

# THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER

*Gymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver*

*Cambrian News*

*Mehefin*  
*2010*

*June*  
*2010*

*Society Newsletter - Fylchgrawn y Gymdeithas*



*Pôr Godre'r Aran*

CAMBRIAN HALL, 215 East 17<sup>th</sup> Ave, Vancouver B.C. V5V 1A6

VANCOUVER WELSH SOCIETY

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**Remember the General Meeting and  
the Summer Barbeque and Picnic**

*The Cambrian News*

From The Editor:

In this issue, the last before September, I have chosen to highlight Côt Godre'r Aran, both to focus our attention on the North American Festival of Wales, held this year in the Pacific Northwest, and also to advertise their concert hosted by our own society. I hope you will all patronize both events!

The photo on the events page shows Neville Thomas and Victor Griffiths by the huge statue in Puerto Madryn of the Native people of Patagonia welcoming the Welsh settlers.

I am sad to report that Cardiff City was defeated 3-2 by Blackpool at Wembley Stadium in its quest for promotion to the Premier League. Next year?!

David Llewelyn Williams

**GARETH EDWARD EVANS**

January 29, 1970 - April 19, 2010

Gwyn and I would like to thank our Welsh Society friends for the many messages and cards of sympathy received on the recent loss of our son, Gareth.

We appreciate the love and support shown to us during his long and courageous battle with Cancer.

"Friends are like flowers;  
They brighten the most dismal day.  
We are so fortunate to have  
Such a beautiful bouquet!"

With sincere gratitude.

Gwyn and Gaynor

*Forthcoming Events*

Wednesday June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:30 pm  
**Executive Meeting**

Saturday June 12<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 pm  
**Reflections on Patagonia**



Victor Griffiths, a native of Patagonia, joined by Neville Thomas, will present a brief account of the Welsh colony settlement in Southern Argentina in 1865 and its trials and successes over the years. This will be followed by an excellent movie on the life of an early Welsh lady settler, titled '*Poncho Mamgu*', (Mamgu is South Walian for Nain (Grandmother)). It is a first-rate production and scripted in Welsh and Spanish. No need to worry, ample guidance will accompany its showing! A donation would be appreciated to defray the costs of the supper provided.

Sunday June 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am  
**Dysgu Cymraeg – Learn Welsh**  
An introduction to the Welsh language following the BBC Wales study guides. Call 778-837-6458 for information.

Sunday June 13<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am  
**Bilingual Church Service**  
followed by a **Tê Bach**.

Monday June 14<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 pm  
**GENERAL MEETING**

Monday June 28<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am until 3:30 pm. **Work Party Day** Volunteers welcome; lunch will be provided

Saturday August 21<sup>st</sup>  
**Society Summer Barbeque & Picnic**  
Join Welsh Society members, family and friends in rural South Surrey. A superbly barbecued lamb will be prepared 'Argentine style' over a log fire by Victor Griffiths. The delicious result awaits you. Great companionship and a fun day! Please call Gaynor at 604-271-3134 or by email at [fgevs@telus.net](mailto:fgevs@telus.net) preferably before August 7<sup>th</sup> for more details and to sign up

September 2-5  
**North American Festival of Wales  
Portland, Oregon.**

Friday September 10<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 pm  
**Côr Godre'r Aran Male Choir**

**Shaughnessy United Church,**  
1550, West 33<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Vancouver, B.C.

The Welsh Society is proud to present a concert by one of Wales' premier choirs, following their appearance at the North American Festival of Wales in Portland.

Tickets: \$25, \$20 for Seniors & Students  
Available either through the Society website or by phoning Alwyn Rogers at 604-742-1378.

This event is organized by our society and your support and assistance would be much appreciated

### The Spring Sale

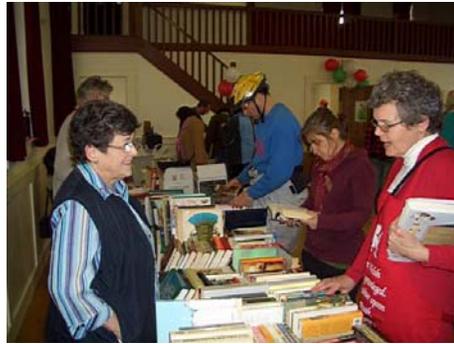
Our second Annual Spring Sale, held at the Cambrian Hall on Saturday, April 24<sup>th</sup> was the scene of much public interest and a steady stream of customers kept our volunteers busy throughout.



The homemade preserves and Welsh baked goods were once again a prime attraction as were the generous teas provided by Gaynor Evans and her helpers downstairs in the Red Dragon.



