



Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Welsh Society Newsletter — Cylchgrawn Cymraeg

RHAGFVR - 1991

DECEMBER - 1991

*Greetings
of the
Season*



Bundled into touch

WELSH rugby was memorably described by the late Richard Burton as "opera, ballet and sheer bloody murder". Now the arty bits have gone; it just remains for the national side to get murdered from time to time. The latest slaughter happened on October 12th at Cardiff Arms Park—just days after World Cup defeat at the hands of Western Samoa—when the Australian side won by the widest margin (38-3) ever achieved by a visiting team in the national stadium.

Memories of a glorious past are a torment these days. The prospect that Wales will ever again beat New Zealand's All Blacks—as in 1905, 1935 and 1953, but never since, despite 13 attempts—seems more remote each year. The great Welsh teams of the 1970s, built round several now-legendary players like Barry John, ranked with the best. Today's team went out of the World Cup along with unknowns like Zimbabwe. The red dragon has lost its puff—as has the crowd at the Arms Park, where stunned silences have gradually replaced the hymns and arias that 60,000 people used to sing at every national game. Will they be heard again?

Those who talk of irretrievable decline blame it on the collapse of the mining communities. When the coal industry was nationalised in 1947, the valleys had 115,500 men working at 222 pits; today 1,900 miners are left, at just four pits. Gone are the big men who could work a night shift, then catch the bus to Cardiff and pack down in the front row of the scrum (as one famous 1940s forward, Cliff Davies, did—to play against the Springboks).

Gone, too, are the small grammar

schools where devoted teachers laboured every evening to instil the skills of the three-quarter line. Wales had 110 grammar schools in 1963; the last one closed in 1989. Over a third of those now at secondary school in Wales attend schools with over 1,000 pupils. And as the introverted culture of the valleys has faded, the lure of big money offered by the Rugby League clubs of northern England has proved too much for several talented Welsh players—any of whom might have beaten Western Samoa single-handedly, bach.

All splendidly nostalgic, but mostly nonsense just the same. More than 75% of the pits had closed before the 1970s began; and fitness is now found in the gym, not on the coalface—nor the antipodean sheepfarm, for that matter. The professional game is far less of a threat in Wales than in Australia, where rugby union is only the fourth most popular national game. As for the collapse of rugby in the schools, the pool of young players has certainly shrunk, but there is plenty of talent. At the under-18 level, Wales beat New Zealand in August 1990 on an unbeaten tour, and last winter took the home countries' triple crown, while the under-19 side pulled off the grand slam (beating France as well, that is).

Rugby still arouses fierce passions in Wales. It is not a sea-change in Welsh society that has undermined the national side, but something much more mundane. Coaching and competitiveness at the top levels have been absurdly neglected. This is partly the fault of the 18 or so big clubs. Lulled into complacency by being the best in Britain for donkey's years, they refused until 1990 to introduce



Barry John, immortal 20 years ago

a competitive league, even though the benefits of doing so were evident in English club rugby.

The neglect must also be blamed on the Welsh Rugby Union. A bumbling bureaucracy which purportedly represents all of the 208 clubs in Wales, it has offered none of them any useful lead for a decade or more. Innovative coaching ideas helped the WRU steal a march on the whole rugby world in the late 1960s; internal bickering and personal rivalries have held it back since the late 1970s, while others have caught up and moved on. Now big clubs squabble with small ones, while senior team administrators spar jealously with those running separate youth and schools teams.

Reforms are on their way; but getting them through could be, well, sheer bloody murder. Time for some famous names to sidestep the little men?

THANK YOU!.....Lynn Owens-Whalen for your very generous donation to the Society of a **lawn mower**. The members and I'm sure the "good Samaritan" who looks after the front lawns, appreciate your kindness.

THANK YOU!..... to the men who volunteered their time to paint the upper hall (ceiling and all). The hall looked especially nice for the Gymnafa in November..and is ready for our Xmas dinner/dance on Dec. 7. Talk is.. some of our Piccassos had more paint in their hair than on the walls!!!! Never-the-less, a job well done.

