he never thought that Cefn had such a good choir and commended them for attempting such a difficult piece of music.<sup>195</sup> By the 1880s, the choirs of north-east Wales had become obsessively competitive, to the extent that David Evans during his adjudication at the 1882 Denbigh Eisteddfod, made reference to the observation of John Stainer after his visit to Caernarfon: 'The money and medals awarded so liberally at the Eisteddfod may give much encouragement to a choir, or flatter its vanity ... but they provide it with no means of aiming at a higher standard'.<sup>196</sup>

Furthermore, the fixation with competition had a restrictive effect on the repertoire of the choirs that concentrated their efforts on perfecting well-known choral works

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<sup>191</sup> 'The National Eisteddfod at Carnarvon', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 28 August 1880, 7.

<sup>192</sup> J. T. Gabriel, coal miner and tavern-keeper, was conductor of the Acrefair Glee Party that later developed into a male voice choir. Clwyd Family History Society Resource Centre, Cefn Mawr, Census (1881, 1891).

<sup>193</sup> 'The National Eisteddfod at Birkenhead', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 21 September 1878, 7.

<sup>194</sup> 'The Annual Christmas Eisteddfod', *ibid.*, 28 December 1878, 8.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> John Graham, *op. cit.*, 52.

rather than learning new test-pieces. It was David Jenkins, adjudicating the choral competition at the Brymbo Christmas Day Eisteddfod who pointed out that: 'Committees would act wisely if they selected new pieces for competition and he reminded choristers that the most powerful singing was not always the best singing'.<sup>197</sup> At the Denbigh National Eisteddfod in 1882, only four male choirs competed for the £15 prize – Liverpool Vocalists Union, Liverpool Gwalia Choir, Rhiwbryfdir (Blaenau Ffestiniog) Choir and the Bethesda Arvonic Male Voice, who were adjudged the winners.<sup>198</sup> By 1883, male choral societies began to make their mark in the Wrexham area and one of the first to enter the field was the Broughton Male Voice Choir, conducted by William H. Davies,<sup>199</sup> who began to prepare his singers for the Liverpool Eisteddfod of 1884.

The 1880s marked a period of change in the choral structure of Merseyside and north-east Wales that began with a difference of opinion between the committee of the Birkenhead Cambrian Choral Society and its conductor William Parry. Having won the gold medal and a £150 first prize in the chief choral competition at the Caernarfon National Eisteddfod in 1880, there was every reason to suppose that the misunderstanding had been resolved, but that was not the case. Parry resigned and in August 1881, the committee approached T. Cilcen Jones, conductor of the male voice Liverpool Vocalists Union, 'to see if he would allow himself to be nominated for the post of conductorship'.<sup>200</sup> Following his agreement to lead the choir during the first season for £15,<sup>201</sup> a joint concert at Hengler's Circus with the Liverpool Vocalists Union and the Birkenhead Cambrian Choir gave him the opportunity to rehearse the test pieces for the forthcoming National Eisteddfod at Denbigh.<sup>202</sup> His efforts, however, were to no avail as Dr. Roland Rogers' Penrhyn Choir took the first prize, and although the Birkenhead Cambrians were commended as a close

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<sup>197</sup> 'Christmas Day', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 3 January 1880, 7.

<sup>198</sup> 'The National Eisteddfod of Wales at Denbigh', *Liverpool Mercury*, 25 August 1882, 6.

<sup>199</sup> 'Brymbo and Broughton: Entertainment at Pentre School', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 11 April 1884, 8. William H. Davies, a former pupil of Joseph Owen of Rhos, was a keen musician who took a choir to compete at the great 1887 Welsh National Eisteddfod in London, where he sang in the presence of HRH the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII, and shared the prize with the Ffynngroew Choir. See E.K. Jones, op. cit., 102.

<sup>200</sup> NLW MS 650D, Birkenhead Cambrian Choral Society Minutes, 1871-1885, 10 August 1881

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 August 1881.

<sup>202</sup> 'The Denbigh Eisteddfod', *Liverpool Mercury*, 19 August 1882, 6.

second, their near invincibility had been challenged.<sup>203</sup> Parry, meanwhile, was preparing the 'Liverpool Competitive Choir' for the principal choral contest at the 1884 National Eisteddfod in the city,<sup>204</sup> while the once-dominant Birkenhead Cambrians declined in numbers to the extent that they were only able to compete in the contest for smaller choirs of no more than 60 voices.<sup>205</sup>

Liverpool had achieved city status in 1880 and K.O.Morgan notes: 'By the eighties, it had become a kind of auxiliary capital for north Wales',<sup>206</sup> and four years later, the Queen bestowed royal patronage on the 1884 National Eisteddfod when it was held in the new city.<sup>207</sup> A local press correspondent claimed that 'an unprecedented number of competitors gathering this year in the "metropolis of Wales" bids fair to be one of the most successful ever known in the annals of eisteddfodau'.<sup>208</sup> The cultural extravaganza consisted of four choral competitions, the first of which was the major choral contest when the Liverpool Competitive Choir of William Parry faced the Penrhyn Choir of Dr. Roland Rogers that was adjudicated by Sir George McFarren as worthy of the first prize.<sup>209</sup>

Whereas the large mixed-voice choirs had been the major attraction in previous years, only four challengers came forward whereas the male choir competition for fewer than 30 and no more than 35 singers attracted 14 contestants.<sup>210</sup> Liverpool and north-east Wales were well represented by Liverpool Vocalists Union, Vale of Clwyd Choir, Cambrian Glee Club, Liverpool Welsh Vocal Union (established in 1884), Broughton (Wrexham) Choir led by William H. Davies and the Maelor Male Voice Glee party.<sup>211</sup> The test pieces were *The Martyrs of the Arena* (Laurent de Rille) and *The Monks' War March* (Joseph Parry), and in addition to the 30 guinea first prize, there was the sought-after gold mounted baton which was won by The Arvonc Male Voice Society of Llanberis, conducted by Robert Phillips.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> 'The National Eisteddfod at Denbigh', *Cheshire Observer*, 26 August 1882, 2.

<sup>204</sup> 'The Royal National Eisteddfod', *Liverpool Mercury*, 17 September 1884, 6.

<sup>205</sup> 'The Royal National Eisteddfod', *ibid.*, 22 August 1884, 6.

<sup>206</sup> K. O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980* (Cardiff, Oxford, 1981), 6.

<sup>207</sup> 'The Royal National Eisteddfod', *Liverpool Mercury*, 22 August 1884, 6.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 September 1884, 6.

<sup>210</sup> 'The National Eisteddfod at Liverpool', *North Wales Chronicle*, 20 September 1884, 3.

<sup>211</sup> 'The Royal National Eisteddfod', *Liverpool Mercury*, 20 September 1884, 6.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*



That the male vocal ensemble was becoming popular in north-east Wales is evidenced by newly-formed choirs such as Maelor Glee Party and the Broughton Male Voice Choir,<sup>213</sup> although, in the long term, their success would have a negative effect on the bass and tenor sections of the mixed choirs.

In the competition for smaller mixed choirs at the Liverpool National Eisteddfod, it was the Vale of Clwyd Representative Choir, a united chorus of the Denbigh Philharmonic Society and other choirs from the neighbouring districts that defeated the choirs of Rhosllannerchrugog and Llangollen.<sup>214</sup> That the victorious choir had combined their talents to compete at the National Eisteddfod was nothing new, and the fractious issue of choosing one conductor did not arise as the choir was led by Felix C. Watkins (1842 -1893), a lay clerk at St Asaph Cathedral, and 'one of the most revered musicians in north Wales'.<sup>215</sup> Watkins was the conductor of the Denbigh Philharmonic Choir,<sup>216</sup> the St Asaph Choral Society<sup>217</sup> and the Rhyl Philharmonic Society<sup>218</sup> – the three choirs that constituted the amalgam that was the 'representative' choir, and for good measure he had, on occasions, conducted the Mold Choral Society.<sup>219</sup> Unlike the majority of Welsh chorus masters who had trained in the chapel vestries of Liverpool and north-east Wales, Felix Watkins' formative years had been spent in Gloucester Cathedral as a pupil of Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810-1876).<sup>220</sup> During his early career, he was the choirmaster of Colwyn Bay and Rhyl Parish Churches, and had established a successful teaching practice in north Wales.<sup>221</sup>

The Liverpool Eisteddfod had been a triumph for language, culture and the Welsh Nonconformist chapels that had encouraged a sense of nationhood, although this identity embodied a new Welsh middle-class élite, particularly so after Royal patronage on the Liverpool National Eisteddfod of 1884 which signified the new city as the capital of Welsh culture. It was in the year that followed the Eisteddfod that the inaugural meeting of the Liverpool Welsh National Society was held in

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 19 September 1884, 6.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> 'Death of a Notable Welsh Musician', *North Wales Chronicle*, 4 November 1893, 5.

<sup>216</sup> 'Brief Summary of Country News', *Musical Times & Singing Class Circular*, June (1892), 367.

<sup>217</sup> 'St.Asaph', *Musical Standard*, 5 January 1884, 7.

<sup>218</sup> 'Rhyl', *ibid.*, 6 March 1886, 149.

<sup>219</sup> 'Mold', *ibid.*, 26 December 1885, 403.

<sup>220</sup> 'Death of a Notable Welsh Musician', *op. cit.*, 5.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

October 1885 and addressed by Lord Mostyn. Essentially this was a convention of the wealthy business classes in the Liverpool Welsh community which included tea merchants, builders and professional men. When it was proposed to charge a membership fee of 5s, the motion was defeated 'on the grounds that such a fee would let in joiners and warehousemen and other undesirables.'<sup>222</sup> John Williams maintains Welsh chapels in Liverpool were characterised by over-respectability and appearances, epitomised by Princes Road Chapel, while Hugh Evans claims that fewer society classes existed in Stanley Road than elsewhere in Liverpool.<sup>223</sup> Despite the elevated cultural status of the Liverpool Welsh, the once unbeatable Birkenhead Cambrian choir of the William Parry era that underpinned the choral reputation of the Liverpool diaspora, no longer dominated the major choral contests in *eisteddfodau*.

This was largely due to the absence of those choristers who had followed Parry into the Liverpool Cambrian Choir that performed the *Messiah* and excerpts from Handel, Mozart and Mendelssohn at St James's Hall in December 1884.<sup>224</sup> Parry's last great effort was with the Liverpool Cambrian Choral Society came when he entered the choral competition at the Liverpool Exhibition in August 1886 against choirs from across the United Kingdom for a £100 prize.<sup>225</sup> Four choirs took part and the Liverpool Choir was placed in third position, which was Parry's last attempt to win a major competition and the end of an illustrious career.<sup>226</sup> David Owen Parry, heir apparent to the musical dynasty had succeeded T. Cilcen Jones as conductor of the Birkenhead Cambrians and he led at the Caernarfon National Eisteddfod in September 1886 only to be defeated by the Wrexham Philharmonic Choir of 189 voices, led by Rev.E.Hilton Stewart, a precentor at Chester Cathedral, who won the £100 first prize.<sup>227</sup> That it took a professional musician from beyond the parish boundaries to garner the talents of local choirs into a united chorus suggests that the reluctance of local maestros to sacrifice their pride had a detrimental effect on the growth of choralism in north-east Wales.

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<sup>222</sup> R. Merfyn Jones, 'The Liverpool Welsh' in R. Merfyn Jones & D. Ben Rees, *The Liverpool Welsh and Their Religion* (Liverpool, 1984), 25.

<sup>223</sup> Quoted in John Williams, *Hynt Gwerinwr* (Liverpool, 1943), 71.

<sup>224</sup> 'Musical Notes', *ibid.*, 25 December 1884, 6.

<sup>225</sup> 'Miscellaneous Concerts', *The Musical Times*, 1 September 1886, 543.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>227</sup> 'Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales', *Liverpool Mercury*, 15 September 1886, 5.

Concurrent with the success of the Wrexham Philharmonic Choir was the demise of the Rhos Choir after the resignation of Richard Mills who was succeeded for a short while by John Roberts of Rhos who conducted the 99-strong ensemble to certain ignominy at the Llangollen Music Festival in August 1885.<sup>228</sup> Amid much laughter, the adjudicator, Mr. Proudman, likened the Rhos Choir's performance to a railway engine without a driver, 'but in this case, the fault did not lie with the conductor, but with the choristers who did not attend to their conductor'.<sup>229</sup>

Rhos Choir did not appear at the Llangollen Music Festival in 1887, and their absence prompted a local journalist to enquire: 'Will Rhos be represented in the choral competitions at the next National Eisteddfod?' and from that same pen came the answer: 'The old choir is completely disorganised and apparently there exists no wish among the old members to be again united'.<sup>230</sup> The mixed-voice Rhos Choir that once dominated the local *eisteddfod* circuit had disbanded as attention turned in favour of male choirs and at a benefit concert in the town's Public Hall in December 1887, the Hirdir Male Choir, conducted by Dan Roberts of Rhostyllen, made its first public appearance along with the Rhos Male Quartet.<sup>231</sup>

Notwithstanding the demise of the Rhos Choir, the mixed-voice choir in Wrexham was thriving and after their triumph at the National Eisteddfod in 1886, Rev. E.Hilton Stewart took the Wrexham Philharmonic Choir of 237 voices to the London Eisteddfod of 1887 only to suffer defeat at the hands of Dr.Roland Rogers' mighty Penrhyn chorus who shared the first prize with a Huddersfield choir.<sup>232</sup> In addition to Hilton Stewart's chorus was the Wrexham district choir, an amalgam of Brymbo, Broughton and Bersham singers conducted by Dr.William Davies that competed in the competition for Welsh choirs of 120-150 voices and shared the prize of £100 and a gold medal with the Gyrn Castle singers, a combination choir from Rhyl, Holywell and Llanasa conducted by F.H.Jackson.<sup>233</sup> For many of the village choirs in the lesser populated areas, the only means of qualifying for the

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<sup>228</sup> 'Llangollen Musical Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 29 August 1885, 8.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> 'Local Notes', *ibid.*, 19 November 1887, 8.

<sup>231</sup> 'Rhosllanerchrugog: Literary Meeting', *ibid.*, 24 December 1887, 8.

<sup>232</sup> 'The National Eisteddfod', *Tonic Sol-fa Reporter*, 1 September 1887, 196.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

National Eisteddfod competitions was to combine their efforts, and this brought success for the Brymbo and Broughton Choral Union,<sup>234</sup> that later became known as the Broughton and Brymbo United Choir.<sup>235</sup>

In awarding the prize to Davies' choir at the Brymbo Tabernacle Eisteddfod on Christmas Day 1887, Emlyn Evans advised the singers to keep together until the National Eisteddfod and praised the conductor for the manner in which he conducted the ensemble.<sup>236</sup> This was sound advice as the Broughton and Brymbo Choir won second prize at the 1887 Wrexham Musical Festival in the chief choral competition<sup>237</sup> and vindicated Davies' view that by combining resources, the village choirs were capable of challenging the larger choral societies in the chief choral competitions. William Davies and F.H.Jackson were not the only advocates of the collective approach, as D.O.Parry performed Handel's *Messiah* in St George's Hall in December 1886, with a choir described as 'The Cambrian Combination', which raises the question as to whether the Liverpool contingency was ever a totally separate entity from its Birkenhead neighbour.<sup>238</sup>

Insofar as the Liverpool Cambrian Choral Society prevailed, the uncertainty that followed William Parry's departure was divisive. In October 1886, it was made known that a new choir was to be formed and conducted by Joseph Parry, one of the most eminent musicians in the Principality.<sup>239</sup> A preliminary meeting took place in St David's Schoolroom, Brownlow Hill when it was announced that 60 singers had already subscribed to the Liverpool Welsh Choral Society.<sup>240</sup> The first practice was to take place in the schoolroom of St Columba's Church in Pleasant Street,<sup>241</sup> and the article concluded on a confident note: 'There is a fine old Welsh flavour about the name ... every promise is given of success and they who wish to join the society should communicate with the secretary Mr. Llewellyn Wynne'.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> 'Wrexham Musical Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 19 February 1887, 6

<sup>235</sup> 'Eisteddfod at Leeswood', *ibid.*, 5 March 1887, 3.

<sup>236</sup> 'District News', *ibid.*, 1 January 1887, 8.

<sup>237</sup> Wrexham Musical Festival, *ibid.*, 19 February 1887, 6.

<sup>238</sup> 'Musical Notes', *Liverpool Mercury*, 2 December 1886, 5.

<sup>239</sup> 'Musical Notes', *ibid.*, 21 October 1886, 6.

<sup>240</sup> 'New Welsh Choral Society', *ibid.*, 20 October 1886, 6.

<sup>241</sup> 'Musical Notes', *ibid.*, 25 November 1886, 7.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

There is no record of attendance at the first rehearsals, although it soon became clear that the appeal for new members met with a poor response and little more was heard of the valiant attempt until the *North Wales Chronicle* reported its demise:

Whilst it must be noted with regret that the Liverpool Choral Society has burst like a bubble, I am gratified to learn that the Liverpool Cambrian Choral Society is thoroughly alive and meant to do good work this season ... when they welcomed as their conductor Mr. Arvon Parry.<sup>243</sup>

That Joseph Parry, one of the first professional musicians to honour the Principality and arguably one of the most feted, had failed to engender interest in a new choir bears comparison to the fate of that other professional, Edward W. Thomas, who dared to trespass on the terrain of the amateur choral conductor.

Some time before William Parry passed away in June 1888,<sup>244</sup> the family association with the Liverpool Cambrian Choral Society had run its course, and in February of that year a letter appeared in the local press announcing that the choir had ceased to exist for some time.<sup>245</sup> For those who mourned the demise of the Liverpool Cambrian, there came yet another 'Parry', [unrelated to the family of the Birkenhead maestro], in the person of W. Arvon Parry, a painter and decorator by trade and late conductor of the Caernarfon Philharmonic Society before he migrated to Liverpool.<sup>246</sup> Shortly after accepting the task of reviving the Liverpool Cambrian Choir in October 1888, Arvon Parry accepted the post of choirmaster at St Mary Magdalen's Church, Liverpool,<sup>247</sup> and although the Cambrian choir continued as a concert party it was little more than a shadow of the competitive chorus of William Parry. The association with the Birkenhead contingency was severed and David O. Parry, the son of the maestro inherited the baton and began to train the Birkenhead Cambrian Choir for the chief choral competition at the

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<sup>243</sup> 'Olla Podrida', *North Wales Chronicle* October 13, 1888, 4. In this same report, it is wrongly stated that Arvon Parry was the son of the late Mr. William Parry, Birkenhead 'who so long wielded the baton before the Cambrian Choral Society in Liverpool'. W. Arvon Parry was initially appointed to conduct the Everton Cambrian Choral Society from which he resigned in 1879, and by 1883, he became choirmaster of Luke's Church, Crosby, and conductor of the Walton Choral Society. See 'Welsh Choral Union', *Liverpool Mercury*, 28 February 1879, 6; 'Local News', *ibid.*, November 1883, 6.

<sup>244</sup> 'Birkenhead', *Cheshire Observer*, 23 June 1888, 2.

<sup>245</sup> 'Liverpool Cathedral', *Liverpool Mercury*, 18 February 1888, 6.

<sup>246</sup> 'Musical Notes', *ibid.*, 15 October 1888, 7.

<sup>247</sup> 'Musical Notes', *ibid.*, 17 December 1888, 7.

1888 National Eisteddfod at Wrexham.<sup>248</sup> Only three choirs competed in the major choral competition as compared to the five contestants in the male voice challenge which suggests that male choirs were becoming the major choral attraction.

One of the most significant outcomes of the 1888 Wrexham Eisteddfod was the recommendation of the Cymmrodorion Society for the formation of a Welsh National Musical Association, 'for a country so essentially musical as Wales'.<sup>249</sup> A sub-committee was charged with the task of arranging a conference, and in December of that year, a meeting of like minds took place in Shrewsbury. John Thomas (*Pencerdd Gwalia*) was elected chairman,<sup>250</sup> and W. M. Roberts (1853-1923), a prominent member of the North Wales Tonic Sol-fa Association who had joined the firm of Hughes and Son in 1888,<sup>251</sup> acted in the capacity of its honorary secretary.<sup>252</sup> The mission of the new Association was to develop music throughout Wales and the chairman emphasised that 'the objects of the society must be to assist rising talent; to encourage the study of instrumental and orchestral music and musical composition'.<sup>253</sup> There was overwhelming support for the new Association and in addition to Welsh peers and bishops, 'the four great Nonconformist bodies of the Principality were to be asked to become vice-presidents'.<sup>254</sup>

Critical to the success of the initiative was Roberts' plan to revive the idea of a Welsh monthly musical periodical to coincide with the formation of the Welsh National Musical Association.<sup>255</sup> In January 1889, the organisation was formally established and corresponded with the first edition of *Y Cerddor*, described by the *Musical News* as the official organ of the new association.<sup>256</sup> Under the editorial stewardship of David Jenkins and D.Emlyn Evans, the musical content of the journal was comprehensive in that it gave equal weight to both notations and the inclusion of anthems did much to extend the repertoire of choirs and soloists alike.

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> 'The Welsh National Eisteddfod', *ibid.*, 1 September 1888, 7.

<sup>250</sup> 'A Welsh National Music Association', *ibid.*, 28 December 1888, 5.

<sup>251</sup> Thomas Bassett, *Braslun o Hanes Hughes a'i Fab Cyhoeddwy'r Wrecsam* (Croesoswallt, 1946), 34.

<sup>252</sup> 'A Welsh National Music Association', *op. cit.*, 5.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> W.M. Roberts, 'Marw Goffa – Y Diweddar Proff. D.Jenkins, Mus. Bac. (Cantab.)', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol 28, Rhif 325, (1916), 2.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

With an enlightened editorial policy, *Y Cerddor* brought together the varying factions of Welsh musical development which acknowledged the professional and encouraged the amateur to the extent that it underpinned the growth of Welsh music from 1889 until 1916.<sup>257</sup> As a music educator, the journal was invaluable and it achieved success by providing a forum for Welsh composers as well as timely information on choral performances, *eisteddfod* activity and *cymanfaoedd canu* from every corner of the Principality and the Welsh communities beyond. The joint editorship of this periodical was a unique alliance of quite different personalities and it was perhaps this characteristic that contributed to the balanced commentaries and critical standards of *Y Cerddor*.

Concurrent with the launch of *Y Cerddor* were the radical changes in the choral structure of north-east Wales, not least being the heightened interest in male choirs that gained momentum in the late 1880s, as evidenced by the formation of the Cefn Mawr Male Choir in 1889.<sup>258</sup> The latter had developed from the successful Cefn Mawr Choral Society,<sup>259</sup> conducted by Griffith William Hughes, and was one of the few choirs that did not practise for competitive events on a Sunday.<sup>260</sup> Other male choruses, such as the Leeswood Choral Society evolved from the glee party and were usually confined to less than 50 singers, and by 1891, in addition to a mixed choir, Coedpoeth had followed this example and formed a male choir as did the hamlet of Bwlchwyn.<sup>261</sup> In the districts of Cefn, Brymbo, Broughton and Coedpoeth, the newly-formed male choirs co-existed with the longer established mixed choirs that continued to succeed in local *eisteddfodau*, while the Rhos Choir called a meeting at the Public Hall committee room in January 1891 for the purpose of preventing the closure of the mixed choir.<sup>262</sup> Although there were only

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<sup>257</sup> Thomas Bassett, op. cit., 34.

<sup>258</sup> Griffith William Hughes of Prestatyn Papers, GB 0222 BMSS GWH (University of Wales Bangor, Department of Archives and Manuscripts).

<sup>259</sup> Soon after R.E.Jones (1838-1909) came to Cefn Mawr c. 1869, he was invited to lead the Wesleyan Chapel choir, and later founded the Cefn Mawr Choral Union. In 1874, Jones conducted the choir in a performance of the *Messiah* with a full orchestra, an unusual occurrence outside the metropolitan cities. He remained its conductor for eight years. In 1889, G.W. Hughes, one of the original choir members, established Cefn Mawr Choral Society. See G.W. Hughes, 'Marwgoffa: Mr. R.E.Jones', *Y Cerddor*, Medi (1909), 103.

<sup>260</sup> David Jenkins. 'Ein Cerddorion: G.W.Hughes', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XIV, Rhif 167, Tachwedd (1902), 124.

<sup>261</sup> 'Welsh Wesleyan Chapel', *Wrexham Advertiser and North Wales News*, 5 December 1891, 5.

<sup>262</sup> 'The Rhos Choir', *ibid.*, 24 January 1891, 8.

two interested parties at the meeting,<sup>263</sup> a mixed choir was revived in 1891 under the direction of Richard Mills in the same year as a male voice choir assembled under the baton of John Hughes.<sup>264</sup> At the Wrexham Eisteddfod in April 1893, Hughes' male chorus were defeated by the 'Croesgadwyr' party, a scratch choir led by Richard Mills<sup>265</sup> and in June of that year, Mills was appointed as conductor of the Rhos Male Choir, and no more was heard of the 'Croesgadwyr' party.<sup>266</sup>

At the Rhyl National Eisteddfod of 1892, it was the male voice choirs that captured the interest of *eisteddfodwyr*, as evidenced by the manner in which the competition was reported in the press: 'The more important competitive feature to-day will be the contest of male voice choirs, no fewer than ten others having entered'.<sup>267</sup> The Cefn Mawr Choir conducted by Griffith Hughes was the only party to represent north-east Wales in the contest for male choirs at the Rhyl National Eisteddfod and the only choir from the region to enter the mixed choir competition of not more than 80 voices, albeit without success.<sup>268</sup> The highlight of this particular festival came, however, at the conclusion of the chief choral competition when the revived Birkenhead Cambrians, conducted by D.O.Parry, so convincingly defeated the mighty Dowlais Choir that a journalist commented: 'It was plain almost from the beginning on whose brow the laurel would be bound'.<sup>269</sup> The other significant aspect of the Rhyl Eisteddfod was that it extended the scope of choral singing even further with the introduction of a competition for female choirs, a contest that enticed six groups, of which the Birkenhead Gitana Choir conducted by Maggie Evans (*Megan Môn*), emerged victorious.<sup>270</sup> Two years later, in Caernarfon, Maggie Evans, again led the Birkenhead Gitana Choir to victory and took the first prize at the 1894 National Eisteddfod, prompting Emlyn Evans to comment that this was the best competition that had taken place at the event.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> *Souvenir Brochure - Rhos Male Voice Choir* (1966), 9.

<sup>265</sup> 'The Wrexham Eisteddfod', *Wrexham Advertiser and North Wales News*, 29 April 1893, 3.

<sup>266</sup> *Souvenir Brochure - Rhos Male Voice Choir* (1966), 9; 'Orchestral Society Concert', *Wrexham Advertiser and North Wales News*, 3 June 1893, 8.

<sup>267</sup> 'The National Eisteddfod', *Liverpool Mercury*, 9 September 1892, 6.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid., 7 September 1892, 6.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 8 September 1892, 6.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 10 September 1892, 6. It was as a 16-year old in c.1880 that Maggie Evans began to accompany Parry's Birkenhead Cambrians, and thereafter, she played at almost every performance. See 'Messiah Concert', *ibid.*, 22 December 1880, 6.

<sup>271</sup> 'The Eisteddfod', *ibid.*, 12 July 1894, 6.



As for the choirs from north-east Wales, the Cefn Male Voice Choir, conducted by Griffith William Hughes, was one of the few willing to test their ability on the National Eisteddfod stage while the Rhos Male Choir opted for the less challenging provincial *eisteddfodau* that were limited to local choirs. At the 1893 Llanfyllin Provincial Eisteddfod, the re-formed Rhos Mixed Choir of 120 voices failed against the Oswestry Philharmonic Choir, led by John Roberts, although there was solace in the fact that the Rhos Male Voice Choir, the only contender, took first prize with the test piece, *Y Pysgotwyr* (T. Maldwyn Price), which was somewhat of a foregone conclusion. That they were deemed worthy of the prize did much to boost the morale of the choir and its conductor Richard Mills,<sup>272</sup> and to complete what had been a successful year, the choir decided to enter the Chester Christmas Eisteddfod in December 1893. Having won praise from adjudicator, Wilfred Jones R.A.M., and the first prize at the Wrexham Festival in 1892 for their rendition of *The Crusaders* (Daniel Protheroe, 1866-1934),<sup>273</sup> Mills and his Rhos Male Choir fully expected to repeat that success at the Chester Eisteddfod.

Any hope of victory disappeared when the adjudicator, D. Emlyn Evans, criticised what he felt was a flawed performance, and the matter should have ended with disappointment, instead of which it turned into a bitter dispute that spilled into the 'Correspondence' columns of the local press.<sup>274</sup> As if to cast doubt on Emlyn Evans' musicianship, Mills cited the victory at Glyn Ceiriog the previous year when the Choir, on the same test piece, was awarded the prize by Joseph Parry. This indiscretion found no favour with the waspish Evans who replied: 'I have other work to do than to follow a man about, who, having been fairly beaten in a stand-up fight, runs all over the country crying that he is hurt'.<sup>275</sup> Rhos Male Choir was the only ensemble to represent north-east Wales at the National Eisteddfod at Caernarfon in 1894,<sup>276</sup> and again failed to impress the adjudicator Emlyn Evans. The fact that they were not even placed was the final straw for Mills and he withdrew the choir from the Llandudno Eisteddfod in 1896 and Ffestiniog in 1898

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<sup>272</sup> *Souvenir Brochure - Rhos Male Voice Choir* (1966), 9.

<sup>273</sup> 'Correspondence, R. Mills', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 6 January 1894, 6.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*; 13 January 1894, 6; 20 January 1894, 7.

<sup>275</sup> 'Correspondence', *ibid.*, 13 January 1894, 6.

<sup>276</sup> 'The Eisteddfod', *Liverpool Mercury*, 13 July 1894, 6.

and retreated to the safety of the local *eisteddfod* circuit where the chances of success were infinitely higher. advance

By the close of the century, the local, regional and National Eisteddfodau provided a stage for every musical endeavour in north-east Wales and Merseyside and a battlefield for the gladiatorial clashes of the male choirs that did more to raise attendances than it did for musical progress. As the *Musical Times* concluded: 'It is a mere matter of gate money; art is ruthlessly sacrificed, but what matters is if a committee can in one day place £400 to its credit at its bankers?'<sup>277</sup> John Graham, the special representative of the *Musical Herald* was equally critical: 'Too many Welsh folk do nothing musically except compete, and too many sing by ear. Big money prizes are sought rather than musical stimulus and progress'.<sup>278</sup> In the male choirs, loyally feted by their compatriots, the *eisteddfod* had found a champion although David Jenkins asks: 'Why is it necessary to leave the singing to the labourers and women in service? Why doesn't every class take part in this glorious work?'<sup>279</sup> Perhaps Jenkins had lost sight of the fact that choral music allowed the working classes an opportunity to succeed in a 'respectable' pursuit that took them from the tavern to the *eisteddfod* stage before the culture was requisitioned by the aspiring middle-classes.

The vain-glorious pursuit of competitive success had taken precedence over all else, and the fact that members of the Rhos Mixed Choir which folded in 1891, could be reunited to perform Handel's *Messiah* during the commissioning of the organ in *Capel Mawr* in 1897,<sup>280</sup> suggests that the choir had existed for the sole purpose of competing at *eisteddfodau*. That the test-pieces had not changed significantly had done little to extend or enrich the choral repertoire that had become so familiar to choristers. Reporting on the Corwen Eisteddfod of 1899, the *Musical Times* opined: 'All the above competitive pieces, with the exception of the part-song, have been sung times without number at Eisteddfodau, and as tests or incentives to musical advancement are utterly valueless'.<sup>281</sup> Alexander Campbell

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<sup>277</sup> 'Eisteddfodau in Wales', *The Musical Times & Singing Class Circular*, September (1899), 618.

<sup>278</sup> 'The National Eisteddfod', *Musical Herald*, 1 September 1911, 264.

<sup>279</sup> D. Jenkins, 'Canu a'r Diwygiad', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XVII, Rhif 195, Mawrth (1905), 28.

<sup>280</sup> *Souvenir Brochure - Rhos Male Voice Choir* (1966), 9.

<sup>281</sup> 'Eisteddfodau in Wales', *The Musical Times & Singing Class Circular*, September (1899), 618.

Mackenzie (1847-1935), Principal of the Royal Academy of Music and one of the first from outside Wales to be honoured with bardic status, maintained that the National Eisteddfod should be a means and not an end:

The choirs are content to devote themselves to the study of two or three choruses a year, which are set for competition, and these are reiterated for months at every local Eisteddfod and the number of oratorios known to Welsh audiences is remarkably small, Welsh choral music has reached finality; it is in a *cul de sac*.<sup>282</sup>

Had the choirs of Rhosllannerchrugog, Cefn Mawr and Penycae abandoned their entrenched parochial jealousies and combined resources, as was suggested in 1875 by William Davies,<sup>283</sup> a north-east Wales choir may well have equalled the might of the Birkenhead Cambrians, but *y cythraul canu* had wrecked any hope of conciliation. A quite different attitude prevailed in the industrial communities of Staffordshire where the pottery workers combined their musical efforts under the baton of James Whewall who conducted the Potteries and District Choral Society to victory in the 1900 National Eisteddfod at Liverpool, winning the first prize of 200 guineas. So frustrated were the Welsh choirs, that according to Nettel: 'The Welsh changed the date of their festivals, and the new dates never seemed to suit the potters, so the Welsh recovered their choral prestige'.<sup>284</sup> This was no victory for Welsh choralism, and G.W. Hughes of the Cefn Mawr Choral Society pointed to the indifference of Welsh choirs as they began to lose ground to their English counterparts: 'We want great results with a little effort ... The English choirs regard it as a serious business. They are regular in attendance, diligent in practice, methodical and thorough in their work ...'.<sup>285</sup>

As the competitive choirs of north-east Wales and Liverpool were brooding over defeat by the thoroughly-trained and disciplined English county choirs, the *cymanfaoedd canu*, on which the Welsh choral tradition was built, had become a denominational issue and the massed gatherings of chapel choirs became a gala performance rather than an expression of praise.

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<sup>282</sup> 'Welsh Choral Singing', *ibid.*, September (1893), 525-6.

<sup>283</sup> 'A United Choir for Ruabon', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 23 October 1875, 7.

<sup>284</sup> R. Nettel, *Music in the Five Towns 1840-1914* (Oxford, 1944), 59.

<sup>285</sup> G.W. Hughes, *Rhos Herald*, 1 October 1910, 8.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Rivalry and Renewal**

'Some of the finest choral effects I have ever heard have been produced in the chapels. People are better educated, more intelligent than formerly, the old dragging behind of voices has gone, and the people sing with great warmth of expression and from the heart'.

(Caradog Roberts)

What began as a simple act of sung worship in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century had evolved into a choral art by the 1870s as priorities moved from praise to performance. That Welsh chapels were complicit to this digression is evidenced by the endless fund-raising concerts that contributed to the grandiose tabernacles that were built as an outward expression of pernicious denominational jealousy. With the exception of the Presbyterians, the arguments for the use of musical accompaniment in the chapels had all but expired, not least because the organ and suitably qualified organists added a new dimension to the performances of oratorio and was often the decisive factor in the choice of venue. Contemporary writers have described the chapelocracy as 'middle-class',<sup>1</sup> while others refer to this demographic as the 'respectable classes', an assumption echoed in the performance of music in the chapels from the mid-1870s that suited the cultural aspirations of an élite social group that had become detached from the working classes.

Choral concerts had the propensity to fill the capacious chapels, and although the performance of secular music often compromised the sanctity of the tabernacles, such events were a lucrative source of income that made a meaningful contribution to the financial needs of the vast auditoria. Conversely, congregational singing offered no instant fiduciary comfort to the debt-ridden denominations and evidence seems to suggest that sung worship may have been a lesser priority. Ieuan Gwyllt frequently criticised the chapel hierarchy whom he felt showed only a tepid interest in the development of congregational singing which according to Rhidian Griffiths, probably accounted for the measured growth that began slowly in the 1860s, gaining momentum around the mid-1870s.<sup>2</sup> In the comprehensive foreword to *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* (1859), Gwyllt admonished the godliest and most influential people in the chapel for not attending the *cyfarfodydd canu* [singing meetings], despite the fact that they supported all other religious events.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Merfyn Jones, for example, refers to 'the middle-class nonconformist elite, through the agencies of chapel and press...' in *The North Wales Quarrymen 1874-1922* (Cardiff, 1981), 55; K. O. Morgan describes the composition of the *sêl fawr* as 'respectable middle-class shopkeepers or Lib-Lab artisans', *Wales - Rebirth of a Nation 1880-1980* (Oxford, 1982), 17. Similar characteristics found in English Nonconformist chapels were, says K. T. Hoppen, 'little more than extensions of local industry hierarchies', *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886* (Oxford, 1998), 450.

<sup>2</sup> Rhidian M. Griffiths, 'Cyhoeddi cerddoriaeth yng Nghymru yn y cyfnod 1860-1914: astudiaeth lyfryddol ynghyd â llyfryddiaeth o gyhoeddiadau rhai cyhoeddwr', *Cyfrol 1, Traethawd Ph.D.* (Aberystwyth, 1991), 16.

<sup>3</sup> Ieuan Gwyllt, *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* (Aberdare, 1859), Rhagair, iv.

Few, it seems, escaped the displeasure of Ieuan Gwyllt and in the preface to *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* (1859) and subsequent editions, he castigates the larger chapel congregations in the more populous towns of Wales and those districts which were noted for their choral singing for their undisciplined and soulless rendition.<sup>4</sup>

If a singing meeting is held at all, no-one attends apart from a few children and young people; the officials and most respectable, pious and influential people in the church and congregation refrain from attending the singing meeting as if it is merely a form of entertainment for the young people, at best.<sup>5</sup>

He believed that chapel ministers and officials were somewhat indifferent to the spiritual importance of congregational singing and dismissive of its rightful place in the service, and furthermore said Gwyllt, it was the deacons' duty to organise congregational singing meetings, preferably under the baton of an accomplished *blaenor canu* [precentor].<sup>6</sup>

Gwyllt regarded congregational singing as an act of Christian praise and advocated 'Caned pawb – Let everybody sing',<sup>7</sup> rather than the handful of young men who attended *Yr Ysgol Gân* to sing anthems and chants in preparation for Literary Meeting competitions or *eisteddfodau*.<sup>8</sup> His perception of how *cymanfaoedd canu* should be conducted was the subject of a series of lectures on 'Psalmody' such as that which took place on 12 March 1866 at the *Dydd Llun Pawb*<sup>9</sup> meeting in Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog.<sup>10</sup> The Presbyterians in the Acrefair district under the baton of Joseph Owen of Rhos pre-empted Gwyllt's visit in September 1868 and formed the *Undeb Cerddorol Acrefair* [Acrefair Musical Union] for the sole purpose of practising congregational hymns.<sup>11</sup> This initiative had been inspired by

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Rhagair, iii.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., iv. *Os cynhelir cyfarfod canu o gwbl, nid oes neb yn dyfod iddo ond ychydig o blant a phobl ieuainc; y mae y swyddogion a phobl barchusaf, dduwiolaf, a mwyaf dylanwadol yr eglwys a'r gynulleidfa, yn ymgadw rhag dyfod i'r cyfarfod canu fel pe na byddai ond rhywbeth er mwyn difyrwch i'r bobl ieuainc, ar y goreu.*

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Rhagair, xi.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Rhagair, xiii.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Rhagair, iv.

<sup>9</sup> *Dydd Llun Pawb* [lit. Everybody's Monday, sometimes referred to as 'Big Monday'] was the term used to describe the annual March fair in Wrexham.

<sup>10</sup> 'District News: Dydd Llun Pawb', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 17 March 1866, 6.

<sup>11</sup> 'Cronicl Cerddorol: Undeb Cerddorol Dosbarth yr Acrefair', *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, Rhif 95, Ionawr (1869), 6.

Gwyllt who formed a Congregational Singing Union (*Undeb Canu Cynulleidfaol*) to sing from *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* at the 1859 *Cymanfa Ganu*.<sup>12</sup> That the Musical Union confined its repertoire to hymnody suggests that its role was to lead the assembly in worship, although like Gwyllt's Congregational Singing Union, this was a selective chorus that would form the basis of a chapel choir.

It was largely through the publication of *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* that Gwyllt came to be regarded as the *maestro* of the Calvinistic Methodists, though there were musicians in other Welsh denominations who were equally committed to the cause of improving congregational singing. For example, the Congregationalists were inspired by Rev. Edward Stephen (*Tanymarian*), a gifted musician with a persuasive technique and humorous demeanour that contrasted with Gwyllt's rather stern and uncompromising approach. *Tanymarian* had been delivering two-hour dialogues on music for some time before Gwyllt arrived in Liverpool and when he held a lecture-concert on Welsh music to choral accompaniment on 4 September 1850, at Pendref Chapel, Ruthin, it was to a capacity audience that were eager enough to pay 1s. for admittance.<sup>13</sup>

Rev. Edward Stephen was a great advocate for the Congregationalists and when he lectured on Welsh music in Hope Hall, Liverpool, in April 1859, the proceeds made a useful contribution to the reduction of debts of those chapels connected to the Congregationalist union,<sup>14</sup> and in October of that year, he made a similar gesture when he addressed the congregation of Seion Chapel, Holywell.<sup>15</sup> When the Congregationalists of Rhosllannerchrugog invited *Tanymarian* to their midst in June 1863, a crowd of 800 gathered in the chapel when the Reverend musician illustrated his lecture with solo items and light-hearted remarks, and three weeks later he adjudicated at the village music and literary festival.<sup>16</sup>

Unlike Gwyllt, *Tanymarian* believed in separating the choir from the congregation and dividing them into the four harmonic strands, a view that invoked criticism

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<sup>12</sup> Gareth Williams, *Valleys of Song: Music and Welsh Society 1840-1914* (Cardiff, 2003), 27.

<sup>13</sup> Huw Llewellyn Williams, *Lle yr Emyr yn y Gwasanaeth Crefyddol - Darlith Davies 1972* (Caernarfon, 1973), 9.

<sup>14</sup> 'The Music of Wales', *Liverpool Mercury*, 20 April 1859, 4.

<sup>15</sup> 'Seion: ger Treffynnon', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 9 Tachwedd 1859, 85.

