

# GYMANFA GANU

WALES DAY  
BY DAY

## - NORTH

# AMERICAN WAY

**M**ANY prominent Welsh men and women are to take part in the 38th annual Gymanfa Ganu of the United States of America and Canada, which takes place early in September, and of which I wrote recently.

The festival, which is being held in Toronto for the first time this year, attracts more than 3,000 people from all over America and Canada and provides a welcome reunion for the American Welsh.

This year's conductor at the Gymanfa Ganu will be Mrs. Ann Davies Thomas, from Abergynolwyn, and Mrs. Estelle Roberts, of Colwyn Bay, will be the accompanist. These two have recently been touring England and Wales with the Welsh American Goodwill Choir.

A production of Eynon Evans' play, "Cobblers Wax," will be produced by Miss Greta Every, of Llanelly, and a Noson Lawen will be presided over by the Rev. Heddwyn Williams, of Garnant.

Seeking financial aid for the festival has been the task of Professor John Hughes, who until 1954 held the Macdonald Chair of Education at McGill University, Montreal.

Professor Hughes has met with a generous response from both sides of the Atlantic, and the success of the Gymanfa Ganu seems assured.

to show friendliness  
Dance Night  
Mr. Eric Trezise, of Allentown, Pennsylvania, walked into the Wales Day by Day office in Cardiff with a bundle under his arm, and said—"Say, how'd you like to print this?" He unrolled the bundle and it became a photograph, four feet long and 10 inches deep, of the Welsh people of the United States and Canada who attended the gymanfa ganu in Washington (D.C.) in 1957. The above reproduction is about one-third the size of the original—in which every face was pin-sharp and the size of the end of a pencil. This year they will gather at Toronto, Canada, and no doubt most of these Welsh-speaking North Americans will be there.

# Song Festival Crowd Requires Extra Space

More than 3,500 voices, each with a sweet Welsh accent, joined in religious and national harmony last night to mark the closing session of the 28th National Gymanfa Ganu (song festival) held by the National Gymanfu Ganu Association of the United States and Canada, Inc., at the Royal York Hotel.

Twelve microphones amplified the gathering's renditions of 18 Welsh and English hymns, the national anthems of England, the United States, and Wales, plus O Canada and the Hallelujah Chorus.

At the afternoon and evening sessions the crowd was so great and so eager to participate that a second room had to be opened to accommodate the overflow.

The Gymanfa delegates included Welsh expatriates, together with third, fourth, fifth and sixth generation descendants of Welsh settlers in North America. The three-day festival hit its high spot on Saturday night with the Noson Lawen (a merry evening) at which the delegates gathered for an informal evening of song and verse.

Predominantly a festival of religious music and hymns, last night's session was led by a mixed choir of nearly 100 persons, seated along the stage and conducted by Gwyn Owen of Toronto.

One of the oldest songsters present, G. David Williams, 86, of Arlington Heights, Mass., who has attended six Gymanfa Ganu conventions in various parts of North America, said he enjoyed the Toronto gathering—the first to be held here since the songsters began in 1929.

"However," he added, "there's too much English being spoken and sung, and not enough Welsh. I came here to sing not to listen to speeches and look at advertising."



Leonard Brockington, president of session, addresses gathering in Canadian Room of Royal York Hotel. Prof. John Hughes, of Montreal, session chairman, is at right. Delegates included Welsh expatriates and descendants of Welsh settlers in North America and devotees of choral singing.

## Over 3,000 Welsh For Songfest 1959

By RON EVANS  
Telegram Staff Reporter

Put three Welsh men together and they'll form a choir.

This week end more than 3,000 Welsh men and women gather here from all parts of the continent to prove it.

They're streaming to Toronto from California, Florida, British Columbia and points between . . . all for the love of singing.

The occasion is the 28th annual international Gymanfa Ganu (song festival), this year being held for the first time in Canada.

ed in 1929 when the St. David's Society of Youngstown, Ohio, organized a Labor Day outing to Goat Island in the Niagara River.

