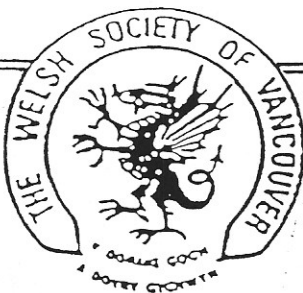


Chwefror i Mawrth
2003

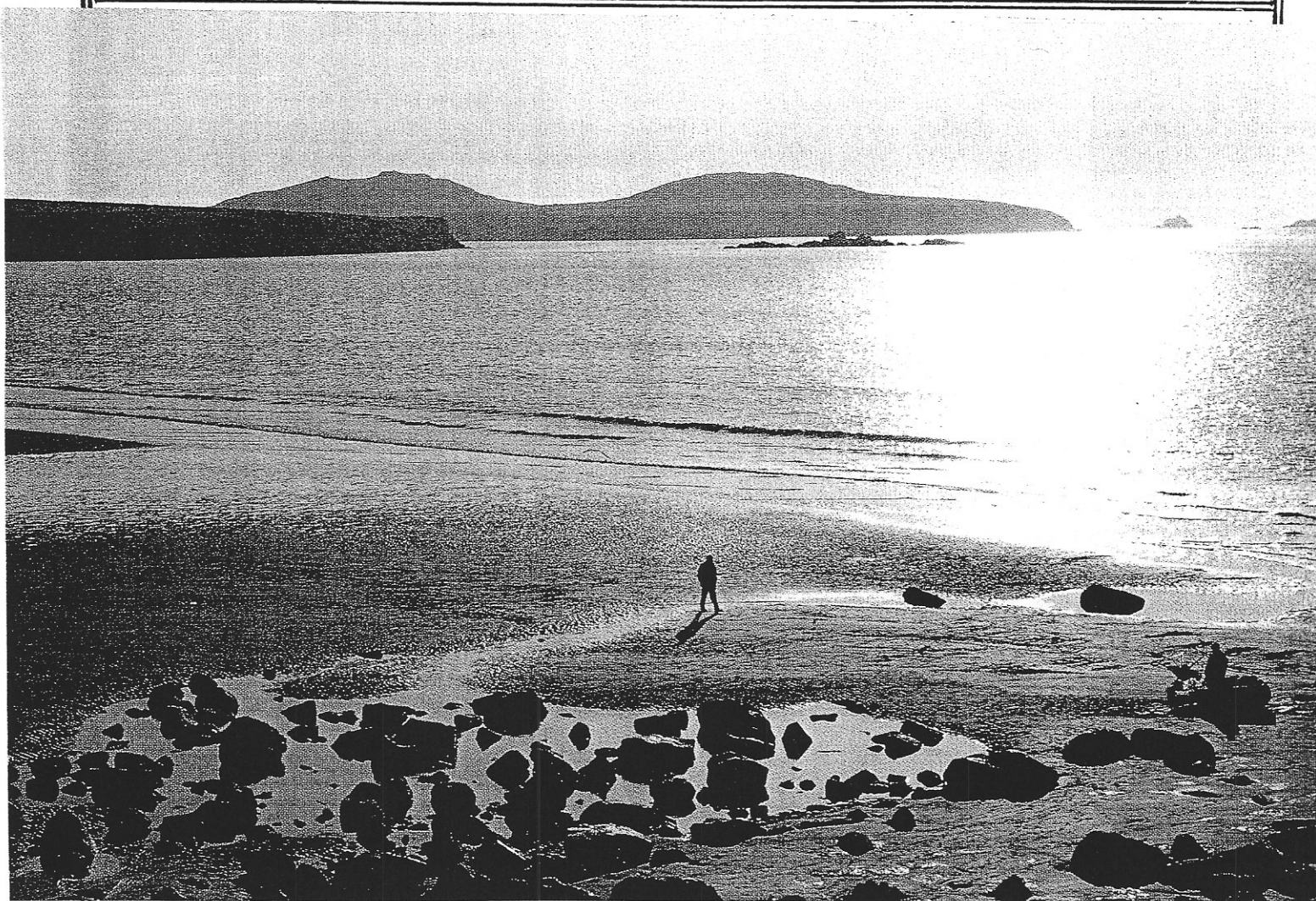


February to March
2003

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Welsh Society Newsletter — Cylchgrawn Cymraeg



