

June/July.....1991.



Mehefin/Gorffennaf.1991

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

*Cambrian News*

Welsh Society Newsletter -- Cylchgrawn Cymraeg



PRIODAS YN NGHYMRU  
Returning from the Wedding

Returning from the Wedding in Wales. Circa 1700/1800.

COVER by ELLIS GRIFFITHS

CAMBRIAN HALL. 215. EAST 17th AVE, VANCOUVER. B.C. V5V 1A6. Telephone (604) 876-2815.....



# Wedding customs in Wales

THE folklore surrounding weddings in Wales has its roots in the mists of antiquity, but even in the sophisticated days of the late twentieth century the old beliefs and customs live on.

Soon after I was engaged, I went to show off my new ring and fiancé to my grandmother. When we had finished our tea and cakes, she went solemnly out of the shed and brought in an old shovel, on which she put two grains of wheat side by side, one for my fiancé and one for me. Then she set fire to them.

If they jumped off the shovel at the same time as they burnt, she informed us, we would marry in due course and be happy thereafter. But if one remained on the shovel after the other the marriage would not take place. Fortunately for us the two grains leapt on to the hearth at the same time!

## LOVE SPOONS

A charming custom in Glamorgan too, was the gift of a love spoon by the suitor to the lady of his choice. These spoons, carved in the country farm houses during the long dark evenings of winter, were often extremely intricate with delicate designs of hearts, initials and keys lovingly fashioned on the long wooden handles.

The number of bowls a spoon had, indicated the number of offspring the man would like from the union. The tale is told of one ambitious suitor who carved no less than eleven bowls of his love spoon, but no one seemed to know whether his ambition was ever fulfilled.

Choosing the time of year for the wedding was also surrounded by superstition, passed from mother to daughter throughout the centuries and a May wedding was believed to be very unlucky and is still avoided in many parts of the country.

This belief dates back, perhaps to Roman times when both the feast of the dead and the festival of the goddess of chastity were celebrated during the month of May. But maybe in Wales the true origin lies in the tradition of the early Celtic peoples who, we are told celebrated the beginning of summer in May with extra-marital love-making amidst the fields of ripening corn.

When the wedding day itself arrived, the couple had to walk pressed closely together on their

THIRTY-FOUR

## . . and one that ended with broken ribs

way to church so that no demons or evil spirits could cast "malignant shadows between them before they were blessed by the priest. Also they had to keep their eyes cast downwards on the walk lest they should be tempted to glance at another before being bound in holy matrimony!

In West Wales it was the custom to throw nuts and apples around the couple as they stood before the altar to bring them good luck in future years. In the early nineteenth century a curate officiating at a wedding at Llanedy found himself the victim of some widely-aimed missiles. He

## Margaret Waugh

was so angry that he vaulted over the chancel rail, seized the offender and threw him bodily out of the church. The poor culprit ended up with three broken ribs, and that particular custom came to an abrupt end.

Until the late nineteenth century Cardiganshire bridegrooms still had to capture their brides from her father's household before the ceremony could take place. The bridegroom and his friends had to ride on horseback to the bride's house which would be firmly locked and barred against them, and were met with resistance from the brides' friends. After much scuffling between the rival sides an exchange of witty questions and answers in verse would follow, sometimes lasting for several hours, until at last the bride's party conceded defeat to the words,

*"It is better you should  
take her  
Than disappoint the lover's heart."*

By then the bride had hidden and the groom had to search for her. Eventually she was captured and borne off by the groom's party to the church, closely pursued by her father and brothers.

Cardiganshire too, was the county of the "horse wedding", when a bride and her father would ride off at top speed from the village. The groom and his friends set off in hot pursuit with loud shouts, until the bride was captured and led back to the church for the ceremony.

## MYRTLE SPRIGS

In some parts of Wales the bouquet of the bride had to contain myrtle sprigs. When the wedding celebrations were over, the bridesmaids accompanied the newly-weds to their new home and planted myrtle from the bouquet on either side of the main door to bring peace and harmony to the household.

If the myrtle bloomed, that bridesmaid would marry in the near future herself, but if the plant did not flourish the planter was destined to be an old maid. Myrtle, however grows very easily and so the number of old maids was small.