<sup>16</sup> 'Rhosllannerchrugog', *Wrexham Advertiser and North Wales Register*, 28 July 1866, 8.

from the Anglican cleric, Rev. Evan Evans (*Ieuan Glan Geirionydd*, 1795-1855) who felt the need for greater participation by the congregation in songs of praise.<sup>17</sup> In the larger places of worship, chapel galleries suited *Tanymarian's* ideal as they provided separate seating for a choir although their prime purpose had been to increase accommodation, and it was for this reason that many tabernacles built after the Great Revival of 1859, such as the Fitzclarence Street Chapel, Liverpool (1865), made provision for a gallery.<sup>18</sup> Architectural historian Malcolm Seaborne observes: 'The more restricted sites in the towns resulted in the planning of chapels with galleries included from the start',<sup>19</sup> and in a culture driven by equivocation, the Calvinistic Methodists at Bethesda, (Mold), and *Capel Mawr*, (Rhos), had added galleries by 1863,<sup>20</sup> as had other denominations.

While the additional capacity was probably justified by occasional 'big meetings' and literary festivals, for the greater part of the year the chapels were seldom more than two thirds full.<sup>21</sup> This anomaly had not escaped the notice of the *Wrexham Advertiser and North Wales Register* that described the gallery at the Mold chapel as a complete failure: 'We would like to see it swept away and another erected in its place more in accordance with the requirements of a place of worship'.<sup>22</sup> While the need of such a structure was perhaps debateable, the addition of a gallery effectively doubled the seating capacity, and that was an important denominator in the constant battle for adherents. There was also a financial motive as this carefully calculated venture not only justified the vast buildings but offered the potential to reduce chapel debts as the demand for concerts, *eisteddfodau* and massed singing festivals increased and the provision of this facility was probably regarded as a greater priority than that of achieving a higher standard of congregational singing.

Challenged by the new-found obsession with *eisteddfodau* and 'sacred' concerts, Ieuan Gwyllt's disciplined singing meetings failed to sustain the momentum that had shown such promise during the Great Revival, particularly during the latter

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<sup>17</sup> Evan Evans, quoted in *Y Drysorfa*, Llyfr XVIII, Rhif CCXII, Awst (1864), 317.

<sup>18</sup> 'Opening of a New Welsh Presbyterian Chapel', *Liverpool Mercury*, 2 March 1865, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Malcolm Seaborne, 'Early Flintshire Chapel Plans', *Capel*, Newsletter 18, Winter (1992), 12, Capeli website, [http://www.capeli.org.uk/english/newsletter\\_contents.pdf](http://www.capeli.org.uk/english/newsletter_contents.pdf), accessed 3 May 2011.

<sup>20</sup> 'Visit to Rhosllannerchrugog', *ibid.*, 3, 12.

<sup>21</sup> 'Sunday Sketches', *Wrexham Advertiser and North Wales Register*, 24 June 1871, 6.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*



part of the 1860s when other mainstream denominations began to compile hymnals specific to their cause. The first to respond were the Congregationalists with *Llyfr Tonau ac Emy nau*, a compilation by Edward Stephen (*Tanymarian*) and J.D.Jones that was published in 1868 by Hughes and Son (Wrexham).<sup>23</sup> This hymnal held a distinct advantage over Gwyllt's *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* in that it contained both hymns and tunes with separate editions for sol-fa and staff notations. In a tribute to *Tanymarian*, D.Emlyn Evans says: 'Two of the collection's characteristics were its singable and tuneful melodies and slick harmony which was neither too simple nor monotonous'.<sup>24</sup> Following a similar pattern to the *Cymanfa Ganu* of 1859 which celebrated the publication of *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol*, the Congregationalists announced that a choral festival was to take place in the grounds of Ruthin Castle in August 1869.<sup>25</sup> On the premise that *Tanymarian* preferred the discipline of chapel choirs, the term 'choral festival' was probably an appropriate description. That Gwyllt had engaged the Congregational Singing Union to sing from *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol*, suggests that this was also a choral performance, although he disguised this fact with the descriptor *Cymanfa Ganu* [Singing Festival] as opposed to 'choral festival', 'Psalmody festival' and other terminology popularised by the English language press. In essence, the terms were synonymous.

Although *Tanymarian* and J. D Jones were the authors of the Congregationalist hymnal, it was printer and Tonic Sol-faist Benjamin Morris Williams (1832-1903) who organised the grand choral event, and in the latter months of his employment at the Ruthin printing works of Isaac Clarke, he travelled throughout Denbighshire and Flintshire training choirs for the choral festival at Ruthin Castle.<sup>26</sup> At the July 1869 meeting of the Denbigh and Flint Association of Independents in Mold, the secretary read a letter from Williams requesting that the Association should prevail on local churches to cultivate congregational singing and to call for full support of the forthcoming choral performance at Ruthin.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Parch. Edward Stephen a J.D.Jones, *Llyfr Tonau ac Emy nau* (Wrexham, 1868).

<sup>24</sup> D.Emlyn Evans, 'Ei Lyfrau Tonau ac Emy nau' yn W.J.Parry (gol.), *Cofiant Tanymarian* (Dolgellau, 1886), 121.

<sup>25</sup> 'Denbigh and Flint Association of the Independents', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 26 June 1869, 8.

<sup>26</sup> D.Emlyn Evans, 'Ein Cerddorion: B.M.Williams', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XV, Rhif 176, Awst (1903), 86.

<sup>27</sup> 'Denbigh and Flint Association of Independents', op. cit.

This was a festival led by a combination of denominational choirs, and in his opening remarks, the president, Rev. Michael Jones, said that he felt great pleasure in meeting such a large congregation to engage in a work in which all could join.<sup>28</sup> The timing of the choral festival was flawless as it coincided with the cancellation of the National Eisteddfod of which the London *Morning Post* reported: ‘Since its collapse in 1868, owing to the disappointing results of the Ruthin meeting in that year; no attempt has been made to revive the National Eisteddfod of Wales, and now in lieu of one grand national gathering, there are held annually a number of local eisteddfodau, which vary in magnitude and *éclat*’.<sup>29</sup> This failure was due to escalating debts after the Chester (1866), Carmarthen (1867) and Ruthin (1868) Eisteddfodau and as a consequence, there were insufficient funds to award prizes at the Ruthin event,<sup>30</sup> hence the non-appearance of the National Eisteddfod in 1870 and 1871.<sup>31</sup> By arranging the open-air choral festival at Ruthin Castle during the same week in August that the Eisteddfod would have taken place can hardly be described as coincidence, although it did provide a worthwhile cultural alternative.

It was Benjamin Williams who conducted the Festival of Congregational Music at Ruthin in August 1869,<sup>32</sup> when the united choir of 400 voices from Flintshire and Denbighshire sang from the new Congregational hymnal, *Llyfr Tonau ac Emy nau*, ‘for the purpose of promoting Welsh congregational singing’.<sup>33</sup> Rev. J. Thomas of Liverpool addressed the meeting and referred to the grand sight of so many gathered before him and his joy at seeing singers, ‘old and young with books in their hands’ and Rhidian Griffiths maintains that the publishing of hymnals specific to each denomination marked the beginning of a period when *cymanfaoedd canu* became more denominational.<sup>34</sup> So successful were the Congregationalists that the event was repeated the following year when a choir of up to 1,300 singers amassed in the grounds of Ruthin Castle at which John Curwen, founder of the Tonic Sol-fa

<sup>28</sup> ‘Ruthin’, *Cheshire Observer & North Wales Times*, 28 August 1869, 3.

<sup>29</sup> ‘Welsh Festival at Portmadoc’, *The Morning Post*, 30 August 1872, 3.

<sup>30</sup> ‘The Welsh National Eisteddfod’, *Cheshire Observer and Chester, Birkenhead, Crewe and North Wales Times*, 19 December 1868, 3.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Welsh Festival at Portmadoc’, *The Morning Post*, 30 August 1872, 3.

<sup>32</sup> ‘Ruthin: Grand Choral Festival’, *Cheshire Observer and North Wales Times*, 28 August 1869, 3

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Rhidian Griffiths, ‘Y Gymanfa Ganu: ei Gwreiddiau a’i Natur’, *Bwletin Cymdeithas Emy nau Cymru*, Cyfrol II, Rhif 9 (1986-87), 280.

method, was the honoured guest.<sup>35</sup> Special trains brought visitors from across the region to the two meetings, the first of which took place at 1.30 p.m. and the second at 5 p.m., both of which were accompanied by an orchestra seated on the slope of a hollow, in front of which was a large platform.<sup>36</sup> At the first meeting, twelve hymn-tunes and several anthems were sung while the later session included several choruses from Handel's *Messiah* as well as solo items.<sup>37</sup>

The vast congregation at Ruthin Castle was in stark contrast to the *cymanfaoedd canu* that Ieuan Gwyllt conducted in rural villages throughout Wales,<sup>38</sup> which were perhaps, better suited to his method of training and conducting, although he did lead the 1,500-strong congregation at Fitzclarence Street Chapel, Liverpool, in March 1871 at the invitation of his former colleague, Eleazar Roberts.<sup>39</sup> Rhidian Griffiths observes that the majority of congregations had mastered the content of *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* by the 1870s, and even though Hughes and Son had published Gwyllt's *Ychwanegiad* in 1870,<sup>40</sup> many were tiring of the 'puritanical strictness' which characterised it.<sup>41</sup> Under the guise of improving congregational singing the massed choral festivals, many of which were held in a secular venue, were becoming denominational showcase events rather than an expression of worship. Motivated by the remarkable success of the 1870 Festival at Ruthin Castle, the Congregationalists arranged a united singing meeting at Denbigh Castle in August 1871,<sup>42</sup> and through 'The Denbigh, Flint and Merioneth Choral Union', other denominations were invited to participate in the event that 'eclipsed its predecessors far beyond anything that was anticipated'.<sup>43</sup> Benjamin M. Williams conducted the singing while Owen Robinson, Fred Owen (Ruabon) and Daniel Jones of Mold providing the harmonium accompaniment.<sup>44</sup> By comparison, the

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<sup>35</sup> 'Welsh Intelligence', *Cheshire Observer*, 6 August 1870, 6.

<sup>36</sup> 'Musical Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 6 August 1870, 6.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> For example, in August 1870, Gwyllt conducted a *cymanfa ganu* in Llanarmon-yn-Iâl, and in December of that year, he visited the Calvinistic Methodist chapel at Garth, near Ruabon, as guest conductor. See 'Cronicl Cerddorol: Llanarmon-yn-Iâl', *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, Rhif 115, 1 Medi (1870), 71; 'Cronicl Cerddorol: Garth, Ruabon', *ibid.*, Rhif 119, Ionawr (1871), 7.

<sup>39</sup> 'Cronicl Cerddorol: Liverpool', *ibid.*, Rhif 122, Ebrill (1871), 30.

<sup>40</sup> Ieuan Gwyllt, *Ychwanegiad at y Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* (Wrexham, 1870).

<sup>41</sup> Rhidian Griffiths (1986-87), *op. cit.*, 280.

<sup>42</sup> 'Grand Choral Festival at Denbigh Castle', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 12 August 1871, 6.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

Rhosesmor Choral Festival arranged by the Calvinistic Methodist Sunday schools of the Dyffryn district and conducted by Eleazar Roberts of Liverpool was a more modest affair in which the congregation sang two anthems and a selection of tunes from Ieuan Gwyllt's collection.<sup>45</sup> However, the inclusion of anthems caused one critic to comment: 'If the time the choir expended on the two anthems that were sung had been expended on the simple tunes that were in the programme, we cannot help thinking they would be rendered with greater success'.<sup>46</sup>

Inasmuch as the interdenominational approach may have contributed to the success of the *Cymanfa* at Denbigh Castle, the gesture did little to calm the competitive rivalry between denominations and, on 3 August 1871, three days before the Congregationalists staged their Festival at Denbigh, the Calvinistic Methodists held a choral festival at Rhuddlan Castle.<sup>47</sup> Ieuan Gwyllt conducted the combined chapel choirs in the north of the Vale of Clwyd that formed a chorus of 400 voices, 'but the attendance was not as large as anticipated with many vacant benches in the auditorium'.<sup>48</sup> Essentially, the choirs were those of Clwyd Street Chapel, Rhyl, and the Dyserth Chapel choir, and a proposal at the end of the proceedings that a grand, united *cymanfa* should be convened to include the choirs of 'all sections of the free church throughout the principality', was met with great enthusiasm.<sup>49</sup> That the Calvinistic Methodists had usurped the Congregationalist festival was divisive although David Smith observes: '... the jealous denominational competition so characteristic of Victorian Wales was not a sign of weakness but an indication of vitality, an essential element in the development and maintenance of popular forms of religious organization'.<sup>50</sup>

To celebrate the publication of the Baptist hymnal, *Llawlyfr Moliant*,<sup>51</sup> compiled by Lewis Jones, the north-east Wales Baptists convened at Corwen in November 1872, and it was suggested that a 'Choral Union for the Baptists in the counties of

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<sup>45</sup> 'District News', *ibid.*, 1 July 1871, 6.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> 'Welsh Choral Festival at Rhuddlan Castle', *North Wales Chronicle*, 12 August 1871, 6.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> D. Smith, *A People and a Proletariat Essays in the History of Wales 1780-1980* (London, 1980), 54.

<sup>51</sup> Lewis Jones, Treherbert, *Llawlyfr Moliant: sef casgliad o donau cynulleidfaol* (Wrexham, 1872).

Denbigh, Flint and Merioneth' should be formed.<sup>52</sup> The outcome was that a *cymanfa* for the region took place on 16 June 1873 in Llangollen, and cheap train excursions were organised from Dolgellau, Wrexham, Chester, Birkenhead, Liverpool, Rhyl, and Oswestry for the occasion.<sup>53</sup> In readiness for the event, the Baptists of Coedpoeth had arranged a rehearsal for members of their denomination throughout the Wrexham district,<sup>54</sup> which augmented the amassed choir of a thousand voices that formed a semi-circle in a field beneath the mound of Castell Dinas Brân, while onlookers seated on the hillside formed a natural gallery.<sup>55</sup> Flannel mill owner, Edward S. Jones of Llangollen, conducted the Choir and Miss Williams of Rhyl presided at the harmonium that was restored especially for the occasion.<sup>56</sup> Unlike other singing festivals, specific mention was made of the preferred notation: 'The music was in the Tonic Sol-fa notation, which since its introduction into Wales by Mr. Eleazar Roberts has become universally popular in the Principality'.<sup>57</sup> The order of service followed much the same pattern as other denominational festivals and at the close of the second session at Llangollen the choirs sang an anthem, on this occasion *Jerusalem* (Lowell Mason), followed by the now mandatory rendition of Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus'.<sup>58</sup>

An article published in *Y Drysorfa* in 1873 reiterated Ieuan Gwyllt's pleas for ministers to take a more proactive role in promoting hymn-singing,<sup>59</sup> to which the Calvinistic Methodists responded with what was described as 'the experiment of massing together a considerable number of choirs'.<sup>60</sup> The Music Committee of the Denbigh Monthly Association Meeting was authorised to negotiate with the Vale of Clwyd Railway Company to organise cheap train tickets for a Music Festival to be held at Rhyl in June 1876 under the direction of Ieuan Gwyllt.<sup>61</sup> Rehearsals with

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<sup>52</sup> J. Owen Jones, 'Cymanfaoedd Canu Cyntaf Bedyddwyr Gogledd Cymru', *Seren Gomer*, Cyfrol XXI, Rhif 3, Mai (1929), 114.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

<sup>54</sup> Multiple News Items, *Wrexham Advertiser and North Wales Register*, 14 June 1873, 6.

<sup>55</sup> 'Baptist Psalmody Festival', *Liverpool Mercury*, 17 June 1873, 8.

<sup>56</sup> J. Owen Jones, *op. cit.*, 116.

<sup>57</sup> 'Baptist Psalmody Festival', *op. cit.*, 8.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> 'Ein Caniadaeth Gynulleidfaol', *Y Drysorfa*, Rhif 509 (Ebrill 1873), 147.

<sup>60</sup> 'Choral Festival at Rhyl', *Liverpool Mercury*, 6 June 1873, 6.

<sup>61</sup> Ellis Wynne Williams, 'Gosod Sylfeini, 1815-80', yn R. H. Evans (gol.), *Hanes Henaduriaeth Dyffryn Clwyd* (Dinbych, 1986), 39. Vale of Clwyd Railway Co. was by now a subsidiary of the London and North Western Railway Co.

individual congregations in Denbighshire were to commence in April of that year,<sup>62</sup> and the patronage of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist *Cyfarfod Misol* [Monthly Meeting] leaves little doubt as to the denominational implication.<sup>63</sup> Unable to resist a slight at the Anglican Church, a report on the event, written in a manner most favourable to the Calvinistic Methodists, claimed that the singing of familiar hymns had required no previous training: 'Yesterday's festival had, however, none of the pretentious features of the church gatherings'.<sup>64</sup> The united choir, conducted by Ieuan Gwyllt, assembled in a field on the outskirts of Rhyl, and the Presbyterian aversion to musical instruments was evident in that the choir sang unaccompanied, relying only on the keynote provided by the conductor. Despite the inclement weather, the festival was regarded as a success, and it was said that 'much of the proficiency displayed by the choirs was unquestionably due to the use of the Tonic Sol-fa system'.<sup>65</sup> In the Calvinistic stronghold of Adwy'r Clawdd with its substantive population and the musical expertise of James Beckett, the organisers decided to stage a Singing Festival specifically for the village in July 1874,<sup>66</sup> and with the co-operation of local publicans who agreed to close their premises on that Sunday, a procession of over 3,000 members of the Coedpoeth Sunday schools marched to a large tent that was provided for the event.<sup>67</sup>

The Baptists had no intention of retracting from what was becoming a test of denominational might, and following the success of the Llangollen Festival, they decided that the 1875 event would be held in the grounds of Ruthin Castle.<sup>68</sup> Almost 1,200 choristers representing every Baptist chapel in north-east Wales had purchased tickets, and despite the inclement weather, 1,000 singers took part in the proceedings that were accompanied by an orchestra and a large harmonium.<sup>69</sup> Professor Gethin Davies, Principal of Llangollen Baptist College, conducted the massed choir that opened the proceedings with 'Rhown glod i enw Iesu glân' ('All hail the power of Jesu's name'), and those who had paid sixpence to stand

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<sup>62</sup> 'Undeb Cerddorol Sir Ddinbych', *Y Goleuad*, 21 Rhagfyr 1872, 4.

<sup>63</sup> 'Choral Festival at Rhyl', op. cit.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> 'Coedpoeth ac Adwy'r Clawdd', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 11 Gorffennaf 1874, 5.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> 'Stray Notes', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 31 October 1874, 6.

<sup>69</sup> 'Baptist Psalmody Festival in Ruthin Castle', *North Wales Chronicle*, 24 July 1875, 3.

throughout the service were again reminded that the purpose of the meeting was to improve congregational singing in the chapels.<sup>70</sup> It was for that same reason that the officers of Adwy'r Clawdd invited Ieuan Gwyllt to address the congregation in September 1875, despite the success of the Psalmody Festival in 1874, and the unquestionable musical ability of James Beckett.<sup>71</sup> Gwyllt was met with an indifferent reception as some choristers were conspicuous by their absence, and one member who attended the event surmised that the real reason for their non-attendance was that they 'considered themselves musically superior to Ieuan Gwyllt ... and there was little to gain from the meeting'.<sup>72</sup> Gwyllt was no stranger to the musical fraternity of Adwy'r Clawdd as he had been one of the adjudicators at the Coedpoeth Eisteddfod along with Thomas Jones (*Canrhawdfardd*), in April 1872.<sup>73</sup>

A similar attitude was apparent in Leeswood where Gwyllt had been invited to conduct a *cymanfa gerddorol* [music festival],<sup>74</sup> and although the singing was considered to be better than at any previous festival, there were those who questioned the choice of conductor.<sup>75</sup> In common with their compatriots in Adwy'r Clawdd, the singers at Leeswood had raised the cultural status of their community through the efforts of local musicians such as Thomas George (1819-1879), who had served Leeswood CM Chapel as *codwr canu* for almost forty years<sup>76</sup> and was regarded as 'one of the best precentors in Flintshire'.<sup>77</sup> Another revered musician was Ephraim Hopwood (1843-1899)<sup>78</sup> of Pontybodkin who trained congregations in the Mold circuit for the denominational *cymanfaoedd canu* and was credited with having raised the standard of congregational music in that locality.<sup>79</sup> While the organisers of the Leeswood festival acknowledged Gwyllt's expertise, there were others who resented the fact that local musicians were being overlooked, and

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> 'Adwy'r Clawdd', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 2 Hydref 1875, 7. Gwyllt gave public praise to James Beckett's efforts on his visit to Adwy'r Clawdd in September 1875.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> 'Eisteddfod Coedpoeth', *ibid.*, 13 Ebrill 1872, 7.

<sup>74</sup> 'Newyddion Cymreig: Coedllai', *ibid.*, 30 Mehefin 1875, 9. Ieuan Gwyllt, was impressed by the singing and complimented the precentors on their preparation for the festival.

<sup>75</sup> 'Mold: Choral Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser and North Wales Register*, 26 June 1875, 6.

<sup>76</sup> 'Marwgoffa Thomas George', *Y Goleuad*, 4 Hydref 1879, 14.

<sup>77</sup> Griffith Owen, *Hanes Methodistiaeth Sir Fflint* (Dolgellau, 1914), 308.

<sup>78</sup> Ephraim Hopwood conducted the Leeswood United Choir. See 'Local News: Leeswood Eisteddfod', *Liverpool Mercury*, 31 May 1882, 6.

<sup>79</sup> Griffith Owen, *op. cit.*, 348.

the question was asked: 'Why should we go to Carnarvon and Liverpool for our conductors and neglect our native talent? No doubt Ieuan Gwyllt is one of the greatest authorities in Wales on congregational music; but why should we cross the river to fetch our water?'<sup>80</sup> The veiled reference to 'Liverpool' may also refer to Eleazar Roberts, as both he and Ieuan Gwyllt had conducted festivals at the New Street Chapel Mold, although the criticism was not necessarily directed at them, but rather at the high-handed officials who relied on the *codwyr canu* to train the congregations and deprived them of the opportunity to conduct the 'big meetings'.

Bethesda Chapel in New Street, Mold was the venue for the *cymanfa gerddorol* of the Mold Presbytery in 1874, on account of the extra capacity afforded by the gallery and while the causes in Leeswood, Gwernymynydd and Buckley had taken the effort to rehearse, little preparation had been made by the Mold contingency, and tensions were mounting in what was already a fragile unity. The Leeswood Sunday school had arrived at the chapel twenty minutes before the superintendents of the Mold Sunday schools arrived, a discourtesy that was perceived as having belittled the efforts of the singers from the outlying districts, many of whom had walked a considerable distance.<sup>81</sup> Despite the best efforts of the conductor, Eleazar Roberts, who chose the tunes from *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol*, the singing in the afternoon was considered as 'scarce equal to that of two years, and the same might be said of the evening',<sup>82</sup> which suggests that the *cymanfa gerddorol* was adjudged on performance rather than its relevance to praise. That numerous chapel concerts had blurred the lines between sacred and secular music may account for the reaction of the Mold congregation who abandoned propriety and applauded the vote of thanks to the conductor, Eleazar Roberts.<sup>83</sup> This carnal response was not lost on a correspondent of the local press who reproached this worldly gesture: 'We did not like to see the vote carried with clapping of hands, such demonstrations seem to our old-fashioned notions out of place in a place of worship, and out of keeping with its sacred associations'.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> 'Mold: Choral Festival', op. cit.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 13 June 1874, 6.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. This event was the first Calvinistic Methodist psalmody festival that took place in 1872, conducted by Michael Jones of Flint, a staunch advocate of Tonic Sol-fa. See 'Annual Psalmody Festival at Mold', ibid., 16 June 1894, 8.

<sup>83</sup> 'Mold: Choral Festival', ibid., 13 June 1874, 6.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.



The officers of the Mold New Street Chapel were accused of having shown ‘a remarkable lukewarmness towards the festival and had done little to prepare for the occasion the previous year’.<sup>85</sup> Understandably aggrieved, the Leeswood faction petitioned the Sunday School Union to convene the 1875 festival in their village,<sup>86</sup> which further increased the ill-feeling when committees appointed to oversee the event were churlishly boycotted by the Mold chapelocracy. In a report of the fracas, the Leeswood delegates retorted: ‘It could not be expected that the representatives of such an intellectual place as Mold would condescend to change views with low, country people from such places as Leeswood and Buckley, so they kept away’. What should have been a united expression of Christian praise was drawn into a vortex of ill feeling, and the abstention of the Mold delegation exposes the rivalry that existed between village chapels and the more prestigious edifices in the townships. Despite the non-attendance of the Mold Sunday School Union, ‘the (1875) festival turned out to be a greater success than ever’, and having made their point, the stalwarts of Leeswood suggested that sulks and jealousies should cease.<sup>87</sup>

No such tension prevailed in Bagillt, where the combined congregations of Flint, Halkyn and Babel exceeded the capacity of the Calvinistic Methodist building as a result of which, the annual choral festival was held in the Wesleyan chapel. The conductor Eleazar Roberts followed his usual style and selected tunes from *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol*, with the exception of ‘Wondrous Love’ from *Sŵn y Juwbili* which was chosen for the benefit of members of the English Calvinistic Methodists who had prepared tea for the visitors.<sup>88</sup> The meeting had opened with a reading from scripture and prayer by John Edwards of Flint and that same expression of sanctity followed the evening event which concluded with a prayer by the conductor, Eleazar Roberts, and although the press described this gathering as a ‘choral festival’, it was a *cymanfa ganu* in the truest sense of the term. William Parry, conductor of the Birkenhead Cambrian Choral Society and a highly esteemed musician, was present at the evening meeting and was invited to address

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> ‘Mold: Choral Festival’, *ibid.*, 26 June 1875, 6.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> ‘Mold’, *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 24 June 1876, 8.

the crowded chapel and he conducted J. Ambrose Lloyd's anthem, *Marwolaeth y Cyfiawn* (1845),<sup>89</sup> which was performed, not by a choir, but by the congregation.<sup>90</sup>

It would appear that there were separate agendas at work – one pertaining to the *cymanfaoedd canu* as arranged by the local Presbyteries, and a wider county-wide denominational initiative, such as the Calvinistic Methodist Choral Festival at Rhyl in 1876 when chapel choirs from Denbighshire and Flintshire congregated in a field close to the railway station.<sup>91</sup> This festival of gargantuan proportions and conducted by Ieuan Gwyllt, consisted of a united choir of 1,700 singers that were accompanied by two harmoniums and in all probability, arranged for no other reason than to challenge the success of the Congregationalist and Baptists' singing meetings. The retributory motive of the Calvinistic Methodist convention failed to achieve its intended purpose and the *Wrexham Advertiser* commented: 'The choir was a little unsteady and called for some pointed remarks from the conductor, this was more to be wondered at as they had all been separately drilled by him at their respective chapels'.<sup>92</sup> The noticeable absence of chapel officials at the afternoon service prompted Rev. Evan Jones to apologise 'for the declining interest of the ministers and deacons in the purposes of the meeting, as evinced by their scant attendance', a rebuke that Gwyllt reiterated at the evening event.<sup>93</sup> Ever consistent, when he addressed the meeting he lamented that congregational singing had yet to achieve its full potential and, inspired by the Moody and Sankey meetings at Liverpool in 1875, he was now of the opinion that 'the grand but plain hymn-tunes must ever be the staple of our religious service'.<sup>94</sup>

In August 1876, barely three months later, the Congregationalists assembled at Denbigh Castle where fifty choirs representing the chapels of north-east Wales and Liverpool formed a united ensemble of 1,500 singers, in addition to the chorus of

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<sup>89</sup> Ambrose Lloyd took the prize at Groeswen (near Pontypridd) Eisteddfod in 1845 for 'Marwolaeth y Cyfiawn'. This anthem became a popular choice in *cymanfaoedd* and *eisteddfodau* during the 1870s in north Wales and it was at the Groeswen chapel eisteddfod in south Wales that Lloyd was awarded prizes for two compositions, 'Marwolaeth y Cyfiawn' and 'Y Ganaan Glyd', adjudicated by Rosser Beynon. See Elfed (trans.), Charles Francis Lloyd, *John Ambrose Lloyd. Hanes ei Fywyd a'i Weithiau* (Wrecsam, 1921), 47; *Y Diwygiwr*, Rhif X (1845), 82-3.

<sup>90</sup> 'Choral Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 24 June 1876, 8.

<sup>91</sup> 'Denbighshire Calvinistic Methodist Musical Festival at Rhyl', *ibid.*, 17 June 1876, 8.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

600 Sunday school children who also took part.<sup>95</sup> While Benjamin Williams was rehearsing the massed choir at 11.30 a.m. in the Denbigh Independent Chapel, almost 5,000 people had arrived in the town by train from every corner of the region, which was the largest influx of visitors in one day that Denbigh had ever known.<sup>96</sup> The Festival should have taken place a week earlier, but due to the fact that the committee had failed to arrange excursion trains, it was postponed until 10 August 1876, and although the delay had little effect on the attendance, it nevertheless provides an insight into the organisational demands required to stage such an extravaganza.<sup>97</sup> Having tested their resources to breaking point with the Choral Festival at Ruthin Castle in 1875, the Baptists abandoned the project and confined their singing meeting to a smaller circuit that became the 'Maelor Baptists Music Festival',<sup>98</sup> and despite the success of the Denbigh Castle performance, the Congregationalists followed the same policy.

The grand expressions of denominational might were unsustainable, and following the Choral Festival at Rhyl in 1876, the Calvinistic Methodists retreated to the larger chapels at the centre of their districts.<sup>99</sup> Gwyllt had seen the spiritual purpose of the *cymanfa ganu* corrupted as it became little more than a propagandist event for the glorification of the denomination. At the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Choral Association at Cefn Mawr in September 1876, he strongly emphasised that their coming together was 'not a concert, nor yet for choral or denominational competition, but rather to learn to promote the singing of the praise of God'.<sup>100</sup> Three months prior to making this statement, he had conducted the Rhyl Choral Festival that was contrived by the Monthly Meeting of the Calvinistic Methodists as a response to the choral festivals of the Congregationalists and Baptists and his reference to 'denominational competition' categorically exposed the failings of his own denomination. Gwyllt had complied with the attempt to upstage the Baptist and Congregationalist choral festivals which had failed, and disillusioned by the

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<sup>95</sup> 'Choral Festival in Denbigh castle', *North Wales Chronicle*, 19 August 1876, 7.

<sup>96</sup> 'Welsh Choral Festival', *Liverpool Mercury*, 11 August 1876, 6.

<sup>97</sup> 'Choral Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 29 July 1876, 6.

<sup>98</sup> J. Owen Jones, op. cit., 118.

<sup>99</sup> 'Mold: Choral Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 23 June 1877, 5.

<sup>100</sup> 'Choral Association', *ibid.*, 9 September 1876, 6.

apathy of ministers and chapel officials towards sung worship, he turned to the simple tunes of Ira D. Sankey and published *Sŵn y Juwbili*.<sup>101</sup>

Ieuan Gwyllt believed that congregational singing was an act of praise rather than a competitive art, and Rhidian Griffiths refers to Gwyllt's disappointment a week before his death in May 1877 that: 'Young people spend their energy in attempting to learn piece after piece for a competition, so that there is really in Wales, after all, nothing left but very little *singing*'.<sup>102</sup> Emlyn Evans, in a tribute to Gwyllt, refers to those who questioned his motives inferring that he had arranged the first *Cymanfa Ganu* in 1859 for the sole purpose of promoting *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol*.<sup>103</sup> If that was indeed the case, then he was not alone as other denominations had adopted similar methods. The Congregationalists arranged the singing festival at Denbigh Castle to coincide with the publication of *Llyfr Tonau ac Emynuau* and the Baptists *cymanfa* at Llangollen was an appropriate occasion for the announcement of the new hymnal *Llawlyfr Moliant*. Regardless of the criticism levelled against Gwyllt, he was an innovator, and it was he who devised the template for the growth of Welsh congregational singing that set the agenda for *cymanfaoedd canu*.

The *cymanfa ganu* was probably the most expedient method of publicising a new hymnal on account of the captive audience, and publishers often capitalised on the weaknesses of existing tune-books as a means of extolling the virtues of their own compilations. An example of this practice is evidenced by the veiled critique of Ieuan Gwyllt's *Llyfr Tonau* in the preface to *Caniadau y Cyssegr a'r Teulu* (1878), a collection of hymn-tunes from various Welsh and English denominational sources, published by Thomas Gee.<sup>104</sup> The article begins: 'One or two reformers of Welsh congregational singing have adjudged that German compositions, and other foreign works of similar style, were the best examples to follow'.<sup>105</sup> In what can only be interpreted as a reference to Gwyllt's penchant for the German chorale, the

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<sup>101</sup> John Roberts (Ieuan Gwyllt), *Sŵn y Juwbili: neu ganiadau y diwygiad* (Wrexham, 1978).

<sup>102</sup> Quoted in Rhidian Griffiths, 'Ieuan Gwyllt a chanu'r Cymry', *Ceredigion: cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hynafiaethwyr Sir Aberteifi*, Cyfrol 11, Rhif 3 (1991), 269.

<sup>103</sup> D.Emlyn Evans, 'Y Gymanfa Ganu, a'i Hamcan Gwreiddiol', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XXIV, Rhif 283, Gorphenaf (1912), 69.

<sup>104</sup> 'Amryw Gerddorion', *Caniadau y Cyssegr a'r Teulu. Detholiad newydd o Donau at wasanaeth Cynulleidfaoedd a Theuluoedd, gyda Geiriau Cymraeg a Saesneg* (Dinbych, 1878).

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, Rhagymadrodd. '... a bod ambell un wedi barnu mai cyfansoddiadau y Germaniaid, a chyfansoddiadau estronol eraill o gyffelyb arddull, oeddynt y cynlluniau goreu i'w dilyn'.

article continues: 'In times of religious revivals, congregations want to sing, not 'the slow, syllabic, German tunes', termed by some musicians as 'classical', but rather tunes which are doubled and trebled in a joyful manner.'<sup>106</sup> Conveniently, this biased critique omits to mention that it was Gwyllt who first introduced Welsh chapel congregations to the joyous gospel songs of Moody and Sankey with *Sŵn y Juwbili* some time before the belated response by Thomas Gee with *Caniadau y Cyssegr a'r Teulu*.

Hugh Davies (*Pencerdd Maelor*, 1844-1907), who succeeded Gwyllt as editor of *Cerddor y Tonic Sol-ffa*, was initially associated with this volume, although it was Benjamin Morris Williams, by now a music compositor with Gee and Sons, who edited and arranged the content of *Caniadau y Cyssegr a'r Teulu*.<sup>107</sup> In addition to the stately tunes of John Ambrose Lloyd and John Roberts (Henllan), a number of hymn-tunes in *Caniadau y Cyssegr a'r Teulu* were sourced from English hymnals,<sup>108</sup> and there is no evidence to suggest that it achieved the outstanding success of *Sŵn y Juwbili*. Arguably, *Caniadau y Cyssegr a'r Teulu* may have met with greater appeal had it not coincided with the second edition of *Llyfr Tonau ac Emynuau*, edited solely by Edward Stephen as an appendix to the first collection which came out at the end of 1879.<sup>109</sup> In the introduction, *Tanymarian* explains that the taste for congregational tunes had changed somewhat from the early collection when German chorale style was much in vogue, and that congregations had been partly influenced by Sankey's lively tunes,<sup>110</sup> a view which substantiated Gwyllt's decision to publish *Sŵn y Juwbili*.

In Gwyllt, the Calvinistic Methodists had a musician that befitted the stature of the denomination, and after his death in 1877, David Jenkins (1848-1915), Mus.Bac, a former student of Joseph Parry at Aberystwyth University College was elected as

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<sup>106</sup> Rhagymadrodd, *ibid.*, iv.

<sup>107</sup> D.Emlyn Evans, 'Ein Cerddorion: B.M.Williams', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XV, Rhif 176, Awst (1903), 86.

<sup>108</sup> *Caniadau y Cyssegr a'r Teulu*, *op. cit.*, iv. Many of J. Ambrose Lloyd's tunes were included, and also a selection from John Roberts, Henllan's *Caniadau y Cyssegr*. Alfred Stone (ed.), *The Bristol Tune Book: A Manual of Tunes and Chants* (London, 1863) and Henry Allon (ed.), *The Congregational Psalmist* (H. Allon, 1858).

<sup>109</sup> E. Stephen, *Tanymarian, Ail Lyfr Tonau ac Emynuau* (Wrexham, 1879). J.D.Jones died in 1870.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, Rhagair.

his successor.<sup>111</sup> Other denominations, such as the Congregationalists resisted this inclination and placed their confidence in local musicians such as Robert George, precentor at Pontybodkin Congregational Chapel who established a 'Cymanfa Undebol' [United Festival] for Llong, Penuel, Caergwrle and Pontybodkin, 'to improve congregational singing in south Flintshire'.<sup>112</sup> Similarly, the Ruthin and Denbigh Congregationalists turned to Benjamin M. Williams, while the Baptist *cymanfaoedd canu* were usually conducted by the *codwyr canu* of the chapel or the principal of the Llangollen Baptist College, Rev. Gethin Davies. A new importance was attached to congregational singing after the publication of denominational hymnals, and the preference for a professional musician such as Jenkins, suggests that the Calvinistic Methodists favoured the notion of 'big names' as a means of attracting big crowds and therefore, *cymanfaoedd canu* came to be regarded as a social attraction rather than an act of sung worship.

A *cymanfa ganu* conducted by Jenkins virtually guaranteed a capacity congregation and Calvinistic Methodist chapels in the smallest rural villages often combined their resources to attract the maestro, as illustrated by the communities of Llandegla, Llanarmon-yn-Iâl, Treuddyn, and Bryneglwys that united in Rhiw Iâl for what was described as a 'Musical Festival'.<sup>113</sup> The *Wrexham Advertiser* claimed that this was a coup for the small communities: 'Mr D. Jenkins, Mus Bach (sic) whose prized cantata, *The Ark of the Covenant*, produced such a favourable impression on the London musical critics a few weeks ago, acted as conductor'.<sup>114</sup> That Jenkins lavished praise on the congregation for the clear enunciation and the attention to musical expression suggests that congregations in the rural chapels conducted *cymanfaoedd canu* in accordance with Gwyllt's intention.

Fittingly, it was at this gathering that a tribute was paid to Gwyllt and the proposal that a 'Ieuan Gwyllt Scholarship' should be established at the University College at Aberystwyth, a motion to which David Jenkins pledged his full support, and it was

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<sup>111</sup> Jenkins was born in Trecastell and gained his Mus.Bac. at Cambridge, prior to Aberystwyth receiving the charter.

<sup>112</sup> 'Pont-y-Bodkin, Sir Fflint', *Y Genedl Gymreig*, 3 Gorphenaf 1879, 7.

<sup>113</sup> *Cymanfaoedd Canu* are described in the press as 'Psalmody Festival', 'Cymanfa Cerddorol' and 'Choral Festival' although the latter descriptor was the common term for the combined denominational choirs that performed at the mass rallies.

<sup>114</sup> 'Musical Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 8 June 1878, 6.

unanimously agreed that collections would be made throughout the Sunday schools of the Llandegla district towards the appeal.<sup>115</sup> David Jenkins was of the opinion that Wales had never fully appreciated the extent of Gwyllt's efforts, and it is ironic that in his introductory paragraph, a newspaper critic berated the inclusion of American gospel songs: 'We cannot refrain from recording our protest against the introduction on an occasion like this of such flimsy and puerile compositions as the two taken out of Mr. Sankey's book'.<sup>116</sup> Assuming that David Jenkins would have approved the choice of hymns for this meeting, the opinion of the critic was ill-informed and inopportune, as it was Gwyllt who introduced Welsh congregations to the vibrant melodies of Sankey through *Sŵn y Juwbili*. Gwyllt was not the only eminent Welsh musician to appreciate the merits of the simpler, gospel songs as *Tanymarian* had acknowledged that congregations had been partly influenced by Sankey's lively tunes.<sup>117</sup> Both *Tanymarian* and Ieuan Gwyllt lectured throughout north-east Wales and Liverpool on behalf of their respective denominations and despite their contrasting styles, they were united in their mission to improve congregational singing.

Gwyllt was of the view that the entire congregation should sing, while *Tanymarian* was more at ease with the principle of having a chapel choir, and when the latter conducted the Caergwrle United Singing Festival in July 1880,<sup>118</sup> he remarked on the 'masterly singing by trained singers'.<sup>119</sup> *Tanymarian* preferred a chapel full of disciplined singers or even a chapel choir,<sup>120</sup> believing that it was more honourable to have worshippers singing in an organised fashion rather than a disorganised congregation, and in that sense the Congregationalists were correct in describing their singing meetings as 'choral festivals'.<sup>121</sup> Undoubtedly, there was a confusion of terms as evidenced by the meeting that was to take place in the Calvinistic New Street Chapel at Mold in 1880 which was described as a 'choral festival' when in fact it was a *cymanfa ganu* as the hymns and chants were sung by the whole

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> E. Stephen, *Tanymarian* (1879), op. cit., Rhagair.

<sup>118</sup> 'Caergwrle', *Y Genedl Gymreig*, 22 Gorphenaf 1880, 7.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Edward Stephen 'Y Modd i gael Diwygiad yn y Canu', yn W.J.Parry (gol.), *Cofiant Tanymarian* (Dolgellau, 1886), 214-5.