A silent auction of some of the more valuable items also generated a return, whereas the 'Things Welsh' stall, with its copies of the new Encyclopaedia of Wales, reminded people of their heritage



At the conclusion, President John Morris presented Gaynor Evans with a bouquet to acknowledge her contributions.



All in all it was a most successful event, raising a total of over \$3000 for the society building fund and also bringing society members together in a common cause. The Social Committee, under their chair, Gillian Rogers, is to be thanked for their efforts, as are all the volunteers and those who donated items. (Photos taken from the website)

### Book Launch

Our member, Anne Bosch, held a most interesting book launch on Thursday, May 13<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the publication of *The Snake, the Dragon and the Tree* based on the writings of Dr. John Layard which she has edited.

*A Celtic Quest*, an earlier work by Dr. Layard, which she also edited in 1975, is a psychological study of the well known Mabinogion legend, *Culhwch ac Olwen*.

Our congratulations to Anne for bringing this latest work to publication.

### The Encyclopaedia of Wales

Thanks to the efforts of Elizabeth, our Secretary, our Cymdeithas is able to sell the Welsh Academy Encyclopaedia of Wales (both English and Welsh versions exist) to members at the discounted price of \$60 (compared with £55). To place your order or for further information, contact Elizabeth by sending a message to [mail@welshsociety.com](mailto:mail@welshsociety.com) These very impressive volumes were displayed at the Spring Sale. See also the website: [www.encyclopaediaofwales.com](http://www.encyclopaediaofwales.com)

I discovered an article in the Celtic Connection by Eifion Williams about his great uncle which I thought should be of interest to our society. Both John Pritchard and I remember him well, especially since he 'gave away' his great niece Jane Williams in her marriage to Peter Byrne in Langley April 1962; a marriage several of us attended. He was also instrumental in convincing several family members including Eifion and Jane to emigrate to Canada and in this sense he has had a pivotal influence on our society. Here is his history:

#### Major Ben Williams M.C.

Ben Williams left his farm home in rural Carmarthenshire, Wales, in 1899 at the age of 17 to serve as a British volunteer in the Boer War. After the war, following an encounter with Canadian Boer War volunteers, he emigrated to Canada and homesteaded in Saskatchewan. These were the years when new settlers in Canada's North-west could obtain a quarter-section of prairie land for \$10 on a promise to produce a crop on it within a certain number of years. I still have his original homestead permit and receipt for \$10.

In 1914 he volunteered for the Canadian First Division and shipped out to France to fight in the First World War. In April 1917, Major Ben Williams won the Military Cross for bravery under fire during the Battle of Vimy Ridge. His citation states that, while greatly outnumbered by the enemy, he showed exemplary courage and leadership in leading a group of men to destroy an enemy field gun emplacement, taking a dozen prisoners in the process.



After the war Ben returned to his farm near Swift Current. The Depression years in Saskatchewan were brutal for farmers but I suspect he endured those hardships just as he had those on the battlefield. I knew him for only a few short years after I came to Canada in the 1960s. He rarely talked about his war experiences but never hid his intense love for his adopted country, based largely on his admiration for the men who fought with him at Vimy Ridge, a battle that helped forge a distinct Canadian identity.

Major Ben Williams MC died without fanfare in the Shaughnessy Veterans Hospital in Vancouver in 1967.

Eifion Williams

Through the good offices of Anne Bosch I received a beautifully bound Welsh Bible which is to be donated to the archives of our society by Muriel Van Laar. The Bible is an edition of *Y Beibl Cyssegr-Lan, published by Henry Frowde, Argraphdy y Brifysgol Rhydychen (Oxford University Press) in 1911*. The inscription inside reads: *Cyflwynedig i Miss Mary Jane Lyddon, gan Ysgol Sabbathol Ebenezer, Garth Maesteg, fel arwydd fechan o'u parch tuag ati ar ei ymadawriad a'r lle hon i fynd i Vancouver, British Columbia, South America. Gyda Dymuniadau goreu am ei Llwyddiant a'i Chysur. Arwyddwyd ar rhan yr Ysgol R. Walters, Gweinidog. Mai 28 1912.* [Presented to Miss Mary Jane Lyddon by Ebenezer Sunday School, Garth Maesteg, as a small token of their respect for her on her departure from this place to go to Vancouver, British Columbia, South America (!). With best Wishes for her Success and her Comfort. Signed on behalf of the School R. Walters Minister. May 28 1912.] Clearly she was held in very high esteem in her community. The following account of Mary's subsequent life was taken from the May newsletter of The North Shore Historical Society:

### **The Welsh Bible**

by Muriel Van Laar

This Bible, written in Welsh was presented to Mary Jane Lyddon in 1912, when she was preparing to immigrate to Canada. Mary was born in the little coal mining village of Garth, near Maesteg, in South Wales. She came to British Columbia to keep house for her brother Jim, who was living in the growing settlement of Lynn Valley, in North Vancouver.

