

Medal y Cymmrodorion, 2007

Dyfarnodd Cyngor y Gymdeithas ei Fedal i'r Athro Brynley F. Roberts, ac fe'i cyflwynwyd iddo mewn seremoni a gynhaliwyd yn y Drwm, Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru, ar 14 Mawrth 2007, gyda Llywydd y Gymdeithas, Dr Prys Morgan, yn y gadair.

The Council of the Society awarded its Medal to Professor Brynley F. Roberts, and it was presented to him in a ceremony held in the Drwm at The National Library of Wales on 14 March 2007, with the President, Dr Prys Morgan, in the chair.

Yr Athro Brynley F. Roberts, CBE, PhD, DLitt: cyflwyniad gan
Yr Athro R. Geraint Gruffydd

Barchus Lywydd Anrhydeddus Gymdeithas y Cymmrodorion a chyfeillion oll:

Nid siarad yn ystrydebol yr ydwyf drwy ddweud fy mod yn ei chyfrif yn fraint anghyffredin gael cyflwyno fy nghyfaill Brynley Roberts i gael ei arwisgo â Medal y Cymmrodorion yma heno, un o'r anrhydeddau pennaf y gall unrhyw Gymro neu Gymraes obeithio ei derbyn.

Fe aned Brynley Roberts (y byddaf yn ei alw'n Bryn o hyn ymlaen) yn Aberdâr yn 1931, a brodor o Aberdâr hefyd yw ei wraig Rhiannon, a fu'n gymaint o gefn iddo drwy gydol ei yrfa. Nid yn Aberdâr yr oedd gwreiddiau Bryn a'i frawd Alun, fodd bynnag; o Gaernarfon y deuai eu tad, a'u mam o Bontnewydd gerllaw, ond bod eu tad wedi ymfudo i Aberdâr i ddilyn ei yrfa fel argraffydd a'u mam, a fu'n gofalu am blant teuluoedd bonheddig am gyfnod, wedi canlyn eu tad yno; fe fu gan Bryn ddiddordeb ar hyd ei yrfa yng nghreffft a galwedigaeth ei dad. Y mae felly'n enghraifft ardderchog o'r symbiosis ffrwythlon rhwng Gogledd a De sy'n un o gryfderau mawr Cymru.

Fe addysgwyd Bryn yn Ysgol Ramadeg Aberdâr ac yno y cyfarfu â Rhiannon: pwynt pwysig i'w nodi wrth ystyried cyfraniad yr ysgolion gramadeg i'n gwareiddiad ac i'n diwylliant! Yn 1948 fe ymunodd ag Adran Gymraeg Coleg Prifysgol Cymru Aberystwyth (fel yr adwaenid ef ar y pryd) a graddio gydag Anrhydedd Dosbarth Cyntaf mewn Cymraeg, ynghyd â Lladin, yn 1951, gan ychwanegu at ei radd Ddiploma Athro yn 1952. Ddwy

flynedd yn ddiweddarach enillodd radd MA am draethawd hynod aeddfed ar y testun litwrgiaidd canoloesol Gwasanaeth Mair. Fe ddilynwyd hyn gan gyfnod o ddwy flynedd yng Nghorfflu Cudd-Ymchwil y Fyddin, lle y dysgodd Rwsieg. Dychwelodd i'w hen Adran yn Aberystwyth yn 1956 fel un o Gymrodyr Prifysgol Cymru, ac yna fel Darlithydd, Darlithydd Hynaf a Darllenydd, gan ennill gradd PhD yn 1969 am draethawd pwysig ar gyfieithiadau Cymraeg nofel hanesyddol ysbrydoledig Sieffre o Fynwy, *Historia Regum Britanniae* (Hanes Brenhinoedd neu 'Frut y Brenhinedd'). Fe gafodd flwyddyn sabothol dra haeddiannol yn 1973-74 fel Cymrawd Syr John Rh_s yng Ngholeg yr Iesu, Rhydychen. Wedi dwy flynedd ar hugain ffrwythlon yn Adran Gymraeg Aberystwyth, fe'i denwyd i fod yn Athro a Phennaeth yr Adran gyfatebol ym Mhrifysgol Cymru Abertawe yn 1978, lle yr arhosodd am saith mlynedd. Yn 1985 fe'i hapwyntiwyd yn Llyfrgellydd Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru, lle yr ydym, yn briodol iawn, yn cyfarfod heno; am naw mlynedd yr arhosodd yma, ac ymdddol yn 1994.

