

Mlawrth i Ebrill

1999



March to April

1999

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

*Cambrian News*

Welsh Society Newsletter – Cylchgrawn Cymraeg



Llangollen Bridge

Photograph by Doreen Smith. Llantysilio W.I.

#### LLANGOLLEN BRIDGE

The 14th century stone bridge of Llangollen is one of the Seven Wonders of Wales. Trefor Bridge which crosses the River Dee in the middle of the town, was built originally by Bishop Trefor.

The present structure dates from Elizabethan times and has been widened several times.

Postcard: published by Clwyd-Denbigh Federation of Women's Institutes

CAMBRIAN HALL, 215 East 17TH Ave, VANCOUVER B C V5V 1A6 Tel: (604) 876-2815

In 1955, the memoirs of Evan Parry and Barbara Llwyd de Evans were published in "Y Drafod" (The Discussion). Both had lived in Coronel Suarez. Barbara Llwyd, the daughter of Robert Jones "Otro Lau", returned from there at six years of age and has entitled her memoirs "What I have heard". But Evan Parry, who was much older has given his memoirs the title of "What I Saw". Both lived in the Chubut Valley for the rest of their lives.

Evan Parry was a poet and musician, and Barbara Llwyd, in addition to being a fine administrator and housewife, was recognized for her literary gifts and her captivating personality. In her youth she had played the harp which is now preserved in her home in Bryn Gwyn, near Gaiman

"From both their articles, we have translated the following excerpts."

#### THE TOWN

In 1884 the railway line between Buenos Aires and Bahia Blanca was completed and the station of Sauce Corto (Broken or short willow) was located at kilometer point 480, three leagues (or Miles) from Curumalan ranch.

Within a short time families and single men coming from the Welsh colony of Chubut settled there, and some arrived directly from Wales. Here are their names:

Rev. John Owen and family (ten);  
Thomas Morgan Jones (eight);  
Evan Davies (nine);  
Richard Evans "Twrch" (The Boar) (five);  
Elias Owen (five);  
David Griffiths (four);  
Gruffudd Pugh (five);  
Robert Jones "Otro" (the other) (four);  
T. R. Jones "Brawd Annwyl" (dear brother) (seven);  
Esau Evans (four);  
John Coslett Thomas (seven);  
John Parry (seven);  
Eleazar Morris (three);  
William Morris (three);  
Gomer Jones (three);  
Evan Jones (six);  
Gutyn Ebrill (four);  
David Hughes Cadfan (five);

and single men:

George Gittens, Owen R. Williams, John R. Roberts,  
Owen Roberts, Jack Roberts, John Williams,  
Jonathon, Benjamin & David Rees  
David Williams, Daniel Probert and his mother,  
Griffith "Bach" (Shorty) and David John.

I cannot fail to mention the family of an Englishman, Harry Collingwood, who was just one of us.

The region, as far as the eye could see, was a large plain, covered with native grass interspersed here and there by clumps of broken straw, as there are on the shores of the Chubut river. There are no trees, except for a few small willows about a metre in height, and from which comes the expression "Sauce Corto" (short willows).

The town is on the right side of the Buenos Aires to Bahia Blanca railway line, and the colony about three miles distance from the line. Every two farms there was a wide street of twenty metres, a cluster of four farms between streets, and each farm being 830 square metres.

In the town, the largest store of Santamarina was located opposite the stockade of the railway station, and covered a quarter of a block. It was a well-established and well stocked firm, but eventually a large number of colonists farms were taken over by it.

A benevolent Irishman, named Eduardo Casey, had made an agreement with the administration of Curumalan to settle in the region ten thousand people within ten years. But his scheme failed, and he died a pauper in Buenos Aires.

## COFIO DEWI SANT

The Vancouver Welsh Society dedicated the week-end of Feb.26 to March 1st., 1999 to St. David, the Patron Saint of Wales.

An enthusiastic group of helpers, under the generalship of Gaynor Owen, spent Friday preparing the lower hall for the festivities. The tables were set, and the whole room was decorated with flags, banners, pictures and flowers. It was indeed an impressive sight.

On Saturday night, over seventy-five members and guests sat down to enjoy the evening. Ann Roberts, as usual, was an efficient Mistress of Ceremonies. Greetings from all over the world were read by our Secretary, Bernadette Howells. Included were a cable from Prince Charles, and an e-mail from the island of Bali, compliments of our vacationing Treasurer, Tecwyn Roberts.

