

Tachwedd i Rhagfyr
2001

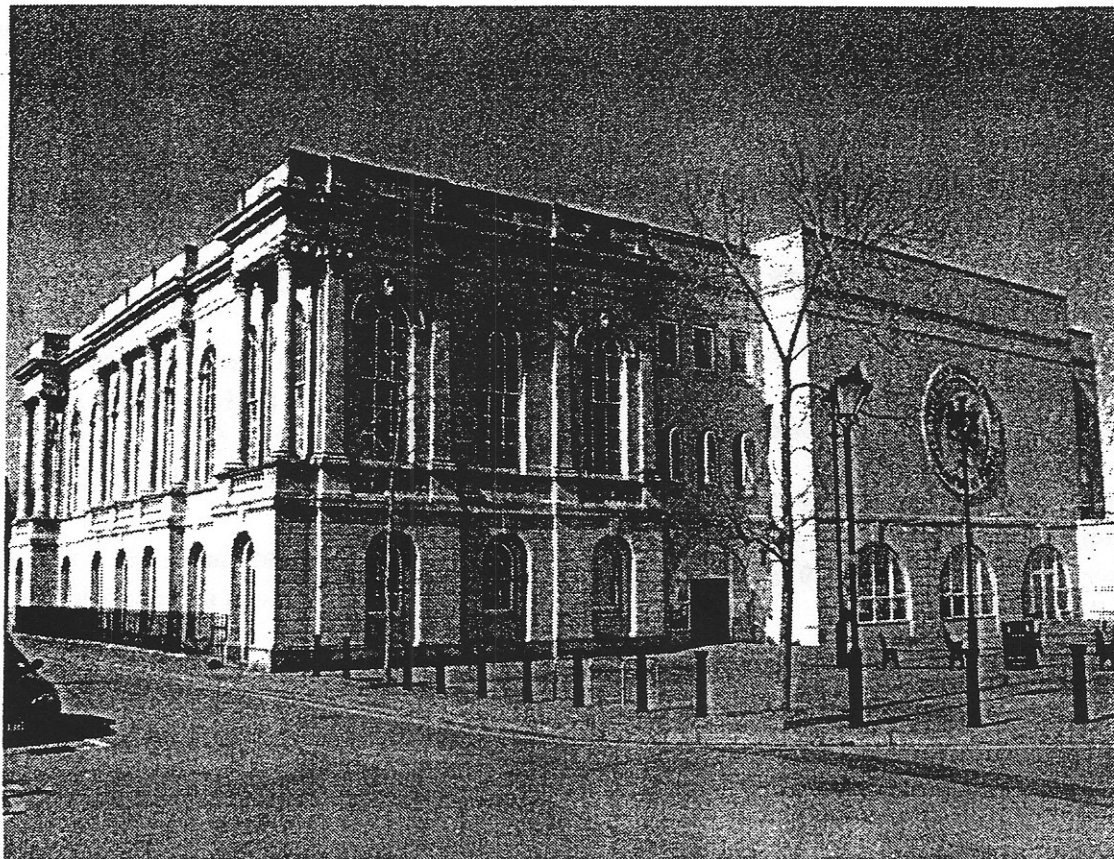


November to December
2001

Cymdeithas Gymkaeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Welsh Society Newsletter — Cylchgrawn Cymraeg



The Dylan Thomas Centre, Swansea, South Wales.

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

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Cambrian News

From The Editor:

This last month has been very active and successful for the Society. The Dylan Thomas Circle, many of whose members also belong to the Welsh Society, have concluded their eight presentations of "Under Milk Wood" at the Cambrian Hall. An abstract of Eifion Williams' article in the Celtic Connection is included. Clearly a highlight of the season was the Welsh Weekend which met with enthusiastic approval from many participants. Another report by Eifion is included, as is a Letter to the Editor below.

I myself was regrettably unable to be present, since I had to return to Wales for family reasons. I hear that my contribution to the Noson Lawen was most effectively replaced by two corgis; however I understand they have no immediate designs on the editorship!

A challenge to any poets in our midst would be to provide a credible translation in the spirit of the poem headlining Artro Evans' article!

David Llewelyn Williams

To The Editor:

I am using the Cambrian News as a vehicle to congratulate the 'Welsh Weekend of Celebration Committee' for organizing such a wonderfully successful weekend that seemed to flow effortlessly.

