

THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER

Gymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Tonawr i Shwefror
2011

January to February
2011

Society Newsletter - Pylchgrawn y Gymdeithas



Children's Christmas Party

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

VANCOUVER WELSH SOCIETY

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(Recording Secretary)
Gethin Owen
Alcwyn Rogers

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Nerys Haqq

Church Service:

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The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

As 2011 starts, this issue reflects upon the joyous Christmas events hosted by our society, but also, sadly, pays tribute to the memory of three of our longtime members. I am most grateful to Eifion Williams for these tributes as well as the one to Chuck Davis.

The officers of the society were elected at the 2010 AGM and subsequently, in the absence of a Secretary, the position was modified with Elizabeth Williams Wallace retaining the position as Corresponding Secretary but with Antone Minard accepting the duties of Recording Secretary at meetings. We are grateful to all who are willing to serve.

Please take note of the request by our Membership Secretary, Mark Jones, to renew your membership dues. It would also be helpful to me when distributing the newsletter to know your preference for email or normal mail.

I have been made aware of a significant effort by your President and Work Party members to refinish the Upper Hall floor. I have not seen it myself but I have received photographs from Neville Thomas and it looks superb. I hope we will have a detailed report in the next newsletter to properly acknowledge this.

Finally, I apologize that this issue gives you little time to compose your offerings for the St. Dwynwen's Party, but I hope you will be suitably inspired!

Blwyddyn Newydd Dda

David Llewelyn Williams

Forthcoming events

Saturday, 29th January 6.30 for 7pm
St. Dwynwen's Day Party
(see advertisement below)

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

Saturday, 5th February at 2 pm at
The Arts Club Theatre Revue Stage
A group of us are going to attend the
matinee performance of “**Floating**”,
a play by Hugh Hughes (Anglesea).
(The theatre is on Granville Island.)
A Welsh island makes a break from
Britain, and reality, in this inventive
adventure. It's 1982, and the island of
Anglesey miraculously tears free, taking
the bewildered residents on a journey
that reaches as far as the Arctic Circle—
but will they ever get home again? Do
they even want to go back? You can find
more details on the web page
<http://pushfestival.ca/shows/floating/>.
The play will be performed from January
20th to February 5th, but if you would
like to join us on February 5th please
book your own tickets and we look
forward to seeing you there.

Monday, 7th February at 7:30
General Meeting

Wednesday, 9th February at 12:00
noon **Book Club**. The Book Worms will
be discussing ‘The Book of Negroes’ by
Lawrence Hill.

Sunday, 13th February at 11:00 am
Bilingual Service followed by Tê Bach

Saturday, 19th February at 6.30 for
7pm, the **Orpheus** will hold an evening
fundraiser of music and comedy (Pig ‘n’
Whistle) in the Hall. Admission \$10.

Monday, 21st February at 10:30 am
Welsh Speaking Group

Saturday February 26th
St. David's Day Dinner. Cocktails at
6.30 pm for Dinner at 7.00 pm.

Catering by Jordan's.
Menu: Leek Soup:
Roast of Beef, Chicken,
Hot Seasonal Vegetables,
Baby New Potatoes with Feta and Dill.
Delicious desserts, Fruit Plate,
Tea and Coffee, Bread rolls and Butter.
The entertainment will be Harp Music.

Tickets, at \$40 each, can be reserved by
calling Gaynor Evans at 604 271 3134 or
e-mail fgevans@telus.net Do book early!

Monday, 28th February from 10:00 am
till 3:00 pm **Workparty Day Lunch** will
be provided and everyone is welcome.

Tuesday March 1st. St. David's Day
Our traditional St. David's Day Open
House and Celebration will be held in
the Lower Hall starting at 7.30 pm.
Cawl Cennin will be served.
Come along and join in the fun.

Wednesday, 2nd March at 7:30
Executive Meeting

Wednesday, 9th March at 12:00 noon
Book Club. Book to be chosen.

Sunday, 13th March at 11:00 am
Bilingual Service followed by Tê Bach

Monday, 21st March at 10:30 am
Welsh Speaking Group.

Monday, 28th March from 10:00 am till
3:00 pm **Workparty Day Lunch** will be
provided and everyone is welcome.

 **We will celebrate St Dwynwen the Patron Saint of lovers (Welsh Version of St Valentine) on Jan 29th with chilli, cheesecake and chocolate!** 

The bar will open at 6.30pm and supper will be served at 7pm.

David Llewelyn will give us a brief introduction to the legend of St Dwynwen

As part of the entertainment,

- * you will be invited to bring along a love poem or limerick in Welsh or English, which you have written (anonymously if you wish) and this will be read aloud.*
- * You are invited to read a verse of your favourite love poem or sing a song.*

The evening will continue with music and dancing.

