

THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER

Gymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Mehefin
2009

June
2009

Society Newsletter - Pylchgrawn y Gymdeithas



New Welsh Stamps

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Mark your Calendars!!

November 7th Anniversary Dinner

November 6th Noson Lawen

November 8th Gymanfa Ganu

The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

Much of this issue was prepared earlier but I ran out of time before leaving on an extended trip. Consequently I am unable to comment on events that occurred during my absence but fortunately Eifion Williams has provided me with all his articles in the Celtic Connection which also aided in my recollections of our St. David's Day Dinner. Lynn Owens-Whalen has updated us on the Love Spoon Carving Workshop and on items of society business.

I regret to report the death of Artro Evans on February 23rd at the age of 82. Artro submitted an article entitled *The Black Chair of Birkenhead* which I published in one of my first newsletters in 2001. At that time we talked over the phone and I learnt that he was born in Bryncryg close to my mother's home in Abergynolwyn. He even knew the elementary school teacher who taught me when I visited Abergynolwyn. He served in the Welsh Guards and then in various police forces in Rhodesia and in Hong Kong. I understand he obtained a law degree in Hong Kong and was consulted by local police forces. He was very interested in researching the Welsh contribution in the First World War. He is survived by his wife Una and two sons to whom we offer our condolences.

His father, John Evans, won the chair at the National Eisteddfod in Aberystwyth in 1952 for his ode "Dwylo" (Hands) and again in Ystradgynlais in 1954 for his ode "Yr Argae" (The Dam). I have reproduced part of the latter ode with its history.

David Llewelyn Williams

Margaret Ellen Davies (February 23, 1910 to March 11, 2009)



Members of our Society were well represented at a Memorial Service held at Christ Church Cathedral to commemorate the life of our oldest member. The following reminiscences of their mother were provided by Heather and Maureen.

She was born on a hilltop farm in Llanfair Clydogau, West Wales; one of nine children, the first girl after 4 boys, with hair as black as a raven. Her father died when she was 14 and she took on the care of her younger sisters, and baby brother. She was the last remaining member of her family.

During the depression she went up to London to work in a shop. Her energy, persistence and work ethic did not let her down at this hard time. She met Jack in London and they were wed in 1937. Like many Welsh people at that time, they bought a dairy business. They had 3 children, Maureen, Heather and Winston. In 1939 Maureen and Heather were evacuated to their grandparents in Wales. Winston was born in Wales in

Sept '40. Mum had planned to stay in London, but it was the Battle of Britain time, so she was made to go to Wales. Dad went out and painted '& son' on his milk-barrow. He telegraphed her to stay in Wales since the bombing was so bad, so she was able stay longer with her children.

In 1960 Maureen, her husband and Winston left for Canada and settled in Guelph. In 1963 upon the arrival of a baby in the family, Heather went to Canada to see him - planning to be back in 2 years. In all Mum traveled to Canada 17 times! In 1978 Mum and Dad retired to a lovely spot in Wales, 4 miles from the sea.

In 1983 they both came to Canada and visited New York when Heather ran the Marathon. In 1987 they celebrated their Golden Wedding in Guelph. In 1997 the Diamond Wedding was in Wales; a telegram from the Queen! The family all went home for this.

Dad died the Easter of 2000...Mum looked after him until the end at home; she was 90. She came to Canada the July of that year to be with us and she became a Canadian Resident at age 91. She divided her time between Guelph with Maureen and Winston, enjoying her three grandchildren and five great grandchildren, and with Heather in Vancouver. She even managed 4 trips to Wales during this time too.

Mum loved to sew, and made us dresses by hand. Until a couple of years ago she sewed the bindings on the quilts the Guild gave to Purdy Pavilion. Mum also loved hats and looked good in them.

We plan to take Mum's ashes back to Wales, to be buried with Dad in his home village, Mydroilyn, Ceredigion.

St. David's Day Dinner



This year our St. David's Day Dinner was held on Saturday February 28th. Once again the Hall was beautifully decorated for the occasion by our ever-ready band of faithful volunteers. After a welcome from our President, John Morris and a Blessing by John Pritchard, we sat down to a tasty repast excellently prepared for us once again by Jordan's.



A musical interlude of two songs was provided by our soloist Sharon McIntee-Birrell accompanied by Ruben Federizon



David Llewelyn Williams entertained the audience with readings of two poems by one of Wales' most famous poets, John Ceiriog Hughes. David explained and interpreted the poems for non-Welsh speakers, while the lyrical sounds of the poems proved a nostalgic reminder of the beauty of the Welsh language.



(The Youngest Attendee!)

