

THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Ionawr
2015

January
2015

Society Newsletter – Cylchgrawn y Gymdeithas



Children's Christmas Party with Santa

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

VANCOUVER WELSH SOCIETY

Officers:

President:

David Llewelyn Williams

Vice-President:

Antone Minard

Secretary:

Angela Smith

mail@welshsociety.com

Treasurer:

Gaynor Evans

Membership Secretary:

Don Smith

Immediate Past President:

Jane Byrne

Directors:

Heather Davies

Gwyn Evans

Patricia Morris

Mathew Parry

Alwyn Rogers

Contacts

Building Committee:

Patricia Morris

Cambrian Circle Singers:

Nerys Haqq

Church Service:

Varied

Welsh Speaking Group:

Gwilym Evans

Rentals:

RichardWilliams 604-340-8545

Social Events Committee:

Gillian Rogers

(Gillian.Rogers@shaw.ca)

Webmaster:

Alwyn Rogers

(www.welshsociety.com)

Newsletter Editor:

David Llewelyn Williams

(williams@phas.ubc.ca)

Cambrian Hall

604-876-2815

The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

As 2015 starts, this issue reflects upon the joyous Christmas events hosted by our society, but also, sadly, pays tribute to the memory of one of our longtime members. This year has now seen nine of our longtime members pass away and another return to Wales.

The officers of the society were elected at the 2014 AGM. We are grateful to all who are willing to serve. Please assist our new Membership Secretary, Don Smith, by renewing your membership dues. It would also be helpful to me when distributing the newsletter to know your preference for email or normal mail.

I am particularly grateful to Lynn Owens-Whalen for her fascinating account of her chance discovery of the Cardigan Welsh community and its history of Welsh migration to Canada. We hope that this may prompt more interest in genealogy and lead to new interaction with the wider community.

Please take note of both St. Dwynwen and St. David celebrations and reserve the dates in your diaries.

Finally, I am grateful to Gwyn Evans for the photographs of both the Children's Christmas Party and our society's Christmas Dinner.

*Blwyddyn Newydd Iach a
Hapus i chwi oll drwy 2015*

David Llewelyn Williams

RALPH MAUD 1928 – 2014

Our long time member, Ralph Maud, passed away on Monday, December 8th in the arms of his wife of 30 years, Alvina, and daughter, Tessa, just shy of his 86th birthday. For many decades, Ralph was a strong presence at Talonbooks as well as in the scholarly community. He was a regular attendee at our Gymanfa Ganu and a member of the Dylan Thomas Circle. We offer our condolences to his family and to his many friends and admirers. He was a world-renowned expert on the work of Dylan Thomas, Charles Olson, and the ethnographers of the Pacific Northwest. He was professor emeritus at Simon Fraser University and founder of the Charles Olson Literary Society. He has edited much of Dylan Thomas's work, including *The Notebook Poems* 1930–1934 and *The Broadcasts*, and is co-editor, with Walford Davies, of *Dylan Thomas: The Collected Poems*, 1934–1953 and *Under Milk Wood*.

A funeral service will be held at 11 am at St. Augustine's Church, 2028 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver on January 2nd.

Forthcoming Events

Monday, Jan. 5th 10am till 3 pm

De-decorating the Hall

As it is getting close to 12th night, it is time to pack our decorations away for another year. We hope you'll join us! As usual a delicious lunch will be provided. See you!

Sunday, January 11th at 11 am

Bilingual Church Service

This will be followed by a Tê Bach

Monday, January 12th at 7:30 pm

First Executive Meeting of 2015

Wednesday, January 14th at 12 noon Cambrian Bookworms.

The book this month is "The Outlander" by Diana Gabaldon.

**Thursday, January 15th. at 6:30 pm
Welsh lesson**

**Monday, January 19th at 10.30 am
Welsh Speaking – Siarad Cymraeg**

Saturday, January 24th at 7.00 pm

St. Dwynwen Celebration

We will celebrate St. Dwynwen, the Welsh Patron Saint of Lovers with a romantic evening and tempting desserts! The program will begin with an introduction to the saint and a video shot on Llanddwyn Island. Love songs, both solos and community participation, will abound, as will other legends, as time permits. We hope to have a quiz to enhance your knowledge of love! Members will be encouraged to present their favourite poems or songs and all are encouraged to participate in the Limerick competition with the first lines:

**A lonely young man/girl from Mold
There once was a boy/girl in
Newport**

You may choose the gender and even the age e.g. woman or girl.

