

North American  
Festival  
of Wales



Gwyl  
Gymreig  
Gogledd America

2003

David G. Morris

Vero Beach  
FL

6 July 2002

Dear David

It has been a long time since we corresponded and I apologize for that. I did promise to keep you in touch with my efforts to advance the eisteddfod and connections across to Wales. However, as you also know I, and the WNGGA, have been sidetracked by the distractions of the lawsuit brought by Geraint Wilkes, Trefor Williams and Rees Lloyd. This has taken up a great deal of time and we have not been able to focus our activities into making the WNGGA a stronger organization.

Despite this distraction we have progressed. We have changed the focus for our annual event by renaming it as the 'North American Festival of Wales' and by creating a new North American event logo which recognizes both USA and Canada. This should will provide more visibility and encourage greater membership. We also opened discussions with the Gorsedd in Wales inviting them to be present and to work with us to develop a stronger North American connection. We also invited them to re-institute the North American Gorsedd, which was disbanded in the early 1940's. A Gorsedd presence in North America would do much to strengthen the link between North America and Wales and to enhance the power of our Festival in promoting Wales and its culture and heritage.

However, the Gorsedd declined stating that there is not a sufficient eisteddfod heritage in North America to warrant their involvement. They did leave the door open but did not specify exactly what would need to be achieved to change their minds. Needless to say that we have not closed the door, but simultaneously we are moving ahead with developing our eisteddfod idea.

One problem has been since we instituted the eisteddfod in 1994, is the inconsistent quality of the competitions. The bar has been lowered to make it more social than competitive. In the North American Festival of Wales in 2003, we will reverse that to some degree: we are planning for high quality competition for trained singers and also other competitions for the not so well trained. That way we begin to develop a quality Eisteddfod tradition, which we can then put before the Gorsedd.

We want a competition for trained voices with a significant prize to encourage entry. The rules will be that one piece must be sung in Welsh and a second (contrasting) in any other language. Entry will be limited to about 10 persons (mixed competition). We already have two quality voices interested. Adjudicators will be Haydn James director of the London Welsh Choir, and international Welsh baritone star Jason Howard. (both of these will be appearing at the Festival).

From: Alan Upshall

Kenmore  
WA

Our strategic changes will make the Festival planning and organization more practical. In the past each Gymanfa has been locally organized and some have suffered from weak planning especially on the fiscal side. Many have raised little money, often barely enough to support the organization. We have to become more business like whilst still mounting a quality Welsh event. In that vein we are attempting to raise significant sponsorship support. We have been quite successful and obtained support for the Male voice choir, the youth choir and several seminars. Sponsorship allows us to personalize the event and make it much more appealing and attractive.

Our idea of an eisteddfod prize is: An expenses paid trip to Wales with entry into the singing competition at the Welsh National Eisteddfod. We estimate the costs as:

Air fare	\$1,250
Accommodation for one week	\$ 500
Subsistence for the week	\$ 500
Car rental	\$ 500
Trophy	\$ 200
Incidental costs (publicity etc.)	\$ 500
Adjudicators (pro-rated: fee, rooms etc)	\$ 300
Total cost of this enterprise to be:	\$3,850

Given our previous interactions, I am writing to ask if you would like to sponsor and be associated with this special Eisteddfod prize. We have not approached any other group with this specific proposal and will not do so until we hear from you. If you wish, there will of course be full recognition, both in the Festival brochure and publicity and the prize will be named after the sponsor. All of these issues would be at your discretion entirely.

It is the goal of the planning group of the North American Festival of Wales to produce a spectacular event. Our outline plans are:

- Thursday - **Gala Opening Ceremony**  
**West Coast Barbecue**  
**Dylan Thomas evening**  
**Noson Lawen (music, comedy and singing)**
- Friday - **Eisteddfod**  
**The Grand Banquet with entertainment,**  
**Ysgol Gerdd Ceredigion Concert (Welsh Youth Choir)**  
**Wales' wildly popular Folk Group, The Rag Foundation,**
- Saturday- **Eisteddfod**  
**The Grand Concert with Jason Howard and the Dunvant Male Voice Choir**
- Sunday **Bilingual Church Service**  
**Gymanfa Ganu led by Haydn James of the London Welsh Choir**

Tours, seminars, clog dancing, folk dancing and other activities, and socializing in the "Laughing Leek bar and restaurant" and of course we will finish every memorable evening singing hymns and favorites from the old sod. We even are setting up a Rockies train tour and an Alaskan Cruise for those who want to take their holidays in this great part of the world.