Fe ragorodd Bryn ymhob maes a bu'n gweithio ynddo, ond fe hoffwn i grybwyll yn gyntaf y maes ysgolheigaidd. Yn syml iawn, ef yw'r awdurdod mwyaf sydd gennym ar ryddiaith Gymraeg yr Oesoedd Canol, gan gynnwys nid yn unig y clwstwr o chwedlau byd-enwog a adwaenir fel 'Y Mabinogion' ond hefyd destunau mwy rhyddieithol megis 'Brut y Brenhinedd'; y mae ei olygiadau o amryw o'r testunau hyn, gan gynnwys ei olygiad diweddar o Breuddwyd Maesen Wledig, yn batrymau o'u bath, ac y mae ysgolheigion a darpar-ysgolheigion o lawer gwlad wedi eistedd wrth ei draed ac elwa'n fawr ar ei ddysg ddofn a'i radlonrwydd diffwdan. Y mae'n deg pwysleisio bod astudio rhyddiaith yr Oesoedd Canol wedi bod yn un o seiliau dysg Gymraeg o'r dechreuad, a bod i Bryn le anrhydeddus mewn olyniaeth anrhydeddus. Ond fe _yr yn dda am farddoniaeth yr Oesoedd Canol yn ogystal â'u rhyddiaith: fe olygodd y testun mydryddol Gwasanaeth Mair yn gynnar yn ei yrfa ac yn ddiweddar waith y Gogynfardd Hywel Foel yng 'Nghyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion': Hywel Foel oedd y bardd llys a feiddiodd feirniadu Llywelyn ap Gruffudd 'Llywelyn ein Llyw Olaf' am garcharu ei frawd Owain Goch yng Nghastell Dolbadarn. Hanner ffordd drwy ei yrfa fe ymroddodd Bryn i gasglu a golygu llythyrau'r athrylith hwnnw o diroedd y gororau, Edward Llwyd, a oedd yn ieithydd, yn hynafiaethydd, yn fotanegydd ac yn balaeontolegydd – ac enwi rhai yn unig o'r disgyblaethau y cyfrannodd atynt – a Bryn bellach yw ein hawdurdod pennaf ar Llwyd. Y mae hynny'n dra gweddus, gan fod Bryn, fel Llwyd, yn bolymath, ac yr wyf wedi peidio ag enwi amryw o'i ddiddordebau ysgolheigaidd ef yn ogystal ag amryw o rai Llwyd.

Ond nid ysgolhaig yn unig mo Bryn (ni wn i ddim a fyddai ef, mwy na minnau, yn ystyried gosodiad o'r fath yn glod!). Cyfrannodd yn helaeth at

weinyddiaeth Adran Gymraeg Aberystwyth tra oedd yma, ac yr oedd gwedd lewyrchus iawn ar ei Adran yn Abertawe pan oedd yn Bennaeth arni. Bu'n nodedig o lwyddiannus fel Llyfrgellydd y sefydliad mawr yma, gan greu cysylltiadau â'r proffesiynau llyfrgellyddol ac archifyddol ar draws Cymru a thu hwnt, a llwyddo i sicrhau grant o un filiwn ar ddeg a hanner o bunnoedd gan y Swyddfa Gymreig er mwyn adeiladu stac lyfrau newydd ac ysblennydd y Llyfrgell. Ar hyd y blynyddoedd fe fu'n ddiwyd yn hybu'r bywyd academaidd a llyfrgellyddol, yn y wlad hon ac yn rhyngwladol, drwy draddodi darlithiau gwadd, drwy arholi'n allanol, drwy asesu dysgu ac ymchwil, drwy eistedd ar bwyllgorau a chynghorau di-ri: er enghraifft, fe fu'n Llywydd Cymdeithas Llyfrgellwyr Cymru 1985–94, yn Gadeirydd Cyngor Llyfrau Cymru 1986–94, yn Gadeirydd Gr_p Llyfrgelloedd Cenedlaethol Ffederasiwn Cymdeithasau'r Llyfrgellwyr (IFLA) 1991–94, ac yn aelod o Gyngor Ariannu Addysg Uwch Cymru (HEFCW) 1992–2000. Fe elwodd y rhain i gyd, ac amryw byd o gyrff eraill, ar ei wybodaeth eang, ei farn sicr, a'i ddoethineb hynod. Lawer tro fe fu'r cynneddfau hyn yn angorfeydd diogel mewn moroedd digon tymhestlog! Rhaid enwi un cylch o wasanaeth yn arbennig, gan fy mod yn amau y byddai Bryn ei hun yn dymuno imi wneud hynny: fel aelod ffyddlon a blaenor yn Eglwys Bresbyteriaid Cymru, fe fu'n Llywydd ei Choleg Diwinyddol 1977–98 ac yn gadeirydd ei gwasg enwadol yn ystod yr un cyfnod, yn Gadeirydd ei Bwrdd Cyfathrebu 1982–96, yn Llywydd ei Sasiwn yn y De yn y flwyddyn 1989–90, yn Llywydd ei Chymanfa Gyffredinol 2001–2, ac yn Olygydd ei chwarterolyn hyglod *YTraethodydd* o 1999 hyd heddiw. Y mae'r ffaith olaf hon yn dangos yn glir na laesodd ei ddwylo ddim wedi iddo ymddeol yn 1994. Yn wir, cynnyrch ei ymddeoliad ydyw'r amryw gyfrolau a gydolygodd yng nghyfes werthfawr y 'Medieval and Modern Welsh Series' a gyhoeddir gan Institut Uwchefrydiau Dulyn, a phum cyfrol o leiaf a gomisiynwyd ganddo yn y gyfres o gofiannau llenyddol 'Dawn Dweud', y bu iddo ran yn ei gychwyniad ac sy'n llenwi bwlch rhwth yn neunydd darllen y Cymro a'r Gymraes lengar.