Eifion Williams brought us greetings from a multitude of Welsh Societies around the globe and. So many were received that only a selection (often humorous!) could be presented. In our own greetings to other societies, we included this year the following message to the Cambrian Society of Victoria, Australia. This year on St. David's Day we will be thinking not only of members of the Cambrian Society of Victoria but of all Australians who suffered during the recent fire disaster. Our sympathy and prayers go out to you all.

Eifion concluded with a message from Rhodri Morgan, the First Minister for Wales, who, after referring to the outstanding achievements by Welsh athletes, pointed to the Welsh language being spoken in the European Union, global success for singer/songwriter Duffy, a Welsh scientist leading one of the biggest experiments in Switzerland, and over 800,000 visiting the Lorient Interceltic Festival in Brittany, where Wales was the featured nation.

The Toast to Canada was proposed by John Cann who reflected upon the various contributions made by Welsh settlers to Canada and the opportunities Canada provided that made these contributions possible. After the Toast, we sang *O Canada*.



The Toast to Wales was proposed by David Llewelyn Williams who contrasted the gloomy prognosis for Wales in R.S. Thomas' early poem *Welsh History* with the surge in creative activity in Wales, citing poet Eurig Salisbury, male choir *Only Men Aloud*, and singer/songwriter Duffy as recent stars who exemplified the promise of a bright future for Welsh culture. After a Toast to the Future of Wales, we sang *Hen Wlad fy Nhadau*.



Sharon McIntee-Burrill then sang a selection from Welsh composer Karl Jenkins' Mass; *The Armed Man*.

The Toast to St. David was proposed by Gareth Prytherch in his usual masterful manner with anecdotes from the Saint's life tinged with Gareth's inimitable sense of humour.



The program concluded with community singing led by Lynn Owens-Whalen and Nerys Haqq and accompanied by Lucy Sorensen

President John Morris acknowledged the hard work put in by members who had prepared and decorated the Hall for the celebration and especially Gaynor Evans for organizing the whole event. He also thanked Jordan's for once again rising to the occasion and all of the participants in the evening's program.

We then retired to the Red Dragon for further socializing which went on until the early hours. A very congenial event!

Thanks to Eifion Williams for access to his article in the Celtic Connection. Thanks to Nicolas Williams and Uta Williams for the photos and to Rob Fox for the photo of the Youngest Attendee.

Rentals

We are saddened that Glyn Shepard was not quite ready to assume his full time responsibilities as our Rentalsman. Having said that, I have just spoken with Glyn and he is feeling much better indeed and the doctors have been thrilled with his improvement.

Alcwyn and Gillian Rogers and Jane Byrne have been taking care of rentals during Glyn's illness and as we would like to continue to support Glyn in a measured and continuous improvement, we decided to hire Melanie Hull to assume the duties of Rentalsman for a period of up to 6 months. Melanie has had considerable experience with the public, organizing programmes in the community and the use of rental facilities. She assumed her duties in mid May and has been working closely with Alcwyn, Gillian and Jane since then. Rental income continues to increase in leaps and bounds which is marvelous news considering improvements that we still need to do with our wonderful heritage Cambrian Hall for our future celebrations and programmes.

We are very happy to have Melanie join us and look forward to working with her during the summer and the fall.

Building

The third Thursday in each month (excluding July, August and December) is a great chance for members of the Society to improve the Cambrian Hall. It is also provides us with an opportunity to get together and enjoy one another's company. On a 'usual' workday 12 to 15 members converge on the hall and work tirelessly to create a warm and welcoming place for renters upstairs and a safe, cozy place for members in the Red Dragon. Recently, we focused on improving the storage capacity of the

upper hall and purchased 40 more black chairs on dollies so as to get rid of any chair that could not be stacked, hence improving our storage possibilities.

We also purchased five more tables and have removed tables that were not able to be repaired. Alan Rees is a talented glazier and one Saturday, he fixed all the broken window panes behind the stage. We are very grateful for this indeed.

Also, John Jones, who we have come to depend on with ridding our building of pigeon mess has, in his own time, come by and secured the gutters on the east side which were very precarious at the very best. Our 'piccassos', Gwilym Evans and John O. Pritchard have done a wonderful job as master painters over the past year, Eirlys Ann is our creative specialist, organizer and recoverer of records and decorator, Jane Byrne, Mary Lewis, Pat Morris and Irene Evans have made sure that the Red Dragon is spic and span and Don and Liz Murray have thorough scoured the bar area more than once !

The building committee of John Morris, Alcwyn Rogers, Wilf Owens-Whalen and myself are very grateful for the consistent, loyal and talented support that all members who have attended work days are providing. Of course, the goal is to maintain and enhance what is a precious gift that past members have provided to us the Cambrian Hall.

Thanks so much to you all.

