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First Drama Attempt Scoops Top Award!

One of the winners of the main literary prizes at the Urdd National Eisteddfod at Cardiff Bay has some sound advice for those thinking of competing for one of the major titles at Ceredigion's Urdd National Eisteddfod at Llanerchaeron next May: "start putting pen to paper now!"

Gruffudd Eifion Owen from Aberystwyth, who was awarded the Drama Medal at Cardiff Bay for his first attempt at creating a play, explains: "I left it late, and was under pressure at the last minute trying to get the work in by the deadline. It paid off for me, but I would really recommend anyone thinking of competing next year to buckle down now. Start drafting some ideas, and planning the work, but above all take the bull by the horn and give it a go. I regret not having the confidence to compete sooner, as I only have another year left to compete under 25."

Gruffudd, originally from Pwllheli, was awarded joint third for the chair at the Urdd National Eisteddfod in 2008. He is nearing the completion of his MPhil research at Aberystwyth University, and his work will be based on the late playwright Wil Sam Jones' plays. Gruffudd also works as a translator at the Students Guild in Aberystwyth.

"I was fortunate enough to meet the late Wil Sam back in 2007, and he was an inspiration to me. When I started creating my play for the Eisteddfod, I followed a similar route to Wil Sam - the words and dialect came first, and the plot (or lack of it!) and characters followed. The play has three characters, named Guto, Sol and Eifion in the script, although they never refer to each other by those names. It is plausible that they do not know or have forgotten their real names. (Guto, Sol and Eifion being variations of my own name, and therefore suitable labels that were at hand for three nameless characters.) The play follows their interactions, as they attempt to recollect past memories and bring a sense of purpose to their existence. The play is called "Nialwch" which could mean 'desert, or barrenness' or it could also mean rubbish or a collection of worthless objects or attachments. The first meaning reflects the characters' physical situation, whilst the others hint at their personal and spiritual situation."

Gruffudd is also a poet, and is a member of the Talwrn y Beirdd team, 'Y Cwps'. His interests include choral singing, mountaineering, politics and... juggling!

Of winning, Gruffudd said: "I was shocked when the news came that I had won the drama medal. I had to keep it a secret for a couple of weeks until the spotlight was on me at the ceremony. I feel

that I am very much an apprentice, learning my trade, and think we are very fortunate in Wales that we have the Urdd platform to test our creative abilities. I certainly hope that I can continue to write, be it as a hobby or as a career. Winning this award has definitely boosted my confidence and made me much more aware of the possibilities that could follow.”

Details of all Ceredigion’s competitions 2010 are now available from the Syllabus Programme, available from Welsh bookshops.