Efficiency makes me tick!!... and that was certainly what I was exposed to on Nov 2-4th 2001.

What a weekend of true Welshness it turned out to be! What with the Gala Concert on Saturday; the Gymanfa Ganu followed by the Te Bach (Mawr +++); and best of all, the heartfelt camaraderie. It made me proud to be a Welsh Canadian.

Diolch yn fawr iawn i'r Committee

Eirlys Ann Thomas

Members in the news at the Festival of Wales 2001

Several reports on this festival, held in San Jose, California, during the Labour Day Weekend, featured prominently members of the Society. The article on the front page of Ninnau's October issue showed a photo of our own Lynn Owens-Whalen in procession, entering the ballroom for the opening ceremony. Lynn is the present Vice-President of the Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu Association.

A new magazine, which I discovered on my recent visit to Wales, is called 'OneWales'. It claims to be 'opinionated, passionate and proud to be Welsh'. Somewhat reminiscent of our General Meetings, I suppose. The second issue to date, October/November 2001, includes an article by Charles Williams reporting on the Festival. Prominently featured in a section entitled "From the Valleys to the Valley" (Silicon Valley that is) are our own Jeff and Gaynor Owen. So our fame is being spread across Wales! The magazine is published by The Western Mail and is expected to appear quarterly.

David Williams

Social Committee Report.

The Christmas Season is quickly approaching so please mark your calendar with these dates. These were announced last month, but a gentle reminder may help!

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 30th

Mulled Wine Evening.

Please come and join us at **8.00pm** for this very special evening of carols and Christmas cheer. Please note the change of date and **DAY**, yes this year the mulled wine evening is a **FRIDAY**. We look forward to seeing you for one of the most favorite evenings of the year.

If you would like to contribute to the evening we would be very grateful for some Christmas goodies to add to our plates for every one to share. Also there will also be a box by the entrance if any one would like to donate a non-perishable item for the food bank. Look forward to seeing you.

CHRISTMAS DINNER DANCE.

DECEMBER 8TH 2001. Cocktails: 6:30pm Dinner: 7:30pm

For tickets please call Gaynor Owen at 604 946 4956.

Or Gwen Tonack at 604 738 3377.

Please call to reserve your tickets before November 30th

The tickets usually go very quickly so please do not hesitate.

The price of the tickets is \$27.00 for members & \$30.00 for guests.

CHOIR VISIT

During the Summer months we heard that the Llanddulas Male Voice Choir would be visiting Vancouver in September during a holiday trip to Western Canada, and that they would be pleased to give us a concert.

"Llanddulas!!-where is that ?" was a common refrain. Well, we found out that it is a small village on the North Wales coast between the resort towns of Llandudno and Rhyl.

The choir was founded in 1946 by Meirion Davies Mus.B. and he has been their Music Director ever since. The choir has performed throughout Wales and has been on many overseas trips, but in recent years they have concentrated upon entertaining visitors to nearby Llandudno. They sang for us at the Cambrian Hall on Sunday, September 9th; the first event in the restored Hall.

The thirty member choir were polished choristers and they gave us a most entertaining evening of music and song. Meirion Davies, their conductor, led the choir from his piano stool with flair and precision. He was also the compere, and introduced the items with pertinence and a lively humour. His public relations skills were evident when he invited members of our local choirs to sing items with the choir. A masterful stroke was to present each one of the participants with a certificate attesting that they had sung with the world-famous Llanddulas Choir!! Meirion was a music teacher at local schools for many years and one can only imagine how lucky generations of pupils were to have his musical enthusiasm, talent, guidance and leadership during their schooldays.

The concert proceeds were kindly donated by the choir to the Cambrian Hall Building Fund-and we thank them for their generosity. They were supposed to fly home to Wales on the following Friday but could not leave till Sunday because of the September 11th crisis. This was fortuitous for the Society, since about two dozen of the visitors joined us at the Red Dragon Saturday night social gathering. At this time the spouses joined the menfolk in entertaining us with their vibrant singing. It was a most pleasant evening indeed. So thank you Meirion Davies and the Llanddulas Male Voice Choir.