Just so you know, this summer another section of the floor in the Red Dragon will be replaced and the plans are to install a new vanity in the upstairs ladies washroom. Happily we are having to refer to the hall rental calendar to find time to access the upper hall to make improvements as there is such an increase in rentals.

Lynn Owens-Whalen

Carving Welsh Love Spoons!

The January 2009 catalogue for Lee Valley tools featured two lovespoons. This inspired us to seize the moment and begin to learn how to carve a lovespoon. Lee Valley sells David Western's book called 'Fine Art of Carving Lovespoons' and retained David to teach an all day seminar in early May. Both the book and the seminar provide a short history of the lovespoon and include techniques for carving the spoons, fixing mistakes and options for finishing. Also, both include step-by-step instructions for three spoons at different levels of difficulty and a chapter on creating your own design.

The advantage of the all-day seminar was that it was created for a class of 8 which provided not only ample instruction but individual attention too. Of the class of 8, Pat Morris and Wilf and Lynn Owens-Whalen proudly tried to represent the Welsh Society. We hope that we did this in an adequate manner and we all gained at least some proficiency. One thing for sure is that we had a terrific day and so thoroughly enjoyed learning our day with David Western that we are encouraging David to put on an advanced beginner course. There is no question that we will all be there. Pat has already invested in her carving tools and is practicing at home. The O-W's will have to play'catch up'!

If anyone would like to join us, let us know. It really is great fun. Who knows, once we achieve more skills, maybe we could sell lovespoons as a money raising venture for the Cambrian Hall. That would make sense as the lovespoon can symbolize our love for the Hall.

Lynn Owens-Whalen

RECENT EVENTS AT THE CAMBRIAN HALL

Society members have enjoyed an increased number of activities due to a very active Social Committee. On March 20, a Welsh language film with English sub-titles *Un Nos Goleu Leuad* (One Moonlit Night) was shown. Based on a novel by Caradog Pritchard, the film is a psychological study of mental illness as seen through the eyes of a young boy.

Our Society held a very successful Spring Sale at the Cambrian Hall on Saturday, April 25. The event was held to raise funds for the on-going repairs to the Hall. The sale netted a total of just under \$2500 for the Society. Among the most popular items at the sale were homemade Welsh baked goods, many of which sold out quickly. Some of the ladies in attendance were dressed in traditional Welsh costume, lending a colourful atmosphere to the event. We are grateful to Gillian Rogers and her Social Committee for their efforts in organizing the Sale and to the many members who donated articles and/or volunteered their services at the Sale.

On Saturday night, April 17, members and visitors were entertained in the Red Dragon by the vibrant youthful music of singer/composer/guitarist Richard Thomas and the Eternals, consisting of brothers Ian and Greg Bevis. These talented musicians attracted a number of youthful followers whose enthusiasm was shared by not-so-young regular members. The MC for the evening was Neville Thomas and refreshments were provided by Social Committee members. No doubt the successful evening's entertainment will prompt the Society to hold similar events in the future.

from **Eifion Williams**



Five of the best young Welsh writers will be performing their work in Washington DC from March 18th to 24th as part of a week-long celebration of contemporary Welsh literature in the US capital. *Washington Meets Wales* is part of the wider Wales Smithsonian Cymru 2009 program of activities and events, which includes Wales as a guest nation at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in June 2009. As a taster to the festival, Academi, with support from the Welsh Assembly Government, has organised a series of literary activities around the city. They will also visit campuses and lead workshops with students. The writers taking part are:

Tom Anderson was led into a writing career through journeys taken as a



surfer. He studied at the University of Glamorgan and was the recipient of an Academi writer's bursary for 2007 for

his next book, a travelogue set in the USA. Tom's main area of interest is travel, and he has had articles published in several publications. His book *Riding the Magic Carpet: A Surfer's Odyssey to Find the Perfect Wave* (Summersdale Publishers Ltd) was published in 2006.

Catrin Dafydd



Author, dramatist, poet, political campaigner and performer. Catrin graduated in Welsh from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. She won the Literature Medal at the Urdd Eisteddfod, Cardiff. Catrin won an Academi bursary in 2004 to work on her first novel, *Pili Pala* (Gomer, 2006), which reached the long list for the Welsh Book of the Year, 2006. Her first novel in English, entitled *Random Deaths and Custard* (Gomer, 2007), has been nominated for the 'Books to be talked about 2009' award by the World Book Day team.

Novelist and singer-songwriter Fflur Dafydd is a graduate of the University of East Anglia's Creative Writing MA course. She was selected in 2005 for the high-profile *Scrittire Giovani* project for emerging European writers, and has undertaken residencies in Helsinki, Finland and on Bardsey Island, Wales. Fflur has a PhD on the poetry of R.S. Thomas and currently lectures in

Creative Writing at Swansea University



Fflur was awarded the Prose Medal at the National Eisteddfod in 2006. She is the author of two Welsh language novels and one English novel, *Twenty Thousand Saints* (Alcemi, 2008).