CAMBRIAN HALL, 215 East 17TH Ave, VANCOUVER BC V5V 1A6 Tel: (604) 876-2815

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The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

This issue owes a great deal to the February issue of *The Celtic Connection* which featured, in particular, an interview by Catholine Butler with the Lord Mayor of Swansea as a prelude to St. David's Day. A similar interview with the Lord Mayor of Cardiff was featured in last year's February issue. The Welsh Society certainly appreciates this coverage. Eifion Williams' interesting article on Welsh and Elvish is reproduced, and much of the text on the forthcoming readings from *The Mabinogion* is paraphrased from his article on that subject. The article on the Leek was sent to me by Ieuan Lampshire-Jones, as was the poem on St. David's Day celebrations. I trust you are all going to celebrate in your own fashion! I really enjoyed the poem sent in by Jeff Owen and I personally take responsibility for the humorous postcard.

On a sadder note, the Society wishes to extend its sincere sympathy to Barrie Hancock on the recent death of his mother in Wales.

David Llewelyn Williams

Front cover:

A Natural Beauty of Wales: Whitesand Bay on the Pembrokeshire coast.

Courtesy: Wales Tourist Board

Forthcoming Events

St. David's Day Dinner

Our annual St. David's Day celebration will take place in the Cambrian Hall on Saturday, March 1st (St. David's Day!).

The hall will be open at 6.30 pm for cocktails and socializing and dinner will be served promptly at 7.30 pm. The dinner will be catered by Jordan's International Food Designs. The cost will be \$28 for members and \$30 for non-members. Please call Gaynor Evans at 604-271-3134 to purchase tickets.

Seattle St. David Program

Sunday, March 2nd, starting at 2:30 pm in St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 111 NE 80th St., Seattle.

Master of Ceremonies Harpist Bronn Journey, gifted soprano Katherine Journey, the Red Dragon Band, and more. Followed by a Te Bach. For information phone 206-524-0854

WAC Fundraiser

Thursday, March 6th, at 6.00 for 6.45 p.m.
"An Evening with the Choir" including Dinner at the Pink Pearl Restaurant, 1132 E. Hastings. Tickets at \$25 each from Gwyn Evans at 604-271-3134 or Dave Gilder at 604-274-4274.

The Mabinogion

The Vancouver Society of Storytelling will be presenting the Welsh Tales of the Mabinogion at its annual Spring Festival this year. The event will be held at the Klee Wyck Art Centre, 200 East Keith Road, West Vancouver, on March 15th from 10 am to 5 pm and 7 pm to 9 pm, and on March 16th from 11 am to 5 pm.

21 professional, experienced and emerging tellers from Vancouver, Bowen Island, Victoria and Washington State will present the stories from Wales' famous medieval collection.

The fee is \$35 for tellers and listeners alike, to include a pot luck lunch on both days and a catered Welsh groaning board for Saturday's dinner. On the Saturday evening there will be performances of Welsh music on harp, lute and cello, as well as some rollicking Welsh folk tales.

Anyone who would like to attend may call the office of the Vancouver Society of Storytelling at 604-876-2722. Those interested in telling, providing music or helping in any other way, should contact Abegael Fisher-Lang at 604-985-5168 or e-mail afl@mythopoetica.ca

The Mabinogion consists of 11 traditional Welsh tales, written down in the Thirteenth Century. They are a combination of fantasy, myth, history and folklore, conjuring up a magical and enchanted world of Celtic antiquity. They were first translated by Lady Charlotte Guest in the early Nineteenth Century; however the later translation by Professors Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones in 1949, together with its subsequent revision in 1974 by Gwyn Jones is 'commonly regarded as a classic of its kind.'

The tales are grouped as follows: the four branches (Pedair Cainc) of the Mabinogi, *Pwyll*, *Branwen*, *Manawydan*, and *Math*; four independent native tales, *The Dream of Maccsen Wledig*, *Lludd and Llefelys*, *Culhwch and Olwen* (the earliest Arthurian tale in Welsh), and *The Dream of Rhonabwy*; and three Arthurian romances, *The Lady of the Fountain*, *Peredur*, and *Geraint son of Erbin*.

