

Llangollen 2018

Gorffennaf 3-8 July

Hands on @ Llangollen Eisteddfod e-newsletter

Edition 10

February 2018

A note from our Chairman

It is that time of year when the shortest day is gone and we can look forward to the summer and of course Llangollen 2018! We've announced the concert stream from Tuesday to Saturday and we're really looking forward to this year's offering with a wonderful programme including Alfie Boe, Van Morrison and of course our traditional Eisteddfod concerts. We hope to launch Llanfest by early spring.

Our USP or unique selling point is the fact that we are an international, competitive, music and dance festival and a peace festival. The eisteddfodic, competitive strand is the most important and we are keen that all competitors have a good experience in Llangollen and want to return. Thus we all have a responsibility to ensure competitors are made to feel welcome and enjoy their time with us. Let's go that extra mile to promote a great competitor and indeed visitor experience.

We have welcomed some new volunteers who have brought new ideas and support to the Eisteddfod. I'd particularly like to thank you volunteers who have supported the Eisteddfod for many years and turn up every year, you are what makes the Eisteddfod!

Thank you all.
Diolch yn fawr iawn.

Dr Rhys Davies
Eisteddfod Chairman

Dates for Your Diary:

AGM - Wednesday 4th April
2018 at 7pm in the hall of
the Royal International
Pavilion.

Tourism Award for Eisteddfod

Eisteddfod honoured at Go North Wales Tourism Awards!

The contribution that the Eisteddfod makes to tourism in North Wales was recently recognised at the Go North Wales Tourism Awards, where the Eisteddfod was the winner of the Magnificent Crowd Puller (over 7.5k) Award.

The awards, sponsored by Traveline Cymru and in partnership with Heart FM, celebrated and recognised excellence in the region's hospitality and tourism sectors, as well as showcasing and celebrating the achievements, hard work and dedication of those working in the industry.

The Magnificent Crowd Puller category is open to successful festivals and events that have attracted over 7,500 visitors, enhanced the profile and appeal of the destination in which they are held and created a significant economic impact for the destination.

Ian Lebbon collected the award on behalf of the Eisteddfod and the trophy is now proudly displayed in reception.



Committee News

Competitors' Committee

Ringing the Changes!

In September 2017, the Hospitality Committee officially changed its name to the Competitors' Committee. However, the mission statement of the committee remains unchanged – working hard to ensure a warm welcome for all of our participants and a high quality experience that means they want to come back again next year! The Management Team have been charged with ensuring the coordination of the successful delivery of our mission.

Sadly, the Chair of the Management Committee, Sarah Jones and her husband Carl (our Finance Officer) are moving away from Llangollen in the near future. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all their hard work on behalf of the Committee and to wish them every success for the future. Currently, our Vice Chair, Karen Price has stepped into the breach as Chair, Sarah is fulfilling the role of Vice-Chair until she moves away and Selwyn Jones has kindly agreed to return to the Committee to take on the role of Finance Officer – a warm welcome back Selwyn! Shawn Davies, who brings with her a wealth of experience and skill from the hospitality sector, has recently joined us as our new Hosting Officer. Shawn already has many ideas and plans to support our hosts in the valuable job they do throughout the week of the Eisteddfod and we welcome her to the Management Team. Our new Secretary, Maureen Gambles, has also agreed to take on the role of Accommodation Officer.

With her characteristic enthusiasm and wealth of experience, Ann Ankers is again coordinating the Competitors' Club in addition to representing our committee on the Music and Staging Committee. Sharon Thomas and Sheila Hughes continue in their roles as Overseas Liaison Officers (OLO), with the valuable continued support of Merle Hunt. Despite her recent elevation to acting Chair, Karen remains the UK Liaison Officer (ULO) and Dave Roberts continues to fulfil the important role of transport coordinator. The Catering team (our loyal and hard working band of volunteers who provide a warm welcome, food and drink to participants on their arrival) continue to be represented on the Management Team by Elaine Roberts and Joyce Linden. Steve Price, our Logistics Officer, represents us on the Grounds Committee and has also recently agreed to be our new Health and Safety Representative. Health, Safety and Welfare has been identified as a key initiative that is of relevance to all who work to make the Eisteddfod a success, particularly perhaps for those working directly with the participants. For this reason, we are thrilled that Kate Price has agreed to take on the role of Welfare Officer for the Competitors' Committee. We are currently looking to appoint a Home-stay Officer to undertake the valuable role of

coordinating the use of accommodation offered by people in their own homes in various locations locally – please look out for the advertisement for this role in this edition of the Newsletter. An important part of the role of Home-stay Officer will be to build the home-stay provider base and we are always on the lookout for more householders to come forward to offer such accommodation. If you are interested in the possibility of letting out beds in your own home during Eisteddfod week 2018, please contact our secretary, Maureen Gambles, by email at comp.secretary@llangollen.net or by leaving a message for her on 01978 862000.

As the forms begin to flood in from our accepted groups, it looks like we're in for a very busy time! The Competitors' Committee is committed to working closely together as a team to make sure that our participants receive a characteristically warm Welsh welcome to the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in 2018!

