

THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER
Cymdeithas Gymreig Vancouver

Cambrian News

Mis Ionawr 2021

January 2021

Society Newsletter - Cylchgrawn y Gymdeithas



Olwen is doing her part

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

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www.welshsociety.com

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Alcwyn Rogers

Newsletter Editor:

Ruth Baldwin

dysgwrcymraeg375@gmail.com

The Cambrian News

From the Editor:

“And we sing hallelujah at the turning of the year . . .”

These words from Richard Thompsons’ song have perhaps never been more poignant for us than at the turning of *this* year, as we look back on the long months of isolation, the economic hardships many have suffered and the tragic death toll from COVID-19. As I wished members Blwyddyn Newydd Dda in my editorial last January, I had no idea – none of us did – of what was to come – *blywddyn ofnadwy*.

Yet there have been moments of joy – chat sessions with friends via the Internet, small unexpected kindnesses from family and friends, the leisure to sit and admire the parks and beaches of our beautiful city - yes, there have been blessings to be grateful for.

The Winter solstice has passed and, believe it or not, the days are now growing longer. This promise of light reminds and assures us brighter days are coming even though life seems bleak right now.

Just before Christmas, the Society aired a video of a past performance of *A Child’s Christmas in Wales* on Zoom. Those members that watched and enjoyed it were reminded that the Welsh Society of Vancouver is ready to recommence its activities as soon as the restrictions are lifted. The knowledge that a COVID vaccine on its way to us gives us hope that we shall again be able to share each other’s company at events in the Red Dragon. May it be soon!

Ruth Baldwin
dysgwrcymraeg375@gmail.com

Cambrian Hall 604-876-2815

Forthcoming Events

In response to the covid-19 pandemic, all events and activities of the Vancouver Welsh Society are cancelled or postponed until further notice. Please continue to consult the Vancouver Welsh Society website www.welshsociety.com for current information.

Typical Monthly Events

For information only! All events have been cancelled or postponed until further notice. Please consult the Society Website for updates.

Sundays: 2nd Sunday of the month: Bilingual Church Service. The exception is in November when the service is on the Sunday of the Welsh weekend.

Mondays: 1st Monday of the month for Board Members only: Executive Meeting at 7:00 pm.

Mondays: 2nd and 3rd Mondays of the month the Red Cardigan Folk Club meets at 7:00 pm.

Mondays: 3rd Monday of the month: The Welsh speaking group meets at 10:30 am.

Mondays: 4th Monday of the month: Volunteer working party: 10:00 am until 3:30 pm.

Wednesdays: 2nd Wednesday of the month: The Book Club meets at 12:00 noon. **The Book Club is meeting on Zoom during the pandemic. Please email for details:**
dysgwyrwymraeg375@gmail.com

Wednesdays: 3rd Wednesday of the month: The Genealogy Group meets from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm in the Red Dragon.

Thursdays: Welsh Language lessons: The schedule varies and details are shown [here](#).

General Meetings: The dates of the General Meetings will be decided upon by the executive. The **AGM** for year #1 is held in February of year #2, e.g. the 2019 AGM will be held in February 2020.

Vancouver Orpheus Male Choir

Please refer to the choir's website for information: <http://vancouverorpheus.org>

Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir

Please refer to the choir's website for information:
<https://vwmc.ca>

2020 NAFOW Poetry Competition

You'll remember that although the 2020 NAFOW in Philadelphia was cancelled, the Eisteddfod Committee set a poetry competition. One poem was to be in Welsh and entitled "Gobaith" and one was to be in English and entitled "Hope."

The winners were **Christine James** for her poem in Welsh "Gobaith," and **Robert Walton** for his poem in English "Alphabet." Both poems may be found on the NAFOW website:

http://festivalofwales.org/uploads/1/2/9/9/12/9901027/naflow2020_booklet_lores.pdf

For information about Cymdeithas Madog's upcoming virtual Welsh language course, 22 – 24 January, and to learn about FREE informal *Siop Siarad* conversation groups, which still have spaces, please check these

websites:
<https://speakwelsh.org/courses/cwrs-rhith-january-2021/>
and
<https://speakwelsh.org/courses/calendar/>

Submissions by Members

Where there's a will . . .