What a different life it must have been, leaving the grime and coal dust of the

coal fields for the evergreen forest and the clear mountain air of the West Coast. Mary settled in to her brother's house and to life in the small, still pioneering community.

Jim owned Gold Mining claims up north, in Stewart, B.C. and when he left to check on his claims, Mary took another long journey to visit cousins in Philadelphia, U.S.A. While there she met and married an American, Will Thompson. Will worked from time to time on the Panama Canal Project and, sadly, came down with Yellow Fever and died. Mary was pregnant, so she stayed with her kind cousins until the baby, a boy, was born and old enough to travel. Mary and her son James went back to Lynn Valley. Brother Jim had returned, (with a fresh supply of gold nuggets in his pockets) and the three of them settled down together.

Several years passed. Mary married Arthur White, a wounded Veteran of World War One and a Lynn Valley resident. Mary, Arthur and James, a teenager by now, moved into a lovely new home near the entrance to Lynn Canyon Park. They worked hard to make a beautiful garden; it was a showpiece to visitors passing by on their way to Lynn Canyon Suspension Bridge. When James became 18 he decided to honour his American birth and returned to the United States where he joined the U.S. Navy and eventually rose to a very high rank.

Mary and Arthur accepted a foster child through the Children's Aid Society. Bruce Van Laar came to them at the age of eleven. He lived with them until his own marriage and was accepted by Mary and Arthur as one of their own family, although he was never adopted. Mary and Arthur lived in their house in Lynn Valley until illness forced them to move.

Mary was a respected member of the community she had come to in 1912 and had lived in for so many years. The Welsh Bible was one of her treasured possessions and was only carried on special occasions when she traveled to Vancouver to join a Welsh congregation. Mary could read and speak Welsh all her life and she never forgot her Welsh roots.

Mary (Mrs. Arthur White) died in 1962. Do any of our members remember her?

### **Côr Godre'r Aran**

The choir was formed in 1949 in Llanuwchllyn (Church above the Lake), a village nestling between the shores of Llyn Tegid (Bala Lake) and the Aran Mountain – an inspiring location and an area steeped in history, literature and music. The 46 members are from varying occupations but most originate from farming and rural backgrounds and they are all natural Welsh speakers.

Since its inception the Choir has regularly entertained audiences all over Wales and at many venues in England including the Royal Albert Hall, the Globe Theatre and Birmingham Symphony Hall. Concert tours have taken them to Scotland, Ireland and Portugal and extended international tours include three visits to Canada and U.S.A. and eight tours of Australia with visits to New Zealand, Tasmania, Hong Kong and Singapore. In November 2007 a return visit after 30 years was made to Patagonia, where a strong community of Welsh descent still thrives.

September 2010 will see the choir return to North America as the featured choir at the North American Festival of Wales in Portland. After the Festival, they will

perform in Victoria on September 8 and here in Vancouver on September 10.

Over the years the choir has achieved noteworthy success in Male Choir competitions. Between 1989 and 1993, four victories were recorded at the National Eisteddfod of Wales and in 2001 the choir triumphed again. Côr Godre'r Aran won first prize at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod in 2008, 2005, 2000 and 1996 and was the winner of the BBC Radio Cymru 2005 Male Choir of the Year competition.



Eirian Owen, Côr Godre'r Aran's Music Director was born in Llanuwchllyn. She graduated with First Class Honours in Music from the University of Wales and holds the ARCM diploma in piano accompaniment, together with a post-graduate diploma from the University of Manchester. She has served as an official accompanist both at the National and International Eisteddfodau. She was Chorus Master of both the 1997 and 2009 Eisteddfod Choirs and served as choral adjudicator in 1999 and 2005. She was inducted into the Gorsedd of Bards in 1999 and in January 2005 she was awarded an honorary M.A. by the University of Wales.



**The 79th Annual Welsh National  
Gymanfa Ganu  
September 2 – 5 2010  
Portland Oregon  
at the Portland DoubleTree Hotel  
Lloyd Center**

Don't miss this opportunity for fellowship and Welsh culture in the Pacific Northwest! Our daytime programming will feature four days of interesting and informative seminars, workshops, concerts and much more. Our hosts this year are the Welsh Society of Portland, Oregon.