<sup>121</sup> Huw Llew Williams, op. cit., 17.

congregation.<sup>122</sup> That it failed to accede to Ieuan Gwyllt's ideal is confirmed by a local press correspondent who railed: 'While other congregations prepared for the festival this year, Mold totally neglected it, making no effort whatever to learn so much as a single tune'.<sup>123</sup> The previous year had been a resounding success when the chapels in the locality convened in Mynydd Isa, on the outskirts of Mold, under the baton of David Jenkins and the chapels from outlying districts were keen to invite him back for the 1880 *cymanfa ganu*, at the New Street Chapel, Mold. Their enthusiasm was not, however, shared by the management committee that voted in favour of John Thomas, Llanwrtyd (1839-1921), a well-known adjudicator and conductor of hymnody festivals.<sup>124</sup>

The hymn-tunes, selected from *Sŵn y Juwbili* and *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* were all too familiar, but the difference of opinion had done little to endear John Thomas to the congregation and in spite of his efforts, the singing was described as 'thoroughly mechanical and void of expression'. There was no abrupt ending to the criticism as the malcontents prolonged the debate and one informed observer refers to the harmonic arrangement of *Hen Derby* when 'half the congregation stopped singing in order to listen to the extraordinary antics introduced into the parts by the harmonist. That seemed to us, at once, to defeat all the ends of a congregational tune'. In the closing comments, the writer castigates the apparent abandon of devotional feeling by a conductor who 'seemed to believe that the tunes were all, and not the channel through which the emotions originated by the words are conveyed into worship'.<sup>125</sup> Luff, however, takes a different view of John Thomas: 'To him as much as anyone must therefore be attributed a change in the meaning of the *Cymanfa Ganu* movement, from being a gathering to *work* at the music of the congregation to being in itself an act of worship'.<sup>126</sup>

What emerges from the press reports' pertaining to the various *cymanfaoedd canu* is that they were adjudged on musical performance rather than the relevance to worship and consequently, they became little more than choral events. The choice

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<sup>122</sup> 'Choral Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 12 June 1880, 6.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Alan Luff, *Welsh Hymns and their Tunes* (London, 1990), 206.



of conductor rested with committees that often overlooked the ability of the *codwyr canu* in favour of professional musicians such as David Jenkins. He was one of the most prominent figures in Welsh congregational music during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and as such he captured the interest of the local press, which explains why chapels were full to capacity when he conducted the singing. 'Choral Festivals', as they were often described, became a performance of chapel choirs rather than a united act of sung worship, and there is little evidence to suggest that they improved the standard of congregational singing. Furthermore, the 'Choral Festival', implied a gathering in which the congregation took no significant part, and therefore contradicted the purpose of the *cymanfa ganu* that was intended to encourage congregational participation.

Eleazar Roberts and John Edwards<sup>127</sup> were the principal activists in the development of Psalmody festivals in the Liverpool area and in October 1879, the Monthly Meeting recommended the formation of a 'Congregational Singing Union Committee' which was presided over by Edwards.<sup>128</sup> By the following April, a 'General Singing Meeting' in Fitzclarence Street Chapel set the pattern for such festivals that would be held annually in Liverpool thereafter.<sup>129</sup> Eleazar Roberts and John Edwards were both appointed 'singing leaders', and the tunes, taken from Ieuan Gwyllt's collection, included *Mannheim, Berlin, Erfyniad, St. Michael, Bavaria* and two Psalm tunes, 4 and 7.<sup>130</sup> Hymn-tunes at these events were invariably limited to *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* and consequently, the programmes were repetitious which gave William Rees Thomas (*Alaw Ddu*) every reason to call for more training in the preparation and learning of new tunes for the *cymanfa ganu*.<sup>131</sup>

When the Calvinistic Methodists assembled at Fitzclarence Street Chapel, Liverpool, in March 1881 for the grand Psalmody Festival, the choir occupied the gallery, while the congregation filled the ground floor, - an arrangement more

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<sup>127</sup> John Edwards was *codwr canu* at Bedford Street Chapel, Liverpool and along with Eleazar Roberts, he was pivotal to the development of Tonic Sol-fa in Liverpool and north-east Wales.

<sup>128</sup> John Hughes Morris, *Hanes Methodistiaeth Liverpool* Cyfrol I (Liverpool, 1929), 328.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> William Rees Thomas (*Alaw Ddu*), 'Yr Adran Gerddorol', *Cyfaill yr Aelwyd*, 30 Hydref 1880, 39.

readily associated with a performance than a united act of praise.<sup>132</sup> David Jenkins conducted the massed choirs of the various chapels that had been prepared by their respective *codwyr canu* in readiness for the occasion which raises the question as to whether this was a *cymanfa canu* in its intended form, or a grand choral event. Notwithstanding his undoubted musical ability, Jenkins was a Calvinistic Methodist,<sup>133</sup> and the denomination took great pride in demonstrating the wealth of talent that existed within its ranks, and since Ieuan Gwyllt's death in 1877, he was in great demand as a *cymanfa ganu* conductor and had attended over 50 festivals in a year in addition to lecturing, adjudicating and composing.<sup>134</sup> The Fitzclarence Street Chapel was filled to capacity and two harmoniums were required to accompany the singing which casts further doubt on the real purpose of the meeting as it questioned the sincerity of the long-held Calvinistic principle that musical instruments had no place in worship.<sup>135</sup>

Invariably, the purpose of *cymanfaoedd canu* was justified on the basis that it was convened for no other reason than to improve congregational singing in the chapels. Ironically, it was *Y Drysorfa*, the journal of the Calvinistic Methodists, that highlighted the distinction between hymn-tunes selected for specific festivals and those sung by chapel congregations, and cited tunes such as *Bavaria*, *Dusseldorf*, *Glan Rhondda* and *Mendelssohn*, as being suitable for *cymanfaoedd canu* but not for regular Sunday congregations.<sup>136</sup> Hymn singing festival organisers defended the decision to invite a guest conductor by claiming that organists had neither the time nor inclination to act as choirmaster, and therefore, the reason for inviting an eminent musician such as David Jenkins, was 'to develop and perfect congregational singing which is still at a standstill in many hundreds of chapels'.<sup>137</sup> This pithy excuse concealed the real motive which was to glorify the denomination as the choirs in attendance had been trained and prepared for the occasion by the *codwr canu* in their respective chapels rather than the organist. Further doubt is

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<sup>132</sup> 'Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Psalmody Meeting', *Liverpool Mercury*, 30 March 1881, 6.

<sup>133</sup> W.T. Samuel, 'Death of Prof. David Jenkins, Mus.B.', *Musical Herald*, 1 January 1916, 29; John Lloyd, 'Ei Fro a'i Febyd', yn J.H.Jones (gol.), *Er Cof am yr Athro David Jenkins* (Liverpool, 1935), 25.

<sup>134</sup> G.W.Hughes, 'Ei Bedwar Camp', yn J.H.Jones (gol.), *ibid.*, 96.

<sup>135</sup> 'Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Psalmody Meeting', *op. cit.*

<sup>136</sup> Cerddor, 'Canu Cynulleidfaol', *Y Drysorfa*, Rhif 623, Medi (1882), 346.

<sup>137</sup> 'Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Psalmody Meeting', *op. cit.*, 30 March 1881, 6.

cast on the credibility of the explanation in a press report in the *Liverpool Mercury* which stated that approximately half of the congregation of 1,700 were members of existing choirs.<sup>138</sup> To the likes of Jenkins and indeed Ieuan Gwyllt before him, such choral events gave conductors the opportunity to test public reaction to their own compositions, as evidenced by the number of Gwyllt's hymn-tunes that were included in *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* which was the mandatory text for Calvinistic Methodist singing festivals.

At the 1883 Psalmody Festival in the Fitzclarence Street Chapel, Liverpool, it was announced that David Jenkins had compiled a new tune book and the occasion no doubt afforded the conductor an ideal opportunity to promote his new volume as the chapel, built to accommodate over 1,000 people, was overcrowded some time before the service commenced. So successful was this event that it was decided to hold future meetings at Hengler's Circus, supposedly able to accommodate 4,000 persons, and this claim was put to the test when David Jenkins conducted the 1884 Psalmody Festival to an overcrowded hall.<sup>139</sup> The opportunity to address a captive audience was not lost on Dwight L. Moody who was in attendance and made specific reference to the revised edition of *Sankey's Songs and Solos*.<sup>140</sup>

The vast gatherings of the Calvinistic Methodist singing meetings overshadowed those of other denominations that were modest events, one of which was the third annual festival of the Welsh Wesleyan Methodists held at Shaw Street Chapel, Liverpool in 1883.<sup>141</sup> A choir of 250 voices had been selected from various fellowships in Liverpool and Birkenhead<sup>142</sup> who performed the anthem, *Ac mi a glywais lais o'r nef* (John Ambrose Lloyd), and much praise was bestowed on the conductor, Edward Gwaenys Jones (1845-1903), precentor of Shaw Street Chapel, Liverpool.<sup>143</sup> It was at this meeting that Annie Williams sang a selection of Sankey

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> 'Llythyr Lerpwl', *Y Genedl Gymreig*, 30 Ebrill 1884, 8.

<sup>140</sup> 'Public Notice', *Liverpool Mercury*, 28 April 1884, 1.

<sup>141</sup> 'Welsh Musical Festival in Liverpool', *North Wales Chronicle*, 28 April 1883, 4.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> 'Ecclesiastical Intelligence', *Liverpool Mercury*, 14 May 1889, 6. Edward Jones (*Gwaenys*) was born in Gwaenysgor, Flintshire and worked at the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance office. He regularly contributed articles on congregational music to *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*, *Y Faner*, *Y Gwyllydydd* and *Y Winllan*. See Bangor University Archive, Gabriel Hughes MS, GB 0222 GAB, 'Edward Jones (*Gwaenys*)', 89-90.

songs while the congregation joined in the choruses and contrary to common practice, no mention was made of improving congregational singing, merely a closing announcement that the proceeds were to be devoted to the liquidation of debts on the trust property.<sup>144</sup> Edward Jones (*Gwaenys*) conducted several of the Wesleyan singing festivals throughout Merseyside and north-east Wales, and a particular feature of this denomination was that the proceedings included a scripture examination following which, prizes and certificates were awarded to those who had passed the connexional examination.<sup>145</sup> Like Gwyllt before him, *Gwaenys* was committed to raising the standard of sung worship and in a series of letters in *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd* he appealed for a greater appreciation of congregational singing,<sup>146</sup> and he referred to the special evenings at Shaw Street Chapel, Liverpool, to sing 'the old Welsh tunes', including *Huddersfield*, *Bryn Calfaria* and *Andalusia*.<sup>147</sup>

By 1885, the Liverpool Calvinistic Methodist singing festival, perhaps more aptly described by the *Liverpool Mercury* as 'A Psalmody Demonstration', had outgrown the capacity of the Fitzclarence Street Chapel and set its sights on filling the capacious Hengler's Circus.<sup>148</sup> In April 1885, David Jenkins conducted a united choir of some 700 voices, drawn from 17 Welsh Calvinistic Methodist chapels in Liverpool and Birkenhead<sup>149</sup> and a congregation of over five thousand assembled for what was later described as the most successful choral festival ever held in the city.<sup>150</sup> Eleazar Roberts presided, and in his introductory comments he reminded the congregation of the spiritual significance of the event, after which Rev. G. Ellis delivered a brief address and expressed the hope that the tunes prepared for the service would be brought into practice amongst congregations.<sup>151</sup> Many of the hymns and chants from *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* were all familiar and presented no challenge to the congregation, unlike the combined choirs that faced the test of performing Jenkins' centenary anthem, *Yr Ysgol Sabbothol*, after which he

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<sup>144</sup> 'Welsh Musical Festival in Liverpool', op. cit., 28 April 1883, 4.

<sup>145</sup> 'Musical Festival at Flint', *Liverpool Mercury*, 30 July 1890, 6.

<sup>146</sup> Gwaenys, 'Caniadaeth y Cysegr', *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*, Ionawr – Rhagfyr (1883).

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., Hydref (1883), 519.

<sup>148</sup> 'Welsh Psalmody Demonstration in Liverpool', *Liverpool Mercury*, 21 April 1885, 6.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> 'Llythyr Lerpwl', *Y Genedl Gymreig*, 30 Ebrill 1884, 8.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

conveyed his satisfaction at their efforts.<sup>152</sup> In his concluding remarks, Rev. G. Ellis appealed for greater co-operation between ministers and chapel leaders to achieve the objective of Ieuan Gwyllt who had made the same plea some twenty-five years earlier.<sup>153</sup>

The Liverpool Calvinistic Methodists' hierarchy were keen to display their musical superiority and as the *cymanfaoedd canu* became a denominational issue it began to garner support from chapel officials and what should have been a genuine expression of praise became little more than a social gathering at which the ministry were conspicuous.<sup>154</sup> Few ministers serving the Liverpool Calvinistic Methodist circuit were absent from the 1886 festival that clarified denominational strength with the united chapel choirs that exceeded 1,200 singers. This vast chorus, collectively known as the Welsh Congregational Singing Union, was established by the Liverpool Calvinistic Methodists, 'for the object of arousing and creating a more general participation by the congregations in this most important part of the services of the sanctuary'.<sup>155</sup> This statement raises the question as to why it had taken the hierarchy of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists so long to realise the importance of sacred music in worship, and why they chose the nomenclature 'Congregational Singing Union' when the second largest Welsh denomination was the Liverpool Congregationalists.

How different were the showcase events of the Liverpool Presbyterians to the evangelistic crusades of Moody and Sankey, where the tuneful had stood beside the tuneless in an inclusive outpouring of praise that sang for redemption rather than musical perfection. These were spontaneous acts of worship while the choral festivals of the Welsh Nonconformist movement were adjudged on musical performance and success was measured by attendance, which according to Hoppen, 'fully shared the Victorian passion for counting things'.<sup>156</sup> Indeed the crowds that

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<sup>152</sup> 'Welsh Psalmody Demonstration in Liverpool', op. cit., 21 April 1885, 6. The anthem, *Yr Ysgol Sabbothol* [The Sunday School], was composed expressly by David Jenkins in Tonic Sol-fa notation for the Centenary of the Welsh Sunday School, 1885. It was a bilingual composition with Welsh words by Anthropos and an English version by E.W.Parry.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> 'Welsh Psalmody Demonstration in Liverpool', op. cit., 6 April 1886, 6.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> K.T. Hoppen, *The Mid-Victorian Generation 1846-1886* (Oxford, 1998), 429.

filled Hengler's Circus were probably comparable to those that relished the major choral events at the National Eisteddfod which had benefited from the numerous choral societies that had once been chapel choirs. Arguably, the *cymanfaoedd canu* were weakened and corrupted by sectarian rivalry, as typified by the response of the Brymbo Congregationalists to the idea of a united denominational singing meeting that was proposed during a discussion in Bryn Seion Congregational Chapel, Brymbo, and resentfully 'thrown out' by Rev. Daniel Edwards.<sup>157</sup>

Equally possessive, the Liverpool Presbyterians were disinclined to invite other denominations to participate in the 1887 *Cymanfa Ganu*, a well organised affair supervised by the Welsh Congregational Singing Union, that delegated the task of selecting hymn-tunes and anthems to a committee of chapel precentors who were expected to visit each fellowship and report on the progress achieved.<sup>158</sup> In a joint venture with the Sunday School Union, the Calvinistic Presbytery established a Tonic Sol-fa Union, no doubt at the behest of Eleazar Roberts and John Edwards, chairman of the Congregational Singing Union's musical committee.<sup>159</sup> At the close of the 1887 Festival, David Jenkins expressed his appreciation to the choir of 1,200 singers before they concluded with a performance Handel's 'Hallelujah Chorus' which was probably beyond the scope of the average congregation.<sup>160</sup>

Arguably, the relevance of these crowd-pleasing events had only a marginal effect on congregational singing and closer to the original intention was the *cymanfa ganu* of the Flint, Holywell, Carmel and Ffynnongroew Presbyterian Sunday schools at Bethel Chapel, Mostyn, in July 1887 when the *codwyr canu* of each chapel took it in turn to lead the singing.<sup>161</sup> Before leading the congregation in the closing hymn, 'Rhosyn Saron', Japheth Jones, *codwr canu* of the Carmel cause, remarked that the chapel was the only place to hold a *cymanfa ganu* as 'the chairman did not need to call for silence so often'.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> 'District News', *Wrexham Advertiser and North Wales News*, 16 June 1888, 6.

<sup>158</sup> 'Welsh Psalmody', *ibid.*, 20 April 1887, 3.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> 'Music Festival at Mostyn', *Flintshire County Herald*, 29 July 1887, 5.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

While Jenkins expressed the view that no organisation in Wales enjoyed more popularity in 1889 than the *cymanfa ganu*,<sup>163</sup> Emlyn Evans took a more cynical view of the grandiose festivals and suspected a denominational motive.<sup>164</sup> Ieuan Gwyllt had pointed to the lack of interest in congregational singing by chapel ministers and leaders in the preface of *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* in 1859, and thirty years later, despite the ‘showcase’ festivals of the Liverpool Welsh Presbyterians, the standard of congregational singing in the chapels showed only a marginal improvement. Writing in *The Cambrian*, Emlyn Evans concurs: ‘Congregational singing, notwithstanding the prevalence of *cymanfaoedd canu*, is at present by no means in a state of efficiency, which is largely due to the neglect of the leaders of the churches, who look upon music as a thing tolerated rather than encouraged, forgetful that song also is praise’.<sup>165</sup> That others subscribed to this view is evidenced by the disdainful plea from an anonymous correspondent writing in *Y Cymro* who called for *cymanfaoedd canu* to be an expression of praise rather than a concert and suggested that there should be more congregational tunes and fewer anthems ‘that were nothing more than showpieces’.<sup>166</sup>

Despite the wise adjudication of Emlyn Evans and the written petitions of those who questioned the denominational motive, the 1890 Welsh Calvinistic Methodist ‘Psalmody Festival’ (having changed from ‘demonstration’) was yet another glorification of Calvinistic might. The Welsh Congregational Singing Union choir of 1,500 singers filled the stage at Hengler’s Circus in what was a choral concert rather than a *cymanfa ganu* as the congregation took a lesser part.<sup>167</sup> The opposite was the case with the Wesleyans, Baptists and Congregationalists that convened in the sanctity of their respective chapels<sup>168</sup> and went almost unnoticed by the local press as the Liverpool Calvinistic Methodists dominated the *cymanfaoedd canu* movement during the 1880s and 90s. In almost every account of the festivals at Hengler’s Circus, reference is made to the amassed choir of 1,500 and the vast

<sup>163</sup> David Jenkins, ‘Ein Cymanfaoedd Canu’, *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol I, Rhif 7, Gorphenaf (1889), 1.

<sup>164</sup> Emlyn Evans, ‘The Development of Welsh Music’, *The Cambrian*, January (1891), 8.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> ‘Nodiadau Cerddorol’, *Y Cymro*, 26 Mai 1892, 7.

<sup>167</sup> ‘Welsh Psalmody Festival’, *Liverpool Mercury*, 29 April 1890, 5.

<sup>168</sup> ‘Musical Festivals in Liverpool’, *ibid.*, 30 April 1895, 6; ‘Local News’, *ibid.*, 12 April 1899, 10.

attendances,<sup>169</sup> while little or no mention is made of the spiritual outcome. Naturally, there was a commercial aspect to the mammoth event, not least being the cost of engaging the celebrated maestro David Jenkins, the main attraction who was described by J. Lloyd Williams as the 'Kaiser' of the *Cymanfa ganu*.<sup>170</sup>

The success of the Hengler's Circus festivals had not gone unnoticed by the chapel hierarchy in north-east Wales, and in 1890, Jenkins was invited to conduct the annual choral festival at Mold when the fourteen Sunday schools of the area congregated in the New Street Chapel.<sup>171</sup> Unlike Gwyllt, who had conducted this festival on numerous occasions, Jenkins decided to separate the choir from the congregation and even suggested that for future festivals, admission to the gallery should be by ticket 'in order that the seats there should be occupied exclusively by choristers'.<sup>172</sup> This was in sharp contrast to the Presbyterian chapels of Holywell where the denominational choir of 600 voices was led by the local *codwyr canu*, William Thomas of Gronant and Jethro Jones of Mostyn.<sup>173</sup> Notwithstanding the absence of a celebrated guest conductor, the chapel was filled to capacity despite the tepid interest by the local press that found visiting maestros more newsworthy. Far too often, the efforts of chapel precentors who prepared chapel choirs and congregations for the annual demonstrations were overlooked, and when the united choirs of the Mold and district Congregationalists assembled under Rev.W.Emlyn Jones of Morryston, it was noted that the singers had been well trained and that 'somebody must have taken great pains in teaching'.<sup>174</sup>

In the case of the Adwy'r Clawdd *Cymanfa* there was good reason for inviting a conductor from outside the area as the Sunday School Union embraced all four of the Welsh denominations, each with a capable precentor and to avoid tension, the *codwyr canu* agreed that David Jenkins should be invited to conduct the *Cymanfa* at Adwy'r Clawdd in May 1891.<sup>175</sup> During the following year, Jenkins was the

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<sup>169</sup> 'A Festival of Psalmody', *ibid.*, 25 April 1899, 8. It was estimated that almost 6,000 people attended the 1899 festival.

<sup>170</sup> J. Lloyd Williams, 'Y Diweddar Athro David Jenkins, Mus. Bac. (Cantab.)', *Y Wawr*, Cyfrol 4, Rhif 2 (1917), 74.

<sup>171</sup> 'Mold: Choral Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 14 June 1890, 8.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> 'Holywell: Choral Festival', *ibid.*, 7 June 1890, 8.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> 'Choral Festival', *ibid.*, 30 May 1891, 8.



guest conductor at *Capel Mawr*, Rhosllannerchrugog, after which time he became a regular visitor.<sup>176</sup> He returned to Adwy'r Clawdd in 1892 and a misinformed report of the *Cymanfa Gerddorol* stated: 'A few years ago it was deemed sufficient to entrust the care of the choirs and all matters appertaining to the musical part of the service to an individual known as the "dechreuwr canu" whose own knowledge of music was often below the average'. Surprisingly, a stark contradiction appears in the same article, stating that the combined chapel choirs that took part had been trained by the congregations' own *codwyr canu*.<sup>177</sup> The ability of Joseph Bartley, the precentor at Adwy'r Clawdd, was beyond question, as indeed was that of Robert Davies, precentor at *Capel Mawr*, Rhos who conducted the *Cymanfa Gerddorol* in June 1884, in a dedicated act of praise rather than a contrived choral performance.<sup>178</sup> Inadvertently perhaps, the concluding sentence of the press report exposes the erroneous agenda in a tribute to the Calvinistic Methodists, 'who had secured the services of one of the *best* present-day Welsh musicians, Mr.D.Jenkins, Mus Bac, (Cantab) Aberystwyth'.<sup>179</sup>

Joseph Parry (*Pencerdd America*) was the maestro of the Congregationalists, and an article in the *Musical Standard* quotes him as saying: 'One of these gatherings, while it would do the hearts of some of our English friends good to attend, would act as a sure and agreeable remedy for any prejudice that may lurk in their minds against the music of Wales and its people'.<sup>180</sup> Accepting that *cymanfaoedd canu* had become a contentious issue between Welsh denominations, Parry's reference to 'English friends' may well have inflamed the competitive tensions, not only in Wales, but further afield. When he conducted the United Choral Festival of the Wrexham Congregationalists in July 1893 at Bryn Seion Chapel, Brymbo, Joseph Parry commended the high standard of singing: 'At the Brymbo Festival the singing was the best of my whole year's festivals'.<sup>181</sup> There was no reason to doubt his sincerity as the singers at Bryn Seion were encouraged by chapel officials and

<sup>176</sup> 'Hanesion: Rhosllannerchrugog', *Y Cerddor*, Hydref - Tachwedd (1892).

<sup>177</sup> 'Cymanfa Gerddorol', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 28 May 1892, 8.

<sup>178</sup> 'Rhosllannerchrugog: Cymanfa gerddorol at the Capel Mawr', *ibid.*, 20 June 1884, 6.

<sup>179</sup> 'Cymanfa Gerddorol', *ibid.*, 28 May 1892, 8.

<sup>180</sup> Dr. Joseph Parry, 'Music and Musicians in Wales', *Musical Standard*, 21 May 1892, 428.

<sup>181</sup> 'Music in North Wales', *Western Mail*, 31 July 1893, 6.

trained by deacon, Peter Williams (1855-1919),<sup>182</sup> who was also the conductor of the Brymbo and Broughton United Choir.<sup>183</sup> That the chapel choir performed items from Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Handel's *Messiah* with soloists, accompanied by *Pencerdd America*, changed what was described as a 'choral festival' into a populist concert. For those that flocked to Bryn Seion there was disappointment as they failed to gain admittance on account of the modest size of the chapel that had a limited seating capacity of c.300.<sup>184</sup>

Arguably, the improvement in congregational singing in the chapels of north-east Wales and Liverpool came by the efforts of chapel precentors rather than the 'showcase events' that secularised the sacred for the sake of denominational egotism. Choral festivals conducted by professional musicians leading well-trained choirs were untypical of congregational worship and *The Welsh Weekly* compared the *cymanfa ganu* to the well-instituted anniversary meetings of the English denominations.<sup>185</sup> Referring to the singing meeting at Gorphwysfa Chapel, Cefn Mawr, in 1892 when choirs from Cefn and Llangollen district were conducted by R. Wilfred Jones,<sup>186</sup> an article on the subject of *Cymanfaoedd Canu* concluded: 'For some years they were held by one or two denominations only, but now the four denominations vie with each other in making their meetings successful'.<sup>187</sup> Ironically, it was David Jenkins who revealed the hidden agenda that lay behind the grand choral events when he conducted the Singing Festival at *Capel Mawr*, Rhosllannerchrugog, in November 1893 and eulogized on the high standard of singing: 'In no other chapel belonging to any denomination in Wales is there such a spectacle... No-one is greater in Rhos than the chapel and the cause'.<sup>188</sup> With equal

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<sup>182</sup> Peter Williams, manager of the Brymbo Iron and Steel Company and precentor at Bryn Seion Congregational Chapel, Brymbo, from 1888-1819, following Seth Roberts who was *codwr canu* from 1858 -1888. See E.K.Jones, *Harwt a Bryn Seion - Hanes Eglwys Annibynnol Brymbo 1802-1940* (Llandysul, 1941), 62-3.

<sup>183</sup> 'Music in North Wales', op. cit.

<sup>184</sup> 'Brymbo and Broughton: Musical Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 8 July 1893, 8.

<sup>185</sup> Correspondent, *The Welsh Weekly*, 3 June 1892, 13.

<sup>186</sup> Robert (Wilfred) Jones R.A.M.(London), (1862-1929), a voice-training teacher of music in Wrexham, succeeded Richard Mills as precentor at *Capel Mawr*, Rhosllannerchrugog, and also as conductor of Rhos Male Voice Choir (1898-1904). He was much in demand by the Wesleyan Methodists as a singing festival conductor and was also a noted eisteddfod adjudicator.

<sup>187</sup> Correspondent, op. cit., 3 June 1892, 13.

<sup>188</sup> David Jenkins, 'Cymanfa Ganu Rhosllannerchrugog', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol V, Rhif 60, Rhagfyr (1893), 142. 'Ni cheir y fath olygfa o fewn unrhyw gapel yn perthyn i unrhyw enwad yn (sic) Nghymru ... Does dim yn cael ei gydnabod yn fawr yn y Rhos ond y capel a'r achos'.

enthusiasm, the Rhos correspondent of the *Wrexham Advertiser* referred to Robert Davies' choir of 700 voices: 'The annual psalmody festival at Capel Mawr is rightly considered in this neighbourhood as one of the chief musical treats of the year'.<sup>189</sup> That the *cymanfa* had become a musical performance was confirmed when Jenkins returned to Rhos for the 1894 festival and remarked that the singing had not achieved the standard of the previous year.<sup>190</sup>

The extent to which the purpose of *Cymanfaoedd Canu* had digressed is illustrated by the annual gathering of the Congregationalists when Joseph Parry conducted the chapels from Rhos and Llangollen at Bethlehem Chapel Rhos, in 1896, to the accompaniment of 'a full orchestra', led by Dan C. Owen.<sup>191</sup> Due reference was made to the efforts of the chapel precentors who had prepared the choirs and also to the accompanists, one of whom was Caradog Roberts. During the course of the day, G. W. Hughes of Cefn Mawr examined candidates in Tonic Sol-fa,<sup>192</sup> which confirms that the gathering was convened as a musical event rather than an act of worship. In addition to the contributions from the circuit ministers, the vicar of Rhos, Rev. T. Pritchard, was invited to address the gathering and following the usual expressions of thanks to the conductor and choral participants, he concluded with a timely observation:

Their sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God's praise must be given with understanding, but whilst cultivating intellect, they must not forget heart culture. Might they never be devoid of the inspiration which accompanied the hymn-singing of their less cultivated dear old fathers. Might their worship of praise never deteriorate into a mere mechanical performance.<sup>193</sup>

This anxious plea for the return to the fundamental purpose of congregational singing as an act of heartfelt praise is a salutary reminder that the simple hymnody of spiritually-enlightened amateur musicians, written with limited understanding of musical form and grammar, had shaped the unique character of Welsh chapel music. John Graham claims that it was the *cymanfaoedd canu* that '... placed Welsh congregational singing, from 1860 onwards, on a plane such as been

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<sup>189</sup> 'Psalmody Festival at Capel Mawr', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 18 Nov. 1893, 8.

<sup>190</sup> David Jenkins, 'Rhosllanerchrugog', op. cit., Cyfrol VI, Rhif 17, Tachwedd (1894), 129.

<sup>191</sup> 'Psalmody Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 11 July 1896, 8.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 6.

probably unequalled anywhere',<sup>194</sup> and K.O.Morgan refers to the growth of the *cymanfa ganu* as having provided the foundation on which the choral tradition was built.<sup>195</sup> With such assertive views, it is unfortunate that neither author makes reference to the spiritual outcome of the *cymanfaoedd canu* or the commitment of the working-class musicians who encouraged congregations to sing the words, only to be overshadowed and contradicted by visiting maestros.

The fervent musical activity of the 1890s, probably reached a high point in 1895, when it was estimated that the Nonconformist denominations in Wales held 280 festivals with 134,550 singers taking part - a figure that equated to almost nine per cent of the population.<sup>196</sup> Denominational propaganda measured the success of *cymanfaoedd canu* by attendance without heed that what had been intended as an act of congregational praise was now little more than a secular expression adjudged on musical performance. By 1899 the Liverpool Welsh Presbyterians were boasting that the Psalmody Festival at Hengler's Circus in 1899 was perhaps the most successful with a congregation of over 5,000 people which included the combined choirs of twenty chapels under the baton of David Jenkins, and accompanied by an orchestra.<sup>197</sup>

As an expression of denominational fortitude, the massed gathering no doubt achieved its objective, but in his closing remarks, Rev. David Jones made the following observation: 'We are sometimes told that our singing is too full of art and that our fathers sung much more effectively with less art. Their singing excelled ours not because it contained less art, but because it was full of spirit'.<sup>198</sup> Despite the acclaimed success of the 1899 event, the Liverpool Calvinistic Methodist *cymanfa ganu* was not held the following year on account of a dispute that arose between the Congregational Singing Union committee and the *Cyfarfod Misol* regarding the services of an orchestra.<sup>199</sup> This matter was later resolved and the 1901 *Cymanfa* moved to St. George's Hall, Liverpool, where the singing was accompanied by one of the finest organs in the country and conducted by David

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<sup>194</sup> John Graham, *A Century of Welsh Music* (London, 1923), 16.

<sup>195</sup> Kenneth. O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation - Wales 1880-1980* (Oxford, 1882), 19.

<sup>196</sup> R. Tudur Jones, *Faith and Crisis of a Nation: Wales 1890-1914* (Cardiff, 2004), 108.

<sup>197</sup> 'A Festival of Psalmody', *Liverpool Mercury*, 25 April 1899, 8.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> 'Lerpwl', *Herald y Rhos*, 4 Mai 1901, 4.

Evans (1874-1948), who would later succeed Joseph Parry at the University College, Cardiff.<sup>200</sup>

The *cymanfa ganu* had become an annual gala performance and D.E.Parry Williams was of the opinion: ‘... the emphasis in the future needs to be placed on the music of the service rather than on the *gymanfa ganu*, which has tended to become an end in itself, rather than the ideal of Ieuan Gwyllt that it should be the means of preparing and perfecting the music of the services’.<sup>201</sup> Arguably, it had allowed what was intended as a service of sung worship to become a choral event and according to Brinley Richards, a churchman and one of the most prominent Welsh musicians of his time, congregational singing was not a performing art:

I have no sympathy whatever with music in churches and chapels merely as a performance. I want to have music of such a kind that we may all unite in singing as an act of worship, in other words, earnest and hearty congregational singing, which, if I do not misjudge my countrymen, is more in accordance with their own religious sympathies than music of any other kind, however excellent it may be.<sup>202</sup>

Not all musicians were of this view as evidenced by the ‘lecture concert’ on music at Bethel MC Chapel, Acrefair, by Joseph Parry in 1899, which concluded with the Welsh National Anthem rather than prayer,<sup>203</sup> which implies that secular music was taking precedence over congregational singing. Moses O. Jones expressed his regret that such little progress had been made in chapel singing: ‘The order of our musical service is almost, if not exactly the same as it was sixty years ago, in many areas; the Eisteddfod during the last thirty years, has done much harm to congregational singing’.<sup>204</sup> His disillusion was shared by Emylyn Evans whose critical views of the massed festivals changed to despair at the lack of preparation for the *gymanfa* – ‘the singers flock to it as if to a fair - a form of ‘ffair ganu’, a day-off to enjoy, meet friends and show off new clothes with little effort to learn

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<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> D.E. Parry Williams, ‘Music and Religion’ in Peter Crossley-Holland (ed.), *Music in Wales* (London, 1948), 58.

<sup>202</sup> Quoted in ‘Mr. Brinley Richards on Congregational Singing’, *Tonic Sol-fa Reporter*, 15 November 1872, 347.

<sup>203</sup> ‘Acrefair’, *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 8 April 1899, 8.

<sup>204</sup> M.O.Jones, ‘Caniadaeth y Ganrif’, *Y Diwygiwr*, Ionawr (1901), 25.

the tunes, hymns and anthems'.<sup>205</sup> R.Tudur Jones observes: 'As in other areas, sincerity was endangered by sentimentality and too much emphasis was placed on subjective pleasure',<sup>206</sup> while David Jenkins, who had played such a prominent part in conducting the Calvinistic Methodist festivals, expressed his disappointment that the *cymanfa ganu* had become little more than a populist attraction.<sup>207</sup> Emlyn Evans maintained that the format of the early singing festivals was far superior to those of 1901, and cited the 1845 *Cymanfa Ganu* in Bala when denominations united in songs of praise after a lecture on music by Rev. John Mills in the afternoon as an example.<sup>208</sup> Despite his misgiving, he nevertheless felt that the *cymanfa ganu* was too valuable an institution to lose as it had the means to enhance public praise in general.<sup>209</sup>

Notwithstanding the fact that the Calvinistic Methodists' musical extravaganzas had elevated David Jenkins to such prominence, he denounced the narrow, self-interest and 'regularly attacked the convention that a denominational *cymanfa* would sing an anthem only by a composer from that denomination, or be conducted only by one of its 'own musicians'.<sup>210</sup> It is incongruous that Jenkins should have condemned the very movement that had enhanced his popularity through the same 'self interest' policy with which he had so readily complied. Caradog Roberts, writing in *Y Cerddor*, remarked that Centenary Commemoration Festivals were often associated with the composer's denomination, as in the case of Ieuan Gwyllt and *Tanymarian*, while *Owain Alaw* was 'simply ignored by us, because he was not attached to one or other of the great Nonconformist bodies of Wales. Unfortunately for him he was a Church of England organist!'<sup>211</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century the concerted drive for new adherents had degenerated into bitter denominational opposition, as evidenced by the reaction of

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<sup>205</sup> Emlyn Evans, 'Cerddoriaeth Gymreig yn y Ganrif Ddiwethaf', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XIII, Rhif 151, Gorphenaf (1901), 74.

<sup>206</sup> R. Tudur Jones, *op. cit.*, 108.

<sup>207</sup> Emlyn Evans, 'Cerddoriaeth Gymreig yn y Ganrif Ddiwethaf', *op.cit.*; Gareth Williams, *op. cit.*, 167.

<sup>208</sup> Emlyn Evans, *ibid.*, 73.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>210</sup> Gareth Williams, *op. cit.*, 166.

<sup>211</sup> Caradog Roberts, 'Ieuan Gwyllt and Tanymarian', *Y Cerddor Newydd*, Vol. 1, No. 10, December (1922), 270.

the Congregationalists when the Wesleyans announced their intention to build a chapel in Wern, Minera. They were accused of building chapels in sparsely-populated areas around Bwlchgwyn and Minera in the tracks of the Congregationalists, although their sincere intention had been to provide a more convenient outreach for those members of the Rehoboth Chapel, Coedpoeth, who lived in the neighbouring villages.<sup>212</sup> Denominationalism was divisive and any thought of unity was dismissed out of hand, which impelled Stanley Leighton (1837-1901), Conservative M.P. for Oswestry to comment: 'The energies which were once solely devoted to purely religious objects were exhausting themselves in sectional antagonisms', and he expressed deep concern for the spiritual condition of Wales as 'Nonconformity is losing ground'.<sup>213</sup>

The last hope for conciliation rested in the prayers for divine intervention that David Howell (1831-1903), Dean of St. David's, prior to his death in January 1903, had offered for over fifteen years: '... that the primary need of my country and my beloved nation at this moment is a spiritual revival through a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>214</sup> Howell did not live to see his prayers answered, but shortly after his death, Rosina Davies, a south Wales evangelist commented: 'The tide was rising everywhere, and there was a spiritual awakening that made it easy and pleasant to preach and *sing* the Gospel',<sup>215</sup> while *Y Goleuad* remarked that the signs of revival were apparent 'in many places'.<sup>216</sup> Rosina Davies campaigned along the north Wales coast in 1903,<sup>217</sup> and also addressed a meeting at Capel Bethlehem, Rhosllannerchrugog, in February 1904,<sup>218</sup> and by the summer of 1904, there were 'unforgettable' services at Seion Baptist Chapel, Ponciau, when J.R. Jones, Pontypridd, and Rev. Thomas Shankland (1858-1927) of Rhyl preached on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June.<sup>219</sup>

<sup>212</sup> 'Rhos a'r Cylchoedd: Y Wesleyiaid', *Y Tyst a'r Dydd*, 7 Mawrth 1890, 11.

<sup>213</sup> Stanley Leighton, 'The Rise, Progress, and Decline of Nonconformity in Wales', *National Review*, July (1888), 647-650.

<sup>214</sup> Roger L. Brown, *David Howell – A Pool of Spirituality* (Denbigh, 1998), 251.

<sup>215</sup> Rosina Davies, *The Story of My Life* (Llandysul, 1942) 180.

<sup>216</sup> 'Sŵn ym Mrig y Morwydd', *Y Goleuad*, 22 Gorffennaf 1904, 9.

<sup>217</sup> Rosina Davies, op. cit., 180.

<sup>218</sup> Cofnodau Eglwysig Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog (1898-1904), Chwefror (1904).

<sup>219</sup> Un o Blant Seion, 'Diwygiad yn y Ponkey', *Seren Cymru*, 15 Gorphenaf 1904, 4; Evan Williams, 'Hanes Dechreuad y Diwygiad yn Rhosllannerchrugog', *Y Greal*, Tachwedd (1906), 291; Brynmor P. Jones, *Voices from the Welsh Revival 1904-1905* (Bridgend, 1995), 110. Rev. Thomas Shankland later became librarian at the College of North Wales, Bangor.

Unaware of the happenings in Rhosllannerchrugog, the community of Loughor was also experiencing the extraordinary intervention of the Holy Spirit as Evan Roberts, a collier and student Calvinistic Methodist minister began to evangelise to the young people of his chapel and within two weeks, the whole area was blessed by the real presence of God.<sup>220</sup> The spiritual awakening was reported in a lengthy article in the *Western Mail* of 10<sup>th</sup> November which referred to the remarkable religious revival taking hold in Loughor where Evan Roberts was 'causing great surprise by his extraordinary orations at Moriah Chapel, that place of worship having been besieged by dense crowds of people unable to gain admission'.<sup>221</sup> Crowds lined the street outside and prayer meetings continued until half-past two the following morning as the spiritual awakening descended on Loughor.<sup>222</sup> What is truly remarkable is that the revivals in Loughor and Rhosllannerchrugog happened simultaneously although they were unconnected. The account of the awakening in Rhos appeared in the *Wrexham Guardian* on the morning of 11 November 1904, within 24 hours of the *Western Mail* report of the Evan Roberts meetings in Loughor, and Philip Eveson asks: 'Was this coincidence or evidence of a divine plan? It certainly cannot be accounted for in terms of contagion'.<sup>223</sup>

The revival moved through Rhosllannerchrugog with a quiet yet dramatic effect gaining momentum through the preaching of Rev. Rhys Bevan Jones (1869-1933), a Baptist minister from Porth, Glamorgan.<sup>224</sup> He had preached at Tabernacle, Cefn Mawr, in October 1904 to a congregation that included a sizeable contingency from neighbouring villages who were so moved that he was invited to Penuel Chapel, Rhosllannerchrugog the following month.<sup>225</sup> R.B.Jones held a series of meetings and the *Wrexham Guardian*, a newspaper better known for its partisan support of the Established Church, merely reported that 'revival meetings' were being held in Rhos,<sup>226</sup> without realising the gravity of the spiritual awakening that was already attracting the interest of the provincial and national press. 'That day'

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<sup>220</sup> Philip H. Eveson (ed.), *When God came to North Wales* (Oswestry, 2010), 14

<sup>221</sup> 'Awstin' [Thomas Awstin Davies], *The Religious Revival in Wales (Western Mail)* (Oswestry, Reprinted 2004), 4.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>223</sup> Philip H. Eveson (ed.), *op. cit.*, 14.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> Noel Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar* (Bridgend, 2005), 40.