Not letting the pandemic cramp his style, Welsh Society and Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir member **Arthur Gee** does a victory leap after completing a rock 'n roll virtual run series of 8k on 10 May, 2020

Welsh Pilgrims

Many volunteers from the Vancouver Welsh Society responded to member **Marilyn Hames'** research questionnaire and gave interviews while she was writing her dissertation on the Welsh diaspora. Below is

an extract from Marilyn's upcoming UWTSD thesis:

'Pilgrim through this barren land'¹ Maintaining Welsh Connections and Culture in Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Chapter One - Introduction

Nighttime—not that it made any difference down there. 'Duw, this is doing absolutely nothing to enhance my career!' His Valleys accent said it all—I knew what he meant. Shovelling coal, sweat glistening in the dim light at the bottom of the breaker station as we dug out the tail pulley yet again, his sing-song humour relieved the frustration and struck me as strangely comforting deep beneath B.C.'s snow-clad mountains. As a proud Welsh woman and engineer who had emigrated to Canada in the 1970s, I had done my share of pioneering and welcomed the adventure, but this had to be the low-point in my upwardly-mobile ambitions—my partner's too, apparently. His wry, almost incongruous comment spoke volumes, summing up our situation precisely.²

We may not have burst into a chorus of *Calon Lân* like Welsh miners of old were wont to do,³ but as latter-day pilgrims in a foreign land, there was no mistaking the camaraderie of shared toil, danger, aspirations and countless memories constantly reshaping the collective consciousness of the Welsh. What is unique about British Columbia, is that being so remote it was beyond the reach of the earliest waves of Welsh emigrants seeking freedom from poverty or religious oppression. Instead, this example illustrates another facet of Welshness that persists in the diaspora—not the romantically heroic or quaint stereotypes, but real-life economic migrants, like me, who landed safely on other shores seeking better opportunities.

For centuries Welsh people have moved not only to survive, but for advancement. Whether seeking education and better prospects in England, or plentiful farmland and prosperity in other fields such as mining and smelting, their skills and entrepreneurial spirit has hastened progress overseas, bringing them success too. Sadly, the downside to this was the dark side of colonialism which cost indigenous peoples their ancestral lands and traditional lifestyles. While acknowledging this, my focus is on the Welsh immigrants, not Canada's First Nations whose treatment is a complex issue and separate subject beyond the scope of this thesis.

Welcomed in North America for their skills, Protestant work ethic and respectability during the rapid nation-building era of the nineteenth century, they were not discriminated against for having a distinct language and customs. On the contrary, being the élite of the industrial workforce and considered the most cultured in B.C., their formative influence outshone their numbers because of the two-way assimilation⁴ that occurs in flexible multicultural societies.

Today, Canadians are actively encouraged to become fully integrated while retaining their ethnic customs, but given globalized worldviews, what defines Welshness? Why and how have Welsh migrants or their descendants in Vancouver, B.C. tried to maintain their culture, language and connections? Having been born in Cardiff and raised as an English-speaking chapel-goer, although I have kept in close contact with family and friends, visiting Wales regularly, that was not enough to satisfy the persistent *hiraeth*. After retirement from mining and ministry⁵ I pursued Welsh language and Celtic studies hoping to discover why and how others bridge time and space to fully belong in the

hyphenated worlds of Welsh-Canadians. This documents my findings.

