

Success of R S Thomas Literary Festival at Eglwysfach

Eglwysfach has never been so busy with a footprint of nearly 800 persons over the three day festival that ran from 11-13 September and every event was fully booked. The Jim Perrin walk on Foel Fawr was popular and it was a sunny morning. In his afternoon talk he discussed the friendship of RS Thomas and William Condry and this was followed by another walk to the RS Thomas hide on the Ynyshir RSPB Reserve led by Dave Anning. In the evening Robin Huw Bowen, Master of the Welsh Triple harp gave an entertaining recital and pleased his audience with stories interspersed with the music. Dr Rowan Williams drew the raffle.

The church was packed for the service on Saturday morning when Dr Rowan Williams preached. This was followed in the afternoon with a discussion by academics, Tony Brown and M Wynn Thomas on R S Thomas's time when he was vicar of Eglwysfach and started to make his name as a Welsh poet writing in English. Again the church was full for Dr Rowan Williams lecture on Thomas's view of death and resurrection. This was followed by an illustrated talk by Christine Kinsey on how her artistic career has been influenced by Thomas. A reception followed at Glandyfi Castle

For many the highlight was Sunday. The day started with a poetry reading by Gillian Clarke, the National Poet of Wales and was followed by the Poetry Competition and over 60 poems were read to a rapt audience. It was won by Peter George with Frances Barker gaining second place, both from Pembrokeshire. Three poets were Highly Commended: Diana Reynolds and Hilaire Wood from the Aberystwyth locality and Susan Fogarty from Pwllheli - so all areas of Wales were represented.



Dr Rowan Williams giving his lecture



Robin Huw Bowen, Master of the Welsh Harp



Professor Tony Brown, Peter George, the winner of the poetry competition and Gillian Clarke, the National Poet of Wales.



Joy Neal introducing the lectures



Professor Tony Brown, Peter George, the winner of the poetry competition, Gillian Clarke, the National Poet of Wales and Joy Neal, the Festival Administrator.



Dr Rowan Williams, with Professor Tony Brown and Professor M Wynn Thomas before the lectures.



Dr Rowan Williams with Rev Canon Stuart Bell before the service on 12 September.



Volunteers preparing refreshments in the Iron Room



The Jim Perrin walk up Foel Fawr .