O ystyried disgleirdeb ei yrfa, y mae'n naturiol fod Bryn eisoes wedi derbyn lluo o anrhydeddau! Er enghraifft, fe'i gwnaed yn Athro Er Anrhydedd neu'n Gymrawd Er Anrhydedd tri o sefydliadau'r hen Brifysgol Cymru: Abertawe, Aberystwyth, a Chaerdydd. Fe fynnodd Institut Uwchefrydiau Dulyn ei wneud yn Gydymaith Ymchwil (Research Associate) a Chymdeithas Astudiaethau Celtaidd Gogledd America (CSANA) ei wneud yn aelod am oes. Braint brin iawn a ddaeth i'w ran oedd cael ei ethol yn Gymrawd Cymdeithas y Llyfrgelloedd (FLA) yn 1994 pan ymddeolodd o'r Llyfrgell: arwydd o werthfawrogiad y proffesiwn o'r waith. Yr oedd eisoes wedi'i urddo'n CBE yn 1993 ac yn fuan wedyn, yn 1996, fe gafodd radd Doethur mewn Llenyddiaeth Er Anrhydedd Prifysgol Cymru: fel y sylwodd y diweddar Athro Emeritws John Ellis Caerwyn Williams – coffa da amdano –

fe fuasai rhoi gradd Doethur yn y Cyfreithiau Er Anrhydedd iddo wedi bod yr un mor briodol, o ystyried ei gyflawniadau fel gweinyddwr academiaidd. Ond rwy'n amau bod yr anrhydedd y mae i'w dderbyn heno o leiaf mor werthfawr yn ei olwg ag y bu unrhyw un o'r lleill. Fe fu'n aelod o Gyngor Anrhydeddus Gymdeithas y Cymmrodorion er 1987 a'r un flwyddyn fe'i penodwyd yn olygydd Y Bywgraffiadur Cymreig i olynu'r Dr E. D. Jones: eisoes fe ymddangosodd Y Bywgraffiadur Cymreig 1951–1970 dan ei olygyddiaeth, a'r fersiwn Saesneg The Dictionary of Welsh Biography 1941–70; gyda'r ddwy gyfrol fe gafodd gymorth parod Dr Auronwy James. Y mae'n awr yn gweithio ar y cyfrolau wedi 1970. Y mae'n anodd gorbwysleisio'r llafur diflino ac anhunanol y mae paratoi cyfrolau fel hyn yn ei olygu, na'r gymwynas â'n cof cenedlaethol a gynrychiolant. Ac ystyried ei holl gyflawniadau a'i holl gymwynasau, na ellais i heno ond rhoi braslun annigonol iawn ohonynt, y mae'n dra phriodol fod Dr Brynley Francis Roberts yn cael ymuno â chwmni hynod ddisglair a hynod ddethol y rhai a arwisgir â Medal Anrhydeddus Gymdeithas y Cymmrodorion ar gyfrif eu gwasanaeth nodedig i Gymru.

Professor Brynley F. Roberts, CBE, PhD, DLitt, presented by
Professor R. Geraint Gruffydd

Mr President of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion and friends:

I am not using a cliché when I say that I account it a signal honour to be invited to present my friend Brynley Roberts to be invested with the Cymmrodorion Medal here this evening, one of the greatest honours any Welsh man or woman can aspire to.