Sandwiched between impenetrable mountains and the Pacific Ocean, British Columbia (B.C.) was isolated from most of North America and also from Britain, except via the Horn—at least until the 1850s and 60s Gold Rushes secured its Provincial status and the promise of a trans-Canada rail link⁶ as incentive for joining Confederation. In fact, Vancouver was considered one of the last outposts of the British Empire with a population of just 1000⁷ when the first passenger train arrived in 1881. Now a thriving cosmopolitan city with 2.5 million living in its metropolitan area, of the 45,000 claiming Welsh background in the 2016 census,⁸ only 120 called Welsh their mother tongue—probably immigrants, since loss of the language by a second generation is common amongst fully-integrated diaspora. However, despite English being dominant even in the 'old country', Welsh passion and pride not only finds a voice in Vancouver bars during rugby internationals, but its presence is felt in concerts, classrooms and committees, in hospitals, mines and many other walks of life.⁹

Often lumped in with the English and far outnumbered by other ethnic groups, nevertheless, distinctive Welsh ways impressed other pioneers, and the Vancouver Welsh Society (VWS)¹⁰ still gathers at the Cambrian Hall to fly the flag, celebrating Welsh culture and ties to Wales. Enthusiastically continuing or adapting traditions associated with Welsh people everywhere, VWS members also tell stories unique to the Welsh in B.C.—stories about explorers and prospectors who helped found the Province, portraits of entrepreneurs who played key roles in the development of Vancouver, and tales of immigrants whose skills still contribute to the business, professional and cultural life of the city. Such stories receive short shrift compared

with those about Welsh settlers east of the Rockies or south of the Canadian border. Perhaps that will be corrected if some nuggets I unearthed prompt others to explore this territory.

Building on research Dr Gethin Matthews and Eifion Williams graciously shared, I collected information from back-issues of the *VWS Newsletter* then surveyed and interviewed members of the Society in parallel with a literature and archive search. The latter was halted after an initial data-gathering when public facilities and libraries were closed because of COVID 19, thereafter being limited to on-line resources.

Conducted according to strict protocols approved by the UWTSO Ethics Committee,¹¹ as a fellow member of the VWS, my qualitative research was enriched by being a participant observer of events others described. The primary objectives were:

- To capture first-hand memories and stories that reflect *hiraeth* as experienced by VWS members whose pride in, or curiosity about their heritage motivates them to preserve, restore and adapt Welsh customs in a twenty-first century urban environment;
- To stimulate a greater awareness of the connectedness to *Yr hen wlad*¹² deeply felt by the Welsh diaspora despite the opportunities and challenges experienced by Welsh immigrants and/or their descendants living half a world away in Vancouver;
- To describe if and how participants try to maintain or study a minority language and share aspects of Welsh culture in a multicultural society.

This could benefit three groups: the VWS as it updates its history and helps Canadians seeking their Welsh ancestors and roots; Welsh organizations wanting to learn more about what the current diaspora

cherish; and First Nations people in Canada who are working to maintain or restore their own languages and cultures, so may see parallels in the ‘Welsh revival’.

By analyzing and comparing the responses with historic situations and experiences, recurring themes emerged that provide a framework for identifying enduring versus evolving attitudes and values.

Answers revealed changing definitions or characteristics of Welshness which are discussed in association with notions of national, cultural and personal identity, while context explained the push-pull motivations¹³ that affected patterns for migration and role of the VWS.

....*Many pages later,.... final extract from Chapter Six — Conclusion:*

....The search for a better life motivates most migrants, but Dr Gethin Matthews asks whether the gold miners were ‘exiled patriots or simply money-grabbing mercenaries...’.¹⁴ One hundred and fifty years later, the majority of Welsh immigrants in the VWS surveyed gave ‘work, career, or job opportunities’ as their primary reasons for moving to Canada. While the ‘get rich quick’ inducements have long-since played out, like the gold, perhaps the proverbial inherited Protestant hard-work ethic still holds the promise of ‘paying off’, even if the wildly successful folk who founded the forerunner of the VWS belonged to the pioneering era. Still, many of those surveyed were part of the ‘brain drain’¹⁵ from Britain who helped Vancouver move into a knowledge-based economy, so benefit from technologies that allow them to maintain their Welsh connections, culture and language, supplementing VWS gatherings as the closest to ‘home’. So the story goes on.

