

THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

*Cambrian News*

**Chwefror  
2017**

**February  
2017**

*Society Newsletter - Cylchgrawn y Gymdeithas*



*Santa visits the Society's Children's Party*

CAMBRIAN HALL, 215 East 17<sup>th</sup> Ave, Vancouver B.C. V5V 1A

## VANCOUVER WELSH SOCIETY

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#### **Treasurer:**

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### Contacts:

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#### **Cambrian Circle Singers:**

**Nerys Haqq**

#### **Church Service:**

**Various**

#### **Welsh Speaking Group:**

**Roy Beavon**

#### **Rentals:**

**Alcwyn Rogers**

#### **Social Events Committee:**

**Gillian Rogers**

[www.welshsociety.com](http://www.welshsociety.com)

#### **Webmaster:**

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## *The Cambrian News*

### **From the Editor:**

After a series of very successful Fall and Christmas events at the Red Dragon, we've welcomed in the New Year and now look forward to the many activities and events scheduled for 2017. These include regular twmpath/barn dances, a St. Dwynwen's Day dinner, an Open House, a St. David's Day Banquet, the Spring Sale and Silent Auction and, hopefully, performances of A Child's Christmas in Wales for December. This year more events will be held during daylight hours, as several members have voiced concern about driving to and from the hall during the hours of darkness. Sadly, we mark the recent passing of two stalwarts of the Welsh Society in Vancouver: **Captain Ieuan Lampshire-Jones**, on 30 December and **Neville Thomas** on 4 January. Obituaries for Ieuan and Neville appear below.

At a recent luncheon, a new initiative was launched by several UK cultural groups "to reach out to the wider community for mutual support in our separate ventures." Representatives were urged to encourage their groups to give thought to the ways in which we might work together in the future to make our individual groups stronger and more effective, thus enhancing the profile, in terms of their contribution to Canadian life and culture, of those whose roots are in the United Kingdom.

Please note the upcoming events in your calendar and enjoy the reports, articles and accompanying photographs put together for your enjoyment in this edition of the Vancouver Welsh Society newsletter.

Ruth Baldwin

## Forthcoming Events

*Note: Please consult the Society Website for a detailed and frequently updated list of forthcoming and regular events.*

### *Genealogy Group*

**Wednesday 15 March.** Meeting in the Red Dragon from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm.

### *Pig 'n' Whistle*

**Saturday 18 February** at 7:00 pm. The Vancouver Orpheus Choir will hold its evening fundraiser of music and comedy in the hall. Admission \$20. All are welcome. Come along and join in the fun. Tickets from Alwyn Rogers by phone (604-742-1378) or email [Alwyn@shaw.ca](mailto:Alwyn@shaw.ca)

### *Welsh Speaking Group*

**Monday 20 February and Monday 20 March** at 10:30 am. Siarad Cymraeg y bore' ma.

### *Work Party Day*

**Monday 27 February and Monday 27 March** from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. The usual delicious lunch will be served.

### *Vancouver Welsh Society Open House*

**Tuesday 28 February.** The bar will open at 7.00 pm. The opening procession will be followed by a proclamation by Councilor Geoff Megs. The Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir will sing and a delicious *cawl cennin* (leek and potato soup) and rolls will be served. The evening will include plenty of singing!

## *St David's Day Banquet*



**Saturday 4 March** at 6:15 pm. Dinner at 7:00 pm. An evening of the most delightful food and entertainment is planned. The dinner will be catered by Jordan's International Food Designs and the menu will consist of:

Leek soup (served at the table)

Rolls and butter

Garden salad

Hot vegetables

Roast beef and gravy

Chicken

Vegetarian dish

Dessert squares

Fruit plate

Tea and coffee

Tickets at \$40 each from Gaynor Evans by phone (604-271-3134) or email

[fgevans@telus.net](mailto:fgevans@telus.net) Please reserve your seat as soon as possible.

### *Executive Meeting*

**Monday 6 March** at 7:30 pm.

### *Cambrian Bookworms*

**Wednesday 8 March** at 12 noon. This month's book is *Into the Abyss*, by Carol Shaben.

### *Bilingual Service*

**Sunday 12 March** at 11:00 am. This will be followed by a *tê bach* (light refreshments).

### *Quiz Night*

Friday 7 April. Details available soon!

**Celtic Studies Association  
of North America 2017  
Annual Meeting,  
Vancouver, BC  
27 – 30 April 2017**

The conference includes panels on Welsh history, myth and legend, and poetry. Welsh Society members are welcome without having to pay the registration fee on presentation of a current (2017) Vancouver Welsh Society membership card. Members are also welcome to attend the conference pub night (28 April). Further details and a full schedule are available at:  
<https://csana2017.wordpress.com/conference-schedule/>  
<https://csana2017.wordpress.com/registration/>

**GRAND SPRING SALE**  
**Saturday 13 May**  
**10:00 am to 2:00 pm**

Our most successful fundraiser!  
With your help, this can be our  
very best yet!

Contact Gillian (604-742-1378) or  
[Gillian.Rogers@shaw.ca](mailto:Gillian.Rogers@shaw.ca) or any  
member of the Social Committee  
to work out how you can help and  
when you are free to volunteer.  
Further details on the Society  
Webpage.

