

THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Hydref

October

2011

2011

Society Newsletter – Cylchgrawn y Gymdeithas



Craig y Nos Castle

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

VANCOUVER WELSH SOCIETY

Officers:

President:

John Morris

Vice-President:

Lynn Owens-Whalen

Secretary:

Elizabeth Williams Wallace
mail@welshsociety.com

Treasurer:

Gaynor Evans

Membership Secretary:

Mark Jones

Immediate Past President:

Jane Byrne

Directors:

Katrina Borsato
Heather Davies
Antone Minard
(Recording Secretary)
Gethin Owen
Alcwyn Rogers

Contacts

Building Committee:

Lynn Owens-Whalen

Cambrian Circle Singers:

Nerys Haqq

Church Service:

John Pritchard

Welsh Speaking Group:

John Pritchard

Rentals:

Richard Williams 604-340-8545

Social Events Committee:

Gillian Rogers
(Gillian.Rogers@shaw.ca)

Webmaster:

Alcwyn Rogers
(www.welshsociety.com)

Newsletter Editor:

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

Cambrian Hall 604-876-2815

The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

As most of you will by now have realized, the contents of the September issue were all contributed by Eifion Williams. Without his help, no issue would have been forthcoming.

The same is true for this edition, most of the information, the biography of Nerys Jones and the photograph of Craig y nos have been provided by Eifion. The sole exception is my Eisteddfod account. The pictures in that article are by Margaret Salisbury and I am grateful to David Llewelyn Davies for material on the Ceiriog Memorial Institute Centenary.

I do hope to write further about my travels in Wales in a later edition.

It is probably worth noting that the Welsh Society made a donation to the Cilybebyll Miners' Fund. Some of you will remember the visit of Kirsty Thomson from Bangor University last June at the Sunday Service. She has presented the society with a decorative Bangor University shield in thanks for our hospitality during her visit.

Notice also that after 25 years, we have revised our Constitution! Thanks are certainly due to the committee that worked diligently to achieve this.

Now, let's focus on the Anniversary Dinner next Saturday and look forward to the Vancouver Celebration of Wales weekend in early November.

Diolch unwaith eto, Eifion!

David Llewelyn Williams

Forthcoming Events

Sunday, October 9th at 11:00 am
Bilingual Service followed by Tê Bach

Wednesday, Oct. 12th at 12:00 noon
Book Club. K. Stockett "The Help"

Saturday, October 15th
Anniversary Dinner

The entertainment at the Society's Anniversary Dinner on October 15 will be provided by Nerys Jones, a popular harpist and mezzo-soprano from Seattle, who will perform a selection of Welsh folk songs to a harp accompaniment.



Nerys Jones was born in Llanfair Caereinion, Mid Wales, and studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Art and the Guildhall School of

Music. She has performed with the world's leading opera companies, including the English National Opera Company and opera companies in Holland, Australia and Venice.

Nerys also hosted her own television show, *Yng Nghwmni Nerys Jones* (In The Company of Nerys Jones) on the Welsh television station S4C.

Since arriving in Seattle four years ago, Nerys has sung with the Puget Sound Opera and the Seattle Opera. This fall she performed at the West Coast Eisteddfod in Los Angeles and conducted the Seattle Welsh Society's annual Gymanfa Ganu.

Those of us who attended the North American Festival of Wales in Portland last year will remember her beautiful *a capella* singing at the opening session. Organizer Gaynor Evans promises that Jordan's International Food Designs will again prepare a delicious buffet at a cost of \$40, including HST, gratuity and entertainment.

Tickets are limited and are available from Gaynor at fgevans@telus.net or phone 604 271 3134.

Monday, October 17th at 10:30
Welsh speaking – Siarad Cymraeg

Monday, Oct. 24th 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
Workparty Day Lunch will be provided and everyone is welcome.

Wednesday, October 26th at 7:30 pm
Welsh class Social gathering for those interested in learning Welsh.