‘Excited? Absolutely @#%&\$ ecstatic!’ he said, unlocking the core shack. *Chwarae teg*, only the Welsh can reel off geo-log data, making it sound like they’re reciting poetry. Then I saw the cylinders of hard rock shot through with gold... from the deep,... so deep, surely we touch creation.¹⁶

It is like that when we plumb people’s passion—precious. I hereby stake a claim on behalf of the Welsh to something deep within us—the why we need to stay connected, the *hiraeth*. But keep digging to find how to keep or adapt our culture alive in today’s multicultural societies.

End notes:

¹ W. Williams and P. Williams (alt. transl.), ‘Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah’, *Common Praise—Anglican Church of Canada* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 2008), #565.

² M.Hames, *Journal*, (1983). Reflection on a personal journal entry.

³ E. Williams, ‘The Welsh Gold Miners of Cariboo’ in *A Toast to Wales* (Vancouver, Self-published, 2018). This describes Welsh miners’ sabbath-keeping, hymn-singing, hardships and hopes, quoting from Harry Jones’s 1862/3 journal in B.C.’s Archives. R.L. Lewis, *Welsh Americans—A History of Assimilation in the Coalfields*, Kindle Edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), p. 153. This says miners sang hymns.

⁴ Lewis, *Welsh Americans*, p. 3. In transnational, reciprocal interactions, Lewis explores the persistence of identity by evaluating the continuity and change in the framework of homeland/hostland.

⁵ Hames, *Journal*, (2019). ‘Retired! First non-stipendiary Worker Priest in the Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of New Westminster; and first female V.P. Engineering, and V.P. Research and Technology for two international mining companies. Job done!’

⁶ A. Seager, ‘The Resource Economy, 1871-1921’, in H.J.M. Johnston, (ed.), *The Pacific Province—A History of British Columbia* (Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas & McIntyre, 1996), p. 207. Map 4 shows the land grants to various railways in B.C., including parts of what is now Vancouver. For further discussion, see B.G., Miller, ‘A Short Commentary on Land Claims in BC’, *11th Annual National Land Claims Workshop*, (October 2003).

⁷ COVID restrictions prevented the checking of

sources which are unclear whether this includes any indigenous Musqueam, Squamish or Tsleil-Waututh peoples who had villages in the area prior to non-native settlement. R.L. Carlson, ‘The First British Columbians’, and R. Fisher, ‘Contact and Trade, 1774-1849’, in H.J.M. Johnston, (ed.), *The Pacific Province*, pp. 12-67. These outline the pre-colonial presence of indigenous peoples, by major native groups, their first contact with European fur traders and settlers, and the consequences.

⁸ ‘Census Profile, 2016’, *Statistics Canada*, Catalogue 98-316-X2016001 (Ottawa, Statistics Canada, 2017).

⁹ Lewis, *Welsh Americans*, pp. ix-x. The Welsh were instrumental in the North American industrial revolution, but invisible, [tending to dissolve into the background of large cities, but Lewis highlights their contributions].

¹⁰ *Cymdeithas Gymreig Vancouver*, also known as the Vancouver Welsh Society abbreviated to VWS or Society.

¹¹ *Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice* (University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2017-2020). Also, see Footnote 155. With a doctorate based on qualitative research, I used data-gathering tools and methods that ensured confidentiality and protected voluntary participants, as well as their identities—if they chose the latter

¹² *Yr hen wlad* (The old country) is doubly meaningful for the diaspora, both as the land of their origin and for its almost sacred antiquity captured in the Welsh national anthem *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* which begins: ‘*Mae hen wlad fy nhadau...*’ (‘O land of my fathers...’), by Evan James and sung to the tune by James James (1856).

¹³ Lewis, *Welsh Americans*, p. 3. ‘Richard A. Easterlin’s “Push-Pull” model explained immigration within the processes of economic modernization, as rapid industrialization in the United States...’ demanded labour with the necessary skill- sets, thereby undermining their home economies.

¹⁴ Matthews, *Welsh in the Gold Rushes*, [unpaginated].