In Carmarthenshire it was customary to summon guests to a wedding by sending a "bidder" through the village to sing the invitation, telling of the wedding meal to tempt the guests and suggesting gifts the couple would like, from a cow to a frying pan.

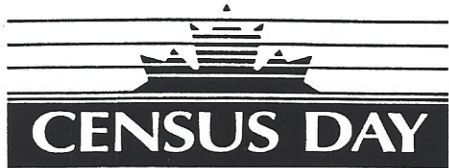
Their "rammas" or invitations had to be entertaining and witty to attract as many guests as possible. One such bidder in Laugharne in the 1840s dressed up in a white apron, carried a white be-ribboned staff and hung a bag around his neck for the bread and cheese given to sustain him on his long walk to the out-lying farmhouses.

Until the end of the eighteenth century, the ceremony did not end with the wedding day itself. Guests carried on the revelry with the custom of "bedding the bride". They would accompany the couple to their bedchamber and hang around for days after singing and drinking numerous toasts to the couple and their hoped-for progeny.

The origins of these superstitions are lost in time but they have survived through the ages to remind us of ancient cultures and long forgotten ways of life.



1 9 9 1 • C E N S U S



June 4 • Count Yourself In!

### Welsh Speakers Rare in Canada.

The 1986 Census reported that there were 1540 speakers of the Welsh language in Canada, with 360 of them resident in British Columbia.

### W.A. REPORT

On behalf of us all in the WA, I say a sincere Thank You to everyone who contributed to the success of the Spring Tea, making it the financial and social success that it proved to be - a special thank you to Mrs. David Gilder (Veronica) who was the convenor. We will be able once again to make a contribution to the parent body. Any one using the hall benefits from fund raisers. We all know it gets increasingly expensive to keep the hall heated and in good repair. The WA is pleased to make a contribution with your help. We were lucky to have quite a few gentlemen members of the society help us with the heavy work of preparing and clearing for the event. They as well as the non WA member ladies who kindly helped are too numerous to mention by name - but all help was very much appreciated.

All the hard work seemed worthwhile when the following note was received and I quote

"The Tea and Snacks was delicious, the service excellent" - A Customer.

The WA have again been invited to the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Morris, where we spent a delightful afternoon and enjoyed a delicious meal last summer. We all hope to travel there again on June 15th, and look forward very much to the visit. Thank you John and Pat.

The La Conner Trip was voted most enjoyable. The village is interesting and the Tulip display we visited was a beautiful and colourful sight. The short stop at a shopping mall also proved popular and even the weather co-operated - rain fell only whilst we were in transit.

The WA have donated home baking for the May Gymanfa - I'm sure it will be enjoyed by all with a cup of tea after the singing upstairs.

DIOLCH O CRLON AM EICH  
CEFNOGAETH. Thank you most  
sincerely for your support.

by Anne Jones.

Editors Note: Correction to the May Newsletter - Please note the WA meeting is always the Third Wednesday of the month.

CONGRATULATIONS TO JACK  
WILLIAMS ON HIS PARTICIPATION  
IN THE VANCOUVER SUN RUN

Jack Williams, a long time member of the Welsh Society joined in on the Vancouver Fun Run, completing the course with a time of 2 hours and 25 minutes - not bad for a youngster of 81 years. Jack is an inspiration to those of us who haven't gotten around to our fitness program yet this spring.

ABERAMAN RUGBY TEAM VISITS

The Aberaman Rugby team from Aberdare was competing in Vancouver during May, and were warmly welcomed to the Cambrian Hall on Saturday evening, May 19th. A special time for Gwyn Evans since this was his home team in Wales. Arthur entertained at the piano.

BONY MAEN please be advised that some mail has been received in your name at the Cambrian Hall. Please contact a member of the executive to arrange pick up or forwarding.

ARCHIVIST/HISTORIAN

The Society Archivist, Mr. Ellis Griffiths, is still in search of items, news etc. of historical importance regarding the Welsh Society in Vancouver. If any of our readers has anything to contribute; or knows of someone who may have some interesting facts about the Welsh and their activities - from the year 1904 to the present day, PLEASE contact Ellis at 597-1201.