<sup>226</sup> Philip H. Eveson (ed.), *op. cit.*, 14.



was how Rev H. Elvet Lewis described the religious revival in Rhosllannerchrugog which broke out simultaneously with the visitation at Loughor.<sup>227</sup> The first community to feel the impact of revival in north Wales was Rhos,<sup>228</sup> and the *Capel Mawr* Logbook records: 'Torfeydd anferth yn ymgynull noson ar ôl noson i wrando ar y pregethu, y Capel Mawr heno yn rhy fach'.<sup>229</sup>

As the effects of revival spread, R.B.Jones reasserted the centrality of preaching God's Word and, says Brian H. Edwards, 'appeared to have deliberately distanced himself from Roberts' methods'<sup>230</sup> that were predisposed to noisy emotion, while the meetings in Rhosllannerchrugog were quietly controlled.<sup>231</sup> John Powell Parry (1887-1979) in an interview with Paul Hook of Hull, was seventeen years of age when the revival broke out in Rhos, and he vividly remembered the sudden but dramatic social change and recalls the Sundays when chapels were full by six o'clock in the morning.<sup>232</sup> In the areas affected by the ministry of Rev. R.B.Jones, choirs abandoned the competitive stage, *eisteddfodau* and *cymanfaoedd canu* were cancelled while secular distractions faltered through lack of support and were regularly postponed. Evangelists took to the streets and emptied the taverns by preaching at their front door and congregational singing returned to its rightful purpose as a free expression of Christian praise and undoubtedly enriched worship, although it was the power of the evangelical truths that filled the chapels.

Similar happenings had been experienced in Holywell in December 1904, when Rosina Davies addressed the Independents, and from that first meeting the spirit of revival spread rapidly through the district.<sup>233</sup> Denominational loyalties were cast aside as men and women left their workplaces to attend prayer meetings that often lasted until midnight, with young people breaking out in song,<sup>234</sup> while many bystanders, attracted by the singing, joined the processions and were eventually

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<sup>227</sup> H. Elvet Lewis, *With Christ among the Miners: Incidents and Impressions of the Welsh Revival* (London, 1906), 103.

<sup>228</sup> *Cofnodau Eglwysig Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog (1898-1904)*, 17 Tachwedd 1904.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.* 'Huge crowds gathered night after night to listen to the preaching – tonight Capel Mawr is too small'.

<sup>230</sup> Brian H. Edwards, *Revival! A people saturated with God* (Durham, 1990), 104.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>233</sup> *Y Tyst*, 14 December 1904, 5.

<sup>234</sup> *Cofnodau Eglwysig Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog (1898-1904)*, 19 Tachwedd 1904.

drawn into the chapels.<sup>235</sup> The Revival engendered a new spirit of unity between denominations as evidenced by the welcome that the chapels of Rhos extended to General William Booth of the Salvation Army on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1904, when 'he conducted one of the most spirited gatherings held during the revival'.<sup>236</sup> United prayer meetings continued throughout December and the *Rhos Herald* reported 743 converts to the faith in Rhos, with *Capel Mawr* gaining the largest number of adherents,<sup>237</sup> and the following year, a *Capel Mawr* Choral Society was formed<sup>238</sup> at the request of the young people, for the purpose of performing sacred works.<sup>239</sup>

A group of 200 men and women from Merseyside travelled to Rhos when the evangelist, Archdeacon Madden of Liverpool addressed the interdenominational prayer meeting in *Capel Mawr* on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1905<sup>240</sup> and J. H. Jones recalls attending a service in that chapel as a visitor when over 1,000 were present.<sup>241</sup> By the end of February 1905, converts in Rhosllannerchrugog and district numbered 1,400,<sup>242</sup> and many from the Welsh chapels in Merseyside journeyed to Rhosllannerchrugog, as a result of which a deputation of the Liverpool Welsh Free Church Council, led by Dr. John Williams of Princes Road Chapel, travelled to Dowlais, near Merthyr, to persuade Evan Roberts to visit Liverpool.<sup>243</sup> In contrast to the spiritual phenomenon that had poured out on Rhosllannerchrugog, the first Liverpool revival meeting, which began in Princes Road Chapel on 29 March 1905 was a well-organised event with admission by ticket, 'so that everyone who so wished could have a fair chance to see Evan Roberts'.<sup>244</sup> For those who came to hear the speaker there was a long wait as he arrived at seven o'clock and sat silently in the pulpit for an hour and a half and broke his silence only to rebuke the congregation for singing a hymn while he was meditating.<sup>245</sup> Among the 1,800

<sup>235</sup> R. Mills, 'Y Diwygiad', *Herald y Rhos*, 18 Chwefror 1905, 4.

<sup>236</sup> Cofnodau Eglwysig Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog (1898-1904), 13 Rhagfyr 1904.

<sup>237</sup> R. Mills, op. cit., 24 Rhagfyr 1904, 4.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 16 Tachwedd 1905, 33.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 22 Tachwedd 1905, 34.

<sup>240</sup> Cofnodau Eglwysig Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog (1905-1909), 4 Chwefror 1905, 5; R. Mills, op. cit., 4 Chwefror 1905, 4.

<sup>241</sup> J. H. Jones, *O'r Mwg i'r Mynydd* (Lerpwl, 1913), 79.

<sup>242</sup> E. Isfryn Williams, Ponciau, 'Trem ar y Diwygiad yn y Rhos a'r Cylch', *Y Drysorfa*, Rhif 75, Mawrth (1905), 118.

<sup>243</sup> R. Tudur Jones, op. cit., 321; *The British Weekly*, 27 October 1904, 61; *Y Faner*, 2 Tachwedd 1904, 7.

<sup>244</sup> R. Tudur Jones, op. cit., 321.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

people who filled the chapel there was a general feeling of disappointment at the lack of warmth and emotion,<sup>246</sup> and 'Awstin' makes a pointed reference to '... the campaign as the Liverpool newspapers describe it – up to the present, at any rate, the word 'revival' is not in use here'.<sup>247</sup>

How different from the revival in Rhosllannerchrugog and other working-class communities where the crowds freely spilled out into the streets to *hear* the quiet but powerful message of Salvation. Thomas Levi (1825-1916), founding editor of *Trysorfa y Plant*, describes the quiet characteristic of revival that typified the spiritual awakening in north-east Wales: 'Indeed there is no commotion, every meeting is quiet, peaceful and measured, and every event is led by the Spirit. But all other meetings, cultural, political and entertainment have had to yield their place to it',<sup>248</sup> and Brynmor Jones observes: 'even the strict cymanfa ganu tradition surrenders to the spirit of liberty and rejoicing'.<sup>249</sup> Evan Roberts was in Liverpool from 28 March until April 18 1905,<sup>250</sup> but in his account of Stanley Road MC Chapel, Bootle, Hugh Evans claims that the 1904-5 Revival did not significantly increase membership in his own chapel - 'Fe giliodd y gwres mawr yn fuan ar ôl iddo ymadael'.<sup>251</sup>

Inasmuch as the emotionally-charged meetings of Evan Roberts in Liverpool contrasted with the more spiritually discerning services led by R.B.Jones of Porth, there was commonality in that both restored congregational singing to its rightful purpose as an expression of Christian worship. *Gwilym Hiraethog's* hymn, 'Dyma gariad fel y moroedd' ['Vast as the oceans'] was sung to the tune 'Ebenezer', after which it became an anthem of revival.<sup>252</sup> Equally popular amongst revival congregations was the hymn, 'Y Gŵr wrth Ffynnon Jacob' [The Man by Jacob's Well] by Thomas William that was sung to the tune, 'Bryniau Casia', which was

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> 'Awstin' [Thomas Awstin Davies], op. cit., 333.

<sup>248</sup> R. Tudur Jones, op. cit., 307; *The British Weekly*, 15 December 1904, 276.

<sup>249</sup> Quoted in Brynmor P. Jones, op. cit., 171.

<sup>250</sup> John Hughes Morris, op. cit., 266.

<sup>251</sup> Hugh Evans, *Camau'r Cysegr: Sef Hanes Eglwys y Methodistiaid Calфинаidd Stanley Road Bootle* (Lerpwl, 1926), 43. 'The zeal soon waned after his departure'.

<sup>252</sup> Delyth G. Morgans, *Cydymaith Caneuon Ffydd* (Aberystwyth, 2006), 332. The tune was previously thought to have been washed up in a bottle, hence the epithet 'Tôn y Botel', until it was accredited to T.J. Williams (1869-1944).

known by heart.<sup>253</sup> W.S. Jones of Rhos refers to the occasion when the preacher, Elvet Lewis, specifically asked the congregation to sing 'Bryniau Casia' which had such a profound effect that, 'the solemn yet triumphant accents of that old Hindu tune have sounded in our ears ever since'.<sup>254</sup> The spontaneity of the singing was evident at a revival meeting in Liverpool when young people sang Pantycelyn's hymn, 'Gwaed y Groes sy'n codi fyny', [Jesu's blood – its strengthening virtues], as others were in prayer and Mrs Annie Davies sang 'I need thee every hour', the American Gospel plea made famous by the Moody and Sankey crusade a quarter of a century earlier.<sup>255</sup> Equally inspired were musicians such as W. Penfro Rowlands (1860-1937) who composed the universally known hymn-tune 'Blaenwern' in the heat of revival to the words of Pantycelyn's hymn, 'Tyred, Iesu i'r anialwch' that would later be adapted by English congregations to Charles Wesley's iconic hymn, 'Love divine, all loves excelling'.<sup>256</sup>

As with the Moody and Sankey meetings that brought many to faith, the 1904-05 Revival gave congregations the freedom to express their praise through gospel songs and hymns and so powerful was the effect that choral societies deferred competitive arrangements and instead of competing at *eisteddfodau*, chapel choirs sang religious choral works solely for their spiritual relevance.<sup>257</sup> The extraordinary outcome of revival had reached the national musical press and the London-based *Musical Herald* reported: 'The Revival still overshadows everything musical, eisteddfodau, concerts, etc., but well-known singers take a leading part in the musical portions of the Revival services ... and the Rhos Male Voice Choir has become the Revival choir in that district'.<sup>258</sup> In the same spirit of unity that had brought denominations together in worship, the Rhos Excelsior and the Rhos Silver Band amalgamated, and with the exception of two members, all were converted during the revival.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> 'Awstin' [Thomas Awstin Davies], op. cit., 335.

<sup>254</sup> Brynmor P. Jones, op. cit., 173.

<sup>255</sup> 'Awstin' [Thomas Awstin Davies], op. cit., 335.

<sup>256</sup> Delyth G. Morgans, op. cit., 291.

<sup>257</sup> J. T. Edwards, *Souvenir Brochure - Rhos Male Voice Choir* (1966), 11.

<sup>258</sup> 'News from all Parts: North Wales', *The Musical Herald*, March (1905), 77.

<sup>259</sup> 'The Revival', *Herald y Rhos*, 28 Ionawr 1905, 5.

Congregational singing in the locality was undoubtedly enhanced by spiritual fervour and the gospel hymns of *Sŵn y Juwbili* captured the divine energy of the awakening and brought a new dimension to Welsh hymnology. Like the simple expressions of the Moody and Sankey crusades, the music of the 1904-05 Revival focused on praise rather than performance. Brynmor Jones observes: 'The accepted task of any festival conductor was of a musical rather than a spiritual character',<sup>260</sup> which may well have been true of David Jenkins, although the much feted conductor of *cymanfaoedd canu*, writing in *Y Cerddor*, welcomed the effect that the Revival had on songs of praise as it reinforced the efforts of those who had toiled to improve congregational singing. The religious revival had re-defined the boundaries between sacred and secular music as sung worship returned to its rightful purpose, and says Jenkins: 'There is clear evidence that the hymns learnt by the young people in those meetings had become living experiences and a source of prayer for thousands'.<sup>261</sup> He did, however, criticise the limited and repetitive choice of tunes, and concurs with a press report that there was '... less variety in the singing and more variety in the prayers and those praying'.<sup>262</sup> Jenkins was nevertheless mindful that the *cymanfa ganu* had lost its purpose as an act of worship and he warned against a return to complacency after the Revival's influence has waned.<sup>263</sup>

The Revival in Rhosllannerchrugog flourished through the spiritual power of R.B.Jones' ministry and left an indelible mark on the culture and society of this working class Welsh community. For the many who travelled from north-east Wales to Liverpool to attend the revival meetings of Evan Roberts there were those who made the pilgrimage from Merseyside to Rhosllannerchrugog to witness the extraordinary effects of the R.B. Jones ministry that had transformed the lives of this working-class community. Evan Roberts declined an invitation from the Free Church Council to visit the Rhos district, and explained that it was difficult to appoint a date and make arrangements beforehand as the south was crying out constantly for his services. The closest he came to visiting Rhos was when he

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<sup>260</sup> Brynmor P. Jones, op. cit., 171.

<sup>261</sup> D. Jenkins 'Canu a'r Diwygiad', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XVII, Rhif 195, Mawrth (1905), 22.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

changed trains at Ruabon station, *en route* to yet another southerly destination.<sup>264</sup> The Revival was deemed, not least by Evan Roberts himself, as an act of divine intervention and he became so inextricably linked with the spiritual phenomenon that Thomas Spurgeon observed: 'Evan Roberts is as much a product as he is leader of the Revival'.<sup>265</sup> The newspapers had placed Evan Roberts as the central character of the Revival, but contrary to Spurgeon's observation, there was not one leader, but many evangelists that were led by the Holy Spirit to bring about one of the most remarkable occurrences in twentieth-century Welsh history.<sup>266</sup>

Ieuan Gwynedd Jones observes: 'The 1904-05 Revival might well have been the last attempt by ordinary Welshmen to make of religion what it had once been - popular, nonclerical, unlearned, unsophisticated, enthusiastic, and organic in the community and Welsh in language'.<sup>267</sup> What I.G.Jones omits to mention, however, is that the Revival re-empowered chapel congregations to sing from the heart.

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<sup>264</sup> 'The Revival', *Llangollen Advertiser*, 8 December 1905, 5.

<sup>265</sup> Noel Gibbard, *Fire on the Altar* (Bridgend, 2005), 58.

<sup>266</sup> R. Tudur Jones, *op. cit.*, 282.

<sup>267</sup> I. G. Jones, *Mid-Victorian Wales – The Observers and the Observed* (Cardiff, 1992), 78.

## Conclusion

According to D. Emlyn Evans (1843-1913), in a lecture to the Cymmrodorion Society in 1890, Wales had no reliable music historian, and it is not surprising that the history of choral and congregational singing has been overshadowed by other considerations.<sup>1</sup> Nineteenth-century historians seemed to find greater fascination with the industrial and economic growth of north-east Wales than with the society that shaped it, and that same indifference to chapel music and musicians is only too clear in the historical accounts of Nonconformist ministers. Their eclectic histories are often abstemious on the societal impact of congregational singing and its relevance to worship, as W.P.Griffith observes: 'The published biographies of the outstanding preachers all attempted to highlight the best qualities of their subjects and concentrated on those who had done credit to the Welsh pulpit'.<sup>2</sup>

This historical oversight conceals the musical aspects of Nonconformity as it was through the Sunday schools and *Yr Ysgol Gân* that self-taught musicians were given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills as evidenced by the number of young people that fulfilled the role of *codwr canu* in the chapels of north-east Wales. Musical dynasties such as the Mills', the family of Owen *Cantwr* of Penycae and the Davies' of Cefn Mawr are but three examples of the families of *codwyr canu* that shaped the music of the chapel communities. The efforts of local musicians were sustained by denominational journals that were critical to the dissemination of knowledge, particularly when it became the practice of each to include hymn-tunes and Temperance music, and it was through such journals that composers, such as John Ambrose Lloyd, first came to public notice.

Few records pertaining to chapel choirs have survived and many monographs that relate to specific denominational causes carry only a brief overview of musical activity, with the exception of John Owen Jones' account of Salem Penycae<sup>3</sup> and that of H. Llewellyn Williams which pays tribute to the *codwyr canu* of Adwy'r Clawdd.<sup>4</sup> Of the few chapel log-books in existence, the most comprehensive is that

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in J. Graham, *A Century of Welsh Music* (London, 1923), 2-3. 'The Cymmrodorion Society, Mr. D. Emlyn Evans on "The Development of Welsh Music"', *Bye-Gones*, 11 June 1890, 386-7.

<sup>2</sup> W.P.Griffith, 'Preaching Second to No Other under the Sun', Robert Pope (ed.), *Religion and National Identity: Wales and Scotland c. 1700-2000* (Cardiff, 2001), 70.

<sup>3</sup> John Owen Jones, *Hen Arweinyddion y Canu yn Salem*, Penycae (Colwyn Bay, 1911).

<sup>4</sup> H. Llewellyn Williams, *Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd yn Adwy'r Clawdd (1747-1947)* (Wrecsam, 1947), 60.



of *Capel Mawr*, Rhosllannerchrugog which acknowledges the importance of congregational singing, and has proved to be an invaluable source. Similarly, the history of Cefn Mawr Tabernacle and Seion Chapels, faithfully recorded by the ancestors of Davies *Y Cantwr*, provide a detailed description of the working-class chapel musicians who transformed an otherwise unremarkable industrial village into a well-known cultural destination. Above all, what characterised the working-classes in the communities of north-east Wales and the Welsh society in Liverpool was the passion for self-improvement that manifested in the literary and musical societies that developed in the chapel schoolrooms.

After the mid nineteenth century and the appearance of more localised newspapers such as the *Wrexham Advertiser* (1854) and the *Cheshire Observer* (1854), both of which circulated throughout the counties of Denbighshire and Flintshire, the activities of Nonconformist chapels began to reach a wider public. The first Welsh language newspaper, *Yr Amserau* was launched in Liverpool in 1843 and later merged with *Y Baner* the Denbigh based newspaper published by Thomas Gee that became *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*. Equally influential was the publishing concern of Hughes and Son of Wrexham that prepared the ground for north-east Wales to become the publishing capital of the Principality.

It was from Merseyside that the Curwen Tonic Sol-fa notation spread through Wales by the efforts of Liverpool chapel musician Eleazar Roberts, around the time that Ieuan Gwyllt published *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol*, the Calvinistic Methodist tune book that introduced the *cymanfa canu* and transformed congregational singing in chapels throughout Wales. Following the success of his tune-book, Ieuan Gwyllt began publishing *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, the first authentic Welsh language musical journal, through the office of Isaac Clarke at Ruthin. It was from this same establishment that Owain Alaw produced *Gems of Welsh Melody* which was inspired by the collection of previously unpublished Welsh airs that was adjudicated at the 1858 Llangollen Eisteddfod that became the model for the National Eisteddfod which was formalised in 1861. It was in *Gems of Welsh Melody* that the Welsh National Anthem first appeared, and was sung in public for the first time in

Tabernacle Chapel, Cefn Mawr, although it was not adopted as the national anthem until the National Eisteddfod at Chester in 1866.

Language and religion were the bedrock on which the musical culture developed to become a defining influence in the lives of ordinary Welsh men and women who transformed the religious life of the region. Congregational singing in chapels was the domain of the amateur musician and would remain so throughout the nineteenth century and it was through the empathy of the *codwyr canu* that congregational singing achieved its real purpose as an act of Christian praise. Many of the iconic hymns of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were written by composers such as John Ambrose Lloyd of Mold, J.D Jones of Ruthin and Caradog Roberts of Rhosllannerchrugog who gave credibility to the plaudit 'The Land of Song'. There were few professional musicians in this inclusive school that gave the labouring classes the opportunity to realise their natural musical talent through the *Ysgolion Sul* and *Yr Ysgol Gân*.

The choral culture which developed from the choirs and *eisteddfodau* of the chapels fired the competitive ethos and led to the formation of choral societies and the gladiatorial clashes that dominated the Eisteddfod stage extended the appeal of this cultural extravaganza to the working classes. It was the passion for competitive singing that changed the emphasis of the musical culture as almost every aspect of Welsh singing, including the *cymansa ganu* became the subject of adjudication as the priority moved from praise to performance. That changed with the spiritual crusade of Moody and Sankey and Ieuan Gwyllt's translation of American Gospel songs in *Sŵn y Juwbili*, which gave back the music of praise to the chapel congregations and re-enthused chapel musicians.

These were the self-educated *maestros* who inspired congregations to 'sing the words' and as Ieuan Gwynedd Jones observes: 'When we consider the leisure preoccupations of the colliers we can see to what extraordinary extent the characteristic institutions of the coalfield were their creation; what was achieved was almost entirely the result of their own efforts'.<sup>5</sup> This corner of Wales, oft overshadowed in historiography by the more populous southern counties, looked to Liverpool as its capital, and a glimpse of its rich cultural history is long overdue.

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<sup>5</sup> I.G. Jones, *Communities: Essays in the Social History of Victorian Wales* (Llandysul, 1987), 122.

## **POSTLUDE**

One of the most dramatic effects of the 1904-05 religious revival was the manner in which choral societies in the village of Rhosllannerchrugog abandoned competitions and returned to the chapel where ministers of every denomination worshipped alongside the clergy from the Established Church in a new spirit of Christian unity. While that blessing prevailed throughout the heat of the spiritual awakening, by the spring of 1906, inter-denominational *eisteddfodau* were being advertised once more and the choral societies that had abandoned the stages of local and National Eisteddfodau reverted to their competitive instincts. Arguably, the *eisteddfod* had done little to extend the repertoire or indeed the standard of choral music, which prompted a correspondent in *The Times* to denounce the motives of Welsh choralism as little more than 'pot hunting' and love of victory. Similarly, the *cymanfaoedd canu* continued as a mass demonstration of denominational choirs that did little to raise the standard of congregational singing in the chapels. Rhidian Griffiths refers to a questionnaire issued by *Y Cerddor* which invited opinion from a number of prominent conductors as to how the festival could be improved and it was generally agreed that the *cymanfa ganu* failed to fulfil its proper role as a stimulus to Sunday worship.<sup>1</sup>

There was, it seems, a failure amongst chapel officials to differentiate between the talent of the more academically-inclined choral conductors and the diverse skills of the *codwyr canu* on which the music in nonconformist worship had been founded. The talents of the gifted, self-taught musicians, whose understanding of sacred music transcended academic qualification, belied a deep understanding of hymnody, and a profound appreciation of the spiritual needs of the congregation. That situation began to change in the early twentieth century as pipe organs were installed in the larger chapels, and formally-trained organists entered the domain of the *codwr canu* who were invariably self-taught musicians and the union was not always successful. For instance, Richard Mills, an experienced choral conductor, insisted that a fine pipe organ would improve congregational singing at *Capel Mawr*, Rhos, although he failed to make a meaningful difference in his two years as *codwr canu*, despite the addition of the grand instrument. The declining standard of congregational singing is referred to in the log-book of *Capel Mawr*, where a

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<sup>1</sup> W. Rhidian Griffiths, 'Welsh Chapel Music-The making of a Tradition' *The Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History*, Vol 6 (1989), 43.

special deacons' meeting in 1906 discussed how best to restore the standard of singing to its former glory, and in particular, to that of Robert Davies' time as precentor.<sup>2</sup> The *deaconiaid* concluded that it was best to appoint a professional musician to the post of *codwr canu*, and Robert (Wilfred) Jones of Wrexham,<sup>3</sup> a student at the Royal Academy of Music, London and a former pupil of John Owen (*Owain Alaw*) was engaged in May 1906.

It was customary for the *codwr canu* to volunteer his services, but as *Capel Mawr* had appointed Dan Evans as a salaried organist, a precedent had been set and when Wilfred Jones commenced his appointment, he was paid a fee of £40 for between 30 and 35 Sundays a year.<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, there is no evidence to suggest that congregational singing improved under his charge and in 1908, after only two years in post, he resigned. Chapel officials were easily beguiled by academic credentials and formally qualified musicians often failed to surpass the standards set by the chapel precentors in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and likewise, there is no substantive proof that grand organs improved congregational singing. In the days of the harmonium player, the *arweinydd y gân* faced the congregation as well as the organist, but when pipe organs came into vogue, they were generally placed behind the *codwr canu* and the pulpit and therefore, the instrument became the focal point.

Notwithstanding the distinction between the Nonconformists and the Established Church that had prevailed since 1811, by the first decade of the new century, the grandiose chapel buildings were as architecturally ornate as the majority of Anglican churches and the formality of pipe organs and chapel choirs meant that there was little to differentiate the once-Dissenting chapels from the Established Church. Therefore, the collective term, 'Nonconformity', was a misnomer as the chapels had become insular, conforming bodies that placed denominational identity above the duty to evangelise and reach out to the masses. Society had changed, and by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, improved pay and the shorter working week had increased leisure time which accelerated the growth of secular entertainment

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<sup>2</sup> Cofnodau Eglwysig Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog (1898-1904), Ionawr (1901), Folio no.1. 'Mae yn sicr iddo godi y canu yna i fod yn un o'r goreuon, os nad y gorau yn Ngogledd Cymru'. Robert Davies *Cantwr* served the chapel for 29 years.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

and presented chapels with a greater challenge than the inter-denominational rivalry that had prevailed throughout the nineteenth century. The expansion of the local press had brought cultural activity to a wider public by providing a facility for the promotion of *eisteddfodau* and concerts, and community newspapers such as the *Flintshire County Herald* and the *Rhos Herald* gave extensive coverage to chapel and cultural activity in their respective communities. *Eisteddfodau* created a demand for secular and religious music and in an attempt to recapture the interest of their flock, chapels turned *cymanfaoedd canu* into mass choral events and compromised their spiritual purpose in order to regain popularity. While music in worship was not considered to be a competitive art, and the annual showcase events, ostensibly contrived to 'improve' congregational singing, became little more than a denominational comparator.

In the belief that the organ contributed indirectly to the social and cultural advancement of the community, the Carnegie Foundation offered grants that amounted to half the total cost, on condition that the applicant group were able to raise the outstanding amount.<sup>5</sup> This scheme began in c.1905 and there were numerous beneficiaries in north-east Wales, one of which was Bethlehem Congregational Chapel, Rhosllannerchrugog, where the organ, built in 1908 to the specification of Caradog Roberts, F.R.C.O., was described as the largest instrument in any Nonconformist place of worship in north Wales.<sup>6</sup> The justification for investing in such a 'splendid organ' was the promise of recitals at reduced rates for *y werin*, in order to familiarise them with the best music,<sup>7</sup> but Emlyn Evans, the joint editor of *Y Cerddor*, was sceptical and criticised the pomp, rivalry and self-importance, not only between church and chapel, but also between Nonconformist

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<sup>5</sup> S.N.D. North (ed.), 'Andrew Carnegie and the Pipe Organ', quoted from *A Manual of the Public Benefactions of Andrew Carnegie*, Estey Pipe Organ Museum website, <http://www.esteyorgan.com/carnegie.htm>, viewed 1 June 2010. Scottish born steel magnate and philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), had donated no fewer than 7,689 organs to churches in America, England, Wales and Scotland, and contributed to the installation of 32 organs in Wales. See Rollin Smith, 'Pipe Organs of the Rich and Famous Andrew Carnegie: The Organ's Great Philanthropist', *The American Organist*, March (2010), website viewed 1 June 2010, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_7161/is\\_201003/ai\\_n53078097/?tag=content;coll1](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_7161/is_201003/ai_n53078097/?tag=content;coll1); S.N.D. North (ed.).

<sup>6</sup> W.M. Roberts, 'Ein Cerddorion: Mr. Caradog Roberts', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XX, Rhif 235, Gorphenaf (1908), 74. See Appendix 5 for information regarding chapel organs.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

denominations.<sup>8</sup> Calvinistic minister, John Hughes (1827-1893) of Liverpool, referring to the decline in spirituality, questioned the changing attitudes of the Nonconformist hierarchy towards music: 'The rewards of culture were displacing spiritual realities in people's minds and the main reason for that was the pursuit of new loves; culture, civilisation and mammon'.<sup>9</sup> Caradog Roberts, however, held firm to the view that the organ had improved congregational singing, and refuted such criticism:

After fifty years' use of an organ the singing at Rhos is now better than ever. You may hear the four parts being sung throughout the congregation. Some of the finest choral effects have been produced in the chapels. People are better educated, more intelligent than formerly, the old dragging behind of the voices has gone, and the people sing with great warmth of expression and from the heart.<sup>10</sup>

Bethlehem Congregational Chapel, Rhos, had established a high standard of singing and from 1906, the Choral Society, led by *arweinydd y gân*, Dan Roberts and accompanied by his nephew, Caradog Roberts (1878-1935), regularly performed Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *The Creation* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.<sup>11</sup> One of the most outstanding features of this chapel, however, was the children's choir conducted by T. Hartley Davies that competed at the 1908 Llangollen Eisteddfod, and according to the adjudicator, David Jenkins, was among the most satisfactory heard throughout the event.<sup>12</sup> Notwithstanding the success of the choir, it was nevertheless clear that choral music had reverted to the competitive stage of local *eisteddfodau*.

At the 1908 Llangollen National Eisteddfod, the Brymbo and Broughton Choir, The Maelor Choir and Wrexham Choral Society were the only local mixed choirs to compete and in the male-voice contest, it was left to the Broughton and District Choir to represent the area. That same lack of interest was also evident at the Wrexham National Eisteddfod of 1912 in which the Cefn Mawr Choral Society, conducted by G.W.Hughes was the only local choir to represent the district. The

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<sup>8</sup> D.Emlyn Evans, 'Yr Organ a'r Côr Mawr', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol VII, Rhif 77, Mai (1895), 45.

<sup>9</sup> R. Tudur Jones (ed. Robert Pope), *Faith and the Crisis of a Nation*, (Cardiff, 2004), 65.

<sup>10</sup> 'Mr. Caradog Roberts', *The Musical Herald*, January (1912), 5.

<sup>11</sup> Competition Festival Record, *The Musical Times*, 1 October, 1908, 93.

<sup>12</sup> *Rhos Herald*, 5 September 1908, 5.

failure of local choirs to rise to the challenge was, according to David Jenkins, due to 'the multiplicity of small competitive meetings and the constant selection of the same pieces of music' and the demise of the permanent choral societies, by which he was referring to the 'scratch choirs' that came together for the sole purpose of competing.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, it could be said that the choirs of north-east Wales failed because they entered *eisteddfodau* that suited their limited repertoire for the purpose of winning rather than for the advancement of the art, and newspaper accounts of choral activity in both local *eisteddfodau* and concerts confirm Jenkins' view.

For the majority of local choirs, the choruses from Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* were the mainstay of their repertoire and were sung to near extinction, unlike the English choirs that began to dominate the major choral contests at the National Eisteddfod. Commenting on the victorious English choirs, Harry Evans (1873-1914) observed: 'Competition is a secondary consideration with these choirs: they exist for the regular performance of complete modern and classical works'.<sup>14</sup> The Welsh correspondent to *The Times* laid the failure of the Welsh choirs at the feet of their self-taught conductors, forgetting the fact that the choral societies were not always successful under the baton of professional musicians. For example, after Dr.C.T.Reynolds was appointed as conductor of the Birkenhead Cambrian Choir it ceased to compete at major *eisteddfodau*, and it was D.O.Parry, son of the *maestro* William Parry, who was invited to conduct the Liverpool Eisteddfod Choir of 1900.<sup>15</sup>

The most significant change to the choral structure in Liverpool and north-east Wales came when Harry Evans of Dowlais was appointed to conduct the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union in 1902.<sup>16</sup> He began his musical career as a chapel organist and received his early instruction through the medium of Tonic Sol-fa before studying staff notation and was one of the first Welshmen to pass the Royal College of Organist's FRCO examinations. The Liverpool Welsh Choral Union was not a competitive choir but a chorus that Harry Evans defined as one that existed for the sake of the art 'with no external considerations other than doing what they could to

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<sup>13</sup> *Musical Herald*, 1 November 1902, 330.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Royal National Eisteddfod, *Liverpool Mercury*, 12 September 1900, 6.

<sup>16</sup> Harry Evans, *The Musical Times*, 1 August 1907, 520.



uphold the reputation of Wales as a choral nation'.<sup>17</sup> The Choir was restricted to persons of Welsh descent and quickly expanded from the initial membership of 150 voices to over 300. Contrary to the general perception that Welsh choirs were capable of little more than the well-worn choruses by Handel and Mendelssohn, the repertoire of the Liverpool Welsh Choral Union embraced the major works and when they performed Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at the Philharmonic Hall the tickets were sold out ten days before the concert.<sup>18</sup> The musical press took a great interest in the achievements of the inspired conductor who elevated Welsh choral music to the national stage, and in an interview with Dr.W.G.McNaught (1849-1918), editor of *The Musical Times* (1909-1918), Harry Evans commented: 'We Welsh people stand alone in our congregational singing.'<sup>19</sup>

The Welsh musical journal, *Y Cerddor*, of which Jenkins was co-editor, played a crucial role in the advancement of Welsh music education, by providing a forum for musicians in Sol-fa and Staff notations. Critical commentaries and a stream of information on chapel concerts, *eisteddfodau* and choral activity in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century created an axis around which the musical culture of north-east Wales and Liverpool revolved. In these communities, the local press gave comprehensive coverage to music and chapel functions, and thus expanded the cultural activity. Local *eisteddfodau* no longer imposed geographical restrictions on competitors from further afield as evidenced at the Rhos Eisteddfod of 1908 when the Cefn Mawr choir, led by G.W.Hughes, challenged the famous Talke and District Prize Choir, from north-Staffordshire.<sup>20</sup>

Each denomination had its *maestro* – the Congregationalists were enriched by the anthems and hymn-tunes of Caradog Roberts and the woollen-mill manager T.R.Williams of Trefriw, while the Welsh Wesleyans were inspired by the Tonic Sol-fa scholar and *eisteddfodwr*, Tom Carrington (*Pencerdd Gwynfryn*, 1881-1961) of Coedpoeth.<sup>21</sup> The majestic hymn-tunes of Griffith Williams Hughes, T. Osborne Roberts, Pencerdd Williams and Richard Mills were included in the revised hymnal

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Eisteddfod y Rhos, *Rhos Herald*, 11 July 1908, 5.

<sup>21</sup> Eric Edwards, 'Y Diweddar Tom Carrington, L.T.S.C'., *Yr Eurgrawn*, Cyfrol CLIII, Rhif VIII, Awst (1961), 206.

of the Calvinistic Methodists, while John Owen Jones, FRCO, bequeathed some of the finest hymn-tunes and anthems to the Baptists. The religious revival in 1904- 05 had undoubtedly increased chapel attendances, and the increased musical activity is reflected in the fact that six new hymnals were published between 1900 and 1914.<sup>22</sup>

Many of the professionally trained musicians that emerged at the turn of the century had received their initial training in the chapels through the medium of Tonic Sol-fa, and as Caradog Roberts commented in *The Musical Herald*: 'When I found a certain chromatic passage difficult to grasp, I used simply to turn it into Sol-fa, and the thing became easy. I found the system also useful for transposition'.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, John Owen Jones, organist of Salem Chapel Penrycae and the third generation of the musical dynasty was as enthusiastic about Sol-fa as his father, John Owen Jones (Senior), LTCL, who conducted the chapel choir. Professional music tuition now became available in the community, as evidenced by the frequent advertisements that appeared in local newspapers, such as the *Rhos Herald* in which Caradog Roberts, Emlyn Davies and John Owen Jones offered private lessons, and through this affordable facility many amateur musicians graduated at the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Organists and the Tonic Sol-fa College. Local composers benefited from tuition in harmony and came to prominence through local and National Eisteddfod competitions, although David Jenkins felt that local *cymanfaoedd canu* had created an opportunity for amateur composers who replicated the ecstatic style of Sankey, merely to please the crowd.<sup>24</sup>

When Robert (Wilfred) Jones, a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, resigned as *arweinydd y gân* at Capel Mawr, Rhos he was succeeded by Griffith William Hughes (1861-1941) of Cefn Mawr, a former pupil of John Owen Jones, Penrycae and a scholar of the Tonic Sol-fa notation. He was the conductor of the Cefn Mawr Choral Society, and under his leadership, *Capel Mawr*, Rhos performed many of the classic religious oratorios until 1911 when he left to become the stipendiary precentor of Princes Road, Welsh M.C. Chapel at Liverpool.<sup>25</sup> It was during his

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<sup>22</sup> A full list of hymnals appears in Appendix 1.

<sup>23</sup> 'Mr. Caradog Roberts', *The Musical Herald*, January (1912), 3.

<sup>24</sup> W. Rhidian Griffiths, op. cit., 42.

<sup>25</sup> Bangor University Archive, X/EM 651 PRI, *Adroddiad Blynyddol Capel Princes Road, Liverpool* (Lerpwl, 1911), 4.

time in Liverpool, that he composed the iconic hymn-tune, *Buddugoliaeth*, to the words of Williams (Pantycelyn), *Yn Eden, cofiaf hynny byth*.<sup>26</sup> G.W.Hughes was succeeded at *Capel Mawr* by Emlyn Davies, F.R.C.O. of Rhos, a former pupil of Caradog Roberts, who later became organist of Westminster Chapel, London.<sup>27</sup>

Language and religiosity were the core values that shaped the culture of north-east Wales and the Liverpool Welsh community during the opening years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and while the increasing popularity of *eisteddfodau* nourished the obsession with competitive singing, the chapels faced an uncertain future. The conflict for the disestablishment of the Established Church that had preoccupied the Nonconformists since 1811 had been won, but the war against secularisation was being lost, as the effects of the 1904-05 religious awakening faded. At the onset of war, many turned to the chapels for spiritual sustenance as a generation of young Welsh Nonconformists went to battle, but sadly, priorities had changed and the chapel was no longer at the heart of its community.

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<sup>26</sup>Delyth G. Morgans, *Cydymaith Caneuon Ffydd* (Aberystwyth, 2006), 553.

<sup>27</sup>*Llawlyfr Daucanmlwyddiant Eglwys y Capel Mawr Rhosllannerchrugog, 1770-1970* (Caernarfon, 1970), 51.