**Monday, January 26th NO WORK
PARTY DAY THIS MONTH**

**Thursday, January 29th. at 6:30 pm
Welsh lesson**

Advanced Notice

Our St. David's Day Dinner will be held on Sunday, March 1st. This year we will be entertained by the Welsh Folk Trio *Tramor* led by John Good, President, Arizona Welsh Society. The Trio presented the Opening Concert at the 2014 NAFOW in Minneapolis. More details will be forthcoming.

December Events

The Annual General Meeting was held on December 8th and well attended. The minutes are on the website but I have included my summary of the year. The Directors for 2015 were elected, thanks to the efforts of the Nominating Committee members, Irene Evans and Mary Lewis. Drs. Gwilym and Irene Evans stepped down this time and we are most grateful for their service to the Society on the Executive in the past year. Antone Minard has assumed the role of Vice President and Angela Smith has taken on his role as Secretary while Don Smith has agreed to serve as Membership Secretary. We appreciate their willingness to serve our society.

Friday December 12 and Saturday December 13, Russell Roberts and his company, consisting of his wife, Coleen Winton, their two sons, Gower and Sayer, with Brian Tate on the piano, presented "A Child's Christmas in Wales" in the warm ambience of the Red Dragon to a sold out audience both evenings. While the reading of the Dylan Thomas classic formed the centerpiece of the evening, it was only part of an imaginative presentation of the Christmas spirit.

Russell commenced with the tale of the poor farmer's son who sought to give his father a meaningful present for Christmas to show his affection. Gower Roberts then, on the 100th anniversary of WWJ., recounted the spontaneous Christmas truce, sparked by a German soldier approaching the trenches singing *Stille Nacht*, demonstrating the humanity on both sides. I believe the Queen referred to it in her Christmas message this year.

Many carols and other songs were sung, often in unusual duets reminiscent of the traditional Welsh duet between harp and voice called *Canu Penillion*, in which the harp and the singer sing different melodies in counterpoint. In one example Sayer sang *Ar Lan y Mor* in Welsh while Gower sang a distinctly different song, interleaving the phrases. Remarkable!

Brian Tate performed individually and in accompaniment, while Coleen often sang with one of her sons and soloed too; so many interesting variations. Russell read a humorous story of the consequences suffered upon receiving all the gifts on the Twelve Days of Christmas from a true love! He then had us all sing *The Twelve Days of Christmas* on our birth month.

The evening concluded with the singing of carols in English, with the exception of, most appropriately, *Stille Nacht*. Our special thanks to Angela and Don Smith for their sterling work running the bar under pressure! Also to Neville Thomas for ensuring all tickets were eagerly bought by the public well ahead of the performances.

Sunday the 14th began with our traditional Bilingual Carol Service in the Red Dragon presided over by Jane Byrne and arranged by Nerys Haqq and Irene Evans. Six carols, sung in both languages were interspersed with four selections from the Scripture, also read in both languages. Lynn Owens-Whalen led us all in prayer and Nerys Haqq gave us a lovely rendition of "Hwiangerdd Mair" with the last verse as a duet with Ray Batten, who provided the piano accompaniment throughout. Capt.

Ieuan Lampshire-Jones gave the Announcements and Jane Byrne the Benediction. We then all enjoyed the Tê Bach before arranging the seating in preparation for the Children's Christmas Party at 2 pm.



This year's Christmas Party attracted 20 children and featured all the games and crafts, which have proved so popular. Ray Batten on the piano, stopped and started at random to enable games such as Pass the Parcel or Musical Chairs. Andrea and son Brian were front and centre with games and crafts and Paula and Gaynor took care of the distribution of hotdogs, welsh cakes and other delicacies as well as soft drinks, tea and coffee. Of course Santa (alias B.G.) was the big attraction and we are grateful to Santa's helpers, who included Adrienne (aged 2). The real thanks go to Gaynor Evans for organizing the event, for purchasing such a variety of age appropriate presents and to Santa for interrupting his journey especially to visit us. A great event to confirm a tradition to future generations!

