

THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Hydref
2007

Cambrian News

October
2007

Society Newsletter – Cylchgrawn y Gymdeithas



Vancouver's premier Welsh Male Voice Choirs
present



A Celebration in Song:

100 years of the Welsh Society in Vancouver

featuring Eifion Thomas, Baritone

Friday, November 2 at 7:30 pm

Michael J. Fox Theatre

7373 Macpherson Avenue, Burnaby

Tickets: Regular Admission \$25; Students/Seniors \$20

VWMC 604-878-1190, vwmc@shaw.ca

Vancouver Orpheus 604-515-5686, mail@vanconverorpheus.org

CAMBRIAN HALL, 215 East 17th Ave, Vancouver B.C. V5V 1A6

VANCOUVER WELSH SOCIETY

Officers:

President:

Jane Byrne (604) 732-5448

Vice-President:

Lynn Owens-Whalen 266-2545

Secretary:

Eifion Williams 469-4904

Treasurer:

Gaynor Evans 271-3134

Membership Secretary:

Heather Davies 734-5500

Immediate Past President:

Tecwyn Roberts 464-2760

Directors:

Selwyn Jones
Mary Lewis
John Morris
Alcwyn Rogers

Contacts

Building Committee:

Cambrian Circle Singers:

Nerys Haqq 278-8978

Church Service:

Ann Roberts 987-6996

Rentals:

Glyn Shepard 879-6925
(glyndwr@telus.net)

Social Events Committee:

Mary Lewis 331-1573

Welsh Folk Dancing:

Gaynor Evans 271-3134

Welsh-Speaking Group:

Ann Roberts 987-6996

Webmaster:

Alcwyn Rogers 742-1378

(www.welshsociety.com)

Newsletter Editor:

David Llewelyn Williams 737-0305
(williams@phas.ubc.ca)

The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

The major events before us are the November Centenary Celebrations, for which advanced notice was provided in the September issue. Many of the details, with updates where necessary are repeated; be sure to book your tickets for both the Concert and the Banquet soon!

But do also remember the following Society meeting dates for **October** and **November** at the **Cambrian Hall**

Wed.Oct.3rd Executive Meeting 7.30pm

Sunday Oct.14th Church Service at 11.00 am followed by Te Bach.

Wed.Nov.7th Executive Meeting 7.30pm

Wed.Nov.14th General Meeting 7.30pm.

I am very pleased to announce that **Glyn Shepard** has agreed to take over the responsibility for the Hall rentals. This includes arranging for interested parties to view the Hall, booking dates, having contracts signed, collecting deposits and rents and any other functions which will maximize Hall revenue. So please direct any inquiries to Glyn.

David Llewelyn Williams

Epitaph to a Public Man

Where now he lies, his old routine
Will suffer scant disruption
For none could say he'd ever been
A stranger to corruption

Harri Webb

Dear Editor,

First, thank you for your work on the Newsletter. Much appreciated.

A comment on *Welsh in a Year*, the language text mentioned in your June edition. Welsh in a year! Now where have I heard that before?

Recently I returned from a visit to Wales armed with a book entitled, *Welcome to Welsh* by Heini Gruffydd. Similar genre and optimistic claim. Deluded I thought that I would soon be showing up at the Society's Welsh-only evening, impressing Ann Roberts and company with my impeccable fluency. Of course I had conveniently overlooked the conditions that applied and are stressed by Jen Llywelyn. She is so right in underlining *effort, hard work* and *perseverance* as essential prerequisites. Indeed I believe she could have added a few more. It helps to be a gifted learner, to possess a degree of dedication somewhat beyond the ordinary, and – possibly – to own the pedigree of a Llywelyn.

After several months of casual slog it was clear to me that at the end of the year I would not be near enough to a *comfort zone* (to use more of Ms Llywelyn's terminology) to enter the door of Ann's inner circle. Indeed it would be presumptuous to just peek through the keyhole.

I had invested a hard-earned "fiver" (pounds sterling, of course) on the Gruffydd's text and had hoped for more. But I should have known better. In the distant days of my youth I was a pupil at Port Talbot's County School where all were required to study Welsh in their first year. In the second year French could be taken as an alternative and I joined in the mass migration. Did our fear of mutations, a rather odd

syntax and other unique features of the language scare us? Or did we believe that Welsh was dying, dying, dying?

