

THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Mawrth i Ebrill

March to April

2011

2011

Society Newsletter – Cylchgrawn y Gymdeithas



Saint David's Druids

CAMBRIAN HALL, 215 East 17th Ave, Vancouver B.C. V5V 1A6

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The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

This issue reports on the events associated with our two Saints, Dwynwen and David. I am grateful to Eifion Williams for his article in the Celtic Connection on our St. David's events and to Kathy Thomas for the photograph on the front page. The St. David's Dinner photos are by Uta.

Gillian Rogers made me aware of her correspondence with Margaret Roberts and I have been reading the book with much interest ever since. I'm sure it will be of interest to many of our members.

There is an obituary of Rachel Bromwich in the recent issue of Yr Enfys but I have chosen to include parts of the one by Meic Stephens in The Independent. A remarkable scholar who always spoke Welsh with her fellow academics!

I note that the referendum giving greater powers to the Welsh Assembly passed with 63.5% in favour. The highest percentage of positive votes were in Gwynedd (76), Neath Port Talbot (73), Carmarthenshire (70.8) and Rhondda Cynon Taf (70.7). The lowest were in Monmouthshire (49.4), Powys (51.6), Vale of Glamorgan (52.5) and Newport (54.8). Border country?!

Finally, remember to support the Spring Sale!

David Llewelyn Williams

Saint Dwynwen Evening

Our Social Committee had arranged a mouth-watering feast of chili, cheesecake and chocolate for us to appropriately celebrate Wales' Patron Saint of Lovers on Saturday, January 29. The Red Dragon was festooned with heart shaped red balloons; background music of Welsh love songs was provided from a Bryn Terfel CD, followed by a Rhys Meirion CD of Celtic songs.

After the meal, the satiated audience listened as David Llewelyn Williams presented the history of Saint Dwynwen, which he followed with St. Dwynwen's Prayer and Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem 'Appealing to Saint Dwynwen'.

Members of the audience were then invited to read their favourite poem; Heather Davies, Mary Lewis (2 poems), Gordon Burrell and John Pritchard (2 poems by Ceiriog with translation) participated. In a very appropriate touch for this evening John also composed a love poem to Llinos, his wife, which he also translated for us. David Llewelyn read excerpts from Ceiriog's poem 'Myfanwy Fychan' with translation. This poem is thought by some to be the best love poem in the Welsh language and the inspiration for the famous song.

To conclude the formal part of the evening, Sharon McIntee Burrell accompanied herself on the piano in a beautiful rendition of 'Danny Boy'. Members then socialized to the folk music of a Dafydd Iwan CD.

The Social Committee members are to be thanked heartily for their efforts on this occasion. It is a pity that not more members of the society attended; could it be that they prefer haggis and Robbie Burns to chocolate and Saint Dwynwen?

St. David's Day Celebrations

Despite a heavy snowfall causing some cancellations, there was a good turnout at the Welsh Society's Annual Saint David's Day Dinner at the Cambrian Hall on the evening of February 26.

Musical entertainment was provided by a group of young harpists called the Prussin Harp Ensemble, who delighted the audience by including some familiar Welsh folk songs in their repertoire.



Following the Blessing in Welsh and English by Neville and Kathy Thomas, the celebrants enjoyed a delicious meal provided by Jordans Catering.



The traditional greetings from kindred Welsh Societies across the globe were read this year by Eifion Williams. Among the messages were several from New Zealand expressing the usual good wishes for St. David's Day but also expressing sympathy for the earthquake victims of Christchurch. Messages of good wishes for St. David's Day were also received from Gregor Robertson, Mayor of Vancouver, Libby Davies, Member of Parliament for Vancouver East, Alex Budden, the British Consul General in Vancouver, and Carwyn

☐ Jones, the First Minister for Wales.

The Consul General reminded members that this year Vancouver is celebrating its 125th birthday and praised the contributions made by Welsh immigrants to the city's growth and prosperity. He referred specifically to the city's first archivist, Major James Skitt Matthews, "a proud Welshman who arrived in Vancouver in 1898."



