

**Dewi Sant Welsh United Church**

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Neges wrth y Gweinidog---Message from the Minister

**Greetings once more from Dewi Sant Welsh United Church.**

Those of you who read the last Gadwyn realize that the Church is going through a major transition. After 16 years (exactly) of honourable service as Music Director our dear friend Murray is leaving us feeling flat by putting away his Treble Clef and Semi Quavers, no longer to amuse us with his sharp wit and air of enchantment. He has always worked in harmony with the congregation, ready to respond in a composed way, without strain or stress. He has been instrumental in bringing to the Church a song for the heart and a serenade to the soul. A measure of the respect we have for him was clear to see at the farewell service, details of which will be seen later in this issue. What can we say, Murray, but 'Fortissimo'.

And so we look to the musical future of the Church, in whose care we have entrusted Mr. Shalom Gao. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Shalom to the Dewi Sant fold, and to tell the readers a little about this talented person. Shalom has been playing the organ since he was a young ten year old, when he lived in his home city of Beijing. He entered the Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing, in 1987 and gained a B.A. degree in 1991. He then moved on to gain an Artist Diploma with honours in 1997 before entering the University of Maryland in 1999 where he received his Master of Music Degree three years later. During the last ten years he has worked in the States during his study time, as accompanist, instructor, music archive editor, composer, choir director and Church music director. Last year he moved to Toronto to seek his future and fortune, and we are so glad that he has agreed to join us at the Church as our Music Director. I wish for him God's blessings in his new venture, and ask that you, the members give to him a real traditional Dewi Sant welcome.

It is also a time of transition for the M&P Committee of the Church, the group who look after the well-being of the staff here at Dewi Sant. After years of wonderful service as Chair of that Committee Betty Cullingworth is retiring, and 'handing the baton' to Sheila Holyer. May I take this opportunity to say a big DIOLCH to Betty, both personally and on behalf of all the Staff at the Church, for your support, advice and guidance over the years. And congratulations to you, Sheila, as you take on this new responsibility. We promise not to cause you too many sleepless nights!

Bendith Duw arnoch oll. May God's Blessing be upon you all.

**Deian.**



## **In The Beginning. ..... ( Farewell to Dr. Murray Black )**

It was early 1994 when I was asked to find a new Musical Director for Dewi Sant. I felt uncertain about the task. Music was an integral part of the fabric of Dewi Sant, and the new Director would need to shine!

I felt like I needed help with the search, and I reached out to the person who could help me the most.

Together, my mother and I interviewed many organists – young, old, professionally-trained, beginner, tall, short. Over the course of several weeks we met close to two dozen musicians. Many were talented, but they were missing something important. They didn't feel like one of us, one of Dewi Sant.

Truth be told, I felt like giving up. I told Mum that we could not find the right candidate. She said to me, "Andrew cariad, if you do not find the right person, you yourself will get the job!" I redoubled my efforts, taking out advertisements and phoning the Conservatory.

And one day, we received an application from a perfect candidate. He was accomplished in his musical craft, but also humble and gracious. He hoped that his candidacy would be well-received by our committee. He mentioned that he lived near the church and would be willing to attend functions during the week. When we met Dr. Murray Black, it was obvious that he was one of us. Indeed, he wasn't ten bars into "Ar Hyd Y Nos" when Mum leaped up from her chair and said "When can you start?" (On the way home that night, Mum said, "He plays so well.... And he's rather good-looking too!")

The rest was history. For sixteen years, Dr. Black was a musical backbone to Dewi Sant, performing his role with grace and diligence. As Deian Evans said so beautifully at the retirement service, Murray provided musical memories to so many members of the congregation. I for one will never forget the music on a cold November afternoon in 1997, at my mother's funeral service. I will remember those notes for rest of my life.

At the February 7<sup>th</sup> retirement service, it sounded like Murray could have kept playing for another decade. But we respect his wishes to retire, hoping that he will make proper use of his newly-minted key to the organ.

I was honoured to help bring Murray Black to Dewi Sant, and I was honoured to be a part of his retirement service.

**Andrew Pollock.**

## **A Special Service to honour Dr. Murray Black**

"Music" was the theme of the service at Dewi Sant on Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup>. That theme is not surprising, one might say, considering that this is a Welsh church, and music is an integral part of our very being. However, the 7<sup>th</sup> was a very special day- special and sad. We were gathered to honour our beloved Director of Music, Dr. Murray Black, who, after 16 years of sterling service, had finally decided to return the keys to the organ and become an "ordinary" member of our congregation.

