

THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER

Mehefin
2007

June
2007

Gymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Society Newsletter - Fylchgrawn y Gymdeithas



'Carreg Cennen, King of Time.'

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The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

Once again I am reminded that 1907 was an inspired year indeed! Dewi Sant Church in Toronto, the only remaining Welsh language church in Canada is celebrating its centenary. It was set up in 1907 by two Welshmen - one from Anglesey and one from Denbighshire. Dewi Sant, which has more than 100 regular worshippers, holds a Welsh language service on the first Sunday evening of every month. Two years ago, Reverend Deian Evans emigrated from Criccieth in Gwynedd, to become the church's minister.

I am very much indebted to Rhodwyn Sykes for once again providing one of his paintings for our front cover. Carreg Cennen is located north of Swansea, a few miles south-east of Llandeilo. The story of Carreg Cennen is a long one, going back at least to the 13th century, but there is archaeological evidence that the Romans and prehistoric peoples occupied the craggy hilltop centuries earlier (a cache of Roman coins and four prehistoric skeletons have been found). The Welsh Princes of Deheubarth built the first castle at Carreg Cennen, but what remains today dates to Edward I. The quote is from *Under Milk Wood: By Carreg Cennen, King of Time, Our Heron Head is only A bit of stone with seaweed spread Where gulls come to be lonely.*

David Llewelyn Williams

Forthcoming Events

Wednesday June 6th at 7.30 pm
Society Executive Meeting

Saturday June 9th at 7.00 pm
A Convivial Evening at the Red Dragon!

The evening will commence with the screening of a Katherine Jenkins video supplied by Allan King (a new one!) At the interval, finger food will be available. Attendees bearing donations of finger food will be welcomed! After the interval, Sharon McIntee-Birrell with her pianist Bea, whom members will remember from our St. David's Day dinner, will lead us in a Sing-Along. Liquid refreshments for parched throats will also be available.

Sunday, June 10th
Please note that there will be no Church Service this month. Services will resume in September.

Tuesday, June 12th at 2.00 pm
Celebration of the Life of Bill Palmer
Regrettably, our long-time member, Bill Palmer passed away in Vernon on Sunday, May 27th. An obituary will appear in a later newsletter.

Wednesday June 13th at 7.30 pm
Society General Meeting

The following poem was sent to me by Ieuan Lampshire Jones. Its author is not known but it celebrates the end of the fierce winds and snow of winter and hails the summer as the crowning glory of the world.
(It does not anticipate global warming!)

Ffarwell i'r Gwynt a'r Eira

Mae'r gaeaf oer yn cyfym ffoi,
Ei dymor ddaeth i ben,
A'r Gwanwyn sydd yn dod i droi
Y ddaear fel y nen.

Distewi wna y corwynt certh
A llai yw cwyn y coed.
Awelon balmaidd rhoddant werth,
I'r byrdwn tlys a' 'riod.

Ffarwell Ffarwel i'r gwyntoedd
Mawr a'r eira gwyn.
Mae gwedd o hedd a'r wyneb
Bro a bryn.

Mae glaswellt tyner ar y ddol
Yn gloewi gwedd y tir:
A blodau man sy'n dod yn ol
Mewn gwisg o dllyni gwir;

Daeth haf yn goron ar y byd
Ar feysydd, bryn, a gwydd;
A phobeth byw sy'n canu' nghyd
Haf anthem nos a dydd –

O! Haf! O! Haf! Wyt hardd
Mewn blodau coch a gwyn,
Mae gwedd o hedd
Ar wyneb bro a bryn.

Croeso – Welcome

Our Membership Secretary, Heather Davies reports that we have several new members:

Andrea Maudsley and family
Garth Holfeld (VWMC)
Elizabeth Lockwood (from Denbigh)
Betty Darvell Jones
Anne and David Jones
Katie, Gareth and Iwan
Anne is from Prestatyn (my home)
and David is from Holywell (St. Winifrede!)
A warm welcome to you all!

