



Richard Huws: An Intervention.
Dr Robert G MacDonald

Excuse my Welsh...
CYFATCH

It's a great honour to share my reminiscences of Richard Huws 1902 and Liverpool.
In 1970 I started at the Liverpool University School of Architecture.

Our city always has had strong Welsh Cultural Connections and Liverpool was often described as The Capital of North Wales.

Our drinking water and possibly Richard's Fountain Water comes controversially from Lake Vernwy !

In 1884 and 1929 The Welsh Eisteddfods were actually held in Liverpool in Newsham and Sefton Parks. There were even plans for 2008 during the European Capital of Culture.

At that time The Welsh Population was 75,000 as reflected in the number and names in the Chapels including The Welsh Presbyterian Church.

Many Streets have Welsh names in Toxteth including the so named Welsh Streets which have been saved from demolition.

The large department stores were TJ Hughes and Robert Lewis the Philanthropist developed his major and famous multi-functional store Lewis'.

There is a book in the Liverpool University Library called 'The Welsh Builders.' They built many of our terraced streets; the Bricks came from Ruabon and the Roofing Slate from the great Ffestiniog quarries.

Uniquely Richard Huws was the resident Engineer in The Liverpool School of Architecture.

More often I might have met Richard in one of the School corridors. He was always explaining and demonstrating his special kinetic engineering and dynamic structural ideas.

Professor Gardener Medwin carefully balanced a diverse number of Tutors including making space for Richard Huws and his amazing design creativity.

I recall Francis Jones a Housing Historian talking about the radical Welsh Miner's Pit-Head Baths.

Dr Morgan was an enthusiastic historian who shared and published his structural and geometric thoughts about Gothic Architecture.

Professor Quentin Hughes was my tutor and lived in Corwen and Liverpool. He was the recognised expert about our great inspirational Seaport. He features Richard's Fountain in his several books.

Professor Dewi Price went on to be Head of The Cardiff School of Architecture.

At that time The Liverpool School also had important Polish Connections which brought dynamic constructivist modernism and the industrial aesthetic to the City; to this Richard brought his experiences of Cammell Laird ship yard.

Richard's Fountain is clearly a special and unique example of mid 20th architectural engineering in a special public space and it deserves our design respect, its historic listing and its protection.

Later in my Career I worked in Powys living near to Talliesin. I won the National Eisteddfod Architecture competition set in Swansea. Mary and I went down across the heads of the valleys and visited Dylan Thomas's Writing Shed in Llargarne.

We travelled down to the Eisteddfod in Swansea to collect my prize from the poetic and musical Bards.

Perhaps Richard Huws was with me in Spirit. I like to think so. Maybe his creative Fountain in water and steel is as poetic as Dylan Thomas's Under Milk Wood narrative poetry. Needless to say I don't speak Welsh so I didn't understand a word of the Prize Giving!

Diolch

Thank You

Dr Robert G MacDonald RIBA
President Emeritus
Liverpool Architectural Society.

40th Anniversary Commemoration of the death of Richard Huws
27th February 2020
Piazza Fountain, Beetham Plaza, Liverpool.