

THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER

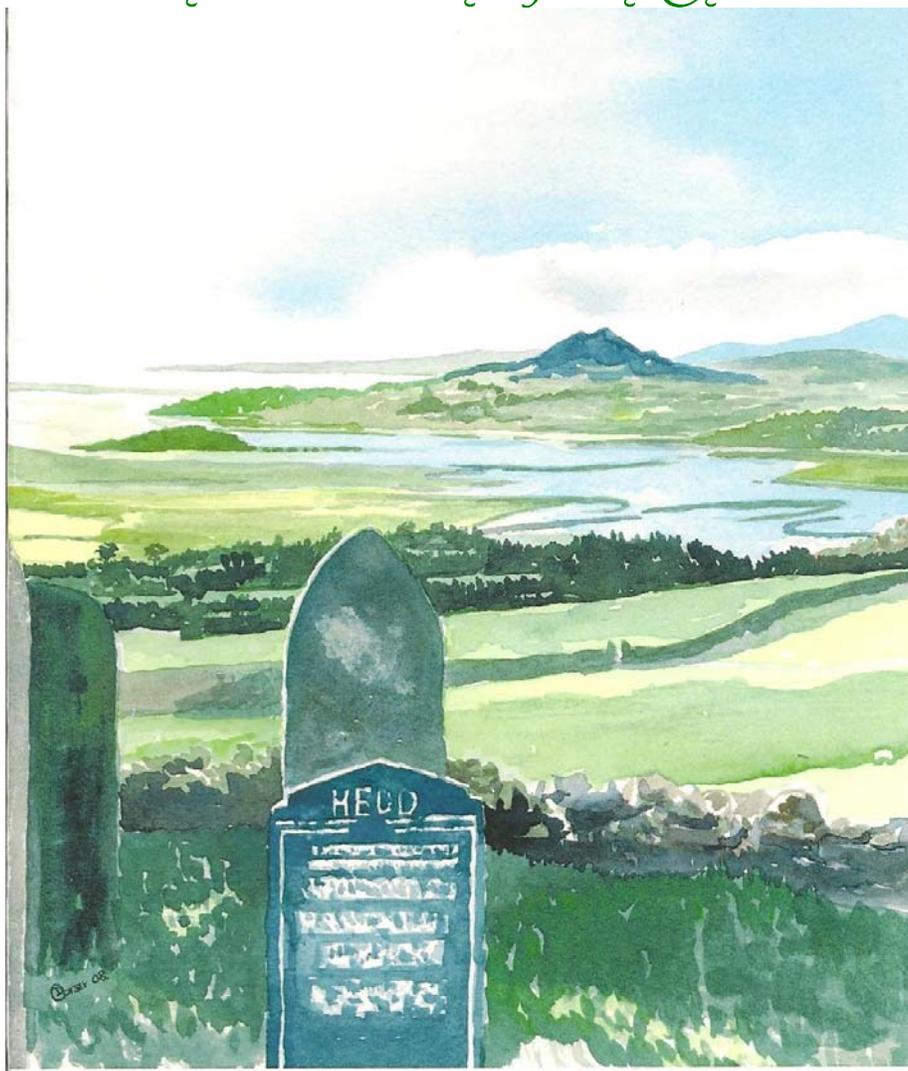
Gymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Hydref
2009

October
2009

Society Newsletter - Fylchgrawn y Gymdeithas



From Eglwys Llandecwyn looking towards Dorthmeirion

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

VANCOUVER WELSH SOCIETY

Officers:

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John Morris

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Lynn Owens-Whalen

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Alwyn Rogers

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Geraint (Nant) Roberts

Eifion Williams

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Cambrian Circle Singers:

Nerys Haqq

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Rentals:

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Ann Roberts

Webmaster:

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Mark your Calendars!!