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Welsh Journals Online, [www.welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/browse/listissues/llgc-id:1050541](http://www.welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/browse/listissues/llgc-id:1050541)



## MUSICAL PERIODICALS

*Early Music History.*  
*Journal of the Royal Musical Association.*  
*Monthly Music Record.*  
*Non-conformist Musical Journal.*  
*Studies in Liturgical Musicology.*  
*Tonic Sol-fa Reporter.*  
*The British Institute of Organ Studies Reporter.*  
*The Musical Herald.*  
*The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular.*  
*The Orchestra.*  
*Welsh Music History.*

*Blodau Cerdd, 1852-3 (Aberystwyth).*  
*Cerddor y Tonic Sol-ffa, 1869-74 (Wrexham).*  
*Greal y Corau, 1861-3 (Denbigh).*  
*Y Cerbyd Cerddorol, 1860-1 (Holywell).*  
*Y Cerddor, 1889-1921 (Wrexham).*  
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*Y Cerddor, 3<sup>rd</sup>. series, 1930-39 (Wrexham).*

## DENOMINATIONAL JOURNALS & PERIODICALS

*Bathafarn*  
*Cenad Hedd*  
*Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd*  
*Seren Gomer*  
*Y Beirniadur Cymreig*  
*Y Cerbyd Dirwestol*  
*Y Cofiadur*  
*Y Cyfarwyddwr Anibynnol*  
*Y Diwygiwr*  
*Y Drysorfa*  
*Y Dysgedydd*  
*Y Greal*  
*Y Traethodydd*  
*Y Tyst*  
*Y Winllan*  
*Yr Athraw*  
*Yr Athraw Crefyddol*  
*Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*

## APPENDIX 1

Welsh Music grammars, hymnals and denominational journals  
published during the 19th Century

## APPENDIX 1

### WELSH MUSIC GRAMMARS PUBLISHED DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR
1816	<i>Cenaniah</i>	Owen Williams
1817	<i>Egwyddor-ddysg</i>	Owen Williams
1818	<i>Egwyddorion Canu</i>	Owen Williams
1821	<i>Egwyddorion neu Donraddau</i>	David Jones, Holywell
1823	<i>Grisiau Cerdd Arwest</i>	John Harris, Swansea
1828	<i>Y Caniedydd Crefyddol</i>	William Owen, Newtown
1835	<i>Egwyddor Peroriaeth neu reolau i ddysgu Caniadaeth Eglwysig</i>	Gwilym Robert, Llanrwst
1837	<i>Egwyddorion Peroriaeth</i>	Hugh Evans
1838	<i>Gramadeg Cerddoriaeth</i>	John Mills
1844	<i>Y Mynegfys Cerddorol</i>	Robert Moses, Llanllechid
1845		
1846	<i>Y Fasged Gerddorol</i>	R. H. Pritchard, Bala
1848	<i>Elfennau Cerddoriaeth</i>	John Mills
1848	<i>Gramadeg Cerddoriaeth</i>	David Roberts, Bethesda
1851	<i>Yr Athraw Cerddorol</i>	David Hughes, Anglesey
1854	<i>Yr Athraw Cerddorol</i>	John Mills & Thomas Williams
1859	<i>Y Canor</i>	John & Richard Mills
1884	<i>Hyfforddwr ar y Gân Eglwysig i'r Côr a'r Gynulleidfa</i>	Owen Humphreys ( <i>Eos Llechid</i> )

## WELSH HYMNALS PUBLISHED DURING NINETEENTH CENTURY

DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR
1797	<i>Cyfaill mewn Llogell</i>	John Williams ( <i>Sion Singer</i> )
1816	<i>Mawl yr Arglwydd</i>	John Ellis
1819	<i>Brenhinol Ganiadau Seion, Vol I &amp; II</i>	Owen Williams
1836	<i>Original Sacred Music, Vol. I</i>	J.D.Edwards
1837	<i>Peroriaeth Hyfryd</i>	John Parry
1838	<i>Y Seraph</i>	Evan Evans ( <i>Ieuan Glan Geirionydd</i> )
1839	<i>Caniadau y Cyssegr</i>	John Roberts, Henllan
1840	<i>Y Tonau Gregoraidd</i>	E. Powell
1840	<i>Caniadau Seion</i>	Richard Mills
1842	<i>Atodiad i'r Caniadau Seion</i>	Richard Mills
1842	<i>Yr Arweinydd Cerddorol, Part I</i>	Richard Mills
1843	<i>Yr Arweinydd Cerddorol, Part II</i>	Richard Mills
1843	<i>Casgliad o Donau</i>	John Ambrose Lloyd
1843	<i>Y Perorydd Cysegredig</i>	David Hughes, Anglesey
1843	<i>Original Sacred Music, Vol. II</i>	J.D.Edwards
1844	<i>Cyfaill y Cantorion</i>	R.H. Pritchard, Bala
1844	<i>Y Symbal</i>	Thomas Jones ( <i>Canrhawdfardd</i> )
1844	<i>Eos Cymru</i>	William Jacob, Holywell
1844	<i>Organ y Cyssegr</i>	Robert James, Merthyr Tydfil
1845	<i>Y Canor Dirwestol</i>	D.T. Williams, Merthyr Tydfil
1845	<i>Yr Arweinydd Cerddorol, Part III</i>	Richard Mills
1845	<i>Yr Arweinydd Coraidd</i>	Owen Roberts, Anglesey
1846	<i>Y Salmydd Cenedlaethol</i>	Thomas Williams ( <i>Hafrenydd</i> )
1846	<i>Y Perganiedydd</i>	J.D. Jones, Ruthin
1846	<i>Y Cerddor Eglwysig</i>	John & Richard Mills
1846	<i>Alawydd Trefriw</i>	R.H.Williams ( <i>Corfanydd</i> )
1847	<i>Y Salmydd Eglwysig</i>	John Mills
1848	<i>Organ y Cyssegr</i>	R. James
1848	<i>Y Canrhodydd Cymreig</i>	John Williams ( <i>Gorfyniawc o Arfon</i> )
1848	<i>Telyn Seion</i>	R. Beynon, Merthyr Tydfil
1849	<i>Halelwiah</i>	Griffith Harris, Carmarthen
1851	<i>Y Cerddor Dirwestol</i>	Richard Mills
1851	<i>Y Canor</i>	John Mills
1852	<i>Ceinion Cerddoriaeth Gorawl</i>	Thomas Williams ( <i>Hafrenydd</i> )
1852	<i>Blodau Cerdd</i>	John Roberts ( <i>Ieuan Gwyllt</i> )
1852	<i>Cydymaith yr Addolydd</i>	Robert Williams, Bodfari
1852	<i>Y Perl Cerddorol</i>	William Owen, Pryscol
1853	<i>Perorydd Y Cysegr</i>	John Roberts, Aberystwyth
1854	<i>Y Blwch Cerddorol</i>	Thomas Davies, Cwmafon
1854	<i>Gemau Cerddoriaeth</i>	Thomas Williams ( <i>Hafrenydd</i> )
1854	<i>Y Cerub</i>	J.D. Jones, Ruthin
1855	<i>Y Drysorfa Gorawl</i>	T.G.Jones ( <i>Tavalaw</i> )
1855	<i>Halelwiah Drachefn</i>	Griffith Harris, Carmarthen
1857	<i>Cydymaith y Cerddor</i>	J.D. Jones, Ruthin
1857	<i>Caniadau Bethlehem</i>	J.D. Jones, Ruthin
1858	<i>Y Degtant</i>	Thomas Jones ( <i>Canrhawdfardd</i> )
1858	<i>Y Cerddor Gwreiddol</i>	Thomas Jones ( <i>Canrhawdfardd</i> )
1858	<i>Organ y Plant</i>	Thomas Jones ( <i>Canrhawdfardd</i> )
1858	<i>Cerddor yr Ysgol Sabothol</i>	Richard Mills, Wrexham
1859	<i>Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol</i>	John Roberts ( <i>Ieuan Gwyllt</i> )

1859	<i>Cerddor y Cysegr</i>	Edward Stephen ( <i>Tanymarian</i> )
1859	<i>Welsh Church Tune and Chant Book</i>	Thomas Jones
1859	<i>Y Delyn Gymreig</i>	J.D. Jones, Ruthin
1859	<i>Udgorn Seion</i>	D. Jones ( <i>Dewi Wyllyt</i> )
1859	<i>Yr Anthemydd</i>	John Owen ( <i>Owain Alaw</i> )
1859	<i>Y Seraph</i>	Eos Bradwen
1860	<i>Y Cerbyd Cerddorol</i>	Thomas Jones ( <i>Canrhawdfardd</i> )
1860	<i>Tonau yr Ysgol Sul</i>	John Owen ( <i>Owain Alaw</i> )
1860	<i>Y Gemau Cerddorol</i>	Thomas Williams ( <i>Hafrenydd</i> )
1861	<i>Hymnau a Thonau yr Ysgol Sabothol</i>	Eleazar Roberts, Liverpool
1861	<i>Y Perorydd Cysegredig</i>	Ellis Williams, Bethesda
1861	<i>Y Gyfres Gerddorol</i>	Owain Alaw a J.D.Jones
1861	<i>Llawlyfr Caniadaeth</i>	Eleazar Roberts, Liverpool
1861	<i>Atodiad i'r Greal</i>	Eos Llechid
1861	<i>Cerddor y Bobl</i>	Thomas Jones ( <i>Canrhawdfardd</i> )
1862	<i>Sŵn Addoli</i>	David Richards
1864	<i>Casgliad o Donau yr Ysgol Sabothol</i>	John Owen ( <i>Owain Alaw</i> )
1867	<i>Llyfr y Salmu</i>	Roberts Davies ( <i>Alawydd</i> ), Bethesda
1867	<i>Carolau Nadolig</i>	J.D. Jones, Ruthin
1867	<i>Organ y Plant</i>	Thomas Jones ( <i>Canrhawdfardd</i> )
1867	<i>Carolau Nadolig</i>	Owen Jones, Pentrefoelas
1867	<i>Psalmdonau Hen a Diweddar</i>	Thomas Jones ( <i>Canrhawdfardd</i> )
1868	<i>Llyfr Tonau ac Emynau</i>	Edward Stephen & J.D. Jones
1868	<i>Casgliad o Gorganau</i>	Edward Stephen & J.D. Jones
1869	<i>Yr Anthemydd</i>	John Owen ( <i>Owain Alaw</i> )
1869	<i>Moliant Israel</i>	Thomas Jones ( <i>Canrhawdfardd</i> )
1870	<i>Ychawnegiad at y Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol</i>	John Roberts ( <i>Ieuan Gwyllt</i> )
1870	<i>Chwech o Anthemau</i>	Joseph Parry
1870	<i>Anthemydd y Tonic Solffa</i>	
1872	<i>Llwybrau Moliant</i>	L. Jones, Treherbert
1872	<i>Casgliad o Donau ac Anthemau</i>	J.D. Jones
1873	<i>Aberth Moliant</i>	J. Ambrose Lloyd & Ebenezer Rees
1873	<i>Llyfr Canu Cynulleidfaol</i>	W. Harries, J. Jones & J.Howell
1874	<i>Sŵn y Jiwbili</i>	John Roberts ( <i>Ieuan Gwyllt</i> )
1874	<i>Deuddeg o Anthemau</i>	Alaw Ddu
1875	<i>Atodiad i Hymnau a Thonau yr Eglwys yng Nghymru</i>	Daniel Evans
1875	<i>Tonau yn Nodiant y Solffa</i>	Daniel Evans, Llanwrin
1876	<i>In Memoriam</i>	W.H. Roberts, Seacombe
1876	<i>The St. Asaph Tune Book</i>	W.J.Hughes
1877	<i>Llyr Canu Cynulleidfaol</i>	W. Harris et al.
1878	<i>Caniadau y Cyssegr a'r Teulu</i>	B.M.Williams et al.
1879	<i>Ail Lyfr Tonau ac Emynau, ac Atodiad</i>	Edward Stephen
1879	<i>Llyfr Anthemau a Salmdonau</i>	Alaw Ddu
1880	<i>Llawlyr Moliant</i>	J.H. Roberts ( <i>Pencerdd Gwynedd</i> )
1883	<i>Odlau'r Efengyl</i>	Walcyn Wyn & W.T.Samuel
1883	<i>Tonau, Salmu ac Anthemau</i>	David Jenkins
1883	<i>Moliant Seion</i>	John Cledan Williams
1884	<i>Casgliad o Donau ac Anthemau</i>	W.Williams ( <i>Northyn</i> )
1887	<i>Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol Cenedlaethol Cymru</i>	Joseph Parry
1888	<i>Anthemydd y Cyssegr</i>	Peter Edwards ( <i>Pedr Alaw</i> )
1889	<i>Caniadau y Cyssegr</i>	Hugh Davies ( <i>Pencerdd Maelor</i> )
1890	<i>Llawlyfr Moliant</i>	J.H. Roberts, Baptist hymnal
1890	<i>Ail-Atodiad i'r Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol (I.G.)</i>	E. Llewelyn Jones & W.M. Roberts

1890	<i>Gemau Mawl</i>	David Jenkins
1891	<i>Gwasanaeth Moliant ar y flwyddyn Eglwysig</i>	William Davies
1891	<i>Hymnau a Thonau</i>	Thomas Jones ( <i>Canrhawdfardd</i> ) -
1892	<i>Y Perl Cerddorol</i> [2 <sup>nd</sup> . Edition]	William Owen, Prysgol
1892	<i>Llyfr Anthemau Novello</i>	J.H. Roberts
1892	<i>Y Salmydd</i>	W. Emlyn Jones, E. Herber Evans, -- E. Cynffig Davies, D. Emlyn Evans & D.W. Lewis
1892	<i>Odlau Mawl</i>	D.W. Lewis
1893	<i>Y Nabl</i>	<i>Isalaw</i> , Bangor
1893	<i>Hymnau yr Eglwys</i>	Ellis Roberts & J.H. Roberts
1895	<i>Y Caniedydd Cynulleidfaol</i>	W. Emlyn Jones, D. Emlyn Jones, D.W. Lewis & M.O. Jones
1895	<i>Hymnau a Thonau (M.C.)</i>	J.E. Jones & W. Harries
1895	<i>Telyn Seion</i>	Peter Williams, Ruabon
1897	<i>Hymnau a Thonau y Methodistiaid Calфинаidd</i>	J.H. Roberts
1897	<i>Llawlyfr Moliant yr Ysgol Sabbothol</i>	J.H. Roberts
1897	<i>Emyniadur yr Eglwys yng Ngymru</i>	Daniel Lewis Lloyd & Roland Rogers
1899	<i>The Baptist Book of Praise</i>	W.T. Samuel & R.R. Price
1900	<i>Hymns and Tunes</i>	T.G. Owen & David Jenkins
1904	<i>Llyfr Tonau y Wesleyaid</i>	
1908	<i>Attodiad i Llawlyfr Moliant</i>	J.H. Roberts & W.T. Samuel
1908	<i>Tonau Talysarn</i>	D. Emlyn Evans
1910	<i>Attodiad i Gemau Mawl</i>	David Jenkins

Source: R.D. Griffith, *Hanes Canu Cynulleidfaol Cymru* (Caerdydd, 1948), 173-178;  
J.H. Roberts, 'Hanesiaeth Gerddorol Gymreig', *Y Cerddor*, Ionawr (1914), 2-3

## APPENDIX 1

### MAIN DENOMINATIONAL JOURNALS Published during the Nineteenth Century

This listing, arranged according to denomination, demonstrates the main Welsh denominational journals published during the nineteenth century. Some were short-lived, and others underwent name changes, but *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*, for example, was one of the few periodicals to survive from early 1800s through to the twentieth century.

#### Baptist

1818	<i>Seren Gomer</i> <sup>1</sup>
1827 - 1837	<i>Greal y Bedyddwyr</i>
1840 - 1842	<i>Y Cenhadydd</i>
1842 - 1868	<i>Y Bedyddiwr</i>
1853 >	<i>Yr Athraw</i>
1890	<i>Yr Hawwr</i> <sup>2</sup>

#### Calvinistic Methodist

1801	<i>Trysorfa Ysbrydol</i> , Thomas Charles 1801-1809
1809	<i>Trysorfa</i> > 1813, 1819 > 1827
1818	<i>Goleuad Gwynedd</i> <sup>3</sup>
1820	<i>Goleuad Cymru</i> <sup>4</sup>
1831	<i>Y Drysorfa</i>
1847-1851	<i>Y Geiniogwerth</i>
1852-1856	<i>Y Methodist</i>
1862	<i>Yr Arweinydd; Trysorfa'r Plant</i>
1885	<i>Cronicl yr Ysgol Sabbothol; Yr Ysgol; Y Lladmerydd; Y Llusern</i>

#### Congregational

1822	<i>Y Dysgedydd</i> <sup>5</sup>
1835	<i>Y Diwygiwr</i> <sup>6</sup>
1852	<i>Y Tywysydd a'r Gymraes</i> <sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Seren Gomer* was undenominational until 1859, when it became affiliated to the Baptists.

<sup>2</sup> Renamed in 1931 as *Yr Arweinydd Newydd (a'r heuwr)*

<sup>3</sup> Changed its name to *Goleuad Cymru* in 1820

<sup>4</sup> Re-named as *Y Drysorfa* in 1831

<sup>5</sup> Joined with *Yr Annibynwr* in 1865

<sup>6</sup> Incorporated into *Y Dysgedydd* in 1912

<sup>7</sup> This Sunday school publication was first published in 1837 as *Tywysydd yr Ieuainc*, which joined with *Y Gymraes* to form *Y Tywysydd a'r Gymraes* in 1852. In 1871, it changed to *Tywysydd y Plant*, before being incorporated as *Dysgedydd y Plant* in 1933. See Huw Walters, 'A Bibliography of Welsh Periodicals 1735-1850' (Aberystwyth, 1993), 63

**Wesleyan**

1809 *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*  
1848 *Y Winllan*  
1894 *Y Fwyell*

**Church of England**

1835 *Yr Haul*  
1848-1850 *Y Cymro*  
1848-1855 *Yr Eglwysydd*



# APPENDIX 2

Population Statistics

APPENDIX 2

POPULATION STATISTICS

Fig. 2.1

POPULATION FIGURES : 1801 -1911 DENBIGHSHIRE & FLINTSHIRE			
	Denbighshire	Flintshire	TOTAL
1801	61,624	22,163	83,787
1811	66,059	26,632	92,691
1821	78,626	31,178	109,804
1831	84,650	35,307	119,957
1841	92,036	40,798	132,834
1851	96,915 (94,698) loss to Shropshire	41,047	135,745
1861* * Boundary changes	104,346 (99,443) loss to Cheshire	39,941	139,384
1871	105,164	43,517	148,681
1881*	112,940 (112,982) gain from Cheshire	45,774	158,756
1891*	116,698 (115,103) loss to Cheshire & Shropshire	42,565	157,668
1901*	126,458	42,261 (60,536) gain from Cheshire	186,994
1911	136,810	69,722	206,532

Dot Jones, *Statistical Evidence relating to the Welsh Language 1801-1911* (Cardiff, 1998), 19-20

Figure 2.2: Percentage of Welsh speakers in North Wales between 1801 and 1911

	1801	1851	1871	1881	1901	1911
Denbighshire	67.6	73.9	77.1	40.8	61.9	56.7
Flintshire	77.0	82.1	69.9	33.7	49.1	42.2
Anglesey	95.4	100.0	93.1	74.2	91.7	88.7
Caernarfonshire	100.0	88.8	92.9	80.1	89.6	85.6
Merionethshire	100.0	100.0	94.4	95.8	93.7	90.3

Dot Jones, *Statistical Evidence relating to the Welsh Language 1801-1911*(Cardiff, 1998), 221

**Figure 2.3: Percentage of population attending places of worship in 1851 and 1910**

	DENBIGHSHIRE		FLINTSHIRE		WALES	
	1851	1905	1851	1905	1851	1905
Church of England	22.3	30.2	24.2	44.0	20.0	25.6
Baptists	11.9	11.6	6.7	3.0	17.4	19.1
Calvinistic Methodists	34.9	33.1	26.2	20.2	25.7	22.9
Independents	11.6	12.5	13.2	10.8	21.8	23.5
Wesleyan Methodists	13.4	10.6	22.1	14.1	12.4	6.4
Primitive Methodists	0.9	1.8	0.9	3.1	1.4	1.1
Methodists New Connexion	1.1	-	1.5	1.1	0.1	-
Wesleyan Reformers	1.4	-	1.0	1.4	0.2	-
English Presbyterians	-	-	-	4.5	-	0.3
R.C.	0.6	-	1.6	-	0.8	0.0
Other	1.9	0.2	2.7	0.3	1.8	1.0

*Census of Great Britain, 1851, Religious Worship in England and Wales.  
Report of the Royal Commission on the Church of England and other Religious Bodies  
in Wales and Monmouthshire, 1910*

**Figure 2.4: Comparison of no. of places of worship and sittings between Denbighshire and Flintshire**

	DENBIGHSHIRE				FLINTSHIRE			
	Places of worship		Sittings		Places of worship		Sittings	
	1851	1910	1851	1910	1851	1910	1851	1910
Church of England	76	120	28,608	32,608	22	86	10,660	25,730
Baptists	31	77	6,253	18,986	11	24	1,614	5,340
Calvinistic Methodists	98	182	20,998	44,108	32	65	6,675	15,601
Independents	49	71	9,072	19,549	21	44	4,933	
Wesleyan Methodists	49	88	9,411	19,935	31	72	6,899	17,491
Primitive Methodists	11	19	1,026	3,615	2	22	281	3,966
Methodists New Connexion	8		889		4		531	
Wesleyan association	7		811					
Wesleyan Reformers			374		1		470	
English Presbyterians						18		4,344
R.C.			345		2		340	
Other		6	1,107	927			324	410

Dot Jones, *Statistical Evidence relating to the Welsh Language 1801-1911*(Cardiff, 1998), 427-28, 443-44

**Fig. 2.5: Comparison of chapel membership in Liverpool and Birkenhead, 1853 and 1881<sup>1</sup>**

	Baptists		CM		Independents		Wesleyan	
	1853	1881	1853	1881	1853	1881	1853	1881
No. of chapels	4	8	7	16	4	7	5	9
Membership	523	924	1863	5343	727	1750	564	1207
Sunday school membership		823		6590		1497		1340

John Thomas, 'Eglwysi Cymraeg Lerpwl', *Y Drysorfa*, Rhif 619, Chwefror (1882), 74

<sup>1</sup> John Thomas, 'Eglwysi Cymreig Liverpool', *Y Drysorfa*, Rhif 619, Chwefror (1882), 74

## APPENDIX 3

National Eisteddfodau 1860-1914

### APPENDIX 3

#### List of National Eisteddfodau held from 1860 – 1914, highlighting those held in north-east Wales and Merseyside

Year	Place	Year	Place
1860	Denbigh	1888	Wrexham
1861	Aberdare	1889	Brecon
1862	Caernarfon	1890	Bangor
1863	Swansea	1891	Swansea
1864	Llandudno	1892	Rhyl
1865	Aberystwyth	1893	Pontypridd
1866	Chester	1894	Caernarfon
1867	Carmarthen	1895	Llanelli
1868	Ruthin	1896	Llandudno
1869	Holywell	1897	Newport
1870	No Eisteddfod	1898	Blaenau Ffestiniog
1871	No Eisteddfod	1899	Cardiff
1872	Tremadog/Porthmadog	1900	Liverpool
1873	Mold	1901	Merthyr Tydfil
1874	Bangor	1902	Bangor
1875	Pwllheli	1903	Llanelli
1876	Wrexham	1904	Rhyl
1877	Caernarfon	1905	Mountain Ash
1878	Birkenhead	1906	Caernarfon
1879	Conwy	1907	Swansea
1880	Caernarfon	1908	Llangollen
1881	Merthyr Tydfil	1909	London
1882	Denbigh	1910	Colwyn Bay
1883	Cardiff	1911	Carmarthen
1884	Liverpool	1912	Wrexham
1885	Aberdare	1913	Abergavenny
1886	Caernarfon	1914	No Eisteddfod held
1887	London		

Source: Dot Jones, *Statistical Evidence relating to the Welsh Language 1801-1911* (Cardiff, 1998), 483

\* The London *Morning Post* blamed the 'disappointing results of the Ruthin meeting' in 1868, for the non-appearance of the National Eisteddfod in 1870 and 1871.<sup>1</sup> Following the Carmarthen, Chester and Ruthin Eisteddfodau, the organisation was heavily in debt and money was owed to award prizes at the Ruthin Eisteddfod.<sup>2</sup>

\* Between 1868 and 1880, all the National Eisteddfodau were held in north Wales and Birkenhead.

<sup>1</sup> 'Welsh Festival at Portmadoc', *The Morning Post*, 30 August 1872, 3.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Welsh National Eisteddfod', *Cheshire Observer and Chester, Birkenhead, Crewe and North Wales Times*, 19 December 1868, 3.

## APPENDIX 4

Biographies of prominent *codwyr canu*, Tonic Sol-fa tutors and local musicians

## APPENDIX 4

A sample of prominent *Codwyr Canu* and Tonic Solfa Tutors who enabled the development of 19<sup>th</sup> century chapel music in North-east Wales and Merseyside

**BECKETT, James** (1829-1876): Precentor and choirmaster, Adwy'r Clawdd Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Coedpoeth (c.1856 –1876).<sup>1</sup>

James Beckett led the choir and congregational singing at Adwy'r Clawdd Chapel for 20 years and founded a choir in 1856.<sup>2</sup> He was undoubtedly at the forefront of developments in chapel singing as, by 1866, the chapel choir, with a repertoire that included both sacred and secular music,<sup>3</sup> became known as the Adwy Tonic Sol-fa Choir. A joiner by trade, Beckett was a gifted precentor and the high standard of singing in Adwy'r Clawdd chapel during the 1860s and '70s was attributed to his leadership. Beckett meticulously selected hymn-tunes that were appropriate to the text and kept time not with his hand, but by his fine voice and expressive eyes.<sup>4</sup>

Adwy'r Choir was in great demand at concerts, and it is said that the proficiency of the choir was due to its commitment to learn classical pieces such as *Teyrnasoedd y Ddaear*, *Gweddi Habacuc*, *y Ddaeargryn* and the *Messiah*.<sup>5</sup> James Beckett conducted the three-day Coedpoeth Eisteddfod in 1874<sup>6</sup> at which the choir sang, but did not compete.<sup>7</sup> As the chapel choir developed, it adopted a more formal structure and following Beckett's untimely death, the choir became the Adwy and Coedpoeth Choral Society under the baton of G.J.Jones of Penygelli School Board.<sup>8</sup> Choir members were examined by Thomas Roberts (*Harmonydd*).<sup>9</sup> who became the choir conductor in the 1880s after which they began competing in local *eisteddfodau* and other competitive events.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> H. Llewelyn Williams, *Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd yn Adwy'r Clawdd (1747-1947)* (Wrecsam, 1947), 60.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>3</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 22 December 1866, 3.

<sup>4</sup> D.Ivor Jones, 'Hen Ddechreuwy'r Canu yr Oes o'r Blaen', *Cymru*, 15 Mawrth 1898, 105.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> H. Llewelyn Williams, *op. cit.*, 60.

<sup>7</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 1 January 1870, 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 January 1876, 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> 'Gwyl Gerddorol Coedpoeth, Llun y Pasg', *Y Genedl Cymreig*, 22 Ebrill 1885, 6 Mai 1885.



**CARRINGTON, Thomas, LTSC** (*Pencerdd Gwynfryn*, 1881-1961): musician, composer and conductor of *cymanfaoedd canu*.

Born at Gwynfryn, near Coedpoeth, Thomas Carrington was an apprentice printer with Hughes and Son (Wrexham) and moved to Coedpoeth where he established the Star Press, a printing and publishing concern.<sup>11</sup> He began playing the organ in the Wesleyan Chapel, Gwynfryn at the age of nine and later became organist at Rehoboth Wesleyan Chapel, Coedpoeth, where he remained for fifty years. He received Tonic Sol-fa lessons from Morton Bailey of Wrexham and published a booklet, *Doniau Da*, containing twenty of his own compositions, including the hymn-tune, 'Y Ddôl' which was one of his best known compositions.<sup>12</sup>

**CUNNAH, Edwin, AC** (1848-1923): Precentor, Pentre Cerney M.C. Chapel, Moss, near Brymbo and choral conductor.

Edwin Cunnah, a Broughton farmer and mine-owner was a local Tonic Sol-fa tutor, choral conductor, and precentor at Pentre Cerney M.C. Chapel at Moss, near Brymbo. By 1873 he became the choirmaster of the Pentre Broughton Tonic Sol-fa choir that was first conducted by John Jones in the late 1860s,<sup>13</sup> Having qualified to the Advanced Certificate level in Tonic Sol-fa,<sup>14</sup> he held classes in Cerney and Gwersyllt,<sup>15</sup> and the Broughton Tonic Sol-fa Choir<sup>16</sup> formed the foundation of the Broughton Choral Union which later became, in 1893, the Brymbo and Broughton Choral Society<sup>17</sup> Edwin Cunnah supported fundraising concerts and competed at local *eisteddfodau*, both as a soloist and with the Broughton Glee Party,<sup>18</sup> Cerney Juvenile Choir,<sup>19</sup> and the Broughton Ladies Choir which he established in the 1890s.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Eric Edwards, 'Y Diweddar Tom Carrington, L.T.S.C.', *Yr Eurgrawn*, Cyfrol CLIII, Rhif VIII, Awst (1961), 206.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>13</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 1 May 1869, 6; 22 October 1870, 6

<sup>14</sup> 'Brymbo', *ibid.*, 19 June 1869, 6.

<sup>15</sup> 'Gwersyllt', *ibid.*, 28 March 1885, 8.

<sup>16</sup> 'Brymbo Eisteddfod', *ibid.*, 19 April 1873, 6.

<sup>17</sup> 'Choral Society', *ibid.*, 6 May 1893, 8.

<sup>18</sup> 'Brymbo and Broughton', *ibid.*, 30 October 1880, 8

<sup>19</sup> 'Brymbo and Broughton', *ibid.*, 22 October 1881, 8

<sup>20</sup> 'Gwersyllt', *ibid.*, 11 May 1895, 5

**DAVIES, Edward, AC:** Precentor, Ffynnongroyw M.C. Chapel.<sup>21</sup>

Edward Davies was an advanced certificate holder in Tonic Sol-fa and also conductor of the Cilcain choir that competed at the Mold Christmas *Eisteddfod* in 1893.<sup>22</sup> This was essentially a chapel choir that confined its competitive efforts to inter-chapel *eisteddfodau* and concerts.

**DAVIES, Hugh, GTSC.**(*Pencerdd Maelor*,1844-1907),: Minister, composer, and a founder member of North Wales Tonic Sol-fa Association.

Born in Garth, near Ruabon, Hugh Davies was employed at J.C. Edwards Brickworks and formed a choir when he was *c.*16 years old.<sup>23</sup> He was a pupil of Joseph Owen's Tonic Sol-fa class in Acrefair,<sup>24</sup> and later became a Graduate of the Tonic Sol-fa College (G.T.S.C.). He later succeeded Ieuan Gwyllt as editor of *Cerddor y Tonic Sol-ffa*, which ceased publication in 1874, but in 1881, he re-launched the journal in the form of a second series entitled *Y Cerddor Sol-ffa*, which continued until 1886, only to be defeated by what Hugh Davies would describe as 'cenedl anheyrngarol'[disloyal nation].<sup>25</sup> Hugh Davies was a prominent member of the North Wales Tonic Sol-fa Association, which was inaugurated in November 1892<sup>26</sup> and a prolific composer. Among his best known works are a Christmas cantata, 'Bethlehem', and *Gemau Corawl*, a collection of anthems and refrains for choirs and singing festivals. He claimed to have produced the first Welsh teach-yourself handbook, *Llawlyfr yr Harmonium*,<sup>27</sup> on playing the harmonium, piano and American organ through the medium of Sol-fa.<sup>28</sup> Hugh Davies was popular on the *cymanfa ganu* circuit and conducted many festivals as well as adjudicating at *eisteddfodau* before entering the Calvinistic Methodist ministry and he was ordained in 1895.

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<sup>21</sup> *Flintshire County Herald*, 5 August 1887, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Mold Christmas Eisteddfod, *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 30 December 1893, 3.

<sup>23</sup> W.M.Roberts, 'Parch. Hugh Davies, *Pencerdd Maelor*', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XIX, Rhif 228, Rhagfyr (1907), 136.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>25</sup> W. Rhidian M. Griffiths, 'Cyhoeddi cerddoriaeth yng Nghymru yn y cyfnod 1860-1914: astudiaeth lyfryddol ynghyd a llyfryddiaeth o gyhoeddiadau rhai cyhoeddwy', Cyfrol 1, Traethawd Ph. D., (Prifysgol Cymru, 1991), 75.

<sup>26</sup> 'North Wales Tonic Sol-fa Conference', *Musical Herald*, December (1892), 363.

<sup>27</sup> Hugh Davies (*Pencerdd Maelor*), *Llawlyfr yr Harmonium* (Rhosymedre, 1896).

<sup>28</sup> Advertisement, *Y Tyst*, 1 Ionawr 1892, 14; Hugh Davies, *ibid.*

**DAVIES, Robert** (*Cantwr*, c.1849-1901): Precentor, *Capel Mawr*, Rhos.

When Bethel Chapel, Ponciau opened in 1860, young Robert Davies was asked to lead the singing in the new chapel at the request of the mother church, *Capel Mawr*, Rhos.<sup>29</sup> His first music teacher was Mrs. Susannah Jones of Ponciau, and he furthered his understanding of music through the Tonic Sol-fa classes of Joseph Owen.<sup>30</sup> Having established a good standard of congregational singing at Bethel, the young coal miner returned to *Capel Mawr* in 1865 to assist the precentor Joseph Jones,<sup>31</sup> who had led the singing in the chapel since 1832.<sup>32</sup> Robert Davies succeeded Joseph Jones in 1872, and instilled a greater appreciation of sacred music<sup>33</sup> that was reflected in the high standard of congregational singing and the success of the large *cymanfaoedd canu* held at *Capel Mawr*. Possessing a fine tenor voice, he was an instinctive precentor and was held in the highest regard by congregations of every denomination in the locality, not least for his ability to memorise most of Ieuan Gwyllt's tunes and those in Jenkins' *Gemau Mawl*.<sup>34</sup> Robert Davies served the Chapel from 1872 until 1901,<sup>35</sup> and was described as 'the best precentor ever born in Rhos.'<sup>36</sup>

**DAVIES, Thomas** (*Cantwr*, 1842-1900): Precentor, Tabernacle Baptist Chapel, Cefn Mawr.

Like many of his contemporaries, Thomas Davies became a chapel precentor while still in his youth, and was appointed to lead the singing at Tabernacle Baptist Chapel, Cefn Mawr as a sixteen-year old, a position which he held for over 40 years.<sup>37</sup> From 1860, he conducted local *cymanfaoedd canu* and was highly regarded by John David Edwards, the musically gifted vicar of Rhosymedre, and composer of the hymn-tune 'Lovely' which later adopted the title of his parish,

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<sup>29</sup> 'Marwolaeth Mr. Robert Davies (*Cantwr*)', *Rhos Herald*, 1 Ionawr 1902, 3.

<sup>30</sup> 'Presentation to Mr. Robert Davies, Precentor at Capel Mawr', *Wrexham Advertiser and North Wales News*, 5 December 1901, 3.

<sup>31</sup> 'Marwolaeth Mr. Robert Davies (*Cantwr*)', op.cit.

<sup>32</sup> *Llawlyfr Daucanmlwyddiant Eglwys y Capel Mawr Rhosllannerchrugog 1770-1970* (Caernarfon, 1970), 47.

<sup>33</sup> William Phillips, *Rhosllannerchrugog – Atgofion* (Caernarfon, 1955), 70.

<sup>34</sup> David Jenkins (gol.), *Gemau Mawl: Casgliad o Donau ynghyda Geriau, ac ychydig Salmau ac Anthemau, wedi eu casglu a'u golygu gan David Jenkins, Mus. Bac.(Cantab)* (1890). John Griffiths, 'Cerddorion a Cherddoriaeth y Rhos yn ystod yr Haner Canrif diweddaf', *Rhos Herald*, 27 April 1912, 5.

<sup>35</sup> *Llawlyfr Daucanmlwyddiant Eglwys y Capel Mawr Rhosllannerchrugog*, op. cit., 47-48.

<sup>36</sup> William Phillips, op. cit., 70.

<sup>37</sup> Emlyn Davies, 'Yr Wyf yn Cofio Eto', *Seren Gomer*, Cyfrol XLVI, Rhif 3, Hydref (1954), 101.

'Rhosymedre.' J.D. Edwards often sought the advice of *Cantwr* on matters of musical interest and both set a worthy example of how music transcended denominational rivalry. *Cantwr*, the first musician in Cefn Mawr to adopt the Tonic Sol-fa system and the patriarch of a gifted musical dynasty, was succeeded by his son, Arthur, and later another son, Gethin, who was the chapel precentor for 45 years. The most famous of his sons was Emlyn (1870-1960) who joined the Royal College of Music and was prominent on the National Eisteddfod stage. He also composed a number of hymn-tunes, the two best known 'Glanllyfnwy' and 'Bryn Hywel' are included in *Y Llawlyfr Moliant Newydd* the Welsh Baptist hymnal. When Elwyn Grey-Davies (son of Caradog Davies, and a brother to Arthur and Gethin) undertook the position, the role of precentor at the Chapel had been occupied by a member of the Davies family for almost a century<sup>38</sup>

**DAVIES, Thomas (1844-1911):** Precentor and Tonic Sol-fa tutor.

Thomas Davies was precentor at Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog for five years, before moving to the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel at Glyndyfrdwy where he remained for forty years.<sup>39</sup> He studied Eleazar Roberts' *Llawlyfr y Tonic Sol-ffa* and for twelve years was a peripatetic Tonic Sol-fa tutor, holding classes every weeknight and Saturday afternoons in the rural villages in Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog, Glyndyfrdwy and Llanellidan district for which he received payment.<sup>40</sup>

**DAVIES, William Hugo (1848-1940):** Musician and Medical Practitioner.

Arguably, one of the outstanding exemplars of the autodidactic characteristics that shaped Welsh music and society, William H. Davies began his education in the vestry school of the Wesleyan Methodists in Brymbo before moving to the British School at Pentre Broughton where he became a pupil teacher.<sup>41</sup> At thirteen years of age he was appointed to lead the singing at Pentre Cerney M.C. Chapel, in the neighbouring village of Moss.<sup>42</sup> He left the teaching profession and for a short while took work as a railway clerk after which he returned to teaching and was

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

<sup>39</sup> David Jenkins, 'Marw-goffa: Mr. Thomas Davies', *Y Cerddor*, Mehefin (1911), 65.

<sup>40</sup> Eleazar Roberts, 'Gohebiaeth', *Cerddor y Tonic Sol-ffa*, Cyfrol III (1871), 25.

<sup>41</sup> Ifor Edwards, 'Log-book of the Brymbo and Broughton British School', *Denbighshire Historical Transaction*, Vol. 22 (Denbigh, 1973), 225.

<sup>42</sup> E.K. Jones, *op. cit.*, 102.

later appointed headmaster of Cefn Mawr Boys' School.<sup>43</sup> Following tuition from Joseph Owen, Rhos, he qualified through the Curwen College and during his time at Cefn Mawr (Nov 1874–Oct 1876), he was precentor at Bethel Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Acrefair,<sup>44</sup> and a local Tonic Solfa tutor.<sup>45</sup>

In 1876, William Davies' set his sights on a career in medicine and after three years study at Edinburgh University, he qualified as a medical practitioner and returned to Brymbo where he served as a family doctor.<sup>46</sup> Prior to the Wrexham National Eisteddfod of 1876, he publicly requested that the choirs of the Ruabon district should unite to compete in the major choral contest, but this wise suggestion was defeated by the same parochial jealousies that confined local choirs to the contests for smaller ensembles. W.H.Davies conducted the Brymbo and District Choral Society that competed at the 1887 Welsh National Eisteddfod in London, and sang in the presence of the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII, when he shared the first prize with Ffynnongroyw Choir.<sup>47</sup> The following year, he conducted the 80-strong Brymbo, Broughton and Bersham Choral Society at Wrexham National Eisteddfod in 1888.<sup>48</sup>

**DRURY, Edward (1803-1876):** Precentor, Bethesda M.C. Chapel, Mold.

Undoubtedly, one of the leading characters in the cultural construct of Flintshire, Edward Drury led the singing at Bethesda Chapel for 'upwards of 40 years' from c. 1830 onwards.<sup>49</sup> His forte lay not in musical knowledge but in his fine voice and ability to influence the congregation,<sup>50</sup> although he is best remembered for the fact that he nurtured the musical talent of John Ambrose Lloyd.<sup>51</sup> He was succeeded as precentor by S. Allen Jones, conductor of the Mold Harmonic Choir,<sup>52</sup> and chairman of the musical committee of the 1873 National Eisteddfod at Mold.

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<sup>43</sup> Ifor Edwards, op. cit., 225.

<sup>44</sup> E.K. Jones, op. cit., 102.

<sup>45</sup> 'Acrefair', *Y Goleuad*, 27 Tachwedd 1869, 11.

<sup>46</sup> Ifor Edwards, op. cit., 226.

<sup>47</sup> E.K. Jones, op. cit., 102.

<sup>48</sup> E. Vincent Evans (ed.), 'The Eisteddfod Record', *Transactions of the National Eisteddfod of Wales, Wrexham, 1888* (Liverpool, 1889), liv.

<sup>49</sup> 'Presentation to Mr. Edward Drury', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 5 February 1870, 9. See *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, Rhif 109, Mawrth (1870), 23.

<sup>50</sup> Griffith Owen, *Hanes Methodistiaeth Sir Fflint* (Dolgellau, 1914), 254.

<sup>51</sup> C. Francis Lloyd, Elfed (cyfieithydd a golygydd), *John Ambrose Lloyd, Hanes ei Fywyd a'i Weithiau* (Wrecsam, 1921), 34.

<sup>52</sup> 'Mold: Concert', *North Wales Chronicle*, 20 May 1876, 6.

**DYKINS, William (1831-1872):** Precentor, Pendref Wesleyan Chapel, Holywell.

Dykens was born in Greenfield, near Holywell, and attended the Alpha English Congregational Chapel until he was 20 years old. In 1852, he was persuaded by a friend to join Pendref Wesleyans, the chapel made famous by William Jacob, whom he succeeded as choir conductor and precentor.<sup>53</sup> He later joined the Wesleyans, probably the 'Wesley Bach' in a small chapel in Greenfield, before joining the Wesleyan cause in Ffynnongroew.<sup>54</sup> His bardic name was 'Dirwynydd' (winder) and the 1871 Census describes him as a 'colliery engine driver'.

**EDWARDS, John (1819-1900):** Precentor, Princes Road M.C. Chapel, Liverpool.

John Edwards was born in Rhewl, near Ruthin and moved to Liverpool c1836 where was apprenticed to his cousin, a qualified tailor who had settled in Liverpool some time before.<sup>55</sup> Shortly after arriving in Liverpool he had occasion to be passing the Bedford Street Chapel where Robert Edwards (*Bob y Felin*) was holding a singing class, and he was so inspired by what he heard that he became a member of the chapel.<sup>56</sup> John Edwards had no musical education, other than that which he learned as a member of Robert Edwards' choir at Bedford Street Chapel and from being a member of the Philharmonic Society, where he developed his musical talents.<sup>57</sup> Following the resignation of Robert Edwards in 1859, John Edwards was appointed precentor of Bedford Street Chapel, that later became Princes Road Chapel, Liverpool

John Edwards played a significant part in the introduction of Tonic Sol-fa to the Welsh Nonconformist chapels after accompanying Eleazar Roberts to Curwen's lecture at the Liverpool Institute Hall in 1861 where he received a copy of Curwen's *Standard Course*, on the understanding that he would use the system to teach the children in the Sunday schools of Princes Road.<sup>58</sup> Together with Eleazar Roberts he formed Welsh singing classes in the Welsh chapels of Liverpool,<sup>59</sup> and taught generations of children to sight-read through the Tonic Sol-fa method. Both

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<sup>53</sup> 'Y Diweddar Mr. William Dykins, Ffynnongroew', *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*, Ionawr (1874), 1-3.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Eleazar Roberts, 'Hen Ddechreuwy'r Canu', *Y Cerddor*, Cyf. VIII, Rhif 86, Chwefror (1896), 11.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>59</sup> John Hughes Morris, *Hanes Methodistiaeth Liverpool*, Cyfrol I (Liverpool, 1929), 272

of his sons William A. Edwards and Henry Rees Edwards were able musicians and became precentors at Princes Road Chapel.<sup>60</sup>

**EDWARDS, Robert** (*Bob y Felin* c.1796-1862): Precentor, Bedford Street M.C. Chapel, Liverpool.

Robert Edwards was born in Mostyn and employed as a miller's assistant before moving to Liverpool in the early 1800s where he took up work as a carter.<sup>61</sup> Known to his compatriots as 'Bob y Felin' (Bob the Mill), this musically-inclined twelve-year old was one of only three people giving singing lessons in Liverpool in 1808.<sup>62</sup> His hymn-tune, *Caersalem*, (also known as *Tôn Bob y Felin*) was written in 1824 and composed at a society meeting in Pall Mall Chapel, Liverpool, and it is said that Robert Edwards harmonised the tune the following day when he wrote it in chalk on the side of a wagon.<sup>63</sup> The hymn-tune, *Caersalem*, came to public notice after it was included in *Peroriaeth Hyfryd* (John Parry, 1837),<sup>64</sup> although it was not ascribed to Edwards until the original version was found amongst his papers in the Bedford Street M.C.Chapel, where he served for 23 years as precentor. Robert Edwards was employed by the Bridgewater Canal Trust and rose to a supervisory position.<sup>65</sup>

**ELLIS, John** (1760-1839): Travelling singing teacher; precentor Pall Mall M.C. Chapel, Liverpool.

John Ellis was born and baptised in the Church in Llangwm, Denbighshire and as a youth, he showed an interest in music and learned the flute. He was apprenticed to a saddler and moved to Llanrwst in 1800 where he joined the Calvinistic Methodists who appointed him as a travelling musician in north Wales.<sup>66</sup> John Ellis is credited with reforming chapel singing in north-east Wales, visiting places such

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<sup>60</sup> Eleazar Roberts, op. cit., 12.

<sup>61</sup> John Hughes Morris, op.cit., 233.

<sup>62</sup> 'Anrhegu Mr. Robert Edwards, Liverpool', *Y Drysorfa*, Rhif CLVII, Llyfr XIV, Ionawr (1860), 23; D. Emlyn Evans, 'Awduraeth y Dôn *Caersalem*', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XIX, Chwefror (1907), 10.

<sup>63</sup> John Edwards, 'Y Golofn Gerddorol', *Y Goleuad*, 11 Gorphenaf 1874, 2.

<sup>64</sup> Huw Williams, 'Cyfansoddwyr a Golygyddion Casgliadau Emyrn-donau Sir Fflint', *Bwletin Cymdeithas Emyrnwyr Cymru*, Gorffennaf (1970), 51.

<sup>65</sup> *Eos Llechid*, 'Geiriadur Bywgraphyddol a Beirniadol o Gerddorion Ymadawedig Cymru', *Yr Haul*, Cyfrol V, Ebrill (1889), 113.

