Rhagfyr i Ionawr 1998



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December to January

Cymde 1thas Gymkaeg Vancouvek



Welsh Society Rewsletter — Cylchgrawn Cymraeg



# Radolig LLawen a Blwyddyn Rewydd **DA**a



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A Merry Christmas
and



A Happy New Year



Ein Marllenwyr / Our Readers



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### Mulled Wine Evening

On Saturday, November 28th, the annual mulled wine evening was held at the Cambrian Hall. The hall was brightly adorned for the occasion, and our thanks go to the numerous folks who turned out earlier in the week to do the decorations.

Early on, our hall was quickly filled by a cheerful crowd which exuded warmth and conviviality; old friendships were renewed and new ones forged in the ensuing camaraderie.

Members of the Orpheus Choir, led by their capable conductor, Lona, and accompanied by their own gifted pianist, sang a number of carols with whom the crowd joined in with gusto and enthusiasm. Then Alan Jones, sitting in our "bardic" chair, rendered his now familiar annual reading, at this event, of Dylan Thomas' "A Child's Christmas in Wales"

Before long, we were served the traditional mulled wine along with tasty finger foods. We extend our sincere thanks to all those involved in the preparation and distribution of these excellent refreshments.

The evening was an unqualified success and it was evident that the large number of guests present had a very enjoyable time. We wish to extend our grateful thanks to all who participated in making this event so successful; it was a worthy introduction to the Festive Season.

Commitment is doing what you said you would do, long after the mood in which you said it, has passed.

Rubin Huertas (Toastmaster)

Get down on your knees and thank God that you are on your feet.

- Irish Proverb

This is a do-it-yourself test for paranoia: you know you've got it when you can't think of anything that is your fault.

- Robert M. Hutchins

Church Blooper:

Due to the Rector's illness, Wednesday's healing services will be discontinued until further notice.

### A Captain Remembers

This morning I would like to share with you one of my experiences during nearly 30 years of seafaring.

In November 1952, my ship was in the port of Otaru on the northern island of Hokkaido, Japan. My officers were British, the deck and engine crew from Bombay and the stewards from Goa - a Portugese enclave on the west coast of India, now part of India. All the stewards were Roman Catholics, and the deck and engine crews were Muslim and worshipped Allah, the most devout praying 5 times a day, facing Mecca.

On November 19th, an engine crew member had a fatal heart attack. Formalities had to be undertaken to prove to the local authorities that the man had not died of a communicable disease. When this was accomplished we obtained *pratique*, which is a licence for the ship to hold intercourse with the port, and get permission to enter the port to discharge its cargo, after satisfying the authorities that it is safe to do so from the health standpoint.

In Otaru, Buddhism is practised and only cremation is allowed due to lack of space for the burial of coffins. The Muslim crew flatly refused to allow their dead shipmate to be cremated - this indeed was a major problem and called for all the diplomacy one could muster. After 2 days of negotiating - myself as a Christian, Chief Steward as a Roman Catholic, the Ship's Agent and Head Monk of the Monastery Buddhist - it was agreed that a burial would be allowed in the cemetery half way up the mountain near the monastery behind the town, but no Buddhist ceremony would be held..

Wood was supplied by the ship's agent and the ship's carpenter made a coffin. In order to bury the coffin we had to have a grave dug. The Monks refused to do so and I had to persuade the Ship's Crew who were then supplied with pick-axes and shovels to dig through the hard rock on the mountain side. The weather was cold with intermittent snow and the Indian crew were not used to such cold weather and I envisaged my crew catching pneumonia.

I consulted the Bosun, who had sailed with me for over 7 years, regarding the formality of a Muslim burial; he informed me that the body had to be buried head towards Mecca. I then instructed the Third Officer to take one of the small compasses from one of the lifeboats up to the cemetery so that the grave could be dug in the right direction. All this was explained to the Head Monk, and fortunately, my Japanese was sufficient then to hold a conversation, which was appreciated. A makeshift hearse was found on the 24th of November to carry the coffin from the ship to the foot of the mountain, and then it had to be carried up to the cemetery site by the ship's crew.

