

Ebrill 2005

April 2005

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Welsh Society Newsletter

Cylchgrawn Cymraeg

WELSH SOCIETY
VANCOUVER

Officers

President:	
Jane Byrne	(604) 732-5448
Vice-President:	
Barrie Hancock	888-9541
Secretary:	
Eifion Williams	469-4904
Treasurer:	
Gaynor Evans	271-3134
Membership Secretary:	
Heather Davies	734-5500
Immediate Past President:	
Tecwyn Roberts	464-2760

Directors

Eric Davies
 Allan Hunter
 Mary Lewis
 Lynn Owens-Whalen
 David Llewelyn Williams

Contacts

Building Committee:	
Eric Davies	583-3918
Cambrian Circle Singers:	
Nerys Haqq	278-8978
Church Service:	
Ann Roberts	987-6996
Rentals:	
Abe Latif	434-3150
Social Events Committee:	
Mary Lewis	331-1573
Welsh Folk Dancing:	
Gaynor Evans	271-3134
Welsh-Speaking Evening:	
Ann Roberts	987-6996
Women's Auxiliary:	

Newsletter

Editor:
David Llewelyn Williams **737-0305**
williams@physics.ubc.ca

The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

This edition is rearranged so the first two pages may be in colour. The picture on the front is from a painting entitled "Taith Aeafol" (Winter's Journey) and it shows Tren Bach y Mwmbwls (The Little Mumbles Train, Swansea).

The events surrounding St. David's Day (Gwyl Dewi Sant) were appropriately filled with 'hwyl' and a good time was had by all. Special mention should be made of the generous donation of \$3000 towards the roof repair, received from the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir.

We were saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Milt and Betty Morgan's son Stephen. Our hearts go out to them at this difficult time and we offer our sincere condolences at their loss. A Celebration of Stephen's Life was held last Friday in Coquitlam; several members attended.

Jane Byrne and Eifion Williams traveled to Wales to attend the Inauguration of their sister, Dr. Mair Williams, as High Sheriff of Glamorgan. I understand it was an impressive ceremony.

As announced at the St. David's Day Dinner, our Society should take great pride that one of our long-time members, John Pritchard, has been chosen as Leader of the Overseas Welsh at the Eisteddfod this year.

Finally for those of you who have not yet sent in your membership dues, do send them in to our Membership Secretary, Heather Davies, at the Cambrian Hall. Regular Dues are \$35, Family \$60, Seniors/Students \$20 and Out of Town (50 miles or more) are \$20.

David Llewelyn Williams
Forthcoming Events

April 6th, Executive Meeting 7.30 pm
April 10th, Church Service 11.00 am
April 13th, General Meeting 7.30 pm
April 18th, Welsh Speaking 11.30 am

Mondays: Walking Group 10 am
 Thursdays: Welsh Folk Dancers
 Fridays: Cambrian Circle Singers
 Saturdays: Red Dragon opens 8.30 pm

Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir:
 "The Celtic Experience" with the Delta Police Pipe Band and Blackthorne. South Delta Baptist Church, 56th St. Tsawwassen, 7.30 pm Friday, April 8th.

Vancouver Orpheus Choir
 Joint Concert with Nota Bene Choir, Dunbar Heights United Church, 3525 West 24th Ave. Sat. April 16th at 7.30 pm.

Advanced Notices

The Annual Welsh Society Golf Tournament will be held, as last year, at Poppy Estates Golf Course, on Saturday July 16th. Reserve this date; last year's event was even recorded in 'Yr Enfys'.

Nerys Haqq and Gaynor Evans are thinking ahead to the next Children's Christmas Party. Perhaps you could let them know if you have children or grandchildren who are likely to wish to attend. Those 12 and under will receive gifts from Santa but older children would be most welcome to participate and help out with the games and activities. Let Nerys or Gaynor know.

**Send Me Anywhere You Like Lord,
But Not to Africa!**

As a boy, I thought missionaries were special people, sent far away for a long time. When Delyth and I began to teach at Pacific Academy, I learned that we all can be missionaries.

A patron has blessed Pacific Academy with grants that covered all the capital costs of our school building. No money went into maintenance, staffing, or programs. We had to make the project work or the buildings would become a White Elephant. Our success can be measured by our usual waiting list being several hundred students.

I believe the outreach program is the root of our success. We reached out to third-world countries before we were judged successful at home; we didn't reach out after we became successful. God's order according to Luke 6:38 is, "*Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.*"

Note "shall men give" not money floating down from heaven. Try it, but watch out! It can be tough to receive!