Last year at Milwaukee the

group decided to move the continental community song to Toronto and an Ontario Gymanfa Ganu Association, headed by Toronto civil servant Douglas C. Jones, was formed to handle arrangements. Toronto has an estimated 14,000 Welsh citizens.

The Gymanfa Ganu is essentially a festival of religious music, and hymns predominate at the official sessions Sunday afternoon and evening in the Royal York's Canadian Room.

# What's Gnew In Song? -- Gymanfa Ganu

SEPT. 2, 1959



What's all the singing about?—Why its for Gymanfa Ganu, which means Welsh singing festival. The young ladies are getting high hat in song while they rehearse for the three-day festival starting on Friday that will draw 3,000 Welshmen and women from all over the continent for the 28th annual international meet. Voices preparing for the tuneful get-together belong to (left to right) Betty Hughes, 16; Mary Davies, 15; Gaynor Jones, 16, and (top back) Glensys Hughes, 15.

Jim Kennedy, Telegram

# Lucky Leeks

Toronto

MAY-9-1959



Telegram

For luck and as a token of esteem, actor-playwright Emlyn Williams received a bouquet of leeks—the onion-like national symbol of Wales—from Mrs. W. H. Heaton, president of Toronto's St. David's Society, after his performance at the Royal Alexandra last night. He was made an honorary member of the society.

## 'A Welsh Wonderland'

By RON EVANS

Emlyn Williams last night reached into the plump prose of poet Dylan Thomas and pulled out a Welsh wonderland of pure enchantment.

With 10 Thomas short stories and two poems, he rocked and hushed the three-fifths-full Royal Alexandra for two and a half hours.

It was the first half of a two-night Toronto stand. Tonight he's off to Montreal to perform his program, *A Boy Growing Up*, described as "an entertainment."

Saturday night he'll be back on the Royal Alex stage with his only props: a folding wooden chair, a burlap screen and a bundle of dog-eared manuscripts.

Thomas, the fire-in-the-belly Van Gogh of words, had a voice that thundered and rolled like a summer storm. And when he read his own verse, he truly "sang in his chains like the sea."

But the Williams voice twangs, hums, squeals and

hisses. It can leap, lurch and, occasionally soar.

And with it, the silver-haired Welsh actor-playwright in a blue business suit can flesh the bizarre figures of Thomas' childhood and set them strutting and peering about the shadowed stage.

With pursed lips and a popped eyebrow, he can abruptly create a complete boyhood of delightful charm.

The bare stage under the spotlights is suddenly a knoll pushed out into the sea where two boys dream and paddle and ponder. Or it's a bus loaded

with happy, quarrelling, singing husbands off on a pub-crawling spree.

A switch in the lighting and a turned-up collar set Williams down under a rain-swept railway bridge with a shabby but poignant story of mis-mating among two young couples.