Lively speeches were given by Margaret Monck (Toast to Canada), and Dr. Hugh Jones (Toast to Wales and Dewi Sant). Margaret is our Membership Secretary, and Dr. Hugh (from Portmadog) is a visiting paediatrician at Children's Hospital.

Caterers Lorraine and Tim Jordan provided us, once more, with a delectable meal. The meat was cooked to perfection, and compliments abounded.

Our thanks go to Nerys Haqq for entertaining us with three Welsh solos. With the help of Lucy Thorensen on the piano, Nerys also conducted us in singing some of the old favourite hymn-tunes.

A folk dancing display and lesson was enjoyed by all. Our thanks go to Gaynor Evans and her group for their efforts.

All in all it was a most friendly and enjoyable evening conducted in a warm, cosy and convivial environment.

On Sunday afternoon the congregation of St. David's Church in Vancouver conducted a special service to honour the Patron Saint of Wales—after whom the church was named. A group of Society members who attended, were made to feel welcome. Most of the hymn-tunes were Welsh, and those of us present were most impressed with the quality and enthusiasm of the singing.

On Monday night, March 1st., the Red Dragon was open again for an informal Dydd Gwyl Dewi Sant gathering. The room was a hubbub of conversation—with an occasional burst of song from the vicinity of Enid Lewis's piano.

Rose Murphy's soup was enjoyed by all—and we are indebted to Rose for what has now become a St. David's Day tradition. The leek-eating ceremony was a hit once more. This year was momentous—for the first time ever it was the ladies that did the eating—good for you girls!

The druidic bards were in fine form, and we thank Rob Barclay and Jeff Owen for organizing this colourful and entertaining event.

Our thanks also to Gwen and Tony Tonack and their helpers for their unflinching dedication.

St. David, I feel certain must have been satisfied with the festivities conducted to honour his memory.

Submitted by John O. Pritchard

We are indebted to Victor Griffiths for the following newspaper account. Since the article is quite lengthy it will take several editions of our newsletter to publish it fully. For this reason, it is suggested that members retain each section of the article as it appears so that they can be re-read with continuity and greater appreciation after the final publication.

### The Welsh Revival in Patagonia

By Adam Freedman

For the Buenos Aires Herald (January 1999)

In 1865, the visionary Lewis Jones led 163 Welshmen to Patagonia, thus founding the Welsh colony of the Chubut Valley. Today, Jones's great-granddaughter, Luned Roberts de Gonzalez, is helping to lead the fight to preserve the Welsh language in Patagonia.

Gonzalez is the local coordinator of a British-government-funded project that brings native Welsh teachers to Chubut Province. The project is credited with doubling the number of Welsh students in the province in just two years. The question of how much farther the project can go - and whether the British government will continue to fund it - is fueling intense discussion about the future of the Welsh colony in Patagonia.

"You could say it's a waste of money to create any cultural links," says Mike Potter, Director of the British Council's office in Argentina, which administers the Welsh Language Project. Potter disputes charges that the program is a waste of British taxpayer money, citing the strong interest in Patagonia among the Welsh and the importance of the Welsh migration to the history of Argentina.

### **The Welsh Colony in Patagonia**

Welsh has been spoken in Patagonia since the 1860's. The story began when President Mitre sought European immigrants to populate the south - back then, the southernmost settlement was Carmen de Patagones in Buenos Aires Province. At the same time, various Welsh groups were searching for new lands beyond the reach of English influence. In 1863, the Argentine government offered a visiting Welsh delegation land in the Chubut Valley. The Welsh accepted.

The first group of Welsh settlers - led by Lewis Jones - arrived in 1865 in what is today Puerto Madryn. Immigration continued, with approximately 3,000 Welshmen arriving between 1865 and 1914. The early years were hard. In order to make the dry soil fertile, the colonist dug (without the aid of machinery) a network of irrigation canals that remain in operation today.

Eventually, the colony prospered, with the Welsh language prevailing in business and newspapers. During this century, however, the arrival of non-Welsh Argentines in the valley,



mass media, and the pressure to assimilate have led to a decline in the Welsh language. Last year, it was estimated that there were fewer than 5,000, mostly older, Welsh speakers in the valley.

However, just as Welsh was beginning to die out among fourth and fifth generation Patagonians, renewed interest, locally and from Wales, is driving a cultural renaissance. In Wales, there has been a growing sense of national identity in recent years, culminating in last year's referendum to create an elected assembly for Wales.

Along with the Welsh *risorgimiento* comes a renewed interest in Chubut. Not that Wales ever completely forgot the only Welsh-speaking colony outside Britain. Gwyn Jones, a native Welshman who now lives in Gaiman, remembers being told stories as a boy "of people speaking Welsh on the other side of the world."