Brynley Roberts (whom I shall call Bryn from now on) was born in Aberdare in 1931, and his wife Rhiannon – who has been such a support to him throughout his career – is also a native of Aberdare. Bryn's roots and those of his brother Alun were not in Aberdare, however: their father came from Caernarvon and their mother from nearby Bontnewydd, but their father migrated to Aberdare to pursue his career as a printer, and their mother, who had for some years been caring for the children of gentry families, eventually followed their father south; Bryn has always been keenly interested in his father's craft and calling. He is therefore a splendid example of the fruitful symbiosis between North and South which is one of the great strengths of Wales.

Bryn was educated at Aberdare Grammar School and it was there that he met Rhiannon: a point to remember when considering the contribution of the grammar schools to our civilisation and culture! In 1948 he joined the Welsh Department of the University College of Wales Aberystwyth (as it was known at the time), graduating with First Class Honours in Welsh, with Latin as an accessory subject, in 1951, and supplementing his degree with a teaching diploma in 1952. Two years later he gained an MA degree for a remarkably mature thesis on the medieval liturgical text *Gwasanaeth Mair* (Honours of the Blessed Virgin Mary). This was followed by a period of two years in the Army Intelligence Corps, where he learnt Russian. In 1956 he returned to his old Department in Aberystwyth as a fellow of the University of Wales, and then successively as Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Reader, gaining a PhD degree in 1969 for an important thesis on the Welsh translations of Geoffrey of Monmouth's inspired and inspirational historical novel, *Historia Regum Britanniae* (History of the Kings of Britain). He enjoyed a well-deserved sabbatical year during the session 1973–4 as Sir John Rhys Fellow at Jesus College, Oxford. After twenty two fruitful years in the Aberystwyth Welsh Department, he was persuaded to assume the Chair and Headship of the corresponding Department at Swansea, where he remained for seven years. In 1985 he was appointed Librarian at the National Library of Wales, where we are, very appropriately, meeting this evening; he remained here for nine years, retiring in 1994.

Bryn has excelled in every field in which he has laboured, but I would like to

mention first the field of scholarship. Put simply, he is our greatest authority on medieval Welsh prose, including not only the group of world-famous stories known as the *Mabinogion*, but also more utilitarian texts such as *Brut y Brenhinedd*; his editions of a wide range of these texts, including his recent edition of *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig* 'The Dream of Maxentius the Emperor', are models of their kind, and scholars and apprentice-scholars from many countries have sat at his feet and have profited greatly from his profound learning and his unassuming helpfulness. It is appropriate to emphasise that the study of Middle Welsh prose has been one of the foundations of Welsh scholarship from the beginning, and that Bryn has an honoured place in an honoured lineage. But he is well versed in the poetry of the Welsh Middle Ages as well as in the prose of the period: early in his career he edited the metrical service-book *Gwasanaeth Mair* and more recently the work of the *Gogynfardd Hywel Foel* in the 'Poets of the Princes Series': *Hywel Foel* was the court poet who dared to criticise prince *Llywelyn ap Gruffudd* of *Gwynedd* for imprisoning his brother *Owain Goch* in *Dolbadarn Castle*. With his career already well advanced, Bryn undertook to collect and edit the letters of that genius from the Welsh border country, *Edward Llwyd*, who was a linguist, an antiquary, a botanist and a palaeontologist – to name only a few of the disciplines to which he contributed – and Bryn is now our leading authority on *Llwyd*. This is very appropriate, because Bryn, like *Llwyd*, is a polymath, and I have refrained from listing a number of his scholarly interests, as well as a number of *Llwyd*'s.

But Bryn is not only a scholar (I do not know if he, more than I, would regard that statement as a compliment). He contributed substantially to the administration of the Welsh Department at *Aberystwyth* while he was a member of it, and the Welsh Department at *Swansea* flourished exceedingly under his guidance. He was outstandingly successful as Librarian of this great institution, forging links with professional librarians and archivists throughout Wales and beyond, and persuading the Welsh Office to release eleven and a half million pounds in order to build the Library's new and splendid bookstack. Throughout the years he has diligently nurtured the life of both academy and library, in this country and abroad, by delivering keynote lectures, by acting as external examiner, by assessing teaching and research, by serving on innumerable councils and committees: for example, he has been Chairman of the Welsh Library Association 1985–94, Chairman of the Welsh Books Council 1986–94, Chairman of the National Libraries Group of the International Federation of Library Associations 1991–4, and a member of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales 1992–2000. All these bodies, and many more, have benefited from the breadth of his knowledge, the sureness of his judgement and his extraordinary wisdom. Many a time these attributes of his have guided to safe anchorages on rather tempestuous seas! One sphere of service must be mentioned specifically, because I suspect Bryn himself would wish me to do this: as a faithful member and elder of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, he has been President of the