***Eurofest***

Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 May. Details to follow.

**Regular Events**

***Welsh Lessons***

At present, these are held on Thursday evenings, from 7:00 – 9:00 pm in the Red Dragon. These well-taught classes are fun, excellent for exercising the brain, AND FREE! Please see the Society Website for the Winter term schedule.

***Bilingual Church Service***

Second Sunday of the month.

***Executive Meetings***

First Monday of the month at 7:30 pm for board members only.

***Welsh Speaking Group***

Third Monday of the month in the Red Dragon at 10:30 am.

***Genealogy Group***

Third Wednesday of the month from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm.

***Volunteer Working Party***

Fourth Monday of the month from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm.

***General Meetings***

Held in February, April, June, September and November on the Monday following the executive meeting at 7:30 pm. The ***Annual General Meeting*** is held in December, date to be arranged.

***Cambrian Bookworms***

Second Wednesday of every month at noon.

## Forthcoming Events: Other UK Groups

### *Brexit Conference in Vancouver*

**Friday 24 February** at midday at University Canada West, 626 West Pender Street, between Granville and Seymour. Lunch at the start. Two feature speakers, one of whom will be the new British Consul General, will address the conference, after which there will be a discussion. Registration: Shawn Wade at [shawnmwade@hotmail.com](mailto:shawnmwade@hotmail.com) Further information from Dan Brown at [stgeorge@telus.net](mailto:stgeorge@telus.net)

### *Vancouver Ceilidh Dance*

**Friday 24 February** from 7:00 to 11:00 pm at the Scottish Cultural Centre, 8886 Hudson Street, Vancouver. Contact: <http://www.rscdsvancouver.org/dance/vancouver-ceilidh-dance-2/>

### *Mixer & Pub Night*

**Saturday 25 February** at 6:00 pm (pub lunch) and 7:00 pm (mixer). Kerrisdale Royal Canadian Legion Br 30, 2177 W. 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Vancouver.

### *Joint St. Patrick's Celebration*

**Saturday 11 March.** To be arranged. Details: [celtict@telus.net](mailto:celtict@telus.net)

## REQUEST FOR HELP

**Elfyn Pugh**, from England, is trying to contact **Clive Thomas** from Tamworth, Staffordshire, England, who was originally from South Wales. He is thought to have settled in Vancouver some years ago. Before leaving the UK,

Clive was an active member of Staffordshire Rugby Union Coaching Society. He was Chairman and Elfyn was secretary. Elfyn would appreciate Society members' help in reconnecting with Clive Thomas. Elfyn can be reached at [elfyn.pugh@talktalk.net](mailto:elfyn.pugh@talktalk.net)

**Welcome to New Members!**  
**Heather Evans**  
**Sarah Henderson**  
**Robert Potts**  
**John Smith**

## Recent society events

### **The Welsh Weekend**

4 – 6 November

#### **Noson Lawen**

Friday 4 November

The weekend began with a noson lawen (social evening) that was great fun despite the disappointingly small number of participants.

**Antone Minard**, whose specialty is Celtic languages and literature, told several ghoulish Breton folk tales, from which we chiefly learned that the Celts of old thought it very unlucky to have contact with a dead body; it was believed to lead inexorably to one's own demise. Modern Celts know that we have less to fear from the dead than from the living! **David Llewelyn Williams** read some great poems, including an amusing one entitled, "Take 'em off!"

**Jackie Jones Chapman** had us in stitches with her reading of comic verse and **Brian Jones** (on concertina) and **Paul Lievesley** (on melodeon) played a selection of traditional tunes while we pulled ourselves together.



**Eifion Williams** gave another of his brain-teasing quizzes that are enjoyed so much at our events. It provided many interesting facts, a good work out for our intellects and a lot of laughter. No noson lawen is complete without a buffet of delicious edibles, and we all enjoyed a selection of scrumptious treats while we sang traditional songs in both Welsh and English, accompanied by **Rhuannedd Meilen** on the piano.



## **Church Service** Sunday 6 November

Because a Gymanfa Ganu was planned for the afternoon and many of the best loved and most well-known hymns would be sung at this festival, the hymns chosen for the church service were less familiar. However, the congregation more than rose to the challenge! **Eifion Williams** gave a fascinating *sgwrs* on the story behind the creation of the recently erected memorial to the Welsh soldiers who died at the battle of Pilkem Ridge, which is very near where the poet Hedd Wyn was killed during the Battle of Passchendaele. **David Llewellyn Williams** added an interesting post script to the talk by drawing our attention to an article on the Website, WalesOnline, describing a visit by the Welsh national football team to the memorial. After a drawn game with the Belgians in Brussels in November 2014, the Welsh football team turned down an early flight home to instead travel some 150 miles to visit the war memorial to Welsh soldiers who had died during the Great War. “Megastar” Gareth Bale asked especially to see Hedd Wyn’s grave.

From [www.walesonline.co.uk](http://www.walesonline.co.uk)

## **Gymanfa Ganu** Sunday 6 November

Although, like the noson lawen, the Gymanfa Ganu attracted a disappointingly small number, those who came made up for the small numbers by singing so lustily that anyone passing by the hall would have thought there was twice the number!