I hope from this David that you get the flavor of our efforts and strategy to improve the visibility of the Welsh in North America and connect back to Wales. I hope also that you do not think me too forward in sending this letter. I can only say that you are not alone in receiving one, but you are alone in receiving one for the Eisteddfod competition.

I look forward very much to hearing from you. Perhaps I shall see you in St. David's this year if you are going to the National in Wales. If not perhaps Harrisburg, but certainly I hope in Richmond next year.

With warmest regards

Hwyl fawr

Alan

Mr. David G. Morris  
3526 Marthas Lane  
Vero Beach  
Fl 32967

I hope that you do not mind me taking advantage of including this letter in with my letter of thanks for your contribution to the annual fund. There is always an attempt to be frugal if the opportunity arises and in these days of spending on the law suit, we have to be cautious and take every opportunity to save.

Thank you for your letter of 13<sup>th</sup> July. I was hoping to see you at St. David's but perhaps it was the rain, what a two day deluge. I attended the Eisteddfod only for two days, I had many other people to meet, but I am very glad to say that I had a great week overall.

My goal was to raise the visibility and also some supporting money for the North American Festival of Wales, and I achieved both. The receptions I received were strong, and also I managed to raise sponsorship for our soloist and, I think, the musical group that will be coming.

The lawsuit, as you say is frivolous, but we may be close to the end of at least stage 1. The judge has ruled in our favor twice, and he should do so again on an application for rehearing next week. We suspect, but hope that sense will prevail, that the plaintiffs will appeal and that will stretch out this action into next year.

Also I thank you for pledging your support in your last letter supporting our ideas for sponsorship of a prize for the eisteddfod. However, I do need to ask if that support extends to the financial support of that prize. Our idea of an eisteddfod prize is: An expenses paid trip to Wales with entry into the singing competition at the Welsh National Eisteddfod. We estimated the costs to cover to be

Air fare	\$1,250
Accommodation for one week	\$ 500
Subsistence for the week	\$ 500
Car rental	\$ 500
Trophy	\$ 200
Incidental costs (publicity etc.)	\$ 500
Adjudicators (pro-rated: fee, rooms etc)	\$ 300
Total cost of this enterprise to be:	\$3,850

The prize would of course bear your name.

I would be grateful for your answer, since we have the opportunity also to approach some other people for support if you decline.

I hope that you had a great trip to Wales and also that you are going to enjoy your Rocky mountain 8 day trip. That will be spectacular at this time of year.

Best regards

Alan Upshall  
Chairman.

**From:**

**Alan Upshall  
7049 NE 163<sup>rd</sup> St  
Kenmore  
WA 98028**

**21 August 2002**

Mr. David G. Morris  
3526 Marthas Lane  
Vero Beach  
FL 32967

Dear David

It was a surprise and, as you heard, a speech stopping surprise to hear your agreement to sponsor the major prize for the eisteddfod competition that we are planning for Richmond next year. Your generosity and support of Welsh activities in North America are second to none, and I thank you most sincerely.

The eisteddfod planning team is working on this competition and I meet with them on Thursday. The goal is to have a high quality competition for trained voices, limited to about 8 competitors, selected from the applicants by an independent musician. This mechanism is needed we think because we have little time to have preliminaries etc if there should be many entrants.

The prize will be the David G. Morris prize, which will be engraved upon the trophy that we will obtain. We anticipate that this competition will continue annually and even though we might have a different sponsor every year, the trophy will always bear your name. We all hope that you will attend Richmond next year so as to be able to present the prize yourself to the winner.

At the moment David, whilst we work out more details, this letter is just to thank you very much for again your superb support. I shall correspond more as we put our plans in shape. If you have any special requests for acknowledgement style, conditions etc. please let me know so that I can ensure that everything is done to your satisfaction.

From: Alan Upshall  
7049 NE 163<sup>rd</sup> St  
Kenmore  
WA 98028

I shall get my treasurer to contact you later to let you know our account details.

Once again David, Diolch yn fawr iawn. I shall be in touch

Best regards

Alan Upshall  
Chairman.