¹⁵ Lewis, *Welsh Americans*, p. 3. This contrasts ‘proud retainers and aspirational modernizers...’. [However, I would argue for both]

¹⁶ Hames, *Journal*. Time and place confidential.

Ed: Marilyn writes:

Preparing this dissertation during the COVID-19 pandemic would not have been possible without help from the Vancouver Welsh Society, including **Dr. Antone Minard’s** Welsh classes, **Eifion Williams’s** essays, **Alcwyn Rogers** as webmaster and

all the wonderful volunteers who responded to my research questionnaire and gave interviews.

A Blast from the Past!

Many will remember the people in this photo sent in by **Alwyn Rogers**. It was taken on 20 June 2015, probably by **Teresa Hancock**, at her son and daughter-in-law **Brian** and **Heidi**'s house on the occasion of **Betty Morgan**'s (80th? 85th?) birthday.



From left to right:

Alwyn Rogers from Caerfyrddin; **Barrie Hancock** from Aberdare (Barrie was on the executive for many years and also a founding member of the Orpheus Choir); **Brian Granville**, (who recently passed away) from Porthcawl, who was Father Christmas at the Society's Children's Christmas Party for many years and a founding member of the Orpheus; Betty's son, **Brian Morgan**; **Betty Morgan** (seated), wife of **Milton Morgan**, who was active in the Society for many, many years. (It is thought they came from Ystradgynlais); **Eric**'s brother-in-law, **Doug**, just above Betty and wearing sunglasses; **Allan Hunter** from Llanelli; **Selwyn Jones** from Neath, and **Eric Davies** from Wrexham.

A Glimpse of Tywyn

Board member **Johanna Hickey** has sent in these interesting photos taken in the small seaside town of Tywyn on Cardigan Bay, West Wales. The photos were taken by her friend **Tony Dent**, a retired teacher from Lincolnshire who visits Wales every year:



The high street has many Victorian buildings. This one, now closed, has window decorations in praise of the NHS.



Above: The Magic Lantern Cinema, built in 1893 as a municipal eating place. Today it has a big screen, the latest technology, and screens the latest films. While it closed during COVID, the owners are adapting and modernizing the cinema goers' experience to include table service and a bar.



St Cadfan's Church (The Anglican Church in Wales) has a long history. It is said to have been founded by the Breton Monk **Cadfan** in 516. The present building is Norman but has features added as late as the Victoria era.



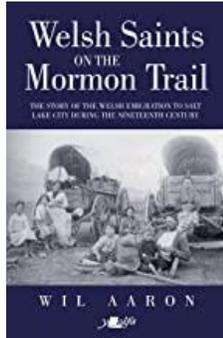
Situated in a meeting hall in a side street is this Wurlitzer Organ. Built in Tonawanda, New York State USA, the 3 manual, 9 rank organ was installed in 1937 in a London Cinema. Since 1996 the privately owned instrument has been used to give regular concerts. It has a beautiful sound. This year, due to COVID, concerts have had to be cancelled. This image was taken in 2019.



Inside the church is the famous Cadfan Stone. It is at least 2m tall. Each edge has a memorial to dead individuals. There are four inscriptions, one on each edge, which are written in 'Old Welsh.'

Ed: Many thanks to Johanna and Tony for these interesting photographs.

Book Reviews



Wil Aaron: *Welsh Saints on the Mormon Trail*, 2020. Published by Y Lolfa. 400 pp.

In the period between 1840 and 1870, at a time of poverty, unemployment and religious friction in Wales, considerable numbers of men, women and children ventured to the “New World” to improve their quality of life and find opportunities for work. Many authors have written about the 55,000 men and women who emigrated to the iron and coal mining areas of Pennsylvania and Ohio. Other authors have collated considerable evidence regarding the Welsh speaking groups of about 1,600 who travelled to Patagonia (Y Wladfa) to set up a Welsh speaking colony, in particular the journey of the ship *Mimosa* from Liverpool in May 1865. However, knowledge regarding the journeys of around 10,000 Welsh people, inspired by evangelists of the Mormon faith, who sailed from Liverpool to Utah and the valley of the Salt Lake has been very limited. Only around 5,000 Welsh people reached Utah but this was three times the number that emigrated to Patagonia.

