

Chwefror a Mawrth 2005

February and March 2005

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Welsh Society Newsletter

Cylchgrawn Cymraeg

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VANCOUVER

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Newsletter

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The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

Please take note of the various forthcoming events listed opposite. We hope they will attract your eager participation. The first event, a film starring Ioan Gruffudd, should prove a draw for his many admirers. Note that Ioan is presently playing the role of Mr. Fantastic in a science fiction film called "The Fantastic Four" which is being shot in Vancouver. Just enter Ioan Gruffudd onto Google. As you will doubtless recall from previous Newsletters, he is a committed Welsh speaker and I am sure that some of the Society's activities should be of interest to him if he can spare the time.

If you are like me and haven't yet renewed your membership, please do so by sending it to Heather Davies at the Cambrian Hall. I didn't include another copy of the form here but the dues have not changed since last year, although additional donations to the roof fund are welcomed. We are pleased to say that this fund is growing steadily and we would particularly like to acknowledge a most generous donation of \$1000 from Mr. Emrys Evans. Diolch yn fawr yn wir. The Hall is a symbol of the Welsh community's contributions to Canada and its preservation is of paramount importance. We also understand that Don and Liz Murray shared their recent winnings at the "Pig & Whistle" with the Society! May your good fortune continue!

David Llewelyn Williams

A motorist was mailed a picture of his car speeding through an automated radar trap in Winnipeg. A \$40 speeding ticket was enclosed. Being cute, he sent the police department a picture of \$40. The police responded with another mailed photo of handcuffs!

The card on the front is of Harlech Castle sent to me by John and LLinos Pritchard in 1966!

EVAN ROBERTS AND THE WELSH REVIVAL

One hundred years ago this past September a well-known itinerant evangelist with the Methodist Forward Movement named Seth Joshua began a week of religious meetings in New Quay and Newcastle Emlyn, Cardiganshire. On Tuesday September 27th Seth Joshua recorded in his journal: "A large number were blessed this evening. Some students received blessing and confessed salvation. The Lord will certainly move this place. The yearning is here among the people."

One of these was young Evan Roberts, beginning his first term of ministerial training at Newcastle Emlyn. The next day Evan and some of his fellow students attended another meeting at Blaenannerch and it was during this meeting that Evan Roberts became convinced that God had sent him a message. In his own words:
"The salvation of the human soul was solemnly impressed upon me. I felt ablaze with the desire to go through the length and breadth of Wales to tell of the Saviour."

These events in Cardiganshire triggered a remarkable religious revival that spread throughout Wales and eventually parts of England and North America.

Evan Roberts grew up in Loughor, a coal-mining village between Llanelli and Swansea. He followed his father into the coal mine and later apprenticed as a blacksmith. He did not go through a sudden conversion in Newcastle Emlyn. Rather, the occasion reinforced his long-held view that he had been called by God for a

special mission. He had always been a deeply religious young man, playing an active role in his chapel, Moriah, Loughor, as a Sunday School teacher, prayer leader and avid student of the Bible. His Cardiganshire experience confirmed his long-held belief that God was commanding him to save the souls of his compatriots. So it was to Moriah that Evan Roberts returned for a week of nightly meetings. After a slow start, news of the meetings spread and by the end of the week they were attracting overflow crowds from all the churches in the area as well as non church-goers caught up in the excitement and religious fervour.

Evan Roberts was not a preacher in the usual Welsh tradition. His tactic was to underplay his own role and to encourage and facilitate the opportunity for people to confess their sins and accept Jesus in their hearts. A description of one of his meetings was published by a reporter in the Western Mail on Saturday 12th November.

"The meeting at Brynteg Congregational Church in Gorseinon on Thursday night was attended by those remarkable scenes which have made previous meetings memorable in the life history of so many of the inhabitants of the district. The proceedings commenced at 7 o'clock and they lasted without a break until 4.30 o'clock on Friday morning. During the whole of this time the congregation was under the influence of deep religious fervour and exaltation. Mr. Roberts is a man of rather striking appearance. There is nothing theatrical about his preaching. He does not try to terrify his hearers, and eternal torment finds no place in his theology. Everything here was left to the spontaneous impulse of the moment. The preacher did not remain in his usual seat. For the most part he walked up and down the aisles, open Bible in hand, exhorting one, encouraging another, and kneeling

with a third to implore blessing from the throne of grace.

A young woman rose to give out a hymn. While it was being sung several people dropped down from their seats as if they had been struck, and commenced crying for pardon. Then from another part of the chapel would be heard the resonant voice of a young man reading a portion of the scripture. All this time Mr. Roberts went in and out among the congregation offering kindly words of advice to kneeling penitents. Then he would ask the congregation to join him in the prayer "Anfon yr Yspryd yn awr, er mwyn Iesu Grist. Amen." (Send the Holy Spirit now for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen). The congregation would then joyously sing

"Diolch iddo, diolch iddo,
Byth am gofio llwch y llawr."

