

Minutes of “North American Festival of Wales” committee meeting, Richmond Inn, Richmond BC, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2001.

Present: Alan Upshall ( Chair) Lynn Owens Whalen, (Vice Chair), Neville Thomas, Gerri Baker Parry, Helen Steinle, Don Murray,. David Lintern absent.

The purpose of the meeting was to create a first pass outline of the event and to allocate responsibilities amongst the group.

The traditional Daily activities are shown below:

**Thursday:** Market place set up (am) registration (pm), Opening ceremony (evening), Entertainment (evening after opening), mixer, afterglow. Option of pre-event tour.

**Friday:** Tours (am and perhaps pm), Seminars (all day), eisteddfod (perhaps), social reception (not in San Jose), Banquet, Concert, afterglow.

**Saturday:** WNGGA AGM,ours (as Friday), Seminars (repeat of Friday), eisteddfod (pm), reception, grand concert, afterglow.

**Sunday:** Church service (am) Gymanfa pm and evening., afterglow.

At our discretion there are some items that we can vary within this traditional package.

inviolable are : opening Ceremony

after opening entertainment

afterglows

WNGGA Annual general meeting

Eisteddfod

Banquet

After banquet concert

Grand Concert

Church Service

Both Gymanfa sessions.

Optional are tours, seminars, receptions, although the options most likely are in numbers rather than absence/presence.

Alan ran through the Hotel contract to indicate to the group the arrangements that had been made with the hotels as a preamble to working out a rough program. The issue of the school venue for the big concerts was discussed and this will be resolved later.

Review of discussions: in order of weekend events:

### **Thursday**

**Opening ceremony:** while there will be a small one in the hotel to start the evening off, there may be a larger more public one outside the hotel so as to attract media publicity. The possibility of the Gorsedd presence was mentioned and Alan indicated that he had people working upon that sensitive issue.

**Opening night concert:** a true real noson lawen i.e. not a concert was wanted. Bronn journey was suggested as compere but no decision was taken.

Afterglow: will happen no discussion

### **Friday and Saturday**

**Banquet.** This will take place on Friday night. Alan indicated that he was hoping that the NWAFF would present their annual Welsh person of the year award after the dinner. He would approach the NWAFF in San Jose. This could take the place of an after dinner speaker unless we had a special celebrity.

**Folk Concert** (or other after banquet entertainment). This would happen but no ideas yet.

**Tours.** The size and number of tours was discussed. Essentially it was felt that we should not offer too many tours, and that they should only be for about 4 hours each maximum. Some tour should include a visit to the Cambrian Hall and we would discuss possibilities with the Vancouver Cambrian Society. It is important that we show off the oldest Welsh Hall in North America. Tours will be arranged through a local company but the committee will handle the sales. Possible tours were: down town, cruise around the bay the Vancouver gardens. On Saturday, tours should leave at 11 am and return at 3 pm. If there are more than one tour they should leave at the same time. A general feeling was that we reduce tour numbers to keep people in the activities. We are close enough that people can make their own way down town if necessary.

**Seminars:** There was much discussion as to numbers and topics. Often in the past seminars have been dry. Ones which enlighten rather than being academics are preferred. Interactive ones are really encouraged.

Suggested topics were: 3-4 hour language classes, beginners and intermediate

genealogy with emphasis on resources at the National library of Wales ( bring over a speaker).

A round table discussing life in Wales with a trio of raconteurs rather than lecturers, i.e. a light-hearted look

Interactive folk Dancing (may be at the Cambrian Hall as part of a tour)

A look at the contribution of the Welsh to North America.

Dylan Thomas

The seminars would run on Friday and Saturday. This is not a final list and no decisions were taken. We will have to decide about inviting speakers from Wales. It was felt that San Jose had too many seminars.

**Eisteddfod:** Suggested categories were:

Solo voice, male and female

Youth

Choral

Instrumental.

Recitation

Written poetry.

There was some discussion about the literary part and the overlap to Y Drych and also we would wait to see what happened in San Jose.

The idea was proposed that we organize a male choir competition inviting two choirs from Wales to compete and also inviting other regional choirs (e.g. Vanc. Mens Welsh Choir, Vanc Orpheus etc). The number of voices in these choirs would be not more than 50. It was decided to follow this up. Alan had already written to D Eifion Thomas of Llanelli who thought it a good idea.

There will be an Eisteddfod (may be held in Gateway theater).

## **Saturday**

The main feature is **the grand concert**. It is expected that there be a Welsh male choir on stage. Several were mentioned. An idea proposed was that the two Welsh choirs that were invited to compete in the eisteddfod combine into one large choir for the concert. It was agreed that we would follow that up for feasibility. Whether a signature soloist would be invited was not planned. We should await the determination of the response of the choirs.

## **Sunday**

The **church service** will probably take place in the hotel and the Gymanfa in the school. We will need to find a minister for the morning ( minister form Toronto Welsh Church?)

Two suggestions for Gymanfa director were Haydn James and Delyth Hopkins( Evans?). No decision was made. Again, choir directors may be used.

## **General**

Each evening after the events, there will be an afterglow of round the piano singing. Over the last few years this has graduated from being ad hoc accompanist and director to an organized singing with “appointed directors and accompanists”. The afterglow has to happen but we will discuss further the structure of this.

The above are the main events which will be the prime responsibility of the planning group. However there are many ancillary events which we would like to consider which makes the weekend more complete. Some of these activities we hope will be contributed by one of the three local societies. Alan will be meeting with the societies to discuss this possibility.

**Special activities for Children under 10 years.**

This we believe may encourage children to come and also provide them with some activity in a Welsh vein.

e.g. sports competition, Dance, interactive story teller, theater.  
Some of this activity may be at the same time as the banquet.

**Hospitality:** The resurrection of the Vancouver Costumes was a great idea. We will approach the society. They could form a “guard of honor at the opening ceremony. Decorations will be important. Resurrect and expand the banners that we had in Bellevue. Approach WAOs for sponsorship of each.

**Tours.** We discussed the possibility of offering pre and post event cruises to Alaska. We do not wish to be tour sellers but can act as publicity outlet. A Festival/cruise package has been mentioned. Similarly, a rail trip through the Rockies to Calgary.

In Vancouver is **Bishop’s restaurant** a class gourmet restaurant. Can we do something along the lines of the Frugal Gourmet in Bellevue?

A **youth disco** from 6 to 9 ( banquet night), perhaps a dance cruise in the evening for the youth. Can we have a Welsh group?  
Perhaps a folk cruise?

**Sport:** A seven a side rugby tournament has been suggested, with two teams from Wales and invitations to teams from the region ( 6 max). Alan had already talked with Gareth Rees ( formerly captain of Canada) we need someone to investigate this.

A **golf tournament**, open amateur with a Welsh trophy We need to determine the feasibility.

**Allocation of responsibilities:**

Neville: Tours and seminars

Geri: Entertainment (with Alan)

Lynn: Hotel liaison and facilities

Helen: Treasurer and Welsh contact

Don: PR and marketing

David: Sunday activities.

As we increase the committee by one more, we will spread out the responsibilities more.

Alan will Ask Gaynor Evans of Vancouver if she will be secretary.