The conductor was **Jonathan Quick**, who is the musical director of The Vancouver Welsh Men’s Choir, and the accompanist was **Ray Batten**. Soloist **Sarah Henderson** sang four beautiful pieces – *Unwaith Eto’n Nghymru Annwyl* (Once Again in the Dear Country); I Sing as a Bird (*’Rwy’n Canu*); The opening

aria, *Ombra Mai Fu*, from G.F Handel's opera, *Cerse*, and Meinir Williams' *Y Blodau Ger y Drws*.

The wonderful afternoon finished with tē bach in the Red Dragon.



**Sarah Henderson**

**Mulled Wine Evening**  
Friday 3 December

Approximately twenty members gathered in the Red Dragon to sing of carols, led by **Sharon McIntee Birrell** and accompanied by **Ruben Federizon** on piano. Mulled wine and cranberry punch was served to keep our vocal cords supple, and mince pies and sausage rolls to keep up our strength.

While we rested our voices, **Nathan Hayward** played a series of tunes on the Scottish smallpipe, including *Suo Gân*, two folk tunes (one English and one Dutch) and “*We wish you a merry Christmas*.”

**Paul** and **Tora** made us all laugh with the hilarious spoof, “A Child’s Christmas in Scarborough,” (the Ontario one!), after which, on a soberer note, **Kathy Thomas** read the moving final pages of Dickens’

*Christmas Carol*, in which, having been shown very vividly by the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future, the probable consequences of his avarice, selfishness and spite, Scrooge resolves to live from this moment on according to principles founded on generosity and love. And he finds, to his delight and surprise, that the by-product of kindness is deep and abiding joy.

After this beautiful reading, which reminded us of the true meaning of the coming season, we sang more carols, finishing with a lovely solo by **Sharon** of “O Holy Night.”

Before the evening was over, some lucky members won wine, chocolates or bath goodies in the raffle - and you know the membership is getting on a bit when few of us can read the ticket numbers by candle light!

What a truly smashing evening.

**A Child’s Christmas in Wales**  
Friday 9 and Saturday 10 December

This is an annual favourite, not just in the Welsh community, but with a wide audience and, as usual, the event was very well attended. The performance included live original music and carol singing as well as a performance by **Russell Roberts** of an abridged version of Dylan Thomas’s well-loved story. **Brian Tate**, **Colleen Winton** and **Gower Roberts** provided the wonderful live music and seasonal songs.

For 2017, an extra performance is being planned, to give more folk the opportunity to attend. And to accommodate those who prefer not to travel at night, a matinée performance is in the works. Look out for further details.



Russell Roberts, Colleen Winton, Brian Tate, and Gower Roberts

### **Carol Service**

Sunday 11 December

The Welsh are never known to miss an opportunity to sing, and those who attended the carol service enjoyed the wonderful carols and were able to stay on after the t  bach to witness the fun and games at the afternoon children's party and visit with Santa.

### **Vancouver Welsh Society Children's Christmas Party**

Sunday 11 December

Once again, Gaynor and her daughters worked their special magic to provide a superb party for the Society members' children and grandchildren. Traditional party games, a yummy tea, a visit from Santa (did you know Santa is originally Welsh? Well, he has a Welsh accent!) and Gaynor's unerring instinct for just the right gift for each child made the party a highlight of the festive season for participants, mums, dads and grandparents alike.





**Christmas Dinner**  
Saturday 17 December

Thanks to **Gaynor Evans'** brilliant organizational skills, members enjoyed another great Christmas Dinner of turkey, ham and all the trimmings, catered by Jordan's International Food Designs. Of course, the evening included lots of carol singing and some festive contributions from participants. **Roy Beavon** entertained us with a fine trumpet performance and **Jackie Jones Chapman** gave a memorable recitation.



**Jackie Chapman Jones**



**Roy Beavon**

**The Welsh Society**  
**Ceilidh/Twmpath/Barn dance**  
Friday 28 January

The Welsh Society's second twmpath was as great a success as its first – practically a sell-out. The dance gave a great start to the events of the year, with The Rattlebone Band performing folk tunes and JD Erskine calling the dances. Dancers from eight to eighty took to the floor, seasoned dancers and rookies alike. The hall buzzed with conversation and laughter and the Welsh cakes went like – well, hot cakes. The dance was pronounced the most fun one can get anywhere for 10 bucks and participants excited to know that the dance is going to be a regular fixture at the Cambrian Hall. Don't miss the next one, tentatively scheduled for May.



### St Dwynwen's Day Celebration Saturday 4 February

Since many members prefer to drive during the daytime, the Society's St Dwynwen's Day celebration was held in the afternoon in the hope that a larger number would be able to attend. Alas, the arrival of heavy snow made driving hazardous and only about twenty people were able to attend. Despite the sparse attendance, the event was a success. In the romantic setting of the candle-lit Red Dragon, **David Llewelyn Williams** started the celebration with an introduction to the story of St Dwynwen, patron saint of lovers and Welsh equivalent to St. Valentine. The 5<sup>th</sup> century maiden was purported to be the prettiest of King Brychan Brycheiniog's twenty-four daughters. There are several tales – from tame to barbaric - told of her, but one story relates that as she danced at a feast given by her father, a young man called Maelon fell in love with her and

wanted to marry her. When the romance failed to thrive – for reasons that differ according to different versions of her tale - she prayed for deliverance from her feelings of love for Maelon. Delivered through a potion given her by an angel, she then retreated to Ynys Llanddwyn, off the coast of Anglesey, and founded a nunnery for girls similarly afflicted with heart-break.