In an enthralling, brilliantly researched book, *Welsh Saints on the Mormon Trail*, Wil Aaron has created an historical, easily read adventurous insight into the main characters and difficulties experienced by this pioneering group of Welsh people. The author considers that the fiercely hostile attitude of Welsh non-

conformists to the Mormon’s “alternative gospel” has resulted in the history of this unique group of pioneers being “pushed under the carpet.”

Although the vast majority of the pioneers came from the Welsh speaking industrial areas of South Wales, in particular Merthyr Tydfil, the North Wales towns such as Hanmer, Wrexham, Ruabon, Hawarden, Trelawnwyd, Trelogan and Halkyn, together with Caersws, Newtown and some areas of Pembrokeshire were also prominent.

The family of John Bennion from Hawarden was the first Welsh family to reach the Great Salt Lake. The author vividly recounts the experiences of the Bennions as they left Nauvoo to travel across the Rockies via the Missouri, by oxen drawn wagons across miles of uninhabited land faced with the [Ed: understandable] threat of hostility from the indigenous peoples, to reach their “promised land.” The Bennions were much admired and their efforts are recognised in the “Bennion Heritage Centre” in Utah.

One of the most successful missionaries in the history of the Mormon church was Dan Jones. Dan was born in Caerfallwch between Halkyn and Northop. After his conversion as a missionary, he came to Wrexham and surrounding areas to preach. He was based in Merthyr Tydfil which was a thriving industrial town made up predominantly of families and children of the poor from the neighbouring Welsh countryside. The main language of the thriving industrial area was Welsh. Merthyr was the “iron capital” of the world and the iron works at Dowlais employed over 5,000 men and boys. The area was a hot bed of non-conformism, religious revivalism and the Welsh language. Dan Jones was adamant that the “Mormon message” had to be brought to the people of South Wales in their mother tongue. He published a monthly magazine “Udgorn Seion” (Zion’s

Trumpet), supported by John Silvanus Davis from Merthyr. Davis was also a great champion of the Welsh language alongside Thomas Giles, the blind harpist of Utah, Elias Morris from Llanfair Talhaiarn, an accomplished builder, John Parry from Trelogan who formed, at Brigham Young's request, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, and many others.

The Welsh speakers established settlements at Council Bluff, Samaria, the spiritual home of the Welsh in Utah, and in Malad Valley, which has the largest per capita concentration of people of Welsh descent outside Wales itself, and where an annual Eisteddfod is held. The reasons why the Welsh language ceased to be the language of the Welsh Mormons are well documented and discussed by the author.

As a result of the fervour of Dan Jones' preaching, in 1849, 326 Welsh speaking "saints" left Liverpool for the journey via New Orleans and up the Mississippi. In 1852 Dan Jones returned to Wales on another mission and it was reputed he baptised 2,000 people, taking 500 of them back to the Valley of the Salt Lake in 1856. During this period Dan Jones was as famous and as influential as Evan Roberts, the leader of the Welsh non-conformist evangelical revival movement that swept across Wales in 1904. Roberts frequently preached to congregations of over 2,000 and galvanised his congregations as they sought "a new beginning and shelter from the ravages of poverty." The singing of hymns such as "*Dyma gariad fel y moroedd*" at meetings was a key feature of the impact of the Evan Roberts era.

The in-depth stories tell of the ravages of the journeys, the death of so many children and adults from illness, particularly cholera, accidents with wagons and starvation. The swarms of locusts in 1855 when all the crops were eaten had a major impact within the community. The

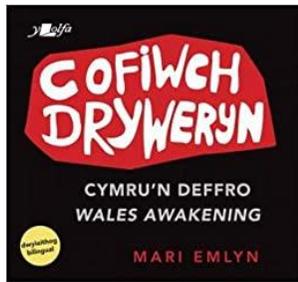
plant that kept the settlers alive was the "Sego Lily," whose bulbs grew deep into the earth and were harvested by the ton. Today the Sego Lily is the state flower of Utah.