Despite our patron's generosity, we still raise funds like any other independent school. We raise thousands of dollars each year for educational projects in third-world countries. Nothing is spent on organizational costs. It all gets to the targeted areas: feeding, clothing, educating, and providing medical care for our sponsored students and their families in Haiti and Uganda.

Del and I began by taking groups of students to Nicaragua in our Spring Breaks. Then we went to Mexico for two years to forge links with a school there.

We raised our own support from relatives and friends. Unfortunately the school in Mexico was populated with the children of professional people. That's not what outreach to needy countries is all about, so we were reassigned. You've guessed it! To Africa!

We landed in early September, 1999, at the infamous Entebbe Airport, an hour from Kampala, Uganda's capital city. The hulk of the hijacked airplane of the historic Israeli raid was still where it was abandoned, on the airport perimeter.

We loaded our luggage onto the project's pick-up. All items in the pick-up were tarped and lashed, so they could not be snatched in slow traffic. The air conditioning wasn't working, but even in the Equatorial heat, windows were only lowered when we were driving at speed. Personal items in the cab were all within snatching range in a slow-moving vehicle.

The road to Kampala was unbelievably rough, and unbreathably dusty, although efforts were under way to renovate the airport to city highway. In the capital, buildings were either bombed out from the wars in the previous ten years (Idi Amin's regime), rickety and ill rebuilt, or luxurious first class hotels. Some of the city streets were still bomb-cratered according to my rear end!

On the three-and-a-half hour drive to Kibaale, we caught glimpses of Lake Victoria, the world's second-largest lake and the source of the legendary River Nile. We crossed the Equator and stood in an archway with one foot in the Southern Hemisphere and one in the Northern Hemisphere. A little man scuttled out to sell us a certificate proving we'd actually crossed the equator. He withdrew when he saw the frequent-crosser champions, our compatriots from Kibaale.

Passing through one-industry villages that sold only drums, or stools, or woven baskets, we heard the word “Musungu” for the first time. That is the Swahili word for a white man. It describes the first European explorers: people who wandered around the countryside with nothing better to do than wander around the countryside.

In Raaki, we started the final leg of the journey over red dirt roads to the trading settlement of Kibaale. Close to the borders of Tanzania, Rwanda, this transportation crossroads was the focus of the earliest cases of AIDS, or Slim Disease as the Africans call it, because its early symptoms can be mistaken for extreme malnutrition. At one time, every third Ugandan was infected. The country’s excellent program of AIDS education is the model followed by other smitten countries. The rate of infection is down, mainly because the earliest victims have all succumbed to the disease.

About ten years ago the first Canadians came to Raaki to do something about the results of the epidemic. The children orphaned by AIDS were the object of a rescue effort mounted by a Vancouver church. The effort was well-planned and well-carried out, but in the culture of Raaki, it was the extended family’s function to take care of orphans. We met families with up to 5 children of their own and another 6 or 7 children of dead brothers and sisters being looked after under the same thatched roof, in the same mud hut.

For the past ten years, Pacific Academy has provided all but the physical shelter for those orphans. Now, over 800 students attend our elementary, secondary, and trade schools.

The project has no electricity except for what we can get from our generators, when they are working, between dark at 7PM and, lights out at 10PM. There is no running water or other modern conveniences, as we provide the services necessary for the education of the whole body, soul, and spirit of our wards.

One day a student turned up selling the Kampala paper. To our amazement, it was that day’s edition. Usually papers were three days old. Here was a historic leap forward in communications. We returned with a group of PA students about two years ago to learn of further progress. A mile or so up the road our director could get a strong enough signal to contact Kampala on her cell phone.

Providing for over 800 students must be a mark of success. Unfortunately, sometimes, we feel less than effective. One weekend a student died, probably poisoned; a lady we had visited just a day or two before, succumbed to AIDS; and a tiny baby, whose mother had walked the 17 km from her home to our clinic, whom we had rushed to the Raaki hospital by pick-up truck, died in the receiving nurse’s arms.

Another time, we saw our two nurses hi-tailing it towards the workers’ complex. Steven, one of our workers was having an asthma attack on a windy day when the air was opaque with red soil dust. A timely injection carried him through. After returning to Canada, we heard that Steven had another attack while visiting his family in Jinja, Uganda’s second city. The local clinic had no medication to help him. He survived in the boonies of Kibaale, but died in the city.

Recently I had an e-mail from our Kibaale director, who had written to say that my sponsored student, Vincent, had been hired at the school on completing

his teacher training. In February of this year he started an adult literary program in the village.