denomination's Theological College 1977–98, Chairman of its denominational press during the same period, Chairman of its Communications Board 1982–96, Moderator of its Association in the South for the year 1989–90, Moderator of its General Assembly for 2001–2 and Editor of its esteemed quarterly *YTraethodydd* from 1999 until the present day. This last fact shows clearly that he has hardly at all scaled down his workload since retiring. Indeed, the volumes he has co-edited in the invaluable 'Medieval and Modern Welsh Series' published by the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies are all the products of his retirement, as are at least five volumes commissioned by him in the 'Dawn Dweud' series of literary biographies, which he initiated and which fills a yawning gap in the material available to Welsh readers.

In view of the brilliance of his career, it is only natural that Bryn should already have received a large number of honours. For example, he has been made Honorary Fellow or Professor of three of the former institutions of the University of Wales: Swansea, Aberystwyth and Cardiff. The Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies has claimed him as a Research Associate and the Celtic Studies Association of North America a life member. A very rare mark of distinction was bestowed upon him when he was elected a Fellow of the Library Association in 1994, on the occasion of his retirement from this Library: a token of the esteem in which he was held by the profession. He had already the previous year been made CBE, and in 1996 he received the degree of D.Litt honoris causa of the University of Wales: as the late Professor Emeritus J. E. Caerwyn Williams – whose memory we revere – mentioned at the time, he could just as appropriately have received the degree of LL.D. honoris causa because of his achievements as an academic administrator. But I suspect that the honour which Bryn is to receive this evening will be at least as cherished by him as any of those he has already received. He has been a Member of Council of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion since 1987, and in the same year he was appointed editor of *Y Bywgraffiadur Cymreig* in succession to Dr E. D. Jones: already *Y Bywgraffiadur Cymreig* 1951–1970 has appeared under his editorship, and the English version *The Dictionary of Welsh Biography* 1941–70; with both volumes he received the ready assistance of Dr Auronwy James. He is now working on the volumes covering the years after 1970. It is difficult to overemphasise the tireless and selfless labour which the preparation of such volumes entails, nor the boon they confer on our corporate memory as a nation. In view of all his achievements and benefactions, of which I tonight have been able to mention only a meagre selection, it is entirely appropriate that Dr Brynley Francis Roberts should now join the very brilliant and very select company of those awarded the medal of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion for outstanding service to Wales.

Ymateb Yr Athro Brynley F. Roberts

Prin fod rhaid imi ddweud gymaint o anrhydedd y'i teimlaf fod Anrhydeddus Gymdeithas y Cymmrodorion wedi penderfynu cyflwyno ei medal imi eleni, na faint mae hynny'n ei olygu imi. Y mae fy niolch yn ddiffuant iawn i'r Gymdeithas am yr anrhydedd a'r fraint hon. Yr wyf yn ddyledus iawn i'r Athro Geraint Gruffydd am ei gyflwyniad nodweddiadol hael a graslon, nodweddiadol goeth hefyd, os caf ddweud. Y mae cyfeillgarwch Geraint a minnau'n mynd yn ôl fwy o flynyddoedd nag y mae'n gysurus bellach inni ei gofio ac yr wyf wedi elwa ar haelioni a dysg eang Geraint droeon yn y gorffennol.

Ac ar achlysur fel hyn, efallai ei bod yn naturiol i feddwl rhywun grwydro i'r gorffennol, oherwydd wrth ystyried yr anrhydedd a gyflwynir imi heddiw, mae'n anorfod bron fwrw trem hefyd ar droeon yr yrfa ac oedi'n atgofus nid yn gymaint gyda hynt y daith ond gyda'r dyledion a grynhowyd ar hyd y ffordd honno. Peidiwch â phoeni. Nid wyf am eich blino â'r hunangofiant na chaiff ei ysgrifennu byth; ond mae rhywun yn sylweddoli o'r newydd, fel petai, gynifer o bobl y mae arno ddyled iddynt, a chyfyngu'r atgofion hynny i gyd-fforddion y llwybr academiaidd yn unig gan anwybyddu am y tro y dyledion enfawr a chwbl sylfaenol i aelwyd a chapel a chymdogaeth. Ar y llwybr academiaidd, fwy nag ar lwybrau eraill efallai, nid yw rhywun yn ymwybodol ar y pryd o'r hyn y mae'n ei dderbyn; ymhen blynnyddoedd y deuir i sylweddoli beth a adawodd ei ôl yn ddiarwybod. Oherwydd nid sôn yr wyf am addysg ffurfiol ysgol a choleg, gwers a darlith – mae'r dyledion hynny'n ddigon amlwg – ond lawer mwy am yr hyn a enillwyd o dreulio cyfnodau yng nghwmni rhywrai arbennig, a sôn yn unig am y rhai sydd bellach wedi marw.