The Toast to Canada was presented by recent immigrant Mathew Parry, who related how previous generations of his family had also emigrated to Canada. In her Toast to St. David, Mary Lewis gave an account of the Saint's life and explained how certain observances and traditions surrounding St. David had evolved. John Pritchard, in his Toast to Wales, expressed his profound love for his adopted country while harbouring a residual love for the country that gave him birth and moulded his character.

David Llewelyn Williams read out the words to the Official Song of the annual Cardiff St. David's Day Parade, entitled *Cenwch y Clychau i Dewi* (Ring Out the Bells for St. David). The Welsh lyrics were written a few years ago by Cardiff Parade organizer Gwenno Dafydd and the tune was composed by Heulwen Thomas. The music was not available on Saturday night but the words themselves proved inspirational. David provided an English version too. Gwenno says about the song: "Now it has just come so far it's taken on a life of its own" and she hopes it will help Welsh societies across the world celebrate St. David's Day.



The evening ended with community singing conducted by Lynne Owens-Whalen, accompanied by Ray Batten. President John Morris, thanked Gillian Rogers and her Social Committee members Jane Byrne, Gaynor Evans, Mary Lewis, Pat Morris and Kathy Thomas for organizing the event.

On the evening of St. David's Day, Tuesday, March 1st, there was a social evening held in the Red Dragon entitled Celebrating St. David, organized by Neville Thomas. The traditional Welsh *cawl cenin* (leek soup) was served during the evening and all present were awarded a celebratory leek.

The Dunsmuir Senior Home Choir performed at the start of the evening while members of the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir made a dramatic musical entrance later, following their rehearsal in the upper hall. The highlight of the evening was a parody of the Druid ceremony held at the Welsh National Eisteddfod, including a resounding Call for Peace (*A Oes Heddwch?*). (See Front Page photo.) There were also poetry readings and an Address on St. David by two of the 'Druids'. The evening ended with a toast to St. David and the spirited singing of two familiar Welsh songs by the audience, led by members of the Welsh Men's Choir.

Eifion Williams

Forthcoming Events

Saturday, 12th. March at 7:00 pm

Concert at the Cambrian Hall

The Valley Singers from Mississippi Valley University are appearing for the first time in Vancouver as part of their tour to the Pacific Northwest. Previous international tours have taken them to Italy in 2004 and the Bahamas in 2008.

Their performance in Italy earned them the Silver Cup at the 15th Concorso Internazionale Di Canto Corale in Verona. While in the Bahamas they performed their compelling repertoire of madrigals, motets, anthems and spirituals to public audiences and in workshops for high school students.

The Choir sings regularly in local churches and schools and this evening they will sing for us at The Cambrian Hall. All funds raised will go to the sponsors, The Vancouver Welsh Society and the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir. Tickets at \$10 may be obtained from Alwyn Rogers at 604 742-1378 or through email at Alwyn@shaw.ca

Sunday 13th March at 11:00 am Bilingual Church Service
followed by a **Tê Bach**

Monday, 21st. March at 10:30 am Welsh Speaking - Siarad Cymraeg.

Monday, 28th. March from 10:00 am till 3:00 pm **Workparty Day** Lunch will be provided and everyone is welcome.

Wednesday April 6th. at 7:30 pm
Executive Meeting
Sunday April 10th at 11:00 am **Bilingual Church Service**

followed by a **Tê Bach**.

