

DOWN HOME DAIRYLAND/TAPE INDEX

45th Annual Welsh Gymanfa Ganu
Cambria, Wisconsin
October 8, 1989

Recorded by James P. Leary
Nagra 4-L recorder

1. No Announcement.

Recording in the Church with Lloyd Savage of Chillicothe, Ohio, directing.

2. #79, "Crimond," the twenty-third psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd," sung in four part harmony with the whole group, ladies only, men only, and the whole group alternating on verses.

3. # 42, "Cwm Rhondda," with the first verse in English and second in Welsh, with the congregation standing. [Not the most even of recordings as the choir falters a bit on the Welsh verses.]

4. Rev. Tom White finds out where people in the congregation are from: California, Illinois, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Ohio. Tells an anecdote about going to a national Gymanfa Ganu in Pittsburgh and getting lost in a tunnel with a train coming.

5. White announces benediction and table grace, I turn off the machine.

6. Announcement.

Agnes Thomas Timm

7. Mrs. Timm gives her name, born in north Wales, came to USA in 1921, is 89 years old. [short intro to self, with Welsh brogue might be good for Down Home Dairyland] Came to Atlantic City where uncle and aunt were living; father was dead, mother came two years later. Came west with her mother to see a brother in Iowa, then came to Chicago and found work as a child's nurse in Lake Forest, Illinois, met husband and married. After husband's retirement, moved to Wautoma, Wisconsin, in 1965. Husband died two years ago, now lives in a retirement home in Hales Corner.

8. Brought up with the Gymanfa Ganu. It's wonderful. We sing in four parts. Thinks there's something about the Welsh language that makes it more meaningful.

9. Gymanfa Ganu similar in Wales, although there are large children's choirs. "We start to sing when we are little." Reckons the voice is developed in south Wales by miners who sing above the noise of the mines. [mining mention for DHD?]

10. Gymanfa Ganu means a hymn singing festival.

11. Events in Wisconsin: Cambria, Wild Rose, Pickett, Kingston, and Marshfield. Most of these happen within the Presbyterian Church, although some are within Calvinistic Methodist churches.

12. Mrs. Timm questions Bob about his Unitarian beliefs.

13. Pickett church only opened once a year. Acoustics are wonderful, but the

church is small. Cambria draws well for song services, an old Welsh community and also close to Oshkosh.

Olwen Morgan Welk

14. Grew up in the Oshkosh Welsh settlement organized in 1847. Recounts an anecdote of the early settlers having a religious service and singing. "And that was the first religious service in that area and that's pretty good." [mentions Wales and Gymanfa Ganu, good for DHD]
15. The settlers take up their claims in the area, including where Peniel, Bethesda, and seven other churches are built. Some are Calvinistic Methodists, some Baptist, some Congregational, some Wesleyan Methodists. They preached and sang. Gymanfa Ganu means "a gathering to sing." Welsh also organized two churches in Oshkosh.
16. Always sang Welsh hymns at each service when growing up. Seven Gymanfas in Wisconsin from May through November. First one varies, second in Wild Rose, then in the Rock Hill Chapel, then Peniel Chapel, Madison, national Gymanfa Ganu over Labor Day weekend, at Christmas in variable locations (this year in Wauwautosa).
17. Recalls "peppy" song leaders of the past, including John Williams who sang for Stratman-Thomas.
18. Also sang as a kid, including singing verses in front of the congregation.
19. Recollections of Stratman-Thomas. "It was like this Gymanfa Ganu." The church was small and some people sat outdoors. Her dad, Moses Morgan, seen in a photograph published in Fred Holmes' Old World Wisconsin. Had a cousin, John Morgan Jones, who listened to his father (John E. Jones) at the Library of Congress.
20. Today's song director is from Ohio. Generally an outside leader is invited for a Gymanfa Ganu. Judy Woodward and Tom Martin-Erickson have visited them, but Helene really loved the singing.

Mrs. Welk's brother, Lee Morgan

21. Lee from Pickett near Oshkosh, has four generations now living on the same farm. Dad was Moses Morgan. "Back in the 1940s Helene Stratman-Thomas attended the Gymanfa . . ." They stayed the night and the next day, rainy, at the Morgan home and made recordings. [DHD] A few test recordings were left with the family and they still play them; the records start from the center and play out.
22. The session included a quartet of Moses, his twin sister Miriam, another sister Hannah Morgan Hoyer, piano, and Miriam's husband John E. Jones.
23. [Bob Wernerehl asks a question.] The session at the Morgan house involved the singers performing a song, and if H S-T liked the tune it would be recorded. The singers had song books, but sang from memory. Moses had a lot of humorous songs, one of which Lee learned and is still singing.

24. Lee Morgan: "The title of this is Uncle Joe, my dad sang it for years and years when I was a boy." Lee goes into an aside about learning all his Welsh song on his dad's knee at the Gymanfa Ganus. Then he sings "Uncle Joe" [reprinted in Peters, p. 179]. Whenever Moses was about to leave a party or some doings he would always have to sing Uncle Joe. [Use the edited introduction, the song, clapping, and Morgan's outro.]

25. Uncle Joe not really a Welsh song, but Lee has sung it at national Gymanfa Ganus, including in St. Paul and in Baltimore.

26. Lee can't think of a short Welsh song.

27. Lee tells a joke. Man learns from the doctor he has just twelve hours to live. He suggests to his wife that they drink and dance all night. "Go on with you, you don't have to get up in the morning."

Shift from church basement where Lee was interviewed to service above.

28. A hymn in Welsh and English with a slight break in the recording on the English part.

29. Preacher comments on Welsh poets, putting meaning to the songs, the traditions of the Welsh bards, leads into "Onward Christian Soldiers" with quotation of Welsh verse. [Tape runs out.]

Note: Good quotes on here for DHD, but no good songs. Get something from Tom and Judy.