I returned to Canada impressed by the current viability of the language, and curious enough to take another stab at getting to know it in all its complexity. Of course the claim of fluency in a year didn't really fool me, but I did hope to get at least some mastery of the printed word rather than the spoken. The Gruffydd text is achieving that for me and is doing it in a novel way. I believe my "fiver" was well spent.

Still a long way to go though! I tested my skills on the poem *Ffarwell i'r Gwynt a'r Eira* submitted by Society veteran Ieuan Lampshire Jones. But I didn't get much out of it. So, more effort and more, more time! But I am approaching my 87th year and I need incentive to spur me on. Maybe someone can assure me that Welsh is indeed the language of the celestial realm to which we all aspire. Knowing that for a certainty would be motivation enough, I think!

Again thank you for your interesting newsletter,

Sincerely,
Art Worsdale

P.S. Your readers might like to know that these texts and related materials can be obtained from Y Lolfa, Talybont, Ceredigion, Cymru, SY24 5AP
Tel: 01970 832 304
e-mail: ylolfa@ylolfa.com
Web page: [http:// www.ylolfa.com](http://www.ylolfa.com)

Editor's Note: When I married my wife, 45 years ago, my mother gave her a small book entitled *Welsh Made Easy*. Regrettably it did not live up to its promise!

Centenary Celebrations

Thursday Nov. 1st - Noson Lawen

At the Cambrian Hall, commencing at 7.30 pm under Master of Ceremonies David Lintern. Refreshments will be available in the Red Dragon Lounge for Welsh Society members and guests.

Friday, Nov. 2nd - Grand Concert

The Centenary Grand Concert featuring the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir and the Vancouver Orpheus Choir together with tenor soloist Eifion Thomas, will be held at the Michael J. Fox Theatre in Burnaby at 7.30 pm. (See Poster).

Sat., Nov. 3rd - Dylan Thomas Circle

The Dylan Thomas Circle will present a variety of events from 10:30 am to 3:30 pm in the Lower Hall. There will be a film about Dylan, narrated by Richard Burton, and a performance of the poet's works by actor Russell Roberts. A Ploughman's Lunch will be available to members and guests.

Saturday, Nov. 3rd - Grand Banquet

On Saturday night, the Grand Banquet will take place at the Cambrian Hall. Entertainment will be provided by Bronn and Katherine Journey from Seattle. Tickets for the Banquet at \$35 can be obtained from Gaynor Evans at 604-271-3134. Hurry! More than half of the tickets have already been reserved!

Sunday, Nov. 4th - Bilingual Service

A special bilingual church service will be held at 11am in the Cambrian Hall, followed by a traditional Welsh *te bach* (Welsh tea) in the Red Dragon.

Sunday, Nov. 4th - Gymanfa Ganu

The Gymanfa Ganu (hymn-singing festival), under the renowned baton of

Eifion Thomas, will commence in the Cambrian Hall at 2pm. The guest soloist will be mezzo-soprano Sandra Stringer.

Biographical Details:

Eifion Thomas

Eifion Thomas has been the Musical Director of the Llanelli Male Choir since 1974. He is well known on the international choral scene, having conducted the North American Gymanfa Ganu in Vancouver, Victoria, Seattle and New York. He is also a renowned tenor soloist, having sung with his award-winning choir throughout Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. In 1996, Eifion was received into the Gorsedd of Bards in recognition of his contribution to Welsh culture.

Bronn and Katherine Journey

Classical harpist Bronn Journey's musical accomplishments are recognized and appreciated throughout Washington State and beyond. His amazing versatility and humorous approach to the classical instrument have made him a favourite with concert goers. Soprano Katherine Journey, a native of Calgary, has a beautiful solo voice and has a Masters Degree in Vocal Performance. Over the past two years the Journeys have performed in 21 U.S. states.

Sandra Stringer

Mezzo-soprano Sandra Stringer appears regularly in Vancouver and elsewhere as a concert artist. She performs regularly with the Vancouver Opera and sang the role of Flora in the Opera's 2004 production of *La Traviata*. She has also performed in several concerts for Festival Vancouver. Sandra is well known to the Welsh community through her previous appearances in Welsh Society events.

BANQUET MENU

*Focaccia Bread with cheese
topping*

Strawberry Leaf Salad

Grilled Vegetable Salad

Hot Vegetables

*Nugget Potatoes with Dill and
Feta Cheese*

Teriyaki Chicken

*Baked Tortellini in Vegetarian
Sauce*

*Sliced Roast Sirloin of Beef
with Gravy*

Squares

Fruit Plate

Tea and Coffee

Welsh Water (from Sally Williams,
Western Mail, August 21)

TWO Welsh bottled waters have tasted international success by being named among the world's best by a panel of experts. Products by Ty Nant Spring Water and the Llanllyr Water Company were among 26 bottled waters from across the globe to be put to a blind test by drinks magazine *Imbibe*.