Monday April 11th at 7.30 pm
GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 13th at 12:00 noon **Book Club**

The book will be "The Sweetness at the bottom of the Pie" by Alan Bradley

Grand Spring Sale

Saturday April 16th. 11am to 3pm

The stalls will include,

- Home made Welsh baking and preserves
- Collectibles
- China
- Pre-owned Books
- CDs and Videos
- Linens and Jewellery
- Children's Wear and Toys
- A "White Elephant" stall
- A "Things Welsh" stall

Please consider how you would like to contribute to the sale. Volunteers are needed before the sale and on the day. Members of the Social Committee will be at the Hall to receive sale items at the following times:

- Sunday April 10th at the Bilingual Service.
- Monday April 11th at 7:00 pm before the General Meeting
- Wednesday April 13th from 11:30 am till 3:00 pm.
- Friday April 15th. from 10:00 am till 3:00 pm.

Please let us know if you have a sale item worth \$25 or more as we plan to hold a silent auction. Silent Auction Tables will be set up with items or services on which people can bid. A minimum bid will be set and people can write down their names and bids. People will have the opportunity to re-

visit bidding sheets if they don't want to miss something that is being offered.

Pick-up can be arranged if necessary.
Contact Gillian (604 742-1378) or Pat (604 536-9556) for more details.
See poster for details.

Monday, April 18th at 10:30 am
Welsh Speaking - Siarad Cymraeg

Monday, April 25th from 10:00 am till 3:00 pm **Workparty Day**. Lunch will be provided and everyone is welcome.

Friday, April 29th.

**Your invitation to the Royal
Wedding**

The Royal Social Committee of the Welsh
Society of Vancouver invites
you to join us in celebrating
the Wedding of

Will and Kate

- Reception at 7:00 pm
- A recording of the Wedding will be shown
on the big screen at 7:30 pm.
Supper and Gifts: Please contribute to the
pot-luck supper but no gifts by request of the
bride and groom.

Dress: Wedding attire is optional.

Location: Red Dragon

For more details please contact Heather
(604) 734-5500 or send email
hadavies@shaw.ca.

**ONTARIO WELSH FESTIVAL 2011
NIAGARA FALLS, April 28- May 1**

Please join us for a special celebration of the Festival's 50th anniversary. It will be held in beautiful Niagara Falls where the very first Festival took place in 1961.

Be sure to secure your room at the spectacular Sheraton Fallsview Hotel at a very special Festival rate. (phone 1-877-353-2557 or 1-905-374-1077)

This year the Festival will start a day early on Thursday with a wine tour and lunch arranged for the afternoon and a film followed by a sing along in the evening. Our traditional Noson Lawen on Friday evening will have a special 50th. anniversary twist. On Saturday morning, the children are all invited to participate in a pageant of famous Welsh people – grandparents, please bring your grandchildren along to join in this great activity!

At the banquet on Saturday evening, there will be the inaugural presentation of the annual GOLD AWARD to be given to a person who has contributed greatly to the Welsh community in Ontario. We are all very excited to find out who this year's winner will be! The banquet will be followed by the highlight of the weekend - a concert by the renowned CF1 choir from Cardiff, Wales, many times winner at the National Eisteddfod of Wales. To top it all, we will have two glorious sessions of hymn singing on Sunday.

More information:
www.ontariowelshfestival.ca or e-mail us at info@ontariowelshfestival.ca or phone 613-725-2704 or 416-486-0432
Sponsored by the Ontario Gymanfa Ganu Association

Advanced Notices

Wednesday, May 4th at 7:30 pm
Executive Meeting

Sunday, May 8th at 11:00 am
Bilingual Service followed by **Tê Bach**

Wednesday, May 11th at 12:00 noon
Book Club Not yet decided which book will be reviewed.

Monday, May 16th at 10:30 am
Welsh Speaking - Siarad Cymraeg

Monday, May 30th from 10:00 am till 3:00 pm **Workparty Day** Lunch will be provided and everyone is welcome.
Please note that this is held on the **5th** Monday of the month on this occasion.

Through Thick and Thin

Hi Gillian,

Here is a copy of our book *Through Thick and Thin* as I promised. I do hope you all enjoy it.

About ten years ago now one of my daughters asked me to jot down a few words about our family “when you die mam there will be no one left to tell us about who has gone before’ is what she actually said.

