

Eisteddfod 2006 Report

Committee Members:

Betty Cullingworth (co-chair); Annette Evans (co-chair); Alison Lawson; Hefina Phillips; Myfanwy Bajaj; Barbara Colton; Sally Funderburk.

The eisteddfod committee has met several times via telephone conference calls/e-mails and has again planned a comprehensive syllabus for the Cincinnati venue. Added to last year's syllabus are a Welsh folk dancing competition and a Welsh Learners competition. The application forms were completed before the end of January to ensure their timely placement on the website. The format is now well developed and once the new material is chosen each year (largely done this year by Hefina Phillips), updating the form is not onerous. This is now a task that can be passed on to new committee members very readily. The task of getting copyright and performance approvals (again done this year by Alison Lawson) continues to be time consuming but eliminates any chance of litigation in the future.

Choosing the adjudicators is one of the most difficult tasks, particularly as we are trying to reduce expenditures. The literary adjudicator and the storytelling/recitation adjudicators (stipend \$100) are in place but the musical adjudicators are yet to be determined. This year, the conductor of the visiting choir was invited to adjudicate but he has declined. We are now attempting to contact the soloist to determine any interest in that area. E-mails were sent to each of the Welsh societies in Ohio with two expressions of interest received but qualifications still not confirmed. Because the musical adjudicators determine the winner of the David Morris Award, it is necessary to have people who are well qualified in both the classical and Welsh music genres. It may be necessary to pay the \$200 stipend to get qualified music adjudicators in place. The eminently well qualified accompanist of the eisteddfod will be Alan Thomas of Ottawa.

It is anticipated that the winner of the Senior Hymn Singing competition will again perform in the Sunday morning service. The winner of the David Morris competition will be featured in the afternoon session of the Sunday Gymanfa. It would appear that the David Morris award (that has 1 year remaining on the original agreement after this year) will be renegotiated with David by Alan Upshaw. Initial indications appear that David Morris is willing to continue for his foreseeable future. Ensuring a quality field within this competition continues to be a major focus of the publicity undertaken by the committee. To date the response has been gratifying but each year is a new challenge.

In previous years, publicity has been sent to various universities within the area of that year's NAFOW but this strategy has met with negligible success. The most efficient means appear to be word of mouth, the Ninnau, or the application process itself. It would be helpful if each board member encourages suitable contestants from his/her own area to consider participating in the competition.

This year when the NAFOW is being held in the Welsh heartland of Ohio, it is particularly appropriate to review the response that is generated by the eisteddfod and to consider its merit (in its present fully developed form) to the Festival as a whole. If the number of contestants continues to be sparse, it might be time to consider paring the event to perhaps a few categories (including the David Morris Award competition) and having it, in effect, comparable to a seminar. This would reduce both the time involved in the preparation of the eisteddfod and the costs as well. HOWEVER, it should be noted that some (including Arturo Roberts) feel that the future of NAFOW could well be in the encouragement of young people in the eisteddfod. This will need careful consideration going forward. If such is the direction undertaken, then a more aggressive marketing strategy re the event will need to be adopted.

Submitted by Betty Cullingworth