

Côr Cymry Honors a Chest of Peace in Kansas City

by Alison McCrary
(US Navy, Ret'd)

A couple of years ago, after long hoping I would, I acquired my Uncle Herbie's trunk from my cousin, Danny – at that time too far into Alzheimer's to need it any longer. Danny and I had looked through it together in times past and we both prized the chest for its cache of Uncle Herbie's World War One letters and photos – Uncle Herbie was our (everyone's) favorite uncle.

This March, very near to St. David's Day, my husband, Dale, and I with our new friends in Côr Cymry Gogledd America-North American Welsh Choir, led by our gifted director, Dr. Mari Morgan, celebrated the arrival in the United States of another chest of similar age, but with quite a different pedigree – one from Wales – the one containing the Welsh Women's Peace Appeal, 1924.

Côr Cymry Gogledd America gave two concerts and a performance for a webinar for the National World War I Museum and Memorial. During the weekend of International Women's Day, we gave performances that heralded the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Appeal Memorial on the shores of North America. What a privilege



A special tribute to honor Côr Cymry family members who served in World War One.
Photo: Beth Landmesser.

to musically open and close the webinar which featured our friend Mererid Hopwood and shed even more light on the Appeal.

Back in early 2023 in preparation for the Wales tour, Dale and I joined Côr Cymry 'for fun' – for the joy of singing, without any thought of, really – anything. What a gift this 'lark' has been. If asked when we joined the choir, we probably would have assumed that we'd be singing 'old standards.' How surprised we were to be singing pieces commissioned just for our choir, to be contributing to the growing repertoire, to be part of a living and evolving musical-poetic tradition. Neither did we expect to

gain over 60 new friends – from across North America and Wales.

More meaningfully, to borrow a metaphor from Mari, our singing has woven us, through 'braids of song,' into events far larger than ourselves, but with which we were already somehow intimately linked. Last summer's experience of celebrating the return of the chest carrying the Welsh Women's Peace Appeal reminded us of our connection with all those affected by the Great War.

Almost as important, perhaps more personally significant for that weekend, was the WWI memorial tribute service that we held together as the community of Côr Cymry Gogledd

America.

Early on Sunday morning we quietly gathered in the World War I Museum. Standing together on the Paul Sunderland Glass Bridge, over a representation of No Man's Land dotted with red poppies, we took a little time to honor those who served in The Great War.

It was my honor to lead this tribute along with three other choristers – all of us, women veterans of the U.S. Forces.

There, Côr Cymry stood as a microcosm of a world experience – of the sacrifice of so many – combatants and non-combatants alike – across too many nations to count. As we know, the War to End All Wars, did not, nor has any war yet

ended all conflict. The experience of War through our lifetimes reminds us that we share the legacy of seeking peace with every generation that has gone before us.

We acknowledged that the names represented honor, courage, and sacrifice – in some cases the ultimate sacrifice.

Carol Biskup (U.S. Army), Merrie Lloyd (U.S. Coast Guard) and Kathryn Reynolds (U.S. Army) called the honor roll of names - so many names - of relatives of choristers who had served in the Great War while members of our choral community held photos of their relatives.

We prayed, and then sang "What Does the Lord Require of You?"

For many – perhaps most of Côr Cymry – this was the first time they had heard the names of their family members honored. It reminded us, all of us, how we are united in experience across years and miles, across traditions and language.

Uncle Herbie would have been touched.

[See & hear Côr Cymry singing "What does the Lord require of you?"]

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/949644106744360>]

Support the Urdd's Peace Message on 17 May Cefnogwch Neges Heddwch yr Urdd ar 17 Mai



To prepare for this year's message, the Urdd held a workshop in the Cardiff Urdd Center on the 25-26 of January. Staff members, apprentices and volunteers of the Urdd, and students of the ESOL course (learning English as a second language) of Cardiff and the Vale Collage all came together for the workshop. All the attendees were women, to reflect the message of the Welsh women's petition 1923-1924.

Elan Evans and the poet and singer, Casi Wyn, led an engaging workshop where participants delved into discussions about peace and the historical significance of the petition. Over the course of two days, a safe and relaxing atmosphere was created, which led to important conversations shared amongst the young women which shaped the direction of the message.

Following the workshop, Casi transformed their powerful words and ideas into a written message. The words are now available to see in both Welsh and English on the Urdd's website.

The message is now being transformed into an animation by the illustrator, Efa Blossomason, and the message in video form will be released from @ Urdd social media accounts on the 17th of May 2024.