Wednesday, November 2nd at 7:30 pm
Executive Meeting

VANCOUVER CELEBRATES

WALES November 4-6

The Vancouver Celebrates Wales weekend will be held on November 4-6.

The opening event will be a Noson Lawen at the Cambrian Hall on Friday evening, November 4 at 7:30pm.

On Saturday, November 5, the Vancouver Dylan Thomas Circle will meet from 10:30am to 3:00pm at the Cambrian Hall for their annual general meeting and a Membership Appreciation Celebration. This will involve members entertaining the audience with any gifts or talents they possess.

Saturday evening will be a Pub Night at the Red Dragon during which Executive member and Celtic Studies specialist Antone Minard will give a talk on 'Legendary Wales'.

On Sunday morning, November 6, the monthly Bilingual Service will be held at the Cambrian Hall, followed by a *Te Bach* (light refreshments). This will be followed at 2:00pm by the annual Gymanfa Ganu. Returning as Gymanfa Ganu conductor will be accomplished musician Jonathan Quick, Musical Director of the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir. We are fortunate to be able to hear Nerys Jones again as the Soloist. Also returning to the Gymanfa will be accomplished accompanist Ray Batten who has served the Society in this capacity for many years.

**Monday, November 7th at 7:30 pm
GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday, Nov. 9th at 12:00 noon
Book Club.** Text yet to be decided.

**Monday, Nov. 15th at 10:30 am
Welsh speaking –Siarad Cymraeg**

**Monday, Nov. 28th 10:00am till
3:00 pm Workparty Day**

**Wednesday, Nov. 30th at 7:30 pm
Welsh class** Social gathering for those interested in learning welsh.

**Mulled Wine Evening.
Saturday, December 3rd**

**Children's Christmas Party
Sunday, December 11th**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Monday, December 12th**

**Christmas Dinner
Saturday, December 17th**

**WELSH SOCIETY CONSTITUTION
UPDATED**

Five members of the Society – Jane Byrne, Gaynor Evans, Alcwyn Rogers, Eirlys-Ann Thomas and Eifion Williams – under the direction of President John Morris, held several meetings over the summer to update the Society's 1986 Constitution.

A draft copy of the new Constitution was circulated to members and a motion to accept it was introduced at the Sept. 12 General Meeting. After a spirited discussion, the motion was accepted unanimously by the members present.

The new Constitution has now been duly signed, affixed with the Society's seal, and sent to the Registrar of Companies in Victoria for final approval. A copy of the Constitution will be provided to all members once it has been approved by the Registrar.

CRAIG-Y-NOS

The photograph on the front page is of Craig-y-Nos Castle, situated in the Upper Swansea Valley. The area is part of the Brecon Beacons National Park, designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty.

For over 40 years, until her death in 1920, the Castle was owned by opera diva Adelina Patti, one of the world's most celebrated 19th century singers, also known for her signature tune, Home Sweet Home, which is said to have brought tears to the eyes of both Queen Victoria and Abraham Lincoln.

After Madame Patti's death, the castle became a tuberculosis sanatorium and later a geriatric hospital. It is now a privately owned country hotel.

Past-President Jane Byrne worked in the Craig-y-Nos Hospital as a young girl and related some of its history at one of our monthly services earlier this year.

9-11 REMEMBERED AT CAMBRIAN HALL BILINGUAL SERVICE

The monthly bilingual service in September happened to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City. Gethin Owen gave a very moving and inspiring address on the meaning and significance of the event to all of us. He began by recounting the many natural disasters – earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, tropical storms – that have occurred this year.

The word for “storm” in Welsh is “terfysgfa”, which is also the Welsh word for “terrorism”, both occurrences having similar effects on people's lives. When we endure such experiences the bond between humans seems to be reformed. People help each other and in the aftermath provide support and the care that is needed. This was particularly evident in the case of 9-11.

Gethin then read out a very moving poem written about 9-11. The poem was originally written by an anonymous author from the state of Maine and modified by Aled Lewis Evans from Wrexham, a nephew of former Welsh Society member Artro Evans.