Our goal is to gather as much data as possible - this year, 1991, to start in earnest to piece together the historical jig saw puzzle in 1992. Much thanks for your continued help.

Ellis

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FATHER

4 years: My Daddy can do anything  
7 years: My Dad knows a lot, a whole lot.  
8 years: My Father doesn't know quite everything.  
12 years: Oh, well, naturally Father doesn't know either.  
14 years: Father? Hopelessly old fashioned.  
21 years: Oh, that man is out of date. What did you expect?  
25 years: He knows a little bit about it, but not much.  
30 years: Maybe we ought to find out what Dad thinks.  
35 years: A little patience. Let's get Dad's assessment before we do anything.  
50 years: I wonder what Dad would have thought about that. He was pretty smart.  
60 years: My Dad knew absolutely everything!  
65 years: I'd give anything if Dad were here so I could talk this over with him. I really miss that man.



**FISH AND CHIP TESTERS**

It is only very recently that the editor learned from Milt Morgan that the Welsh Society has a "committee" of fish and chip tasters. This group of gourmets visits restaurants throughout the lower mainland for the 'sole' purpose of rating the quality of fish and chips. Next trip is to Steveston Wharf. If you'd like to know more about this committee and their next adventure contact Gaynor Evans 271-3134.



# Wales battling slump with rural jobs plan

A £25 MILLION investment programme has been launched by the Rural Wales Development Board to bring jobs to farming villages and hamlets hit by the agricultural recession. Some 1,600 new openings have been created in the past year and the hope now is to speed up the recovery programme.

"With indigenous companies expanding to larger premises, demand for factories is higher than in 1989," says board chairman Glyn Davies. "And our £100,000 redundant-building conversion grants are helping companies to convert old schools, stations and farm buildings into craft workshops".

Some 70 people will soon find work in these small businesses, which are developing outlets for trades as



**BUILDING:** Bridget Inglis

diverse as coffee-grinding and jewellery-making.

One of the most successful is a dolls-house manufacturing outfit called Diminutive Dwellings launched by former Bath architects Lee Sharp and Bridget Inglis in a former school in Llanwrtyd Wells. They make onetwelfth scale models of historic homes, lovingly com-

plete down to the door-knockers and the (working) electric light systems, and sell them for £3,000 each to mainly American collectors.

To build on its success the board last week unveiled its strategy for the 1990s — a £25 m programme designed to attract more inward investment.

Glyn Davies is well aware that Mid-Wales needs a strong regional policy if it is to compete with more accessible parts of the UK, but he is convinced that the area's quality of life more than compensates for transport problems.

"That is why we are investing heavily in community enterprises and are constructing sports and arts facilities across the region," he says. "These not only promote tourism. They also enhance community life for local residents."



**COOK BOOK 1991**

The cut off date for sending in your recipes for the cook book is June 19, 1991. We thank all those who have sent in their recipes to date - however we need some more! Why not send them in NOW.

Please mark your envelope Cook Book 1991 - and mail them to The Welsh Society of Vancouver, 215 W 17th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5V 1A6

With thanks for all your help.

by Ellis Griffiths

**CHURCH SERVICE**

Next church service will be on Sunday June 9th, 1991 at 11 am. It will be our last service for the summer until Sunday, October 13th. Please come and join us, everyone is welcomed. A light lunch will be provided after the service.

**FOUNDING MEMBER GOING HOME**

This summer the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir will embark on a concert tour of the U.K.. Between July 3rd to 17th, about sixty choir members along with Musical Director Robin Thomas, accompanist Richard Coombes and soloist George Roberts will present seven concerts in Southwest England and South Wales.

Welsh Society member, Mr. Gwyn Evans was a founding member of choir which celebrated its 10 year anniversary in 1990. For Gwyn, as first tenor with the choir, the highlight of the tour will be to sing in Swansea's famous Brangwyn Hall. He last performed there with the national award winning Cwmbach choir twenty years ago. This will be his first trip back.

We wish the choir well for their tour.

