

Chapter 13

The National Eisteddfod Proclamation Day at Aberdare



Trumpeters Dewi Corn and Gwyn Anwyl

The blazing sun shone down on 24th June 2024 in Aberdare, 67 years since the National Eisteddfod last came here welcoming crowds of people to this great event.

In the morning David Leslie Davies, historian and CVHS member, gave an excellent historical walking tour of Aberdare starting at St John's Church, built around 1189, then passing Siloa chapel where some brave chapel members left to sail to Patagonia in 1865. He then spoke about the great centre of printing once located in Aberdâr, about Caradog, and the Market Hall.

During the morning all the Gorsedd members' robes were ironed under the supervision of Susan Jenkins, the editor of *Clochdar*, the district's local Welsh language monthly paper.

At 2pm all the Gorsedd members, followed by members of local organisations, marched from the Sobell Leisure Centre over the bridge to the Welsh flag bedecked Commercial Street, to Cardiff Street around Market Street, back over the bridge to the Ron Jones Stadium.

The Archdruid Myrddin ap Dafydd opened the proceedings at 3pm. The hot sunshine was so powerful that an old man beside me fainted with the heat and had to be revived by ambulance men.

Aberdare's own Roy Noble, *Roy o'r Gwter Fawr*, recited Mountain Ash's Pennar Davies's poem 'Pan oeddw'n Fachgen,' (When I was a boy).

The Horn of Plenty, (Corn Hirlas), was presented to the Archdruid.

The Welcome poem, written by Dr Aneirin Karadog, was read by Gavin Rhydfelen and Menna Tomos. One line was 'Aberdâr yw bro'r derwydd' (Aberdare is the home of the druids!). This referred to the first modern National Eisteddfod held at Aberdare in 1861.

Helen Prosser, Chair of the local Executive Committee, presented the Archdruid with the first copy of the RCT Rhestr Testunau of 2024.

The Archdruid in his speech singled out 94-year-old Elfed Davies, of Gadlys, (and of the CVHS), as he spoke from the centre of the Gorsedd circle. He explained that Elfed was the last remaining member of the local General Committee of the 1956 Aberdare National Eisteddfod, and it was his pleasure to acknowledge Elfed publicly for what he had done over the years for education, the Eisteddfod, the Welsh language and for the Macmillan Cancer Support Charity. Elfed, (in the care of his daughter Elisabeth), was given a prime seat in the front row of the Gorsedd guests, and had tea with the Archdruid after the ceremony.

Going from the past to the future, Myrddin stated that Dr Mererid Hopwood had been elected Archdruid from 2024 to 2027. She became the first woman in Eisteddfod history to be awarded the Chair at the National Eisteddfod in 2001, and in 2003, she won the Crown. She is the second woman to hold the post after Christine James who held it from 2013–16.

On a wider theme, the Archdruid defended the Eisteddfod's 'Welsh language rule', by which the event celebrates the language by using it to conduct the festival.

The Flower Girls' Dance followed which was a delight to behold.

The ceremony finished by the singing of 'Hen Wlad fy Nhadau', which was sung with such 'hwyl' that it echoed around the hills.

Six weeks later it was announced that the National Eisteddfod would be held in Ynysangharad Park, Pontypridd.



Seren Haf MacMillan, (Mam y Fro), with the Corn Hirlas and
Ffion Haf Roberts, (Morwyn y Fro), with the Blodauged and Chynnyrch y Mesydd



A Oes Heddych ?



Rev Hywel J. Davies and Elfed Davies.



Professor Mererid Hopwood, to be the next Archdruid.



Archdruid Myrddin ap Dafydd



Jeremy Turner formerly of Aberaman



Sandra de Pol, an Argentinian who learnt Welsh in Patagonia, now living in Wales, and D.L. Davies



David E. Roberts formerly of Blaengwawr



Archdderwydd/Archdruidd and
Robin McBryde (Robin o Fôn),
Ceidwad y Cledd



A group including Roy Noble
(Roy o'r Gwter Fawr), right,
at the beginning of the procession



The Procession
returning
to The Ynys