Welsh and Elvish in the Lord of the Rings

By EIFION WILLIAMS

Actress Liv Tyler was recently asked by talk show host Conan O'Brien to say a few words in the Elvish language she speaks as Princess Arwen in the movie *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*.

Tyler did so and then volunteered the information that JRR Tolkien's invented language, known as Sindarin, sounded very much like Welsh. Conan thought it sounded like Gaelic.

Whether Tyler or Conan were aware of it or not, most experts on the various languages of Tolkien's Middle-earth are agreed that this particular language was indeed modelled on Welsh.

In a BBC interview in 1971 Tolkien also admitted that the names of persons and places in *The Lord of the Rings* were deliberately modelled on those of Welsh. "This element in the tale," he said, "has given more pleasure to more readers than anything else in it."

Tolkien was a philologist, a student of languages, whose day job for most of his life was Professor of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English at Oxford University.

His love of languages led him from an early age to invent some of his own, many of which he later put into the mouths of the hobbits, dwarves, elves, orcs and other sundry peoples who inhabit his imaginary world.

Tolkien frequently recounted the story that he first encountered the Welsh language on passing coal

trucks while growing up in the English Midlands. He described the experience as "a flash of strange spelling and a hint of language old and yet alive. It pierced my linguistic heart."

Tolkien became fascinated by Welsh words like "adeiladwyd" (built) which he saw on stone slabs above the entrances to Welsh chapels.

He later came to relish the music and enchantment of Welsh words like "alarch," "eryr," "awel," "niwl," and "glas," many of which he later simulated in the languages of Middle-earth.

After graduating from Oxford, Tolkien surprised many of his contemporaries by deciding to use an English Prize from Exeter College to study Welsh. His heavily annotated copy of John Morris Jones' Welsh Grammar is in the English Faculty Library at Oxford.

Towards the end of his life, in an essay called "English and Welsh," Tolkien wrote that he learned Welsh because he believed the pleasure to be attained from Welsh words could only be experienced by those who speak and understand it.

Welsh was not the only linguistic influence on Tolkien. Anglo-Saxon, German and Old Norse influences are also evident in much of his writing. He was especially taken with Finnish, on which Quenya, the other Elvish language in *The Lord of the Rings* is based.

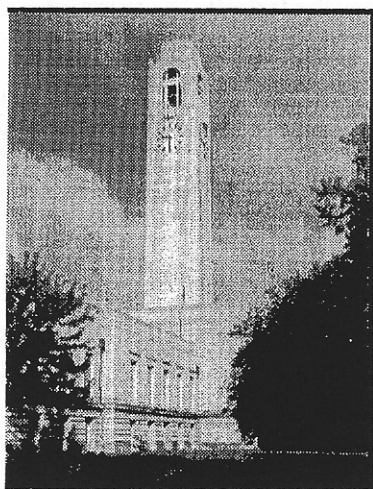
For his stories Tolkien drew heavily on Old English epics like *Beowulf*, the Norse sagas and Welsh and Irish folk traditions. Many of these tales involve heroes who overcome overwhelming odds to defeat the forces of evil and are full of the magic, monsters and mythical kingdoms that have delighted so many millions of Tolkien's readers.

But it is the magic of language that obsessed Tolkien and that makes *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy so fascinating. He firmly believed that people could experience sense and pleasure from the mere sounds of words.

He himself once stated that the stories were made to provide a world for the languages rather than the reverse, while several critics have suggested that Tolkien created his fantasies simply to hang his words on.

The Sindarin line quoted by Liv Tyler was "Law hir nin udalen I riw anirach nui lu gwarnad uen gwaith lin," which could easily be mistaken for Welsh by a non-Welsh speaker.