The author discusses a number of major events which unsettled the pioneer families. For example, he raises awareness of the reader of clashes with the indigenous peoples, including the Grattan massacre when a group of 28 soldiers was killed outside Fort Laramie. Interestingly, amongst the Sioux children who witnessed the massacre was Crazy Horse who became the greatest First Nations warrior of all time.

Readers will also enjoy reading about the impact of the Californian Gold rush and the 49ers on the lives of the settlers.

The author draws attention to the controversial issue of polygamy and the difficulties faced by some Welsh women in polygamous Mormon marriages. Brigham Young believed it was a wealthy man's duty to father more than one family. Brigham himself had 55 wives. Polygamy was popular and even Dan Jones, the evangelist, had more than one wife.

Wil Aaron has written a brilliant historical account of the emigration of so many Welsh men, women and children during the nineteenth century to America, which deservedly gives greater recognition to key individuals from Wales, such as John Bennion, Dan Jones, John Silvanus Davis, Elias Morris, Thomas Perkins and John Parry. The challenges they faced in their efforts to reach "the promise land" are honoured in a memorial outside Bluff. **"No pioneer company... ever demonstrated more courage, faith and devotion to cause."** The next time evangelists from Utah working for the Mormon church knock on your door, ask them if they have heard of Dan Jones, the Bennion family or John Parry.



Mari Emlyn: *Cofiwch Dryweryn: Wales Awakening*, 2019. Published by Y Lolfa. 120 pp.

A number of young people and adults both living and travelling throughout Wales have been enquiring about the significance and “meaning” behind the graffiti type mural, which has been reproduced by groups across Wales and also by groups in Chicago, Sydney Melbourne and other towns and cities across the globe where Welsh people and those of Welsh descent are living. The key questions they have been asking focus on the background and reasoning behind the graffiti type mural “Cofiwch Dryweryn” which they have seen painted on a range of buildings and walls.

Mari Emlyn, in a fully bilingual book, “**Cofiwch Dryweryn: Wales Awakening**,” traces the background to the mural as a significant slogan of the struggle by the people of Wales for a greater say or voice in decision-making on issues that impacted communities in Wales, which were taken within the Westminster Parliament or by larger local authorities in England without consultation with representative bodies in Wales.

The author, in an enthralling, thought provoking and, at times, emotionally challenging text, traces the background to the drowning of the village of Capel Celyn, just outside Bala, by the Liverpool Corporation in 1965 in order to build the Tryweryn Dam. The plan to flood the village would have a massive negative impact on the residents, depriving them of their homes, farms, livelihoods, school, and dispersing

social groupings and destroying a Welsh speaking community. Within the text the author highlights the emotional pleadings and actions of the residents of Capel Celyn supported by the people of Wales by giving “a voice” to some of those affected.

Liverpool Corporation in 1955 considered they had the right to drown the valley and the village in a similar nature to the way they had created Lake Vyrnwy in 1889. The numerous pictures indicate clearly to the reader the plight of the families within the village of Capel Celyn, the impact on adults and children and the rejection of their emotional protests by Liverpool Corporation.

Unfortunately, only very limited pressure was put on the Liverpool Corporation by politicians in London to reverse the plans. In addition, the extremely arrogant attitude of certain Liverpool councillors and officials to the Welsh speaking residents of Capel Celyn and the Welsh language gained “official acceptance.”

The stubborn, unbending attitude of Liverpool Corporation, the drowning of the village and the destruction of a community and livelihoods of families in Capel Celyn resulted in a deep feeling of “emotional hurt” within the population of Wales. The majority, particularly the young people, felt that they had been ignored and deceived by a political system which paid no attention to their “calls to reverse the planned flooding of the village.”