On the 24th of November Abdul Kareem was buried according to Muslim rights in a Buddhist Cemetery in the presence of his shipmates - myself a Methodist, my Chief Steward a Catholic, the Head Monk and a Buddhist. Both the Indian Flag and the Red Ensign were flown over the grave. These were sent to his family in India together with his personal possessions.

Now, I want to come back and reminisce about my own village of Aberarth and the next town of Aberaeron, a mile and half away. Many seamen from both places have been lost at sea, including my own grandfather, and the gravestones in the local cemeteries testify to that.

Early in 1873 a disaster occurred with the loss of seamen from Aberaeron. A well-known local poet "Cerngoch" wrote an englyn entitled "Cofio am Forwr a gollwyd ar y Mor". ("Remembering a sailor who was lost at sea".) This englyn won the prize at the Eisteddfod in Aberaeron in 1873.

Iach hwyliodd i ddychwelyd - ond ofer,

Fu dyfais celfyddyd;

Y mor wnaeth ei gymeryd Ei enw gawn - dyna'i gyd.

The last two lines are heartwrenching — " the sea took him, his name we have - that is all ".

Cerngoch was John Jenkins, Penbrynmawr, Talsarn(1820—1894). His poems

and writings "Cerddi Cerngoch" are well-known locally.

Unfortunately, a year or so after winning at the Aberaeron Eisteddfod with this englyn he himself lost a son at sea. In his grief he stated "it was for him I wrote the englyn... little did I realize at the time....." Many of the grave stones at the Aberarth and Aberaeron cemetries have the above englyn as an epitaph.

Ieuan Lampshire-Jones
Sunday, November 1, 1998

#### Vancouver Welsh Society

#### Officers and Directors For 1998

President: V. Pres. :

Jeff Owen (604) 946 — 4956 Ann Roberts (604) 925 — 4662

Secretary:

Ann Roberts

Treasurer:

Tecwyn Roberts (604) 464 - 2760

Mem. Sec.: News. Ed.: Margaret Monck (604) 733 — 9787

-

Gwlym Evans (604) 274 — 3794

Directors:

Rob Barclay Jane Byme

Victor Griffiths Ieuan Lampshire-Jones

John Pritchard



Sunday, December 13th

Games, fun, lots of treats - and a visit with Santa!

### The Origin of the Christmas Card

While Christmas had always been joyously celebrated throughout the world, it was not until the year 1846 that the idea of sending a printed message of good-will and cheer was conceived.

In 1846, Sir Henry Cole of England, suggested to J.C. Horsley, Member of the Royal Academy, that he design an appropriate greeting.

The original effort of Mr. Horsley showed a tripartite illustration depicting "Feeding the Hungry" on the left, a central panel portraying a group of happy people celebrating the Christmastide, and on the right a panel depicting "Clothing the Naked".

Only 1,000 copies of this card were distributed, and only 20 are known to exist.

The enthusiasm with which Sir Henry's greeting card was received prompted others to follow his example, and today the friendly habit of remembering one's family, friends and business acquaintances at Christmastide is widespread.

Season's Greetings!

Many of us look at the Ten Commandments as an exam paper: eight only to be attempted.

-Malcolm Muggeridge

A rumour without a leg to stand on will get around some other way.

- John Tudor in Omni

### Y NADOLIG - CHRISTMAS

As in many other European countries, Christmas and its attendant celebrations came to be the best-loved time of the year in Wales, and there are many traditions connected with it, some religious and some entirely secular. For example, this was the time of the year when a plough was brought into the house and placed under the dining table to mark the beginning of the Christmas season, when work was suspended on the farms. The ploughshare was ceremoniously wetted with beer to show that even if it wasn't being used for a short while, its services were not forgotten and should be rewarded. Much of the rest of the day was spent in feasting and merry making, but it was also a time for rough and tumble games of football, or squirrel and rabbit hunting.

In many parts of Wales up until quite recently, it was the custom to get up very early on Christmas morning to attend the Church service known as Plygain (Daybreak) held between 3 and 6 a.m. To pass the time during the long overnight wait on Christmas Eve, young people would make treacle toffee and decorate their houses with freshly gathered mistletoe and holly. It is known that for many centuries before the celebration of Christ's birth, country people brought green plants indoors in the depths of winter, especially evergreens, which are seen as symbols of the return of

spring.