REMINDER.....ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING....WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11/91 at 7.30pm

Please make every effort to attend this very important meeting. The Executive Committee for 1992 will be elected at this meeting and the membership fees for the coming year will be voted on. We need a quorum of 15 people in order to carry out the business of the Society, so please join us.....we make an excellent cup of tea to round off the evening.

Ellis Griffiths, Trustee, W.N.G.G.A., Marion Griffiths, Phyllis Owens, Lynn Owens-Whalen, Gwenfyl Jones, Past President, W.N.G.G.A., attended the National Gymanfa in Cincinnati. Everyone was given a tremendous welcome. At the end of the Festival the consensus of so many people was that the 60th anniversary of the Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu Association must be among one of the best Gymanfas we have had.

Opening night on the Thursday was a welcome ceremony followed by a Noson Lawen.. The excellent M.C. Rev. Guy Maxwell Evans, Vicar of Llanfihangel ar Arth and Pencader, Dyfed.

For 24 years I've attended the National, and the Cincinnati Noson Lawen has to be the most outstanding. During Friday and Saturday, people attended seminars and tours of the city and areas around. Friday night the National Banquet was held and Rev. Guy M. Evans was the after dinner speaker. His speech held everyone's attention. He told us of Wales today, the revival of the Welsh language, the increasing of all-Welsh schools, the culture, the arts and of the young people being extremely proud of their country -

WALES.

On Saturday morning there was a very good attendance at the W.N.G.G.A. Annual meeting. Several reports were presented and we had good discussion on several matters.

The Saturday W.A.Y. luncheon brought together young people from the U.S.A. and Canada. There were quite a number of older members present. John Lloyd, W.A.Y. President welcomed the older members and thanked them for their continued support of W.A.Y. which he very much appreciated. Llio Meleri Millward of Cardiff and Aberystwyth was the featured artist. Llio regularly appears on U.K. T.V. and on European Vision T.V. including a series of singing folk and pop songs in six separate European countries. Llio's father was prince Charles' tutor while he was learning to speak Welsh at University College Aberystwyth.

Sunday morning a large congregation were present at the Church service. Nelson Llewellyn, secretary of the W.N.G.G.A. conducted a most moving service of memorium for 1990 - 1991. Dr. Rev. Gwyn Walters, Boston, Massachusetts delivered the bilingual sermon with an inspiring message. The two sessions of the Gymanfa were conducted by Delyth Hopkins - Evans of Pontrhydygroes, Cymru. During the afternoon and evening sessions Delyth H. Evans conducting was inspiring with the various voices eagerly responding to her directions. The singing was outstanding and the consensus of those present hope Delyth Hopkins Evans will return to conduct another North American National Gymanfa. We thank David Taliesin Richards and his sponsoring committee who worked so hard for the Cincinnati National. So many people asked how did David Taliesin Richards find time to make 7,000 Welsh cakes all on his own? - a remarkable accomplishment - and they were delicious! Diolch yn fawr David"

As we said "good-bye" we all looked forward to be present at the 1992 Kansas City National Gymanfa Ganu.

GWENFYL E. JONES

W.A. REPORT

The W.A. have arranged for the Christmas luncheon to be catered by an outside caterer this year. The luncheon will be held on Wednesday, December 4th at the lower Cambrian Hall - the ladies will meet at 12noon and lunch will be served at 1.00pm. For further details, please call Ann Jones at 324-1151 or any member of the W.A.

The W.A. have once again made their donation to the Childrens' Christmas party. A few of our members are indisposed at the present time, and we wish them a speedy recovery. We miss you at our meetings!

All ladies are welcome at our meetings held on the third Wednesday of the month at 12 noon. A brown-bag lunch is usually brought, followed by a business meeting at 1.00pm. Please come and join us - I think you will enjoy yourselves.