Eurig Salisbury



Poet and academic Eurig Salisbury was born in Cardiff and later moved to Carmarthenshire. He is currently a Research Fellow on the Poets of the Nobility Project at the Centre for Advanced Welsh & Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth. At the age of 13 he taught himself the craft of cynghanedd – the ancient, but still very popular, verse form in Welsh. He won the Chair at the National Urdd Eisteddfod in 2006, and

has come second in the Chair competition at the National Eisteddfod of Wales on three occasions, in 2006, 2007 and 2008. *Llyfr Glas Eurig*, his first collection of poems, was published by Barddas in 2008.

Owen Sheers

Owen Sheers was born in Fiji in 1974 and brought up in Abergavenny. He was educated at King Henry VIII School, Abergavenny and New College, Oxford. The winner of an Eric Gregory Award and the 1999 Vogue Young Writer's Award, his first collection of poetry, *The Blue Book* (Seren, 2000) was short-listed for the Wales Book of the Year and the



Forward Prize Best 1st Collection 2001. His debut prose work *The Dust Diaries* (Faber 2004) won the Wales Book of the Year 2005. In 2004 he was selected as one of the Poetry Book Society's 20 Next Generation Poets. Owen's second collection of poetry, *Skirrid Hill* (Seren, 2005) won a 2006 Somerset Maugham Award. His first novel, *Resistance* (Faber, 2008) has been translated into nine languages. Owen was a 2007 Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Fellow at the New York Public Library. He currently divides his time between New York and Wales.

Argae Llanwddyn a Llyn Evyrnwy
(Llanwddyn Dam and Lake Vyrnwy)

Lake Vyrnwy was created when work on a dam to supply water to Liverpool was built. In order to create the Lake the whole valley behind the dam was to be flooded. This valley contained the old village of Llanwddyn. People still lived in the village as the dam was being constructed, but down the valley in front of the dam the Liverpool Corporation built the new village also today called Llanwddyn. The Dam was started in 1881 and completed in 1888. It was the first large stone-built dam in the United Kingdom, and is built partly out of great blocks of Welsh slate. In all two chapels, three inns, ten farmhouses, and 37 houses were all to be lost under the reservoir. Even the remains of bodies from the chapel's cemeteries were removed before the flood, and re-buried respectfully in the new church cemetery. During a dry summer or a mild winter, you can see the ruins of the old village.

As John Evans said in his ode *Yr Argae* that won the Chair at the Ystradgynlais National Eisteddfod in 1954:

*“Llanwddyn yn llyn heddiw — dinodded
Ei anheddau chwilfriw;
Tan genlli tonnog unlliw
Allorau bro'n y llawr briw.*

*Troi'r cwm yn fedd rhyfeddol — yn
rhwth gell
Wrth y gaer gadarnaf;
O ffoi'r hud, ni ddeffry haf.
Hen ias ar Gynonisaf.”*

A lake today is Llanwddyn –
unprotected its shattered dwellings;
Beneath the pale turbulent deluge
The vale's altars lie on its bruised floor.

The valley turned into a strange grave –
a gaping cell
Beside the mightiest stronghold;
Since the magic fled, summer will not
reawaken,
And ancient chills beset Lower Cynon.
(translation D.L.I.W.)

Forthcoming Events

Sun June 14th at 11.00 am **Bilingual
Church Service followed by Tê Bach**
Monday June 15th at 10:30 am
Welsh Speaking Group
Thursday, June 18th at 10:00 am
Work Party Day

Lunch at the Cambrian

On May 27th, our group went for a walk on Main Street, to meet the merchants who are the Society's neighbours. We started with an enjoyable lunch at Bert's Restaurant, visiting one time member Jerry De Kova, the manager. We then browsed in several stores including the Urban Source, Blim's Craft Place, a Turkish Deli and Spice outlet and Chef Claire's Catering. Members who attended were inspired with ideas for future activities. Join us for the next **Lunch on June 24th at 11.30 am.**

**Sunday, June 28th Bryn Seion Welsh
Church 74th Annual Gymanfa Ganu**
22132 S. Kamrath Rd.

Beavercreek, Oregon. OR 97004
Church Service at 11.00 am;
First Gymanfa Session at 1.45 pm;
Te Bach at 4.00 pm;
Second Gymanfa Session at 6.00 pm.
Conductor Rhiannon Acree, Organist
Teresa Vosse. Details and Hymn list at
pugetsoundwelsh.org/brynseion.htm
Note: **Bryn Seion is 125 years old**