Now that all present were thoroughly in the mood for romance, **Sharon McIntee Birrell** (accompanied on the piano by **Tae Maeda**) sang romantic songs, including Hoagy Carmichael's "The Nearness of You" and Irvin Berlin's "Cheek to Cheek."

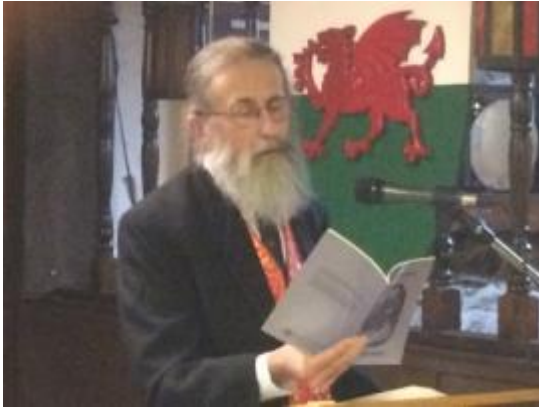
Special guest of the occasion was **Griffith H. Williams**, from Washington State, whose bardic name is **Gruffydd Hirwallt**. **Gruffydd** braved the snow to drive to Vancouver with his wife, **Laurie**, to read a selection of his poetry and make available a selection of anthologies of his poems, printed and illustrated by himself on his own presses. **Gruffydd's** well-crafted and inspirational poems delighted all present and many members of the audience bought copies of the anthologies.

**Gruffydd** read several *englynion* (short poems), before explaining that the bard's task is to recreate old stories for contemporary audiences and reading a long poem, an adaptation of the legend of Myrddin and Nimue entitled "Myrddin's Breakout."

After taking part in a sing-along comprising Welsh love songs such as "Myfanwy," "Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn" ("Watching the White Wheat"), and "Merch y Melinydd" ("The Miller's Daughter") and being entertained by more poems from **Gruffydd**, participants sampled the delicious treats provided by the social committee, and enjoyed several more romantic songs (including "From this Moment on" and "The Very Thought of You") sung by **Sharon**, who crowned

the evening with a beautiful rendering one of the loveliest love songs of all - "The Rose." Bard **Gruffydd Hirwallt** can be reached at

[www.eastpointwestpress.com](http://www.eastpointwestpress.com)



**Gruffydd Hirwallt**

**Lunch at the Legion**  
Sunday 6 February

Several members of our Executive and their partners, attended a special meeting at the Kerrisdale Royal Canadian Legion Hall. We and other groups had been invited to join the Royal Society of St George for lunch following their A.G.M. During the hearty and delicious meal, we enjoyed linking with some of the other organizations in casual conversation. 12 organizations with U.K. connections had been invited, although some were unable to attend due to the very snowy weather conditions. After lunch there were short presentations from each of the groups present, giving us an idea of who they are and some of the activities and events they plan for this year. Among those present were representatives from the Commonwealth Society, the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, The English Country Dance Society, The Vancouver Morris Men, The Tiddly Cove Morris Dancers, the new Proprietor of the Celtic Treasure Chest, The Vancouver Welsh Society

and, of course, the hosts, The Royal Society of St. George.

The theme of the afternoon – to reach out to the wider community for mutual support in our separate ventures - was a concept of the R.S.S.G's returning President, Jayne Boyer, and this was translated and expanded upon by Steve McVittie, (newly retired from managing the Celtic Treasure Chest), who is now the R.S.S.G's Vice President- Marketing/ PR and Social Media + Pan Celtic Liaison. It was he that organized this first of several events. Steve's focus is to increase awareness of all our organizations, by providing publicity for each society's events, so that attendance can be increased and conflicts in scheduling can be avoided. I think this may prove to be especially valuable for our Welsh Society.

Pat Morris

As 2017 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Passchendaele in which the great Welsh bard, Hedd Wyn lost his life, it seems appropriate to revisit the article about him written by Artro Evans several years ago:

**The Black Chair of Birkenhead**

Gadair unig ei drig draw, - ei dwyfraich  
Fel pe'n difrif wrandaw,  
Heddiw estyn yn ddistaw  
Mewn hedd hir am un ni ddaw.

The solitary chair, the bard's abode – its  
two arms  
As if intently listening  
Silently reach out today  
In enduring peace for one that will never  
come.

"Hedd Wyn" by R. Williams Parry (tr. D. Ll. W.)