A minnau'n fyfyrwr ifanc ac yna'n brentis ymchwilydd ac ymhen y rhawg yn ddarlithydd peryglus o ddibrofiad, bûm yn ddigon ffodus i gael tri hyfforddwr a dyfodd yn dri chyfaill, tri a gynigiodd olwg imi o beth y mae ysgolheictod a diwylliant yn ei olygu, a'r tri'n gwneud hynny'n hollol anfwriadol, dim ond trwy fod yr hyn oeddent. Y mae rhywun yn swil wrth enwi'r rhain a'u harddel yn athrawon o weld diffygion y disgybl, ond iawn yw imi gydnabod mor helaeth y derbyniais ganddynt.

Thomas Jones fyrlymus egniol a ddangosodd imi fod yna gyffro a gwefr a dychymyg mewn ymchwil yn ogystal â llafurwaith a manylder trylwyr; Garfield Hughes encilgar, diymhongar a diwylliedig odiaeth a agorodd fy llygaid i'r eangder o ddiwylliant amlweddog sy'n waelodol i bob ysgolheictod ac yn ei atal rhag bod yn chwilota briwsionllyd neu'n fanylu deddfol; a Proinsias Mac Cana aflonydd a ddeuai i ben rywsut â phob gorchwyl er

gwaethaf y mynych sgwrsio a chymdeithasu ar y ffordd, ef a gyflwynodd imi olwg ar yr eangder o ddysg a diwylliant yr oedd ef yn rhan ohono yn Iwerddon ac a ddangosodd fod hwyl i'w gael yn y bywyd academaidd. Yn llawer diweddarach cefais y fraint o fod yng nghwmni Caerwyn Williams a deall yn well nag erioed o'r blaen nad oes byth ateb terfynol, fod bob amser fwy i'w ddysgu, mwy i'w ddarganfod, a rhagor i'w ddirnad a'i amgyffred. Y cawr hwn o bolymath, trwy ei ymagweddu at ei waith a thrwy ei bersonoliaeth ei hun, a bwysleisiodd, heb ddweud dim, fod gwir ysgolheictod a gwyleidd-dra yn mynd law yn llaw.

Ond pam dilyn y llwybr hunan-gofiannol hwn, yr atgoffio maldodus? Y mae tros ugain mlynedd er pan fŷm yn ymwneud o ddydd i ddydd ag addysgu mewn prifysgol, er fy mod wedi ceisio cadw mewn cyswllt â'r prifysgolion, er gwell ac efallai er gwaeth, tros y cyfnod hwnnw hefyd. Nid oes gennyf unrhyw hawl i draethu ar fywyd y prifysgolion heddiw, fwy na gorfod cyfaddef nad wyf yn deall yn hollol ragoriaethau modiwlau rhagor yr hyn a alwem gynt yn gysiau, nac ychwaith rinweddau semestrau a'u harholiadau rhagor tymhorau. Dieithrwech a thraul blynyddoedd yw'r anwybodaeth amheul hynny, mae'n siŵr. Ond fe'm caf fy hun yn fy holi fy hun ar dro tybed a yw myfyrwyr yn cael yr un hamdden i efrynu (gwell gair yw *myfyrrio*) ag a geid gynt, hamdden nid yn yr ystyr o segura, er bod lle i hynny bid siŵr, ond yn yr ystyr fod cryn fwelch gennym ni rhwng y ddarlith a'r darllen, rhwng yr addysgu a'r arholi, heb y rheidrwydd i symud ymlaen yn anorfod at bwnc arall a maes newydd tan reolaeth calendr a chaethiwed 'hand-out'. Nid rhamantu yr wyf wrth ddweud fod yna gymdeithasu academaidd yn digwydd ymhlith myfyrwyr a bod treulio amser yng nghwmni darlithwyr a thiwtoriaid yn un o hanfodion bywyd prifysgol, fel y mae treulio amser yng nghwmni cyd-ddarlithwyr yn hanfodol i aelodau'r staff. Fe elwais i ar hynny, nid gymaint ag y dylsw'n efallai, ond elwa serch hynny; ac y mae achlysur fel heddiw, a minnau'n dal i ryfeddu at yr anrhydedd a estynnir imi, yn gyfle imi i ddatgan fy niolch am y drefn honno ac i fynegi fy ngobaith ei bod yn dal i fodoli mewn rhyw ffurf neu'i gilydd, er gwaethaf y pwysau, na wyddem ni ddim amdano, ar i fyfyrwyr ennill eu tamaid wrth efrynu.