7 October, 2002

Mr. David G. Morris  
3526 Marthas Lane  
Vero Beach  
FL 32967

11 February 2003

Annwyl David

Great to talk with you last week, but sad to hear about your medical problems. However, I don't think there is any possibility that you will not be here for the Festival of Wales in Richmond, your Welsh genes are just too strong for that. Although I am not a medical doctor, from what I understand from other friends with the same condition, (including one diagnosed about 15 years ago and still going strong) the treatment while maybe uncomfortable, does work well and keeps the slow growth in check. I know also your great positive approach to life will serve you in good stead.

With regards to the sponsorship, here is the breakdown that I placed in the original proposal letter.

Air fare	\$1,250
Accommodation for one week	\$ 500
Subsistence for the week	\$ 500
Car rental	\$ 500
Trophy	\$ 200
Incidental costs (publicity etc.)	\$ 500
Adjudicators (pro-rated: fee, rooms etc)	\$ 300
Total cost of this enterprise to be:	\$3,850

As you know if you receive either Y Drych or Ninnau, we have already announced the competition, and I think we have one entry. We are currently searching for an appropriate trophy, suitable for the occasion. We think this competition will be one of the highlights of the weekend.

**From:**

**Alan Upshall  
7049 NE 163<sup>rd</sup> St  
Kenmore  
WA 98028**

**21 August 2002**

In the overall planning we have had some obstacles with the withdrawal of the Welsh youth choir and our pop group, but we have managed to fill the latter's shoes with an outstanding Welsh folk group. The withdrawal of the choir was unfortunate since we wanted to focus on youth, but we are instead planning on mounting a concert with artists younger than 22 years old after the banquet. Such are the travails of organizing a festival.

Would you please make the cheque out to 'North American Festival of Wales' and you can send it to me at the address on the side. I will make sure it gets through to the treasurer. Apparently mail into Canada is very slow these days so I shall carry it up across the border.

Take good care of yourself David, and I shall keep you up to date with all of the activities around the competition. The Festival registration forms should be mailed within the next two weeks.

Hwyl Fawr

Alan

David G. Morris  
3526, Marthas Lane  
Vero Beach  
FL 32967

8 December 2003

Dear David

It was very good to talk with you last week and I am so glad that you recovered from your recent hospitalization. Also on behalf of the Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu Association I am delighted to thank you for your wonderful offer to support our semiprofessional singing competition at the North American Festival of Wales for the next 4 years. That support I know will ensure that it becomes established as a central feature to the North American Eisteddfod and Festival and help to develop and strengthen the connections to the Annual Eisteddfod in Wales.

There comes now the question of how to set this up. In my last letter I suggested the formation of an endowment fund specifically named for his competition into which you will place the money and which will be drawn from every year. The treasurer of the WNGGA would administer this fund. At the annual figure of \$3,500, which I suggested in my last letter, that would be a payment of \$14,000 into this fund.

Alternatively you could indicate in a letter to us that you guarantee payment of \$3,500 per annum for the next four years, to be placed directly into the budget for the Eisteddfod specifically support the semi professional competition at each of the corresponding Festivals.

The prize would be travel expenses for one person to Wales and one week's accommodation for the winner to sing in the National Eisteddfod. The WNGGA would expect the prizewinner to report back in writing to the committee and yourself on their experiences.

The WNGGA would guarantee that the competition would be known as the 'David G. Morris Competition' and your name would continue to be attached to the trophy. You will, as the sponsor, be invited at each occasion to present the prize. You may designate an alternative if you are unable to attend. Full recognition of your generous support would be made in all Eisteddfod publicity and in the Festival brochure.

I am about to depart for a pre-Christmas business trip to Australia and shall not be back until just before Christmas. I shall copy this letter (by email ) to our WNGGA treasurer and will leave it to him to contact you regarding the financial details and any other points that you might think of.. His name is Huw Seiriol Williams and he is currently living in Cummings, Georgia. His telephone number is 678-513-2456. I shall give him your number also.

Once again David, on behalf of the WNGGA, and also personally from me, a very grateful thanks to your outstanding generosity in supporting this and other Welsh activities in North America. Have a very happy Christmas and New Year and I look forward very much to meeting up with you again at next year's festival in Buffalo.

Take care and very best regards

Alan