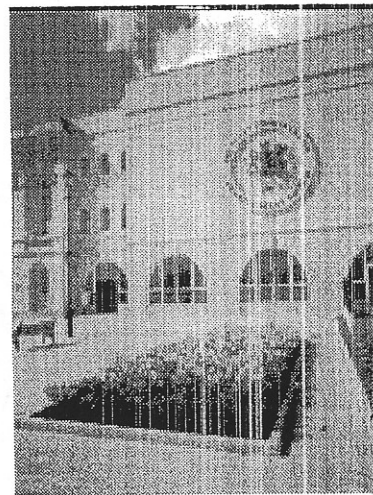
It is no accident that Tolkien put these Welsh-sounding words in the mouth of the beautiful dark-haired elf Arwen, or that the equally beautiful Liv Tyler was chosen to speak them in the movie. In Tolkien's own words, "Welsh is of this soil, this island, the senior language of the men of Britain, and Welsh is beautiful."



THE GUILDHALL in Swansea



HER WORSHIP Councillor June Burtonshaw, the Lord Mayor of Swansea



THE DYLAN THOMAS Centre in Swansea

St. David's Day Greetings from Swansea

Faithful readers may recall that last year at this time Catholine Butler interviewed the Lord Mayor of Cardiff for *The Celtic Connection*. The Lord Mayor conveyed his good wishes to ex-patriot Welsh on the occasion of St. David's Day. This year Catholine has interviewed the Lord Mayor of Swansea, Councillor June Burtonshaw, who extends the following greetings to Welsh people abroad who will be celebrating St. David's Day:

Annwyl Darllenwyr,

Mae'n rhoi pleser mawr i mi estyn cyfarchion i chi i gyd o Ddinas a Sir Abertawe yng Nghymru, sy'n rhan o'r Deyrnas Unedig.

Anfonir y cyfarchion hyn i bawb, ond yn arbennig i'r rheiny ohonoch sydd o darddiad Cymreig ac y gadawodd eich teuluoedd y Dywysogaeth i ymgartrefi yn Canada. Pob dymuniad da i chi wrth Ddydd Gwyl Dewi nesau, ac rwy'n gobeithio os byddwch yn penderfynu ymweld a Chymru ryw bryd, y byddwch yn manteisio ar y cyfle i ddod i Abertawe.

Mae'n ddinas ar lan y mor sydd a bae ysgubol 5 milltir o hyd, lleoliad di-ail sy'n caniatáu i chi gerdded o ganol dinas fywiog i draeth godidog mewn llai na phum munud. Mae gennym hefyd dros 70 o draethau, ym amrywio o rai diogel gyda digon o dywod i'r teulu i arfordir dramatig gyda golygfeydd anhygoel.

Mae hefyd yn ddinas hanesyddol iawn gyda llawer o adeiladau gwych o ddiddordeb, gan gynnwys Neuadd y Ddinas ei hun lle 'rwyf yn aml yn derbyn ynwelwyr a'r ddinas ac yn trefnu taith o amgylch yr adeilad dinesig gwych hwn.

Mae'n wir yn ddinas gwerth ei gweld, ac os dewch yma, gallwn eich sicrhau y cewch groeso cynnes Cymreig.

Yn gywir,

Y Cynghorydd June Burtonshaw
Gwir Anrhydeddus Arglwydd Faer
Dinas a Sir Abertawe.

Dear Readers,

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you all greetings from the City and County of Swansea, Wales, U.K.

These sentiments are sent to all, but particularly to those of you who are of Welsh extraction and whose families have left the Principality to settle in Canada. As St. David's Day approaches, I wish you all well and hope that if you ever decide to visit Wales, that you take the opportunity to visit Swansea.

It is a city by the sea with a magnificent sweeping five-mile bay, an unrivalled location, whereby you can walk from a lively city centre to a fabulous beach in less than five minutes. We also have more than 70 beaches ranging from safe and sandy family beaches to dramatic coastal stretches with breathtaking views.

It is also a city steeped in history with many fine buildings of interest including our own Guildhall where I often receive visitors to our city and arrange a tour of this fine civic building. It is a city worth visiting, and if you do, we can assure you of a warm Welsh welcome.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor June Burtonshaw
The Right Worshipful Lord Mayor of
The City and County of Swansea

SACRED HERB OF WALES



Whether it is regarded as a "sacred herb" or "the poor man's asparagus" there is no doubt that the leek has been grown, eaten and even revered since ancient times. Truly, it is a vegetable of antiquity.