Y mae rhannu a chyd-ddysgu yn elfen sylfaenol ymhob ysgolheictod; gweithgarwech colegaid a rhyngwladol ei natur ydyw. Mae i'w ganfod ble bynnag y bydd pobl yn rhannu'r un delfrydau ac yn ceisio'r un ddisgyblaeth. Yr oedd cymdeithasau dysgedig yng Nghymru cyn bod prifysgolion, a'r Anrhydeddus Gymdeithas hon yn enghraifft wiw o hynny yn y ffordd y mae wedi methrin dysg ac ysgogi datblygiadau gwerthfawr tros ddau ganmlynedd a hanner ei bodolaeth.

Soniais gynnu nad oes pendraw i ymchwil ac nad oes byth ateb terfynol mewn ysgolheictod am mai bodau dynol yn trafod ffrwyth y meddwl dynol

ydyw. Mae pob un sy'n ymwneud â'r bywyd academiaidd, boed mewn prifysgol neu y tu allan iddi, yn ymwybodol ei fod mewn olyniaeth – profiad sy'n rhwym o greu gwyleidd-dra. Ychydig sy'n cael y rhagorffaint o osod sylfeini newydd neu newid cyferiad ei bwnc, ond braint pob ymchwilydd yw bod yn yr olyniaeth a doddi maen ar feini a rhoi bricsen yn y wal. Adeiladu ar gyfraniadau ein rhagflaenwyr yr ydym, neu o leiaf ymateb iddynt, ac y mae'r olyniaeth yn sylfaenol, yn arbennig mewn cyfnod pryd y mae'r pwysau i weld elw'r buddsoddiad, fel y dywedir, yn gallu mygu ymchwil estynedig. Mewn llyfrgelloedd y ceir gweld yr olyniaeth gyfraniadau honno gliriaf wrth iddynt hwy warchod a diogelu ffrwyth meddwl yr oesoedd tros amryw ddiwylliannau ac mewn gwahanol gyfryngau. Swyddogaeth yw hon sy'n dod yn fwyfwy hanfodol yn oes yr ymchwydd mewn gwybodaeth a galw cyson gynyddol ar lyfrgelloedd i agor drysau'r drysorfa hon i ddefnyddwyr ymhell ag agos. Llyfrgelloedd yw'r wythien sy'n cynnal gwaed bywiol y ddysg a'r ysgolheictod sy'n fynegiant o enaid a gobeithion gwlad. Y mae gwarchod ffyniant a phriod swyddogaeth llyfrgelloedd – a'i fynegi yn nhermau cras yr oes hon – yn fuddsoddiad angenrheidiol anhepgor er lles dyfodol ein cymdeithas.

Un o freintiau mawr fy mywyd oedd cael bod yn gysylltiedig ag un o lyfrgelloedd mawr y byd. Y mae cael derbyn ei medal gan gymdeithas ddysgedig hynaf Cymru yn ein llyfrgell genedlaethol ym mlwyddiant ei chanmlwyddiant yn gosod gwedd bersonol lawn ystyr ac arbennig iawn imi ar yr achlysur hwn, wrth imi gydnabod yr anrhydedd a diolch amdano.

Professor Brynley F Roberts's Response

I need hardly say how much it means to me that the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion should have decided to present its medal to me this year nor what a singular honour I feel it to be. I thank the Society most sincerely and warmly for this honour and privilege. My thanks are due to Professor Geraint Gruffydd for his characteristically generous and gracious presentation which was, if I may say, also characteristically elegant. My friendship with Geraint goes back more years that it is comfortable to recall and I have more than once profited from his extensive scholarship and generosity.