Our final event of 2014 was our society Christmas Dinner on the 20th. The Red Dragon was full and the food was of the high standard that we have

become to expect of Tim and his company, Jordan's International Food Designs, Richmond.



After gorging ourselves on this excellent food for the body, we turned to food for the soul. Susann Kingston regaled us with the *a capella* singing of eight carols – the most evocative was for me “A spotless rose is blowing..” which in German is “Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen”. I first encountered the song at the Advent Carol Service in Kings College Chapel in 1957, sung in the candlelight by a Choral Scholar.

Our Past President, Jane Byrne, to my surprise, presented Certificates of Appreciation to myself, Antone Minard and Eifion Williams for our service to the Society. We concluded the evening by drawing for several donated door prizes. Once again, our thanks go to Gaynor Evans for arranging this event.

President's Report December 2014

This has been a noteworthy year in many ways. Tragically we lost eight of our members during the year, several of whom had been frequent participants in our events. A number of very well attended memorial services honoured their passing. Another long time member returned to Wales. Their absence is felt.

The year's Calendar of Events, despite the absence of a Cultural Grant, has been rich and varied. Our annual celebration of St. Dwynwen's Day was probably the best to date. It was closely followed by an exceptional evening where we were privileged to listen to Welsh poet Menna Elfyn read from *Murmur*, her latest work in Welsh with English translations of her work by other poets. We are indebted to Mathew Parry for arranging her visit and to Antone for guiding her to and from the Hall.

Our Celebration of St. David began with our formal dinner on February 28, attended by the Consul General of the United Kingdom, Rupert Potter and featuring harpist, Claire Morgan. On St. David's Day itself, March 1st, we celebrated with a very well attended concert at the Michael J. Fox Theatre in Burnaby featuring the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir and the Vancouver Orpheus Choir together with soloist Susann Kingston from Opera Cantanti. A most fitting tribute to St. David!

Later in March, our Cambrian Circle Singers headlined Celtic Fest held at the Surrey Library and I together with Heather, Mary and Pat in Welsh Costume looked after our information stall replete with free Welsh Cakes,

and our banner designed by Mathew Parry.

April featured our highly successful Spring Sale, thanks to all the volunteers, the donors of Welsh delicacies from Jams to Welsh Cakes to Bara Brith, and the remarkable organizational energy and donation gathering skill of Carol Smythe. We held our traditional Garden Party at the home of Lynn and Wilf Owens-Whalen. The sun shone and we remembered that two years ago we had celebrated Phyllis' 99th birthday. Our Anniversary Dinner organized by Gaynor Evans featured operatic highlights sung by Richard Williams. The Society presented an impressive tribute to Dylan Thomas on his centenary through an unique presentation on his life by Russell Roberts. Russell and his group will present two performances of *A Child's Christmas in Wales* in the Red Dragon Lounge. Thanks to Neville Thomas, both performances have been quickly sold out. Public interest in this unique production is great.

A highlight of our Fall events was our traditional *Vancouver celebrates Wales* November weekend. The Noson Lawen was a 'spirited' occasion with many appearing in costume. (see Newsletter photos by Angela Smith.) It featured a talk by Dr. Antone Minard on Celtic customs surrounding Halloween and folksongs performed by Nerys Jones from Seattle, accompanied on the piano by Rhuanedd Meilen. Nerys also took over the conducting of our Gymanfa Ganu (a bilingual hymn-singing festival) on Sunday as well as performing as the soloist. Thanks to local advertising and spreading the

word through printed media such as the *Courier* and the *Celtic Connection*, as well as social media such as Facebook and Twitter, several new members of the community attended. We look forward to our Carol Service and the Children's Christmas Party on Sunday December 14 and our Christmas Dinner on December 20, which will fittingly bring the year to a close.

Owning our own hall brings a focus to our activities, but it comes with a significant demand on the relatively small group of our volunteers. Gillian Rogers and the members of her Social Committee are to be commended on hosting and planning our programs. Gaynor Evans not only fills the role of Treasurer but also looks after all the society Ceremonial Dinners and organizes the Children's Christmas Party. Several other members volunteer their time on Work Party days, to clean, to repair or to decorate the Hall as the occasion demands. Jane Byrne and Heather Davies ensure the bar is stocked for each occasion.