3.

ANN G. JONES

 * JOHN M. WILLIAMS
 *
 * Mr. John M. (Jack) Williams died peacefully and unexpectedly at his home on
 * October 31, 1991. He was predeceased by his wife Kay, in 1983.
 * Jack first came to Canada in 1931 and worked in Regina, Montreal and Toronto.
 * He returned to the U. K. with the Rooyal Canadian Air Force and flew 31 bombing
 * missions. The extensive eye surgery he underwent was the result of one of these
 * missions, but he never complained.
 * Returning to Canada, Jack married Kay and together they came to Vancouver to work.
 * Both were held in high esteem by all who had the privilege of knowing them.
 * Jack loved music, and this and his pleasant personality brought him friends where
 * ever he went. During his life he sang under the direction of such prominent
 * conductors as Sir Thomas Beecham and Sir Malcom Sargent, to name but a few. He was
 * the soloist at churches in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver and was a member and
 * soloist of the Cambrian Circle Singers. He was also a conductor of GymanfaGanu in
 * the U.S.A. and Canada.
 * Jack will be greatly missed by his family and his hundreds of friends across Canada,
 * America and Wales, but not least by his extended family - the Welsh Society of
 * Vancouver. By his efforts over the years, thousands of dollars have been added to
 * the coffers of the Society. Jack was always ready to do a kindness to anyone and
 * with a smile on his face. When thanked, his reply always was, "It was a joy to me
 * to be able to help!"
 * The filled-to-capacity West Burnaby Church for his memorial service, was proof
 * positive of Jack's popularity.
 *
 * "Sincere and kind in heart and mind,
 * what a beautiful memory he left behind"
 *
 * Anne G. Jones
 *
 * *****

THOUGHTS OF HOW OUR MEMBERS, OLD AND YOUNG ARE FARING

We have been fortunate in having quite a number of very enthusiastic and dedicated members through the years. We still have, but my concern is about those who for varying reasons are no longer active in the Society. Some have moved and it is no longer possible to attend on a regular basis. There are others who have become so involved with other matters time is not available. But then there are the ones who through illness have not been around with us for some time. I'm sure these men and women are in contact with their own Welsh friends but several of us feel that we should have an official phoning or visiting "committee" or group to contact them. Let them know they are appreciated and only through their efforts are we still able to continue to enjoy our beloved Welsh Hall and Welsh culture, i.e. Gymanfa Ganu, etc.

I am willing to co-ordinate such a group and any member who knows of a member or even a lapsed member who fits the description, please telephone me at 228-9394 - dinner hour is a good time to reach me.

Phyllis M. Owens

Anniversary Dinner, Saturday, October 19, 1991

Once again the Society's Anniversary Dinner was a great success, with a delicious buffet meal served by Jordan's Caterers. The ever faithful 50 or so members again supported this function, and enjoyed an evening of socializing with friends and singing favourite songs with Arthur Williams, our talented pianist at the piano.

The evening also saw the Debut of our own "Vancouver Welsh Country Dancing Group" Everyone enjoyed the dancing (even the mistakes) and were impressed with the number of dances learned since the start of the classes, just 6 weeks before.

October 26 was the date for our halloween dance at the Red Dragon. A fine selection of music was provided for everyone to listen to. Sadly there were only about thirty-five people at the dance but we all had a great time and those that did not come missed out of a great time. There was an excellent assortment of costumes and those people who were not in costume were amazed at the quality of the costumes that must have taken hours to make. One person asked how Gwyn managed to make his knees so knobbly? The best female costume was won by Jean Chapman dressed as Carmen Meranda and the best male costume was won by Jeff Owen dressed as "Jake the Peg" (the threelegged man)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday November 30 is the night of the hot mulled wine and carol singing, as usual this promises to be an enjoyable evening with hot wine being served while singing carols and decorating the Christman tree.