Although closely connected with Wales, it is in fact native to lands of the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. When King Ahab, assisted by Jezebel, coveted Naboth's vineyard for a kitchen garden, did he visualise rows and rows of this succulent green and white vegetable? It is possible, for leeks were widely grown in the Bible Lands and the fact that the Hebrew word for leek is also translated as "herb" suggested that it might have been regarded as THE herb.

For as long as food records have been kept, the leek has received an honourable mention. In those two cradles of civilisation, Egypt and Mesopotamia, leeks flourished in the gardens and their praises were sung. "We remember . . . the leeks," cried the Israelites in the wilderness, as they pined for the good things of Egypt. Mocking references are found to Egypt as a land "where leeks are gods" and according to the Greek historian, Herodotus, the labourers who built the Great Pyramid were fed on radishes, onions and leeks. Other contemporary records stated that the best leeks came from Egypt and were grown by the Pharaohs.

Many "British" plants are attributed to the coming of the Romans, with varying degrees of accuracy. Leeks are included in the list. Their Latin name "allium porrum" comes to life when adapted to "porrophagus," the nickname given to the Emperor Nero who consumed vast quantities of them, believing they were good for his voice. There is certainly written evidence that the leek was used in Roman recipes as a vegetable, a salad ingredient and for flavouring.

To state simply that the leek is a hardy biennial that likes deep, rich soil is to ignore entirely its magical properties, for it was among the leeks at Hallowe'en that a Welsh girl could see her future husband. All she had to do was to walk into the garden backwards and place a knife among the leeks. Then her future husband would appear and throw the knife into the middle of the garden!

The daffodil, the leek's rival as a Welsh emblem, is known in Welsh as "cenhinen Pedr," Peter's leek, or "cenhinen Fawrth," the March leek. Much has been debated, and little decided, about the origin of the leek as a Welsh emblem. One story attributes it to the abstemious St David, who drank water "and fed upon the leeks in the fields," to quote the Tudor Poet Laureate, Drayton, who also referred to the leek as "the sacred herbe," worn in memory, on the anniversary of the saint's death.

Many other theories associate the leek with "battles long ago." King Arthur's men, say some, wore leeks in their caps (by order of St David!) when they were victorious over the Saxons. It was at the Battle of Meigen say others, when Cadwallon and the Britons defeated

Edwin of Northumbria in 633, that the Welsh wore leeks. At the Battle of Crecy, the Welsh troops wore leeks, but it was not for that reason alone that they were known as the Green and Whites; the Black Prince ordered that the Welsh of the Principality should be given a uniform, a short coat and hat in green and white. Thus clad, five thousand of them, spearmen from the north and long-bowmen from the south, fought for the king.

The most famous "literary" leek is surely the one forced on Pistol by Fluellen in Shakespeare's "Henry V". Leeks were popular in Tudor times. It has been said that in Henry Tudor's coat of arms were the Valois colours, green and white, and that when he was in exile, his followers recognised each other by producing any flower or vegetable which showed a green stem going white at the root end. Leek or daffodil? His grand-daughter, Mary Tudor, was presented with a leek when she distributed gifts on March 1, to the Yeomen of the Guard. Another monarch to wear the leek was George III, for a London newspaper of 1793 said: "In compliment to the day, that of the tutelar Saint of Wales, His Majesty wore a leek in his hat."

The Coal Miner

A Welshman stood at the golden gate
His head was bent and low
He meekly asked the man of fate
The way that he should go
What have you done St Peter said
To gain admission here
I merely mined for coal he said
For many, many a year
St Peter opened wide the gate
And softly tolled the bell
Come choose your harp he said
You've had your share of hell.

Submitted by Jeff Owen

Moli'r iaith drwy arethio – a mawr sêl
Mawrhau'i sant wna'r Cymro.
O! Cofied, cadwed mewn co'
Ein cenedl, - wedi'r cinio.

