

THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

Tachwedd/Rhagfyr
2008

November/December
2008

Society Newsletter - Pylchgrawn y Gymdeithas



Psgol Pysyn Bro Mrorgannwg Choir

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

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The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

The front page photo shows the visiting Bro Morgannwg school choir on stage. They presented a program of songs and skits on Sunday evening, October 19th, after the society had earlier fed them in the Red Dragon. It was good to hear them using Welsh so freely in their everyday conversation.

With great regret, I must announce that our longtime faithful member, **John D. Williams**, passed away on Monday, November 10th. A memorial tribute will appear in a later edition, but I'm sure all of us will wish to express their deepest condolences to Hazel and the family. A service will be held at St. David's United Church 1525 Taylor Way on Saturday, November 22nd at 3.00pm.

Please remember to attend the AGM on Monday December 8th. At the last General Meeting, a motion was passed restricting the terms of the President and Vice-President to three consecutive years to encourage turnover. **So come forth and volunteer your names to Pat Morris or Gillian Rogers!**

Thanks to Tecwyn Roberts for the "Bilingual Sign"; to Gwilym Evans for the Katherine Jenkins reference; to Alan Tucker for the Morryston Choir item. I have taken the liberty to include my own Sgwrs (Talk) at the last Sunday Service.

Welsh Society calendars have been put together as a fundraiser at \$10 each and will be available at all our upcoming functions.

David Llewelyn Williams

The Governor General's Caring Canadian Award



On October 29th in a ceremony at Government House in Victoria, Ann Gwyn Roberts was one of three B.C. residents to receive this award from Lieutenant Governor Steven Point. The award consists of a certificate and a lapel pin showing the maple leaf supported by a helping hand and heart. Ann's citation has been previously published in our newsletter. We all congratulate Ann on receiving this well deserved recognition.
D.L.I.W.

Y Gymanfa Ganu

"Canwn yn llafar i'r Arglwydd" Sunday afternoon, November 2nd, saw the rafters of The Cambrian Hall reverberating to the sound of the old Welsh hymn-tunes. Jane Byrne chaired the Gymanfa, Lynn Owens-Whalen was our enthusiastic and vibrant "codwr canu"- conductor, with Ray Batten being our talented pianist. About fifty eager singers present gave of their all.

The Bible readings were given by Katie Jones in Welsh and by Don Murray in English. It was most moving to hear sixteen-year-old Katie reading the 100th Psalm in the language of her forefathers. It was a treat indeed to hear the beautiful singing voice of our soloist, Sharon McIntee-Birrell rendering appropriate songs for the occasion. Her performance of The Lord's Prayer was especially inspiring.

As usual the "tê bach" was a convivial get-together. Thanks are in order to the main participants, the victual providers and the behind-the-scene organizers.

John Pritchard

Forthcoming Events

Thurs., Nov. 20th Building Work Day
Come, lend a hand with the Hall repairs.

Wed., Nov. 26th 11.30am to 1.30pm
Lunch at the Cambrian will celebrate Advent and the Christmas and Yuletide season. As we decorate the hall, we will enjoy music from the Player Piano and a selection from Welsh Choir recordings. A hot lunch will be offered. Everyone is welcome!

Wednesday, December 3rd 7.30 pm
Executive Meeting

Saturday, Dec. 6th 7.30pm for 8.00pm
Mulled Wine and Carols with Xmas Goodies. Donation to defray expenses.

Monday, December 8th 7.30pm
A.G.M. and Election of Officers

Thursday, December 11th 7.30 Contact Pat Morris or Gillian Rogers ASAP if you would like to join a Welsh Society group visiting Gren Thomas' pub *The Red Lion* in West Vancouver.

Sunday, December 14th 11.00am
Carol Service followed by Tê Bach
2.00pm Children's Christmas Party

Saturday, December 20th Christmas Dinner. The Hall will open at 6.00 pm; dinner will be served at 7.00 pm.

