Mehefin i Gorffennaf 1996

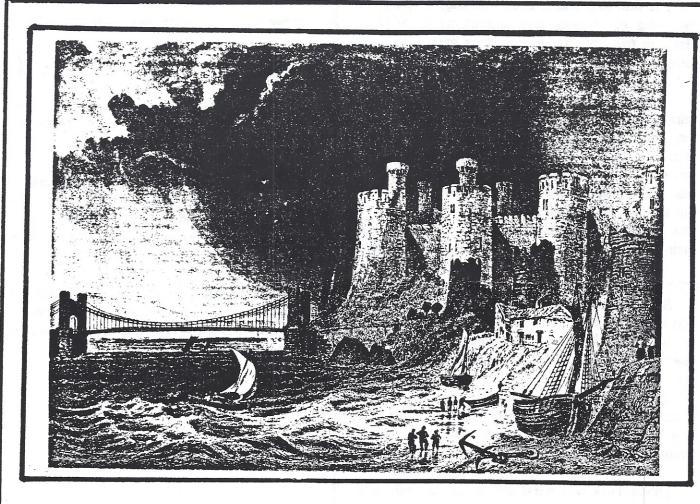


June to July 1996

Cymde 1thas Gymraeg Vancouver



Welsh Society Rewsletter — Cylchgrawn Cymraeg



Conway Quay and Castle

Drawing by W.H. Bartlett

Choir Visit Revisited

Firstly, we wish to thank the volunteers, and all those who contributed to the choir's reception, Thursday, May 16th. The gentlemen of the choir truly enjoyed themselves at our Hall and wished to have stayed longer, but hopefully will return to us again in the future.

They are a super bunch of gentlemen, the Pontarddulais Male Choir. On their tour of Western Canada, they stopped by Vancouver for a few days and gave a wonderful concert at Shaughnessy Heights United Church, Wednesday, May 15th.

Before then, about 90 of the 110 members of the choir, flew in from the United Kingdom to Calgary, and from there, two coaches took them westwards.

The first stop was in B.C.'s Okanagan Valley, in the town of Vernon, pop. approximately 40,000. Here, in the city's auditorium, they gave a marvellous, well-attended concert.

After Vernon, the group toured further west, admiring the beautiful scenery this province has to offer, before embarking on the ferry for Vancouver Island. Victoria, is our provincial capital, and one of this country's most lovely cities, was the venue for one concert, and Duncan, a little further north was the second. Both concerts were fantastic and there was plenty of hwyl and hiraeth to be found. Upon their return to the mainland of B.C., the choir stopped in Vancouver for a few nights.

Sadly there was not a large turnout for the concert they gave here, and those who didn't attend really missed out on a marvelous evening. The resonance of their voices as they sang a myriad variety of songs, fair took our breaths away. Among the selection were spirituals, operatic pieces and traditional Welsh tunes, all of which were so moving, and kept our spirits high so that before we knew it, the evening was over and it was time to go home.

David Tuck was guest soloist for the night and along with his accompanist, he gave exquisite rendi-

tions of songs such as "Elen Fwyn" and some operatic pieces.

Busy preparations and hard work on the night of the reception, were worth it in the long run, as the choir were ecstatic at the hospitality and friendly welcome shown to them at the Hall.

They had a marvellous time with us, but all too soon it was over and they were on their way home. Still, we can only hope that they do come back for a future visit and bring with them some more hiraeth and hwyl to balance against our croeso a ddiwod eto.

Written by Lynne Fox

Grateful acknowledgement to D. Davies of Kamloops, B.C. for additional information.

FROM THE EDITORS

This is the last newsletter before Summer break. The hard working volunteers are deserving of a vacation and that includes us as well!

In this issue, we remind our members that the Red Dragon will be open over June, July and August and also that in Autumn and Winter, there are some important events to look forward to. Note them on your calendars.

Please continue with the contributions to the newsletter. We enjoy receiving them very much. Have a lovely time over the holidays and we shall see you back here in September.

Lynne and Rob Fox

Coming Engagements

Members, mark the following autumn and winter ('96) dates for Welsh Society events on your calendar:

- The Anniversary Dinner will be held Saturday, October 5th. Jordans are the caterers.
 Watch for further details in an upcoming newsletter.
- Mulled Wine Evening, Saturday, November 30th.
- Christmas Dinner Dance, Saturday, December 7th.
- Children's Christmas Party, Sunday, December 15th.