Llanllyr's sparkling water, from Talsarn, was voted runner-up in the sparkling category while fellow Ceredigion producer Ty Nant's Tau still water was named one of the top four in the world. In the sparkling water category, judges raved about Llanllyr's "excellent bubbles" and notes of "green fruits and sherbet" that "make the mouth water". It was runner-up to the well-known Italian San Pellegrino water.

Ty Nant Spring Water's latest brand, Tau – which scooped gold at the True Taste awards – made the still water top four with its "strong and diverse mineral content". Meanwhile, two other Ty Nant products also scored well in the tests. Ty Nant and Tau brands' sparkling varieties pleased the judges who said the latter would "go well with spicy foods" and put both in the international top 10.

Nick Toy, a quality assurance manager for T Nant, said, "Ours is a completely natural mineral water that is extracted from a Silurian aquifer, protected from contamination. Our water comes from rain filtered through rock, a process that can take years. The water source is constantly replenishing itself so we are confident that we will never run out of a supply. It is lightly mineralised with some calcium, magnesium and it has a very low salt content which is healthier for the heart."

Angela Gray, food broadcaster, pointed out that Ty Nant's distinctive bottles have gained global renown, appearing in television shows including *Frasier* and *Absolutely Fabulous*, as well as on the shelves of world-famous shops such as New York's Saks department store.

Editor's note: Ty Nant's famous blue bottles are locally available at Urban Fare in Yaletown!

ECHOES OF YESTERYEAR

Ieuan Lampshire-Jones suggested the title when he sent me a copy of the October 1980 Newsletter which recorded many details of the 1980 National Gymanfa Ganu Festival held at the Hotel Vancouver.

It opened on the Thursday with a Fashion Show – “Ddoe a Heddiw” – featuring the Welsh costumes of “Yesteryear” sown by the ladies of our society who also formed a “Costume Choir” which sang Welsh Folksongs – the Cambrian Circle Singers. The Master of Ceremonies for the Noson Lawen on Friday was John D. Williams. The Gala Concert featured Cor Meibion Llanelli under its conductor D. Eifion Thomas who also conducted both the afternoon and evening Gymanfa Ganu sessions to great effect. Many letters were received commenting on his musical leadership, his first class performance as a tenor soloist and the quality of his conducting. We look forward to Mr. Thomas’ repeat performance at our centennial!

Cor Meibion Llanelli members, through their presence at the Gymanfa sessions, were truly appreciated as was their frequent presence at the lower hall which they filled with singing, fun and laughter. They were still singing at the airport, they sang all the way home on the ‘plane. Apparently the pilot said they were welcome to come back any time!

Other interesting snippets:

A small committee was formed to investigate the possibility of obtaining grants for the North American Gymanfa and for the renovations to the Cambrian Hall. They had successfully received grants from Federal, Provincial and

Municipal sources for the Gymanfa and were in the process of obtaining a large grant from the Lotteries Fund which would be applied to the Cambrian Hall renovations. (Sounds familiar?)

The Vancouver Welsh Men’s Choir had the honour to sing at the Orpheum with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, conductor Sir Stanley Black, in the Battle of Britain Festival Concert.

A game to commemorate the centenary of Welsh Rugby was played between the Vancouver Welsh in their red jerseys and the Vancouver New Zealanders in their black. The New Zealanders’ traditional Maori challenge (the Haka) delighted the audience, but the Welsh won by a margin of 28 to 8.

GYMANFA GANU

Sunday, October 14, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.

St. Andrews Episcopal Church
111 NE 80th Street Seattle, WA

Presented by the Puget Sound Welsh Association. Featuring congregational singing of traditional Welsh hymns in both Welsh and English

Directed by Mari Morgan
Special Music by Nerys Jones

Tea, Cookies, and Welsh Crafts Table following the Singing

Admission is free & donations are welcome

For information please contact
Ellen Webber (206) 522-9853

From New York to Aberystwyth
Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Britain's Permanent Representative at the United Nations has been appointed the new President of the University of Wales at Aberystwyth. He will take office in January 2008.