After five years research and writing and many tears later our daughters read what I had written and said “You must try and get it published” and so in 2006 we self published the book and what you see in front of you is the outcome.

It has given me, my husband and indeed our two daughters such huge pleasure to know that our book has been enjoyed by so many people. We have made so many new friends and met relatives we did not

know existed since the publication. Perhaps not a story of a typical Welsh family, but a story of my family going back nearly three hundred years in our lovely village of Llanfairfechan and one I thought worth sharing with the generations to come.

One does not realise how many Welsh connections there are in the world and how many Llanfairfechan people or their decedents (descendants?) are out there. It has been such an honour and a privilege to receive letters, emails or phone calls telling us how much they enjoyed the book and such HIRAETH it has brought to their hearts. It gives us such satisfaction to donate a few of our books to various bodies and we are so glad that it will be in the library of your society.

With our very best wishes
Cofio yn gynnes iawn
Emrys a Margaret Roberts

This book by Margaret Roberts is subtitled *Family Tales and Village Life; Memories of Llanfairfechan, North Wales, 1776 – 2005*, and as you will see from the letter, it is donated to our Society.

Through documented tales about her family, told forthrightly, recording both their strengths and weaknesses, we get an unvarnished view of village life over a period of 230 years.

This book is full of interesting nuggets of information and can be reread time and again. Just to whet your appetite, I will mention three:

About 200 years ago a death affected the whole community and on the night before the funeral a *gwynnos* or wake was held. Next morning, before the funeral procession started, a female family

member would place some bread and cheese and often some coins in a dish on the coffin and invite the poor of the neighbourhood to eat from the dish. This was supposed to help the deceased into the next world with a last good deed. It was traditional for family to carry the coffin and it was considered lucky if rain fell during the procession since it was the dew of heaven. This happened frequently in Llanfairfechan!

In 1929 Llanfairfechan reached the semifinals of the Welsh Amateur Cup at home against Cardiff Corinthians. The Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George kicked off the event, which was the scene of much revelry – even though Cardiff won!

Finally, there's a Vancouver connection! Margaret's father Owen was with the Navy as a stoker and spent part of 1944 in Vancouver and also in Esquimalt. He met and married his first wife Vera at that time and they had a child; Margaret has managed to connect with them again. They divorced some time after Owen returned to Llanfairfechan but he visited Vancouver again in January 1976. He looks very handsome in his Navy uniform picture in 1944!

In conclusion, this book will bring much pleasure to anyone having a connection to this area of Wales and is a meticulous source of information for anyone interested in the social history of Wales.

D. Ll. W.

Rachel Bromwich: Celtic scholar celebrated for her masterly dictionary of Welsh and British legend

Rachel Bromwich was a distinguished Celtic scholar whose magnum opus was

Trioedd Ynys Prydein: the Welsh Triads, an index of legendary characters, arranged in groups of three, a characteristic feature of the traditional lore of Britain and Ireland since earliest times. In medieval Wales, a society in which oral instruction was the chief means of conserving and transmitting bardic culture, the triad served as a mnemonic device for cataloguing facts and ideas. Her book, published in 1961, is an invaluable dictionary of Welsh and British legend; a splendid third edition appeared in 2006.

Working from a collation of manuscripts of the 13th and 14th centuries, she provided a translation of the texts, together with a commentary, thus throwing a great deal of light on allusions to heroes, places and events from the distant British past. In so doing she elucidated many of the more problematic references in early Welsh poetry, particularly that written in "the Old North" – what are now parts of southern Scotland and northern England.

She was born Rachel Amos in Brighton, Sussex, in 1915, but spent her early childhood in Egypt, where her father was a barrister and Professor of Law. On his retirement in 1925 the family returned to England, settling in Cumberland, a county with old British associations, which she was later to study as belonging to the traditions of "the Old North".