The rental of the Upper Hall brings much needed revenue to both fund its running expenses and to enable necessary repairs and maintenance. Alcwyn Rogers supervises the rentals through Richard Williams and monitors the necessary repairs and alarms. He also manages our website which he has filled with a treasure trove of society information; events, minutes, membership, policies, hall bookings and financial details. He will be presenting us with a budget spreadsheet tonight.

The Building Committee, chaired by Pat Morris, has undertaken many necessary projects. These include the completion of the pointing of the outside walls together with the replacement of our signage. A new stage lighting system has been installed to benefit performances in the Upper Hall. Accessibility to the Red Dragon has been improved through the purchase of a wheelchair ramp; sourced and transferred by Rodney Morris, who also volunteers his time on the replacement of the awnings. Sudden emergencies included the failure of the bar dishwasher; Alcwyn sourced a replacement, we researched the company and its local service outlets, Pat bought, transported the unit and also supervised its installation. After an attempt to hire a carpenter to raise the railings on the mezzanine to conform to the Safety Code, Allan Hunter volunteered his services in conversation with Gwyn Evans; Pat and Paul Lievesley sourced the material and the installation is being completed today. Allan's expertise is much appreciated. Paul has also taken care of many other details, such as upgrades to the washrooms, access doors and electrical systems. Paul's audiovisual services have been crucial to the success of all our social events.

As a service to the community, our Secretary, Antone Minard, continued his series of free Welsh Lessons, further supplemented with daily words with their translations. He has also established and documented a list of 500 books in our Library in English and Welsh, now available to the public through LibraryThing. He and our Membership Secretary, Mathew

Parry started a series of Pub Nights to encourage members and guests to visit the Hall. Mathew tended the Bar on these and other occasions too. Mathew has established both a Facebook page and a Twitter account for the Society, which brings us to the attention of the wider community and has indeed led to some connecting with our society.

I have managed only three standard newsletters this year, but both Eifion Williams and I have contributed to *Ninnau*, the North American Welsh newspaper and two of Eifion's obituaries have appeared in *Yr Enfys*, the journal of Wales International. Eifion is a regular contributor on Welsh affairs to the local monthly, *The Celtic Connection*, and he has taken on the role of our society's contact with *Ninnau*. Eifion is also our Quiz Master and held a popular Quiz Night recently. He also contributed significantly to our St. Dwynwen evening with two novel quizzes.

The monthly bilingual Church Service, previously organized by the late John Pritchard, has been successfully maintained through the combined efforts of Nerys Haqq, Irene Evans and Jane Byrne. The Welsh Speaking morning maintained by Gwilym Evans has attracted members from as far afield as Nanaimo! We have been very fortunate to be able to call on the services of Dr. Ray Batten as accompanist at many of our events – including the Children's Christmas Party where Santa's presence has also been appreciated! Sharon McIntee Burrill's rendition of love songs contributed critically to the St. Dwynwen's evening. I could go on to list many individual contributions, but

I fear to leave someone out. Finally I would like to thank the Executive for their service to the society.

2013 was the Centenary of the poet R S Thomas; 2014 has been the Centenary of Dylan Thomas. We look forward to 2015, the 150th Anniversary of the establishment of the Welsh Colony (*Y Wladfa*) in Patagonia; several of our members have family connections to Argentina, and we look forward to building bridges with the wider Argentine-Canadian community.

David Llewelyn Williams

Discovering Canada's (and our family's) Welsh Roots

Discovering one's family roots has become a fanatical pastime to many in recent years. This includes a yearning for an understanding of one's cultural heritage, hence the multicultural environment that we enjoy in Canada today.

