

Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Gymreig Vancouver Vancouver Welsh Society Newsletter



Calan Mai / 1 May 2024

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The Newsletter Is Back!

After something of a covid-induced hiatus, the Welsh Society once again has a newsletter. The plan is for the newsletter to be a chronicle of what has been going on at the Cambrian Hall and in the Vancouver Welsh community, with a few bits about Welsh history and culture thrown in. For upcoming events, currently paid-up members* are getting useful regular bulletins via email, also reproduced on Facebook at the Vancouver Welsh Society's page.

Also planned are profiles of some of the Society's regular events and some information on how the Society functions: who does what, what else might be needed, and opportunities to volunteer and get involved.

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome—if you have photos or stories to share, in English or Welsh, please email the Editor.

* You can become a member by sending a mere \$25 to us at bmo@WelshSociety.com—be sure to include a note or follow it up with an email to mail@WelshSociety.com to let us know who has just paid!

What We've Been Up To: Special Events

This has already been a busy year.



We started with the Mari Lwyd on Twelfth Night (*Nos Ystwyll*). This year, she processed along Main Street for a while before being challenged at the doors of the Cambrian Hall. A few people on the street even recognized her as a figure from Welsh tradition. Some people were startled, but most were thrilled—though one (a cook at Brown's Social House) was *very* angry indeed. I don't think he appreciated the Mari's impromptu circuit of his restaurant! The rest of the staff and the diners were delighted, though.

The Mari is a cold and lonely lady, but the Society's lovers were celebrated on Saint Dwynwen's Day (*Dydd Santes Dwynwen*) with the now-traditional limericks on her day on January 25th... or possibly just a little later this year. It's never too late for love!

The nation's Patron Saint, Saint David, was remembered with an Open House, complete with druids proclaiming the truth against the word in the usual Welsh mix of swords, poetry, dragons, and leeks. A small child came dressed *as* a dragon, which was the best thing ever, but your intrepid photographer did not get a picture (and generally won't: please send in your contributions to the Editor!).

As is traditional, the attendees toasted Saint David with water, at least notionally; a more formal celebration was held the following evening, with a catered banquet and entertainment upstairs.



Roy Beavon with his *utgorn* (trumpet) and Pat Morris in Welsh costume.

Whitsun / Sulgwyn

Whitsun, the seventh Sunday after Easter, is a traditional Christian holiday long celebrated across the UK. This year, the Welsh Society will be holding a Sunday Service, starting with an *Ygsol Gân* (“School Song”) at 12.30 p.m. on the 19th of May, with the Rev. Marilyn Hames leading the service at 2 p.m. (please confirm via an email to mail@welshsociety.com if you will attend).

Once upon a time, these celebrations started earlier—200 years ago, in *Yr Hynafion Cymreig* (“Welsh Antiquities,” 1823) we find the following:

Dydd Llun Sulgwyn hefyd y mae yn rhaid i holl bobl y wlad gyfodi yn y boreu am dri neu bedwar o'r gloch, dan y poen o gael eu llusgo o'u gwelyau, a'u gosod yn y cyffion gan eu cyfeillion.

“Whit Monday, too, everyone in the country has to get up in the morning at three or four o'clock, under pain of being dragged from their beds, and put in the stocks by their friends.” Some friends!

Special Events, Continued

Later on in March, the Society hosted a bilingual talent show, where some of the Welsh learners performed a very exciting skit in Welsh about *neidio* (jumping) inspired by the rather unexciting Ladybird series of books for Welsh children. There was some lovely singing in Welsh—I won't list all the names, only because I didn't save the program and don't want to omit any of the fantastic singers and musicians. We had everything from folksongs to songs designed to help Welsh learners. There were solos and duets, as well as group performances in costume (the Cambrian Cuties, dressed in bright blue, sang the Woad Song—another missed opportunity for a great photo).



There was even a mummings' play: you will no doubt recognize Gerald of Wales there on the right, with Saint George in the centre and the Doctor behind him, and a genuine real-life Welsh Dragon there on the left. You could have cut the tension with a knife as George and the Dragon warily circled each other, testing each other's mettle and occasionally helping each other out with their lines. Saint George is famous for his dragon-slaying but he didn't quite manage to subdue this one! It will take a while for the performers to recover, but look out for another talent show perhaps sometime in the autumn.

Regular Events

The Cambrian Hall is host to a number of regular events. Saturday mornings there is Welsh practice: an hour of reading from 9–10 a.m., followed by conversation, games, and general silliness from ten until noon. Everyone is welcome: even people with no Welsh at all, so long as they'd like to learn some! We can help with pronunciation, grammar, or even just motivation.

Every other Saturday there is a Pub Night, with the Welsh Dragon Lounge open for business. This is open to members and their guests, and is typically from 5–10.30 p.m.

Off site, the Book Club meets over Zoom once a month on a Thursday, and the Walking Group meets at eleven every other Monday. For these and other upcoming events, keep an eye on the website and bulletins.

Our Welsh Library

We have many books in English and in Welsh about Wales and its history and culture. Over 500 are catalogued online at [librarything \(VancWelsh\)](http://librarything.com/VancWelsh), but we would love ideas as to how to make them useful! Our oldest book is from 1630, *Yr Ymarfer o Dduwioldeb yn Cyfarwyddo Dŷn i Ryngu Bôdd Duw* [The Practice of Piety, Instructing Man to Gratify God] (no longer a bestseller), but we do have books from this century, too.