Ellis Humphrey Evans, better known by his bardic name of Hedd Wyn, was born on the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 1887 at a farm by the name of Ysgwrn near the village of

Trawsfynydd in Merionethshire, Wales. His education was not extensive, being confined to attendance at the local elementary school. His stay at the local council school was short-lived, for when he was old enough, he was pulled out to help on the farm. Although his schooling was limited, he was to inherit from his father, Evan Evans, his love of Welsh poetry. By the time he was twelve he had accrued a fundamental knowledge of its form and syntax. He continued his self-education by reading everything he could lay his hands upon - in particular Welsh literature. He borrowed books from friends and was a weekly visitor to the free council library in Blaenau Ffestiniog. His first poetic success came at the age of eighteen at Bala, where he won the bardic chair for a 'prydddest' entitled "Y Dyffryn" (The Valley). He came to know Elfed, the psalmist, and later, the renowned Welsh poet Eifion Wyn. It was at this juncture that he adopted the bardic name of Hedd Wyn. Further successes followed, at Pwllheli, at Pontardawe, and two chairs at Llanuwchllyn. In 1916 he came second in the National itself for his "awdl" (ode) entitled "Strata Florida." His interest in farming as such was to pale in comparison to his interest in composing poetry. However, a collection of his work entitled "Cerddi'r Bugail" ('The Poems of the Shepherd') was published posthumously.

On July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1917, elements of the 38<sup>th</sup> (Welsh) Division commenced to take over trenches on the west bank of the Yser Canal, a few miles north of the city of Ypres in Flanders. The sector was humming with activity as a total of seventeen 'fresh' divisions manoeuvred into line in anticipation of the coming offensive - activity that was not lost on the enemy. A few days later 'A' Company of the 15<sup>th</sup> (London Welsh) Battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers made a reconnaissance in strength over

the canal and were badly mauled in the process.

At Litherland, on Merseyside, new intakes were arriving to replace the drafts that had already left for the front, and it was here that 61117 Private E.H. Evans of Trawsfynydd had been moulded into a soldier in the Royal Welch Fusiliers. It was from here he left to join the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

At 3.50 a.m. on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July the attack platoons of the 38<sup>th</sup> Division moved across the Yser Canal. Other divisions on the flanks were similarly on the move to the thunderous cacophony of a barrage from the heavy artillery to the rear. The Third Battle of Ypres had begun, a battle which was later to become better known as the Battle of Passchendaele. It is unlikely perhaps that Hedd Wyn was to give even a passing thought to a poem entitled "The Hero" that he had submitted to the National Eisteddfod Council some weeks earlier, for he was with one of the assault platoons of his battalion as they moved into the maelstrom ahead. Like all his comrades-in-arms he must have wondered what the outcome would be on that day. The success of the 38<sup>th</sup> Division was nothing short of spectacular as it advanced on a fifteen hundred yard frontage, taking in its stride the city of Pilkem and smothering opposition on the Pilkem and Iron Cross Ridges. Within days it had advanced some two and a half miles and established a bridgehead over the River Steenbeck. The Division had achieved all its objectives, and in so doing had neutralized 250 concrete machine-gun emplacements, albeit at a heavy cost.

Meanwhile, in Birkenhead in Cheshire, frantic preparations of an entirely different nature were in progress, for the Merseyside city was girding itself for a Welsh "invasion" as it was hosting the Welsh National Eisteddfod that year.



At the Eisteddfod, held during the first week of August 1917, there was a tense and dramatic silence following the summons of the Archdruid for Hedd Wyn to reveal his identity and ascend the rostrum to take his place in the Bardic Chair. To win the Chair is one of the highest accolades that the National Eisteddfod can bestow upon one of its competitors, one bringing instant entry into the time-honoured Druid Circle. The audience was stunned when at last it became known that Hedd Wyn had been killed on Pilkem Ridge a few days earlier. The empty Bardic Chair was draped immediately with a black cloth and has since been known as “The Black Chair of Birkenhead.”

July 31st, 1917 was indeed a day of mixed fortunes. Three Welshmen were to receive the Victoria Cross, one posthumously, and Wales, in Hedd Wyn, was to lose one of its leading poets. Hedd Wyn was to the Welsh language what Wilfred Owen was to the English language. Both poets abhorred war, yet both died violently in their prime in war. By a sad twist of fate, Hedd Wyn was deprived of the knowledge that he had reached the pinnacle of his ambition as a poet; even more ironic perhaps is that “Hedd Wyn” translated means “Pure Peace.”

Mae gwaedd y bechgyn lond y gwynt,  
A'u gwaed yn gymysg efo'r glaw.

The young men's cries fill out the wind,  
Their blood flows mingled with the rain.  
*From the poem “Rhyfel” by Hedd Wyn  
 (“War” by Hedd Wyn (tr. D.Ll.W.)*

Submitted by Artro Evans.

## Interested in your Family History?

**We have a group for you!**

The Welsh Society has a genealogy group that has been meeting for about a year. Just this week, we decided to become affiliated with the British Columbia Genealogical Society as a Special Interest Group (Wales). Our main focus is Wales, but we discuss family history research for any area that a member is interested in. We meet monthly at the Cambrian Hall, 215 East 17th Avenue in Vancouver. Two members, Carole Smythe and Lynn Owens-Whalen are also members of BCGS. We know there are others in BCGS who are also researching Welsh roots. So, with the assistance of Eunice Robinson of BCGS, the Vancouver Welsh Society will be inviting any member of BCGS who has a special interest in Wales to join our group. And it goes without saying that we encourage any member of the Welsh Society who is interested in their family history to join us.