It was a reflection of how much regard we have for our beloved Murray when so many members congregated to honour him. Yes, it was a very emotional service. Tears began to flow as Sheryl Clay sang the beautiful Celtic Blessing. Rev. Deian Evans, after expressing his own appreciation of Murray, both as our Director of Music and a personal friend, read out greetings and thanks from past ministers such as Cerwyn Davies, Alwyn Evans, Roger Roberts, and Larry Beech. Rev. Gordon Nodwell spoke of his relationship with Murray during his stay at Dewi Sant. Sixteen years ago Andrew Pollock was in charge of the search for a new organist, aided by his mother, Gwyneth. What an excellent choice they both made.

As chair of the M&P committee, Betty Cullingworth decided that the best way she could express her gratitude to Murray was to call on members of Merched Dewi to sing words that she had written to "16

Tons". Murray, who has accompanied Merched Dewi at all services and concerts, was astonished to be serenaded with the words:

**Chorus:**

"16 years, and what did we get?

Dr. Murray at the organ without breaking a sweat.

And that's not all he's done for us,

He's worked behind the scenes without making a fuss.

**Verses:**

At Bedford Park United Murray was baptised

An auspicious beginning thus was realized.

Moving on as a teen to be confirmed

At Fairlawn Park we since have learned.

Since coming to Dewi Sant Murray surely has been

The best musical director that we have seen,

He plays all the hymns with such gusto,

The singing from the congregation does just flow.

If you see him coming, never step aside

From his genuine friendliness you don't want to hide.

He always has a smile, he never says "No!"

If you have a good idea, he always says, "Let's Go!"

So we say,"diolch yn fawr" to our friend Murray,

You're a favourite of ours as you can see.

We're glad you'll be a member and with us stay,

But it's your musical service to Dewi Sant being lauded today.

Rev. Deian closed the service of homage by presenting Murray with a booklet compiled by Annette and which contained a copy of the day's Order of Service (with photographs of Murray), copies of the letters of appreciation, pages of congregants' signatures and best wishes, and the words of Merched Dewi's song. But we couldn't really let Murray go. Rather than accept his retirement, Deian conferred on him a new staff position, viz. that of Director of Music Emeritus with his own key to the organ and his own private parking notice. When the emotion of the service abated, we then feted Murray with a delicious lunch and a very special cake. It was a fitting ending for a wonderful morning when we showed this lovely man how much we appreciate him. **Hefina Phillips.**

(***And so say all of us.***)





Rhys Bowen the author has won many awards such as 'Agatha Award', 'Anthony Award' and the 'Herodutus Award' for her novels.

This book and the many more that she has in this series appeals to us the Welsh – here we see storytelling at its best with well drawn, engaging characters and a vivid sense of place, which is North Wales.

The Constable Evans Series consists of :

*Evans Above, Evan Help Us, Evanly Choirs, Evan and Elle, Evan Can Wait, Evans to Betsy, Evan Only Knows, Evan's Gate, Evan Blessed, Evanly Bodies.*

A special **Meet and Greet Reception with Rhys Bowen** will be held at the National Gymanfa Ganu at Portland from 5pm-6pm Friday evening, September 4, 2010. In addition Ms. Bowen will speak at a **NAFOW seminar**, Saturday, Sept. 5.

**Annette Evans.**

*This is such a small world. Six months ago I was looking at Face Book and there was a suggestion that I ask Rhys Bowen to be my friend. Well it was a very Welsh name so I said that I would give it a go! We have chatted back and forth several times and she is a delightful lady. If you can't find copies of all her books in the stores you will find that some of her out of print books are sold by **Alibris**. This company sells every book imaginable at fantastic prices. You will have to go into Google and type up the name and go from there! Her books are also available in Toronto libraries. I will be sending Rhys this copy of Y Gadwyn and I am sure she will be delighted that she is well appreciated by the Welsh in Toronto.*

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**Myfanwy.**

**The National Saint David's Day Parade, staged in Cardiff on Wales' patron saint's day, March 1st, grows in colour and delight year by year.** The civilian parade last year was supported by over six thousand walkers including performing bands, jumping stiltsters and groups in traditional Welsh costumes carrying the banners of Wales and Saint David. The city is expecting the crowds to come out once again to line the streets and there is a welcome for all who want to join in the celebrations and/or just cheer on the lunchtime parade. **2010**

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**Subject: Homecoming Ceremony at Saint David's Cathedral (Gwenno Dafydd.)**

"If you want to see some great pictures of Saturday's Homecoming Ceremony at SAINT DAVID'S CATHEDRAL then Google 'Pembrokeshire Banner'. Os ydych eisiau gweld lluniau gwych o'r Gwasanaeth Ymgartrefu yn Eglwys Gadeiriol Ty Ddewi, Gwglwch 'Pembrokeshire Banner'."

