

**Manchester & Milford Railway, A New Song  
Which Is A Journey With The Railway From Pembroke To Strata Florida  
Together with some comments on the works from there to Aberystwyth**

---

**Synopsis**

A description of the journey as stated in the title.

**Themes:**           Impact of the Railways on Rural life  
                          Impact of railways upon industry  
                          Railway construction  
                          Anticipated economic benefits of railways

**Text:**             Translated into English from the Welsh by Eirionedd A. Baskerville

Puff, puff the train is starting,  
In the morning from Pembrokeshire;  
Here's an opportunity to go to Manchester  
Or to any part of Wales and England.  
    We'll sing the praise, fair Wales  
    We'll sing the praise, fair Wales,  
    Now to the magnificent and brave men  
    For making a road for the Horse of Fire.

Here we are by Tenby station,  
Passing Whitford presently,  
To St Clears and Bancyfelin  
Here we are in Carmarthen town.  
    We'll sing the praise, &c.

Success be to the two contractors,  
For laying down the extra rail;  
Now that there's a narrow gauge working  
Coal and lime will come more orderly,  
    We'll sing the praise, &c.

Now to Bronwydd and to Cynwyl.  
The old horse is puffing  
Through Llanpumpsaint on its journey  
In and out of the Tunnel.  
    We'll sing the praise. &c.

Here's Pencader station,  
There are crowds of people here  
There's the Junction, there's the Tunnel  
Cross Inn Fach and Llanfihangel.  
    We'll sing the praises all together,  
    We'll sing the praises all together  
    Now to Davies and to Beeston  
    Duff and all the brave workmen

**Manchester & Milford Railway, A New Song  
Which Is A Journey With The Railway From Pembroke To Strata Florida  
Together with some comments on the works from there to Aberystwyth**

---

Here's Maesycrugiau station  
The place where I used to play long ago;  
We go onward through Llanllwni parish  
There's a healthy breeze in Teifi valley.  
We'll sing the praise, &c.

Here we are in Llanybydder,  
Where I spent many hours of pleasure,  
In the train I'm going to sing,  
Come forward now to buy  
We'll sing the praise, &c.

I have to climb on upward,  
Over the river towards Lampeter;  
That station is in a pretty place,  
On either side of St David's College.  
We'll sing the praises, &c.

We'll go directly towards Betws  
There's the house of Beeston the contractor  
We'll go to Llanio at full speed  
Without having a pint in Lord Brougham's house.  
We'll sing the praises, &c.

From there we'll go to Tregaron  
Where we'll have a peat fire to warm us;  
Some people from the town are coming here,  
In order to buy the Railroad Song.  
We'll sing the praises, &c.

Strata Florida is next,  
I will alight here,  
I shall go on to sing a little  
To the inhabitants of Ystrad Meurig.  
We'll sing the praises, &c.

Men and money go comfortably  
With the coach to Aberystwyth,  
In just a little while more,  
Because of the song I too will be carried.  
We'll sing the praises, &c.

They're working together,  
Through the hanging rocks and trees  
At Tynygraig there's a small tunnel  
And an ugly place when you come out of it.  
We'll sing the praise, &c.

**Manchester & Milford Railway, A New Song  
Which Is A Journey With The Railway From Pembroke To Strata Florida  
Together with some comments on the works from there to Aberystwyth**

---

Ahead there's a far more pleasant spot  
Along Llanilar's little valley  
But within an hour or two the river  
Robs the men of a month's work.  
We'll sing the praise, &c.

The Ystwyth River has to be placed  
In a new soft bed,  
Instead of cutting through the mighty features,  
That join north and south.  
We'll sing the praise, &c.

After completing it satisfactorily,  
With two great gentry of the kingdom  
Every class will be as one family  
Visiting Aberystwyth.  
We'll sing the praises, &c.

Through Machynlleth at full speed  
The Horse of Fire will go to Llandinam  
To Newtown and Llanidloes,  
And back before the dark night comes.  
We'll sing the praise, &c.

Before long there will be Excursions  
Great fairs will be held in Tregaron;  
Pontrhydfendigaid and Iwan's Fair  
Gentle youngsters will come by train.  
We'll sing the praises, &c.

