

28/ Albany Road
Newport Road
Cardiff Dec 4th 1910.

Dear Mr. Crockett.

Replying to your enquiry
as to when "Hen wlad y cythadaw" was composed,
I have before me, as I write, the original
manuscript of the melody.

It is dated January 1856.

I have often heard my father say that
on a Sunday afternoon, in that month
and year, he went for a walk up the Rhonda
Road, and that the melody then came
to his mind. Returning to my Grandfather's
house, but a few doors from his own, he
said to him, "Father, I have composed a
melody, which is, in my opinion, a very
fitting one for a Welsh patriotic song.

Will you write some verses for it?"

"Let me hear it," said my Grandfather.

My father then sang the melody, and my
Grandfather then said, "Fetch your Harp,
James." My father brought the Harp to the
"Factory House," and played the air on that
instrument. My Grandfather was greatly struck
with it, and at once took down his slate,
which, I dare say you know, always hung
by the side of his armchair, by the fireplace,
and in a few minutes, the words
of the first verse were written. My father

was singing the words to his melody,
accompanying himself on the Harp, when
my Grandmother returned home from
evening service, at Carmel Baptist
Church, where she was a zealous and
devoted member. She reprimanded my
father, severely, for desecrating the
Sabbath by playing the Harp. He replied
by saying to her, "Mam, cofiwrch am
y Brenin Dafydd yn charaen ei
delyn". The second and third verses were
written the next day. The song became
exceedingly popular, so popular in fact,
that even the children were soon singing
and whistling it in the streets of Portyriad.
A prize was offered at the great Eisteddfod
of Bangor in 1858 for the best collection
of unpublished Welsh Airs. A friend of my
father's, Mr. Thomas Llewelyn (Llewelyn
Alan) ^a ~~and~~ well known Welsh Harpist, and
clever poet, decided to compete for this
prize, and with that view, called upon
my father, and asked him if he knew
any unpublished Welsh Airs. My father
replied saying he did not, but one of his
songs, which is called "Glanbroadwr",
in the original manuscript, because, I

hymn, it was composed in its banks,
had become very popular. and if he,
(Mr. Llewelyn) liked it, he could insert it
in his collection, with pleasure. My father
was weaving at the time, and he sang it
to Mr. Llewelyn from the loom. He (Mr. Llewelyn)
meanwhile, sitting on a 3 legged stool, getting
down the notes.

Mr. Llewelyn added this song to his collection
of unpublished Welsh airs. composed at
the Llangollen Eisteddfod and was
awarded the prize.

Owain Alaw, Organist of Chester Cathedral,
was the Adjudicator, and he, under
the impression that it was an old song
rescued from oblivion by Mr. Llewelyn,
published it in the 3rd Vol. of his "Gems
^{They were for the nation}
of Welsh Melodies". My father and Grand-
father protested against this, and Owain
Alaw apologised to them, and explained
how the song came to be inserted in
the "Gems". Owain Alaw then asked for
and obtained the permission of my
father and Grandfather to continue
the insertion of the "Hen wlad, fy
Rhadau" in the 3rd Vol. of the "Gems of
Welsh Melodies", which states that the
song is published by permission of James

James. Owain Alaw. some years after,
offered to buy the copyright, and
offered my father £15 worth of Copies
of his (Owain Alaw) song "Mae Robin
yn Swil".

Dont you think this was a gross piece
of impertinence, after selling hundreds
of copies of Vol 3. of the "Genius of Welsh
Melodies". Mr Hughes, of ~~the~~ Merham,
who published the "Genius of Welsh Melodies"
for Owain Alaw. called at the factory,
Pentypaid, on one occasion, and
told my father that more copies of Vol 3.
had been sold than Vols 1 & 2 put
together. Mr Hughes presented my
father with the 3 vols. and this is
all he ever got for his song. Nothing
from Owain Alaw, who must have
made hundreds of pounds out of my
father & Grandfather's song. The song that is
undignified by the title of "The Welsh
National Anthem."

Yr Liddych
Taliesin James