Annual Summer Picnic

Sunday, July 7th

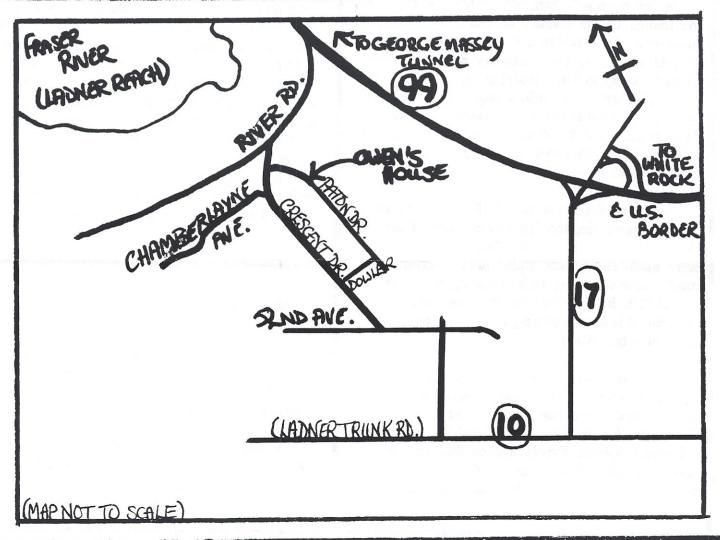
At the home of Jeff and Gaynor Owen, by kind invitation.

Sunshine is promised for this year, as well as plenty of fun-filled activities.

All you have to do is bring a lawn chair for sitting on, sunscreen, something to barbecue and a swimsuit.

The Owen's address is 5456 Paton Drive, Ladner; telephone: 946-4956.

Here is a map to help you get there...



Welsh Gold

Taken from "This Week", the national tourist
paper for Wales
Donated by Gwen and Tony Tonack

The Romans came to Wales in search of it. In the 19th Century, sleepy Dolgellau became Wales' answer to the Klondike because of it. And the Royal Family make ceremonial rings out of it.

The Romans, attracted by tales of gold in the waters of the River Cothi, arrived at remote Dolaucothi deep in the hills north west of Llandovery in the 1st Century A.D. They soon discovered that the stories were true and began mining here. It was a huge and typically well-planned endeavour, a testament to the value they placed on Welsh gold, which was transported to the Imperial Mints at Lyon and Rome.*

Wales' main gold belt, though is to be found in the middle of the country around Dolgellau. The rocks along the Mawddach Valley yield a high quality gold which has been used for everything from Celtic jewellery to Royal wedding rings. It is said that the Royal Family once held a nugget of Welsh gold from an old mine in the hills overlooking the Mawddach estuary and the Queen was given a kilo of Welsh gold by Gwynfynydd Mines Royal to celebrate her 60th birthday.

Gold was discovered here in the mid nineteenth Century, prompting the first fevered "Gold Rush" to the Welsh mountains. Unlike California, no fortunes were made and interest faded until a second, and much better organised, rush of mining activity in the late 1880's. In all, about twenty mines operated in this belt of land until mining activity ceased with the onset of World War I.

Over the years, the romance and lure of Welsh gold have attracted much interest, not least because of the Royal connection. In 1981, the Gwynfynydd Gold Mine hidden deep in the Coed Y Brenin Forest, was reopened. Experts reckon that there is still sufficient gold here to sustain mining activity for the next thirty years, though it is a daunting task; it usu-

ally takes the mining and processing of about two tons of ore to glean just one ounce of gold.

Visitors can see operations for themselves on conducted tours, which depart from the Welsh Gold shop in Dolgellau. From there, they are taken by minibus to the mine, where they don protective clothing for a conducted, underground tour on which the techniques of mining and the everyday life of the miner are explained. Here, a visitor can even try his or her luck by chipping away at Gwynfynydd's gold bearing quartz vein or panning for gold - a record number of visitors "struck gold" last year and although some amounts were fairly microscopic, the thrill still exists. Back in Dolgellau, the shop sells an attractive range of items in Welsh gold and silver and there's a catalogue available, there is also the opportunity to watch a jeweller at work.

Because of it's rarity there are a few remaining shops now in Wales where Welsh gold jewellery can be found. One such shop is Rhiannons' in Tregaron. Recognised internationally as one of the leaders in the field of Celtic design, Rhiannons' jewellery in gold and silver is a link between creative expression in the Wales of today and yesterday. The jewellery design displays the exquisite complexity typical of Celtic design interpreted with a contemporary touch. The connection with the interlacing designs you see on ancient Celtic crosses is unmistakable. It's a rewarding experience to follow the gold trail on your visit to Wales - though there are no guarantees you will find any precious metal for yourself.......