Sir Emyr studied Theoretical Physics at Cardiff before obtaining his Ph.D. in Polymer Physics at Cambridge. Upon entering the Foreign Office, he worked for the British High Commission in Ottawa (Ed. Where I'm sure he would have been present at St. David Day Dinners). He spent 30 years with the Overseas and Commonwealth Office before being appointed Britain's Permanent Representative to NATO. He moved to his present role at the United Nations in 2003

Lynne Shepard

This summer the Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing gave an award to Lynne Shepard for her contributions to the well-being of the community. The citation reads: "Lynne is one of those rare people for whom giving, caring and noticing the needs of others just seems as natural as breathing. She gave hope and assistance to so many people who had no one else to turn to. She worked with Deaf people who have had mental health, addiction and other problems. She gathered and distributed information, furiously argued cases with line workers and supervisors, went to bat for people, showed enormous compassion and gave people hope. Her strength is to find ways to help when all hope and avenues have been closed."

I'm sure we all congratulate Lynne on receiving this deserved recognition.

I received the following e-mail from my namesake in Flintshire who is also a physicist!

I have read the News with interest, including the snippet that you are from Prestatyn - a place I spent much time as a boy - we lived just down the coast at Northop Hall and it was a quick drive to a good beach. Anyway, I wondered would the Society be interested to hear about a Welsh writer, also born in Flintshire?

Gee Williams is the first author to be published by Alcemi, the English language imprint of Y Lolfa, who have been publishing in Wales for 40 years. **Salvage** is a literary thriller set in coastal West Wales and in Chester, a murder mystery where the English and the Welsh clash. There's a body, a priceless diamond ring and a tangled set of relationships resulting in betrayal. What more could you want? **Salvage** is in the Welsh Books Council Top Ten Bestsellers for July. Phil Rickman of BBC Radio Wales described it as "ultimately effective, in the end conveying one inescapable message – never trust anyone in Cheshire!"

I admit to a personal interest – Gee is my wife. You can find out more about her on www.academi.org in the Writers of Wales section.

Regards
David Williams

Finally I hope you all noticed that the Trelawnyd Male Voice Choir placed first in National Eisteddfod again this year. Last time when I was home I heard them in Rhyl with Rhys Meirion.

The Llangyfelach Connection

Many of you will be aware that Thomas Edwards, one of the founders of the Cambrian Hall, was chosen as the first Leader of the Overseas Welsh at the 1948 National Eisteddfod held in Bridgend. He brought with him the Bardic Chair which was a gift from our Society. He was accompanied by his young granddaughter, Anne, who passed on to me the following details of his family background in Wales.

“Thomas Edwards of Llanelli came to Vancouver in May 1889. In 1898 his fiancée, Margaret Davies of Llangyfelach, came out to join him and they were married in the Presbyterian Church in Cumberland on Vancouver Island. (This was presumably in lieu of a Baptist wedding since Thomas was a practising Baptist for most of his adult life – perhaps there was no Baptist Church there or maybe other reasons.)

Margaret’s mother was Jane Hopkins of Llangyfelach, who had married Jonah Davies, a miner who worked nearby. Three of their five children survived to adulthood, but Jonah was wounded in a mine accident and died two years later of his injuries. Jane refused help from the mine owner and for a while worked hauling stones from the quarry next to the mine. However she damaged her heart thereby and took to other work. She was greatly helped by her father, who worked as a gardener on the Llywelyn Estate in Swansea. She was active in founding a Congregational Church group, which met at a nearby farm. The two story cottage in which she lived in the village is gone but the two trees that flanked it are still standing.”

A story all too typical of the hard life and stoic perseverance of our ancestors.

The village of Llangyfelach lies on the northern outskirts of Swansea; its church is dedicated to St. David and St. Cyfelach and is the only one in West Glamorgan to have a detached tower. In 1803 there was a terrible storm which destroyed the church. The locals built the present church to the North-West and below the tower. Legend has it that the Devil tried to steal the Church and all the repair material but was foiled by the prayer of a clergyman. In his haste the Devil dropped the tower in its current position of solitude!



The churchyard is circular and is believed to be the home of a Monastery, built by St. David in the 6th century. A cross decorated slab can be found in the church, dating to the 9th century (a cast can be seen at the National Museum of Wales). A flat stone with a cross and the inscription *Crux Xre* (Christ’s Cross), possibly of Irish-Celtic origin, was discovered during an excavation of the nave in 1913. The church contains a 17th century brass and also memorials to the Dilwyn family, makers of rare Swansea –ware pottery in the early 19th century.

I am very grateful to Anne Bosch for providing much of this information.