Undoubtedly the Tryweryn Dam and the arrogance shown to the people of Wales was one of the key factors in Wales’ being given a greater say on issues affecting the Welsh electorate, the growing movement towards devolution for Wales and the eventual establishment of the Senedd (Parliament) for Wales in Caerdydd (Cardiff).

Groups from across Wales were so incensed by the actions of those who destroyed the original mural on the wall outside Llanrhystud in 2019, that the wall was re-built and re-painted. The anger felt by so many resulted in what the author describes as “the phenomenon of Tryweryn murals” as the mural was painted by groups across Wales. Now that the history of Wales is taught within schools in Wales, both Welsh medium and English medium pupils have studied the historical background to “Tryweryn,” the real meaning of “Cofiwch Dryweryn” and the impact drowning a community had on the political and social framework within Wales.

This bilingual book enables individuals and groups to give details of their action in painting the mural and the meaning that “Cofiwch Dryweryn” has for them and their community. It is a really enthralling and “eye opening” text and well worth reading.

Ed: Many thanks to **John Teifi Morris**, who wrote these insightful reviews.

John was born in Hammersmith and lived and worked in London as a physical education teacher and fitness coach until he was 27, when he moved to Aberystwyth University to further his studies.

Following his marriage to Eirlys (from Denbigh, Clwyd) and leaving Aberystwyth in 1975, John and Eirlys moved to Wrexham and John became headteacher of a secondary age special school.

John has had extensive experience as a headteacher in a range of secondary schools, lecturer for the Open University on the MA and PGCE courses, consultant adviser in a range of schools and colleges across England and Wales, and as an Ofsted inspector. In addition John was fitness coach at Wrexham Rugby Club, adviser with the Wales Rugby Union and fitness consultant

and motivator to numerous groups in the community. John is now a fluent Welsh speaker and appears regularly as an educational consultant on Radio Cymru, BBC Wales and S4C television. He reviews books for a number of publishers and publications on a voluntary basis and we are so fortunate to be able to bring these two reviews to you in the Society newsletter.

Look out for further contributions and book reviews by John in future issues of Cambrian News.

Several member of the Society have passed away in recent months – Rob Barclay, Brian Granville, Graham Wilkinson and Liz Murray. The Executive and members of the Vancouver Welsh Society send their sincere condolences to their loved ones and friends. They will be very much missed.



Brian Granville (1937 – 2020)

Brian Granville was originally from Porthcawl in South Wales. He went to Cowbridge Boys Grammar School and then on to University of Wales in Swansea. Brian was conscripted into the army and was based in Cyprus during the Greek and Turkish Cypriot conflict. In 1967 he and his wife Stella emigrated to Canada and lived first in Montreal and later in British Columbia. Brian was a member of the Vancouver Welsh Society and was a founder member of the Welsh Men’s Choir. In 1992

Brian was one of the founder members of another choir, the Vancouver Orpheus, and he remained a member until his death in September this year.

Brian was a very colourful and jovial character and was the Santa Claus at the Welsh Society Children's Christmas party for about 10 years, his last year being 2017.

Brian initiated the Pig 'N Whistle pub nights for the Orpheus, this being a yearly event that is held at the Cambrian Hall. As an Orpheus member, Brian led the singing of the song "Who Killed Cock Robin" in virtually all the post-concert "After Glow" pub events and, to everyone's delight, he performed it again at last February's Pig 'N Whistle. His unique personality was loved by all the people who met him and he will be missed by many of us.



Brian wearing his military medal at an Orpheus remembrance concert.

Alcwyn Rogers

The Vancouver Welsh Society Newsletter is issued three times a year, in January, May and September. The editor welcomes contributions from members in the form of photographs, articles, news items and letters. During the pandemic, when we are socially distanced from one another, it's especially important to keep in touch.



Camaraderie at an Orpheus Social Event



The Welsh Society Children's Christmas Party in 2017



Byddwch yn iach ac arhoswch yn ddiogel!

Be Well and Stay Safe!