Maureen Gambles
Secretary, Competitors' Committee

My visit to India

In November last year, our new Hosting Officer, Shawn Davies, travelled to India on holiday and spent some time with the group she looked after during the 2017 festival. Shawn has very kindly written a short piece about her experience, which gives a touching account of her experience as a host and the friendships that can be made.

Last year I volunteered to look after a dancing group who were competing in the Eisteddfod, they were the Real Folk Cultural International Academy, a Bhangra dancing group from Ludhiana.

As a host, you meet and greet the group, you liaise with the office, transport department, TV crews if necessary, show them where they need to be when competing and escort them, and you generally look after them throughout their stay and offer them Welsh hospitality at its best.

So, what did I get for my week of hard work? I got to meet a group of enthusiastic dancers who were thrilled to bits to be here, I learnt about a new culture and religion, I learnt a few new dance steps but most of all I made some special friendships. I witnessed their excitement and anticipation and their pure exhilaration when



they won a trophy, and at the end of the week I was physically and emotionally exhausted but went away with everlasting memories.

So when they asked me to come and visit them in Ludhiana, I was delighted. I had already arranged to visit India, the Delhi triangle, Agra and Jaipur, so I extended my visit and flew up north to Chandigarh, there I was met at the airport with flowers given to me by Gurjeet Cheema Singh, the President of the RFCIA and his good friend Satvir Singh. I was taken to lunch and we did some sightseeing before we travelled onto Ludhiana, there I was taken to hotel that they had very kindly booked for me to use during my stay. I was picked up later and taken to a pre-arranged party given in my honour! I was greeted by the competitors and guests, I was so overwhelmed by their kindness and hospitality, I was presented with gifts and a lovely portrait drawn by Ravi, there was delicious food laid on and plenty of dancing took place, it was a fantastic evening.



The following day we travelled to Amritsar, to visit the Golden Temple (Sri Harmandir Sahib) it is the holiest Gurdwara and the most important pilgrimage site of Sikhism, and I was privileged to be invited, we were joined by Gurjeet and Satvirs wives Gurjinder and Rajwinder and their two gorgeous boys. This was a wonderful end to my very first visit to India.

This year I am the Hosting Officer for the 2018 Eisteddfod, and we will be looking for more volunteers to look after the visiting competitors, so if you are interested please let me know, I am sure you will enjoy the experience and will treasure the memories.

Shawn Davies
Hosting Officer, Competitors' Committee

Photographs courtesy of Shawn Davies.

Albanian Group Visit

In December 2017, we once again welcomed Fitim Mimani, Albanian Peace Ambassador, together with several members of the Albanian dance group, which has competed in Llangollen in recent years.

It is not the first time Fitim has been to Llangollen outside of festival week as he visited at around the same time last year and presented three olive trees – a traditional symbol of peace, health and hope - which now reside at the entrance to the pavilion in planters, where they seem to be thriving.

On this occasion, the group was welcomed by members of the Competitors' Committee and Officers' Group and gifts were exchanged over coffee and mince pies. The visitors presented us with a number of beautiful souvenirs from their locality and we reciprocated with some framed photographs of their visit to Llangollen in July 2017.

They are now looking forward to competing again in July 2018 and we look forward to welcoming them back!



Photographs courtesy of Sharon Thomas, OLO, Competitors' Committee

New Volunteer Opportunity

Competitors' Committee Home-stay Officer

A new volunteer opportunity for a Home-stay Officer has recently been created by the Competitors' Committee. If you are interested in a new volunteering challenge, or know someone who might be, please get in touch with Committee Secretary, Maureen Gambles on comp.secretary@llangollen.net for more information.

The main tasks and responsibilities of the Home-stay Officer will be as follows:

- Produces an up to date list of all local areas offering home-stays, including contact details of area hosts, individual home-stays and beds available.
- Identifies and implements a strategy to encourage further areas and homes to offer home-stays.
- Liaises regularly with Accommodation Officer, Hosting Officer and CLOs.
- Allocates and books provisional accommodation for overseas groups and soloists, matching numbers to beds available.
- Arranges room allocation with area hosts.
- Records home-stay owners' bank details for payments and confirms with Competitors' Committee Finance Officer.
- Meets and greets overseas groups when they reach Llangollen and arranges for them to be taken to their home-stay accommodation by their allocated host.
- Provides detailed evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in the year's provision and makes appropriate recommendations for development.

Les Misérables - School edition

From 20th -23rd February, Ysgol Dinas Brân will be staging a production of Les Misérables, the school edition, in the school hall starting at 7pm.

Tickets are £6.00 for adults and £4.00 for concessions/ children and can be purchased in advance from the school reception (call 01978 860669).

The cast is entirely students and you will undoubtedly recognise a number of our younger volunteers in their midst. Please support them if you can.

Grounds

Volunteer Opportunity - Secretary of Grounds

The Grounds Committee is looking for someone who would be interested in taking over the role of Secretary for 2019.