Submitted by John Pritchard

Under Milk Wood a Resounding Success

The recent production of *Under Milk Wood* by the Dylan Thomas Circle, in association with the Welsh Society, was a resounding success, drawing appreciative audiences for eight nights at the Cambrian Hall. Four of the eight performances were sold out. Director Trevor Found successfully combined the 'play for voices', as Dylan described it, with a visually entertaining theatrical production. The performers, many originally from Wales, succeeded in providing the authentic Welsh voices of the mythical Llaregyb. Space precludes mentioning all cast members, each of whom played several characters. However, the heaviest burden fell on Anthony Tobin and Angela Wells as First and Second Voice, respectively. Both did an excellent job of supplying the narration linking the various scenes in the play. The production was also fortunate in having the skills of Jonathan Ryder as lighting designer and William Moysey as sound designer. The stage manager and self described 'den mother' was Carol Kaye. Financial sponsors included Grenville Thomas, the British Consul General, and the law firm of Anthony Tobin.

(abstracted from Eifion Williams' article in the Celtic Connection.)

The Welsh Weekend of Celebration

The Welsh Weekend of Celebration, November 2-4, proved to be a great success.

The festivities got off to a good start with the Noson Lawen on Friday night. John Williams was the Master of Ceremonies for a most entertaining potpourri of contributions, by participants from Seattle, Vancouver, and Vancouver Island. Most of the audience stayed on afterwards to enjoy the afterglow in the Red Dragon.

On Saturday morning the Dylan Thomas Circle entertained a number of people with skits and readings and held their annual meeting after lunch.

The afternoon and evening Gala Concerts featuring the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir were both popular and successful. The two guest soloists, Jason Howard and Fiona Blackburn drew loud applause from an appreciative audience, both for their solos and for their duet rendition of the popular show tune 'Wunderbar'. The Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir sang in both Welsh and English under the direction of regular conductor John Trepp. The Choir's final three songs were conducted by guest conductor Dr. Haydn James, who received an enthusiastic welcome from the audience.

On Sunday morning a Welsh Chapel Service at the Cambrian Hall set the tone for the Gymanfa Ganu in the afternoon. The Gymanfa was conducted by Dr. James and attracted over 200 participants, including many from Washington State, and also from other parts of British Columbia. The organist for the hymn singing was David Millard, regular organist at St. Martin's Anglican Church in North Vancouver. Guest soloist Sandra Stringer rounded out the occasion with beautiful renderings of sacred songs by Vivaldi, Handel, Mendelssohn, and Rossini. She was ably accompanied by pianist Margaret Airey.

At the conclusion of the Gymanfa Ganu, the President of the Welsh Society, Tecwyn Roberts, thanked the organising committee for the Welsh Weekend of Celebration for their efforts in realising a memorable weekend. The assembled company then retired to socialise and enjoy the delights of the Te Bach.

The organising committee (Neville Thomas, Jane Byrne, Gwyn Evans, Lynn Owens-Whalen, Mary Slaney, David Williams, Eifion Williams) wishes to thank all those who assisted in so many ways with the various events. It especially wishes to thank Ken Rogerson, Gerry Hildebrand, Des Harris, and the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir for their assistance and co-operation in staging the Gala Concerts.

Eifion Williams

The Black Chair of Birkenhead

Cadair unig ei drig draw, - ei dwyfraich
Fel yn difrif wrandaw
Heddiw estyn yn ddistaw
Mewn hedd hir am un ni ddaw.

'In Memoriam' by R. Williams Parry

Ellis Humphrey Evans, better known by his bardic name of Hedd Wyn, was born on the 13th of January, 1887 at a farm by the name of Ysgwrn near the village of Trawsfynydd in Merionethshire, Wales. His education was not extensive, being confined to attendance at the local elementary school. His stay at the local council school was short-lived, for when he was old enough, he was pulled out to help on the farm. Though his schooling was limited, he was to inherit from his father, Evan Evans, his love of Welsh poetry. By the time he was twelve he had accrued a fundamental knowledge of its form and syntax. He continued his self education by reading everything he could lay his hands upon, in particular Welsh literature. He borrowed books from friends and was a weekly visitor to the free council library in Blaenau Ffestiniog.