A MEMORABLE DAY AT VIMY RIDGE

“There may be no place on earth that makes me feel more Canadian” said Prime Minister Stephen Harper in front of the Vimy Ridge Memorial on April 9th.

I can vouch for the fact that the thousands of Canadians who attended the rededication ceremony undoubtedly agreed with him. Although primarily planned as a solemn ceremony of remembrance and rededication, it was also a festive occasion, a celebration of pride in Canada and in being Canadian.

I happened to be visiting family and friends in the United Kingdom at the beginning of April and made a last-minute decision to attend the ceremony. My great uncle, who had emigrated from Wales to Canada in 1907, had fought and survived the Battle of Vimy Ridge, having been awarded the Military Cross for his efforts. I felt I owed it to him and to my adopted country to travel the relatively short distance across the Channel to take in the event.

I was one of an estimated 25,000 people who gathered on Easter Monday in front of architect Walter S. Allward’s towering Vimy monument, the majority of them Canadians, although judging by the number of maple leaf flags being waved about it appeared as if almost everyone present was Canadian.

I had arrived in France two days before the ceremony and stayed in a hotel near the city of Arras. I discovered when I arrived that there would be a ceremony the next day in front of the Arras City Hall at the *Place des Heros*, the central square of Arras, granting the

Freedom of the City to the Canadian troops.

On a sunny afternoon in the beautiful historic square several thousands gathered to join in the festivities. Young French schoolchildren handed out small Canadian and French flags which we proudly carried throughout the proceedings. Many visitors sat at the outdoor cafes surrounding the square.



Stephen Harper gave an impressive speech on the historic ties between France and Canada, following which the Mayor of Arras formally granted the Freedom of the City to the Canadian forces. Cheers greeted the army, navy and air force contingents of Canadian troops as they marched into the square with bands playing, drums beating and colours flying. However, the loudest cheers were reserved for the RCMP contingent in their red uniforms.



The following day at Vimy Ridge was also a beautiful sunny day for the Ceremony of Remembrance and Dedication. One of the most impressive sights came when 3500 Canadian students walked down a winding road and entered the open area in front of the monument, each waving a Canadian flag and cheering loudly. Cheers also greeted the marching troops and the RCMP contingents as they marched on to the site.

The crowd was so large that one could not get anywhere near the platform where the visiting dignitaries would appear. The front rows were reserved for invited guests and the large number of veterans organizations. Most people saw the actual ceremony on the large screens placed around the site.

The first speaker was the French Prime Minister, Dominique de Villepin, who expressed the gratitude of the French people to the Canadians who had given their lives on French soil. Stephen Harper emphasized the significance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge in building a Canadian national identity. Both men made reference to the Canadian soldiers who had died in Afghanistan the previous day.



In her speech rededicating the monument, Her Majesty the Queen said: “To those who have so recently lost their lives in Afghanistan, to Canada and to all those who serve the cause of freedom, I rededicate this magnificently restored monument.” She and the French and Canadian Prime Ministers then laid wreaths in front of the monument.

The rest of the proceedings included the Last Post, Minute of Silence, a beautiful Indian lament, other musical performances and the French and Canadian National Anthems. When the visiting dignitaries had departed many people stayed to tour the battlefield and to examine the names of the 11,285 Canadians who died in France during the First World War and who have no known grave.

As I left the memorial site my thoughts turned to that other Easter Monday in 1917, a freezing cold, snowy day when four Canadian Divisions attacked Vimy Ridge and succeeded in winning a victory where other armies had failed. The British and French failures are sadly evident in the large number of war cemeteries in the Arras region, including the thousands of French crosses on a nearby hilltop at Notre Dame de Lorette.

My visit to Vimy was a memorable occasion and I will always remember the friendliness and sheer enthusiasm the people of Arras showed towards the thousands of Canadian visitors, young and old.