Menu (catered by Jordan's)
Turkey and ham dinner with all the trimmings followed by traditional Christmas deserts.

\$35 Reserve your tickets early with Gaynor Evans (604-271-3134)

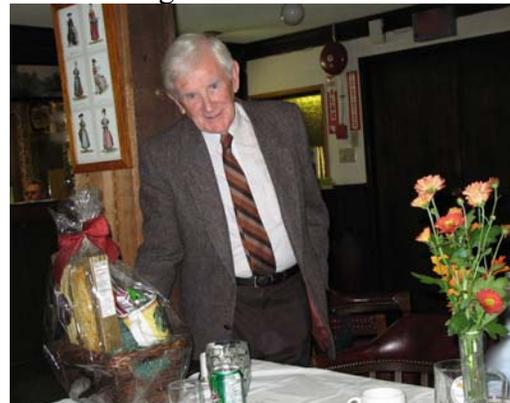
The Anniversary Dinner

On Saturday, November 1st, the Society celebrated its 101st Anniversary. As we gathered to socialize before dinner, we were entertained by Alcwyn Rogers who 'played' the recently acquired piano.

After Grace in Welsh and English by our President Jane Byrne and our Social Committee Chair, Gillian Rogers, we sat down to a fine meal provided by the caterers, Jordan's, who surpassed themselves once again. The bar was ably looked after by Art Kelm and Dave Gilder, who ensured the company was not lacking in liquid refreshment.



Drawing the Door Prize Ticket



Lucky Door Prize Winners were Jackie Chapman, Eric Davies (above) and Gaynor Owen (above).

After the meal we enjoyed community singing accompanied by Lucy Sorensen on the piano and two short Welsh poems recited by David Llewelyn Williams.



In conclusion, Jane Byrne thanked all those who had contributed to the success of the evening and in particular, Gaynor Evans, the organizer.



(Photos by Uta Williams)

The Player Piano

The player piano came of age around 1900 in America and it caused quite a stir. Yet by 1930 the craze dwindled and in 1932 not a single player was shipped from the factories (in part a result of the depression). However piano rolls have been manufactured continuously since and now people still find players a great pleasure, rebuilding and repairing them and adding more rolls to their libraries.



The one we were fortunate to obtain is a beautiful, mahogany player piano from the 40's, made in Ottawa. It belonged to **Jennifer Parkinson-Dow's** great uncle who spent \$2500 refurbishing it a couple of years ago. It has 20 rolls of music (old time favourites) that go with it. After her uncle died, Jennifer sought a good home for the piano. She asked Neville Thomas if our society would be interested. Not only did she give us the piano, she also paid the moving costs. The piano was tuned by our Fred Miyayoshi, and it also functions beautifully as a manual piano. We have been entertained by Jennifer's Scottish dancers on several occasions. Her children, Annika and Cameron, gave a fiddle and dance performance at the Noson Lawen during our Centennial. We are most grateful for her support.

SGWRS

Next year the National Eisteddfod will be held in Bala, so I thought I would tell you about a local man whose influence on the survival of the Welsh language and its culture has been pivotal.

Owen Morgan Edwards was born in 1858 in a thatched roof cottage on a farm in Llanuwchllyn, which his father farmed as a tenant of Sir Watcyn Williams-Wynn, the largest landowner in North Wales. He was the eldest of four sons born to Owen and Beti Edwards, his hardworking parents, from whom he inherited a love of the country-side. His father composed verses which he sang to concertina accompaniment, while his son, who couldn't hold a note, excelled at imaginative story telling, a talent passed on from his mother. It was a rare week during the winter that the family did not participate in a Noson Lawen at one of the farms or cottages in the parish.

On Sunday the whole family attended Capel y Pandy, three times a day in all weathers, walking each way. During the week they would attend the Seiat and the Cyfarfod Gweddi. O.M.