<sup>66</sup> 'Ellis, John', *Yr Attodiad* (gol. J.Ogwen Jones) yn John Parry (gol.) *Y Gwyddoniadur Cymreig*, Cyfrol X (Dinbych, 1879), 529; R.D.Griffith, *Hanes Canu Cynulleidfaol Cymru* (Caerdydd, 1948), 131.

as Llansannan and Adwy'r Clawdd, and in 1816, he published the first part of *Mawl yr Arglwydd*, printed in Trefriw by Ishmael Davies, while the second and third parts were published in London where Ellis personally supervised the work.<sup>67</sup> On the frontispiece of the book, he describes himself as a music composer (*Cyfansoddydd Peroriaeth*). He later moved to Liverpool c.1821-22, where he served the Pall Mall fellowship as singing leader for five years before joining the Bedford Street cause in 1827-28, as precentor and singing class tutor,<sup>68</sup> and was appointed a deacon in 1836.<sup>69</sup> His hymn-tune, *Elliott*, and anthem, *Molwch yr Arglwydd* became popular with Welsh congregations.

**EVANS, Thomas (c.1785-1870):** Precentor, Adwy'r Clawdd.

Thomas Evans came from Llanrwst to Adwy'r Clawdd c.1802-03 to serve as a schoolmaster,<sup>70</sup> and under his leadership 'a high standard of music' began to develop in the village.<sup>71</sup> Encouraged by Thomas Charles to expand the cause,<sup>72</sup> and accompanied by John Hughes (1796-1860),<sup>73</sup> one of the leading singers at Adwy'r Clawdd, Thomas Evans took the chapel choir through the streets of Bangor-on-Dee and nearby villages c.1808, to sing and spread the gospel message.<sup>74</sup> This was the first Calvinistic Methodist cause in the Wrexham district to adopt the *canu ffasiwn newydd* [new singing] under the tutelage of schoolmaster Thomas Evans,<sup>75</sup> and two of his hymn-tunes, 'Mwnglawdd' and 'Adwy' were included in John Ellis' *Mawl yr Arglwydd* (Trefriw, 1816). He became secretary to R.Burton of Minera Hall and was often referred to as Mr. Evans', clerk.<sup>76</sup> His son, P.M.Evans, the Holywell printer, was also active with the Calvinistic Methodist cause in the town and was

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> John Hughes Morris, op. cit., 230.

<sup>69</sup> O.J.Owen, 'Hanes Methodistiaeth yn Lerpwl', *Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd*, Cyfrol III, Tachwedd (1917), 20.

<sup>70</sup> John Hughes, *Hanes Methodistiaeth Cymru*, Cyfrol III (Gwrecsam, 1856), 101; 'Y Diweddar Mr. P.M. Evans', *Y Drysorfa*, Awst (1878), 297.

<sup>71</sup> Bangor University Archive, X/EM 637 WRE 370182, Edward Francis, Hanes dechreuad a chynydd y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd yn Ngwrecsam, er oddeutu'r flwyddyn 1769, hyd y flwyddyn 1870 (Gwrecsam, 1870), 10.

<sup>72</sup> 'Mr. Hugh Morris, Mwnglawdd', *Y Drysorfa*, Rhif XVI, Ebrill (1848), 134.

<sup>73</sup> John Hughes was the younger brother of Richard Hughes, founder of Hughes and Son, Wrexham.

<sup>74</sup> Roger Edwards, *Buchdraeth y Diweddar John Hughes, Liverpool* (Gwrecsam, 1864?), 28; Edward Francis, *Hanes dechreuad a chynydd y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd yn Ngwrecsam, er oddeutu'r flwyddyn 1769, hyd y flwyddyn 1870* (Gwrecsam, 1870), 62-3.

<sup>75</sup> Roger Edwards, *ibid.*, 26.

<sup>76</sup> Griffith Owen, op. cit., 33



known throughout Wales as the printer of *Y Drysorfa*, the Calvinistic Methodist denominational journal.

**EVANS, William** (*Alaw Mabon*, 1835-1903): Precentor, organist and conductor of *cymanfaoedd canu*.

Born in Cefn Mawr, William Evans moved to Rhos in 1856 and later to Penycae when he succeeded Owain *Cantwr* as *arweinydd y gân* at Salem Chapel, a cause which he served from 1862 until 1878.<sup>77</sup> He was the first organist at Salem Chapel and worked loyally for the denomination as a musical adjudicator and choral festival conductor in north-east Wales and, says John Owen Jones, he conducted choirs in Cefn and Rhos.<sup>78</sup> During this period he took part in several local choral competitions and was actively involved in the Baptist Psalmody Festivals of 1873-1875.<sup>79</sup> On account of his employment as a manager for the Prudential Assurance Company Society he moved around the region, and in 1878 he spent time in Oswestry, Newtown and Mold, where he was also appointed precentor,<sup>80</sup> before returning to Penycae in 1896.<sup>81</sup> He committed himself to music and was, for many years he conducted the Flintshire Baptist Union choral festivals.

**GABRIEL, J.T.** (c.1853 -1945): Precentor, Acrefair English Chapel.

Thomas Gabriel, a collier by vocation, gained his Advanced Certificate in Tonic Sol-fa, c.1891<sup>82</sup> and for many years he led the Acrefair Philharmonic Society and Maelor Philharmonic Society<sup>83</sup> which rose to prominence during the 1870s and 1880s and was one of the most successful choirs in the Ruabon and Cefn Mawr areas. The 80-strong chorus performed at numerous fund-raising concerts and *eisteddfodau*, both at local and national level, and were awarded first prize at the Birkenhead National Eisteddfod (1878), by adjudicators, McFarren and Brinley Richards, in the choral competition for not less than 60 voices.<sup>84</sup> The choir also travelled further afield to compete, as evidenced by their trip to the Pontypool Bank Holiday Eisteddfod in 1887, where they were the smallest choir in the

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<sup>77</sup> John Owen Jones, *Hen Arweinyddion y Canu yn Salem, Penycae* (Colwyn Bay, 1911), 27

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 26

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 28

<sup>80</sup> 'Marwgoffa', *Y Greal*, Mawrth (1904), 81

<sup>81</sup> 'Mold: Presentation', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 1 February 1896, 8

<sup>82</sup> 'The Tonic Sol-fa Examination', *ibid.*, 13 June 1891, 8

<sup>83</sup> 'Llangollen Musical Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 29 August 1885, 8

<sup>84</sup> 'The National Eisteddfod at Birkenhead', *ibid.*, 21 September 1878, 7.

competition with 127 singers.<sup>85</sup> J.T.Gabriel continued with his studies through the Curwen College and in 1891, he passed the second stages of examination in musical composition.<sup>86</sup>

**GEORGE, Robert** (*Pencerdd Pont-y-Bodkin*): Precentor, Pont-y-bodkin, Congregational Chapel.

Dedicated to improving congregational singing in south Flintshire, Robert George was instrumental in organising the first united Psalmody Festival that included the villages of Llong, Penuel, Caergwre and Pontybodkin c.1876.<sup>87</sup> B.M Williams and Edward Stephen (*Tanymarian*) were guest conductors at several of these annual musical festivals. Robert George conducted the Pont-y-bodkin choir, a village ensemble that took part in many local concerts,<sup>88</sup> mainly for the purpose of raising funds for the chapel.

**GEORGE, Thomas** (1819-1879): Precentor, Leeswood M.C. Chapel.

A grocer by trade, Thomas George was precentor at Leeswood Calvinistic Methodist Chapel for 39 years from c.1840 until his death. Possessing a fine voice, he was well-regarded in the vicinity and devoted much of his time to the Temperance cause which he had served for 45 years<sup>89</sup>

**GRIFFITH, Joseph** (1828-1911): Precentor, Buckley Congregational Chapel; choirmaster and singing tutor.

Joseph Griffiths was actively involved with Buckley Congregational Chapel throughout his life and was precentor until 1889. He set up a Band of Hope at the chapel with about 40 children who were taught Temperance melodies and sacred songs at the weekly meetings.<sup>90</sup> Following a concert at the Welsh Calvinistic Chapel, Buckley, in 1856 by three juvenile choirs from the Primitive Methodist, Congregational and Calvinistic Methodist Sunday schools, he was one of the three stalwarts who founded the Sunday School Festival in 1857 which became the

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<sup>85</sup> 'The Pontypool Eisteddvod', *ibid.*, 16 April 1887, 8.

<sup>86</sup> The Tonic Sol-fa College, *The Musical Herald*, 1 February, 1891, 64.

<sup>87</sup> 'Pont-y-Bodkin, Sir Flint', *Y Genedl Gymreig*, 3 Gorphenaf 1879, 7.

<sup>88</sup> 'Cyngerdd mawr', *ibid.*, 22 Ionawr 1880, 7.

<sup>89</sup> 'Marwolaeth a Chladdedigaeath Mr. Thos. George, Coedllai', *Y Goleuad*, 4 Hydref 1879, 14.

<sup>90</sup> Flintshire Record Office, N/39/17, *Buckley Sunday School Centenary Jubilee: 1857-1956*, 7.

Buckley Jubilee.<sup>91</sup> In collaboration with Edward Davies of the Primitive Methodists and Richard Roberts of the Calvinistic Methodists,<sup>92</sup> he brought the Sunday schools of Buckley together in a procession of interdenominational praise.

**HOPWOOD, Isaac (1827-1888):** Precentor, Buckley M.C. and Tonic Sol-fa tutor.

Colliery manager for Watkinson & Sons, Buckley, Isaac Hopwood was examined in Tonic Sol-fa by Peter Jones of Flint and is credited as being the first to introduce the Tonic Sol-fa system into the Buckley area.<sup>93</sup> He became precentor at Buckley M.C. Seion Chapel at seventeen years of age, a position he occupied for over forty years.<sup>94</sup> An enthusiastic exponent of congregational singing, he held regular singing classes in the area following a full day's work and was one of the first leaders of the Temperance movement in Buckley, and it was he who established the Temperance choir.<sup>95</sup>

**HUGHES, Griffith William (1861-1941):** Precentor, conductor and composer.

A native of Cefn Mawr, G.W.Hughes was employed at the Acrefair Iron Works until his appointment in 1889 as accountant at the Wynnstay Colliery.<sup>96</sup> His early music education was through the Tonic Sol-fa classes of John Owen Jones and Edward Hughes of Cefn Mawr; he took the leading alto role in R.E.Jones' Cefn Mawr United Choir and in 1876, aged 15, he was conducting a children's choir.<sup>97</sup> He was also a member of William H Davies' choir, and the Acrefair Philharmonic Society under the baton of J.T.Gabriel.<sup>98</sup> In 1889, he founded the Cefn Mawr Choral Society, a choir which took pride in the fact that they refused to hold rehearsals on a Sunday.<sup>99</sup> G.W.Hughes tutored many in Tonic Sol-fa and in 1893, he was appointed by the Tonic Sol-fa College as an examiner for the Matriculation Advance Certificate and the Third Grade Staff Notation,<sup>100</sup> before his appointment in 1900 to the Tonic Sol-fa College Council.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Flintshire Record Office, D/DG/53, Joseph Griffiths, *A History of Buckley Congregational Church*, (1894); Griffith Owen, op. cit., 315.

<sup>94</sup> 'Bwcle', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* (Dinbych), 7 Gorffennaf 1888, 5.

<sup>95</sup> Griffith Owen, op. cit., 315.

<sup>96</sup> Huw Williams, *Tonau a'u Hawduron* (Caernarfon, 1967), 38.

<sup>97</sup> 'G.W.Hughes', *Rhos Herald*, 25 November 1899, 5.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> 'Cefn and Rhosymedre: Musical, *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 3 June 1893, 8.

When R. Wilfred Jones resigned as precentor of *Capel Mawr* M.C. Chapel, Rhos, it was Griffith Hughes who succeeded him in 1908,<sup>101</sup> and three years later, in 1911, he moved to Princes Road Chapel, Liverpool, to the paid position of precentor in place of Daniel Daniel.<sup>102</sup> It was during his time in Liverpool that G.W. Hughes composed the iconic hymn-tune, *Buddugoliaeth* (1915), to the words of Williams Pantycelyn, 'Yn Eden, cofiaf hynny byth.' He remained in Liverpool until 1928 when he moved to Prestatyn.<sup>103</sup>

**HUGHES, J. Pryce, LTSC (1877-1930):** Organist and choral conductor; Tonic Sol-fa College examiner; composer.

Born in Saron, near Denbigh to a musical family, J. Pryce Hughes became an accomplished organist. Aged 19, he received harmonium lessons from Thomas Roberts (*Harmonydd*) of Coedpoeth and was for a time, organist at Wern Chapel, Coedpoeth.<sup>104</sup> John Owen Jones later became his piano and organ teacher, following which he became the organist at Salem Congregational Chapel, Coedpoeth c.1904.<sup>105</sup> After further study on harmony and counterpoint under J.H. Roberts of Liverpool, he became a Licentiate of the Tonic So-fa College, but it was as a composer that he excelled. At the National *Eisteddfod* of 1912, his 'Croesaw, Wanwyn' was one of the test pieces for the children's choir competition which was won by Bethlehem Chapel Rhos.<sup>106</sup> J. Pryce Hughes conducted Coedpoeth Music Society, and was a regular competitor at local *eisteddfodau*.

**HUGHES, Richard Thomas (1865-??):** Precentor, Salem Congregational Chapel, Coedpoeth; Tonic Sol-fa tutor.

Born and raised in Coedpoeth, R.T. Hughes began working in the local colliery at Fron, near Coedpoeth. He was taught the rudiments of Tonic Sol-fa from the Modulator at elementary school, and received Old Notation lessons from Thomas Roberts (*Harmonydd*).<sup>107</sup> He was the precentor at Salem Chapel for almost 24

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<sup>101</sup> 'Rhosllannerchrugog', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XX, Awst (1908).

<sup>102</sup> John Hughes Morris, op. cit., 273.

<sup>103</sup> Huw Williams (1967), op. cit., 37.

<sup>104</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: Mr. J. Pryce Hughes, L.T.S.C.', *Y Cerddor*, Chwefror (1911), 15.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> National Eisteddfod, Wrexham, The School Music Review, 1 October 1912, 2.

<sup>107</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: R.T. Hughes, Coedpoeth', *ibid.*, Gorffennaf (1913), 75.

years from 1890 until c.1913,<sup>108</sup> and held both Tonic Sol-fa and Old Notation classes in the Band of Hope.<sup>109</sup>

**HUMPHREYS, Edward** (1827-1893) Precentor, Bethania M.C. Chapel, Brymbo.

Edward Humphreys, precentor at Bethania M.C Chapel, Lodge near Brymbo, was examined for his Intermediate Certificate in Tonic Sol-fa by Joseph Owen in 1866, and established a Tonic Sol-fa class in Brymbo with 25 pupils<sup>110</sup> that included a class of children whom he taught in the chapel, and adults who attended lessons in his home.<sup>111</sup> He became a Tonic Sol-fa examiner and tested E.W.Parry, his successor at Bethania Chapel, Lodge, for the intermediate examination which required the candidate to demonstrate ability in the Sol-fa and staff notation.<sup>112</sup> Edward Humphreys became conductor of the Brymbo Choir that were regular competitors at chapel *eisteddfodau*.<sup>113</sup>

**JACOB, William** (1777-1846): Precentor, Pendref Wesleyan Chapel, Holywell.

Carmarthenshire-born, Jacob was a baker and flour dealer who established a business in Holywell, having moved there from Manchester c.1818. He was a well-respected precentor and choirmaster at the Pendref Wesleyan Chapel, Holywell for many years. Within ten years and through his disciplined approach, the Sunday school membership rose to 1100, with four superintendents, directed by Jacob, and when the chapel building was enlarged in 1830 to accommodate the growing congregation, the 'Holywell Society became one of the greatest centres of Wesleyan Methodism in North Wales.'<sup>114</sup> In 1844, Jacob published his hymn-tune collection, *Eos Cymru* (Llanidloes, 1844).

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> 'Congl y Tonic Solffa', *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, Rhif 63, Cyf. IV, Mai (1866), 3.

<sup>111</sup> The Tonic Sol-fa College, *The Musical Herald*, 1 March 1878, 64.

<sup>112</sup> Robert Griffiths, 'The Tonic Sol-fa College', *ibid.*, 1 July 1883, 120.

<sup>113</sup> 'The Christmas Eisteddfods', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 1 January 1876, 8.

<sup>114</sup> David Young, *The Origin and History of Methodism in Wales and the Borders* (London, 1893), 475.

**JONES, Ebenezer**, Birkenhead (1841-1903): Precentor, Parkfield Chapel, Birkenhead and choral conductor.

A native of Cardiganshire, Ebenezer Jones lived for a while in Bwlchgwyn, near Wrexham, while working as a travelling salesman for Hughes and Son, the Wrexham publishers.<sup>115</sup> After settling in Birkenhead c.1872, he was employed by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board where he remained for 30 years, and during that period, he became the precentor and choral conductor at Parkfield Chapel, Birkenhead,<sup>116</sup> following William Parry's resignation from the position after a difference of opinion with the chapel officers. Ebenezer Jones was well known as a music adjudicator at local *eisteddfodau* in north-east Wales and the deputy conductor of the Birkenhead Cambrian Choral Society, and the thousand voices Children's United Singing Festival in the Philharmonic Hall (1884),<sup>117</sup> and St. George's Hall, Liverpool (1885, 1886, and 1887).<sup>118</sup>

**JONES, Edward Gwaenys** (1845-1903): Precentor, Shaw Street Wesleyan Chapel, Liverpool, and conductor of *cymanfaoedd canu*.

Edward Jones was born in Gwaenysgor, Flintshire, joined the Wesleyan cause in the area, and in deference to his early upbringing, he adopted the name 'Gwaenys'.<sup>119</sup> After seven years at Ysceifiog School, he settled in Liverpool, where he found life-long employment at the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance office, where he stayed for forty years. He joined Shaw Street Wesleyan Chapel under the ministry of the charismatic John Evans (Eglwysbach), and became *codwr canu*. 'Gwaenys' was passionate about congregational singing and contributed articles on songs of praise to *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*, *Y Gwyliedydd* and *Y Winllan*,<sup>120</sup> calling for better singing and a wider repertoire of tunes. He was, for many years, the Liverpool correspondent (*Gohebydd Lerpwl*) for *Y Faner*.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> 'Mr. Ebenezer Jones, Birkenhead', *Y Drysorfa*, Llyfr LXXIV, Rhif 831, Mawrth (1904), 122.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> 'Liverpool Welsh Sunday School Union', *Liverpool Mercury*, 3 June 1884, 6.

<sup>118</sup> David Jenkins, 'In Memoriam: Mr. Ebenezer Jones, Birkenhead', *Y Cerddor*, Tachwedd (1903), 127.

<sup>119</sup> 'Mr.E.Gwaenys Jones', *Y Cymro*, 24 Medi 1903, 4.

<sup>120</sup> Bangor University Archive, Gabriel Hughes MS, GB 0222 GAB, 'Edward Jones (Gwaenys)', 89.

<sup>121</sup> Teyrnged, *Y Cymro*, 24 Medi 1903.

**JONES, Edward Stephen:** (1814-1883) Precentor, Penybryn Baptist Chapel Llangollen, choral conductor.

Local flannel-mill owner, Edward Stephen Jones, established the Llangollen Philharmonic Society in 1851 that was later known as the Dee Mill Philharmonic Society. It consisted of around twenty members, anthems forming the greater part of their repertoire and excerpts from Mozart's *Twelfth Mass* and Handel's *Messiah* became popular pieces in their concert programme.<sup>122</sup> In early 1870, the chapel choirs of Rehoboth (M.C.), Seion and Glanrafon were amalgamated to form a new choir of over 100 voices under the baton of E.S.Jones.<sup>123</sup> He was the first conductor of the Baptist Hymnody Festival held at Llangollen in June 1873.<sup>124</sup> Ill-health forced him to move to live with his sister in Rhyl before the end of the 1880s when Rev. Gethin Davies took up the baton.<sup>125</sup>

**JONES, John** (1824-1911): Precentor, Bethesda M.C. Chapel, Mold.

John Jones was the first to introduce Tonic Solfa classes to Mold and established further classes in Maeshafn, Nercwys and Leeswood.<sup>126</sup> He lived in Oswestry for a time and towards the end of his life resided with relatives in Liverpool.<sup>127</sup> He is said to have raised the standards of musical literacy in Leeswood to the extent that the choir and chapel congregations were renowned for the successful *cymanfaoedd canu* that took place alternately with the Mold and Buckley chapels.

**JONES, John** (*Glas Alaw*, c. 1850-1924): Precentor and choral conductor.

Although brought up in the Established Church in Llanefydd, Denbighshire, where his father was an accomplished cornet player (*corn hir*),<sup>128</sup> John Jones was drawn to the singing classes of the Calvinistic Methodists after having been persuaded by the precentor to join his choir at the Abergele chapel.<sup>129</sup> He moved to Rhyl in the early 1870s to work in the Post Office and was precentor at Bethel M.C. Chapel for

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<sup>122</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 23 May 1857, 3.

<sup>123</sup> 'Concert', *Llangollen Advertiser*, 4 February 1870, 4.

<sup>124</sup> 'Cymanfaoedd Canu Cyntaf Bedyddwyr Gogledd Cymru', *Seren Gomer*, Cyfrol XXI, Rhif 3, Mai (1929), 116.

<sup>125</sup> 'Llangollen', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 15 February 1873, 5.

<sup>126</sup> 'Tonic Sol-fa', *ibid.*, 24 October 1868, 7.

<sup>127</sup> Rhiaian Phillips, *Y Dyfroedd Byw-Hanes Capel Bethesda yr Wyddgrug* (Yr Wyddgrug, 1987), 90.

<sup>128</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: John Jones (Glas Alaw), Rhyl', *Y Cerddor*, Rhagfyr (1911), 134.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

25 years, and continued when the cause later moved to Clwyd Street, Rhyl.<sup>130</sup> John Jones was credited with raising the standard of congregational singing in Bethel Chapel where chants and anthems were given their rightful place alongside congregational hymns.<sup>131</sup> He was also responsible for training the various chapel choirs in preparation for the *cymanfaoedd canu* when the most prominent guest musicians were invited to conduct.<sup>132</sup> *Glas Alaw* later became conductor of Rhyl United Choir, which frequently performed with full orchestra accompaniment.<sup>133</sup>

**JONES, Jonathan:** Precentor and choirmaster at Adwy'r Clawdd.

Jonathan Jones was a lead miner and precentor at Adwy'r Clawdd until 1840, during which time he formed a choir of 50 voices, and was consequently dubbed 'the father of musicians'.<sup>134</sup> An able music teacher and choirmaster, he held singing classes at his home, until his failing health forced him into retirement. He was succeeded by his nephew, John Jones who was the chapel precentor from 1840 until 1844, and under his guidance, the choir performed Handel's *Messiah* and Mozart' *Twelfth Mass* to a large audience in Wrexham Town Hall.<sup>135</sup>

**JONES, Joseph David:** (1827-1870): Ruthin schoolmaster, musician and adjudicator.

The son of a Wesleyan preacher, J.D.Jones showed an early interest in music, although he chose to follow a career in teaching and trained at the Borough Road Training College in London.<sup>136</sup> He was appointed as a master of the British School, Towyn in 1851 and in 1865 opened a private grammar school in Ruthin from where he exerted a significant influence on the musical life of north-east Wales and Merseyside.<sup>137</sup> As a composer of hymn-tunes and anthems, he had the rare gift of writing sacred music that was easily learned by congregations, as portrayed by his

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid. Bethel Chapel was opened c. 1826 and Clwyd Street Chapel was built in 1855. See 'Rhyl', Local Information Sheet 25, *Capel*, [http://www.capeli.org.uk/uploads/local\\_25\\_rhyl.pdf](http://www.capeli.org.uk/uploads/local_25_rhyl.pdf), accessed 3 October 2010.

<sup>131</sup> Hugh Edwards, 'Ein Cerddorion: John Jones (Glas Alaw), Rhyl', *Y Cerddor*, Rhagfyr (1911), 135.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> GB 0222 BMSS, 23771, Gabriel W. Hughes of Prestatyn Papers, 'John Jones (Glas Alaw), Rhyl', August (1935), 82.

<sup>134</sup> H. Llewelyn Williams, *Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd yn Adwy'r Clawdd (1747-1947)* (Wrexham, 1947), 60.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>136</sup> Transcript of J.D. Jones Memoirs in *Y Cerddor*, Cyfroll XXII, Rhif 256, Ebrill (1910), 35.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.



hymn-tune 'Capel-y-Ddôl' which achieved great popularity in every denomination. In association with Edward Stephen (Tanymarian) he edited the Congregational hymnal, *Llyfr Tonau ac Emy nau* and harmonised many of the older tunes that appeared in this volume. As a composer, editor and adjudicator, J.D.Jones was pivotal to the development of chapel music in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**JONES, Michael (1818-1887):** Ordained Minister and Tonic Sol-fa tutor.

Michael Jones was probably the most influential Sol-faist in Flintshire and performed much the same role as Joseph Owen in the Wrexham area. Born in Cilcain, his early career began as a pharmacist in Bagillt and later at Flint before he began preaching in 1842.<sup>138</sup> He was a Tonic Sol-fa tutor and examiner and was ordained into the Calvinistic Methodist ministry in 1857.<sup>139</sup> He gained the Intermediate Certificate in 14 February 1867, after being examined by Eleazar Roberts,<sup>140</sup> and it was he who was the first to introduce Tonic Sol-fa into Flint and the neighbouring parishes.<sup>141</sup> Michael Jones was a regular contributor to *Cerddor y Tonic Sol-ffa* and did much to promote the notation throughout Flintshire.

**JONES, Owen (Owen y Cantwr, 1811-1862):** Precentor, Salem Baptist Chapel, Penycae.

Born in Cynwyd, John Owen Jones, *Owen Cantwr*, came to Penycae in 1824 to work in the Ruabon coalfields, and joined the congregation at Salem Penycae. After studying the *Gamut* and Mills' *Gramadeg Cerddorol*, he was appointed chapel precentor at the age of sixteen<sup>142</sup> and formed a chapel choir. *Cantwr* taught new hymn-tunes and short anthems that were sung every Sunday evening, and he is rightly regarded as the founder of the *Ysgol Gân* in the Ruabon district. He later established a Temperance band allied to the chapel, but the deaconate took exception to the fact that the band took part in Friendly Society marches and clubs, and they objected on the basis that it devalued sacred music.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> 'Marwolaeth y Parch. Michael Jones, Fflint', *Y Drysorfa*, Llyfr LVII, Rhif 676, Chwefror (1887), 70.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> 'Congl y Tonic Sol-ffa', *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, Ebrill (1867), 23.

<sup>141</sup> Griffith Owen, *op. cit.*, 538.

<sup>142</sup> John Owen Jones, *Hen Arweinyddion y Canu yn Salem, Penycae* (Colwyn Bay, 1911), 15.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Owain *Cantwr* worked for a short while in Nantyglo, south Wales, but returned to Penycae in 1852 and was persuaded to lead the singing once more.<sup>144</sup> As well as learning hymn-tunes and anthems of his own composition, the chapel choir began holding concerts in 1854, which were a new feature in the Rhos and Ruabon area.<sup>145</sup> He composed the hymn-tune, *Penycae* some time before he was killed in a pit explosion in August 1862,<sup>146</sup> and was succeeded by his son, John Owen Jones who carried on a musical tradition that would ultimately span two centuries.

**JONES, John Owen, G & LTSC (1848-1940):** Tonic Sol-fa examiner.

John Owen Jones had very little education apart from the Sunday school and started his working life in the local pits. He began studying music in 1867 and took lessons in the Old Notation from William Evans (*Alaw Mabon*), Penycae, at the same time as he attended a Tonic Sol-fa class at Groes Chapel (MC) where he was taught by Joseph Owen, Rhos.<sup>147</sup> In 1869, he began organising Sol-fa classes in Rhos, Cefn Mawr, Cefn Bychan (Newbridge), Groes and neighbouring villages<sup>148</sup> as well as conducting a local choir in Penycae that competed at local *eisteddfodau*, a role he fulfilled until 1884<sup>149</sup> He was appointed precentor at Salem Chapel, Penycae in 1880 and in 1897 he was elected Vice President of the North Wales Solfaists Union.<sup>150</sup> John Owen Jones had taught generations of Sol-faists over a career that spanned almost seventy years and at the age of 90 he was probably the oldest precentor in Wales. His son, also named John Owen Jones, FRCO (1876-1962) was a composer, organist, choral conductor and eisteddfod adjudicator.

**JONES, R. Harris:** Conductor and Precentor, Tabernacle M.C. Chapel, Ruthin.

A native of Ruthin, Harris Jones was apprenticed as a draper in Denbigh, where he joined the Tonic Sol-fa classes of Daniel Parry Williams.<sup>151</sup> He left Denbigh and went to Wrexham and then to Shrewsbury where he stayed for three years. During a four-year stay in London, he became a member of Jewin Chapel in the city.<sup>152</sup> On

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<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>147</sup> G.W.Hughes, 'Mr. J.O.Jones, L.T.S.C.', yn John Owen Jones, *op. cit.*, 67.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-9.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>151</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: Mr. Harris Jones, Rhuthyn', *Y Cerddor*, Medi (1909), 98.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

his return to Ruthin, he became actively involved with the musical life of the Vale of Clwyd. He was a member of Felix C. Watkin's Denbigh Philharmonic Choir in the 1880s, and conducted the Male Voice Choir that won at the 1887 Llangollen Eisteddfod and the Clwydian Male Voice Choir that competed at the National Eisteddfod in Wrexham in 1888.<sup>153</sup> Ruthin United Choral Society was formed in 1892 and Harris Jones became its conductor.<sup>154</sup>

When Tabernacle Chapel, Ruthin, was opened in 1891, Harris Jones assisted John Jones (1820-1895), a corn factor and long-standing precentor of the old Calvinistic Methodist chapel in the town.<sup>155</sup> He succeeded John Jones as precentor and made a valuable contribution to congregational singing in the area, but declined an invitation in 1898 to lead the *cymanfaoedd canu*, although he willingly assisted at rehearsals and meetings. He conceded, however, to a similar request in 1904.<sup>156</sup>

**JONES, Robert (Wilfrid) (1862-1929):** Precentor at *Capel Mawr*, Rhos, singing festival conductor and music adjudicator.

Born in Arthog, near Dolgellau, Wilfrid Jones studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and after completing his studies, he settled in Wrexham c.1893 and became a voice-training teacher in the Grammar Schools of Wrexham, Ruabon and Llangollen.<sup>157</sup> A fine baritone, he had received tuition from *Owain Alaw* of Chester and in 1896, he was appointed chorus master of Wrexham Choral Society and later succeeded Richard Mills as conductor of the Rhos Male Voice Choir until 1904.<sup>158</sup> Prior to this appointment, he was in demand as a guest conductor and led the Buckley Choral Society when they performed the *Messiah* at the Whitsun *eisteddfod* in 1900.<sup>159</sup> Under his baton the choir were successful at Corwen in 1897 and the National Eisteddfod in Blaenau Ffestiniog in 1898,<sup>160</sup> and he became the popular choice of the Wesleyans as a conductor of *cymanfaoedd canu* for his own denomination.<sup>161</sup> For a short period he was precentor and choir conductor at *Capel*

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> 'Ruthin United Choral Society', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 26 October 1895, 7.

<sup>155</sup> 'Ruthin', *ibid.*, 7 September 1895, 5.

<sup>156</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: Mr. Harris Jones, Rhuthyn', *op. cit.*

<sup>157</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: Mr. Wilfrid Jones, Wrexham', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol X, Rhif 120, Rhagfyr (1898), 134.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> 'News from all parts', *The Musical Herald*, 1 July 1900, 628.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

*Mawr*, Rhos, although his commitments as an adjudicator and choir conductor prevented him from achieving the standards that had been set by Robert Davies. Wilfred Jones conducted the National Eisteddfod choir at Llangollen in 1908.

**JONES, S. Allen Jones:** Precentor, Bethesda M.C. Chapel, Mold; soloist and music adjudicator.

S.Allen Jones, a local draper, was conductor of Mold United Harmonic Society,<sup>162</sup> which was established in late 1869, and one of the choir's first performances was a Benefit Concert to honour Edward Drury for his long-standing services as precentor at Mold M.C. Chapel.<sup>163</sup> His services as a tenor soloist, along with T.J.Hughes, Liverpool, were much in demand not only at local musical events, but also at numerous concerts. S. Allen Jones was the Musical Director of the 1873 Mold National Eisteddfod and conductor of Eisteddfod choir.<sup>164</sup>

**JONES, Thomas** (*Canrhawdfardd*, 1823-1904): Precentor, *cymanfaoedd canu* conductor, adjudicator and composer.

Born near Nannerch, Flintshire, he was appointed precentor at the Wesleyan Chapel, Nannerch in 1839, aged sixteen, and remained in post until 1852,<sup>165</sup> after which time he concentrated on composing, publishing, teaching music and adjudicating.<sup>166</sup> Before he was eighteen years of age, *Canrhawdfardd* was well-known as a music tutor<sup>167</sup> and taught the grammar of music to pupils in the coastal towns of Conwy, Abergele and Rhyl and the villages of Llanrhaeadr, Llandyrnog and Gellifor, as well as his home town of Holywell.

His first publication, *Y Symbal*, appeared in 1844 and included two anthems and 21 tunes of his own composition.<sup>168</sup> Following his marriage in 1851, he lived in Holywell and later in Lixwm, but in 1864, he moved to Coedpoeth as a bookseller

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<sup>162</sup> 'Wyddgrug', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 2 Chwefror 1870, 9.

<sup>163</sup> 'Mr. Drury's Benefit Concert', *Cheshire Observer*, 20 November 1869, 6.

<sup>164</sup> 'The Eisteddfod Choir', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 22 March 1873, 6.

<sup>165</sup> M.O.Jones (D. Emllyn Evans, gol.), *Bywgraffiaeth Cerddorion Cymreig: O'r oesoedd boreuaf hyd y ganrif bresennol* (Caerdydd, 1890), 58; Huw Williams, 'Cyfansoddwyr a Golygyddion Casgliadau Emyrn-donau Sir Fflint', *Bwletin Cymdeithas Emyrnwyr Cymru*, Cyfrol 1, Rhif 3, Gorffennaf (1970), 54.

<sup>166</sup> 'Y Diweddar Thomas Jones', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XVII, Rhif 193, Ionawr (1905), 5.

<sup>167</sup> T.O.Jones, *Ceninen Gwyl Dewi*, Supplement, March (1905), 12.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

and printer.<sup>169</sup> He was appointed precentor at the newly-built Rehoboth Wesleyan Chapel, Coedpoeth, in 1864, but after three years he resigned on account of the pressure of work which consisted of preaching, adjudicating and conducting *cymanfaoedd canu*, in addition to his business commitments as a printer and bookseller.<sup>170</sup> His son, R.E.Jones, later became precentor at Rehoboth, Coedpoeth and conductor of the Coedpoeth Male Voice Choir.

**LLOYD, David (1820-1887):** Precentor, Stanley Road M.C. Chapel, Bootle.

David Lloyd joined the Stanley Road Chapel, Bootle from Pall Mall c. 1861, when he started Tonic Sol-fa classes and Band of Hope.<sup>171</sup> He was a popular teacher and respected precentor for almost 25 years, until his health failed.<sup>172</sup> While at Pall Mall Chapel, where he was also precentor, he held singing classes some time before Ieuan Gwyllt introduced young people in the Sunday schools to the Waite numerical system and before Eleazar Roberts began to promote Curwen's Tonic Sol-fa method of sight-singing.<sup>173</sup>

**LLOYD, John Ambrose (1815-1874):** Precentor, Tabernacle Chapel, Great Crosshall Street, Liverpool, composer, choral conductor and adjudicator.

Born in Mold, Flintshire, John Ambrose Lloyd was a member of the Established Church and received music lessons from Edward Drury, precentor of the Bethesda Calvinistic cause in Mold.<sup>174</sup> He moved to Liverpool in 1831 to join his brother Isaac, a journalist, and both attended the St David's Welsh Church, and it was during this period that he composed the hymn-tune, 'Wyddgrug', which was published in *Y Gwladgarwr* in 1835.<sup>175</sup> When Isaac Lloyd left for Blackburn, his younger brother joined the Welsh Congregationalist Chapel, Tabernacle, where his cousin, William Ambrose (*Emrys* 1813-1873) was a member.<sup>176</sup> Ambrose Lloyd became the precentor at Tabernacle and later moved to the Brownlow Hill cause where he formed a chapel choir that developed into the first Welsh Choral Society

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<sup>169</sup> M.O. Jones (D. Emlyn Evans, gol.), op.cit., 59.

<sup>170</sup> T.O.Jones, 'Canrhawdfardd', *Ceninen Gwyl Dewi*, Mawrth (1905), 12.

<sup>171</sup> Hugh Evans, *Camau'r Cysegr: Sef Hanes Eglwys y Methodistiaid Calffinaidd Stanley Road Bootle* (Lerpwl, 1926), 63.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 29; *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 13 Ebrill 1887, 7.

<sup>173</sup> *Y Genedl Gymreig*, 30 Mawrth 1887, 8.

<sup>174</sup> C. Francis Lloyd, Elfed (cyfieithydd a golygydd), *John Ambrose Lloyd, Hanes ei Fywyd a'i Weithiau* (Wrecsam, 1921), 13.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 21.

in the region.<sup>177</sup> Ambrose Lloyd did not find the same success as a choral conductor that he would as a composer and by 1851, the violinist, E.W.Thomas, took up the baton, although the choir faced an uncertain future.

When Ambrose Lloyd moved from Chester to Rhyl in 1864, he joined Christchurch, the English Congregational Chapel, and was appointed deacon and precentor.<sup>178</sup> As in Liverpool, he soon formed a small select choir from the singers at the Chapel which he augmented by inviting keen singers from the area, one of whom was John Jones (*Glas Alaw*).<sup>179</sup> Although choir members suggested naming the choir, 'The Rhyl Philharmonic Society' or 'The Rhyl Choral Union', Ambrose Lloyd preferred the title of 'Rhyl Amateur Choral Society'.<sup>180</sup> It was as a composer that Ambrose Lloyd left an indelible mark on Welsh congregational and choral music and the vast store of hymns and anthems, the most famous of which was *Teyrnasoedd y Ddaear*, effectively changed the course of Welsh sacred music.

**MILLS, Richard (1844-1903):** Choral conductor and Composer.

The eldest son of Richard Mills Llanidloes, the author of *Caniadau Seion* (Llanidloes, 1840), Richard Mills came to Wrexham to work as a music compositor for Hughes and Son. He soon became involved in choral activity and assisted choirs in Broughton and Bangor-on-Dee and in 1873, he succeeded Hugh Griffiths as conductor of the Rhos Mixed Choir which changed its title to the Rhos Choral Society. It was during this period that he joined the congregation of Capel Mawr, Rhos and in 1878, after leaving the employ of Hughes and Son, he established a printing business and later published the weekly *Rhos Herald*, of which he was also the editor.<sup>181</sup> While the choir succeeded in the contests for medium sized ensembles, they never entered the major competition for 150 voices and were therefore always in the shadow of choirs such as William Parry's Birkenhead Cambrians, although they found moderate success in local *eisteddfodau*. To Mills, competitive success was all-important and it was the failure of the choir at this level that brought about its demise in the late 1880s.

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>179</sup> John Jones (*Glas Alaw*) quoted in *ibid.*, 85.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>181</sup> W.M. Roberts, 'Ein Cerddorion: Y Diweddar Richard Mills', *Y Cerddor*, Gorphenaf (1903)

After Robert Davies' death in 1901, Mills was appointed as *arweinydd y gân* at Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog, although, during the two years which he served in that capacity he failed to achieve the standards that had been set by his predecessor, Edward Davies. Mills passed away in 1903, but perhaps his greatest legacy were the hymn-tunes and anthems which he composed, although it is the hymn-tune *Arweiniad*, to the words of George Rees, 'O Fab y Dyn, Eneiniog Duw, fy Mrawd a'm Ceidwad cry' that first appeared in the 1890 edition of Gwyllt' *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* by which he is best known.

**OWEN, Joseph (1836-1910):** Tonic Sol-fa promoter, tutor and examiner.

Shrewsbury-born Joseph Owen devoted his life to promoting the Tonic Sol-fa system, both as tutor and examiner, and is regarded as the founder of the Tonic Sol-fa method in Rhosllannerchrugog. Such was his enthusiasm for the notation that as a student at Bangor Normal College in 1860, he taught fellow students to sight-read through the method, and when he left the College to take up a teaching post in the British School, Talysarn, he set up a class and choir in his spare time, and gained his Intermediate Certificate after being examined by Eleazar Roberts.<sup>182</sup>

In 1865, he became the first headmaster of the British School in Rhos, and as a leading tutor of Tonic Sol-fa in the area he became the catalyst for a new musical impetus in the neighbourhood.<sup>183</sup> Although a chapel choir already existed in Rhos under Hugh Griffiths, who taught through the medium of the old notation, Joseph Owen had, within a year, started two Tonic Sol-fa choirs, and established Sol-fa classes with a membership that totalled 130.<sup>184</sup> When he moved to Rhyl in 1869, he soon formed a Sol-fa class of 120 members, and such was the regard for Joseph Owen, that thirty-five years after he left the area, he was invited back to Rhos to a special presentation to reward him for creating a new era in the history of music in the area.<sup>185</sup> His former pupil, William Davies, by now an international singer, was one of the soloists, and was accompanied by Caradog Roberts.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: Joseph Owen, Amwythig', *Y Cerddor*, Mawrth 1909, 26.

<sup>183</sup> 'The Late Mr. Joseph Owen', *Rhos Herald*, 16 July 1910, 8.

<sup>184</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: Joseph Owen, Amwythig', op. cit., 26; 'Croniel Cerddorol: Rhosllannerchrugog', *Y Cerddor Cymreig*, Tachwedd 1866, 85.