November 6th Noson Lawen

November 7th Anniversary Dinner

November 8th Gymanfa Ganu

The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

I am indebted to Pat Morris for the front page picture. It is a painting by David Corser which she received as a card. On the gravestone you can clearly see the word HEDD which means PEACE. It is accompanied by a quotation from the poem 'Asking' by R.S. Thomas (1913 - 2000)

How beautiful
in a world like this
are the feet of the peace
makers upon the mountains

I understand that the latest Quiz Night was a great success and very well attended. Now we can hope that our November weekend will attract similar enthusiastic participation.

I have included an article on the visit of the Manic Street Preachers which only came to my attention at the eleventh hour. James Dean Bradfield certainly had his fans in Wales, if not here!

You will notice a letter from Michael Williams researching his grandfather, a prominent member of our society, listed in our Society History booklet. I hope our archives and members' recollections will allow us and Michael to complete his grandfather's story. Both Michael and I found that the winner of the chair was Dewi Emrys (James), who actually won the chair four times. His is a most colourful history which I will defer to a subsequent issue

David Llewelyn Williams

**November Welsh Weekend
Celebrating the 80th Anniversary of
The Cambrian Hall.**

November 6th at 7.30 pm
Noson Lawen (M.C. Neville Thomas)

Saturday, November 7th
Anniversary Dinner
Doors open at 6 pm; Dinner at 7 pm.

Caterers: Jordan's International Food
Designs

Menu:
Assorted buns with butter
Strawberry leaf salad
Grilled vegetable salad
Hot vegetables
Nugget potatoes with dill and feta cheese
BBQ chicken
Baked tortellini in vegetarian sauce
Sliced roast sirloin of beef and gravy
Squares, Fruit plate
Tea and coffee

Entertainment by tenor soloist, **Eifion
Thomas**, Llanelli, and **Joy Cornock**,
harpist and soloist, Abergwaun.
Accompanist: **Dr. Ray Batten**

Please call 604 271-3134 to reserve
tickets priced at **\$40** per person.

Following the dinner an "Ysgol Gan"
will be led by Eifion Thomas to rehearse
for the Gymanfa Ganu on Sunday..

Sunday, November 8th at 11.00 am
Church Service followed by Tê Bach

Sunday, November 8th at 2.00 pm
Gymanfa Ganu conducted by **Eifion
Thomas** with accompanist **Barry
Yamanouchi**. This will be followed by
another **Tê Bach** in the Lower Hall.

Other Forthcoming Events

Saturday, October 17th at 7:30 pm
Social Evening at the Red Dragon
Come along and enjoy an evening of
music, chat, an informal game of
darts if you wish and our mystery
competition Please bring along a hot or
cold appetizer or desert and we will
enjoy supper together. See you there!

Monday, October 19th at 10.30 am
Welsh Speaking Group
Siarad Cymraeg

Monday, October 26th at 10:00 am
Work Party at the Hall. N.B. Changed
from 3rd Thursday to 4th Monday.

Wednesday, October 28th 11.30 – 1.30,
Lunch at the Cambrian.

Monday, November 9th at 7.30 pm
General Meeting

Monday, November 16th at 10:30 am
Welsh Speaking - Siarad Cymraeg

Monday, November 23rd at 10.00
Work Party at the Hall

Wednesday, Nov. 25th 11.30 – 1.30
Lunch at the Cambrian

Advance Notice

Saturday, December 5th 7.30 for 8pm
Mulled Wine & Carols Evening

Sunday, December 13th at 11.00 am
Bilingual Carol Service

2pm **Children's Christmas Party**

Monday, December 14th 7.30 pm

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, December 19th 6pm for 7pm
Christmas Dinner

Letter to the Editor

I have just read your newsletter - May 2008. I was fascinated to read about the presentation of the bardic chair to the Bridgend Eisteddfod in 1948. My grandfather Ernest Morgan Williams was vice/president or president of the Cambrian Society round about that time and was involved with the presentation of the chair. He is reported to have written a history of Vancouver which was also sent to Bridgend with the chair. Does your society have any archived information about any of this? Is there a picture of the chair? I would be fascinated to learn more. I have researched newspaper extracts of the time when I visited Vancouver from England earlier this year. I have found photos of the actual ceremony in which the chair was presented; unfortunately the chair is not visible. I would love to locate the actual chair itself! Any help you can offer or any further information you are able to provide would be gratefully received.

