

Literary Festival and Poetry Competition

20-22 September 2019



Walk led by the **Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales**

The Living Wells of Wales
My personal relationship with RS
Iago Prytherch's Houses
R S Thomas: an Anglican Dissident?
From Italy to Wales: The Artistic Life of
Mildred Eldridge
R S Thomas - Love Poet

Poetry Reading: Gillian Clarke
 National Poet of Wales 2008-2016
 and **Professor Menna Elfyn**

OPEN POETRY COMPETITION
ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH
EGLWYSFACH, CEREDIGION, SY20 8SX

Friday 20 September

11 am - **Guided Walk** – limited to 30.
 An exploration of the buildings and landscape known by R S Thomas while vicar of Eglwysfach, led by Richard Suggett, James January-McCann and Nicola Roberts from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.

2 pm - **Phil Cope**
The Living Wells of Wales
 Phil Cope has been exploring our wellsprings for more than two decades, trying to capture something of their spirit through words and images, with a number of publications. We are pleased to be launching his latest book, *The Living Wells of Wales*. His talk – illustrated with his own photographs, historical accounts and myths, as well as the poetry of R S Thomas and other Welsh writers – will celebrate these magical watery places, including the newly renovated Ffynnon Non at Eglwysfach.

4 pm - **Professor Menna Elfyn**
My personal relationship with RS
 Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales
 Fellow of Royal Society of Literature
 Fellow of Aberystwyth University and UWTSO.
 Menna has published fourteen volumes of poetry. She has also written plays, libretti, and children's novels. Her work has been translated into eighteen languages.

7 pm - **Richard Suggett FSA**
Iago Prytherch's Houses
 Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales
 Senior Investigator at the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales.
'A shock to Georgian sensibilities': Iago Prytherch's Houses. This talk will be an exploration with images of the farmhouses and cottages of upland Wales with special reference to Cardiganshire.

Followed by tea in the Iron Room where refreshments and archive film will be showing throughout the Festival.

Saturday 21 September

11 am - **The Right Reverend Barry Morgan**
 Archbishop Emeritus of Wales will preach at the morning service led by Canon Enid Morgan.

1 pm - **The Right Reverend Barry Morgan**
R S Thomas – an Anglican Dissident?

Pro-Chancellor of the University of Wales
 Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales.
 Barry Morgan is Patron of the R S Thomas and M E Eldridge Society. He published *Strangely Orthodox: R S Thomas and his Poetry of Faith* in 2006. They met when RS had retired and Barry Morgan was Archdeacon, later Bishop of Bangor. From 2003-2017 he was Archbishop of Wales.

3 pm - **Professor Tony Brown**
From Italy to Wales: The Artistic Life of Mildred Eldridge (Mrs R S Thomas)

Co-Director of the R S Thomas Research Centre at Bangor University
 Fellow of the Learned Society of Wales.
 He is recognised as a leading expert on RS, and has been involved with the Festival since its inception. He published *R S Thomas* (rev. edn. 2013) and co-edited RS's *Uncollected Poems* (2013).

4.30 pm - **Professor Matthew Jarvis**
R S Thomas – Love Poet

Matthew Jarvis is Professorial Fellow in Literature and Place in the Department of English and Creative Writing at Aberystwyth University. He is also Co-Chair of the Association for Welsh Writing in English, lead editor of the *International Journal of Welsh Writing in English* and Chair of the *Poetry Wales* Committee. He is primarily a critic of recent and contemporary poetry, with particular expertise in the English-language poetry of Wales since its revival during the 1960s.

7 pm - **Reception at Voelas Hall**

Mrs Lillian Hughes has kindly agreed to host an evening entertainment in her home. There will be a 'hog roast' with accompanying courses, followed by an entertainment of folk music. Limited to 40 guests.

Sunday 22 September

9.30 am - **Service in church – Holy Communion**

11 am - **Poetry Reading**

Menna Elfyn
Gillian Clarke –
 National Poet of Wales 2008-2016.

Gillian Clarke and Menna Elfyn will read their favourite poems, some of their own poems and some by R S Thomas.

1.30-5 pm - OPEN POETRY COMPETITION

1st prize £250
2nd prize £100
Highly Commended £40

Judges: Gillian Clarke, Tony Brown

The quotations chosen by the judges for poets' inspiration:

Anything to sell? cries the tourist to the native rummaging among the remains of his self-respect. ('If You Can Call It Living', Collected Poems 255)

Stay green.

*Never mind the machine,
 Whose fuel is human souls.
 Live large, man, and dream small.
 ('Lore', Collected Poems 114)*

*But the silence in the mind is when we live best, within listening distance of the silence we call God.
 (Counterpoint, Collected Later Poems 118)*

*I lean far out from the bone's bough knowing the hand I extend can save nothing of you but your love.
 ('Seventieth Birthday', Poems to Elsi 49)*