(I am indebted to Eifion Williams for sending me a copy of his inspiring article from The Celtic Connection.)

Eirwen Gwynn was the first woman to gain a doctorate in Physics at Bangor University and also led the way in popularizing scientific writing in Welsh. In well over a thousand contributions to various publications she wrote about all kinds of scientific matters. She later also excelled as a prose writer.

Eirwen St John Williams was born in the Newsham Park district of Liverpool, among the large Welsh diaspora of that city, in 1916. Welsh was the language of her comfortable home and she was brought up to take pride in her family's roots in north-west Wales. By 1928 the family had moved to Llangefni, where her father had a practice and where she rebelled against the predominantly English education meted out at the County School. She joined Plaid Cymru in 1930 while still a schoolgirl and remained a committed Welsh nationalist throughout her life. She did extremely well at school and, turning down a place at Cambridge, went up to Bangor to read Physics in 1934. She gained her Ph.D. for X-ray research in 1940.

In 1942 she married the poet Harri Gwynn whom she had met in Bangor and joined him in London but in 1950 they moved to the Lleyn peninsula to provide a Welsh language education for their son, Iolo. She and her husband became popular broadcasters and she wrote a weekly column in *Y Cymro* in a style that was easily understood on a variety of scientific subjects. One of her first books *I'r Lleuad a thu Hwnt* (To the Moon and Beyond) dealt with space exploration; another *Bwyta i Fyw* (Eating to Live) encouraged healthy eating well before it became fashionable. In 1970 she was the winner of a BBC drama competition and in 1977 she was a short story winner at the National Eisteddfod. At last year's Swansea

Eisteddfod she was awarded the Science and Technology Medal. She died 25 January 2007. (from her obituaries in *Yr Enfys* and in *The Independent*).

Myfanwy Spencer Pavelic, B.C. artist, died aged 91 in her Saanich studio on May 7. Mentored from childhood by Emily Carr, her portraits won her international acclaim and were exhibited in the National Portrait Gallery in London. Among her high profile subjects were Katherine Hepburn, Yehudi Menuhin and Pierre Trudeau. Readers will be interested in her Welsh background: she was born Myfanwy Spencer on April 27, 1916 in Victoria. Her grandfather David Spencer arrived in Victoria in 1862 and established Spencer's stores in Victoria, Vancouver and Nanaimo. Will Spencer, Myfanwy's father, managed the Victoria operations. Will and his wife Lillian pursued an active social life at their home, *Hael-y-Bryn*, across the road from Craigdarroch Castle. Myfanwy received the Order of Canada in 1984 and she was chosen to paint the official portrait of Pierre Trudeau which was unveiled in 1985. She was awarded the Order of British Columbia in 2001(photo).



(Robert Amos, Vancouver Sun 11 May)

Slaughter fight for sacred bull.

(thanks to Eirlys Ann Thomas)

Hindus have launched a last minute appeal to prevent the slaughter of a sacred bull which has tested positive for tuberculosis. The bull lives in a shrine in Llanpumsaint, Carmarthenshire.

Officials at the Skanda Vale Temple and the Hindu Forum of Britain, say the killing of cows and bulls is against their religious principles. Shambo the bull tested positive in routine bovine TB screening and was placed in isolation. Ramesh Kallidai of the Hindu Forum of Britain, which represents many Hindus in the UK, said the rest of the herd of 35 cows and bulls were "absolutely fine". "As a responsible organisation, the temple has sought veterinary advice to ensure that robust measures are taken to isolate Shambo and minimise the spread of disease. Killing Shambo will violate our faith, tradition and desecrate our temple. It goes against all accepted norms of our faith."

Skanda Vale Temple, known as the Community of the Many Names of God is a multi-denominational monastic centre, which embraces all religious faiths and includes three Hindu shrines. It attracts over 90,000 pilgrims every year and Skanda Vale also runs a hospice. Speaking on behalf of Hindus at the temple, Swami Suryananda said they "understand and appreciate" the position with regards to public health and containing the spread of bovine TB. "We have been advised that there is provision for permission to treat and vaccinate any animal identified as having TB with the prior consent of the minister for the National Assembly of Wales."