Edwards had an unshakeable respect for his first school, the Ysgol Sul at the chapel, (Sunday School) and for the rest of his life, if it was at all possible, he made every effort to be back home on Sunday from wherever he was in order to attend.

His experiences at the local school, Ysgol y Llan, also stayed with him to influence the rest of his life. At age 9 when he entered the school, he knew little if any English so didn't understand the lessons – he recalls the headmistress having to lower her social station by speaking Welsh to him and he was put in a class to learn English. Having responded in Welsh in

the playground to some teasing he found he had to wear the Welsh Not about his neck for which he was caned at the end of the day. From that day on he vowed that he would not allow anyone else to wear it and took the punishment himself every day, thereby freeing other students to speak Welsh.



The Welsh Not

Fortunately there was a change to a new Headmaster, to whom he immediately took a liking and for the first time he was not beaten. From then onwards school was a pleasure. After being a “teacher’s pet” for some time, Owen at age 15, won a scholarship to Bala Grammar School. He was a fast reader and devoured the works of Shakespeare, the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, and learnt Latin. Such was his progress that during harvest, his father, with considerable self sacrifice, suggested he attend Bala College. At this time he also began preaching and was accepted as a preacher in the area. He then won the Robert Scholarship which kept him at the College and allowed him to save enough to attend Aberystwyth University College for two years.

Aberystwyth College was only 8 years old and prepared its students for exams set by the University of London. It was a strange experience for him to go down to London and sit exams amongst privileged Public School students. Not only did he attain first class standing, he placed first overall in his subject. After graduating in Theology, he studied Philosophy at Glasgow where he won the Ethics Prize; from there he won one of the premier scholarships to Oxford, the Blakenbury Scholarship to Balliol College as a History Scholar.

He was captivated by Oxford's charm, its learning and culture, its libraries and the beautiful gardens of its Colleges. There he went on from strength to strength, winning major prizes each year... "No hope this year; Edwards of Balliol is in." was commonly heard. During his time in Oxford, he, together with John Morris Jones, formed a small group they called Cymdeithas Dafydd ab Gwilym to meet to discuss Welsh topics.

He graduated top of the first class Honours in History and received a traveling fellowship which he spent visiting the continent. He wrote books in Welsh about his travels in the various countries since he felt there was a need for books in the Welsh Language. At the same time he entered the world of periodicals and was appointed co-editor of the Welsh monthly "Cymru Fydd".

In 1889 he was appointed Fellow in History at Lincoln College and began the life of a don. He was an inspiring lecturer and his students achieved unusual success under his tutelage. The Master referred to him as 'Our brilliant lecturer in Modern History'.

In 1891 he married Ellen Davies from a neighboring farm and she joined him in Oxford where they lived and raised their children with the help of two Welsh girls from Llanuwchllyn

After 'Cymru Fydd' failed, in July 1891 he saw the opportunity to create a more literary monthly of his own entitled "Cymru" which he alone edited through war and peace until the end of his life while also bearing its financial burden. In its pages many a Welsh writer or bard had their first opportunity to be in print.

In January 1892 he started another monthly for children "Cymru'r Plant" which he also edited for the rest of his life. This changed the attitude of the children of Wales towards reading and writing in Welsh and renewed in them a respect for their country.

"Y werin sy'n siarad, ac os na dderbyn llenyddiaeth eiriau ac arddull y werin, bydd arddull llenyddiaeth Cymru yn rhy hynafol a chlasurol ac yna yn annaturiol ac yn ddiwerth at amcanion bywyd."

(It is the common folk who speak and unless literature accepts their words and their style, the style of Welsh literature will be too ancient and classic and so unnatural as to be valueless for the purposes of life.)

How could an Oxford don find time for all this? He was such a popular lecturer and tutor that he was asked to give more lectures than his colleagues; but in his eyes it was a matter of importance and somehow he managed. He continued to publish books in Welsh to benefit his countrymen, often refusing valuable commissions to write in English.