This year's Peace and Goodwill Message will celebrate the centenary of Welsh women's remarkable 1923-24 Peace Petition, highlighting the

need to advocate for peace a hundred years on.

A century ago, on the 19th of February 1924, the Welsh Women's Peace Petition chest was opened with its 390,296 signatures inside in front of 600 US women at the Biltmore Hotel, New York. The petition was an act of hope for world peace, and its story has inspired the Urdd to encourage a group of young women to come together to create this year's Peace and Goodwill Message.

The Urdd's 2024 Peace and Goodwill Message emphasizes the importance of taking action and persistently advocating for peace. It asserts that atrocities, wars and violence must be stopped, and that cooperation, passion and hope are the driving forces that can lead the towards a better future.

If you would like to know more about the Urdd's Peace and Goodwill Message, please get in touch – peace@urdd.org

We kindly ask for your support by sharing this important video message from @ Urdd social media account on the 17th of May.

Together we'll call for peace on 17 May 2024

Gweithred yw Gobaith. Hope is an Action. #Heddwch2024

See the peace message printed on p 12

Côr Cymry Gogledd America World War I HONOR ROLL

Called by Carol Biskup, Merrie Lloyd & Kathryn Reynolds

For Tom Abbott: his grandfather, **Dr. John Abbott**

American medical doctor, volunteer in the British Expeditionary Force. POW 8 months.

For Dick Dewey & Tricia Dewey: his father, **George Lewis Dewey**, US Army Served in France

For Heather Evans DeFer: her great-grandfather, **Robert John Evans**, Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 4th Battalion.

For Kent Freeze: his great-grandfather, **John Parry** "Tunneler" in British Expeditionary Force & his great-uncle, **Penry Griffith**, British Expeditionary Forc. Killed in France 1918

For Lisa Evans Hopkins: her great-uncle, **Daniel Hopkins**, Northumberland Fusiliers, British Expeditionary Force. Killed in Gallipoli 1915 & her great-uncle, **Thomas Hopkins** King's

Shropshire Light Infantry, British Expeditionary Force, Killed in Flanders 1916 & her 1st cousin twice removed, **John Buffton**, 4th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Division, US Army, Killed in France 1918 & her 1st cousin twice removed, **David Edgar Thomas**, 145th Infantry Regiment, 37th

Division, US Army. Served in France & her great-uncle, **John Thomas Evans**, 4th Naval District,

US Navy & her great-uncle, **Walter Evans**, 154 Depot Brigade, US Army

For Timothy Hughes: his grandfather, **Andrew Bryan Hughe** s168th Iowa, US Army

For Kim Lloyd Jones: her grandfather, **Joseph Henry Morgans**, 2/6th Battalion, Gloster Regiment, British Expeditionary Force. Wounded at the Somme; POW 12 months.&her husband

Ron Jones' great uncle, **Richard Clement Thomas**, 14th Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers, British Expeditionary Force. Killed at Passchendaele 1918

For John Lawson: his grandfather, **William James Mason**, Royal Field Artillery, British Expeditionary Force. Served in France, Belgium - wounded twice.

For Alison McCrary: her grandfather, **Walter McCrary**, US Army & her great-uncle, **Herbert Barfels**, US Army, served in France & her great-uncle, **Otto Barfels**, US Army, served in France & her great-uncle, **Pete Staack**, US Army

For Ann McFerrin: her father, **James M. McFerrin**, US Army, Cavalry, served in France and Germany

For Mari Morgan: her great-uncle, **David Walters**, Royal Medical Corp, British Expeditionary Force

For Roderic Owen: his great-uncle, **Ivor Morgan**, Royal Medical Corp, British Expeditionary Force

For Martha Thomas:, her grandfather, **John Benjamin Thomas**, 153 Depot Brigade, US Army

For Joel Ware IV: his grandfather, **Herman Ernest Wood**, US Army

For Torry Watkins: his uncle, **Morris Wynn Watkins**, US Marine Corp & his uncle, **Frank W. Davis**

US Army, Cavalry & his uncle, **Robert V. Davis**, US Army, Medical Corp

For Larry Whyte: his grandfather, **James Earl Whyte**, 40th Artillery Regiment, US Army & his great-uncle, **Norman Newman Whyte**, US Army

For Andrea Wild: her 1st cousin twice removed, **Peter Dop**, US Army, Medical Corp & her 1st cousin twice removed, **Charles Dop**, US Army