

Haydn James to Direct the 72nd National Gymanfa Ganu at Richmond

Highlighting the North American Festival of Wales in Richmond will be the 72nd Annual Welsh North American Gymanfa Ganu.. We are delighted to announce that the director of the 2003 Gymanfa will be Dr. Haydn James of London, England.

Haydn was born and raised in Nantyllyfflon, South Wales. Although he has a doctoral degree in physics, music is his passion, and he has an outstanding international reputation as musical director, arranger and adjudicator of choral music.

Haydn has been the Musical Director of the London Welsh Male Voice Choir since 1979, and of Côr Meibion de Cymru (the South Wales Male Choir) since 1999. Not content with directing these male voice choirs, he has led the massed spectator singing prior to Wales' home rugby international games at Wembley Stadium and at Cardiff's new Millennium Stadium for the past four seasons and he will also be there for this season's two internationals against England and Ireland. His affiliation with the game of rugby is strong — in 2001 he was selected to conduct the British Lions choir on their tour of Australia and in 2002 directed the singing at the international match between Wales and South Africa in Cape Town.

But musical life exists also outside of rugby, and Haydn has conducted no less than seven of the Festivals of Male Choirs at the Royal Albert Hall in London. At these annual festivals, as many as 18 choirs are invited to join with the London Welsh Male Voice Choir to create a single mass choir of long-remembered power and beauty.

Haydn is no stranger to North America. He has been guest conductor on several occasions at the annual Ontario Gymanfa Ganu and also directed in Vancouver at the Pacific Northwest Welsh Weekend. In 2000 he brought Côr Meibion de Cymru to Ottawa to sing in the grand concert of the National Gymanfa Ganu.

We list today the hymns that Haydn has chosen to be sung at the Gymanfa Ganu in Richmond. All the favorites and best-loved hymns are represented — what a fine program! And with local society Gymanfa season just about to begin, what better way to prepare for your visit to Richmond than to begin singing and enjoying this wonderful music this spring?

Afternoon Session

Rachie (1)
Diadem (14)
Aberystwyth (17)
Pantylfedwen (98)
Morte Criste (104)
Diolch i Ti (34)
Penparc (26)
Crugybar (37)
Bryn Calfaria (3)

Evening Session

Blaenwern (75)
Huddersfield (18)
Rhys (89)
Bryn Myrddin (23)
Ebenezer (11)
Sandon (27)
Tydi a Roddaist (110)
O Fy Iesu (22)
Mae D'eisiau Di (62)

Sarah (57)
Crimond (77)
Hyfrydol (16)
R'wy'n Canu (65)
Builth (73)
Mawlgan (106)
Sanctus (30)

Arglwydd Dyma Fi (96)
Blodwen (60)
Calon Lan (66)
Cwm Rhondda (40)
God Be With You (117)

Rev. Ben Rees, Liverpool, Bilingual Service Minister

The minister for the Sunday morning bilingual Church Service is the Rev, Ben Rees, currently minister at the Welsh Presbyterian Chapel in South Liverpool. Rev. Rees was born in Llanddewi Brefi in Ceredigion Wales, He graduated from The University of Wales Aberystwyth in 1959 and was awarded the Pierce Scholarship at the United Theological College, from where he graduated with his Bachelor of Divinity. He was ordained to Presbyterian Church of Wales in 1962 after which he ministered for nearly seven years in the Aberdare valley of South Wales. For the last 40 years Ben has traveled the world ministering. He has preached in all of the Welsh Chapels in Patagonia, and in 1987, he spent 6 months at the Presbyterian Church in Akron, Ohio

Ben also has a Ph.D in political studies, an M.A in Celtic Studies and a M.Sc.(economics), is Moderator of the North Association and has been Professor of Theology.

Not content with his academic qualifications, while a student Ben was twice recognized by the BBC as the best debater amongst all students at the University of Wales, and he has during his career written 33 books in Welsh and 15 books in English, and also many articles on many topics including prominent hymn writers.

Ben will be traveling with his wife and several other members of the Cymru A'r Byd (Wales International) organization who are turning the special visit to Richmond for the North American Festival of Wales into a never to be forgotten holiday on the west coast of North America.