

# Welsh Programmes for St. David's Day Broadcast of Hawera School Orchestra

ON Friday, March 1, St. David's Day will be remembered by Welshmen all over the world, and the occasion will be commemorated in New Zealand with the presentation of Welsh programmes from all four stations.

ON Friday evening a special "St. David's Day" programme will be presented by the choir of the Wellington Welsh Society, under the conductorship of Mr. W. G. Aked. Mr. Barton Ginger, the well-known local elocutionist, will also assist with the programme. The choir's items will comprise part songs, duets, choruses and solos, some of which will be sung in Welsh, and some in English. In order that listeners may follow the items more closely a brief outline of each item will be given before its performance. The part songs will include Dr. Parry's "I was Tossed by the Wind" (which number was composed after Dr. Parry had been in a storm in the Atlantic), "All Through the Night," "God Bless the Prince of Wales" (which is always on the programme at any Welsh function), and two bright items "Sospian Bach" and "Mary Ratan."

The choral section of the programme will conclude with the Welsh National Anthem, sung in the native tongue. Mr. Tucker, the President of the Wellington Welsh Society, will also give a short talk on St. David. Mr. Barton Ginger, who still continues to delight listeners with his artistic elocutionary numbers, will be heard in a character sketch from Dickens's "Scrooge," and in a humorous number from the "Grindler" series. In the former Mr. Ginger will be assisted by the Welsh choir.

ON Sunday afternoon, March 3, the annual Welsh service will be celebrated in the Anglican Cathedral, Christchurch. This service will be relayed by 3YA.

## The Life Story of St. David of Wales

TO examine the life story of David, the Patron Saint of Wales, is very like lifting a dark curtain to peer into the gloom, because those early centuries are very obscure, full of a strange mixture of myth and tradition. Yet, somehow, out of it all there rises the figure of a strong man ruling his monastery and drawing the wild tribesmen to God by the power of his fiery eloquence.

His life story may be said to begin with the love story of Sant, The Brython, and Non, a woman of the Goidelic tribes, because the child Dewi, or David, was the result of their irregular union.

The expectant mother was driven out by her own kindred, and so her child was born in the wilds. Whilst he was still young he was sent to the monastery of Hen Llwyn to be taught by Paulinus, the abbot. This early settlement was probably a collection of huts in a thorny brake, but afterwards a fine stone building rose on the site which was named Ty Gwyn. When the young man was fully grown he went into Gower, establishing churches in all the land between the Tawe and the Towy.

From there he went back to Dyfed and established his monastery at Glyn Rhosyn, in the place now known by his name as St. David's.

There are traditions of his life at the monastery and the strictness of his rule, and these ring true. One story which has reached us tells of a conspiracy between three of his monks to poison him. They were the steward, the cook, and his deacon or assistant.

A VISITOR from Ireland, a monk named Scuthen, was staying at Glyn Rhosyn at the time, and he suspected the plot, which was to poison the abbot's bread. David, all unsuspecting, sat down at the table, when Scuthen exclaimed: "To-day none of

the brethren shall wait on the Father but myself."

The deacon turned pale and trembled as Scuthen took up the bread and gave it to a house dog.

At the same moment a crow flew down from an ash-tree close by and picked up the crumbs.

Whilst the conspirators and the other monks stood looking on, the dog and then the bird fell dead. Upon which the brethren rose and cursed the offenders, praying that they should forfeit their place in Heaven.

Sometime in the middle of his life David was compelled by the violence of the yellow plague to fly over the sea to Armorica. He probably stayed there from 547 till 551, and this accounts for the many churches in Brittany which are dedicated to the Welsh saint.

After his return to Wales he seems to have made his series of journeys, his preaching tours, from Cardigan Bay across to the banks of the Wye, which is probably the reason why we have so many churches.

He was famous for his great sayings, and one of these at least has come down to us in the motto, "Goreu defawd daioni," which in English would read, "Goodness is the best custom."

We have a relic of his stay in Gwent, where the little church near Caerlwn, called Llandewi fach, was granted to the Saint and dedicated to him after he had settled a long-standing dispute between the neighbouring chiefs.

The old man, full of years, was greatest in his death, for the story goes that on the Sunday, though he was even then dying, he preached to his people in the church which is now the cathedral of St. David's. On the following Tuesday, being the first of March, he was again in the church, and as he listened to the brethren singing the psalms, he suddenly repeated the words, "Tolle me post Te" ("Raise me after Thee"), and so passed away.

ON Thursday evening, March 7, the broadcast will take the novel form of a concert entirely by school children. These will be pupils from Hawera Main Primary School and Hawera Technical School, who are making a special visit to Wellington to give a concert at the Town Hall. This visit is chiefly the outcome of the interest taken in the Hawera School Orchestra by the ex-Prime Minister, the Hon. J. G. Coates, who was much struck with their playing last year.

The orchestra, which numbers over 50, has been trained by Mr. H. C. A. Fox, conductor of the Hawera Borough Band. It began in 1926 as a school flute band, but has developed so remarkably under Mr. Fox's skilful and enthusiastic teaching that it now comprises some 26 violins, together with piccolo, flutes, oboe, clarinets, cornets, horns, althorns, euphoniums, trombone, drums, effects, and piano.

In addition to a number of orchestral items there will also be vocal and instrumental solos and recitations, all by the pupils of the two schools. The Technical School pupils are those who have left Hawera Primary School, but

who naturally wish to retain their membership of the orchestra as long as possible. The orchestra has received the highest praise from Mr. E. Douglas Tayler, Supervisor of School Music to the Education Department, and listeners-in will be assured of a very happy evening on March 7.

It is interesting to note that there are quite a number of school orchestras and bands in the country. One of the best known is the Albany Street School Band, Dunedin, trained by Mr. Hanna, which has enjoyed a reputation for many years past. Mr. Langtry trains an orchestra at Hutt Valley Boys' High School, and Mr. Dobson at New Plymouth Boys' High School trains both junior and senior orchestras. In these and other schools organisations of this kind do much to strengthen and brighten the corporate life. "Percussion Bands" are formed in many infant and junior class rooms, and mouth-organ and fife bands are not unknown; but we are still a good way behind America in the matter of popularising the school band. The broadcast of the Hawera Orchestra should prove an impetus in the right direction.

AFTER his death his body was placed in a rich shrine in the church, and though at one time the portable shrine was removed to Glas-tonbury, it was brought back again to be an object of veneration to generations of pilgrims.

Many of the kings of England in the Norman time made the pilgrimage to the shrine of St. David.

In honour of the Saint the place was named with his name, and he was accepted by the people of Wales as their patron saint.

Here, then, is the rough framework of his life, a life spent in leading the wild tribesmen of Wales into the paths of holy peace, in a very dark period of history.

Of the miracles wrought at his shrine I will say nothing, for I can only see the greater miracle of a true man of God in a wild and bloody age. And he has become the rallying point for men of all creeds in Wales, because even in this crude narrative you cannot fail to see that he loved his country, and worked for the healing and the cleansing of the nation.—J. Kyrle Fletcher, in "Radio Times."



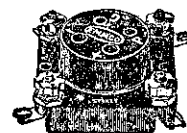
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