

THE END OF THE ROAD FOR THE WELSH SHORT STORY?

Concern is growing that the Welsh language short story is in decline as a literary form and that a new and specific campaign aimed at young people is necessary to revive it.

This year is the 25th anniversary of the death of Kate Roberts, the Queen of Welsh literature whose short stories have been compared to those of the Russian writer Chekov. The Chairman of the Kate Roberts Heritage Centre, the Head of the School of Welsh at the University of Bangor and the Director of the National Writing Centre at Llanystumdwy are all of the opinion that now is the time to try and re-create an interest in the short story, especially amongst young people.

“Even though we had worthy winners in the recent Kate Roberts Short Story Competition there were precious few competitors, and no-one competed in the category for those between 17 and 25,” said Dewi Tomos, Chairman of the Heritage Centre. “You can imagine that this was a particular disappointment to all of us who are trying to preserve Kate Roberts' literary heritage.”

Professor Peredur Lynch from Bangor University believes that the decline of the short story is directly related to the recent increased interest in the novel and that the short story no longer appeals to young writer. He believes that a well directed initiative is needed to revive the short story's fortunes.

“They say that there is novel inside everyone. But is there a short story? What has happened to the short story in Welsh at the beginning of the 21st century? Is it spurned as a literary form now by our main authors? Isn't it about time we re-directed some of the fantastic vitality that there is today regarding the novel towards the short story? “

Sally Baker also believes that direct action is needed to revive interest in the craft of writing short stories in Welsh.

“It seems that in the last few years the short story in Welsh has drifted into the doldrums. Tŷ Newydd, with its partner Academi, is delighted to be working alongside Cae'r Gors and the University of Bangor in order to nurture new young writing talent and to revitalise this important genre”.

Representatives of all three institutions will now meet to try and resolve the challenge practically by contacting organisations in Wales that work with young people in order to see if it is possible to redress the situation before it is too late.

NOTE TO EDITORS

Interviews can be arranged by contacting Cae'r Gors on 01286 831 715