Here is the poem, followed by Gethin's own English translation.

AR ADEG TRYCHINEB

Wrth i'r lludw a'r budreddi lawio arnom
daethiom yn un lliw

Wrth i ni gludo ein gilydd i lawr y
grisiau ar dan daethom yn un dosbarth

Wrth i ni oleuo canhwylau o wynos a
gobaith, daethom yn un genedlaeth

Wrth i ymladdwyr tan a swyddogion
heddlu ymladd eu ffordd i'r danchwa
daethom yn un rhywogaeth

Wrth syrthio ar ein gliniau mewn gweddi
am nerth, daethom yn un ffydd

Wrth sibrwd neu weddi geiriau o
anogaeth siaradom un iaith

Wrth roi gwaed mewn rhesi oedd yn
filltir o hyd daethom yn un corf

Wrth gydalaru'r golled fawr deawn yn
un teulu

Wrth i ni rannu dagrau o alar a cholled,
deawn yn un enaid

Wrth ailadrodd balchder aberth eraill
deawn yn un bobl

DURING A DISASTER

As the soot and dirt rained upon us we
became one colour

As we moved together down the stairs
while the building was ablaze we
became one class

As we lit candles of hope we became
one generation

As the service men and women fought
their way towards the explosion we
became one species

As we fell on our knees in prayer we
became united in worship

As we whispered or shouted words of
support we spoke the same language
As we donated blood in a line a mile
long we became one body
As we grieved our loss we became one
family

As we shared tears of pain and loss we
became one spirit

After rejoicing in the sacrifice of others
we became one people.

Gethin ended his address by saying that
eventually all of us will endure a storm
of some kind during our lifetimes and
although each experience is different we
can all relate to some experience and
provide guidance and compassion to
each other.

Eifion Williams

**CILYBEBYLL ACCIDENT A SAD
REMINDER OF SOUTH WALES
MINING HISTORY**

“All who love Wales will shed a tear for
the miners. This will revive in its
people, wherever we live, a sad sense of
community.”

So said British author Jan Morris,
writing about the Gleision mine accident
in *The Guardian* on Sept. 16th.

Mine disasters invariably attract world-
wide attention. People everywhere
recognize the dangers faced by those
who earn their living in an alien

environment where options are limited in the event of an accident.

As former South Wales Miners' leader Dai Dan Evans once said: "Men do not with impunity tear the guts out of the earth."

Like other South Wales mining valleys, the Swansea Valley has seen its share of coal mine accidents. The deaths of the four miners in the Gleision mine last month were the latest in an industry that has over the years been both a boon and a curse for the Valleys.

I grew up in a mining village about five miles from the Gleision mine, which is located at Cilybebyll, near Pontardawe. There were no major disasters in my time but I was always aware of the dangers faced daily by the men who worked in the local mines, including my father.

When even a single individual lost his life in a mine as a result of a roof collapse, flash flood, methane gas or other calamity, the community drew together as a family, grieved together and provided help and comfort to the deceased's family.

The people of Cilybebyll, Rhos and Pontardawe came together to deal with the latest loss of life in the same way that mining communities always have. The deaths of Charles Breslin, Phillip Hill, Garry Jenkins and David Powell also drew sympathy from people in many other parts of the world who shared the same sequence of emotions as the local communities – shock, suspense, hope, despair, and, ultimately, grief.

Eifion Williams

Recollections from the National Eisteddfod

The National Eisteddfod was held this year in Wrexham. Unfortunately I was only able to spend two days there, but I was richly rewarded by an amazing series of random chance meetings and events, culminating in an unforgettable Chaining of the Bard Ceremony in which the judges declared the 28 year old winner to be a new Dafydd ap Gwilym! I have many photographs of the event, taken by Margaret Salisbury, F.R.P.S.

I started Thursday with a visit to the Undeb Cymru a'r Byd stall where I met Secretary Bryan Jones who regretted the absence of John and Llinos this time. I later met Treasurer Meirion Williams who recalled with pleasure his visit to the Cambrian Hall with Godre'r Aran Choir last year. I also met the President, Lord Roger Roberts by chance on the Maes who wished to pass on his warm greetings to our society.