O. Trevor Roberts
Ruthin

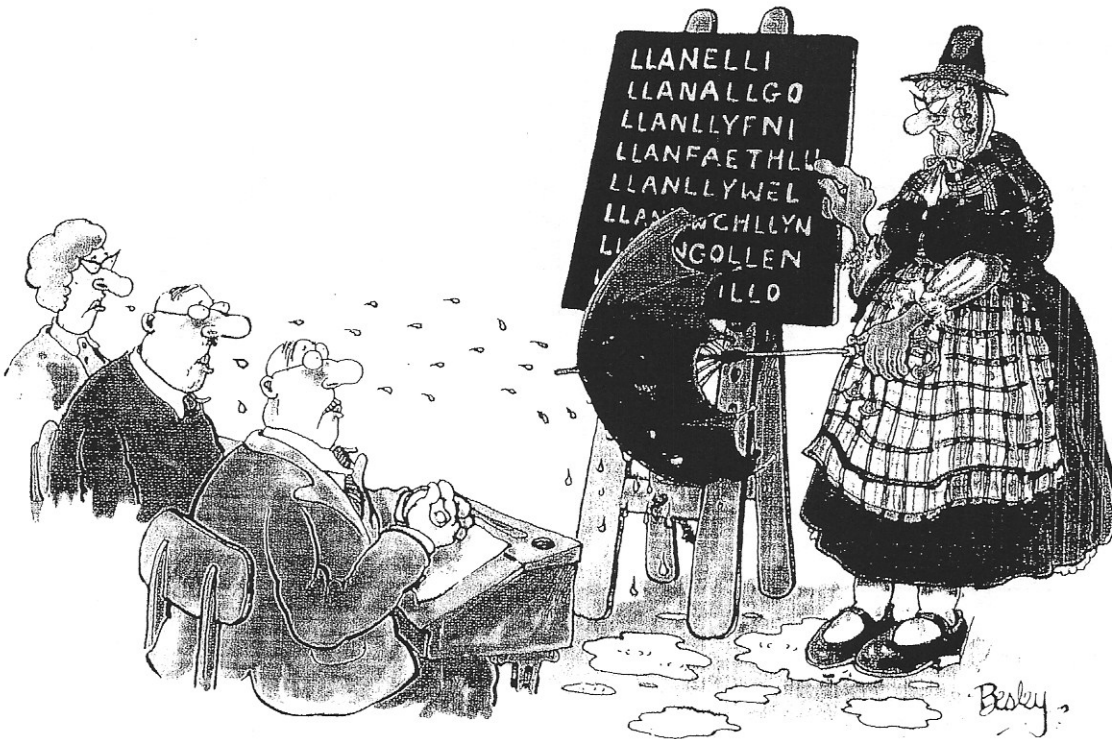
Submitted by Capt. I. Lampshire-Jones

He praises his language through oratory
– and with great zeal
The Welshman extols his saint.
Oh! Remember, retain in your memory
Our nation, -- after the dinner!

A translation by D. Llewelyn Williams

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'TO PRONOUNCE THE WELSH 'LL: PLACE THE TIP OF THE TONGUE AGAINST THE TOP FRONT TEETH AND BLOW HARD...'

February 2003

Mis Chwefror 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
16	17 Welsh Speaking Evenings	18	19 W.A. (Noon) Mig	20 Thursdays Welsh Folk Dancers	21	22 Pig & Whistle Red Dragon Open 8.30 p.m.
23	24	25	26 Cambrian Circle Singers	27 Welsh Folk Dancers	28	

March 2003

Mis Mawrth 2003

2	3	4	5 7:30 p.m. Exec. Mig	6 Thursdays Welsh Folk Dancers	7 8:00 p.m. Cambrian Circle Singers	8 Red Dragon Open 8.30 p.m.
9 11:00 a.m. Church Service and te bach	10	11	12	13 Welsh Folk Dancers	14 Cambrian Circle Singers	15 Red Dragon Open 8.30 p.m.

Welsh Men's Choir Rehearsals Tuesdays at Cambrian Hall
Orpheus Choir Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m. @ John Oliver High School

Orpheus info line: 515-5686

Gymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver Welsh Society
Cambrian Hall, 215 E. 17th Ave, Vancouver, B.C.
V5V 1A6 Telephone:- 604 876-2815