Stephen Williams

[I have received many more details from Stephen regarding his grandfather. He was born in Rhosllanerchrugog and first came to Canada in 1920 as a music teacher in Medicine Hat. He came to Vancouver in 1929 to the Mozart School of Music. He served as musical director at the church of St Francis in the Wood, Caulfield and was also involved with the Seamen's Mission. Stephen has some of his compositions, mainly hymn tunes.]

Letter to the Editor

Efficiency makes me TICK!! And that is certainly what I was exposed to at the Red Dragon on Saturday evening, September 26th 09.
Thanks to the Society's Social Events Coordinator, GILLIAN ROGERS, and

her dedicated and enthusiastic team of volunteers. This time they included Jane Byrne, Heather Davies, Mary Lewis, Pat Morris and Eifion Williams who was multitasking as Quiz Organizer, Master of Ceremonies as well as Barman for the evening.

It was a great night!

Diolch yn fawr iawn i chi gyd.

E.A.T.

Good Night Ladies

The people of the Valley pride themselves in being knowledgeable, smart, sometimes cleverer than those Town people; at least they know that Rachie wasn't a Rugby player!

When Quiz Night came to the Cambrian Hall, it would be a piece of cake; they would survive the onslaught of questions from that devious gentleman out front. But what a shock to learn that those Spanish Prancing Horses were from Austria; the Impala was a car not an animal. As the night went on it was more and more guesswork. Those noisy women on the other side were having a ball, they even knew that Canada had six time zones and that Chopin wrote the Minute Waltz in seventy seconds.

However, being good Valley people they swallowed their pride and ate the goodies with delight. They were after all in company of THE choir boys and girls, not to forget the ladies who produced this delicious way to end the evening. So who cares that the Valley people were put in their place. It was a most entertaining and well planned evening and yes, it beats playing darts on a Saturday night!

Good Night Ladies (& Eifion)

Merrily we roll along 🎵 🎵

T.M.

The Manic Street Preachers

In the voting for Wales' top 100 heroes in late 2003, I'm sure you all remember that Aneurin Bevan secured first place, but you probably won't recall that in seventeenth place was **James Dean Bradfield**. On September 22nd he performed, with his band *The Manic Street Preachers*, at the Commodore Ballroom as part of their first North American Tour in ten years.

Born on 21 February 1969 in Pontypool, he attended the local Comprehensive school where as a result of bullying, he formed a rather exclusive relationship with three friends: his cousin Sean Moore and future bandmates Nicky Wire (real name Nicholas Jones) and Richey James Edwards. Together they formed *The Manic Street Preachers*, an alternative rock band with James as singer/guitarist, Nicky on bass and Sean on drums. Their fourth member Richey Edwards had graduated with a 2:1 in political history. He was known for his politicized and intellectual lyrics and was often miming as a rhythm guitarist. Edwards vanished on February 1st 1995. He is said to have written 70% of the lyrics on their famous 1994 album *The Holy Bible* which stands as a document of almost bottomless despair, placing Edwards's battles with alcoholism and anorexia inside its larger indictment of a world laid waste by evil. Eventually carrying on as a three-piece, the Manics released *Everything Must Go* (1996), folding the tragedy into their work with characteristic grace and sensitivity, and emerging as the biggest band in Britain. When Edwards was officially presumed dead last year, the Manics returned to a portfolio of lyrics he "bequeathed" to them before vanishing and created their ninth album *Journal for Plague Lovers*.