### **The Welsh Language Project**

In 1990, an informal program began to bring Welsh teachers to Patagonia on a voluntary basis. The volunteers were generally retirees who could afford the time without salary. In 1996, a proposal was made to the Welsh Office to formalize the program and provide a salary to the teachers. Gonzalez traveled to Cardiff to meet with representatives of the Welsh Office. The "Welsh Language Project" was born.

The project sends three native Welsh-speaking teachers to Chubut; one for Gaiman and Dolavon; one for Trelew, Rawson, and Puerto Madryn; and one for Trevelin and Esquel. After a competitive selection process, the first group of teachers arrived for the 1997-98 academic year.

As an adjunct to the program, provision is made for native Argentine Welsh teachers to attend an eight-week tutor training course at the Centre for Welsh Language Teaching at the University of Wales, Cardiff. There is also an intensive Welsh language course at the University of Wales, Lampeter available for some advanced Welsh learners from Chubut.

The British Council works with a steering group made up of representatives of the Welsh Office, the Wales Argentine Society, and the Centre for Welsh Language Training to administer the program.

Gonzalez emphasizes that the project "is not just the British government throwing money [at Chubut] . . . it is a joint effort." The approximately £40,000 annually from the Welsh Office mainly covers the salary and transportation expenses of the three teachers. Local associations in Chubut provide housing, teaching facilities, and other support.

For its part, the British Council has donated some used office equipment to the program and has assigned Projects Officer Liliana Tomchik to oversee the effort. Potter cites Tomchik's devotion to the Welsh Language Project as one factor in its success.

TO BE CONTINUED— PLEASE RETAIN THIS COPY

## W. A. REPORT

In January we welcomed three guests: Elvira Tairova; Barbara Vellhuis, a Welsh Society member and one of the Cambrian Circle Singers; and Michelle Whelan, also a Welsh Society member. Elvira came here a year ago from Russia and works with Maureen Grecht.

We also received a delightful letter from Jean Hinkley's daughter, Marion, including a picture of Jean, looking well and happy at 93 years of age. The letter and picture went up on the notice board for all to see and the picture will be added to our photograph albums. Thanks very much Marion.

News from Dorothy Walters, another of our honoured members, is that she is well and happy, singing in her church choir, and spent a week at Christmas with family on Vancouver Island. We delivered a plant and a card to her at Christmas.

Our February meeting saw us busily cleaning the display cases and polishing the silver trophies. We hope all of you attending the St. David's Day banquet were suitably impressed.

The flowers we donated for the banquet were beautifully arranged by Gaynor Owen, and you who attended the dinner will have seen how lovely the head table and the hall looked.

Next month we will be planning some outings and more mini-sales. We are pleased to welcome Michelle Whelan and Barbara Vellhuis as members. We hope they will enjoy being part of the group.

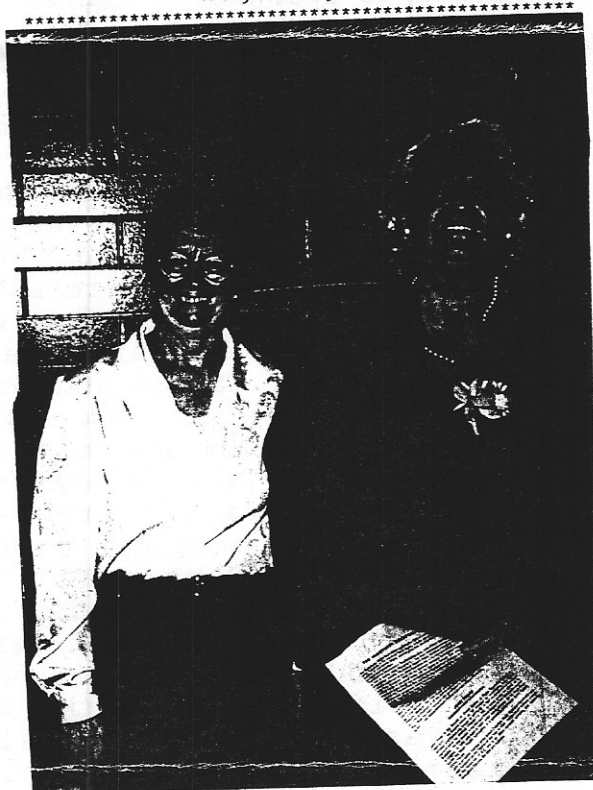
B. Thomas, Secretary

## Vancouver Welsh Society

### Officers and Directors For 1999

President : Jeff Owen (604) 946 - 4956  
V. Pres. : Ann Roberts (604) 925 - 4662  
Secretary : Bernadette Howells 873 - 0532  
Treasurer : Tecwyn Roberts (604) 464 - 2760  
Mem. Sec.: Margaret Monck (604) 733 - 9787  
News. Ed. : Gwilym Evans (604) 274 - 3794

