

Introduction to day one remarks

John Lloyd-Jones, CCW Chairman,
Wednesday 2nd April, 13.55 - 14.00.

It gives me great pleasure to chair this opening session of the Vine Conference on Inspirational Nature dealing as it does with harnessing passion, inspiration and creativity and I am so pleased that there is nothing in the Conference dealing with Sound Governance, Corporate Vision or even Science!

I am especially pleased about that last item because you are looking at somebody who has never had a biology or botany lesson in his life because in school when it came to a choice between Biology or Ancient Greek, I chose Greek because I considered Thucydides's History of the Peloponnesian Wars considerably more interesting than the life cycle of the amoeba.

As a farmer, my working life was ruled by seasons. How apt therefore that we are meeting in spring, when literally life is bursting open all around us. But nature contains many features, not all of them benign. Dic Jones, a famous Welsh poet and also a farmer has written a wonderful ode to Spring in the complex Welsh poetry form.

He starts off by describing the small white bones of animals who have died during the long cold winter and are blown here and there as "Teganau trist y gwynt a'r rhew", the sad toys of ice and wind. He goes on in a chilling passage which captures the reality and rawness of predation, "Ar hen fran, fry a'r y rhos, a'm eu hawr yn amaros", whilst in the trees the silent crows await their turn.

But he ends his ode on a wonderful burst of optimism, "Ond gwanwyn y gwynnau sy'n agor eu stor or drysor ar hyd yr oesau", but nature has opened its store of treasures down the ages. This is a difficult line to translate because it equates spring to harvest whilst we think of harvests in terms of autumn. However we farmers know that it's the work that we do in spring that determines the success of the autumn harvest.

Therefore it gives me particular pleasure to welcome the store of treasures that is awaiting us in this Conference.

John Lloyd-Jones

Chairman
Countryside Council for Wales.