Delyth and I visited him at his teachers' college. "What would you like for a special treat?" we asked. "I'd like a boiled egg," he replied, so we took him to the village store for that treat. To know he'd succeeded beyond what would have been possible without sponsorship was worth more than the dollars and cents we had sent on his behalf over the years. Now that he is an independent earner for himself and his family, we've greedily sponsored two more students. Maybe one

of them will be the Ugandan prime minister one day!

These are the things we remember, not the snakes, not the marching ants, not the boiling and filtering of rainwater. These and a million other experiences came our way because God didn't listen when we told Him, "Oh, no! Not Africa!"

[This is a shortened version of an account given by John Cann at the Sunday service in March of his and Delyth's visit to Africa and their efforts through the outreach program of the Pacific Academy to improve the lot of over 800 students in Uganda. Editor.]

St. David's Day Dinner

Our annual St. David's Day Dinner was held at the Cambrian Hall on March 5th. President Jane Byrne chaired the evening's proceedings. The Guest of Honour was Mr. James Rawlinson, British Consul General in Vancouver. He read a message from Rhodri Morgan, First Minister for Wales, and proposed the toast to the Queen.

Numerous messages were also received from various kindred Welsh Societies across Canada and other parts of the world, some as far afield as New Zealand, Australia and England. Messages were also received from Canadian government leaders, most of whom referred specifically to the past year's Cambrian Hall 75th Anniversary events and especially the Society's efforts to raise funds to repair the building.

Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson said, "The longevity of your club attest to the vitality of its past and current members and I commend you for your contributions." In his message, the Prime Minister urged members to "take great pride in the contributions Canadians of Welsh descent have made to building a strong, prosperous and inclusive Canada." Iona Campagnolo, B.C. Lieutenant Governor, also sent a message commending "all those volunteers whose dedication to this memorable heritage includes embarking on a

new project to restore and sustain this significant historic site."

A Toast to Canada was proposed by Neville Thomas and a Toast to Wales by Dr. Richard Thomas. Music was provided throughout the evening by Bowen Island harpist Ruta Yawney. Community singing was led by Lynn Owens-Whalen, after which members and guests adjourned to the Red Dragon for post-dinner socializing. Dinner arrangements were organized by Jane Byrne, Gaynor Evans and Heather Davies and the food was catered by Jordan's.

Eifion Williams

From The Right Honourable Rhodri Morgan, First Minister for Wales:

On behalf on the people of Wales, I am delighted to send you our best wishes for St. David's Day 2005. As we celebrate our Patron Saint's Day we should not forget the hundreds and thousands suffering in countries around the Indian Ocean because of the December 26th tsunami. I am immensely proud of the generous response of the people of Wales to that tragedy, and of all the fund-raising activities that have taken place, from the wonderful mega-concert at the Millenium Stadium to the hundreds of local events the length and breadth of Wales. It is also a time to reflect on a momentous period for Wales and the Welsh people. In November last year we saw the opening of the Wales

Millennium Centre, a 100 million pound multi-purpose centre for the performing arts which stands as a tribute to Wales' new-found confidence. It sends a clear message to the world that Wales stands boldly at the cutting edge of artistic excellence and innovation in design.

Later this year, next to the Wales Millennium Centre, another landmark building, the permanent home for the National Assembly for Wales will open. Using traditional Welsh materials and designed to provide a model of sustainable construction, it is perhaps fitting that this symbol of devolution in Wales will open in the year when the capital city, Cardiff, is celebrating its centenary as a city, and also its 50th anniversary as capital of Wales. Swansea will also see the opening of the new National Industrial and Maritime Museum, which will tell the true story of Wales, the world's first industrial nation. It is not surprising that an increasing number of tourists, investors, students and media VIP's are coming to Wales to see at first hand the tremendous changes going on in our country. Visits by representatives of overseas governments are coming in increasing numbers to find out for themselves about the strides we are making since devolution. Wales nearly always exceeds their expectations. Gradually but steadily Wales is ceasing to be Europe's best kept secret.

As part of our own arrangements to mark St. David's Day this year we are organizing a number of events overseas, including Brussels, New York and Dubai. In London we will host an event for the overseas diplomatic corps and journalists to encourage more to visit Wales and see how we are turning our vision for the future into reality. But we would also encourage your help in spreading the word about Wales and all it has to offer.

I wish you a happy St. David's Day.
Dydd Gwyl Dewi hapus a
llwyddiannus dros ben i chi gyd.

John Pritchard Honoured by the National Eisteddfod

John Pritchard will be honoured this coming August at the National Eisteddfod to be held at Y Faenol, between Bangor and Caernarfon.

