

Construction Begins on Great Plains Welsh Heritage Centre Expansion



The board of the Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project in Wymore, Nebraska

Thanks to many generous donations, the Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project in Wymore, Nebraska has poured the foundation and set footings for its new 2,200-square-foot exhibit room. This marks the completion of the first phase of the expansion project. An addi-

tional \$100K is still needed to finish the building by the end of this summer. Please consider making a donation to help tell the story of Welsh people in North America as it has never been told before! For details on how to donate, please visit greatplainswelsh.org/donate

GPWHP board members shown, left to right: Doug Jones, Lois Milburn, Eric Bryson, Sara Bryson, Rosalee Reedy, Gwenith Closs-Colgrove, Jeff Jones, Lauren Riedesel, Rhonda Brownawell, Robert Humphries, Brad Keller and Maggie Dunn.

North American Welsh Choir Tours British Columbia This July

by Dr. Mari Morgan

This July, the North American Welsh Choir – Cór Cymry Gogledd America (Cór Cymry) will embark on an exciting concert tour of British Columbia, Canada taking Welsh song to audiences in Nanaimo, Victoria and Vancouver.

Choristers, friends and family from Canada, the USA and Wales will gather in Vancouver on Tuesday, July 7 before setting off on a six-night tour itinerary that blends performance, sightseeing and warm camaraderie – offering a range of experiences simply not possible outside of touring with Cór Cymry!

Would you care to join us? There are just a few seats remaining.

"The stage is set for a successful, fun and musically inspired trip for all of us this July," says bass chorister, Dr. Roderic Owen. "This 2026 tour marks Cór Cymry's fifth international concert tour since 2022 and promises to be not only a rich musical experience, but also an immersive cultural adventure!"

Traveling by private coach and chartered ferries, we will explore the region's spectacular coastal scenery accompanied throughout by an experienced Welsh-speaking tour manager. Carefully selected hotels and locally inspired dining fare will enhance the journey.

At the heart of our tour are three distinctive concerts, each presented in venues specifically chosen for their character and collaborative performance



Cór Cymry Gogledd America at Senedd Cymru, July 2023

opportunities.

Welsh music, of course, will take center stage with a tour repertoire that blends beautiful songs and arrangements of Wales, several receiving their Western Canada premieres during this summer tour!

The tour opens in Nanaimo, a vibrant harbor city on the eastern shore of Vancouver Island, once a far-away home to Welsh miners who worked the rich anthracite seam along the shores of the Salish Sea.

The first tour concert will be at St. Andrew's United Church, Nanaimo on Wednesday, July 8th - an historic church that is today led by a Welsh Canadian minister. The program will open with a set of songs by the Island Bel Canto Singers, led by Fiona Blackburn who directed the winning "Youth Choir of the World" champions at the 2018 Llangollen International Eisteddfod in Wales.

Our second stop is Victoria, the provincial capital at the southern tip of Vancouver

Island, known as the "garden city". There, Cór Cymry will give a concert in a brand-new venue designed for modern spiritual and creative community usage. The beautiful acoustics at Broad View United will ring with Welsh song on Thursday, July 9th. During our stay in Victoria there will, of course, be a much-requested visit to the world-renowned Butchart Gardens.

Our tour culminates in Vancouver, where a warm Welsh welcome will be extended to us all by the members and friends of the Vancouver Welsh Society.

The grand finale concert on Saturday, July 11 at Pacific Spirit Church promises to be a tour highlight, featuring a thrilling collaboration with more than 50 additional voices drawn together from the Vancouver Orpheus Male Choir and the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir, under the direction of Liana Savard. The evening will be filled to the



Celebrations with the Women's Welsh Club with Tom and MaryLynne Bird and Audrey Roberts

Women's Welsh Club of NYC Gifts Support to the Welsh American Community

At the end of January, a general meeting of the Women's Welsh Club of New York was held via Zoom where members voted unanimously to dissolve the club and disperse funds to four Welsh charities. The Club was founded on May 23, 1921, with the purpose to give Welsh people a place to meet other Welsh people, to get the latest news from home, and to help keep meaningful Welsh traditions going - such as the gymnasium, and local *cisteddfodau*.

The New York Club was a branch of the Women's Welsh Club of America, founded in Rocky River, Ohio. The National Club founded a home for the aged, The Welsh Home, and received support from each club. The Women's Welsh Club of America still exists, however the local chapters have almost all disbanded, with New York possibly being the last.

A final in-person meeting took place in early March to finalize plans. Club Treasurer Alonza Greco said, "The WWC was home to a very special group of women, with some meetings spanning three generations. Many of us like myself emigrated for work, while others were GI brides or descendants of Welsh immigrants. It was always fascinating to hear where members were from, north or south, the valleys or the coast; every member had a colorful story and a way of transporting you back to Wales. On the first Saturday of each

month, we enjoyed programs ranging from classical music and opera to films and plays as well as museum excursions and other Welsh events. These were always followed by tea and Welsh cakes, sandwiches, and tasty treats all made by the ladies. And we would enjoy a 'good old chin wag' sharing our news from here and home. I have been a member for 34 years, and some members for over 50 years!. The ladies became my American family, and while the club is no more, we have wonderful memories and wonderful friendships."

105 years after its beginning, the members were committed to continuing to support Welsh causes. President Colleen Kennedy said, "The members of the WWC are sad to see our jolly little group disband, but it makes us happy to know that our remaining funds will go to four wonderful organizations that will carry on celebrating the unique country that is Wales! Funds were donated to the Welsh Congregational Church of New York, Ninnau & Y Drych, the Welsh North American Association, and Urdd Gobaith Cymru.

Colleen says, "We are especially grateful to Ninnau for maintaining a constant link with 'Pethau Cymreig'". Ninnau editor Megan Williams says, "We are incredibly grateful. This gift will help secure our future and is the single largest gift received to date."

Choir Tour (continued)

brim with Welsh song and spirit!

"We are absolutely thrilled to welcome Cór Cymry Gogledd America to Vancouver! This is far more than a concert—it's a vibrant celebration of Welsh culture, music, and friendship. To bring together so many voices in one place, united in song and spirit, is truly extraordinary. We cannot wait to share this unforgettable experience with our community—Vancouver is in for a spectacular night of music and celebration!"

Lynn Owens-Whelan, President of the Vancouver Welsh Society

Celebrations will continue with an afterglow reception hosted at the Cambrian Hall, the longtime home of the Vancouver Welsh Society for nearly 100 years.

Those interested in joining this remarkable journey - or attending any of the concerts - are encouraged to contact Cór Cymry director, Dr Mari Morgan for further details and a full itinerary.

Seize the day and travel with Cór Cymry between July 7 to 13, 2026 for an unforgettable journey of song, scenery, and camaraderie!
Amdani!