We meet monthly at the Cambrian Hall 215 East 17th Avenue, Vancouver (downstairs, enter from the back of the building).

Meeting time - third Wednesday of the month 10:30 am to 12:30 pm

Next two meetings: Wednesday February 15 and Wednesday March 15. □

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Carole

at: [csmmythe@telus.net](mailto:csmmythe@telus.net) or Lynn

at: [stellarj73@telus.net](mailto:stellarj73@telus.net) or Pat Morris at: [druidsgreen@gmail.com](mailto:druidsgreen@gmail.com)

Hope to see you there.

Lynn Owens-Whalen

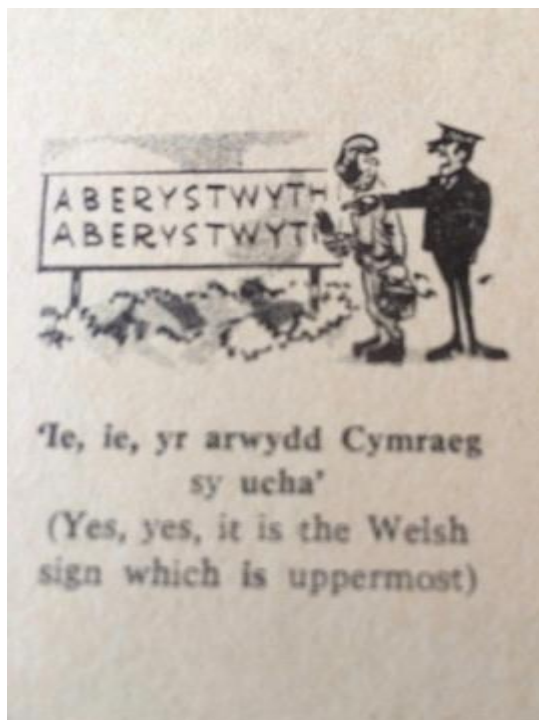
## AND NOW FOR SOME LIGHTHEARTED FUN

### Questions About Wales

- 1) What flower is used as an emblem of Wales?
- 2) Which vegetable is used as an emblem of Wales?
- 3) Which three colours are used on the Welsh flag?
- 4) Name the highest Welsh mountain.
- 5) On the border of England and Wales is an ancient earthwork which is also a well-known walk. What is this called?
- 6) Which English king was born at Pembroke Castle?
- 7) On which part of the coast can Pwllheli be found?
- 8) Which animal is Wales famous for breeding?
- 9) Name the setting for the TV series called *The Prisoner*.
- 10) What was the ancient Roman name for Anglesey?
- 11) Where was Welsh singer Shirley Bassey born?
- 12) Name the Welsh boxer who won Joe Lewis's world crown.
- 13) What was the original name of famous Welsh actor Richard Burton?
- 14) Which well-known Welsh entertainer is known for having women's underclothes thrown at him whenever he sings?
- 15) Name the popular Welsh TV presenter and singer who first shot to fame as a child, with her album "Voice of an Angel."
- 16) Name the politician who was born in Port Talbot, and who became Foreign Secretary and Chancellor for Margaret Thatcher's government?
- 17) Who is Wales's most famous poet and playwright?
- 18) Which Welsh comedian used to march around the stage holding a giant leek?
- 19) Name the Welsh singer and TV presenter who first won acclaim with "Walking in the Air"?
- 20) The TV series, *Torchwood*, is filmed in which Welsh city?
- 21) What is the Welsh name for St David?
- 22) When is St David's Day?
- 23) If you were born on St David's Day, what would your star sign be?
- 24) Which town was St David a bishop of?
- 25) What was St David given as a surname?
- 26) What did St David insist that his monks do for themselves, rather than use farm animals?
- 27) Which bird is often depicted as sitting on St David's shoulder?
- 28) What did St David allegedly do when people at the back of the crowd he was preaching to complained that they couldn't see or hear him?
- 29) Which two groups of people is St David said to be the patron saint of?
- 30) Where is St David's shrine?
- 31) What is the Welsh name for Wales?

- 32) What was the old Latin name for Wales?
- 33) Where was the Prince of Wales invested as the Prince of Wales?
- 34) Name the annual Welsh festival of the arts?
- 35) What is the name of the medieval collection of ancient Welsh folktales, some of which possibly date back to the Iron Age?
- 36) In the 15th century, who briefly restored Welsh independence from England?
- 37) What is the capital city of Wales?
- 38) What infamous deed by the Romans took place on Anglesey?
- 39) Who became the first British Prime Minister in 1916?
- 40) What are The Seven Wonders of Wales?

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On a beautiful summer's day, two English tourists were driving through Wales.

At Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrob wylllantysiliogogogoch they stopped for lunch and one of the tourists asked the waitress: "Before we order, I wonder if you could settle an argument for us. Can you pronounce where we are, very, very, very slowly?"

The girl leaned over and said:

"Burrr... gurrr... King."

[walesonline.co.uk](http://walesonline.co.uk)

*Answers in the next newsletter . . .*

## OBITUARIES



### CAPTAIN IEUAN LAMPshire-JONES

It was with profound sadness that members of the Welsh Society learned at the end of December of the passing of

long-time member Captain Ieuan Lampshire-Jones.