In looking for my 'Owens' family roots in Nova Scotia we have also stumbled upon Canada's Welsh roots. My paternal grandfather was born on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia. His father was also born there but his grandfather, Richard Owen(s) was an immigrant from Wales. This is noted in the Census of 1911 where both John in Nova Scotia and his son George (my grandfather) now in British Columbia indicate racial origin as being Welsh. We also know that Richard was in Nova Scotia by the 1827 census. Family stories regarding Richard and how he arrived in Nova Scotia include reference to him being

from Newport in Wales and that he was only 14 years old when he jumped ship in Nova Scotia. Given that the 1871 Census notes that Richard was 63 years old, indications are that he was born in 1808. If he jumped ship when he was 14 years of age, it would mean that he arrived in Nova Scotia in 1822.

Fast forward to the 1980 book by Peter Thomas, 'Strangers from a Secret Land'. It is a fascinating literary journal that documents the voyages of the brig *Albion*, the *Fanny*, the *Fair Cambrian* and *The Active* as well as the story of the origins and destiny of the passengers. Peter Thomas describes the ships as a "little cluster of Welsh emigrant sailings from Cardigan and Carmarthen between 1817 and 1822" that sailed to what is now Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In 1819, the brig *Albion* brought 180 Welsh passengers to Saint John via stops in Halifax and Shelbourne. The 'Royal Gazette' newspaper in Fredericton announced the arrival of the emigrants in Saint John in June of that year. Many articles followed about their arrival and a Cardigan Society was formed to assist them to settle on the land. They were largely from Teifiside especially the lower Teifi area around Newcastle Emlyn and Cardigan itself.

These brave souls were inspired by a poster written in both English and Welsh that was found in The Print and Map Room of the National Library of Wales; a source which is a treasure for the family historian.

It announced: "*Am America. Y Llong Hwylus, Albion o Aberteifi, Cadpen Llywelyn Davies. Sydd yn bweriadu*

cludo Ymdeithwyr drosodd i Saint John's, Brunswick-Newydd and York Newydd, ac i hwyllo o Aberteifi tu a dechreu Mis Ebrill nesaf."

The departure of the *Albion* scheduled for April 09, 1819 was delayed by violent storms and it was nearly the end of the month before the ship was able to leave local waters after putting in at the Teifi estuary, Fishguard and Kinsale on the southern tip of Ireland. After six weeks at sea fighting hunger and sickness in cramped conditions they were within view of the coast of Newfoundland where they were greeted by boats offering fish for sale and they were able to cook themselves fresh meals. The journeys of the *Albion* did not last long as she sank off Wexford with her master and all hands in December 1819. Subsequent voyages to British North America including the 1822 sailing of *The Active* with 72 more emigrants used the same poster with the ship and ship's captain's name revised.

The question that emerges is why was there rise of Welsh emigration to British North American at this time given the long and dangerous voyage ahead and the uncertainty of a new and unknown land. Cardigan was a seafaring town with an abundance of experienced captains, seamen and ships engaged in post Napoleonic era trade. For some seafaring provided opportunity for searching for a greener pasture beyond the seas. But it is not surprising that this wave of emigration coincided with the Enclosure Acts making it difficult for small land-owners to pass land on to their sons. In addition to pursuing seafaring as a career, many young men and their

families found going abroad for the prospect of land an enticing opportunity for a better future. West Wales also the home of Blaenywaun Baptists who were described as “a dangerous sect of ‘levellers’ in the eyes of some Tory landowners. Indeed, Welsh Baptists and Quakers played a significant role in the new world and a number of religious dissenters were represented on the brigs *Albion* and *The Active*.

It is interesting that in ‘Can Sef Hanes y Brig Albion’, Peter Thomas tells us that the balladeer relates how the Brig Albion was off Shelbourne, Nova Scotia and was greeted by some fishermen. No one knows for sure why but some of the passengers chose to leave the ‘Albion’ to settle in Shelbourne. Perhaps after the long journey from Cardigan, they were simply tired of the turbulent and unpredictable sea so despite being so closely bonded by language, custom and purpose, some left the main group that went on to St. John and then up river to Fredericton and finally to the Cardigan settlement. The Shelbourne settlement was known as Welshtown.