The mistletoe was considered both as a magical plant and a powerful protector of the home from evil. The holly, a symbol of eternal life, was also prominently displayed, along with the ivy, rosemary and bay leaves. All too, had pleasant scents to disguise the many foul odors that had built up during the long months

when doors and windows were shut tight against the winter cold.

Dancing and singing to the harp under their festoons of greenery, many people spent an enjoyable Christmas Eve with their neighbors until the more serious time arrived to go to church. There, the churches were ablaze with light, provided by as many as several hundred special Plygain candles brought by the parishioners in a recreation of the ancient festival of light. The Plygain itself was often a short form of morning service in which carols were sung by visiting soloists and groups of singers, but in some churches, as many as 15 carols were sung, and services may have lasted until 8 or 9 in the morning. The custom managed to survive in many country areas, and because of its simplicity and beauty is being revived in many others. The Plygain service sometimes came to an end when groups of men under the influence of strong drink, after a night spent merry-making, came to the church and created disorder. Often, however, a day of feasting began the end of the service, the principal dish consisting of toasted bread and cheese (the traditional "Welsh Rabbit"), washed down with prodigious quantities of ale. For those who could afford it, goose was the main course on the Christmas menu. 

Church Blooper:

Low Self - Esteem Support Group will meet at Thursday at 7-8.30 p.m. Please use the back door.

### W.A. Report

The November meeting was held as usual, on the third Wednesday of the month at 12:00 noon. There were 12 members present, with only one absent due to sickness.

We decided to send our usual donation to the Battered Women's Support Group.

The raffle and crafts are going well, and we are getting good support from the society. Tickets for the raffle and some crafts and preserves will be available for sale at the Red Dragon on Saturday night Dec. 12th, and at the Children's Christmas Party, which follows the Church service and the Te Bach Sunday, December 13th.

The raffle will be held during the Children's Party.

B. Thomas, Sec.



TOPOT

"... And now we'll wait a moment while the choir decides which hymn they'll sing."

### MAIL ORDER SHOPPING

The world's first mail order shopping began in Newtown, Montgomeryshire, Wales. Some time in 1859, astute businessman Pryce Pryce-Jones, of Newtown, began to cater to the needs of many of his rural customers by offering goods for sale through the mail. Many of the area's farmers lived in isolated valleys or in mountain terrain, and had little time or suitable transportation to come to town for their many needs. The Pryce- Jones Mail Order business was the perfect answer, especially since the Post Office reforms of the 1840's had made the mail service cheap and reliable. The Newtown Warehouses, packed with the goods, began a service that quickly caught on in the United States, with its greater distances and scattered population. As we all know only too well from our mail boxes ever bulging with catalogues, mail order shopping was here to stay.

- (a) The Pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday morning.
- (b)The Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B.S. is done.
- (c) Pastor is on vacation. Massages can be given to church secretary.

### VANCOUVER WELSH MEN'S CHOIR

Powell River is well known as the venue for the international Kathaumixw choral festival every two years. It was therefore with a certain amount of trepidation that we approached our first concert there on November 14. Our fears were groundless since the sellout audience applauded enthusiastically throughout the performance and also bought nearly \$1000 worth of our tapes and CD's. The audience at the Raven City Theatre in Sechelt the following afternoon was equally generous with their applause. Next up are our four Christmas concerts in the Surrey Arts Centre, St. Andrew's Wesley Church, Vancouver and the New Life Church in Abbotsford on Dec. 19. Since the writer was educated across the water from Wales, he would like to take this opportunity to wish all members of the Welsh Society:

"Gach déa-ghuí i goomhair na Nollag agus na h-Ath Bhliana"

Mr. Des Harris keeps our Society informed every month, by newsletter, of the activities and forthcoming concerts of the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir, and for this we are much indebted to him. I am sure that our members would desire me to convey our grateful thanks to him for this service. We send our Christmas Greetings to him and all the members of the Choir, and wish them every success in the coming Year.

## MANY THANKS.....

The editor wishes to express his sincere thanks to all those who made a contribution to our newsletter throughout the current year. In particular, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Gordon Coslett Thomas for his monthly contribution in providing the format for the front and back pages of each publication.