The Captain was respected and admired for his many years of service as a highly esteemed merchant navy officer and marine surveyor. His dedication to the Vancouver Welsh Society was evident right up to the last months of his life with his participation in the monthly bilingual church services at the Cambrian Hall. Ieuan Lampshire-Jones was born in 1923 in Aberarth, a small coastal village on the Ceredigion coast. The village has a long maritime history and up to the end of the nineteenth century was an important port with a thriving ship-building industry. Aberarth mariners sailed to all parts of the world and Ieuan himself came from a long line of seafarers. On his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, he wrote a memoir on his early years in Aberarth, in which he said: "I am the last Master Mariner born and raised in the village."

The centre of Ieuan's life growing up in Aberarth was Bethel Chapel and its Sunday School, where music became a part of his life. According to the diaries he kept on his many voyages, his skill as a pianist served him well on many occasions and he frequently played piano or organ accompaniments at events in the Cambrian Hall.

Given his maritime background, it is no wonder that Ieuan went to sea, joining his first ship in Avonmouth in 1939. A November, 2012 Veteran Profile of Ieuan in the magazine *BC Shipping News* carried the headline: SEAFARER OR SURVEYOR, CAPTAIN JONES OUTSHINES THEM ALL.

The Captain took part in the Second World War as a merchant seaman, winning six campaign medals, including the Burma Invasion Star, the North African Invasion Star and the Atlantic Star with clasp, denoting his contribution to the D-Day landing at Juno Beach. He was also a recipient of the 1939-1945 Second World War Civilian Medal.

After the War, Ieuan attended the Department of Marine Studies at the University of Wales, the Southshields Marine and Technical College and the City of London Polytechnic School of Navigation. He obtained his Master's certificate in 1950 and served on merchant ships to worldwide destinations throughout the 1950s and 1960s, frequently accompanied by his wife Philomena, whom he married in 1950. When he left the sea in 1969 Ieuan was the Senior Captain for one of the largest shipping companies in the world, World Wide Shipping out of Hong Kong. That same year he and his family immigrated to North Vancouver and Ieuan took up a position in Vancouver opening up a field office for SGS Supervision Services. As a Senior Principal and Manager for Gen-testing Laboratories, Ieuan built a formidable reputation for his expertise in marine surveying, covering a territory that included the entire Pacific Northwest from Northern California to Greenland. His expertise in bulk cargo loading led to his becoming well-known in the shipping world and his advice was sought by many companies and countries throughout the world.

In May, 2013, the Association of Marine Surveyors of BC held an awards ceremony and dinner in honour of Ieuan, who was one of the founders of the Association in 1968.

His cheerful personality and sense of humour undoubtedly contributed to the Captain's popularity with fellow mariners as it did with members of the Welsh Society. He served the Society in many capacities, including terms as President and Vice-President. For many years he played an active role in Society activities, including the monthly bilingual church services and Welsh-speaking sessions. It was at the monthly church services that three major influences in Ieuan's life became apparent – his faith, his music and his mother tongue – all nurtured



those many years before in the village of Aberarth and Bethel Chapel.

In November, 2015, the Welsh Society dedicated its Sunday Service to the Captain, in which members thanked him for all he had contributed to the Society and to people in so many parts of the world who had benefited from his lifetime of service.

The Vancouver Welsh Society extends its profound sympathy to Ieuan's wife Philomena, to his three daughters, Christine, Susan and Jill, grandchildren Nicholas, Adam, Nina and Kaleigh and great-grandchildren Charity and Nicola. A celebration of life for Captain Ieuan Lampshire-Jones was held on January 14 at Boal Chapel and Memorial Gardens, North Vancouver, with the Rev. Robin Jacobson officiating.

On the Ship of Life, He Stood His Watch  
Well.

Eifion Williams



## REMEMBERING NEVILLE THOMAS

Neville Thomas, who passed away on January 4, will be remembered by Welsh Society members as someone who probably did more than anyone to raise awareness of the Welsh community in the BC Lower Mainland.

With his wide circle of friends and involvement in several other community organizations, Neville represented the face of the Welsh Society to the public. Although socially and politically active as a proud Canadian, he never forgot the rich culture he inherited from his early days in Wales.

Neville gathered a multitude of friends during his lifetime, from his boyhood in Wales to his years in retirement. His circle of friends was not confined to British Columbia but extended to the UK, the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

John Neville Rees Thomas was born in 1939 on a farm near the Welsh village of Felindre, a small farming community near Swansea. He came from a Welsh-speaking family steeped in a traditional Welsh chapel and Sunday school environment. He was educated at Pontardawe Grammar School and the University of Wales, Swansea, where he graduated in 1961 with a BSc degree in Mathematics and Geology.

Following training as a teacher, Neville took up a position at a school in London's East End, followed by a year at the prestigious London Oratory School. In 1965 he emigrated to Canada, where his first teaching post was in the British Columbia coastal community of Ocean Falls.

