

March 13th 1989 Suite [redacted] [redacted] Walmer Road,
Toronto Ontario M5P 2T8 Canada

Dear Ellis, Re N. W. S. G. Assn Inc, Mar 13, 1989

Thanks for your letter and have duly filled up
the form as requested.

You will note several items I believe should
be dropped from our program of events and I
will endeavour to explain it.

After over 35 years being involved in Welsh here
in North America also 33 years in Wales itself
my feeling is we are trying to expand
things Welsh way beyond the limits of
good common sense.

To review as best I can, many years ago I was
invited with my wife to attend the Welsh
Festival at the Royal Albert Hall in London
and let me say that this is the only Festival
of its kind still in existence anywhere in the
World.

Of course "The National Eisteddfod" exists in
Wales for over 800 years with few changes other
than to build its attendance etc.

During the 1950's and 60's some 9,000 odd Welsh
people filled the Albert Hall for a review of
Welsh Culture and its people, Royalty attend
regularly or are represented.

The review of Welsh affairs was a great experience
with the Welsh personalities and about 80%
of those participating born in the Principality,
schoolchildren, industry, politicians and
Welsh landed gentry.

It was a real gathering of our Welsh people
and its traditions.

However interest in it has waned, not because
it any less as a Festival but because the
older generation of our Welsh have disappeared
due to age, infirmity or death and our
generation or our children have failed
to embrace these traditions and find
other interests more compelling also
spend their time in leisure.

2/ offices, club house at Gray's Inn Road.
When we visited the headquarters in 1960 it
was a well run place with all kinds of
events taking place.

In 1983 when we were there again, it appeared
to have declined, it looked very much
like a beer joint and those participating
were in a fair state of intoxication.

The organiser for the Festival and the
original organiser were with us and explained
that without the booze they would go
broke and have to sell up and get out.
I enquired what interest their members had
in the Festival and the answer was
quite clear very little.

Things Welsh are so fragmented that the
social activity and club is an all consuming
thing.

In other words change has taken place
and the numbers which flocked to these
events in the 30's 40's 50's & 60's has been
greatly diminished.

From what I have seen of churches in Wales
during the past twenty years it is a sorry
sight to see them now as Bingo Palaces,
Builders yards and factories with any hope
of drawing a crowd for a Gymnastfa Ganol
very much a thing of the past.

I am writing this with the hope that
a more realistic approach be made to
our Welsh weekend taking in a Mason
Laver, Banquet, Sunday morning Bilingual
Service and two sessions of the Gymnastfa
Ganol.

3) bearing in mind that our numbers have diminished in the past ten years to a positive attendance of not more than 1500 Welsh people.

This then puts a financial strain on our Welsh people and the Sponsoring Committee to only organise what our Festival is really all about.

Many of the events we now encounter seem to clutter up our days at the Festival from a day and a half in the 1950's to almost five days in 1988 and 1989.

The originals attending these events are about all gone, vast numbers of our Welsh Immigrants have gone with few or no replenishments from Wales, to the end that what suited us in the 30's 40's & 50's is failing to stimulate our interest and new ideas are being introduced by Sponsoring Committee's absorbing extra time spent at the Welsh weekend and certainly much more money being extracted to participate.

It is my feeling that the market place is nothing more than a convenient way of those peddling books and articles which can be obtained at a more reasonable price if one takes the trouble to write to any Library in Wales for half the price. In view of the fact that these people selling this merchandise are doing it exclusively for profit they should be left to arrange with the Hotels in which we meet to make their own arrangements. Then the Seminars are another imposition on our time taking up more valuable time and extending the Festival beyond its requirements, which would have to be instructed from Wales to instruct

H) Enclose my writing also the paper I am using just some old stuff I had around. There is one thing I would like to say, meeting in the Hotel for 100% of our activity is a great idea and relieves us of that bus side to Theaters, Sports Arena's and music Halls which have to be paid for.

You know Edie I seem to glean the notion that some sponsoring committees feel they have to put on a big expensive show and then to be exposed to hours of boring events which really have little or no connection with a Welsh Festival.

We bring masters of Ceremony, Soloists, Chorus from Wales, Welsh M.P.'s and other busy bodies who are all on a free side contributed to by us and supplemented by special grants from Arts Council, Govt., or an all expense paid event.

Sponsoring committees should be governed by strict rules of spending and then when about \$50,000 is generated from our adherents that a very small amount of it finds its way into the Treasury of our Assn.

The Grand concert is O.K., but attending our festivals are many artists who would gladly participate, if well in advance it was known that they were needed.

The "Gr Assn Plant" is fine and talent could be drawn from this source.

The Church service as a Bilingual event would be a splendid idea providing it was a service of the spirit rather

5) set up with the right atmosphere and a Welsh minister gifted in the dedication of our Welsh Tradition.

The Sunday events should be staged with a view to a spiritual uplift and refreshment, bringing to us a feeling that our visit to Baltimore or Pittsburgh was the one thing in our lives at least for another year would send us on our way rejoicing.

God knows we need it in these days of unrest, upheaval and disregard for human life and feelings.

My thoughts are not those of a religious bigot or narrow minded God-batherer, but rather a very serious sincere old member of our deliberations who would like us to get back on track.

Our Annual meetings leave a lot to be desired, where a lot of us who seek the offices available, ^{which} we are a God's gift to the Association, which you and I know is the real big joke.

Reading the Dyrch & Pinnau at times some of the gossip is so self effacing it's hardly worth the paper it's written on.

I'll be 75 in June and wonder how long it will take to silence my views and feelings.

There is a final item that really bothers me and that is the amount of out and out boozing that takes place

c) but I hear tales of those putting these chaps up have been abused verbally in that the hosts were not Welsh speaking and in one instance the Director and his wife had a first fight and she flew home without her husband. This is all personal and gossip to boot, but it was also reported that when the Choir got home this conductor was fered from the chair, was arrested for drunk driving.

all this is human behavior, but it is up to us to make it clear that the people here are doing these people a big favour in accommodating them and helping to pay their way.

At least our efforts should be respected.

In the end I believe that Friday noon is a good time for our events to get under way, with a Banquet or rosen Flower Friday evening.

At the Banquet local politicians should be limited to an introduction with just greetings from the City, speeches by those trying to make cockle points about the Welsh should be out and our thoughts should be on our Festival its Future and it should be on a N. W. G. G. Assn level, Sponsoring Committee should take a back seat and only the officers of the N. W. G. G. A should be at the Head Table with invited guests such as the Conductor, Minister and Organist.

Sunday afternoon and evening sessions the National President should be in charge Sunday evening the National Vice President should be in charge, only he or she should be on the Platform with the Conductor. The National Secretaries should be in

7) National Treasurer the other.

This would in my opinion add more dignity to the event; long speeches by either Chairman of Session, Conductor or appeal person should be a No No. of course the officiating minister to open & close the Session an added blessing. One other point, I am not sure if we need two sessions in view of the fact it has been brought up that Labour weekend is a bad time, as children have to get to school etc.

If the events opened on Friday and closed on Sunday afternoon with ~~one~~ session starting at 2 P.M., and closing at 4-45 P.M., our problem would be solved.

For 60 years it has been Labour Day weekend and the vast crowds also the children came, so let's adjust our affairs to meet today's needs.

The National Officers & Board of Trustees should take charge of our Festival and be up front with the Sponsoring Committee, making sure that N.P.G.G. Assn Inc, and its membership were fully in control.

Sincerely,
Douglas.

P.S. There is one other point the Scholarships both N.A.T. and N.P.G.G. Scholarships need to be reviewed is this really what our Association is about.