

Jan Morris receives Worldwide Welsh Award

The international committee of Anrhydedd Cymry & Cyfanfyd – The Worldwide Welsh Award decided unanimously that this year's award should go to author Jan Morris ‘for her exceptional and outstanding contribution to Welsh culture, heritage and letters.’

Dr Arturo Roberts, publisher of Ninnau, the North-American Welsh newspaper and international coordinator of the committee said “When we decide on the recipient of the award, we take into account the contribution that individual has made to Welsh culture and the Welsh way of life. Jan Morris was nominated by an overwhelming majority of those asked to provide possible candidates, and we consider her to be the most deserving.”

Henry Jones-Davies, former editor of Cambria magazine and the Welsh co-ordinator of the Award committee, added “Not only is she one of the greatest living European writers, but Jan Morris’s commitment to Wales and Cymreictod has inspired and delighted an entire generation. She is nothing less than a national treasure, and it is highly appropriate that we should honour her with the only national award Wales has.”

The award was established at the 2000 National Eisteddfod in Llanelli, where it was presented to former Plaid Cymru President and first Member of Parliament Gwynfor Evans in an emotional ceremony attended by a capacity audience. The following year it was presented collectively to the people of Y Wladfa, the Welsh Patagonian community.

An avowed republican and patriot, Jan Morris is the author of over 30 books -including a novel, Our First Leader, translated into Welsh by her son, the poet Twm Morys - a number of travel books on Venice, Oxford, Hong Kong, Trieste and Manhattan, historical works such as the Pax Britannica trilogy which chronicles the rise and fall of the British Empire, and the unashamedly proud and passionately patriotic The Matter of Wales.

This year’s ceremony had added poignancy since the actual award, the ‘Lleuadydd’, a commemorative golden Welsh lunula mounted on a base of Welsh oak, was made by Celtic craftsman and jeweller Anthony Lewis who died in 2005. The first award, also created by Anthony Lewis, remained at Gwynfor Evans’s bedside until his death in 2005.

Anrhydedd Cymry & Cyfanfyd – The World-wide Welsh Award was presented at a special ceremony in the pavilion on 7th August by the Archdruid of the Gorsedd of Bards and attended by members of the Eisteddfod Court and other dignitaries.

The following is the text of Professor Hywel Teifi Edwards who introduced the presentation on behalf of the Award Committee:

Braint fawr yw cael cymryd rhan yn y Seremoni arbennig hon yn enw’r cylchgrawn hardd Cambria ar dylanwadol Ninnau, Papur Cymry Gogledd America, ac yn rhinwedd doethineb Dr. Arturo Roberts.

Mor gwbl briodol yw anrhydeddu Jan Morris â thlws Cymru’r Cyfanfyd yn ein Prifwyl ar dir a daear Daniel Owen, y nofelydd a blannodd ei bobol ei hun, yng ngrym eu hiaith eu hunain, ynghanol comedi ddwys dynoliaeth.

Mor drawiadol ydyw ei bod hi, wrth dderbyn yr anrhydedd hwn, yn olyniaeth Gwynfor, y gweledydd o wleidydd a fynnodd i Gymru ei hawl a’i chyfle i fyw yn wlad greadigol, hyderus ymhlith gwledydd byd.

Gweledigaeth, dychmyg, dyfeisgarwch, menter, teyrngarwch ynghyd â dysg a gallu dewinol i alw geiriau at waith – y mae’r cyfan ynghyd, ers hanner canrif dda bellach, wedi creu corff o lenyddiaeth sy’n peri ystyried Jan Morris yn Wydion o awdur. Y mae wedi hen ennill ei lle ymhlith arch-gyfarwyddiaid ein cenedl ni, y bodau anhepgor hynny sy’n gweld storïau mawr mewn gwlad fechan ac sydd o’r herwydd yn cadarnhau ac yn estyn einioes y genedl.

Ond Saesneg yw iaith ei llenyddia hi. Digon gwir – Saesneg yw iaith storïa Emyr Humphreys a barddoni R.S.Thomas hefyd, ac mae’r tri yn eu defnydd ohoni yn Gymry i’r carn. Wele driawd a droes yr ‘imperial tongue’ yn iaith dyrchafu Cymru – ei dyrchafu heb ei thwylo a’i harddu heb ei ffladro.

Yn achos Jan Morris y mae hi wedi teithio’r byd, ei led a’i hyd, ac y mae hi wedi cwmpasu ei rwysg a’i remp gan ddangos ei gorchest o lyfr i lyfr. Boed Fenis, boed Rydychen, boed Manhattan, boed Hong Kong, boed Sbaen, boed Awstralia – y mae cael eu profi fel y mae Jan Morris wedi eu profi yn wledd i’r synhwyrau a’r deall. Rydym heddiw yn anrhydeddu awdur byd-enwog ei chyflawniadau, un y mae ei rhagoriaethau yn ennyn clod lle bynnag yr êl.

Diolchwn iddi am gyrchu’r byd i Gymru; ond heddiw diolchwn iddi’n fwy am ddwyn Cymru, yn ei pherson ei hun, i olwg y byd. Bendith ar ei phen hi, y teithiwr ysbrydoledig, am angori llong ei chariad wrth Gymru ag angerdd rhamantydd diedifar. Dysgwn lawer am ysblander ac ysbleddach y byd hwn yn ei llyfrau, ond i mi, ni ddysgwn ddim sy’n werthfawrocach i Gymro a Chymraes na’r hyn sy’n pefrio mewn dwy gyfrol sy’n llawenydd calon i mi bob tro rwy’n eu hagog. Syllwch ar wales: the first place (1982); darllenwch the matter of wales: epic views of a small country (1984) a gorfoleddwch yn hyfrydwch ymlyniad Jan Morris wrth ei gwlad a’i phobol:

Y mae awdur sy’n gallu dangos â’r fath loywyder, mai trwy ymhyfrydu y mae i’r Cymry ddysgu ymlynu wrth eu hetfeddiaeth, yn werth ei phwysau mewn aur. Dyna pam fod cael anrhydeddu Jan Morris ar y llwyfan hwn heddiw yn ddigwyddiad cenedlaethol sydd mewn cytgorod llawn â phwrpas canolog ein Prifwyl. Felly, yn enw Anrhydedd Cymru’r Cyfanfyd – Hawddamor, Jan Morris!

Accepting the award, Jan Morris replied:

“A fo ben”, declared Bendigeidfran in the Mabinogi, “bid bont” - he who is a leader, let him be a bridge. I am proud to think that I may have added a plank, or at least a tintack, to the bridge which visionaries of our time have been building between Wales and the rest of the world.

Prominent among them on the other side of the Atlantic has been Arturo Roberts, the true begetter of this award, with his irrepressible magazine Ninnau.

From Wales itself the founders and editors of Cambria have been tireless in making new links with readers around the globe.

The National Eisteddfod has introduced the idea of Wales to countless visitors and viewers of every nationality, and I hope made friends of most of them. I owe my thanks to them all for their encouragement and example, and not least to my son the Prifardd Twm Morys, whose loving pride in all that is best in Wales has been my spur and my inspiration always. But most of all, or course, I am grateful – o’r galon, from the heart – to dear old Wales itself, warts and all.”