I visited the Bangor University stand and found that Duffy had been granted an Honorary Fellowship at the Graduation Ceremony in July. Here I am, probably as close to Duffy as I will ever get!



My friend, Hefin Salisbury, pointed out that I was featured on a Photograph of

the Men's Hostel, Neuadd Reichel, from the '50s, actually 1955 to be precise!



Later, I was passing by another stand, when it was announced that Dafydd Iwan would shortly perform a protest song – so I stopped to listen, at a distance of about 10 ft.!



He is most famous for his song “Yma o hyd” which many consider to be a second National Anthem. A powerful song indeed whose theme is that despite the worst that people and events can do to us – we are still here; the words are on Wikipaedia and there are many versions on Utube. It was a privilege to hear him ‘up close and personal’!

My final stop of the day was in the Lle Celf where I viewed a series of videos of the Architecture Competition. Oriol Mostyn, an art gallery in Llandudno was the winner. Upon leaving, I was urged to

vote on my favourite piece of art in the whole exhibition. The prize for Dewis y Bobl (The People's Choice) was sponsored by the Josef Herman Foundation! Eifion Williams wrote about the artist Josef Herman, a Polish refugee who settled in Ystradgynlais and lived there for eleven years, producing a substantial body of work. (see February 2008 Newsletter) The Foundation is based there and is dedicated to promoting Herman's life and work and fostering a wider participation in the arts. The prize was awarded by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, who himself also hails from Ystradgynlais! To quote David Herman: “It is a great honour to have this significant art prize, from Wales' major cultural event, especially presented by the Archbishop of Canterbury. My father would be immensely proud.”

Friday was no less filled with chance meetings and discoveries. Let me start with lunch with the Salisbury family.



Seated in the front are the cousins Eirian, Vaughan and Hefin. Their fathers were both Blaenoriaid together with my father in Rehoboth Chapel in Prestatyn, where Eirian and Vaughan's mother was an organist as was my mother. Standing are Eirian's husband and their two boys, Rhiannon and then Vaughan's children Eurig and Leila (and me); both of whom are members of the Bardic Circle. I first

told you about Eurig when he won the Chair at the Urdd Eisteddfod in the March 2007 newsletter. He was recently appointed for a two-year term as The Children's Poet in Wales. I was shown some of his poems for children with pride this August when I visited his grandmother in Prestatyn. Leila is working on the contribution of Iolo Morgannwg to the preservation of Welsh Folksongs at Bangor University. Eurig's companion, Rhiannon's group won the Choral Recitation and Leila's folksong group from Bangor came in third. The whole family participation in the Eisteddfod bodes well for the future.

In the Ceiriog Valley Stall I purchased a slim volume, *Glain y Glyn* (The Jewel of the Glen) by Sir Alfred T. Davies, the grandfather of our member from Kamloops, David Llewelyn Davies. It was a reprint of the 1933 edition of the handbook of the Ceiriog Memorial Institute compiled by the Founder. The book is full of historic treasures and references to the famous Welsh figures that are immortalized at the Institute. The Institute opened on May 25, 1911. Its Centenary was celebrated over

several days this year beginning with an Opening Ceremony on May 21. Featured speakers were the Chairman of the Institute, Dr. Derek Llwyd Morgan, Richard Davies (David's son), who spoke about his great grandfather's life and Huw Edwards of the BBC who talked about his father's (Hywel Teifi) interest in Ceiriog and his affection for the Institute.

Sir Alfred's influence on Wales has been pivotal. When Lloyd George set up the Welsh Department of the Board of Education, he asked his friend to Head it. It was he who appointed O.M. Edwards as Chief Inspector for Education in Wales with far reaching results. He also led a successful campaign against the proposal to flood the Ceiriog Valley to provide water for Warrington in 1923.

David Llewelyn Williams