And on an occasion such as this, as I think of the honour that is being done me today, it is perhaps unavoidable that the past should come to the forefront of the mind and that one should reflect on the passage of the years, lingering over reminiscences not so much of the journey but rather of the debts that one has incurred on that journey. I am not going to weary you with the autobiography that will never be written, but one realises anew, as it were, how much one owes to so many people, fellow travellers on the academic paths in particular, leaving aside for the moment those substantial and immeasurable debts to hearth, church and neighbourhood. I suppose it is especially true that what is being given at the time is less self evident on the academic path than on life's other roads; it takes years to become aware of what has left its mark. For I am not talking about the formal education of school and college, lesson and lecture – those debts are clear and obvious – but far more about what was received simply by spending time in the company of some individuals. Restricting myself to those who have died, I cannot but refer to three or four who gave me more than I realised at the time.

When I was a young student and then an apprentice researcher before becoming a dangerously inexperienced lecturer I was fortunate enough to have three teachers who became three of my friends, three who gave me an insight into what characterises scholarship and culture; they gave, not consciously or intentionally, but simply by being what they were. One hesitates to claim these men as teachers as one realises the shortcomings of the pupil, but it is right that I should acknowledge how freely I received from them.

Thomas Jones, bursting with energy, showed me that research has its own thrill and excitement and that it calls for imagination as well as for assiduous, painstaking work; Garfield Hughes, reserved, retiring and carrying his wealth

of culture unobtrusively, opened my eyes to that wide multifaceted culture which underlies all research and which prevents it from being no more than rummaging for crumbs or fastidious detail; and Proinsias Mac Cana who always completed every task he undertook in spite of all the sociable chats along the way; he gave me a view of the wide learning and culture that he was part of in his native Ireland and showed that research and the academic life had their lighter sides. Much later I had the privilege of spending time with Caerwyn Williams and of coming to understand better than ever before that there is never a final answer, there is always more to learn, to discover, to comprehend and to discern. This remarkable polymath, in his attitudes and his personality, emphasised, without saying a word, that true scholarship and humility go hand in hand.

But why dwell upon these bye-gone days, these self-indulgent reminiscences? Over twenty years have passed since I was involved in university teaching from day to day, though I have tried to keep in contact with the universities during that period, for better and no doubt for worse. I have no right to pronounce on university life today, other than to say that I do not fully understand the advantages that modules have over what we used to call courses, nor the virtues of semesters and their examinations rather than terms. No doubt this unenlightened scepticism arises from unfamiliarity and the passage of the years. But I cannot help wondering occasionally whether students have the same leisure time actually to study (I like the Welsh *myfyriwr* and its connection with *myfyrio*) as we had, leisure not simply to be idle, though that too has its place, but to enjoy the interval that was given us between the lecture and the library, between the learning and the examining, without that pressure to move on constantly to another field and a new topic, constrained by the calendar and the restrictions of the 'hand-out'. I am not romanticising when I say that academic socialising among students and between them and lecturers and tutors is one of the essentials of university life, just as spending time with fellow teachers and researchers is a requisite for staff. I profited from these unplanned meetings, not as much as I should have maybe, but profit I did. An occasion like today, as I reflect upon the honour being done me, is an opportunity for me to express my thanks for that pattern of university life and to hope that it still exists in some form or other in spite of the pressures, about which we knew nothing, for students to pay their way as they study.

Sharing and learning together are basic to all scholarship; it is a collegiate and international activity to be found where ever people have ideals in common and where they acknowledge the same discipline. There were learned societies in Wales before there were universities, and this Honourable Society is a fine

example in the manner in which it has nurtured learning and initiated valuable developments in the 250 years of its existence.

I said earlier that research has no terminal point nor scholarship any final answer as men and women discuss the fruits of the human mind. Everyone who is involved with the academic life, be it at university or elsewhere, is conscious of being in a succession – which cannot but engender humility. Few have the unique privilege of setting new foundations or changing the direction of their subject but it is the privilege of every researcher to be part of the succession and to place a stone upon stones, to set a brick in the wall. We build upon the contributions of our predecessors, or at least we respond to them, but the succession is essential, especially at a time when the pressures for immediate returns can stifle extended study. The continuity of contributions is to be seen most clearly in libraries, the guardians of the fruit of many cultures and many studies in a variety of media throughout the ages. This is a function which is becoming ever more necessary in an information and knowledge-rich age. They are the arteries that carry the life blood of the learning and scholarship which are the expression of a nation's soul and hopes. The safeguarding of the role and wellbeing of libraries is – to put it in the strident terms of our day – a necessary and indispensable investment for the benefit of society.

One of the special privileges that I have enjoyed is to have been associated with one of the great libraries of the world. To receive its medal from the oldest Welsh learned society in our national library in its centenary year gives this occasion a very personal and meaningful complexion for me as I acknowledge the honour and express my gratitude for it.