The remit of this role is quite diverse and duties include:

- Arranging Grounds Committee meetings
 - Arranging meetings as necessary with representatives from grounds and suppliers
 - Obtaining quotations from suppliers for Eisteddfod week services e.g. security
 - Presenting quotations and competitive quotations where possible to the committee
 - Placing orders dependant on committee decision.
 - Attending and acting on instruction from the Delivery Board
 - Ensuring orders are honoured and delivered on time to site.
 - Dealing with supplier discrepancies.
 - Dealing with site issues as they arise along with the Siting Officer throughout the year and during festival week.
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- **Time requirements:** Minimum half day every day on site during Eisteddfod week. Year round as needed, with busiest time of year November- March for quotations.
 - IT and communication skills essential
 - Business acumen beneficial

If you would be interested in this role or know of someone who might be, please contact Colin Roberts, Secretary of Ground on colin.roberts@llangollen.net

Hands On @ Llangollen Eisteddfod has a Facebook page!



Like our page to keep up to date with the latest news and information!

Volunteer News

In this edition, Eisteddfod week Continuity Supervisor and long-standing volunteer, Helen Belton, talks about the creative interests that she and a number of other volunteers have outside of their Eisteddfod volunteering roles. It is a fascinating insight and just goes to show what a versatile and talented group of volunteers we have!

Eisteddfod volunteers are always busy. It's not only in July that many of us jump into action and I don't just mean the work the committees do in the run up to the festival. Since September, the Llangollen Pantomime Group has been rehearsing for their production of Snow White. This talented, amateur group raise money for various charities. This year, money is being raised for Dinas Brân Curtain Up appeal. Some of the group can be found on the Eisteddfod Outside Stages or Stage Crew in July or on the various committees, such as Grounds and Music and Staging. I have been involved with the Pantomime for the first time, having been an audience member for many years. This season I was asked to help the singers as Musical Director and to play the piano in the band. It's been such a lot of fun and I can't wait for opening night. (Snow White opened January 18-21).

As well as that, Eisteddfod volunteers can be found in Llangollen Operatic Society, helping with the Young Uns (up to 18) or within the adult section. Some of the Eisteddfod stage crew are found stage managing the Young Uns' show of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat (opening February 8-10), set building and painting. Eisteddfod stewards are found helping with costume and refreshments.

We are so lucky in Llangollen to have talented musicians and technicians, many of whom help as much as they can during Eisteddfod week and play their instruments or work their sound and lighting for nothing, or for a community rate when working on a show. All these fantastic people are highly involved in their local community, putting back into it, more and more.

For a number of years, I have performed on the stage for the Operatic and Twenty Club; in Carousel, Scarlet Pimpernel, The Mikado, 9-5, Fawlty Towers and Love on the Dole. However, this year I decided to Produce the show which is



My Fair Lady, to be performed April 17-21. Again, I find that the connections and friendships made through the Eisteddfod have stood me in excellent stead, as I am able to call on many friends from many areas of the Eisteddfod to help me. I have members of continuity performing, stage crew are building and stage managing, stewards are performing, providing costume or refreshments, members of archive are photographing and publicising, members of finance will be helping with front of house and members of outside stages will be my technical wizards and musicians. In a lovely twist, some pupils of Dinas Brân (remember the Curtain Up appeal?) may play in the orchestra.

This is what I love about this community; we give, we take and we give some more. Everything is cyclical and we all help each other where we can. The same creative and helpful people can be found entertaining in bands around the town, or organising and running the Women's Festival for charity, or the Comedy Club, or the Twenty Club, or the New Dot Cinema, or the many other events and societies that regularly take place and meet in Llangollen.

In July, though, we can be found on the Eisteddfod field, or in the Town, helping people from other cultures, communities and countries; we give, we take and we give some more. Every July I come out of the Eisteddfod having seen something new and having made new friends, both locally and internationally but the wonderful thing is that I'm surrounded by the same loyal people who I have spent my year with. It really is one big happy family. Admittedly there are still people in the Eisteddfod that I haven't met, but there's still time. Come backstage to say 'hello'. I will have on my Eisteddfod hat, rather than my Operatic/Twenty Club/Women's Festival/Panto hat!

Helen Belton
Continuity Supervisor, Music & Staging Committee

Photograph courtesy of Helen Belton showing L to R: Rachel Hall (Outside Stages Technician), James Barber (Outstage Stages Sound Technician), Barrie Roberts (Chair of Grounds) and Helen, in one of their "other" roles as the Llangollen Panto band.

Fundraising

Give as you Live

Those of you who follow the Eisteddfod on social media will have seen posts publicising “Give as you Live” as a means of raising funds towards the Bursary Fund.

Give as you Live is a shopping and price comparison website with a heart. You can shop for products from thousands of leading online retailers; use their price comparison tool to ensure you get the best price and even save money by using the exclusive offers and deals available through their website. A percentage of every purchase you make will be donated to the Bursary Fund.

Sign up to the scheme is free and easy to use and you can shop at over 4,000 leading online stores including Amazon, eBay, Tesco, John Lewis, Sainsbury's, Just Eat and Booking.com, to name but a few!

Please help support us in this fundraising initiative which is an easy way to raise funds. For further details of to sign up please go to - <https://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/llangollen-eist>