Directors : Rob Barclay  
Jane Byrne  
Ieuan Lampshire-Jones  
John Pritchard  
Mary Slaney



It was a great pleasure to meet up with long time society member Meirwen Evans at the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir concert in Powell River. Meirwen, sporting a beautiful daffodil corsage, introduced herself to choir members and their wives and spent most of the intermission chatting to all. As many members know, Meirwen has always been involved with music and still plays the organ for church services.

Gaynor Evans

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## VANCOUVER WELSH MEN'S CHOIR

Saturday February 28 featured our first performance in 1999 , in St. George's Anglican Church in Maple Ridge where we performed a benefit concert for the Arcus Foundation and the Rainbow Ridge extended care facility. We approached the concert with a little trepidation , since the program included no less than six new numbers , i.e. Ching-A-Ring Chaw, With a Voice of Singing, The Gift of Song, Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit, Shenandoah and Onward Christian Soldiers. Our fears were groundless since the entire concert was received most enthusiastically by the sold-out audience who showed their appreciation by purchasing nearly \$500 worth of our tapes and CD's. Coming next are our Spring Concert "With a Voice of Singing" in the Surrey Arts Centre on Wednesday March 24 and a benefit concert for the Heritage Park School Music Program in Mission's Clarke Foundation Theatre on Saturday April 10.

Submitted by Des Harris



### The Month of March

This was the first month in the old Roman Calendar. It was named after the god Mars, and was the *Hlyd(storm) monath* of the Anglo-Saxons.

In our childhood in Wales the advent of March was greeted with relief and undiluted enthusiasm. One seemed to have turned a meteorological "corner", where one could be confident that the icy blasts of winter would soon be only memories. One could be mildly surprised on occasions to experience an exceptionally mild month only to be unceremoniously confounded by the vagaries of April's weather. Generally, it heralded better things to come : some sunny days that afforded some relief from the dreary tedium of the long winter months; an abundance of lilly-white lambs romping and prancing in the meadows, hills and vales; a resurgence in the activities of our feathered friends; and the vision of ubiquitous stately daffodils swaying in the breezes.

All in all it was a month of optimism, where one could look forward to the lengthening days of advancing spring and the prospect soon of gaining an extra hour of daylight for athletic pursuits. The memories of members of the family huddled in somnolent and sometimes grotesque repose, in front of the glowing embers, began to fade. It was the time when we literally itched to divest our winter woolies only to be cautioned by our cautious parents who admonished us not to be so foolish and precipitous as to defy the capricious month that "can come in as a lamb, but go out as a lion".

Ed.

Reproduced below is a telegram received from HRH The Prince of Wales on the 10th February/99.

Bernadette Howells, Secretary  
Welsh Society of Vancouver  
Cambrian Hall, 216 East 17th Avenue  
Vancouver(V5V 1A6) Canada

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND MESSAGE OF LOYAL GREETINGS. I HOPE THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER GATHERED TOGETHER ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR ST. DAVID'S DAY BANQUET AT THE CAMBRIAN HALL, ON SATURDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 1999, HAVE A MOST ENJOYABLE TIME.

CHARLES  
THE PRINCE OF WALES

COL CKD

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We would like to welcome two new members, Ms. Ingrid Wood and Mr. Eifion Williams and to welcome back Mr. George McDonnell, Mr. Ted Orme and Dr. Tecwyn Jones, after long absences. We hope to see you at the Red Dragon on a Saturday night to meet and greet fellow members and to renew old acquaintances.

I am putting on my nagging hat again this year and am reminding all members that 1999 dues are due as of January 1st.

Margaret Monck,  
Membership Secretary

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When you finally go back to your old hometown, you find it wasn't the old home you missed but your childhood.

— Sam Ewing

Nostalgia is like a grammar lesson: you find the present tense and the past perfect.

— The United Church Observer



### The driver's seat - Part I

Matt Mickiewicz says these quotes were taken from the *Toronto News* on July 26, 1977, and are statements from insurance forms where car drivers tried to summarize accident details in as few words as possible.