At Newnham College, Cambridge, she took the first part of the English Tripos in 1936 and the second part, consisting of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, two years later, graduating with a First in both. The principal influence on English studies in

Cambridge at the time was HM Chadwick, the foremost authority on the archaeology and languages of early Britain. It was his pupil, Kenneth H Jackson, who persuaded Rachel Amos to go on to the University College of North Wales, Bangor, to study Welsh under Sir Ifor Williams.

The Second World War interrupted her studies at Bangor. Her husband, John Bromwich, a lecturer in Anglo-Saxon at St John's College, Cambridge, was posted to Northern Ireland, and she joined him there in 1940. For a while she was able to attend the Old Irish classes of Professor Michael O'Brien at Queen's University, Belfast, but when Bromwich was sent overseas she returned to Cumbria with their child.

In 1945 she was invited to teach Old Welsh and Old Irish as part of the English Tripos at Cambridge, and there she was to remain for the rest of her academic career. Among her first publications were studies of Gaelic tradition in 18th-century Ireland, and of the Arthurian tradition in Scotland and the Breton Lays. Her chapter on the drowned kingdoms of Cantre'r Gwaelod and Ker Ys in *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe* (The HM Chadwick memorial volume, 1950) is a model of lucidity and comparative scholarship. She was made University Reader in Celtic Languages and Literatures in 1973 and, in the year following, held the Sir John Rhys Fellowship at Oxford, where she was one of the first women to be elected a Fellow of Jesus College.

Her work on Dafydd ap Gwilym, generally considered to be the outstanding

Welsh poet of the medieval period, is much admired. In *Tradition and Innovation in the Poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym* (1964) she demonstrated the French influences on his work, a theme she continued to explore in numerous essays collected under the title *Aspects of the Poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym* in 1986. For readers with no Welsh she translated a generous selection of Dafydd's poems, which appeared as a Penguin paperback in 1985.

As a tribute to her old teachers, Sir Ifor Williams at Bangor and Sir Idris Foster at Oxford, she edited *The Beginnings of Welsh Poetry* (1972) for one and (with R Brinley Jones) *Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd* (1978) for the other.

On her retirement in 1976 Rachel Bromwich went to live in Bethesda, the former slate-quarrying village in Gwynedd, where she renewed her contact with the University College of North Wales at Bangor by accepting an Honorary Professorial Fellowship in the Department of Welsh. The University of Wales awarded her the honorary degree of DLitt in 1985. Her last years were spent in Aberystwyth, where she worked indefatigably at the National Library of Wales and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. She died 15 December 2010.

Meic Stephens

The Welsh in the Valley celebrate St. David's Day

St. David's Day was celebrated by the "Welsh in the (Fraser) Valley" on Saturday 5 March 2011. The event was attended by 42 persons; a group that included Welsh ex-pats and other guests. It was held at the Rendezvous Restaurant on Mount Lehman Road, Abbotsford, across the street from the Auto Mall.

Mario, the owner of the Rendezvous provided a private room and his catering staff prepared a splendid banquet meal that featured Leek Soup, Rack of Lamb with vegetables, Apple Pie and coffee and

tea. It was truly sumptuous and we requested that Mario and the staff who looked after us be brought out so that we could give them an enthusiastic round of applause in gratitude.

The evening included a programme of singing Welsh songs and hymns, plus an entertaining St. David's Day story by John Cann.

Heartfelt thanks are extended to Pat and John Morris, and Mary Slaney who made the arrangements for this successful occasion.

Martin Gouldthorpe



The Cambrian Hall, 215 East 17th Avenue

Grand Spring Sale

April 16th from 11am till 3pm

- Collectibles
 - China
 - "Things Welsh"
 - Books, CD's and Videos
 - Silent Auction
 - Welsh baking
 - Linens and Jewellery
 - Kitchenware
 - "White Elephant"
 - Children's wear and toys
 - Prizes
 - Preserves
-

Refreshments will be served in our Tea Room.

www.WelshSociety.com

Phone: 604 876-2815