

Mari Lwyd Ceinwydd

[singers outside]

Wel, dyma ni'n dwad, Cyfeillion diniwad x2
I ofyn am gennad x3
I ganu.

Os na chawn ni gennad, Rhowch wybod ar ganiad x2
Pa ffordd mae'r 'madawiad x3
Nos heno.

[inside response]

Does genny' ddim cinio, Nac arian i'w wario x2
I wneud i chwi roeso x3
Nos heno.

Translation

Well, here we come, Innocent friends
To ask permission
To sing.

If we don't have permission, Tell us by song
Which way to leave
Tonight.

We don't have supper, Nor money to spend
To make you a welcome
Tonight.

The exchanges between the outside group and the inside group are in rhymed verse (the type of measure used for the Mari Lwyd is called 'Tri Thrawiad'). This is an example of the song we sang for Megan (the verse is 12.9. (i.e. a line of 12 syllables and then a line of 9 syllables - rhyme scheme aAaB)):

Wel, dyma ni'n dwad (6)
Cyfeillion diniwad (6) = 12
I ofyn am gennad (6)
i ganu (3) = 9

[Well, here we are coming / innocent friends / to ask for permission / to sing]

The way each verse is sung is to sing the first two lines as a phrase, then repeat; sing the third line, three times, and then the last line once to close.

The tune we have is from Ceinewydd (the village where we live).

The verses tend to be the outside group asking to come in, for food & drink, and the inside group trying to deter them. Generally, the proceedings would be very raucous though maybe not too rude. Sometimes the verses of both groups poke fun at each other. Usually it is men on the outside with the Mari, and families on the inside with the food.

Once inside, there would be ale and food and more singing (including a song thanking everyone) but the Mari Lwyd was in the past also a way to raise money for the poor, as the group would collect money from the houses they visited.

Elsa's mom remembers the Mari Lwyd visit as being very scary - the Mari (horse's skull) was quite a threatening figure.

These days the Mari procession goes between pubs rather than people's houses. There is a leader for the horse, holding his reins, and the Fari will sometimes try to bite people. In Mallwyd they also have a parson character, wearing ribbons on his arms, and a Beca figure (a man in women's dresses), and everyone in the group wearing ribbons. In Ceinewydd, our village, they used to have a lot of ribbons on the Fari, and included a procession of people wearing homemade animal masks to accompany, like foxes & squirrels.

Calennig is a New Year's morning visit by children around the local houses - singing special rhymes, and collecting money - nowadays they collect the money to send to local charities. The rhyme the children used to say in our area was 'Calennig yn gyfan, ar fore dydd Calan, unwaith, dwywaith, tair!' [A whole New Year's present on the morning of New Year's Day, once, twice, three times!]