His future and high office in Oxford was assured, but he felt that Wales called for his service. The opportunity

came when the Liberal Government under Lloyd George established in 1906 the Welsh Section of the Board of Education to look after Welsh Education. Its first Permanent Secretary was Sir Alfred T. Davies, (our member from Kamloops, D.Ll.Davies' grandfather) and he needed a Chief Examiner. Owen Edwards was chosen, with responsibility for all levels of Education including Universities. Rather than live by the Seat of Power in London, he managed to persuade Sir Alfred to allow him to live amongst his people in Llanuwchllyn while retaining his office in London. So he built a house for his family close to his and Elin's childhood homes and from there he started visiting schools across Wales.

Welsh education in those days was still influenced by the notorious Blue Books of 1847 which stated; "The Welsh language is a vast drawback to Wales and a manifold barrier to the moral progress and commercial prosperity of the people. It is not easy to overestimate its evil effects."

In the nineteenth century, it was the ordinary folk who cherished their language, but here was a distinguished scholar with all the learning of Oxford and the authority of the Board of Education behind him, visiting Welsh schools and demonstrating the value of the language by speaking unaffectedly to the teachers and the children. The notion of an inspector who created fear and spoke a language the children barely understood was dispelled. And he was the Chief Inspector! The headmasters gradually came to realize that the Chief Examiner was a man of firm convictions and a clear vision. They came to respect him and to accept his ideas.

Owen Edwards was so persuasive that even the Education Committee in English speaking Monmouthshire agreed to teach Welsh in their schools. His influence transformed Welsh education and he worked unceasingly to inform the Welsh of their heritage and their culture through his books and periodicals. His fame spread across Wales. In 1918, at the Newport National Eisteddfod, he was introduced with the words "Dyma fo i chi – Gwardwr mawr y Gymraeg!" (Here he is for you –the great saviour of the Welsh language!)

He was Knighted in 1916, he received an Honorary Degree from the University of Wales in 1918 from the hands of Sir John Morris Jones and he died in 1920.



His son Ifan ab Owen Edwards, the founder of Urdd Gobaith Cymru, the Welsh League of Youth, continued in his father's tradition. A statue of father and son on the road to Llanuwchllyn outside Bala commemorates their achievements.

D. Ll. Williams,
Sunday, November 2nd.

Welsh sensation Duffy charms Orpheum crowd.

(abstract from Vancouver Sun review by Chantal Eustace, Friday, October 17th)

‘Welsh pop sensation, Duffy, unleashed her retro soul sound to a packed Orpheum Theatre on Thursday night singing from her debut album, *Rockferry*. She did it in high style with more than a little sex appeal, none of which was lost on the her fans....Live, Duffy is plain old sensational....First off, there’s her signature, a surprisingly big, penetrating voice that seems capable of doing almost anything. It sort of criss-crosses from the past to the future, from soul to pop, from crackle to purr. And then there’s Duffy herself, the young diva from Wales....The crowd loved it, telling her so with applause and more whistling. “Thank you so much Vancouver,” she said after tying a ribbon on the night with a perfect encore, the anthem, *Distant Dreamer*. Right back at you, Duffy.’

Katherine Jenkins signs with Warner

Music Week. Monday October 20, 2008 by Tom Evans

Warner Music Entertainment has signed Welsh opera singer Katherine Jenkins to a deal that incorporates revenue from brand endorsements and merchandise.

WME, Jenkins and her management company Bandana Management will work together to develop the singer’s career and share revenues across a broad creative and commercial mix. Award-winning producer **David Foster** will work with the Welsh singer on her first release for the label. He has previously collaborated with Michael Bublé, Celine Dion and Josh Groban.

Warner Music Entertainment president Conrad Withey says, “We look forward to taking her popularity to new heights on both sides of the Atlantic.”