And so with this background, and with the knowledge of the passenger list including surnames such as Richards, Thomas, Evans, Jenkins, Jones, Lewis, Harris, Davies and Owens, I may have very well come across the circumstance and event of my Owens link with Wales. There is a documented family of John Owens (34), Catherine (32), Anna (9), Ann (8) and Sarah (6) who disembarked in Shelbourne from the *Albion*. The family story of our Richard who was 14 years old in 1822, was from the

port of Newport, Pembrokeshire and jumped ship in Halifax had become now a strong possibility rather than a mere tale. He may very well have been on *The Active*. What is left now is absolute proof and we are ‘on the hunt’.

Now to an extraordinary day in October! While in New Brunswick, Wilf and I decided to find Cardigan. Peter Thomas’ book has interested us for a long time and we now had an opportunity to follow the road north from Fredericton to the Cardigan settlement. The fall colours were spectacular and the straight road across rolling hills accentuated the brilliant reds and oranges. On one rising hill we found a white clap board chapel to our right and a graveyard. Cars lined the side of the road and the lights were on. We ventured about a mile up the road to be sure that the first was indeed the Welsh chapel and we found an Anglican church. It had a graveyard too and the names on the stones reflected that Welsh names that were consistent with those of the brig Albion. So we knew we were indeed in the Cardigan settlement. We were drawn back to what we found was indeed the Welsh Chapel at Cardigan, to find people emerging from the chapel. We seized the opportunity and learned that this was one of two church services a year held by the descendants of this central New Brunswick Welsh community and we had stumbled upon one of those two days! A miracle!

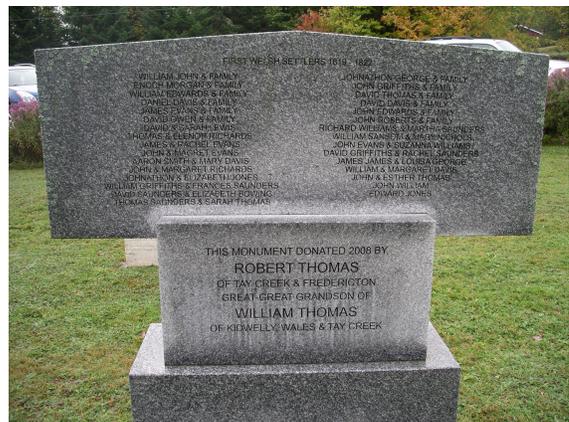
A plaque is in the cemetery, which commemorates the first settlers who arrived on Albion and established the first Welsh settlement in Canada. The

family names remembered on the gravestones are those listed on the passenger lists between 1819 and 1822 and those emerging from the chapel were in large part their descendants. We were delighted to be asked to join the gathering for a potluck dinner in the lower hall, an invitation that we gratefully accepted. It was a thrill to share food and conversation that afternoon and to share our Welsh roots with one another. We are especially grateful to Janet who took us under her wing and shared her experiences within the Central New Brunswick Welsh Society with us. After almost 200 years, we were a gathering of Canadian born Welsh from coast to coast who, on this day, celebrated our Welsh roots together. And in finding Cardigan and its' Welsh community, we may very well have discovered more of our Owens roots too. Our visit to Cardigan, New Brunswick, was amazing, and a real blessing.

Lynn Owens-Whalen



The Welsh Chapel at Cardigan



Reverse of stone listing Welsh settlers

Annual Membership Applications and Renewals

Name:.....Phone No.....

Address:.....

City:.....Postal Code:

e-mail.....

It would be very helpful if you would indicate whether you wish to receive a copy of the Newsletter by mail or if you are content to view the Newsletter on the website. You will then be notified by e-mail when the latest edition appears on the site.

I wish to continue to receive the Newsletter by mail (YES or NO).....

Membership Dues for 2015: Regular: \$45
Family (Member, Spouse): \$70
Seniors: \$35
Students: \$20
Out of Town (50 miles or more): \$20

Note that there have been some small changes to the membership dues this year. Additional sums as donations are welcomed! Cheques or Money Orders should be made payable to

“THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER”.

Send your renewals to: **Don Smith, Membership Secretary, Cambrian Hall,
215 East 17th Avenue, Vancouver B.C., V5V 1A6**

Please circle any committee(s) that you are willing to serve on in 2015:

Bar/Social	Building	Church Service
Welsh night	Membership	Other?

We would welcome any suggestions you have for the coming year. Please indicate your ideas in the space below.