The \$10 cover charge will include your delicious home made supper, a scrumptious desert and of course a raffle ticket.

 



Pictures from the Children's Christmas Party by Uta Williams

Christmas Celebrations

Our Christmas celebrations started off on a high note with ‘**A Merry Mulled Wine Evening**’ on Saturday, December 4th. The program of entertainment was arranged and M.C.’d by Neville Thomas and the Mulled Wine and Christmas cakes and mince pies which fortified us were provided by the Social Committee.

The program was arranged so that audience participation in the carols was interspersed with brief accounts on the possible origins of the various traditions, two readings by John Cann from *A Child’s Christmas in Wales* and some outstanding contributions – in several languages – by our guest soloist, James Thomas. Our accompanist for the carol singing was yet another Neville Thomas

In the break between the two halves of the program, our knowledge was once again tested by a thought provoking Quiz by Eifion Williams. The evening concluded with a Raffle Draw and after John Morris thanked all those who contributed we sang two further carols, leaving us in a warm Christmas spirit. It was indeed a very merry evening!

Our **Christmas Dinner** on Saturday, December 11th, which was catered with its usual high quality by Jordan’s. Following the dinner, the audience sang two carols and then the Raffle Prizes were drawn. (Donated by Mareth Hunter, Heather Davies and Eirlys Ann Thomas.) Entertainment was provided by the Madd Regaeles’ Muse before the evening concluded with the singing of *We wish you a Merry Christmas*. Once again we were joined by members of the St. George’s Society, a clear indication of how much they enjoyed last year’s

dinner! We are most grateful to Gaynor Evans and the Social Committee for arranging this event.

Sunday, December 12th, our bilingual **Christmas Carol Service**, chaired by Jane Byrne, was well attended and featured six Carols and four Readings in both languages. Nerys Haqq was the soloist and Margaret Airey was the accompanist throughout. John Cann led the prayers and gave the benediction.

After members socialized at the Tê Bach that followed the service, it was time to prepare for the **Children’s Christmas Party**. This was a highly successful event, greatly enjoyed by all the 22 children (a recent record) who participated in various games and activities and of course also spent time with Santa. Thanks to Andrea at the craft table, Katie for games and carols, Paula and Diane, who helped in the kitchen and Brian, who was Santa’s helper and of course Santa himself, a k a Brian Granville. Ray Batten stepped in and played the piano and Anne Jones and the Granville family brought Christmas goodies. I would be remiss if I didn’t recognize Gaynor Evans who, not only organizes the event but also buys all the presents given out by Santa. I know that my grandson looks forward to this event each year and has never been other than delighted with his present.



Dear Member:

I'd like to wish you all the best for 2011 on behalf of the Welsh Society of Vancouver, and to thank you for your support. 2010 was a very busy year, with many successful events including quiz nights, the St. David's Day dinner, summer picnic, Vancouver Celebration of Wales and the children's Christmas party.

It is now time for me to remind you that your 2011 membership fee is due. If you are planning on continuing your membership this year, please make the cheque payable to 'The Welsh Society of Vancouver' and send it to

Membership Secretary
The Cambrian Hall
215 East 17th Avenue
Vancouver
V5V 1A6

The respective membership fees are:

| | Yearly fee |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Regular (single) | \$45 |
| Family (joint) | \$70 |
| Senior (65 & over) | \$30 |
| Student | \$30 |
| Out-of-town (over 50 miles) | \$20 |

As 2011 will mark my second year as Membership Secretary, I would like to continue to grow our member quota. If you are aware of anyone who is thinking of joining the Welsh Society please let me know.

If you have already sent in your fees, please disregard this reminder.

Blwyddyn Newydd Dda!

Mark

Attached is a copy of a letter received by President John Morris from Janet Figini of the Portland Welsh Society. In it she thanks our Society for its participation in the North American Festival of Wales. Specifically she thanks Uta Williams for donating copies of her photobook of the event both to the Portland Society and to Bryn Seion Welsh Church. Both she and Betty Pierce enjoyed our Vancouver Celebration at Halloween and hope to let others know so that they might be encouraged to attend in the future.

Diolch Un Ffamr

Vancouver B.C. Welsh Society
 President John Morris.

Dear John.

I am writing to express our appreciation to your Society & especially to Uta Williams for the copy of her book which describes in pictures from the North American Festival of Wales. She has sent a copy to Bryn Seion Welsh Church and an honoured copy to the Welsh Society of Portland. We all are thrilled that so many of your members were able to come to Portland to attend the festival. Their pleasure in the event is evident in Uta's photographs.