<sup>185</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: Joseph Owen, Amwythig', op. cit., 27.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

**PARRY William (1827-1888):** Precentor and choirmaster.

William Parry preceded Ebenezer Jones as precentor at Parkfield Road Chapel and Parry's choral ability attracted singers from other chapels which led to the formation of the Cambrian Society (later known as the renowned Birkenhead Cambrian Choral Society).<sup>187</sup> The success of this ensemble in *eisteddfodau* led to objections to the Choir's connection with the Chapel and consequently William Parry resigned as precentor in 1872.<sup>188</sup> He was a naturally gifted choral conductor and was held in such high regard that when the North Wales Choral Union was formed in 1873, it was the Birkenhead *maestro* who was elected to lead the mass choir, despite the fact that among the applicants were professional musicians.

**PROFFIT, John (1818-1894):** Precentor, Gronant M.C. and Clwyd Street Rhyl.

John Proffit was leader of the singing at Gronant M.C.Chapel from 1840 until 1855 when he moved to Rhyl, where he joined the cause at Clwyd Street Chapel. He was appointed precentor and established the first Band of Hope in the town.<sup>189</sup>

**REES, John C., G & LTCL:** Minister of Tabernacle Baptist Chapel, Coedpoeth, and Secretary of the Wrexham and District Board of the Tonic Sol-fa College.

Rev. John Rees had been a student at the Llangollen Baptist College where the Principal, Rev. Gethin Davies, had introduced Tonic Sol-fa into the curriculum and therefore, all students were encouraged to develop congregational singing in their new calling.<sup>190</sup> When J.C.Rees began his mission in Tabernacle Baptist Chapel, Coedpoeth, he was already studying for qualification through the Curwen College and this enabled him to achieve remarkable success with the young people in his pastorate. He was committed to increasing musical literacy among his flock and set an example by becoming a graduate and licentiate of the Tonic Sol-fa College and was also a local examiner.<sup>191</sup> During his term as the Secretary of the Wrexham and District Board of the College he succeeded in making the local Tonic Sol-fa

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<sup>187</sup> 'Mr. Ebenezer Jones, Birkenhead', *Y Drysorfa*, Llyfr LXXIV, Rhif 831, Mawrth (1904), 122.

<sup>188</sup> John Hughes Morris, *Hanes Methodistiaeth Liverpool*, Cyfrol II (Liverpool, 1932), 12-3.

<sup>189</sup> L.A.Owen, *Hanes Methodistiaeth yn Nosbarth Treffynnon, 1750-1910* (Dolgellau, 1910), 183.

<sup>190</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 3 June 1893, 8.

<sup>191</sup> Robert Griffiths, The Tonic Sol-fa College, *The Musical Herald* 1 July 1890, 455.



committee the largest of its kind in north Wales, and as the examining secretary, he produced a record number of candidates.<sup>192</sup>

**REYNOLDS, William** (*Alaw Alun*, 1838-1918): organist and *codwr canu* at Bethel Wesleyan Chapel, Brymbo.

A choir was formed in Bethel, the Wesleyan chapel in Brymbo c.1866 under the leadership of William Reynolds (*Alaw Alun*), originally known as *Côr Alaw Alun*. It was this ensemble that competed against Buckley Union Choir, the Merthyr Glee Party and the Anglo-Cambrian Choir at the 1866 National Eisteddfod in Chester<sup>193</sup> in a choral competition for over twenty voices.<sup>194</sup> Reynolds later formed the Brymbo Glee Party and in order to make up the numbers for the purpose of competing he often combined the party with the Wesleyan Chapel Choir and sang under the title of the Brymbo Glee Party and Wesleyan Choir and they were the first in the district to sing the *Prince of Wales Cantata* (*Owain Alaw*, 1862).<sup>195</sup> For the most part, it was called the Brymbo Glee Party, and in common with other choirs of the period, it underwent a number of name changes, and later appeared under the title of the 'Philharmonic Society' in 1880 and in 1881, after which it became known as the Brymbo Choral Union.<sup>196</sup>

**ROBERTS, Caradog**, Mus.Doc.Oxon, FRCO., LRAM (1878-1935): Organist, composer of anthems and hymn-tunes, adjudicator and *cymanfa ganu* conductor.

Dr. Caradog Roberts is one of Wales' most distinguished musicians and from his early upbringing in Rhosllannerchrugog, his talents as a pianist and organist were manifest. He was from a musical family and following a period as a pupil-teacher in the Elementary school, he became apprenticed as a carpenter for three years, during which time he continued his musical studies.<sup>197</sup> His first organ teacher was Dan Owen, organist of St. John Church, Rhos, with whom he studied for five years and later with Morton Bailey, organist at St. Mark's Church, Wrexham. Following further tuition from Dr. Joseph Bridge, organist of Chester Cathedral, he gained

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<sup>192</sup> 'Presentation', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 3 June 1893, 8.

<sup>193</sup> 'National Eisteddfod at Chester', *ibid.*, 8 September 1866, 8.

<sup>194</sup> 'National Eisteddfod at Chester', *Cheshire Observer*, 8 September 1866, 3.

<sup>195</sup> District News, *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 12 January 1867, 6.

<sup>196</sup> 'Literary Meeting at Bwlchgwyn', *Wrexham Advertiser*, 31 January 1880, 6, 'Brymbo and Broughton, the Christmas Eisteddfod', 31 December 1881, 6.

<sup>197</sup> Tom Carrington, 'Dr. Caradog Roberts', *Y Genhinen*, Cyfrol 1, (1950-51), 26.

four grades within three years [ARCO-1899; FRCO-1900; ARCM-1901; LRAM – 1902 for piano playing].<sup>198</sup> He was organist at Mynydd Seion, Congregational Chapel Ponciau, near Rhos, but moved in 1904 to Bethlehem Congregational Chapel, Rhos, where he began a successful career as organist and choirmaster.<sup>199</sup> In 1904, he began studying under Johannes Weingartner, a renowned German pianist who has settled in Liverpool as Cathedral organist,<sup>200</sup> and to whom Caradog attributes his grounding in the classics.<sup>201</sup> He was the first in north Wales to gain a Doctorate in Music in 1911.<sup>202</sup> ‘Doctor Caradog’, however, remained faithful throughout his life to the Congregational cause in Rhosllannerchrugog. Caradog Roberts succeeded Harry Evans as part-time Director of Music at Bangor University in 1914 until 1920<sup>203</sup> during which time he conducted the 350-strong Rhos Choral Society and for seven years the Seasonal Concerts at Llandudno. He succeeded D.Emlyn Evans as chief music editor of *Y Caniedydd Cynulleidfaol Newydd* (The New Congregational Songbook, 1921) and *Caniedydd Newydd yr Ysgol Sul* (The New Sunday School Songbook, 1930).<sup>204</sup> In addition to conducting local *cymanfaoedd canu*, he was in great demand as an adjudicator and organ recitalist visiting London, Merthyr, Cowbridge and Morriston on a regular basis.<sup>205</sup> Among his many iconic compositions are the hymn-tunes *In Memoriam*, *Rachie*, and his anthem, *Yr Arglwydd yw fy Mugail*.

**ROBERTS, Dan, AC (1871-1938):** Precentor and choirmaster, Bethlehem Congregational Chapel, Rhos; Tonic Sol-fa tutor.

Born into a musical family in Rhosllannerchrugog, Dan Roberts was an uncle to Caradog Roberts. He was for many years a Tonic Sol-fa tutor at evening classes and enabled many pupils to achieve certification from the Tonic Sol-fa College.<sup>206</sup> Although active in the Sunday school, he excelled as a choral conductor, and in 1906, he was appointed to conduct the newly-formed Bethlehem Choral Society,

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<sup>198</sup> Gwynne Williams, *Dr. Caradog Roberts 1878-1935* (Abertawe, 1973), 13.

<sup>199</sup> Tom Carrington, op. cit., 26.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>201</sup> ‘Mr. Caradog Roberts’, *The Musical Times*, January (1912).

<sup>202</sup> Tom Carrington, op. cit., 27.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> ‘Musical Rhos’, *Rhos Herald*, 16 April 1910, 5.

<sup>206</sup> ‘Huno o’r Cerddor ger y Plas’, *ibid.*, 22 January 1938, 3.

assisted by his nephew Caradog Roberts on the organ.<sup>207</sup> He also assisted Wilfred Jones, conductor of Rhos Male Voice Choir, and eventually became its conductor.

**ROBERTS, Eleazar (1825-1912): Pioneer of the Tonic Sol-fa in Wales.**

Eleazar Roberts' family moved from Pwllheli to Liverpool when he was two months old and it was in the chapel schoolroom that he received his primary education. At the age of 13, he was apprenticed as an articled clerk and during the seven year apprenticeship he attended night school as well as taking part in the literary societies of the Welsh chapels.<sup>208</sup> After completing his articles he worked in a solicitor's office and later in Liverpool Magistrates Office and for a number of years he was the chief secretary to the well-known magistrate Mr.Raffles.<sup>209</sup> Eleazar Roberts became a contributor to *Yr Amserau* shortly after Ieuan Gwyllt became editor c.1852.<sup>210</sup> His insatiable appetite for work and knowledge is evidenced by the fact that after a ten-hour working day, he would call at the office of *Yr Amserau* to read the daily newspapers following which he would return home and toil into the early hours writing his weekly column and other contributions to literary and denominational journals.<sup>211</sup>

Two years after the demise of *Yr Amserau*, Eleazar Roberts attended Curwen's lecture in Liverpool after which he realised that the Sol-fa method which was gaining popularity in England, was ideally suited to the needs of Welsh Sunday schools and congregations. He established sight-singing classes in the Welsh chapels in Liverpool and north-east Wales and spent his holidays travelling the length and breadth of Wales explaining the system and extolling its merit.<sup>212</sup> Music had, by now, become his all-consuming passion, and as well as tutoring he was also an examiner for the Tonic Sol-fa College, adjudicator at *eisteddfodau* and a popular conductor of *cymanfaoedd canu*. Largely through his efforts and those that he had enrolled as tutors there were more advanced candidates in Wales than any other part of the United Kingdom and the inextricable link between the

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<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> David Jenkins, 'Y diweddar Mr. Eleazar Roberts, Y.H., Hoylake', *Y Cerddor*, Mai (1912), 52.

<sup>209</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: Mr. Eleazar Roberts, Lerpwl', *Y Cerddor*, Awst (1896), 86.

<sup>210</sup> Eleazar Roberts, 'Adgofion am Rai o Gymry Fu Lerpwl', *Transactions of the Liverpool Welsh National Society* (1896-97), 55.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Owen J.Owen, 'Canmlwyddiant Eleazar Roberts' *Y Cerddor Newydd*, Cyfrol 4, Rhif 39, Mai (1925), 41.

notation and the music of Nonconformist Wales was such that many were of the opinion that it was an invention of the Welsh. Its success was undoubtedly due to the tireless efforts of the Liverpool magistrate's clerk, editorial contributor, amateur astronomer, and the father of fifteen children who dedicated his life to Welsh congregational music.

**ROBERTS, John** (- 1840): Precentor, *Capel Canol* M.C. Denbigh.

John Roberts was a labourer and basket-maker, born in Llanrwst, and who later moved to Denbigh.<sup>213</sup> He excelled at singing and it was he who revived the interest in the Denbigh Sunday school, and became well-known throughout the area as a leader of congregational singing.<sup>214</sup> As a singing tutor and soloist, he led the singing at the Bala Association meetings in the presence of the Mills' who were committed to improving Welsh congregational singing. Rather than resorting to English tunes, James Mills was encouraging readers of *Yr Athraw* to use the old Welsh tunes, such as the one that he had heard John Roberts singing c.1812.<sup>215</sup> Roberts' strong, melodic voice earned him the title of 'Cantwr mawr y Gogledd', as he travelled regularly to nearby districts to teach hymn-tunes.<sup>216</sup>

**ROBERTS, Seth** (1826-1888): Precentor, Bryn Seion Congregational Chapel, Brymbo; soloist.

Seth Roberts was precentor at Bryn Seion Congregational Chapel, Brymbo and also the chapel choirmaster,<sup>217</sup> although he preferred to sit amongst the choir rather than the deacon's pew.<sup>218</sup> Employed in the local pits at Brynmally and later at Fron and Coedpoeth Colliery,<sup>219</sup> he was a popular tenor soloist at local concerts and *cymanfaoedd canu* and a regular competitor at eisteddfodic events. *Hen Wlad fy Nhadau* was sung for the first time in north Wales as a duet by Seth Roberts and Iolo Drefaldwyn at the 1859 Seion Baptist Chapel *eisteddfod* in Cefn Mawr.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> E.P.Jones, *Methodistiaeth Galffinaidd Dinbych 1735-1909* (Dinbych, 1936), 83.

<sup>214</sup> 'Adgofion am Sir Ddinbych', *Y Drysorfa*, Llyfr VIII, Rhif XCIL, Awst (1854), 255.

<sup>215</sup> *Yr Athraw*, Cyfrol 2, Rhif 6, Mai (1937), 80.

<sup>216</sup> E.P.Jones, op. cit., 83.

<sup>217</sup> 'Penuel, Llanfynydd ger y Wyddgrug', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 31 July 1861, 490.

E.K. Jones, *Harwt a Bryn Seion - Hanes Eglwys Annibynnol Brymbo 1802-1940* (Llandysul, 1941), 93.

<sup>219</sup> 'Death of Mr. Seth Roberts', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales News*, 28 January 1888, 8.

<sup>220</sup> J.H.Phillips, 'Seion, Its Ministers and People - The History of the Seion Baptist Church Cefn Mawr' (1960), 16.

**ROBERTS, William Morgan (1853-1923):** Founder member of North Wales Tonic Sol-fa Association; adjudicator and composer.

Born in Powys, W.M. Roberts lived in Corwen prior to his family moving to Wrexham.<sup>221</sup> His father was initially opposed to him studying music as a boy, but he did attend Tonic Sol-fa lessons in Corwen, and in Wrexham he developed his keen interest in music in the company of musicians such as (John Jones, Rhosddu; R. Harries Jones, Ruthin and Richard Mills).<sup>222</sup> He worked for some time in Liverpool and was a member of the city's Philharmonic Society, under the baton of Sir Charles Hallé,<sup>223</sup> and was General Secretary to the 1884 Liverpool National Eisteddfod. When he returned to Wrexham, he joined the firm of Hughes and Son where he stayed for thirty years during which time he became a founder member of the North Wales Tonic Sol-fa Association, a hymn-tune composer and eisteddfodic adjudicator and General Secretary of the 1888 National Eisteddfod at Wrexham. As General Manager of Hughes and Son he persuaded his colleagues to re-visit the idea of a Welsh musical journal, as a result of which, he became the first editorial director of *Y Cerddor* and also edited the second supplement to Ieuan Gwyllt's *Llyfr Tonau Cynulleidfaol* (1890).<sup>224</sup> William Roberts conducted the Wrexham Orpheus Choral Society<sup>225</sup> and made an outstanding contribution to the musical life of north-east Wales and Liverpool. In 1918, he left the publisher Hughes and Son to work for the Ministry of Agriculture.<sup>226</sup>

**THOMAS, Pedr (1834-1904):** Precentor, Gronant M.C.Chapel.

Pedr Thomas was a much respected pillar of the Gronant cause, working tirelessly to promote congregational singing through the Sunday school, Band of Hope and Temperance. He was appointed deacon in 1862, a position he held for 43 years and was precentor for 29 years and his valuable contribution to congregational singing was honoured with a special presentation in 1897.<sup>227</sup> He started work as a twelve-

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<sup>221</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: W.M.Roberts, Gwreccsam', *Y Cerddor*, Hydref (1918), 110.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> W.M. Roberts, 'Ymddiswyddiad', *Y Cerddor*, Mai (1918), 49.

<sup>225</sup> 'The Orpheus Society', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 30 September 1893, 5.

<sup>226</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: W.M.Roberts, Gwreccsam', op. cit., 110.

<sup>227</sup> L.A.Owen, op. cit., 171.

year old at a local quarry and worked his way to become a commercial traveller for the company.<sup>228</sup>

**WILLIAMS, Benjamin Morris (1832-1903):** Tonic Sol-fa examiner, conductor of choral festivals.

Benjamin Morris Williams was a highly skilled music composer who served an apprenticeship in his home town of Bethesda at Robert Jones' Cambrian Music Office where he typeset Tanymarian's *Ystorm Tiberias*.<sup>229</sup> He moved to the Ruthin printing office of by Isaac Clarke c.1860 where he was stayed for ten years, during which time he typeset *Owain Alaw's Gems of Welsh Melody*.<sup>230</sup> He conducted a united denominational choir at a choral festival in Ruthin Castle on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1870 and came to the notice of John Curwen, the honorary president<sup>231</sup> who invited him to join the Curwen Press as a composer in Old Notation and Sol-fa. During his time in London, Benjamin Williams organised a Tonic Sol-fa class in the meeting room of the Welsh Independent Chapel in Hackney Road, London where he taught and examined pupils.<sup>232</sup> After a year in London, B.M. Williams returned to work with Thomas Gee at Denbigh, collating tunes for *Caniadau y Cysegr a'r Teulu* (1878). He gained further experience with music printer-publisher Isaac Jones of Treherbert for whom he was working by 1880,<sup>233</sup> and his last employment was as a music composer for *Y Genedl Gymreig*, based in Caernarfon.<sup>234</sup> Whilst in Ruthin, he conducted Ruthin Choral Society<sup>235</sup> and distinguished himself as a choral festival conductor of the united choirs of Denbigh, Flint and Merionethshire.

**WILLIAMS, Daniel Parry (1831-1878):** Precentor, Seion M.C. Chapel, Denbigh. A native of Llanrwst, Daniel Parry Williams moved to Denbigh in 1853-4 to establish a grocery business.<sup>236</sup> He was for many years precentor at Seion Chapel, Denbigh where he held Tonic Sol-fa classes.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Griffith Owen, op. cit., 201.

<sup>229</sup> D. Emlyn Evans, 'Ein Cerddorion: B.M. Williams', *Y Cerddor*, Awst (1903), 86.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Advertisement, *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 30 July 1970, 1.

<sup>232</sup> 'Tonic Sol-fa Work', *The Musical Herald*, 15 April 1871, 124.

<sup>233</sup> Rhidian Griffiths, 'Isaac Jones, Music Printer and Publisher', *Y Llyfr yng Nghymru*, Rhif 5 (2003), 50.

<sup>234</sup> D. Emlyn Evans, 'Ein Cerddorion: B.M. Williams', op. cit., 86.

<sup>235</sup> 'Ruthin: Choral Society', *Wrexham Advertiser & North Wales Register*, 17 December 1864, 6.

<sup>236</sup> 'Marwolaeth Mr. Daniel Parry Williams, Dinbych', *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 22 Mai 1878, 14.

<sup>237</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: Mr. Harris Jones, Rhuthyn', *Y Cerddor*, Medi (1909), 98.

**WILLIAMS, Peter (1855-1919):** Precentor, Bryn Seion Congregational Chapel, Brymbo; conductor of Brymbo and Broughton United Choir.

Born in Broughton, near Brymbo, Peter Williams, worked at Brymbo Steel Works for 55 years. From an early apprenticeship in the fitting shop at the Works, he rose to become its General Manager and was responsible for introducing pioneering methods of producing steel. He succeeded Seth Roberts as precentor at Bryn Seion Congregational Chapel, Brymbo from 1888 until his death.<sup>238</sup> Passionate about improving congregational singing, he included in every copy of *Y Caniedydd Cynulleidfaol*, a printed schedule arranged to ensure that every tune, anthem and chant in the hymnal was sung at least once a year.<sup>239</sup> He also introduced a new element to songs of praise by forming and training instrumentalists to master various instruments of the orchestra and succeeded in getting every member to take part in the service. He was appointed Chair of the Music Committee of the 1912 Wrexham National Eisteddfod.<sup>240</sup>

**WILLIAMS, Pencerdd Williams, G & LTSC (Pencerdd Berwyn, 1856-1924):** Precentor at Rehoboth MC Chapel, Llangollen, *cymanfaoedd canu* conductor and music adjudicator.

Born in Llangollen, Pencerdd Williams was a keen musician and studied Tonic Sol-fa in Thomas Davies' class in Glyndyfrdwy<sup>241</sup> and later became a prominent member of the North Wales Tonic Sol-fa Association. For many years, he was a music teacher giving tuition in both Old Notation and Tonic Sol-fa,<sup>242</sup> and became an examiner for the Tonic Solfa College, London and as conductor of Llangollen Choral Society, he won many accolades for his disciplined approach. It was *Pencerdd Berwyn* who gave musical status to this choir when he became its conductor in the early 1880s and gained recognition through *eisteddfod* successes. He composed the hymn-tune, *Rehoboth*, after the chapel where he was *codwr canu*.

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<sup>238</sup> E.K. Jones, *Harwt a Bryn Seion - Hanes Eglwys Annibynnol Brymbo 1802-1940* (Llandysul, 1941), 63.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>241</sup> 'Ein Cerddorion: Wm. Pencerdd Williams', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XVIII, Rhif 214, Hydref (1906), 111.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

## APPENDIX 5

Examples of pipe organs installed in the chapels  
of north-east Wales and Liverpool



APPENDIX 5

INAUGURATION of PIPE ORGANS in NORTH-EAST WALES and LIVERPOOL CHAPELS

Date	Location	Denomination	Inaugurated by	Builders	Reference
November 1857	Brynyffynnon Wrexham	Wesleyan (English)		Gray & Davidson, London	<i>Wrexham Advertiser</i> , 21 Nov. 1857,
c. 1857	Mynydd Seion, Abergele	Calvinistic Methodist		Willis (in School Room)	<i>National Pipe Organ Register</i>
May 1859	Chester St., Wrexham	Baptist (English)		Butterworth of Chester	<i>Wrexham Advertiser</i> , 21 May 1859
October 1863	Bethlehem, Rhosllannerchrugog	Congregational	Bought from J.D. Jones, Ruthin to replace the harmonium. Purportedly, the first pipe organ ever erected in a north Wales Congregational chapel	Rushworth, Liverpool 2-manual, 16 stops	W.M.Roberts, 'Ein Cerddorion', <i>Y Cerddor</i> , Gorphenaf (1908), 74
October 1871	Shaw St., Liverpool	Wesleyan	Mr. Bennett	Gray & Davidson, London 17 stops	<i>Liverpool Mercury</i> , 26 October 1871, 6; <i>Wrexham Advertiser</i> , 28 October 1871, 6
April 1877	Thornton Hough, Birkenhead	Wesleyan		American Organ	<i>Baner ac Amserau Cymru</i> , 7 April 1877, 7
August 1877	Buckley	Congregational			<i>Wrexham Advertiser</i> , 1 Sept. 1877, 6
September 1877	Park Road, Liverpool	Congregational	Tomaso Radcliffe Edward Stephen ( <i>Tanymarian</i> ) presided	Forster & Andrews, Hull £440 2-manual, pedal	<i>Y Genedl Cymreig</i> , 13 Medi 1877, 5; <i>Liverpool Mercury</i> , 5 September 1877, 6

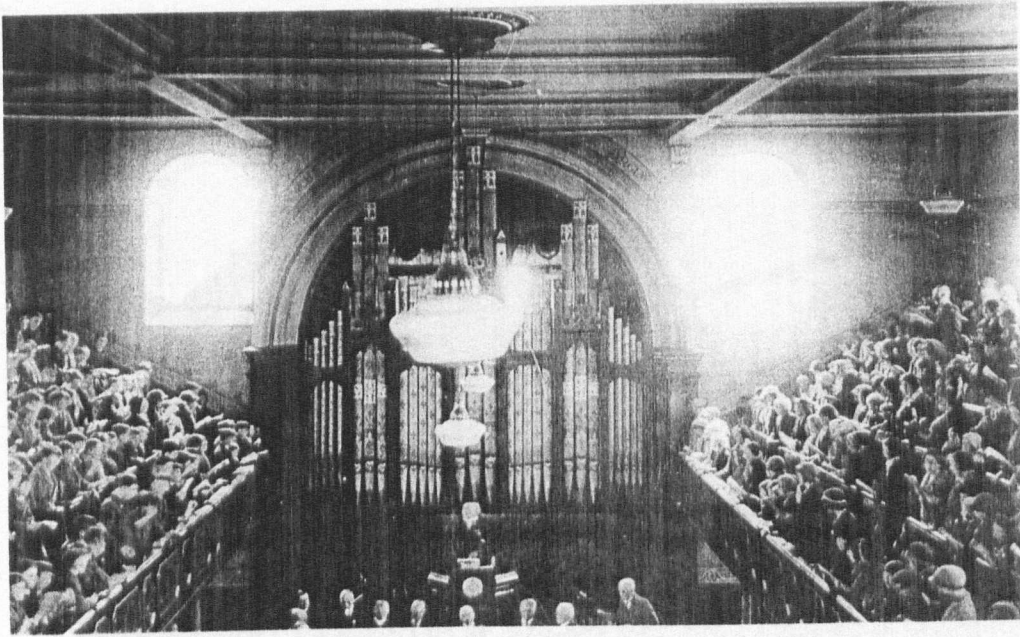
Date	Location	Denomination	Inaugurated by	Builders	Reference
September 1877	Park Road, Liverpool	Congregational	Tomaso Radcliffe Edward Stephen ( <i>Tanymarian</i> ) presided	Forster & Andrews, Hull £440 2-manual, pedal	<i>Y Genedl Cymreig</i> , 13 Medi 1877, 5; <i>Liverpool Mercury</i> , 5 September 1877, 6 <i>Wrexham Advertiser</i> , 7 Dec. 1878, 5
December 1878	Chester St., Wrexham (English)	Congregational	Described as first organ amongst Baptists of north Wales		Quoted in <i>Bwletin Cymdeithas Emynau Cymru</i> , Cyfrol 2 (1987-8), 342
1880	Brymbo	Baptists			<i>Y Genedl Cymreig</i> , 12 Medi 1883, 8
1883	Netherfield Road, Liverpool	Congregational	H.A. Branscombe, chorusmaster Liverpool Philharmonic Society	Willis	
September 1889	Netherfield Road, Liverpool	Calvinistic Methodist	W.H. Jude, Principal of Liverpool Organ School	The first organ installed by CMs in Liverpool	<i>Baner ac Amserau Cymru</i> , 28 Medi, 1889, 4
January 1894	Prince's Road, Liverpool	Calvinistic Methodist	W.A. Roberts, organist at St. Paul's, Prince's Park, Liverpool	Norman & Beard, Norwich	<i>Liverpool Mercury</i> , 22 January 1894, 6; <i>Baner ac Amserau Cymru</i> , 7 Chwefror 1894,
July 1889	Llanrwst	Calvinistic Methodist	The first pipe organ to be inaugurated in a Calvinistic Methodist chapel in north Wales		<i>Baner ac Amserau Cymru</i> , 31 Gorffennaf 1889, 13
June-July 1890	Seion, Cefn Mawr	Baptist			
September 1891	Swan Lane, Denbigh	Congregational	F. H. Bursall, organist of pro- Liverpool Cathedral	John Bellamy, Denbigh	<i>Liverpool Mercury</i> , 1 October 1891, 7
May 1892	Holywell	Congregational			<i>Y Tyst a'r Dydd</i> , 3 Mehefin 1892, 9
October 1892	Salem, Coedpoeth	Congregational			<i>Y Genedl Cymreig</i> , 2 Tachwedd 1892, 5

Date	Location	Denomination	Inaugurated by	Builders	Reference
January 1893	Engedi, Brymbo	Calvinistic Methodist		Pedal organ	<i>Wrexham Advertiser</i> , 21 January 1893, 8
January 1894	Prince's Road, Liverpool	Calvinistic Methodist	W.A. Roberts, organist at St. Paul's, Prince's Park, Liverpool	Norman & Beard, Norwich £1600	<i>Liverpool Mercury</i> , 22 January 1894, 6; <i>Baner ac Amserau Cymru</i> , 7 Chwefror 1894, <i>Y Genedl Cymreig</i> , 26 Mawrth 1895, 7
March 1895	Bethel, Bagillt	Baptist	W.A. Jones	possibly harmonium	<i>Wrexham Advertiser</i> , 27 July 1895, 5
July 1895	Rhosddu, Wrexham	Calvinistic Methodist		Crane and Son, Wrexham	<i>Jiwbili Mynydd Seion</i> 1919-1920
1896	Mynydd Seion, Ponciau	Congregational		£200 approx.	
1896	Capel Mawr, Rhos	Calvinistic Methodist	Dr. Roland Rogers	Norman & Beard £500	<i>Baner ac Amserau Cymru</i> , 11 Tachwedd 1896, 4
November 1896	Chatham Street, Liverpool		J.J. Ward, organist at English Wesleyans, Southport	Hill and Son, London	<i>Y Goleuad</i> , 10 Chwefror 1897, 5
February 1897	Capel Mawr, Rhos	Calvinistic Methodist	Dr. Roland Rogers	Nicholson & Co., Worcester £600	<i>Baner ac Amserau Cymru</i> , 12 Mai 1897, 5
May 1897	Clwyd Street, Rhyl	Calvinistic Methodist	Mr. Fielding, organist at English Wesleyan chapel, Rhyl	Wadsworth & Co., Manchester	<i>Liverpool Mercury</i> , 23 November 1899, 8; <i>Y Goleuad</i> , 29 Tachwedd 1899, 14
November 1899	Stanley Road	Calvinistic Methodist	A.E. Workman, organist of Emmanuel Church, Bootle	Norman & Beard of Norwch and London 3-manual	<i>Baner ac Amserau Cymru</i> , 6 Rhagfyr, 1899, 10
December 1899	Talwrn, Coedpoeth	Congregational	Caradog Roberts		<i>National Pipe Organ Register</i> , British Institute of Organ Studies website, <a href="http://www.bios.org.uk/">http://www.bios.org.uk/</a>
1899	Engedi, Colwyn Bay	Calvinistic Methodist	Dr. Roland Rogers, Bangor	Peter Conacher & Co., Huddersfield	<i>Y Genedl Cymreig</i> , 18 Gorphenaf 1900, 1

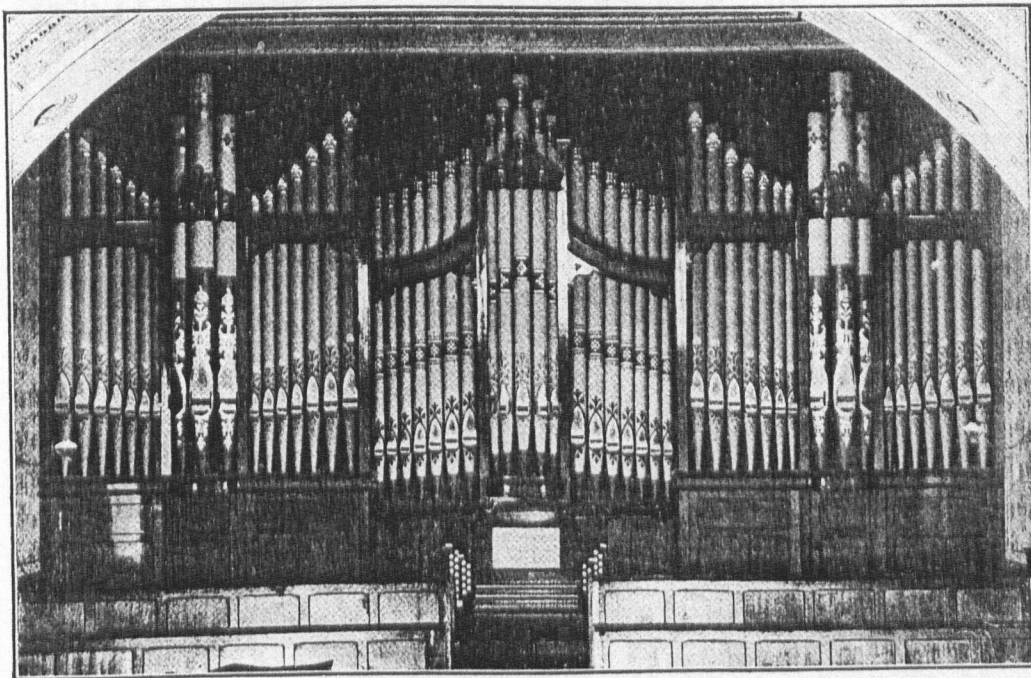
Date	Location	Denomination	Inaugurated by	Builders	Reference
c. 1900	Mynydd Seion, Prestatyn Corwen	Calvinistic Methodist	J.H. Roberts, Liverpool	Peter Conacher & Co., Huddersfield	<i>National Pipe Organ Register</i>
July 1901	Seion Wreccsam,	Calvinistic Methodist		Peter Conacher & Co., Huddersfield	<i>Y Cerddor</i> , Awst (1901), 85
1902	Rehoboth, Presatytyn	Calvinistic Methodist	Caradog Roberts	Nicholson & Lord	<i>Y Cerddor</i> , Ionawr (1904), 7
December 1903	Llansannan	Calvinistic Methodist	D.Parry, Llanrwst	Young & Sons, Manchester	<i>Y Cerddor</i> , Ionawr (1904), 8
December 1903	Adwy'r Clawdd	Calvinistic Methodist	J.H. Roberts, Liverpool	Thomas Casson, Positive Pipe Organ Company, London	<i>Y Cerddor</i> , <i>Y Cerddor</i> , Rhagfyr (1904), 137
1904	Bethel, Ponciau	Calvinistic Methodist	Caradog Roberts	Conacher, Huddersfield	
March 1904	Mynydd Seion, Abergele	Calvinistic Methodist			R.H. Evans (gol.), <i>Hanes</i> <i>Henaduriaeth Dyffryn Clwyd</i> (Dinbych, 1986)
1905	Bethesda, Mold	Calvinistic Methodist	Carnegie-funded £250	£500	Griffith Owen, <i>Hanes</i> <i>Methodistaeth Sir Fflint</i> Dolgellau, 19140, 247
July 1905	Rehoboth, Coedpoeth	Wesleyan	Harry Evans	James Binns, Leeds 2 manual, pneumatic	<i>Y Cerddor</i> , Awst (1905), 92
October 1905	Glanrafon, Southsea	Calvinistic Methodist	Frank Pullein, church organist at Wrexham	P. Conacher & Co., Huddersfield	<i>Y Cerddor</i> , Rhagfyr (1905), 139

Date	Location	Denomination	Inaugurated by	Builders	Reference
Late 1905	Capel Mawr, Denbigh	Calvinistic Methodist		Alexander Young & Sons Manchester	E.P. Jones, <i>Methodistiath Galfmaidd Dinbych</i> , 1735-1909 (Dinbych, 1936), 229
October 1907	Penuel, Rhosllannerchrugog	Baptist	Caradog Roberts	Norman & Beard, Norwich & London	<i>Hanes Penuel</i>
June 1908	Bethlehem, Rhosllannerchrugog	Congregational	Caradog Roberts Described as the largest pipe organ in a nonconformist chapel in north Wales	Norman & Beard, London, Norwich and Glasgow 3-manual, 45 stops	<i>Y Cerddor</i> , Gorphenaf (1908), 74
September 1908 May 1910	Seion, Ponciau Engedi, Brymbo	Baptist Calvinistic Methodist	Caradog Roberts H.A.Branscombe	Rushworth & Dreaper, Liverpool	<i>Y Cerddor</i> , Hydref (1908) <i>Musical Times</i> , 1 July 1910, 440
1911	Cefn Berain, Cenbigh	Calvinistic Methodist			R.H. Evans (gol.), op.cit., 127
1914	Seion, Llanrwst	Calvinistic Methodist		William Hill & Son	<i>National Pipe Organ Register</i>
July 1915	Tabernacle, Ruthin	Calvinistic Methodist	E.T.Davies		R.H. Evans (gol.), op.cit.,

British Institute of Organ Studies website, <http://www.bios.org.uk/> Royal College of Music: National Pipe Organ Register, [http://www.npor.org.uk/cgi-](http://www.npor.org.uk/cgi-bin/NPORSearch.cgi?)



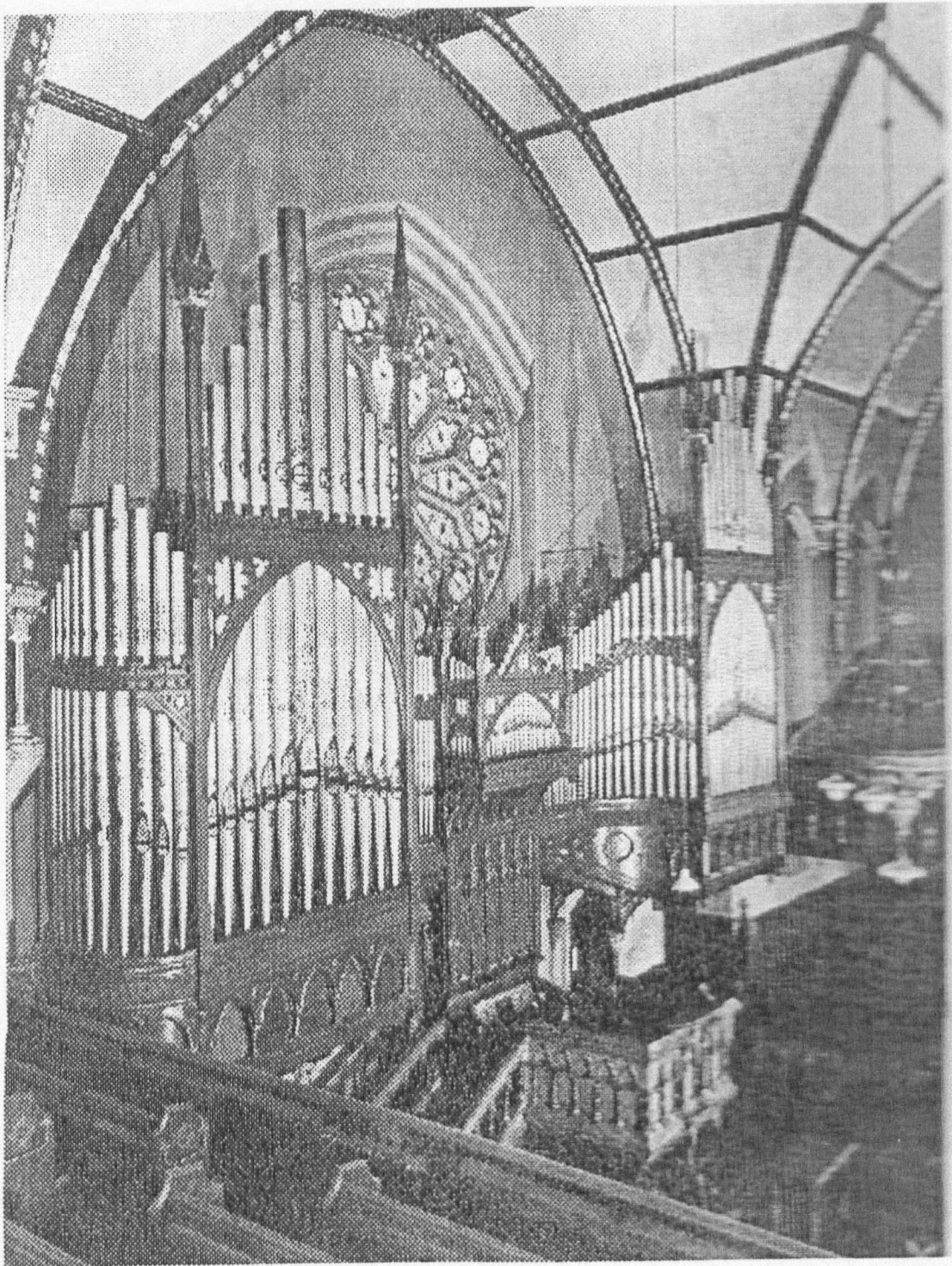
CAPEL MAWR, RHOSLLANNERCHRUGOG  
CYMANFA GANU'R PLANT  
Early 20<sup>th</sup> century



*Photo gan*

*[Llisaone & Sons, Llangollen.]*

Organ Newydd, Bethlehem, Rhosllannerchrugog.



**NORMAN & BEARD ORGAN IN PRINCE'S ROAD CHAPEL, LIVERPOOL**

## APPENDIX 6

Choral activity in north-east Wales and Merseyside



## APPENDIX 6

A sample of choirs in north-east Wales to illustrate the type of choral activity that developed in the Nonconformist chapels. This overview includes chapel choirs, and choral societies that competed at local literary meetings and *eisteddfodau* and the more ambitious choruses that answered the challenge of the National and Provincial *Eisteddfodau*.

LOCATION	CONDUCTOR	ACTIVITY
<b>ACREFAIR</b>		
Penybryn Chapel Choir Acrefair	E. Morris	Concert of sacred and secular music <sup>1</sup>
Tonic Sol-fa Choir	Joseph Owen	Tribute to Joseph Owen was the Tonic Sol-fa Concert at the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Acrefair. <sup>2</sup>
Acrefair Philharmonic Society	John Thomas Gabriel [coal miner]	Choir of 80 members held concert at Llangollen in aid of their expenses to compete at Birkenhead Eisteddfod. <sup>3</sup>
	J.T. Gabriel	McFarren and Brinley Richards gave 1 <sup>st</sup> prize to Acrefair Philharmonic Society in a choral competition for not less than 60 voices. <sup>4</sup>
	J. T. Gabriel	Concert to raise funds for competing in Corwen National Eisteddfod. <sup>5</sup>
	J. T. Gabriel	Easter Monday Eisteddfod in Coedpoeth Wesleyan chapel. <sup>6</sup>
	J. T. Gabriel	Competed at Pontypool Bank Holiday Eisteddfod. 128 members in choir – smallest choir in competition <sup>7</sup>
	J.T. Gabriel	Competed at Tabernacle Eisteddfod Coedpoeth <sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 24 September 1870.

<sup>2</sup> *District News, Wrexham Advertiser*, 9 January 1869, 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 August 1878.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 September 1878, 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 July 1881, 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 March 1883, 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 April 1883, 8.