We'll tell you a few more tomorrow:

1. Coming home I drove into the wrong house and collided with a tree I don't have.
2. The other car collided with mine without giving warning of its intent.
3. I collided with a stationary truck coming the other way.
4. In my attempt to kill a fly, I drove into a telephone pole.
5. I had been shopping for plants all day and was on my way home. As I reached an intersection, a hedge sprang up, obscuring my vision and I did not see the other car.
6. I had been driving for 40 years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had an accident.
7. I was on my way to the doctor with rear end trouble when my universal joint gave way causing me to have an accident.
8. My car was legally parked as it backed into the other vehicle.
9. As I approached the intersection a sign suddenly appeared in a place where no sign had ever appeared before, making me unable to avoid the accident.
10. I told the police I was not injured, but upon removing my hair, I found that I had a fractured skull.
11. I was sure the old fellow would never make it to the other side of the road when I struck him.
12. The indirect cause of the accident was a little guy in a small car with a big mouth.

### Annual Golf Tournament

This year's tournament between North and South Wales is scheduled for Saturday, 26th June, 1999 at 1pm at the Delta Golf Course.

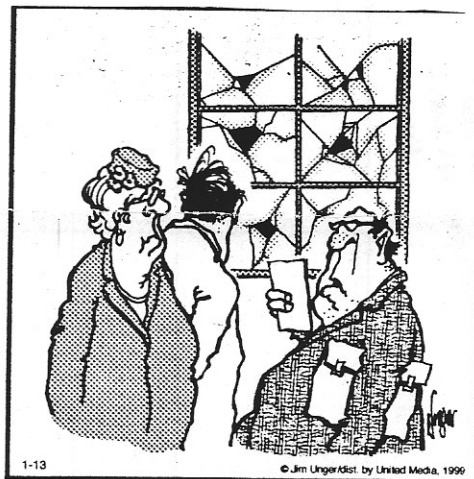
In contrast to previous years, the official Minister for Propaganda for the South Wales team has declined to make any pre-match comments, threats or forecasts on the forthcoming match.

Our condolences are extended to long-time member, Margaret Parry on the death of her mother at Rhos-on-Sea, Wales on February 8th. last.

### The driver's seat - Part II

Matt Mickiewicz says these quotes were taken from the *Toronto News* on July 26, 1977, and are actual statements from insurance forms where car drivers tried to summarize accident details in as few words as possible:

- I was thrown from my car as it left the road, and was later found in a ditch by some stray cows.
- A pedestrian hit me and went under my car.
- I thought my window was down, but I found out it was up when I put my head through it.
- To avoid hitting the bumper of the car in front, I struck the pedestrian.
- The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him.
- The pedestrian had no idea which way to run, so I ran over him.
- An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car and vanished.
- A truck backed through my windshield into my wife's face.
- I pulled away from the side of the road, glanced at my mother-in-law, and headed over the embankment.



"Another feature of this home is that it's within a stone's throw of several schools."

# March 1999

## Mis Mawrth 1999

Welsh Men's Choir Rehearsals Tuesdays at Cambrian Hall  
 Orpheus Choir Tuesdays, 7.30 p.m. @ John Oliver High School

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
14 11:00 a.m. Church Service and te bach	15	16	17 W.A. (Noon) Meeting Cambrian Circle Singers Rehearsal	18 Thursdays Welsh Folk Dancing Welsh Speaking Evening	19	20 7:30 Duncan Vancouver Island Orpheus Choir Red Dragon Open 8:30 p.m.
21 2 p.m. Sydney Vancouver Island Orpheus Choir	22	23	24 8: p.m. VWMC Surrey Arts Cambrian Circle Singers	25	26	27 Red Dragon Open 8:30 p.m.
28	29	30	31	Cymdeithas Cymraeg Vancouver Welsh Society Cambrian Hall, 215 E. 17th Ave, Vancouver, B. C. V5V 1A6 Telephone:- (604) 876-2815		

# April 1999

## Mis Ebrill 1999

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 Easter	5	6	7 7:30 p.m. Exec. Mtg	8 Thursdays Welsh Folk Dancing	9 Cambrian Circle Singers	10 VWMC Clarke Theatre Mission Red Dragon Open 8:30 p.m.
11 11:00 a.m. Church Service and te bach	12	13	14	15	16 Tacoma Welsh Weekend	17 Red Dragon Open 8:30 p.m.
				1	2 Good Fridays	3 Red Dragon Open 8:30 p.m.

For your concert date, or later changes,  
 notices for inclusion in this calendar display are  
 requested by month-end, 4 - 6 weeks BEFORE the event.