MEMBERSHIP FEES: Regular \$30/person  
Family \$50/person (two members)  
Seniors \$17/person  
Out of Town \$15/person (to qualify you must live a minimum of 80kms or 60 mi outside Vancouver)

**MEMBERSHIP REMITTANCE FORM - 1991**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
POSTAL CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
I WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE BY \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Please send this form along with a cheque or money order, payable to the Welsh Society of Vancouver, to: MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Cambrian Hall, 215 E 17th Avenue, Vancouver, BC. V5V 1A6.



# Army asks the Queen to help save regiments

by Anthony Smith

Political Editor

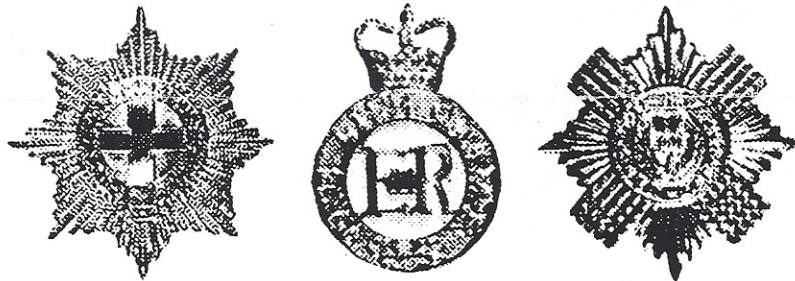
ARMY chiefs have appealed to the Queen to intervene over Ministry of Defence plans to axe some of Britain's most famous regiments.

Senior generals have approached Buckingham Palace amid fears that centuries of tradition are about to be torn up by Defence Secretary Tom King in the most drastic shake-up of the Armed Forces since the Second World War.

The Queen has instructed Major General Brian Pennicott, Defence Services Secretary to the Royal Household, to keep her informed.

Army sources claimed last night that the Queen, colonel-in-chief of all the Guards, would be dismayed to see the names of old regiments disappear.

One top commander said: "The approach to the Palace



IN PERIL: the Coldstream, Life Guards and Scots Guards

is a desperate measure and reflects our anxiety. We are fighting men, and we are fighting this with every weapon at our command."

The generals believe some of the regiments most closely associated with the Royals — the Household Cavalry and the Guards Division — will not escape unscathed.

Guards officers are among those most worried. Their foot regiments embrace the Grenadiers, the Scots, Irish, Welsh and Coldstream Guards — names that have piled up battle honours in

centuries of historic tradition.

One of Mr King's senior officials said last night: "There is bound to be blood on the carpet when some famous regiments are in danger of disappearing under a wider umbrella. We never expected this operation to be painless."

The uproar, following the brilliant success of the military campaign in the Gulf, could delay the cutbacks by several months.

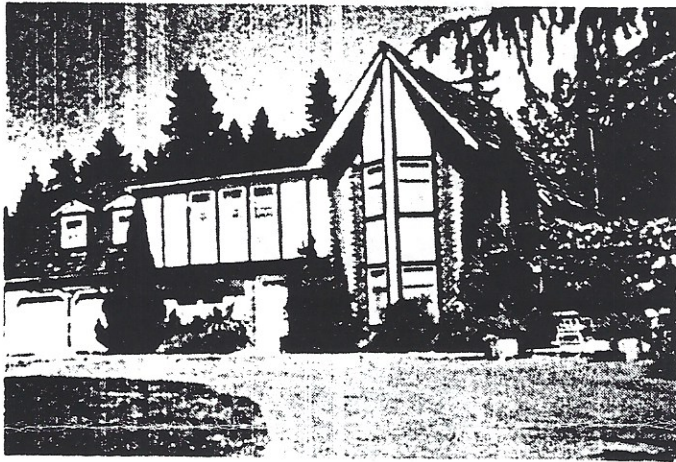
But Mr King is determined to cut the Army by 40,000 men to a total of 120,000.

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## FIRST PACIFIC NORTHWEST GYMANFA GANU A GREAT SUCCESS!

The kick off event of the Pacific Northwest Gymanfa Ganu Association, held the weekend of April 12-14 in Bothell Washington brought together people from Washington, Oregon, California, Montana, Vancouver, Victoria and Penticton to enjoy a weekend of fine Welsh song and companionship. Program events included a Noson Lowen on Friday evening which included folk music, poetry, penillion, humorous recitations and music by Band y Ddraig Goch.