The **2010 NAFOW Eisteddfod** again features the **David G. Morris Award** for a Semi-Professional Soloist, with the latter receiving a trip to Wales to compete in the National Eisteddfod. **Seminars** will run on Friday and Saturday on a variety of subjects for registrants of the Festival. Learn about **Corgis Galore; Gold Rush Fever – The Welsh in the Gold Rush in British Columbia** and **My Favourite 25 Welsh Americans**, a fresh interpretation and totally unexpected.

Learn to sing **Welsh songs** in four part harmony at the **Ysgol Gân** or begin your adventure in learning the **Welsh Language**. Maybe even treat your toes to a few **Welsh Dance** steps. Visit the **Marketplace & Tea Room** between sessions. Something for everyone to enjoy!

**Cinema Wales:** Sponsored by the Welsh Assembly Government; a sample of contemporary Welsh films and programming.

**Thursday:** The Festival begins with a **Folk Concert** featuring harpist **Bronn Journey** and soprano **Kathrine Journey**

**Friday: The Annual NAWAF Award Banquet** with featured baritone soloist **Glynn Morris**, who hails from **Aber-gwynegregyn** near Bangor, Gwynedd.

**Saturday:** Enjoy the **Grand Concert** with **Côr Godre'r Aran**, a Welsh Male Voice Choir based in Llanuwchllyn in Penllyn, near Bala in North Wales.

**Sunday: the 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Gymanfa Ganu.** No matter whether you are an alto or a tenor or if you just come to make a joyful noise, join the hundreds of people singing Welsh hymns throughout the afternoon and into the evening.

**Local Activities:**

Take a NAFOW Tour around Portland or explore the Willamette Valley with a visit to **Bryn Seion Welsh Church**, the oldest surviving Welsh church on the west coast. See **Frank Lloyd Wright's Gordon House**, a 'Usonian' house built in 1964. Visit the **Aurora Colony Antiques Row**. Explore the **Rose and Japanese Gardens** within the city. Take in a sample of Oregon's waterfalls and mountains as you travel up the **Columbia Gorge** and to **Mount Hood's Timberline Lodge**.

**More details including the Eisteddfod competitions can be found on the website [www.wngga.org](http://www.wngga.org) Members interested in attending this event are asked to leave a message at 604-876 - 2815 or to [mail@welshsociety.com](mailto:mail@welshsociety.com) in case there is interest in group travel.**

## WALES INTERNATIONAL HARP FESTIVAL

Harpists and their families from 24 countries arrived to participate in the 2nd Wales International Harp Festival held in Caernarfon, April 4 - 10.

The event reached its climax on Saturday evening with the final of the Chief Musician Competition. The winner of the magnificent Grand Concert Harp, worth £20,000 and donated by Camac Harps of France, was Elisaveta Kozina of Russia.



The winner of the under 19 competition, Valeria Voshchenikova, was also from Russia. Flora Olsz from Hungary won the under 14 competition and Hannah Phillips from Scotland won the new Camac Celtic harp for her performance in the Non-pedal harp competition. In the new section for the Amplified pop harp, the winner was Marie Christina Papadopoulou from Greece.

The standard of the Festival competitions was very high, and the concerts were all world-class. Some of the best international teachers were

members of the Jury panels and gave valuable masterclasses, for example Milda Agazarian from Moscow, Russia's most highly regarded teacher, Germaine Lorenzini, France's most revered harp professor, and Wales' Ieuan Jones, Professor of Harp at the Royal College of Music, London.

Festival Director Elinor Bennett said, "In an International Festival of this kind, the standard is inevitably high and as Festival organisers, we are extremely glad that the young harpists from Wales did so well. I would like to congratulate all the contestants, and particularly:

- 10 year old Math Roberts from Llanrug near Caernarfon who came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the open Triple and Non-pedal harp competition,
- Anne Denholm of Carmarthen, who was placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the under 19 competition and Glain Dafydd from Pentir, Bangor who came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the same competition
- Hannah Stone from Swansea, who placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Chief Musician Competition, and
- Benjamin Creighton-Griffiths of Cardiff who placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Pop harp competition.

"I am so glad that local people also had the opportunity of attending concerts by world-class artists. Throughout the week the Theatre at the Galeri arts centre in Caernarfon held capacity audiences. "People from all over the world came to Wales last week and went home with many memorable experiences. Requests for the date of the next Wales International Harp Festival were heard by many of the departing harpists!"

see [www.wales-harp-festival.com](http://www.wales-harp-festival.com)