Saturday December 7 is the night of the Christmas dinner dance and draw, Cocktails are at 6:30p.m., dinner is at 7:30p.m. precisely, and the dancing is from 9p.m. until 1a.m. In order to keep the cost down we have hired a music service instead of a live band. This enables us to keep the same price as last year \$25.00 for members and \$28.00 for guests. Tickets are on sale now and going fast, please call any social committee member for tickets or phone the hall on a Saturday night and ask for tickets. As always we will have the prize draw on that night and we have some wonderful prizes again this year. The tickets for the prize draw are bought on any Saturday night up to the night of the dance, just remember if you don't buy you can't win. At the time of printing there are still some tickets left so if you don't have yours, phone Gwen at 738-3377 or Gaynor at 946-4956.

Saturday December 14 This is the last Saturday night of this year that the club is open for a social evening so come on down for a last visit this year. We will re-open the Red Dragon on January 4

Please Note Although the Red Dragon is an "A" licence lounge you do not have to buy alcohol we have a selection of pop, juice, non-alcoholic beer, coffee, and tea. Just come out and have an enjoyable evening.

P.S. free coffee for designated drivers

Sunday December 15 is the date of the childrens Christmas party. All the preparations are well in hand. For this event, the monthly church service has been moved to this date and anyone wanting to stay after the service to watch the children are welcome to do so. I'm sure there will be some coffee or tea for you. The party starts at 2p.m. so please be prompt.

Tuesday December 17 is the date of our Christmas boat cruise. We will be cruising around Vancouver harbour for several hours while enjoying a Christmas buffet. The summer cruise was enjoyed so much by the participants that quite a few asked that we do it again so we thought we would try a Christmas one. There are still two or three places left on board so anyone interested should phone Gwen at 738-3377 or Gaynor at 946-4956.

THE VANCOUVER WELSH FOLK DANCERS

The Folk dancing group meet every Thursday evening at 7.30pm. We now have 14 members in the group, and we have given two performances at the Cambrian Hall.

The last dance class for this year will be on Thursday, December 5th, and the classes will resume on Thursday, January 9/92. An invitation is extended to prospective dancers to join us in the New Year.

On January 16th the Folk Dancers will host a social evening in order to meet and welcome the President of the Auckland Welsh Club, Derek Williams and family of Auckland, New Zealand will be making a brief visit to Vancouver at that time. Dancing will be from 7.30pm to 8.30pm, then a small reception is planned so that all members of the Society have the opportunity to meet Derek, Louise, Sian and David Williams. So please come along and in true New Zealand style. please bring a plate(yes, with something on it!).

For more information please call Jack and Bertha Smith at 683-1335.

HELP! HELP! HELP!

We are in desperate need of an editor to keep our monthly newsletter in circulation! There are no special qualifications or requirements - all you need is enthusiasm and a little bit of time to spare.....

N.B. THE printing, labelling, stamp and envelope licking will be done by two volunteers from Richmond..... If you are interested in filling this position, please call Jeff Owen at 946-4956.

VANCOUVER WELSH MEN'S CHOIR
Robin Thomas, Music Director

Presents

WHITE CHRISTMAS

A celebration of Word and Song

December 13 & 14, 1991 - 8.00pm
St. Andrew's Wesley Church
(Burrard and Nelson, Vancouver)
Tickets available 250-4444

December 11, 1991 - 8.00pm
Surrey arts centre Theatre
Tickets available 596-1551

December 8, 1991 - 3.00pm
Chilliwack Arts Centre
Tickets available 792-2069

Tues. December 31, 1991 7.00pm
First Night Performance with the
15th Field Artillery Band at **Orpheum Theatre**

Tickets for the above also available from any choir member.

A MESSAGE TO ALL OUR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS.....DRIVE WITH CARE DURING THIS FESTIVE SEASON.....BEST WISHES.....

A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR!

NADOLIG LLAWEN A BLWYDDYN NEWYDD DDA!