The religious fervour aroused by the meetings spread throughout the area. It is claimed that many pubs went bankrupt when so many men gave up alcohol. It was also said that the pit ponies underground refused to obey the miners because the men stopped cursing and the poor animals could no longer understand them.

After the events in Loughor, Roberts was called to preach at Bryn Seion, Aberdare and from there went on to carry the mission to the Rhondda Valley, Pontycymmer, Bridgend, Merthyr and Abergwynfi, arousing the same fervour wherever he went. Other preachers capitalized on Roberts's success and carried the Revival throughout Wales. In Ammanford Seth Joshua could not believe the intensity of the religious awakening. In Bethesda, North Wales, the Reverend Hugh Hughes drew the

same response. The Nantlle Valley became the centre for the evangelism of Evan Lloyd Jones, while the Reverend R.B. Jones held a mission at Rhos. All led to a flood of conversions. In Egryn, near Harlech, one Mary Jones, a farmer's wife, brought over 70 of her neighbours to faith in Christ.

The Revival swept towns and villages throughout Wales. The London Times sent W.T. Stead, one of its most famous correspondents, to report on the event. In Wales alone, over 100,000 were said to have been 'saved'. The Revival also spread to other parts of Britain and to the USA, where the 'Welsh Revival' is credited with boosting the Pentecostal and Evangelical movements that have lasted to this day.

By the end of 1905 Evan Roberts was apparently burned out. Broken in health he retired from public view and died in relative obscurity in 1951. With Evan Roberts' absence the Revival also gradually petered out.

It should be remembered that Wales has a long tradition of religious revivals going back to the mid-eighteenth century. In fact, several of those who attended the meetings in 1904-1905 testified to having been converted at the previous revival in 1859. Religious fervour was nothing new to Welsh worshippers and great preachers were the celebrities of the day. Evan Roberts, despite his youth and unorthodox methods, is said to have been very charismatic and became a celebrity in his own right.

It was also no accident that the Revival first took hold in the South Wales mining valleys. Life in the coal-mining towns and villages was fairly bleak. Frequent strikes, rapacious mine-owners, an uncaring government, poor wages and bad housing led men to drink and family neglect. The

Revival gave these men and women hope and a reason to redirect their lives in a more positive direction. It should also be remembered that the inhabitants of the mining areas were only one or two generations removed from the traditional chapel-centred towns and villages of rural Wales. Evan Roberts was rekindling the traditional religious culture of Wales's pre-industrial society.

As for whether or not it could happen again, the answer is doubtful. Many evangelical groups are using the centenary of the Revival in an attempt to rekindle the same religious fervour. But in an era where one chapel a month is closing in Wales this is quite a challenge.

Eifion Williams

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

This letter is addressed to those Members who visit Wales infrequently or not at all. It is about the almost complete bilingual signage that now covers the land – a silent revolution. My wife and I visit the UK every five years to be with family and friends and our last and final visit was this Fall just past. The signage transition in Wales from blanket English to bilingualism has taken a quarter century – or a third of a person’s lifetime – to evolve and was so gradual that, presumably, it did not become newsworthy to an inhabitant or the media. But to visitors like us the change is dramatic and a delight !

We noticed that in south-east Wales, where Welsh is less spoken, that road signage had English first and Welsh in second place, but elsewhere in places visited the reverse positioning was shown, thus ‘Y Trallwng/Welshpool’. Even cars were marked ‘Heddlu’ and not ‘Police’. Public bodies, such as government agencies, municipalities, post offices, and the like, all carry bilingual literature and signage. Even banks have bilingual signs, such as ‘Mortgages’ and ‘Enquiries’, so presumably there are staff on hand to speak Welsh to clients.

The two photos span 27 years and witness the extremities of change. The first, of a defaced unilingual traffic sign, was taken in 1977 in my boyhood village of Pontfadog, Dyffryn Ceiriog, Denbighshire; the second is of 2004 in Fishguard.

David Ll. Davies, Kamloops, B.C.

Editor’s Note:

David drew my attention to two recent articles in ‘Ninnau’ regarding the direct action campaign in Aberystwyth by Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg to extend the Welsh Language Act so that it covers the private sector. What’s Burger King in Welsh?

Dear Editor,

The book "Lion Rampant" which you mentioned in our Newsletter interests me greatly after reading the name "Owain ap Cadwgan". About one mile south of 'my' village of Aberarth was where Castell Cadwgan was built (now long taken by the sea). Aberarth was the seat of Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, a local prince of some importance between the two local castles of Cadwgan and Castell Dinerth.

Ieuan Lampshire Jones

Editor's Notes: Ieuan included an old map of the region showing all the castles of Cardiganshire. Most, like the two mentioned were Norman Motte (moat) and Bailey Castles (Cestyll Pridd) and thus no match for the sea. He also included a reference which states "Between Aberarth and Aberaeron, on the coast, is the site of Castell Cadwgan, one of the castles of that lax and unfortunate 12th century prince, Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, whose son Owain abducted Nest, the glamorous wife of Gerald of Pembroke and let loose a series of feuds and petty wars that were to trouble South-West Wales for thirty years." Richard Hartnup of the University of Wales suggests that Dinerth is from Dinarth - the fort on the Arth. Certainly no-one would name a castle Di-nerth! (without strength). I am indebted to Ieuan for all this interesting material and I must buy the book !