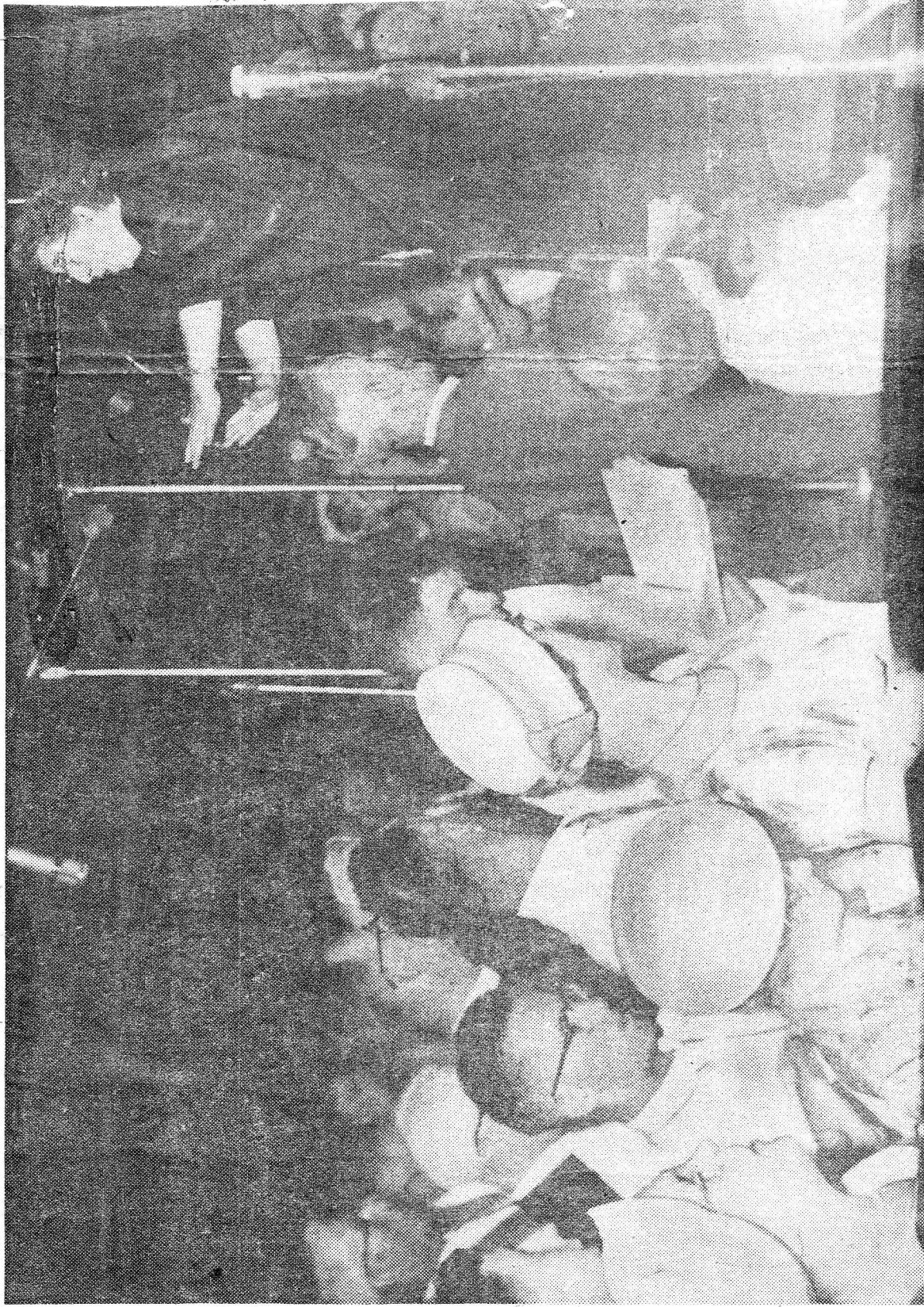
The most popular segment of last night's program was the hilarious first chapter from Thomas' surrealist novel, *Adventures in the Skin Trade*, saved till the last before the powerful curtain scene. The audience howled helplessly as Williams bounced and staggered through the description of a

Welsh lad wandering lost through London with a Guinness bottle stuck on his finger. Williams does not read the stories . . . he lives them. His amazing memory leaves him free to swing over and about his prop-chair, unhampered by a script.

Curiously, he is at his weakest with the Thomas poetry (although fellow-Welsh actor Richard Burton delivers it superbly). His voice tightens and goes flat on the verse.

It's unfortunate, because although this program is brilliant entertainment, with more poetry it might have proved even more stimulating and rewarding.

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**3,500 Voices Raised in Welsh Gymanfa Ganu**



Director Mrs. Ann Davies Thomas of Menlo Park, Calif., leads chorus during 28th National Gymanfa Ganu (song festival) of National Gymanfa Ganu Association of the United States and

Canada Inc. Yesterday's program included Welsh and English hymns, national anthems, Hallelujah Chorus. Crowd overflowed into extra hotel accommodations.

—Globe and Mail, John Boyd.