To reply to this message, follow the link below:

<http://www.facebook.com/n/?inbox%2Freadmessage.php&t=1311083851092&mid=1e27c74G4539ca17G184bc33G0>

**Gadwyn Donors.**

John & Barbara Sharpe: David Jones : Irene Field : Shirley Evans : Helen Taylor : William Davies  
Doreen Becket: Anne Johnston :

***Thank you for the donation. We would respectfully remind the folks who get Y Gadwyn that paper ink etc. come out of the church coffers. Please make a donation if you have not ever done so. Diolch M.***

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**Reminiscences.**

Reading "Y Gadwyn" this week which I always appreciate, your article on Dylan Thomas started me reminiscing about my early childhood in Swansea, and my family's close connection with Dylan and his parents. I was born at the top of Le Breos Avenue, in my great-grandmother's house, in The Sketty. In those days (1932) new mothers were kept in bed and Nanny Tweeney was very much in charge. Turn

right and proceed towards Cwm Donkin park and often a call on the Thomas' was a daily outing for me as a babe, as my grandmother Wells was a good friend of Mrs. Thomas, while I was in their charge. My mother went to a Dame School with Dylan's older sister, which Dylan later attended, and also knew them all well

Three weeks old, and we went to live at 69 Glanbrydan Ave, close to my other Grandmother Trick, my dad's mother, who had a shop on the corner across from another park, at the foot of the Knoll. With her lived her son Bert Trick and his family. Nell, his wife, and Pamela and Kerith (some years later). Students of Dylan Thomas' life will recognise their names, as for three years before he went to London; Dylan spent much of his time with Bert, who was known eventually as the "literary grocer". Bert, older than Dylan, was a mentor to him, and sometimes with an artist called Fred Janes, they took over the attic of the house and wrote letters and poems on shoe boxes. Flattened out and pinned to the walls. Bert was a bit of a holy terror in those days. He was my godfather, and I adored him, and I was a frequent visitor, and remember Dylan. In fact, when I was about two and a half, I was asked "Do you know who this is?" and I am told that I replied "Yes - He's Gentle Jesus". I can see him now, wearing baggy corduroy pants and a polo necked sweater with a halo of golden curls. We moved later that year to Neath, where my father became Headmaster of Brynhyfryd School, and where my father, I'm proud to say, had a teacher who taught Welsh, in defiance of Glamorgan County Council.. But I can remember every part of the house we lived in, so I believe my memories of Dylan are accurate, He became godfather to Kerith, and in fact, picked his name - the brook of Kerith. Pamela as a small child asked Dylan "What colour is glory?" and I'm told he wrote a poem for her. But up in the attic there was a lot of poetic action and Uncle Bert told me years later that the first draft of Under Milk Wood, then a parody of life on Glanbyrdan Ave, was written there, and that all three wrote a line each. The one I remember was Mrs, Quarter of Liver who used to come into the shop. And the next door neighbour who always had her blinds down. I wish I could remember their names

My grandmother died when I was in London as a student, and I had had a teacher who loved Dylan's work in the Upper Sixth so I was desperate when my poor sister tried to stop my aunt and mother from throwing the shoeboxes away The prevailing opinion in Swansea at the time was that Dylan was a wastrel and a drunk and what they had to deal with was rubbish. Fortunately Bert had saved his letters, which are now at the University of Buffalo. When I returned to the U.K. in 1958 with my new husband, my uncle was living in Wrexham, and had attained respectability by becoming the Commissioner for Savings for North Wales. We met in mid Wales for lunch, afterwards sat on a river bank while Bert regaled us with hilarious stories about his Dylan days. At the time I wished I had a tape recorder with me. Later my mother taped an interview with Uncle Bert which I still have, but it was stilted and nothing like our riverside regalia of the lively times they had. On that same trip, we were to go to Laughan to visit Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, who by then had moved to the village "under Milk Wood" and to see Dylan's simple grave, only to find that she had died.

I believe that Dylan both loved and mocked the Welsh in a loving way. I think he felt deprived of his inability to speak Welsh, as do I. I am sure he would be gratified and amused to know how much he is appreciated now. Uncle Bert, too. And my grandmother must be amazed that people visit her house and attic on their Dylan Thomas Tours of Swansea.