Christmas Draw Squares

The night of the Golf Tournament & Barbecue, Christmas Draw squares will be on sale in the Red Dragon at 50 cents each. This will continue every Saturday night, until the Dinner Dance.

Be sure to stop by and purchase some as you could win one or more of the delectable prizes that are given out at the Dinner Dance.

Land of my Jathers' Sons

Below is the Welsh National Anthem, with the latest translation in English. Ann and Ron Watkins of Manteca, California, recently found it on a postcard while on holiday in Wales and they sent it along to Jeff and Gaynor Owen, who in turn, kindly loaned it to us for the newsletter. Sadly, the name of the translator is not included.

Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau Land Of My Fathers

Mae hen wlad fy nhadau yn annwyl i mi, Gwlad beirdd a chantorion en wogion o fri; Ei gwrol ryfelwyr, gwladgarwyr tra mad, Tros ryddid, gollasant eu gwaed.

Gwlad! Gwlad! pleidiol wyf i'm gwlad,
Tra mor yn fur
I'r bur hoff bau,
O bydded i'r heniaeth barhau.

Dear land of my fathers, whose
Glories were told
By bard and by minstrel who loved
Thee of old,
Dear country whose sires, that their
Sons might be free,
Have suffered and perished for thee!

Wales! Wales! Land of mist and wild;
Where e'er I roam,
Though far from home,
The mother is calling her child.

Keeping up to date with our membership...

Regular attendees of the most recent Sunday Church Service said how nice it was to see Ros Thomas there, after absence due to ill health. We are all very pleased to hear that he is doing so well.

We also send our fondest regards to Gareth Prytherch. Glad you are feeling better!

New baby congratulations go to members Nerys and Sam Haqq on the newest arrival into their family. Brett Michael Rhys was born on May 9th. Llongyfarchiadau yn gynnes iawn i'r theulu.

Also to Victor and Liliana Griffiths on the birth of their first child, Nicholas, who was born on June 6th. Best wishes to your family.

Warmest welcomes to the little ones.

Folk Dancing News

The dancers had their End of Season Barbecue at the home of Don and Liz Murray, on Thursday, June 13th.

Everyone attending, prepared and contributed delicious food for the supper table and later, when the sun went down, we strayed indoors to sit and chat over dessert and coffee. It was wonderful as always.

Thank you gifts were presented to a few people; a prettily hand-crafted bird house to our generous hosts - and of course, we mustn't forget to include Shilling the dog, who was just a love!

Also, Gaynor Evans, dance instructor extraordinaire, was given an adorable little basket which held tiny gardening tools, water meter, seed packets and a hand painted flower pot. All recipients were thrilled.

Happy but full, the dance troupe eventually rolled home, but they will be back in September to begin season number six.

Poets' Corner

"Lament of Ceridwen"

Once upon a time
Before written word or rhyme
Lived a woman dressed in white
A very a wesome sight
On her foot she wore the shoon
Her hands she raised towards the moon

No one knew her name
Or whence she came
A white dragon was her guide
Soon they knew her far and wide
She understood the human condition
And gave advice with erudition

Her success was her end
Before the man she had to bend
The man was dressed in red
Just like the dragon that he led
It's the same to this day
Man will always have his way.

Pur Sang

Written by Isla Jane Kail



A super Wind-Up Party was held for the singers at the home of Nervs and Sam,

Sunday, June 9th.

Practices resume in September, on the Friday after Labour Day.

People interested in joining the group please call Director Nerys Haqq at 278-8978.

Of Interest_

Q: Why is it that we "tie a Yellow Ribbon round an old Oak Tree"?

A: This tradition was begun by Welsh settlers in America in the 18th and 19th Centuries. They originally planted Daffodils outside their homes to welcome the new arrivals from Wales, but later they used a yellow ribbon instead. New immigrants would therefor know where their countrymen were living.

Contributed by Ieuan Lampshire Jones

More News From Home

The Oldest Tree In Wales

A 4,000 year old yew tree, growing in the grounds of St. Digian's church at Llangernyw, between Abergele and Llanrwst, thought to be the oldest tree in Wales and one of the oldest yew trees in the whole world, is drawing an increasing number of visitors who wish to see, touch, or be photographed beside it.

A Centenary Celebration & Award for Great Little Railways of Wales!

The Snowdon Mountain Railway, the only rack and pinion railway in the U.K. which since it opened has carried more than five million passengers, is celebrating it's centenary this year and Glyndyfrdwy Station on the Llangollen Railway, which has been completely re-built from scratch by volunteers, has won an Ian Allen National Railway Heritage Award in a national competition open to preserved railways throughout the U.K.

(Taken from "This Week", The Welsh Tourist newspaper.))

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