I wish all readers a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR.

### A Visit by The Stork

Congratulations are extended to Liliana and Victor Griffiths who are pleased to announce the birth of a daughter on August 3rd last. Weighing in at 7lbs 4oz, Iriel makes a welcomed sister to Nicholas, aged 2.

### NOTICE

This newsletter is distributed at our monthly general meeting, which is on the second Wednesday of each month. Prospective contributors are kindly asked to submit their articles at least 10 days before the date of distribution.

### National Welsh-American Foundation

This organization can be found on the web at:—

wales-usa.org

### **District Nurse**

This is a long-standing serial aired on VIS (Cable24 in the lower mainland), every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 4.30p.m. It is filmed in West Wales, and depicts authentic, poignant but realistic scenes in the life of a district nurse.

### **CELTIC VOICES**

Just a Reminder.....

On Saturday mornings, at 8.00a.m., you can listen to Celtic Voices on radio, 96.1 FM.

If you want to participate, please phone Nessa at 432—7351

#### LEISURE

What is this life, if full of care, We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs And stare as long as sheep and cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass, Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight, Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance, And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care, We have no time to stand and stare.

William Henry Davies(1871-1940)

This Welsh poet spent some time tramping in England and America, and his work shows knowledge of and love for nature. He wrote Autobiography of a Super-tramp.

### Welsh Cowboys!

Under the heading Drovers' Gold the Knowledge Network televised this serial on Nov. 20, 27 and Dec.4. It was filmed amid the splendour of the Brecon Beacons in Wales. This gritty tale of passion and revenge follows a rag-tag band of 19th-century cowboys on a hazardous journey from rural Wales to London. In defiance of Sir Huw Watkins—their manipulative landlord—the downtrodden tenant farmers drive a herd of cattle to England in search of the best market price.

| 10 Church<br>11 am Service              | w                                       | Cymdeithas Cym<br>Cambrian Hall, 2<br>V5V IA6   | 27                    | 20                            | 13 II a.m. Church and te bach 2:00 p.m. Children's  | 3:00 p.m. Sun. 13th @ Gramille Island Vancouver Orpheus Male Voice Choir Free performances Sunday | (Security and Security Securit |
|---|---|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 11                                      | 4                                       | Cymdeithas Cymraeg Vancouver Welsh Society<br>Cambrian Hall, 215 E. 17th Ave, Vancouver, B.C.<br>V5V 1A6 Telephone:- (604) 876-2815 | 28                    | 21                            | 14  | Monday  |  |
| 12                                      | 5 7:30 p.m. Welsh Men's Choir Rehearsal | elsh Society<br>Incouver, B.C.<br>876-2815  | 29                    | 22                            | 15  | Decen<br>Mi<br>Tuesday  |  |
| 13 7:30 p.m. General Mig                | 6 7:30 p.m. Exec. Mig                   | January 1999<br>Mis Ionaw   | 30                    | 23                            | 16<br>WA. (noon)  | December 1998  Mis Rhagfyr 1998  day Wednesday  |  |
| 14                                      | Welsh Folk Dancing Thursdays            | mary 1999<br>Mis Ionawr 1999  | 31                    | 24                            | 17 Orpheus Male Choir Musical Fort Langley info: 513-4777                                       | 98<br>Thursday  |  |
| Cambrian Circle<br>Singers<br>rehearsal | 8 Cambrian Circle Singers rehearsal     |   | Blwyddyn Newydd Dda ! | 25<br>CHAISTMAS               | 18 Dylan Thomas Circle Cambrian Circle S. Van Deus Gdns. 8.00—9.00p.m.                          | 3 41.   |  |
| Red Dragon<br>Open 8:30 p.m.            | 9 Red Dragon Open 8:30 p.m.             | Red Dragon Open 8:30 p.m.   | ewydd Dda !           | 26  Boxing Day  Boxing Closed | 19 Welsh Men's Cron Welsh Men's Cron  @ Mcallum Rd  Abbotsford  Red Dragon  Closed till Jan 2nd | St. Andrews Wesley Red Dragon Open 8:30 p.m. Saturday   | 12 Welsh Men's Choir   |