Events on Saturday included a Saturday Afternoon of Welsh Culture, with a program rich in music, history, folk songs and dance. Then Welsh dances were demonstrated by the St. David's Dancers. The Grand Concert at the church that evening provided plenty of heart-tugging Welsh music from choirs and soloists, as well as plenty of laughter generated by Master of Ceremonies Bronn Journey, who also played his harp. Soprano Lynn Williams from Bowen Island was joined by her husband Richard for the closing number "Hywel a Blodwen," from Joseph Perry's opera Blodwen.

The Vancouver Welsh Choir, sixty voices strong, sang a variety of Welsh, Canadian and American songs all of which delighted the large audience. Richard Coombes accompanied the group. The concert ended with the performance of a new anthem arranged and conducted by Benton Williams of Seattle called "Psalm 67" performed by the combined voices of the Seattle and Vancouver Choirs.

(from a report in Y DRYCH by Edita)



UNITED KINGDOM CONCERT ITINERARY VANCOUVER WELSH MEN'S CHOIR

July 2nd -17th 1991

Thursday

July 4th: Joint concert with the Basingstoke Male Voice Choir.  
Main Hall, Park Prewitt Hospital 7.30 pm.  
Information: James Bratton, 94 Elmwood Way, Basingstoke, Hants.  
Telephone: 0256-476382

Saturday

July 6th: Joint concert with the County of Cornwall Choir.  
St. Andrews Church, Royal Parade, Plymouth 7.30 pm.  
Information: Bill Russell, 3 Wadeland Cottages, New Road, Liskeard  
Cornwall PL14 4JS Telephone 0579-44690

Sunday

July 7th: Joint concert with the County of Cornwall Choir.  
Cornwall Coliseum, Carlyan Bay, St. Austell 7.30 pm  
Information: Bill Russell (as above)

Wednesday

July 10th: Joint concert with the Richard Williams Singers.  
Llantrisant Leisure Centre, Llantrisant, Glamorgan, 8.00pm  
Information: Richard Williams, 2, The Square, Thomastown,  
Tonyrefail, Mid. Glam. Tel: 0443-670320

Thursday

July 11th: Joint concert with Cŵr Meibon Ystradgynlais  
Parish Church, Ystradgynlais (nr. Swansea) 8.00pm  
Information: Glyn Griffiths, 43, Ynyscedwyn Road, Ystradgynlais,  
Swansea SA9 1BH Telephone: 0639-843371

Saturday

July 13th: Joint concert with The Morryston Orpheus Choir  
Brangwyn Hall. Swansea 7.30 pm.  
Information: R. Royston Pugh, 27 Woodlands Park Drive,  
Cadoxton, Neath, West Glamorgan. Telephone: 0639-636238  
Fax: 0639-639384

Tuesday

July 16th: Concert sponsored by the Harrow Welsh Society  
Hatch End High School, Headstone Lane, Harrow 8.00pm  
Information: Mrs Sylvia Jones, 46 Breakspear Road South,  
Ickenham, Uxbridge, Middx. UB10 8HE Tel: 0895-638774

N.B. Approval has been sought from Worcester Cathedral authorities to  
allow us to perform an informal mini-concert (15 mins) in the Cathedral  
during our visit there, scheduled for Sunday July 14th, between 4.30pm  
and 5pm, whilst en route from Swansea to Stratford-on-Avon.

CONFIRMED. 5pm.

Simon Foulds 732-5843

(February 26th 1991)



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 1991 s m t w t f s 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	July 1991 s m t w t f s 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31					
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
CHURCH SERVICE 11 AM (LAST ONE WITH 9 FALL)		CENSUS DAY	GENERAL MEETING 7:30 PM			RED (ARTHUR) DRAGON OPEN 8:30 PM
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
HAPPY FATHER'S DAY			WA MEETING NOON		FLAG DAY (US)	RED DRAGON OPEN 8:30 PM
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
FATHER'S DAY						RED DRAGON OPEN 8:30 PM
23						RED DRAGON OPEN 8:30 PM
30	24	25	26	27	28	29
	ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST (CANADA)					

July Newsletter DEADLINE: JUNE 22ND.

June

1991