Lampeter's Fairs will be filling up,  
Llanybydder too;  
There are two very excellent places here  
With monthly markets held.  
We'll sing the praises, &c.

I should mention Pencarreg's Fair,  
Where Johnny speaks English  
And says *My dear Jenny*  
*Come and have a glass of brandy,*  
We'll sing the praises, &c.

I should recall Llanwnnen fair  
That almost went forgotten  
Where animals are sold  
On the second day there will be pigs and girls  
We'll sing the praises, &c.

**Manchester & Milford Railway, A New Song  
Which Is A Journey With The Railway From Pembroke To Strata Florida  
Together with some comments on the works from there to Aberystwyth**

---

Let Davies and Beeston  
Remember the old singers  
By giving them a Pass to go to the fairs  
In order to sell the Railway Song.

We'll sing the praises, &c.

Llanybydder                      DAVID JONES

PS GUANA is for sale from John Jones near Llanybydder

**Glossary:**

Guana                                      Guano; seagull or cave bat droppings, prized as a fertilizer

Translator's comments:

It is often difficult to know exactly what's in a poet's mind when he uses certain words, and the meaning of a word can change over time. I had a problem with the word 'cadarnwedd' (towards the end of page 3). One dictionary gave the meaning as 'firmware', but the *Dictionary of the Welsh Language*, the Welsh equivalent of the OED, made no mention of the word. I've taken it as cadarn = strong or mighty + (g)wedd = feature or face and have translated it as mighty features. As you see, I have made no attempt to make the translation read as poetry.

In the case of the metre of *Cân y Rail Road*, I cannot comment further. If the ballad is meant to have four lines, each of eight syllables, the author has failed to be consistent. The first line has just 7 (unless the first Puff was pronounced Pu-uff) and the last line of the first verse 10, but perhaps it would make sense when sung. You would need to ask a musician about that, I think.

The lines "Ahead there's a far more pleasant spot / Along Llanilar's little valley / But within an hour or two the river / Robs the men of a month's work" may be a reference to flooding. The word 'Speilio' is a contraction of 'Ysbeilio' which means to plunder, rob, pillage, sack, ravage or despoil. It could also mean that the Ystwyth despoiled/damaged a month's work carried out by the men. The land from Tynygraig to Aberystwyth is very flat, and the flooding of the line near Trawsgoed in 1964 was the excuse Beeching took to close the Aberystwyth to Carmarthen line.

**Source of Text:**            National Library of Wales

**Music.**                              Don Fechan

The translator consulted the experts on Welsh Folk Music Dr Meredydd Evans and Phyllis Kinney who said that there are a great many airs called 'Y Dôn Fechan' used for songs in the 8888 bardic metre.

**Source of Music:**            Tune Not Found

**Printer:**                              Not known

**Manchester & Milford Railway, A New Song  
Which Is A Journey With The Railway From Pembroke To Strata Florida  
Together with some comments on the works from there to Aberystwyth**

---

**Where Printed:** Probably in or near Llanybydder

**Author :** Jones, David, of Llanybydder, 1803-1868.

**Date:** 1866 or soon after

**Notes on the Song and Its Historical Context:**

There was a station of some sort at Strata Florida in 1865 when the decision was made to extend the line to Aberystwyth.

The Manchester and Milford Company opened a station in Aberystwyth in July 1867.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aberystwyth\\_railway\\_station](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aberystwyth_railway_station)

<http://www.hanesybont.org.uk/corscaron/balad.htm> gives a text that specifies the date of the journey described as 1866.

The Manchester and Milford Railway was a grand railway scheme supported by the London and North Western Railway to connect the industrialised Northwest England, Manchester and the Midlands with the deep-water West Wales port of Milford Haven, there by giving an alternative to the Port of Liverpool in reaching North America. In reality, it was a connecting railway between Mid Wales and West Wales, which owing to financial difficulties never achieved its stated aim or profit. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manchester\\_and\\_Milford\\_Railway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manchester_and_Milford_Railway)

The second section connecting Llanidloes to Newtown, is the subject of Bar224