After leaving Ocean Falls, Neville spent several months teaching in Australia and New Zealand before returning first to the UK and then, in 1968, returning once more to Canada, taking a teaching

position in the interior community of Quesnel. In 1969 he moved to Maple Ridge and taught first at Maple Ridge Secondary and then at Pitt Meadows Secondary, where he was a highly-respected mathematics teacher until his retirement in 1998.

In 1975, Neville married his beloved Kathy, a fellow teacher in Maple Ridge district, who shared his interests and supported him in his various endeavours. Kathy has since herself become an active and valuable member of the Vancouver Welsh Society.

Neville became a member of the Welsh Society in 1980 and continued to make valuable contributions to the Society for the rest of his life. He served on the Society's Executive in several capacities, including a term as Vice-President. As Membership Secretary in the 1980s, he enrolled more members than anyone else before or since. Many will remember Neville as a jovial MC and raconteur at popular Society events in the Cambrian Hall.

In the mid-1980s, as the Welsh Society's Building Committee Chair, Neville directed and shared in the renovation of the upstairs Hall, including building a stage and constructing new staircases. He was also a frequent contributor to the monthly bilingual religious services at the Cambrian Hall.

In 1985 the Welsh Society produced the first Vancouver performance of Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood* at the Cambrian Hall. In 1996 Neville, together with Allan Jones and Ted Langley, formed the Dylan Thomas Circle, which quickly attracted new members. Another performance of the popular play for voices was presented by the Circle in 2000, to much public acclaim.

Neville served the Dylan Thomas Circle in many capacities over the years, organizing events such as poetry readings, annual presentations of A

*Child's Christmas in Wales*, and annual outings to interesting venues in the Lower Mainland. Having lived in Swansea for several years, Neville was familiar with all the locations associated with Dylan's life and work.

He never lost his love for Swansea and rarely lost an opportunity to speak nostalgically of Dylan's "ugly, lovely town". He was a strong supporter of Welsh rugby and made many friends in the Vancouver rugby world. In 2002, following the death of Swansea-born Harry Secombe, Neville organized a presentation of sketches from the iconic 1950s radio show *The Goon Show*, which proved to be a huge success with many fellow British expats in the Vancouver area.

Following his retirement, Neville liked to meet in a pub or restaurant with as many friends as he could gather around him, the "lads" as he liked to call them. At these gatherings, he would forcefully hold forth on solutions to all the world's problems, although his contributions were usually laced with much humour.

Neville was a well-rounded individual with a wide range of interests and, whenever possible, involved in efforts to improve and build up membership in the Welsh Society. He was mindful of individual suffering and loyal to his many friends. He was also very aware of his Celtic background and frequently encouraged the involvement of other Vancouver Celtic groups in Welsh Society events at the Cambrian Hall. He could also be very sentimental, especially about his Welsh heritage. Many of us will always remember the many occasions at Cambrian Hall events when Neville requested a rendition of his favourite Welsh song, *Unwaith Eto 'Nghymru Annwyl*, which recounts the visit of an expat Welshman to his childhood home. Neville could never hide the inevitable tears when he heard the lines in the chorus:

*Magwyd fi ar ei bron  
Ces fy siglo yn ei chrud  
O holl wledydd y ddaear  
Dyma'r orau yn y byd.*



Welsh Society members and friends of Neville extend their sincere condolences to Kathy and Neville's family in the UK. Donations in Neville's memory can be sent to one of the following: Amnesty International, Vancouver Union Gospel Mission or the Vancouver Welsh Society.

Eifion Williams

**Celebration of Life:  
John "Neville" Rees Thomas**

There was standing room only at the Celebration of Life for **Neville Thomas** at the Cambrian Hall on Saturday 11 February, as two hundred and six family members, friends, colleagues and ex-pupils came to celebrate and remember Neville Thomas, who was known and loved by so many. Moving tributes were made by **Tom Sigurdson, Kristian Koschany, Nicolas Koschany** and **Anton Koschany**. A solo was sung by **John Owen** – "Unwaith Eto'n Nghymru Annwyl," Neville's favourite song. A photo tribute to Neville was compiled and screened by Willie Ritson-Bennett and **Jane Byrne** provided the final words. After the service têt bach was served in the Red Dragon where an open mike was provided for Neville's many friends to share their stories of times spent with Neville and his wife Kathy. The stories bore witness to the wonderful man that Neville was and the great impact he had on the lives of those who were fortunate enough to have known him.

*The next Newsletter* will hopefully reach you in May. Please send your photographs of Welsh Society events – not forgetting to give the names of the people in them! – to the editor, Ruth Baldwin, at [youcanreachruth@hotmail.com](mailto:youcanreachruth@hotmail.com)

Articles on events and issues of interest to the Welsh community for inclusion in the society newsletter are also very welcome. Enjoy all the wonderful events that are planned for the coming months, but ***don't forget that memberships are due for renewal!***

We're happy to send by mail a black and white, shortened version of the newsletter to members who don't have access to a computer. However, if you're currently receiving the Welsh Society newsletter by mail, but now have an email address and would like to receive the newsletter by email instead, please let the editor know. Aside from receiving the full version in glorious technicolor (!), you'll be helping to save money, time and the environment!

Your views and participation are very important for a thriving Welsh Society in Vancouver, so please come on out and join in!