This is from a review of their Vancouver concert:



“Before the Internet obliterated division lines in the early '00s, the hottest music in the UK and Europe was totally different from what was big in North America. *Manic Street Preachers* hail from this pre-homogenization era of musical culture: bona fide hit-makers on the other side of the Atlantic, with a string of UK Top 10 singles. Here, they occupy more of a cult position, but cult bands tend to have particularly ravenous fans, and the Manics' faithful were lined up early outside the Commodore for the trio's first Vancouver appearance in a decade. The set itself was a "greatest hits" affair, peppered with songs from 2009's surprisingly excellent *Journal for Plague Lovers*. These songs, along with classics like "Motorcycle Emptiness" and "La Tristesse Durera" and touching solo acoustic versions by James of "This Is Yesterday" and "The Everlasting," came together into a pretty unforgettable experience. When they launched into "Motown Junk," their first commercially released single and one of the greatest rock songs ever, well, you couldn't help but thrust your fists skyward, full beer or not, and remember a bygone era when the cool kids made that special effort to listen to bands that were only big in Europe.”

Two Books on Dylan Thomas

Readers will remember from my November/December 2008 newsletter that Dylan Thomas expert, David N. Thomas, published a book on the 55th anniversary of Dylan's death (November 9th) entitled *Fatal Neglect: Who Killed Dylan Thomas*. In it, through meticulous detailed research (there are 150 pages of text followed by 80 pages of documents and references), he shows that neglect by his agent, John Brinnin and his deputy, Liz Reitell, together with medical negligence by his fashionable New York doctor were in large part responsible for his death at a time when his health was already compromised. It is an unnerving story which demonstrates how helpless Dylan was in the hands of his hosts. One can't help thinking of the demise of other famous artists who were pressured by agents to perform and then 'treated' by personal physicians to enable them to do so. This is an impressive work and sobering to read.

On July 29th of this year, Aeronwy Thomas-Ellis, Dylan's daughter died of leukaemia at the age of 66. She had just completed an autobiography of her childhood called *My Father's Places* which has now been released. The following quote is from a review in the *Irish Times* by Sorcha Hamilton: "The fiery, volatile relationship between Dylan Thomas and his wife, Caitlin, was no secret in the quiet Welsh village where they lived. The shouting, tears and tirades of abuse were often conducted in public, and usually after the pub, where he spent each evening of their married life. Caught in between the dramatics of a poet struggling to eke out a living and a moody, unpredictable mother was daughter Aeronwy and her two brothers.

In this curious, if quietly tragic memoir, she describes the rowdy, bohemian household of the Thomas family. It is clear that Thomas was far from an ideal father. He didn't turn up for days after Aeronwy was born, drank heavily and was, most often, distracted and all-consuming with his work. Her mother often neglected the children, leaving them alone in the evenings to join Dylan in the pub and even leaving for months with her husband on a tour of the U.S. Aeronwy was constantly used as a go-between to fetch her father from the pub, or woken in the night to her parents fighting. She also became a target of her mother's "fluctuating temper"; she once said to her: "The trouble is, you look so much like your father . . . the harder I pull your curls, the better I feel." At one point Aeronwy describes her fury at being introduced at school "as Dylan Thomas's daughter". The book ends, perhaps tellingly, soon after her father dies. Aeronwy was only 10."

After this upbringing, one could have expected something of a reaction to the chaotic bohemianism of her parents' existence. In 1973 she married Trefor Ellis, a tenor from Pontypridd, and the pair moved to New Malden in Surrey. There she brought up their two children and for a time lived the quiet life of a suburban housewife. But after a while she came to appreciate her father's work, thanks to a reading she was asked to give of his poetry for a Welsh Development Corporation function. One of two poems she read for the occasion was *Fern Hill*, which opened her eyes to his remarkable gift. Thereafter, she became a patron of the Dylan Thomas Society, took part in readings of her father's poetry in Wales and elsewhere, and supported such projects as the Dylan Thomas Prize.