But an assembly spokesperson said TB was a disease which was transmissible to humans and other mammals. "We fully understand that this can be distressing

for the owners, but these measures are in place to protect public health and animal health. Every effort will be made to deal with this case as sensitively as possible."

Welsh in a year – News Wales May18

An ex-learner who now speaks Welsh fluently, says there is no reason why people can't learn to speak the language in a year. To prove her point, she did exactly that, although she was working and studying history at the time. Jen Llywelyn moved to Wales when she was 48 and has chronicled her experience in a book called *Welsh in a Year!* She hopes the book will help and encourage other learners.

She said today, "Whatever other people say, it's not impossible to learn the language in a year. It's hard work obviously, but if people pull themselves out of the comfort zone it is totally possible. One of the main difficulties to promote learners these days is that too many Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers say it is a too difficult language to learn, but it's not that difficult, and with effort and perseverance it is possible to learn and use the language in a short period."

According to television presenter Nia Parry, who has written a foreword to the book, "*Welsh in a Year* is a useful reference book that is full of handy tips to learners. Whether you're thinking about learning Welsh, or are already on the journey, this is a book everyone should read: also a book every first-language Welsh speaker should read towards understanding how important it is that they are supportive to, and patient with learners."

Jen lives in Ystumtuen, Ceredigion and is a candidate for Learner of the Year.

To the Editor.

As you mentioned in the March/April Newsletter, for the first time in memory a representative from the British Consulate in Vancouver did not attend this year's St. David's Day Dinner.

It has long been a Welsh Society tradition to invite to the Dinner the Consul-General of the United Kingdom in Vancouver, who has traditionally proposed the toast to Her Majesty the Queen. This year the letter of invitation emphasized the significance of this anniversary occasion. For the past two years the Consul-General has declined the Society's invitation on the grounds of a prior commitment. Last year the Deputy Consul-General attended the Dinner and was warmly received by those present. This year, no substitute was suggested.

With the understanding that the Consul-General might well have commitments more important than celebrating Wales' Patron Saint or marking the centenary of a group with strong ties to the United Kingdom, I nevertheless find it disappointing that no effort appears to have been made to accommodate the Welsh Society's wish to have a representative of the United Kingdom present at this significant celebration.

Furthermore, greetings and congratulations on our St. David's Day centenary dinner were received from, among others, the Governor-General and the Lieutenant-Governor. The only communication from the representative of Her Majesty's Government in Vancouver was an e-mail from a staff member regretting that the Consul-General was unable to attend.

Please note that these observations represent the views of the Welsh Society Executive and are conveyed on their behalf.

Eifion Williams. (Secretary)

WALES' first commercial olive grove has been planted in a bid to capitalise on the increasing effects of climate change. Anglesey cooking oil producer, Calon Lan, has planted 50 olive trees next to a vineyard on the northern coast of the island. The idea for the Welsh project came from Geraint Hughes, 28, a farmer's son and Calon Lan's director, who saw the potential of diversifying into growing "the first pure Welsh olives". He teamed up with enterprise agency Menter Mon and local vineyard owner Tom Barlow to source trees from an olive-producing region in Italy that experiences frost and snow in winter. "The variety should provide the best chance of a successful harvest and a proportion of the trees planted are old enough to produce, given the right conditions. The trees are well adapted for growing in thin rocky soils," added Mr Hughes "Climate forecasters say Wales will resemble the South of France in 20 to 30 years' time, so we may as well start planning ahead. No one can condone the causes of climate change, but we must think about future opportunities or we will struggle even more." Calon Lan (Ed: yn llawn daioni?!) already produces avocado, hemp and camelina oils for cooking.