Every year the Eisteddfod devotes one afternoon to welcoming Welsh exiles from all over the world. The exiles are represented by Wales International (Undeb Cymru a'r Byd), an organization which since 1948 has linked Wales with people of Welsh descent and friends of Wales throughout the world. This year, John has been appointed by the National Eisteddfod Committee and Wales International as Leader of the Overseas Welsh (Arweinydd y Cymry Tramor). His duties will include leading the exiles into the Eisteddfod Pavilion and responding to the Eisteddfod's welcoming address.

John and Llinos have been frequent visitors to the Eisteddfod since coming to Canada over forty years ago. At the St. David's Day Dinner, our President, Jane Byrne congratulated John on his selection. He received a standing ovation from those present. We can be very proud to have a long-time member of our Society so honoured.

Eifion Williams

St. David's Day Evening

Members gathered in the Red Dragon on the evening of March 1st to socialize and celebrate St. David's Day. John Pritchard began the evening with a few words about the life of St. David. Meanwhile Heather Davies and Mary Lewis, attired in Welsh costumes distributed portions of leeks to everyone. A toast to St. David was proposed, the leeks were eaten and we all sang "Hen Wlad fy Nhadau". Neville Thomas read a poem by Eifion Wyn entitled 'Os wyt Gymro' (If you're Welsh) which exhorts you to observe the Day and to honour St. David. Your editor provided an English translation so the verses were read alternately in English and Welsh. This was followed by the Crowning of the Bard ceremony won by last year's winner, John Pritchard. One of his entries involved completing a limerick given the first line:
*A Methodist preacher called Glyn
Went out for a drink at The Inn.
One over the eight
Assured his fate;
The deacons went after his skin!!*
We were then treated to Cawl Cenin and Welsh cakes and sang some more under the direction of Nerys Haqq and Lucy Sorensen at the piano. As the evening progressed, we were joined by members of the VWMC who had been rehearsing upstairs. They were persuaded to give a rendition of *Myfanwy*, which provided a wonderful atmosphere. We were later joined by members of the Orpheus choir who had come from their rehearsal at John Oliver and the singing continued. A spirited performance by the Morris Men brought the evening to a close. But by now the hour was late and many had left

so we do hope to hear more from this talented group in the future.

Special thanks to Neville Thomas for arranging the evening, to Kathy Thomas for the Cawl Cenin, to all who supplied the Welsh cakes, to Heather and Gaynor Evans for decorating the Hall and to Wynford Owen for the bar.

Enid Lewis Memorial Plaque

Enid's children have recently had the plaque pictured below placed on a bench at Coal Harbour Park. At present the bench is the last one situated on the East side of the walk, directly in line with the temporary float plane dock. The bench position is also temporary and will be moved upon completion of the new Conference Centre. Members walking in the area may wish to visit it.



Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir Silver Jubilee Concert

Ninety-one choristers entertained a sellout crowd of 700 people at St. Patrick's Church on Saturday, February 26 to celebrate the choir's 25th anniversary. The program – which included solos by Music Director Jonathan Quick and former VWMC soloist Andy Hillhouse – was a great success from the point of view of both performers and audience. Jonathan's rendition of *Myfanwy*, in Welsh, reduced more than a few listeners to tears. The occasion was made even more memorable by the fact that the choir's first Music Director, Denis Whyte, and its first accompanist, Margaret Airey, were in attendance. Three founding members of the choir, Gwyn Evans, David Gilder and Clive Jones, still sing with the ensemble and were introduced to thunderous applause.

In recognition of the support for the choir by the Vancouver Welsh Society, whose Cambrian Hall is used for choir rehearsals, the VWMC donated \$3,000 to the Society towards the repair of the Hall roof.
(abstracted from the VMWC newsletter)

Your editor accepted the donation with grateful thanks on behalf of the Society and expressed the wish that the relationship between the Choir and the Society would continue to flourish for many years to come. Yes, indeed, I can attest that this was a memorable event!

To acknowledge this significant anniversary and in thanks for their support, the Welsh Society hosted a reception following the concert in the Red Dragon. It was a most convivial occasion highlighted by the gift of a Welsh Flag to the choir and the cutting of a special cake suitably inscribed with the words 'Congratulations on your Silver Jubilee VWMC'.

To all those who worked so diligently in preparing the food and running the bar and especially to Neville Thomas who organized the reception, we offer our sincere thanks.



Neville Thomas presenting the Welsh Flag to Allan Dahlo. (Don Blake Photo)



Gwyn Evans and Al Dahlo cutting the cake. (Neville Thomas photo). Cake in all its glory (Don Blake photo)