Betty Pierce & I were thankful for the great Welsh weekend we attended over Halloween. We look forward to coming up again next year. We will be working hard to let everyone here know what fun it is so that they may decide to come too. Please let everyone know how much we enjoyed ourselves & how we are enjoying our "Books" -

Diolch yn fawr

Janet Figini

Sadly, our society recently lost three longtime faithful members who have made significant contributions over the years. I am indebted to Eifion Williams for access to his articles in The Celtic Connection which follow. My own recollections on the Executive are of Alan's service with the Hall rentals until his move to Princeton.

Milton I remember for his quiet sense of humour in the short pieces he submitted to the newsletter – the one about the small boy at Halloween who asked to see the dragon was particularly beautiful.

I was aware of contributions Glyn and his wife Lynne made to our society, but only at the Funeral Mass were their awe-inspiring contributions to society at large made evident to me.

ALAN JONES

The passing of Alan Jones on November 23 saddened his many friends and acquaintances throughout the Lower Mainland. He will be fondly remembered for his unique talents and as an amiable and gregarious personality.

Alan made significant contributions to the Vancouver Welsh Society and the Dylan Thomas Circle, serving as President of both organizations. He was blessed with a rich and superbly resonant voice which invariably captivated his listeners. He was especially effective in reading the works of Dylan Thomas, the poet for whom he had a lifelong love and appreciation.

Alan was President of the Welsh Society of Vancouver from 1981 to 1984, during which time his geniality and enthusiasm inspired considerable improvements to the Cambrian Hall, including reconstruction work in the upper Hall.

He also generated a vibrant social climate in the Society. Among members' fondest memories of Alan are his amiable sessions at the piano, accompanied by the ever-present pint and cigarette.

Alan Jones was born in 1940 in the mid-Wales town of Brecon, receiving his early education in the town's 500-year old Christ College. He then studied English Literature at the University of Bristol where his major thesis was an analysis of the life and works of Dylan Thomas, the genesis of his lifelong interest in the poet.

Following his graduation, Alan taught school in the English Midlands for a short period and briefly taught English in Germany before returning to England. He quickly decided that teaching was not for him and he went to work for a time in the retail trade in Liverpool. It was there that he met Tima, his future wife.

His next move was to Winnipeg, where Tima soon joined him. They married and eventually moved to Vancouver, where Alan had considerable success in the real estate business. The couple were soon gifted with two children, son Alan Jr. and daughter Marina. They in turn produced the five grandchildren - Brooke, Anys, Jayson, Kyle and Shayne - who brought him so much pleasure in his later years.

After settling in Vancouver, Alan became actively involved in the Welsh Society. He produced and directed a wonderfully successful presentation of Under Milk Wood in 1985 and in 1996, together with Ted Langley and Neville Thomas - two other Dylan Thomas enthusiasts - he co-founded the Dylan

Thomas Circle, which met with popular success and which continues to thrive and attract devotees of the Welsh poet.

Five years ago Alan and Tima retired to Princeton, BC, where they purchased the Cedars Motel. The business proved successful and Alan and Tima took great pleasure in welcoming visitors, many of whom returned frequently to enjoy the motel's delightful ambience.

Alan continued to enjoy his semi-retirement until the past year, during which he bravely endured a cruel illness that finally silenced the mellifluous voice that had given pleasure to so many.

Alan requested that there be no funeral. The Welsh Society and the Dylan Thomas Circle held A Celebration of the Life of Alan Jones in the Red Dragon on December 18.

MILTON MORGAN

Milton Morgan, one of the longest-serving members of the Welsh Society, passed away peacefully on Saturday, December 4, 2010 at the age of 84. He will be sadly missed by his loving wife Betty, son Brian, daughter-in-law Heidi and two grandchildren, Brandon and Stephanie. He was predeceased by his son Stephen.

Thomas Milton Morgan was born in the Swansea Valley town of Ystradgynlais, into a family with strong roots in the community. He was proud of his Welsh heritage and participated faithfully for over fifty years in the Vancouver Welsh Society's many activities.

Before moving to Vancouver in 1952, Milton completed his National Service

in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, one of Wales' most famous regiments. He was stationed for much of his military service with the British Army of the Rhine in Germany.

Milton's wife Betty, who was born in the neighbouring Swansea Valley town of Pontardawe, soon joined him in Vancouver. He was employed in the television industry and was one of the first employees of the Fred Welsh Cable Company, which later became Rogers Television, retiring at the age of 65.

Milton's two greatest passions were music and sports. In his younger days he played cricket, soccer and rugby in both Wales and Canada and was an enthusiastic follower of the sports throughout his life. When his two sons came along he coached soccer at the Wesburn Youth Soccer Club in Burnaby and more recently enjoyed watching his two grandchildren play soccer and lacrosse in Coquitlam.

Tom Morgan, as he was affectionately known to his fellow choristers, was an enthusiastic member of the Vancouver Orpheus Choir. He had been a member of the first Welsh Men's Choir in Vancouver in the fifties and early sixties. A Vancouver Orpheus tribute posted on the Choir's website remembers Milton as a popular member who enjoyed his many years singing in the Choir and participating in its activities. He will be sadly missed by everyone.