But the story doesn't end there. A dear friend of mine, a "Welsh" cousin, bought and restored the boat house at Laugharne. And Dylan's daughter Aeronwy tracked down my sister in search of her father's early years. Kerith is his biggest disciple and often lectures about him, and has the sonorous voice that is so suitable for Dylan's work. And last, but not least, Myfanwy Bajaj when a student in Wreccsam and later as a teacher in London used to date Kerith when he was a medical student, and she has some funny stories to tell. Small world, isn't it?

**Anne Johnston.**

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## **Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir Celebrates 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.**

According to a 2006 Stats Canada survey, there are approximately 182,825 people of Welsh descent living in Ontario, Canada, and it can be expected that most of those people are living somewhere in the Greater Toronto Area. Gwyn Roberts is one of those people, having moved to Canada in 1991.

In 1995, Gwyn, who was a member of the Caernarfon Choir for over 22 years back in Wales struck upon an idea to begin his own choir that would continue the Welsh choral tradition and give a face to those wanting to celebrate their Welsh origins. Thus, the Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir was born.

Celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary this season, the choir has come from humble origins to develop into a recognizable and high demand concert experience. Two years ago, the choir was invited to perform, amongst 400 other choristers at Carnegie Hall in New York City. The soloist was renowned Welsh bass-baritone opera and concert singer, Bryn Terfel, who Gwyn has known since high school. Ten years previous, in 1998, Bryn accepted Gwyn's invitation to become the choir's Honorary in Patron, making the Carnegie benefit a perfect fit. On March 1<sup>st</sup>, the TWMVC has a concert lined up celebrating St. David's Day at the prestigious Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto where it has been recording its fifth album during the past few months.

The choir is thriving, and its founder has dreams of one day returning to Wales proud of what has been accomplished in Toronto; "We currently have about 50 choristers. Our goal has always been to ultimately have around 70 or 80 members given we are based in such a big city as Toronto", says Gwyn, "...I would really love to return to my beloved homeland with an improved quality choir of 70 or 80 members and compete with the best of the Welsh choirs, such as Morryston Orpheus and Treorchy in a National Eisteddfod. This would be a great learning experience for our choir members including our Director and Accompanist." William Woloschuk, Artistic Director, joined the choir in 2006 after being Dean of Music for St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral in Montreal for fifteen years, and Artistic Director for the South Florida Men's Chorus – Fort Lauderdale, FL from 1997-2000 as well as the Artistic Director for Counterpoint Chorale that he founded in 2001. Since joining the TWMVC, William has "impressed the Welsh community with his ability to empower the "Welsh soul" into the choir's performances even without his being Welsh."

William's non-Welsh status may come as a shock, but the choir, though Welsh in soul and spirit, does not demand Welsh blood as a matter of membership; for the continued survival and growth of any choir, there seem to be two concerns. "Choirs tend to have an aging choir membership and Toronto Welsh is no exception. I think we should have a goal of establishing an initiative to address this in the very near future. Also our traditional audiences are for the most part older people so you will ultimately need to appeal to younger audiences." says Gwyn, and "...We need to reach out an appeal to [the] Welsh community. This outreach also includes others who have a song in their hearts. We have as yet not determined how we will tap into this Welsh community. The final objective would be to have interested people come and visit us in practice on a Wednesday evening in order to share the joy, the experience and the camaraderie. Our goal has always been to make everyone feel welcomed Welsh or non Welsh." And so, though outreach to the Welsh community remains strong with the base operations in Toronto being the Dewi Sant Welsh United Church, there exists an open invitation for any and all to come and join in the fun. For the 2009/10 season alone, which began in September, the choir has ten concerts scheduled all over Southern Ontario, including three nights in continuation of its popular "Christmas with a Welsh Accent" series. Last year the series featured a reading of Dylan Thomas' "A Child's Christmas in Wales" by retired CBC Newsworld presenter Christopher Thomas. This year, Christopher read an original story written by Ross Harrhy, a member of the choir. In November, the choir performed Liszt's Masterpiece *Faust* alongside one of their principal sponsors, the Ontario Philharmonic.

With this continued success, and exciting growth and development of the TWMVC choral repertoire, it's hard not to see how the choir has become an established representative of the Welsh voice in Ontario. From the longing of a Welshman for the choral traditional of his homeland, to a popular and successful Welsh choir celebrating 15 years, you are invited to experience a "vibrant blend of traditional Welsh songs and contemporary works from around the globe." For more information, visit the Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir website at [www.twmvc.com](http://www.twmvc.com).

Ross Harrhy