Note: David Foster, O.B.C., Order of Canada, LL.D. (Hon, U.Vic.) was born in Victoria and maintains a residence here. His most recent local protégé is Burnaby’s Michael Bublé. **Perhaps he will bring Katherine Jenkins here!**

Morrison Orpheus Choir go supersonic with big bang gig
Monday, October 13, 2008

Members of Morrison Orpheus Choir showed off their skills in the control room at the Large Hadron Collider in Switzerland. The out-of-this-world opportunity came about following an invitation by Aberdare-born **physicist Lyn Evans**. The Swansea University graduate heads the project at the European Centre for Nuclear Research (CERN), which seeks to create the conditions seconds after the universe was created.

The Orpheus' performance, which featured classic Welsh hymns as well songs from Italy and New Zealand, will form the soundtrack to a special presentation given by Dr Evans when he gives a multi-national address to 50 nations across the world later this year. Dr Evans said: "I was delighted to have the chance to invite the Orpheus to CERN. I want to explain to everyone the importance of the world's greatest scientific instrument and am particularly pleased to be able to explain the device to people from my home country."

First Minister Rhodri Morgan, who joined the choir for the Welsh national anthem, "It was superb celebrating the pinnacle of scientific achievement and Welsh choral excellence."

Fatal Neglect, a new book on Dylan Thomas' death, is published on November 9th, the 55th Anniversary of his untimely end.

The author **David Thomas** was brought up in Pontarddulais and Port Talbot. After Oxford and the LSE, he worked in London as a senior lecturer and chief executive. Since returning to Wales, he has written widely about Dylan Thomas, including *The Dylan Thomas Murders*, *The Dylan Thomas Trail*, *Dylan Remembered* and *A Farm, Two Mansions and a Bungalow*, now a major film, *The Edge of Love*, starring Keira Knightley and Matthew Rhys. Of local interest to our society is that David is a cousin of Anne Bosch.

The following is a quote from the book's back cover:
'Dylan Thomas went to New York in October 1953 to perform in *Under Milk Wood*. Three weeks later, he was dead. This fascinating book confronts painful facts about why he died.

Neglect was central to the death. John Brinnin, Dylan's agent, had a playboy lifestyle to fund. Desperate for his fees, he turned a blind eye to the poet's failing health. Liz Reitell, Brinnin's zealous deputy, also knew Dylan was ill but she worked him to collapse. Did she put her own career before his well-being? Brinnin's intimate papers show how greed, ambition and sexual intrigue fed into a chain of events that sent Dylan to an early grave.

Dylan suffered from a treatable illness but his fashionable New York doctor ignored the warning signs. David Thomas examines hospital data and the post-mortem report – included in the book – and shows that medical negligence was a factor. *Fatal Neglect* also investigates the conspiracy to protect those responsible. Friends and

doctors took part in a cover-up, as did two of Dylan's American biographers.

David Thomas' previous books on Dylan have required us to rethink the poet's life. *Fatal Neglect* is a fundamental reappraisal of his death.'

Fatal Neglect: Who Killed Dylan Thomas? is published by Seren at £9.99, ISBN 978-1-85411-480-8. It is now available from U.K. bookstores, internet book suppliers or direct from www.seren-books.com.

Lost in Translation?!



The sign originally said in English: "No entry for heavy goods vehicles. Residential site only" but when Swansea Council officials sent it to be translated, they received an automated e-mail written in Welsh that read: "I am not in the office at the moment. Please send any work to be translated."

Unaware of the actual meaning of the e-mail, officials had the sign printed and put up near a supermarket, only realizing their mistake when Welsh speakers pointed it out. "Our attention was drawn to the mistranslation of a sign at the junction of Clase Road and Pant-y-Blawd Road," a Swansea Council spokesman said. "We took it down as soon as we were made aware of it and a correct sign will be installed as soon as possible."
(Agence France-Presse)