St. Dwynwen's Day

Love is in the air, hearts are beating as the Welsh Language Board celebrates 'Diwrnod Santes Dwynwen' with a 'Give me a Kiss' campaign on January 25th. (Damn it, I missed it and I'm sure it's better than eating Haggis!) BBC presenter Eleri Sion said, "In this day and age where we hear so much about war, cruelty and tragedy, celebrating a day specifically aimed at showing love is something that must be welcomed." Meri Huws, Chair of the Welsh Language Board welcomed the campaign, "We already know that the Welsh are very romantic. This campaign centred on Dwynwen the patron saint of Welsh lovers offers a fantastic opportunity to celebrate and be proud of our language and culture." According to legend Dwynwen was in love with a young man named Maelon, who spurned her when she refused to sleep with him. (It's the same the whole world over!) Dwynwen prayed to God to free her from her love for him and drank a magic drink. Maelon drank the same drink and was turned into a block of ice. Dwynwen was given three wishes by God, she wished for Maelon to be thawed, that she would never fall in love again, and to be the Patron Saint of Welsh lovers. She spent the rest of her life as a nun. The church at Llanddwyn is consecrated to Dwynwen, and there is a tradition that lovers go to the well on the island to bless their love. (from the Welsh Language Board)

Forthcoming Events

Friday February 18th at 7.30 pm in the Lower Hall there will be a presentation of the Welsh language film "Solomon and Gaenor", starring Ioan Gruffudd . It is set during the anti-Jewish riots in Tredegar in 1911. The subtitles will be in English. It was nominated in the "Best Foreign Language Film" category in 2000.

Saturday February 26th at 8.00 pm in St. Patrick's Catholic Church, 2881 Main Street, the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir will hold their **Silver Jubilee Concert**. Admission is \$20 and \$15 for seniors and students. Following the concert a reception for the choir will be held in the Red Dragon. All are welcome to attend.

St. David's Day Dinner

The Annual St. David's Day Dinner of the Welsh Society will take place at the Cambrian Hall on Saturday March 5th. Doors will open at 6 pm and Dinner will be served at 7 pm. Consul General James Rawlinson will be the Guest of Honour and will propose the toast to the Queen. The toast to Canada will be proposed by Neville Thomas and the toast to Wales by Dr. Richard Thomas. The event will be catered by Jordans and the company will be entertained by harpist Ruta Yawnei. Please reserve early by contacting Gaynor Evans at 604-271-3134. Tickets are unchanged from last year at \$35 each.

A report from the Orpheus:

A funny thing happened at our last benefit concert. No it wasn't the crowd, the location or even the weather. This church had something that I'd never seen before; it wasn't the ornate woodwork, stained windows, carved pulpit, choir loft or even an organ. It was a busy kitchen with lots of people helping to make their Saturday night meal. This was at the Bethel Church in Richmond and they were putting on part of their recovery program for addicted men and women. It must have been good - I saw one of our tenors checking out the hot dogs. During the concert I saw people peeking at us from a doorway off the kitchen. What a Saturday treat - good food and good music!

Oh, by the way, **our next concert** is at Queens Avenue United Church in New Westminster with the Maple Leaf Singers, on **February 26th at 7.30 pm**. Come tune up for St. David's Day. T.M.

Tuesday March 1st, St. David's Day will be celebrated at 7.30 pm in the Lower Hall. Cawl Cenin and Welsh Cakes will be served. As mentioned in our previous Newsletter, we encourage members to demonstrate their literary skills by attempting one or more of the competitions listed in the E-steddfod. The worthy victor will be the Crowned Bard of the evening. Only one set of entries has been received to date

February to March 2005
Chwefror hyd Mawrth 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
13 Church Service 11.00 Te Bach	14 Walking Group 10 am Mondays	15	16	17 Welsh Folk Dancers	18 'Solomon & Gaenor' 7.30 pm	19 Red Dragon 8.30 pm
20	21 Welsh Speaking Meeting 11.30	22	23	24 Welsh Folk Dancers	25 Cambrian Circle Singers	26 8.00 pm VWMC Red Dragon Reception Following
27	28	1 St. David's Day Evening 7.30 pm	2 Executive Meeting 7.30 pm	3 Welsh Folk Dancers	4 Cambrian Circle Singers	5 St David's Day Dinner 6.00 for 7.00
6	7	8	9	10 Welsh Folk Dancers	11 Cambrian Circle Singers	12 Red Dragon 8.30 pm
13 Church Service 11.00 Te Bach	14	15	16	17 Welsh Folk Dancers	18 Cambrian Circle Singers	19 8.30 pm Red Dragon 7.00 pm OrpheusChoir Victoria