

Eisteddfod Report – April, 2005

Membership: Betty Cullingworth, Chair, Alison Lawson, Past Chair, Hefina Phillips, Barbara Colton, Sally Funderburk and Geraint Jones)

Having experienced a very successful eisteddfod in Buffalo in September, 2004, the Eisteddfod Committee is attempting to build on that success as we move to the Orlando venue.

Available members have met by telephone conference call several times this fall and winter to review the Buffalo event and make revisions as necessary for September 2005. Updated eisteddfod information sheets have been included in the program booklets. Discussion re adjudicators is ongoing. Paul Birt of the University of Ottawa has agreed to adjudicate the literary submissions, both Welsh and English. Hopefully Haydn James and one other will adjudicate the musical entries including the David Morris Competition.

The committee feels strongly that the winner of the David Morris competition should be highlighted in one, if not both, of the Gymanfa sessions on Sunday. This substantial award is a particularly generous gesture on the part of David Morris and should be given the recognition it deserves. Again, we would request that the winner of the Senior Hymn Singing be asked to perform at the Sunday service.

The committee feels that the biggest challenge facing it this year is the long distance relationship that the committee has with the actual Orlando area. It is tremendously important that some on site public relations work be done in the area to encourage participants, particularly for the David Morris competition. Janet Briggs, one of the local chairs, will endeavour to make contacts for us. Last year, probably 80% of the participants came from the local area having been encouraged to do so by committee members. Most of those people will not be attending the event in Orlando this year but it is hoped that local contestants will fill those places.

Present avenues of advertisement include: the Ninnau, e-mails to various music departments and universities in the area and, of course, the information sent with the registration booklets. Success last year corresponded directly to the amount of personal contact made with potential contestants. Support by board members in encouraging any in their own local areas to consider participating would be greatly appreciated.

The committee hopes to structure some sort of report to be filled in by the winner of the David Morris Award so that feedback can be used for future advertisements etc. It will be helpful to know how the participant fared and what help could be provided in future to make the experience even better.

Work continues on getting performance and copyright permissions, a considerable task but one that precludes the possibilities of lawsuits by disgruntled members.

The biggest challenge facing the committee this year would appear to be communication with potential participants. We will continue to address that issue as we move forward. There were only three categories contested in the eisteddfod in Vancouver, many in Buffalo and an uncertain number in Orlando.

The committee continues to struggle with the notion of for whom the event is being staged. We do not have the manpower to stage a large musical competition for local schools etc. unless they have a specific niche interest in things Welsh. However, without local input, the eisteddfod will continue to be uneven in its participation factor and perhaps not time effective in an already busy NAFOW schedule. It is my belief that the next couple of years will test the validity and longevity of an extensive eisteddfod program within the context of the larger event.

Submitted on April 1, 2005 by Betty Cullingworth....Chair of the Eisteddfod Committee