His first poetic success came at the age of eighteen at Bala, where he won the bardic chair for a 'pryddes' entitled 'Y Dyffryn' (The Valley). He came to know Elfed, the psalmist, and later on, the renowned Welsh poet Eifion Wyn. It was at this juncture that he adopted the bardic name of Hedd Wyn. Further successes followed, at Pwllheli, at Pontardawe, and two chairs at Llanuwchllyn. In 1916 he came second in the National itself for his 'awdl' (ode) entitled 'Strata Florida'. His interest in farming as such was to pale in comparison to his interest in composing poetry. However a collection of his work entitled 'Cerddi'r Bugail' ('The Poems of the Shepherd') was published posthumously.

On July 20th, 1917, elements of the 38th (Welsh) Division commenced to take over trenches on the west bank of the Yser Canal, a few miles north of the city of Ypres in Flanders. The sector was humming with activity as a total of seventeen 'fresh' divisions manoeuvred into line in anticipation of the coming offensive. A few days later 'A' Company of the 15th (London Welsh) Battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers made a reconnaissance in strength over the canal and were badly mauled in the process.

At Litherland, on Merseyside, new intakes were arriving to replace the drafts that had already left for the front, and it was here that 61117 Private E.H. Ellis of Trawsfynydd had been moulded into a soldier in the Royal Welch Fusiliers. It was from here he left to join the 15th Battalion.

At 3.50 a.m. on the 31st of July the attack platoons of the 38th Division moved across the Yser Canal. Other divisions on the flanks were similarly on the move to the thunderous cacophony of a barrage from the heavy artillery to the

rear - the Third Battle of Ypres had begun. It is unlikely perhaps that Hedd Wyn was to give even a passing thought to a poem entitled 'The Hero' that he had submitted to the National Eisteddfod Council some weeks earlier. For he was with one of the assault platoons of his battalion as they moved into the maelstrom ahead. Like all his comrades-in-arms he must have wondered what the outcome would be on that day. The success of the 38th Division was nothing short of spectacular as it advanced on a fifteen hundred yard frontage, taking in its stride the city of Pilkem and smothering opposition on the Pilkem and Iron Cross Ridges. Within days it had advanced some two and a half miles and established a bridgehead over the River Steenbeck. The Division had achieved all its objectives, albeit at a heavy cost.

Meantime, in Birkenhead in Cheshire, frantic preparations of an entirely different nature were in progress for the Merseyside city was girding itself for a Welsh 'invasion' as it was hosting the Welsh National Eisteddfod that year.

At the Eisteddfod, held during the first week of August 1917, there was a tense and dramatic silence following the summons of the Archdruid for Hedd Wyn to reveal his identity and ascend the rostrum to take his place in the Bardic Chair. This is one of the highest accolades that the National Eisteddfod can bestow upon one of its competitors, one bringing instant entry into the time-honoured Druid Circle. The audience was stunned when at last it became known that Hedd Wyn had been killed on Pilkem Ridge a few days earlier. The empty Bardic Chair was draped immediately with a black cloth and has since been known as 'The Black Chair of Birkenhead'.

July 31st, 1917 was indeed a day of mixed fortunes. Three Welshmen were to receive the Victoria Cross, one posthumously, and Wales in Hedd Wyn was to lose one of its leading poets. Hedd Wyn was to the Welsh language what Wilfred Owen was to the English language. Both poets abhorred war, yet both died violently in their prime in war. By a sad twist of fate Hedd Wyn was deprived of the knowledge that he had reached the pinnacle of his ambition as a poet; even more ironical perhaps is that 'Hedd Wyn' translated means 'Pure Peace'.

Mae gwaedd y bechgyn lond y gwynt,
A'u gwaed yn gymysg efo'r glaw.
(From the poem 'Rhyfel' by Hedd Wyn)

The young men's cries fill out the wind,
Their blood flows mingled with the rain.
('War' by Hedd Wyn (tr. D.L.I. W.))

Submitted by Artro Evans.

Editor's Note: Mr Evans rightly states that the poem at the start is a masterpiece and he dares not attempt its translation.

Dec 14
8:00 pm VanDusen
Cambrian Singout

November 2001 Mis Tachwedd 2001

Dec. 9
2:30 p.m.
@ BB's Heritage Museum
Cambrian Singout

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	
<p>December 2001</p> <p>Mis Rhagfyr 2001</p>						
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Cymdeithas Cymraeg Vancouver Welsh Society
Cambrian Hall, 215 E. 17th Ave, Vancouver, B.C.
V5V 1A6 Telephone:- 604 876-2815

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