Welsh Society members will remember Milton as a quiet and reserved individual who contributed much to the Society and to the Cambrian Hall. His wish was that there be no funeral service. Donations in Milton's memory can be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

GLYN SHEPARD

The Vancouver Welsh Society has lost a faithful, hard-working member with the passing of Glyndwr Shepard, who died at St. Paul's Hospital on Monday December 27, 2010, after a short illness. Glyn served the Society in many capacities, including a term on the Society's Executive. For the past few years he had served as the rental agent for the Cambrian Hall, a period during which rental income increased considerably.

The Welsh Society's loss is shared by the wider community in Vancouver. Glyn, together with his wife Lynne, was dedicated to selfless community service with a particular focus on the poor and deprived inhabitants of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Over the years, Glyn and Lynne were foster parents and surrogate family to countless individuals whose lives were enhanced by their love and care.

Throughout his life Glyn applied a deep and abiding Christian faith to helping those less fortunate than himself. He served the Catholic Church in numerous capacities, the last few years at St. Paul's Parish on Cordova Street, where he was involved in the Church's outreach program to people in the community.

In recent years Glyn volunteered his organizational skills as a member of Advocacy Groups and Anti-Poverty Groups as well as Social Housing and Alcohol and Drugs Working Groups in the Downtown Eastside. He also served as Chair of the Community Directions Steering Committee and as a member of the Eastside Movement for Business and Economic Renewal Society (EMBERS),

an organization dedicated to creating job opportunities for marginalized and disadvantaged people in the Downtown Eastside.

Glyn's recreational passion was choral singing, deriving joy from participating in the great Welsh tradition of male choral singing.. He was a member at different times of both the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir and the Vancouver Orpheus Male Choir. In 2008 the VWMC presented him with its Unsung Hero Award.

Glyndwr Michael Shepard was born in Regina, Saskatchewan and moved to Vancouver as a child. He was a proud member of the Vancouver College Class of '52. Glyn will be deeply missed by his wife Lynne, sons Michael (Sandra), Steve (Silvia) and Matthew (Maria), by his grandchildren Alexander, Garrick, Marisa and Diego, and by his sisters Jean and Marion (Bill) and other family members and friends.

A large gathering attended the Funeral Mass for Glyn Shepard at the Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church, 4295 Cambie Street, on Tuesday, January 4. The Mass ended with the popular hymn *When I Survey The Wondrous Cross* sung by members of the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir and the Vancouver Orpheus Choir.

It would be appreciated by the family if those wishing to honour Glyn's memory donate to the Vancouver Food Bank (foodbank.bc.ca) or Covenant House (covenanthousebc.org)

VANCOUVER HISTORIAN CHUCK DAVIS WILL BE MISSED

Anyone with an interest in the history of Vancouver will regret the recent passing of Chuck Davis.

I never met Chuck personally but on several occasions I had reason to contact him by email for information on the contributions of prominent Welsh immigrants to the city's history. He always responded promptly, usually with a sense of humour and a genuine enthusiasm for whomever or whatever I was enquiring about.

I also frequently consulted his on-line History of Metropolitan Vancouver which is, and will remain, a valuable year-by-year source of information on the city he so obviously loved. He did not live to complete his last book, a comprehensive history of Vancouver, but others have apparently agreed to complete it and publish it in the near future.

Chuck Davis was the guardian of Vancouver's heritage. In my contacts with him he conveyed the impression of someone with a profound interest in Vancouver's history but with no intellectual pretensions, an impression confirmed by the numerous articles written about him after his death.

By coincidence, one of the families I asked Chuck about was the Spencer's Department Store family, the subject of an article I wrote a few years ago. It was announced recently that David Spencer (1837-1920), originally from St. Athan, Wales, is one of three prominent businessmen to be inducted next May into the Business Laureates of BC Hall

of Fame. Recipients of the award are honoured for outstanding business achievement and enduring contributions to the province and country.

David Spencer arrived in Victoria in the 1860's and opened a dry goods store. He eventually built a retail empire that expanded to other BC towns, including Vancouver. He also expanded his interests into other businesses, including the Victoria Times newspaper. The Spencer's stores were sold to Eaton's in 1948.

David's son, Chris T. A. Spencer, was one of the early benefactors of the Welsh Society and is one of the names on the cornerstone at the front of the Cambrian Hall.

Eifion Williams

Editor's Note:

My interactions with Chuck Davis closely mirror those of Eifion, in particular with respect to his interest in Jonathan Rogers, but also in any brief articles we managed to unearth for the newsletter. He expressed an interest in having us write a page for him on the influence of the Welsh upon the growth of Vancouver, but regrettably I never managed to put one together in time.