<b>ADWY</b>			
Adwy Choir	James Beckett (1829-1876)		James Beckett formed a chapel choir of 40 members <sup>9</sup> c1856 and continued until his death in 1876 <sup>10</sup>
Adwy'r Clawdd TSF choir [MC]	James Beckett		In concert with Rhos Choir and Joseph Owen <sup>11</sup>
Adwy'r Clawdd choir	James Beckett		Choir singing (but not competing) at reconstituted Adwy Eisteddfod. <sup>12</sup>
Maelor Juvenile Choir	G.J. Jones (Board School)		60 members of Penygelli Board School <sup>13</sup>
Adwy & Coedpoeth Choral Society	G.J. Jones		All members to be examined by Thomas Roberts[Harmonydd] <sup>14</sup>
Coedpoeth and Adwy Choral Society	<i>Harmonydd</i> [Thomas Roberts]		100 in number – concert at Wesleyan chapel <sup>15</sup>
Adwy and Coedpoeth Choral Society	<i>Harmonydd</i>		Coedpoeth Easter Monday Festival and sang the Cantata, 'David, the Shepherd Boy' <sup>16</sup>
<b>BROUGHTON</b>			
Broughton Tonic Solfa Choir	John Jones		Benefit concert at Fron Wesleyan for Barnard Roberts, <i>codwr canu</i> at the Chapel. <sup>17</sup>
Broughton Tonic Solfa Choir	Edwin Cunnah		Won first prize at the Brymbo, Good Friday Eisteddfod, April 1873 <sup>18</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 17 Mawrth 1894.

<sup>9</sup> *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 12 March 1862.

<sup>10</sup> H. Llewelyn Williams, *Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd yn Adwy'r Clawdd* (Wrecsam, 1947), 61.

<sup>11</sup> Advertisements & Notices, *Wrexham Advertiser*, 22 December 1866, 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 January 1879, 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 13 Mai 1874.

<sup>14</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 6 January 1877, 7.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 July 1887, 8.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 March 1888, 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 May 1869, 6; 22 October 1870, 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 April 1873, 6.

<b>BRYMBO</b>			
Brymbo Tonic Sol-fa choir formed c.1866 by Edward Humphreys (M.C.) <sup>19</sup>	Edward Humphreys		Performed in ' Penny Readings' at British School Concert in February 1867. <sup>20</sup>
Brymbo Tonic Sol-fa Class at Bethania Chapel Lodge, Brymbo	Edward Humphreys		'Second public debut in Brymbo'. <sup>21</sup> Sang <i>Teyrnasoedd y Ddaear</i> and 'Hallelujah Chorus'
Lodge Choir	Edward William Parry		Conducted choir from 1869, 1885 <sup>22</sup> Parry was a regular competitor at local <i>eisteddfodau</i> . <sup>23</sup>
Côr <i>Alaw Alun</i>	William Reynolds ( <i>Alaw Alun</i> ) (Wesleyan)		National Eisteddfod at Chester (1866) they took part in competition for choirs of no fewer than 20 <sup>24</sup>
Brymbo Glee Party & Wesleyan Choir	William Reynolds		Prince of Wales Cantata sung for the first time in the district <sup>25</sup>
Brymbo Choral Union	Edward Hughes		Easter Monday Eisteddfod in Coedpoeth Wesleyan Chapel in March 1883 and Rehoboth Wesleyan Chapel, Coedpoeth in April 1885 <sup>26</sup>
Brymbo Choral Society	Edward Hughes		Competed at Chester Christmas Eisteddfod 1891 <sup>27</sup>
Brymbo Choir	William Reynolds		Concert at Wesleyan chapel, Mold, February 1876
Engedi Brymbo Choir	John Howard		Christmas Day Tabernacle Eisteddfod 1888 <sup>28</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 25 May 1867, 6.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 23 February 1867, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 4 February 1871, 6.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 1 May 1869, 6; 15 August 1885.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 15 August 1885, 8.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 8 September 1866, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 12 January 1867, 6.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 31 March 1883, 8; 11 April 1885, 5.

<sup>27</sup> *Cheshire Observer*, 2 January 1892, 6.

Brymbo and Broughton Philharmonic Society	W.H. Davies <sup>29</sup>	Choral competition at Concert in Bwlchgwyn – July 1873 <sup>30</sup>
Brymbo and Broughton Male Voice Choir	Edward William Parry, Lodge	E. W. Parry was a baritone soloist and precentor at Bethania M.C. Chapel, Lodge <sup>31</sup>
Bethania Children's Choir	Edward W. Parry	Literary meeting at Lodge, Brymbo, February 1893 <sup>32</sup>
Bryn Seion chapel choir	Seth Roberts led the choir until 1888 <sup>33</sup>	Brymbo Eisteddfod <sup>34</sup>
Bryn Seion chapel choir	Peter Williams	1893 - Choir of 150 performed the <i>Messiah</i> <sup>35</sup>
	Peter Williams	The choir took part in London TSF Association concert in Crystal Palace in June 1896, along with choirs from Ruthin [Harris Jones], Rhos [Henry Jones], Cefn Mawr [G.W. Hughes] and Coedpoeth [T.Jones]. <sup>36</sup>
Brynteg chapel Choir [Cong]	Edward George, Cerney <sup>37</sup>	Competed at Brynteg Eisteddfod <sup>38</sup>
<b>BWLCHGWYN</b>		
Bwlchgwyn Choral Society	John Jones	November Took part in Bwlchgwyn Eisteddfod – November 1882 <sup>39</sup>
	Robert Jones	Competed at Tabernacle Baptist, Coedpoeth Eisteddfod in August 1888, and at Treuddyn M.C. Chapel Eisteddfod – December 1888
Bwlchgwyn United Choir	Robert Jones	Broughton Young Men's Eisteddfod March 1893 <sup>40</sup>
Côr Bwlchgwyn <sup>41</sup>	Robert Jones	Competed at the annual Eisteddfod at Tabernacle, Coedpoeth, 1894.

<sup>28</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 28 December 1888, 8.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 February 1887, 8.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 August 1878, 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 February 1887, 8.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 February 1893, 8.

<sup>33</sup> E.K. Jones, *Harwt a Bryn Seion - Hanes Eglwys Annibynnol Brymbo 1802-1940* (Llandysul, 1941), 95.

<sup>34</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 3 September 1874, 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Y Cerddor*, Mai (1893).

<sup>36</sup> *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 8 Gorff 1896, 13.

<sup>37</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 3 November 1888, 8.

<sup>38</sup> *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 20 Ebrill 1887, 10.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 November 1882, 6.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 March 1893, 3.

Bwlchgwyn Choral Society	Robert Jones	June 1899 – competed against Talke and District Choral Society from Staffordshire (J. Whewall) at the Bwlchgwyn Younh Men's Eisteddfod <sup>42</sup>
<b>CEFN MAWR</b>		
Cefn Choral Union	R.G. Price	Literary meeting of the independents held at the Baptist Tabernacle. Test piece was the hymn-tune 'Gobaith' <sup>43</sup>
Cefn Choral Union	R.E. Jones	Competed at the annual Cefn Mawr Christmas Eisteddfod <sup>44</sup>
Choir	J.T. Gabriel G.W. Hughes	Competing at Tabernacle Eisteddfod Coedpoeth <sup>45</sup>
Côr Plant y Wlad	John Wright	Competed at Wrexham Young Men's Eisteddfod <sup>46</sup>
<b>COEDPOETH</b>		
Maelor Party	Thomas Jones Tailor	Literary Meeting at Bwlchgwyn Wesleyan Chapel, 1880. <sup>47</sup>
Maelor Choral Society	Joseph Wilcoxon [postmaster]	Coedpoeth Musical Festival, April 1891
Coedpoeth Male Voice Choir	Robert Edward Jones, son of <i>Canrhawdfardd</i>	Coedpoeth and Minera Concert, March 1893 <sup>48</sup>
Adwy and Coedpoeth Choral Society	Thomas Roberts ( <i>Harmonydd</i> ) was conductor of this Society for a number of years.	Took first prize of £15 at Adwy Eisteddfod in 1882 <sup>49</sup>
Coedpoeth Musical Society <sup>50</sup>	J. Pryce Hughes	

<sup>41</sup> *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 17 Mawrth 1894, 5.

<sup>42</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 22 June 1899, 8.

<sup>43</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 9 April 1870, 6.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 August 1873; 2 January 1875, 6.

<sup>45</sup> *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 17 Mawrth 1894.

<sup>46</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 29 April 1893, 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 November 1880, 6; 1 July 1882, 6.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 March 1893, 8.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 August 1882, 6.

DENBIGH			
Denbigh Choral Society	Thomas Roberts		Concert in aid of Denbigh Infirmary – Tuesday 27 November 1860
Denbigh Harmonic Union	Lewis William Lewis ( <i>Llew Ltwyfo</i> )		Over 100 voices – Concert in aid of Denbigh Infirmary – Thursday 29 November 1860
Denbigh Choral Union	<i>Llew Ltwyfo</i>		Benefit concert for <i>Llew Ltwyfo</i> at Denbigh – January 1861 <sup>51</sup>
Denbigh Choral Union	<i>Llew Ltwyfo</i>		Concert in aid of Denbigh Infirmary – February 1875 <sup>52</sup>
Denbigh Harmonic Union	<i>Llew Ltwyfo</i>		May 1863 – Concert at Denbigh Asylum <sup>53</sup>
St.Asaph Choral Society <sup>54</sup>	Felix C. Watkins		1884 Watkins combined the choirs of Denbigh, St Asaph and Rhyl to form a 'representative choir' to compete at the National Eisteddfod at Liverpool.
Rhyl Philharmonic Society <sup>55</sup>	Felix C. Watkins		1884
Denbigh Choral Union	T.R. Jones		Took part in choral competition for between 60 and 80 voices at the 1888 Wrexham National Eisteddfod. <sup>56</sup>
Caledfryn Choral Union, Denbigh	T.R. Jones		Choir of 100 voices competing at Llandudno St. David Day's Eisteddfod 1891 <sup>57</sup>
Denbigh Philharmonic Society <sup>58</sup>	Felix C. Watkins		1892 Watkins created an enviable National reputation for this choir that came to the attention of the National music press. <sup>59</sup>
Denbigh Choral Union	Moses Lloyd		Vale of Clwyd Good Templars Eisteddfod at Denbigh, September 1891 <sup>60</sup>
Vale of Clwyd Choir	Felix C. Watkins		Obituary notice – 'One of the ablest conductors and musicians in north Wales has passed away.' <sup>61</sup>

<sup>50</sup> *Y Cerddor*, Mawrth (1914), 31.

<sup>51</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 2 February 1861, 3.

<sup>52</sup> *Cheshire Observer*, 27 February 1875, 8.

<sup>53</sup> *North Wales Chronicle*, 23 May 1863, 5.

<sup>54</sup> *Musical Standard*, 5 January 1884, 7.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 8 Medi 1888, 5.

<sup>57</sup> *Cheshire Observer*, 7 March 1891, 7.

<sup>58</sup> *Musical Times*, 1 June 1892, 367.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 26 September 1891, 5.

<sup>61</sup> *North Wales Chronicle*, 4 November 1893, 5.

<b>LLANARMON D.C.</b>			
Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog TSF Choir	Thomas Davies		June 1869 - Concert at Corwen, with the Sol-fa choirs of Bryneglwyns, Glyndyfrdwy and Llanarmon DC <sup>62</sup>
Côr Dyffryn Ceiriog	John Roberts		Choral competition at Llangollen Musical Festival, July 1887, <sup>63</sup>
<b>LLANARMON-YN-IÂL</b>			
Llanarmon Choral Union	H.B.Jones ( <i>Garmonydd</i> ) <sup>64</sup>		1882 - Christmas Day Concert at Llanarmon <sup>65</sup>
<b>LLANDEGLA</b>			
Llandegla Choir	J.H.Roberts		Local Eisteddfod at Llandegla, October 1881 <sup>66</sup>
<b>LLANGOLLEN</b>			
Llangollen Philharmonic Society est. 1851 by E.S.Jones	Edward Stephen Jones [flannel-mill owner]		Choirs of Rehoboth, Seion and Glanrafon were amalgamated to form a new choir – over 100 voices in 1870 <sup>67</sup>
Llangollen Philharmonic Society	E.S. Jones		About 24 members gave concert in Carrog – sang excerpts from Mozart's <i>Twelfth Mass</i> and Handel's <i>Messiah</i> in June 1862 <sup>68</sup>
Llangollen Choral Society	Mr. Clarke		'The National Eisteddfod at Denbigh' <sup>69</sup>
Llangollen Choral Society	William Williams [ <i>Pencerdd Berwyn</i> ]		Llangollen Musical Festival <sup>70</sup> July 1887

<sup>62</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 26 June 1869, 6.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 July 1887, 6.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 July 1882, 6.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 December 1882, 8.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 October 1881, 8.

<sup>67</sup> *Llangollen Advertiser*, 4 February 1870, 4.

<sup>68</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 14 June 1862, 6.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 August 1882, 7.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 July 1887, 6.

<b>PENYCAE</b>			
Penycae Choir	William Evans		Grand Concert with <i>Owain Alaw</i> at Tabernacle Chapel, Cefn Mawr – December 1867 Sacred and secular songs in Welsh and English <sup>71</sup>
Pentre Cristionydd Choir	J.Owen Jones		Pentre Cristionydd Choir competing at Mold 1873 National Eisteddfod <sup>72</sup>
Pentre Cristionydd Choral Union	J.Owen Jones		Competed in annual Cefn Mawr Christmas Eisteddfod 1874
<b>RHOSLLANNERCH- RUGOG</b>			
<i>Capel Mawr</i> Choir	Hugh Griffiths		First choir in Rhos was formed in 1863, under the baton of Hugh Griffiths, Pentre <sup>73</sup> Concert and Literary meeting at the Calvinistic Chapel, Ruabon., February 1864 <sup>74</sup>
<i>Capel Mawr</i> Choir	Joseph Jones ( <i>Arweinydd y Gân at Capel Mawr</i> )		Christmas Day concert at <i>Capel Mawr</i> 1866, where the chapel choir of 28 singers performed with the Tonic Sol-fa Choir of Joseph Owen which had 21 male voices. <sup>75</sup>
Tonic Sol-fa Choir	Hugh Griffiths		<i>Capel Mawr</i> , Rhos and Ponciau form a Band of Hope in October 1864 with 20 members. <sup>76</sup> Jospeh Owen established TSF classes and formed choir - 1865 <sup>77</sup>
Rhos Choir	Joseph Owen		Four choirs competed for the best rendition of Handel's <i>Messiah</i> , but it was the Southsea Glee and Choral Society, conducted by D. Jones, who were victorious. The adjudicators were Revs. J.D. Edwards, E. Stephen and <i>Llew Lliwyfo</i> <sup>78</sup>
Rhos Choir	R. Thomas		Concert to honour Hugh Griffiths, the late leader of the choir, and Richard Mills was presented with a silver mounted baton. <sup>79</sup>
Rhos Choir	Richard Mills		

<sup>71</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 7 December 1867, 6.

<sup>72</sup> Thomas Cropper, *Buckley and District* (Edinburgh, 1923), 201.

<sup>73</sup> J.Rhosydd Williams, *Hanes Rhosllannerchrugog* (Liverpool, 1945), 25.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 February 1864, 8.

<sup>75</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 29 December 1866, 6.

<sup>76</sup> *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 9 Tachwedd 1864, 725.

<sup>77</sup> 'Ein Cerdorion: Mr. Joseph Owen', *Y Cerdor*, Mawrth (1909), 26.

<sup>78</sup> 'Rhosllannerchrugog Literary and Musical Festival', *Wrexham Advertiser*, 30 June 1866, 6.



Rhos TSF Choir	Edward Davies	The choir sang the Glee 'Dyddiau'r Haf' at a Benefit Concert in the Public Hall. <sup>80</sup>
Bethlehem Choral Society	Dan Roberts	1906 – <i>Cymdeithas Gorawl Bethlehem</i> (120 voices) established by Dan Roberts and Caradog Roberts as accompanist. <sup>81</sup>
Bethlehem Children's Choir	Jacob Edwards	Bethlehem Children's Choir was founded early 1898 from the Band of Hope to compete in Johnstown Young Men's Eisteddfod. Emllyn Davies - accompanist. <sup>82</sup>
<b>RHYL</b>		
Rhyl Amateur Choral Society	J. Ambrose Lloyd	c. 1864-5, Ambrose Lloyd formed a small choir, consisting mainly of members of the English Congregational Church, Rhyl. John Jones ( <i>Glas Alaw</i> ) was one of the singers. <sup>83</sup>
Rhyl Choral Union	<i>Eos Bradwen</i> [John Jones]	1876 - Choir was formed for the purpose of competing at the forthcoming National Eisteddfod at Wrexham <sup>84</sup>
Rhyl Philharmonic Society	W.I.Argent Professor of music, Rhyl Music teacher at J.D. Jones' Clwyd Bank Street School Ruthin. <sup>85</sup>	April-May 1869 - took part in singing Messiah at Holywell British School, assisted by members of Liverpool Philharmonic Society and Cambrian Choral Society <sup>86</sup>
Rhyl Philharmonic	W.I.Argent	23 April 1869 assisted by Ruthin Philharmonic Society and Denbigh Choral Society gave a performance of the <i>Messiah</i> <sup>87</sup>
Rhyl Philharmonic	W.I.Argent	At Holywell, Rhyl Philharmonic again performed the <i>Messiah</i> , 'assisted by a few members of the Liverpool Philharmonic and the Birkenhead Choral Societies' <sup>88</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 21 March 1874, 6.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 28 March 1896, 8.

<sup>81</sup> 'Huno o'r Cerddor ger y Plas', *Rhos Herald*, 22 January 1938, 5.

<sup>82</sup> 'Cor Plant Bethlehem, Rhos' *Y Cyfarwyddwr Anibynnol*, Cyfrol II, Rhif 8, Mai (1902), 1.

<sup>83</sup> C. Francis Lloyd, Elfed (cyfieithydd a golygydd), *John Ambrose Lloyd, Hanes ei Fywyd a'i Weithiau* (Wrecsam, 1921), 85.

<sup>84</sup> Rhyl, *North Wales Chronicle*, 4 March 1876, 7.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 12 January 1867, 1.

<sup>86</sup> *North Wales Chronicle*, 23 February 1867, 3.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 1 May 1869, 2.

<sup>88</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 1 May 1869, 6.

<b>RUTHIN</b>			
Ruthin British Choral Society	J.D. Jones		Established by J.D. Jones of the British School, to counteract criticism that, apart from chapel choirs, not enough attention was given to musical concerts. <sup>89</sup>
	J.D. Jones		J.D. Jones set up a Choral Society with close on 150 members in 1863 <sup>90</sup>
Ruthin Choral Society	Benjamin Morris Williams		'... secure the valuable services of B.M. Williams' – December 1864 <sup>91</sup>
Ruthin Choral Society	B.M. Williams		He left Ruthin c. 1870. Farewell concert to BM Williams at Ruthin. <sup>92</sup>
Ruthin United Choral Society	E. Humphreys <sup>93</sup>		Choral Society held concert at the Assembly Rooms <sup>94</sup>
			1895 – 'attempt to reinstate the old Ruthin Phil. Soc.' <sup>95</sup>
Ruthin United Choral Society	R. Harris Jones		1895 -The society ... in its third year <sup>96</sup>
Clwydian Male Voice choir	R. Harris Jones		Beat Roland Rogers' Arvonic Male Choir at Wrexham National Eisteddfod 1888. <sup>97</sup>
Ruthin United Choral Society	R. Harris Jones		Rehearsing in preparation for David Jenkins' Crystal Palace Choir. <sup>98</sup>
Ruthin United Choral Society	R. Harris Jones		Concert at Town Hall, Ruthin, June 1896 in aid of Denbigh Infirmary <sup>99</sup>
<b>WREXHAM</b>			
Wrexham Competitive Society	W.M Roberts		Wrexham Young Men's Eisteddfod 1893 <sup>100</sup> W.M. Roberts also conducted the Rhosyllten Tabernacle Choir at this event. Wrexham Competitive Society later 'The Wrexham Orpheus Society', September 1893 <sup>101</sup>
Wrexham Philharmonic Choir	Rev.E.Hilton Stewart		The most successful choir in north-east Wales and the only one that took victory from the Birkenhead Cambrians at the Caernarfon National Eisteddfod in 1886. <sup>102</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Pierce Owen, *Hanes Methodistiaeth Dyffryn Clwyd* (Cyfarfod Misol Dyffryn Clwyd, 1921), 9.

<sup>90</sup> *Y Cerddor*, Chwefror (1863), 191.

<sup>91</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 17 December 1864, 6.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 September 1870.

<sup>93</sup> *North Wales Chronicle*, 7 December 1878, 6.

<sup>94</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 25 May 1878, 8.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 October 1895, 8.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 October 1895, 7.

<sup>97</sup> Ein Cerddorion: Mr. Harris Jones, Rhuthyn', *Y Cerddor*, Medi (1909), 98.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 January 1896, 8.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 June 1896, 3.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 April 1893, 3.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 September 1893, 5.

FLINTSHIRE		
<b>BAGILLT</b>		
Bagillt Choir	Evan Evans	Whitsunday Concert at Flint Town Hall – June 1858 <sup>103</sup>
Dee Choral Society, Bagillt		Competed at Holywell Eisteddfod 1869 <sup>104</sup>
Bagillt Choral Union	Evan Evans, Bagillt <sup>105</sup>	Competed at Holywell Eisteddfod – October 1885 <sup>106</sup>
Bagillt Choral Society	Arthur Jones	Won choral competition for 30-40 voices at Chester Christmas Eisteddfod 1891 <sup>107</sup>
Bagillt Choral Society		St. David's Day Festival held at National School <sup>108</sup>
Bagillt Choral Society	Arthur Jones	Took part at Mold Eisteddfod December 1892 <sup>109</sup>
Bagillt United Juvenile Choir	John Morgan	Competed at Bagillt Eisteddfod, September 1897 <sup>110</sup>
<b>BUCKLEY</b>		
Chapel Temperance Choir was formed pre 1850	Isaac Hopwood Colliery manager	'It is understood that this is the first occasion a cantata has been gone through in this neighbourhood' <sup>111</sup> 'The society comprises members of various denominations, united together to be taught the TSF method of singing at the M.C. Chapel, Buckley where Hopwood was precentor for over 40' <sup>112</sup>
Buckley Union Choir		National Eisteddfod at Chester competition for choirs of no fewer than 20 members

<sup>102</sup> 'Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales', Liverpool Mercury, 15 September 1886, 5.

<sup>103</sup> *Baner Cymru*, 2 Mehefin 1858, 345.

<sup>104</sup> *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 18 Medi 1869, 87.

<sup>105</sup> Conducted Congregational Sunday School Festival of Holywell Circuit, June 1885.

<sup>106</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 7 October 1885, 7.

<sup>107</sup> *Cheshire Observer*, 2 January 1892, 6.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 March 1892; *Cheshire Observer*, 5 March 1892, 6.

<sup>109</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 31 December 1892, 3.

<sup>110</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 13 September 1897, 8.

<sup>111</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 24 September 1870, 6.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 January 1871, 6.

Temperance choir	Edward Griffiths Clerk at brickworks	Temperance choir in 1850 for south Buckley, Hopwood covered the other part <sup>113</sup>
Bethel Choir, Buckley	Isaac Hopwood	Took part in Calvinistic Methodist Musical and Literary meeting at Buckley <sup>114</sup>
Buckley United Choral Society	Thomas Jones (Bistre Board School)	Choir of 55 members took part in Leeswood Eisteddfod St. David's Day Eisteddfod 1881 <sup>115</sup>
Buckley United Choral Society	Thomas Jones	'This Society which has been in existence for the last two years or so, and now numbers about 80 voices...' <sup>116</sup>
Buckley United Choral Society	Thomas Jones	Leeswood Chair Eisteddfod and Musical Festival, August 1882 <sup>117</sup>
<b>CAERGWRLE</b>		
Caergwrle Choristers	Thomas Evans	Hope and Caergwrle Eisteddfod May 1887 <sup>118</sup>
<b>CILCAIN</b>		
Cilcain Choir	E.Lloyd & Robert Hughes	Cilcain M.C. Sunday school treat, October 1874 <sup>119</sup>
Cilcain Choir	Edward Davies	Mold Christmas Eisteddfod 1893 <sup>120</sup>
<b>CYMAU</b>		
Cymmau Choir	David Thomas	Took part in M.C. chapel concert at Ffrith -- March 1882 <sup>121</sup>
Cymmau Choir	John Owen Smallwood <sup>122</sup>	Fund-raising concert for Llanfynydd chapel and winners of choral competition for choirs not less than 35 in number at Caergwrle Eisteddfod, May 1887 <sup>123</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Thomas Cropper, op. cit., 111.

<sup>114</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 31 December 1881, 6.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 March 1881, 6.

<sup>116</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 4 March 1882, 6.

<sup>117</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 31 May 1882, 6.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 May 1887, 8.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 October 1874, 6.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 December 1893, 3.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 March 1882, 6.

<sup>122</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 28 January 1888, 6.

Cymmau Choir	John O. Smallwood	Choir competed at Christmas Day Tabernacle Eisteddfod Brymbo 1888 <sup>124</sup> Sang 'Messiah's Reign' (J.L.Cobbin)
Cymmau Choir	John O. Smallwood	Christmas 1893 – conducting 'Welsh hill country choir' at M.C. Christmas Day Literary Meeting in Cymmau
<b>FFRITH</b>		
Ffrith Tonic Sol-fa choir c. 1869 <sup>125</sup>		
Ffrith United Choir	David Thomas	Took part in choral competition in local literary meeting at Bwlchgwyn, Ffrith in 1878.
Ffrith United Choir	J.Davies	Concert at Llanfynydd Board School in November 1878 <sup>126</sup>
<b>FFYNNONGROYW</b>		
Ffynnongroyw Choir	Thomas Jones	Competed at Bagillt Eisteddfod, September 1897 <sup>127</sup>
<b>FLINT</b>		
Choral Society		Choral Society about to be established in this town, under the auspices of some of the leaders of the late Eisteddfod. <sup>128</sup>
Flint Mountain & Halkyn English & Welsh TSF class	J. Richards	Mr. Richards of Halkyn presented with tribute on his leaving the area. <sup>129</sup>
Flint TSF choir		1867 – Took part in a musical evening <sup>130</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 14 May 1887, 8.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 28 December 1888, 8.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 25 December 1869, 8.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 23 November 1878, 8.

<sup>127</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 13 September 1897, 8.

<sup>128</sup> *North Wales Chronicle*, 23 October 1851, 2.

<sup>129</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 14 September 1867, 8.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 7 December 1867, 6.

<b>HALKYN</b>			
Halkyn United Choir	J.D. Jones		Annual Eisteddfod of the Mold Calvinistic Methodists on Christmas Day, 1897. <sup>131</sup>
<b>HOLYWELL</b>			
Holywell Choral Society			Edith Wynne joined this choir when she was 9 years of age, c. 1851 <sup>132</sup>
Holywell Choral Society	John Williams ( <i>ab Alaw</i> )		First concert given by the choir of 70 members – October 1860 <sup>133</sup>
Holywell Choral Society	John Williams ( <i>ab Alaw</i> )		Concert of sacred and secular music at Wrexham – March 1861 <sup>134</sup>
Rehoboth, Holywell TSF class	Richard Davies		
	Samuel Nuttall		Wesleyan chapel choir, Holywell, conducted by Mr. Nuttall, sang the Prince of Wales <i>Cantata</i> – Christmas Eve 1864 <sup>135</sup>
Holywell	Samuel Nuttall		Pendre Wesleyan chapel Holywell 'The Wesleyan Tea Meeting'
Orpheus Glee Society	Samuel Nuttall		Competed at Mold National Eisteddfod of 1873. Also competing at this Eisteddfod was John Davies' Glee Party. <sup>136</sup>
Orpheus Choral Society, Holywell	Samuel Nuttall		Took part in Holywell Eisteddfod – 1885s <sup>137</sup>
Holywell Ex-Harmonic Society	J.E.Pierce		Choral competition at Llangollen Musical Festival, July 1887, 6 <sup>138</sup>

<sup>131</sup> Mold, *Chester Standard*, 2 January 1897, 6.

<sup>132</sup> Huw Williams, *They Lived in Flintshire* (Wrexham, 1960), 128.

<sup>133</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 6 October 1860, 5.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 March 1861, 1.

<sup>135</sup> *Y Cerdor Cymreig*, 1 Mawrth 1865, 22.

<sup>136</sup> Thomas Cropper, *op. cit.*, 202.

<sup>137</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 7 October 1885, 7.

<sup>138</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 23 July 1887, 6.

<b>LEESWOOD</b>			
Leeswood United Choir	David Davies		Annual Christmas Day Concert and Competitive meeting at Congregational Chapel, Leeswood <sup>139</sup>
Leeswood Choir(Wesleyan)	E. Prydderch		Good Friday Concert at the Wesleyan Chapel in 1870. <sup>140</sup>
Leeswood TSF Society	E.C. Griffiths		Cerddor y TSF, 3, 1870??
Leeswood Seion Coed Talon	Ephraim Hopwood		
Leeswood United Choir	Ephraim Hopwood		Competed at Leeswood Eisteddfod, May 1882 <sup>141</sup>
Leeswood United Choir	John Roberts		Leeswood Chair Eisteddfod and Musical Festival, August 1882. <sup>142</sup>
Leeswood Glee Party <sup>143</sup>			
Penuel and Pontybodkin choir	Ephraim Hopwood		Competed at the Ffrith and Cymmau Bank Holiday <i>eisteddfod</i> . <sup>144</sup>
Leeswood Male Voice Choir			Competed against Chirk United Male Voice and Bwlchgwyn Male Choir. Coedpoeth Male chorus were the winners <sup>145</sup>
<b>MOLD</b>			
Mold Choral Society			Reference to this choir as being in the 'sixth season, with weekly practices at the National School-room' <sup>146</sup>
Mold Choral Society c. 1857	Mr Lawrence		This was a concert of two parts, the first being of sacred music and the latter half consisted of secular songs. <sup>147</sup>
Mold Choral Union			1864 - Amalgamated choir of churches of Mold, Hawarden, Northop, Flint, Treuddyn, Connah's Quay - second annual festival celebration <sup>148</sup>

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., District News, , 2 January 1892, 8.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 'Leeswood' 23 April 1870, 6.

<sup>141</sup> *Cheshire Observer*, 3 June 1882, 7.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., Leeswood Chair Eisteddfod, 12 August 1882, 8.

<sup>143</sup> *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, 5 Ebrill 1873.

<sup>144</sup> District News, *Wrexham Advertiser*, 15 August 1885, 8.

<sup>145</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 10 October 1896, 3.

<sup>146</sup> *Flinthshire Observer*, 1 Feb. 1861.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., District News, 23 May 1857, 3.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 27 August 1864, 5.

Mold Glee Party	S. Allen Jones	Farewell concert for Rev. H Gwerfyl James, Baptist Minister. <sup>149</sup>
Mold Harmonic Society	S.Allen Jones	Sunday School anniversary and Literary Meeting at the Assembly Rooms, Mold, on Christmas Day 1866 <sup>150</sup>
Mold TSF Society Choir	John Jones	Competing at Mold annual 'Literary & Musical Entertainment' <sup>151</sup>
Mold United Choral Society	S.Allen Jones	February 1870 - Report of inaugural concert <sup>152</sup>
Mold Choral Society	Thomas Foulkes	Competed at Leeswood Eisteddfod, May 1882 <sup>153</sup>
<b>MYNYDD ISA</b>		
Mynydd Isa Choir - 1879	Michael Lewis <sup>154</sup>	
Northop	Shem Jones' choir	Took part in a local eisteddfod in Mold, 'which was not well attended' <sup>155</sup>
<b>TREUDDYN</b>		
Pontybodkin	Robert George	Christmas Concert at Pontybodkin <sup>156</sup>
Treuddyn Choir	H.Hopwood	Competed at Treuddyn M.C. Eisteddfod <sup>157</sup>
Treuddyn Choral Union	John Roberts	Sang glees at Treuddyn Eisteddfod <sup>158</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 6 February 1869, 8.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 29 December 1966, 6.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 1 January 1870, 3.

<sup>152</sup> *Cheshire Observer*, 19 February 1870, 3.

<sup>153</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 31 May 1882, 6.

<sup>154</sup> *Y Genedl Gymreig*, 10 Gorphenaf 1879, 7.

<sup>155</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 6 May 1876, 8.

<sup>156</sup> *Y Genedl Gymreig*, 9 Ionawr 1879, 7.

<sup>157</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 3 January 1885, 2.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.



MERSEYSIDE		
Liverpool Philharmonic Society		Established 10 January 1840 and J. Ambrose Lloyd joined the choir. <sup>159</sup>
Liverpool Welsh Choral Society	John Ambrose Lloyd	Formed in 1846, this was one of the first chapel choirs to adopt the nomenclature 'choral society'. <sup>160</sup>
Liverpool Philharmonic Society	E. W. Thomas	E. W. Thomas mentioned as leader of Liverpool Philharmonic Society 1860. <sup>161</sup>
Birkenhead Cambrian Society	William Parry	Birkenhead Cambrian Choral Society was established in 1862. <sup>162</sup> Parry was undoubtedly one of the most gifted choral conductors of his day as evidenced by the consistent success of the Birkenhead Cambrian choir. When the choirs of north Wales amalgamated to form the North Wales Choral Union, a mighty chorus to challenge the south Wales choirs at the Crystal Palace, London, it was Parry who was chosen to be its conductor.
Liverpool Cambrian Choral Union	William Parry	This choir was inaugurated in 1869 and began with 300 members but later reduced to 100. <sup>163</sup>
Liverpool Vocalists Union	Thomas Cilcen Jones	established by Thomas Cilcen Jones c. 1870 Concert at Liverpool International Exhibition in June 1886. <sup>164</sup>
Birkenhead Cambrian	T. Cilcen Jones	T. Cilcen Jones conducted Birkenhead Cambrian Society for an interim period. <sup>165</sup>
Liverpool Philharmonic Society	David O. Parry J. H. Roberts	Won choral competition at National Eisteddfod in Bangor 1890. <sup>166</sup> J.H.Roberts was leader of Liverpool Philharmonic Society for almost 34 years. <sup>167</sup>

<sup>159</sup> C. Francis Lloyd (Elfed, cyfethydd a golygydd), *John Ambrose Lloyd – Hanes ei Fywyd a'i Weithiau* (Wrecsam, 1921), 49.

<sup>160</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 13 November 1846, 10.

<sup>161</sup> *Wrexham Advertiser*, 18 August 1860.

<sup>162</sup> NLW MS 6504D, Birkenhead Cambrian Choral Society Minutes, 1871-1885.

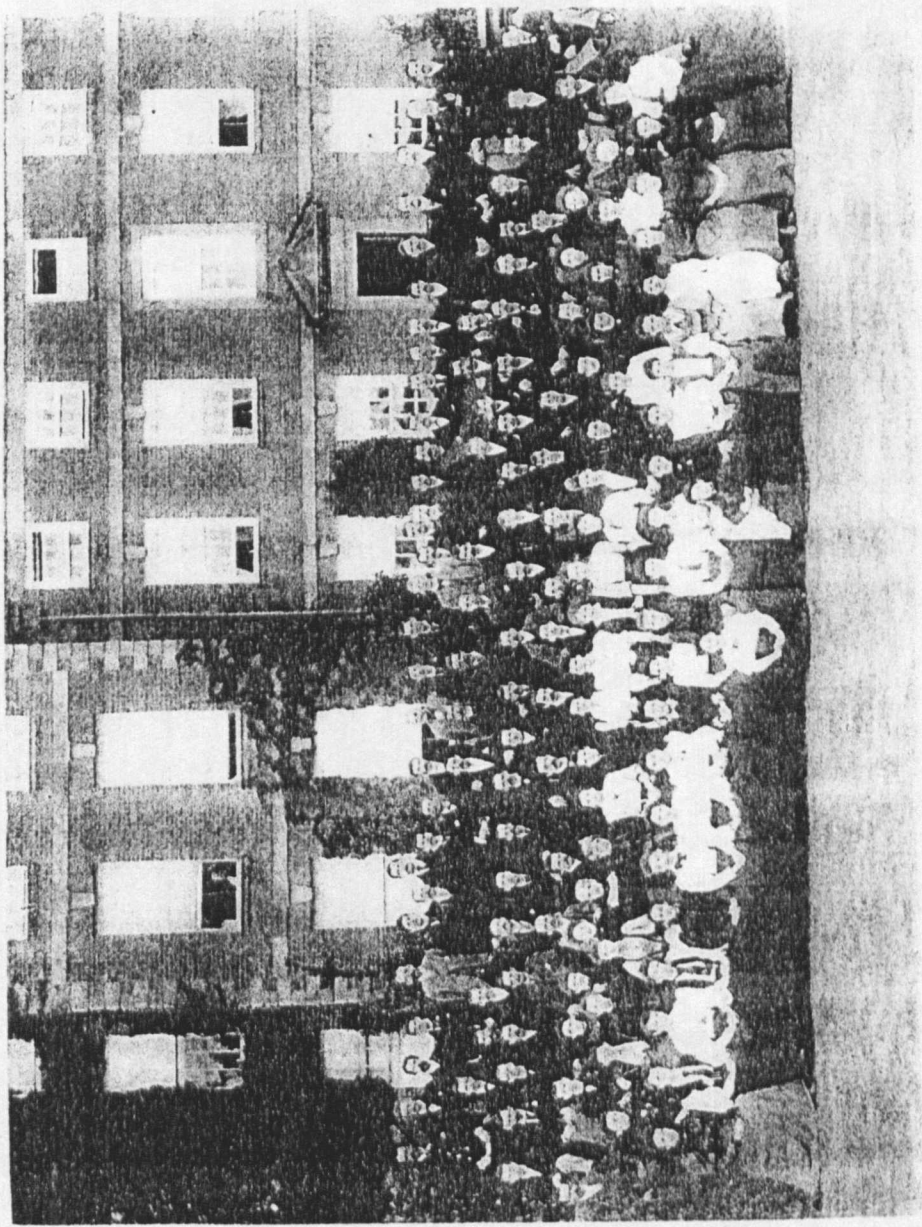
<sup>163</sup> W.M.Roberts, 'Ein Cerddorion: Mr.Llew Wynne', *Y Cerddor*, Cyfrol XXIV, Rhif 281, Mai (1912), 51.

<sup>164</sup> *Liverpool Mercury*, 21 June 1886, 6.

<sup>165</sup> *Y Genedl Gymreig*, 29 Gor. 1885, 8.

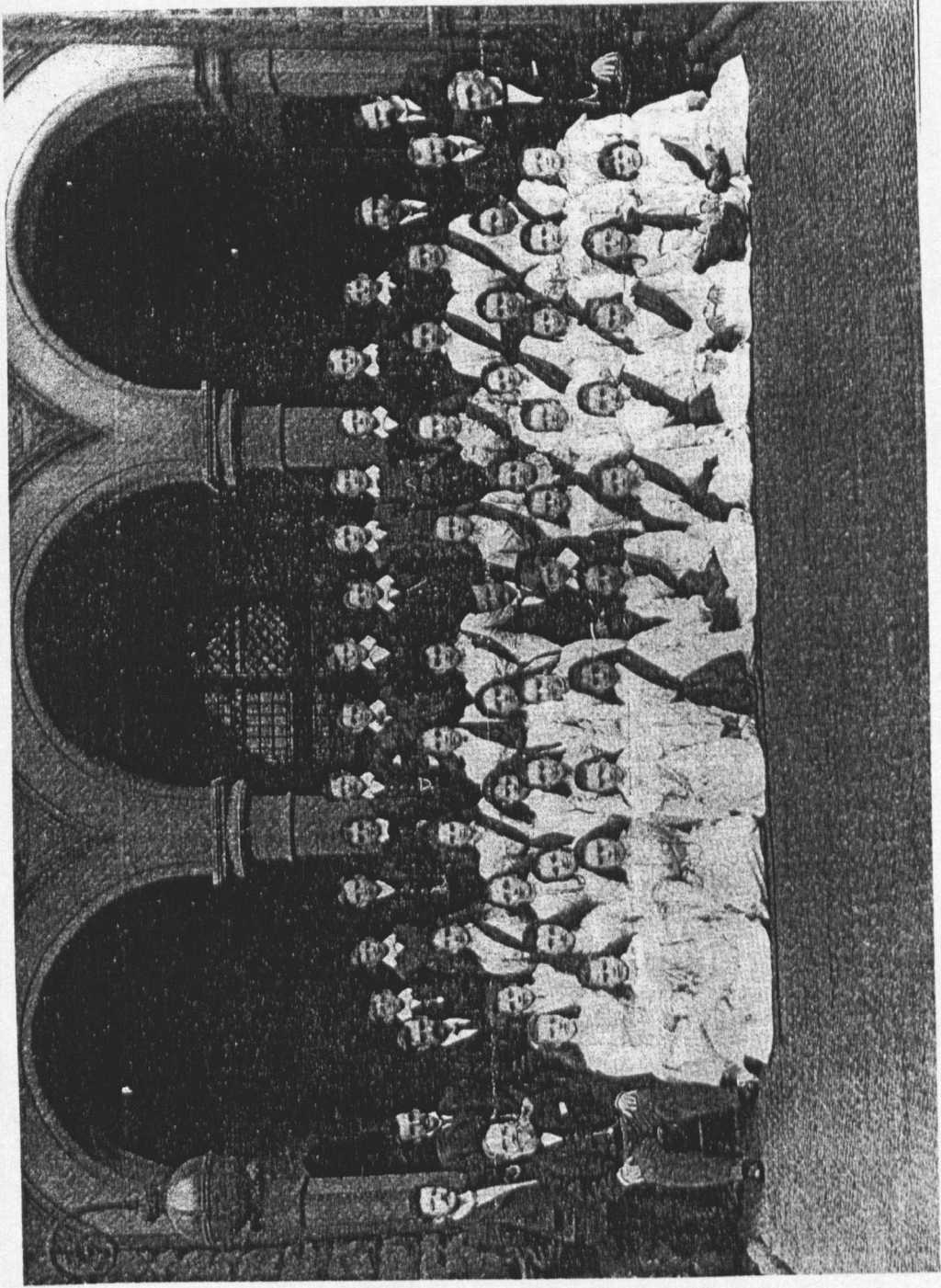
<sup>166</sup> *Y Cymro*, 4 Medi 1890, 6.

<sup>167</sup> J.H. Roberts, 'E.W. Thomas, y Crythor', *Y Cerddor*, (1892), 140.



**CEFEN MAWR CHORAL SOCIETY**  
**July 1895**

REFLECTIONS OF THE PAST IN A NEW WORLD



BETHLEHEM CHILDREN'S CHOIR, RHOSLLANNERCHRUGOG  
1902