

THE WELSH SOCIETY OF VANCOUVER

Gymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver

Cambrian News

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2009

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Society Newsletter - Fylchgrawn y Gymdeithas



Lord Roberts presents a Welsh Lovespoon to the Society

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

VANCOUVER WELSH SOCIETY

Officers:

President:

John Morris (604) 536-9556

Vice-President:

Lynn Owens-Whalen 266-2545

Secretary:

Gaynor Evans 271-3134

Treasurer:

Alwyn Rogers 742-1378

Membership Secretary:

Heather Davies 734-5500

Immediate Past President:

Jane Byrne 732-5448

Directors:

John Cann

Mary Lewis

Gethin Owen

Geraint (Nant) Roberts

Eifion Williams

Contacts

Building Committee:

Lynn Owens-Whalen 266-2545

Cambrian Circle Singers:

Nerys Haqq 278-8978

Church Service:

John Cann 588-0249

Rentals:

Melanie Hull

Social Events Committee:

Gillian Rogers 742-1378

(Gillian.Rogers@shaw.ca)

Welsh-Speaking Group:

Ann Roberts 987-6996

Webmaster:

Alwyn Rogers 742-1378

(www.welshsociety.com)

Newsletter Editor:

David Llewelyn Williams 737-0305

(williams@phas.ubc.ca)

Mark your Calendars!!

November 6th Noson Lawen

November 7th Anniversary Dinner

November 8th Gymanfa Ganu

The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

A warm welcome back to members after their summer breaks. I would be remiss in not mentioning the sterling efforts of our President and his crew of volunteers who laboured diligently to renovate the floor in the Red Dragon. It was in fine shape for our welcome to Lord Roberts.

Sadly, I must report the passing of two of our members: Leslie Day on April 19th and Tegwen Shirlaw on August 20th, just 11 weeks away from her hundredth birthday. I am grateful to Eirlys Ann Thomas for her memories of Tegwen. Several of our members have been unwell or have suffered accidents but, fortunately, all are now improving.

There has been a sudden explosion of technological aids to Welsh language instruction which bodes well for the future. In our own society there is a developing interest in the language and one of our members attended *Cwrs Goleuni'r Gogledd* this summer.

Gwenno Dafydd, the creator of the official song for St. David's Day has sent me some press releases. I have personally bought two versions of "*Cenwch y Clychau i Dewi*", so we should be in fine voice by March 1st! Whether we can emulate Sir Benfro and produce a banner is more of a challenge!

I have included a request from Cadw Coed for support for their proposal for the historic lands on the Mawddach.

David Llewelyn Williams

(Front page photo thanks to Rob Fox)

Tegwen Shirlaw (November 5, 1909 – August 20, 2009)

Tegwen was born in Cilfynydd, Wales and immigrated to Edmonton in 1920 with her father and mother and 6 of her siblings. She married Michael Shirlaw in 1934 and in 1936 they moved to Vancouver but her husband died in 1957. She is survived by her son Terry Shirlaw, her daughter Fay Stothard (Al), her grandson Michael Pittman (Sandy), great-grandchildren Sara and Ryan, her sisters Gwyneth Garside and Anne Rankin and sister-in-law Winnie Lloyd.

Eirlys Ann Thomas has provided the following recollections of Tegwen's participation in the Women's Auxiliary.

Tegwen was certainly 'one of a kind'! I first became acquainted with her at the W.A. Meetings in the late 80's and 90's and immediately felt at ease as we greeted each other with our limited Welsh salutations.

She was proud of being Welsh and talked about possibly revisiting her birthplace, Cilfynydd. She also talked about her extended family, including her brother-in-law, David James, who was a well respected Executive Trustee of our Society and a member of the 1986 Constitution and Bylaw Committee. Tegwen enthusiastically reminisced about accepting a six-month stint as an Assistant Manager in a hotel in Port Alberni in the early '60s – the six months lasted for seven memorable years!

Betty Morgan would regularly pick up Tegwen and Marion Armstrong from her apartment on Harold Street and bring them to the W.A. meetings as well as to

other events that were held at the Cambrian Hall.

She was never idle! Tegwen was generous to a 'T'! Members will remember the gorgeous tea-cozies and jeweled Christmas tree wall hangings that she made and donated to the Society's fund-raising ventures. I was privileged to have shared the Arts and Crafts Stall with her at the W.A. Spring Tea/Fair.

She also donated a huge bolt of red plush velvet fabric that was made into drapes which are regularly used at the Red Dragon dart area on special occasions – especially Christmas time and the St. David's Day and Anniversary Dinners.

Thanks for the wonderful memories,
Tegwen fach,
Eirlys Ann Thomas.

Leslie Day

I must apologize that I only recently became aware that Leslie Day passed away on April 19, 2009.

Leslie and Jeannie Day moved to White Rock from Nova Scotia in 2004 and became members of our society soon afterwards. Les served in the RAF in WWII; he and Jeannie immigrated to Canada in 1957. Before moving to B.C. they had enjoyed 25 years of retirement in Nova Scotia where Les had served on the Executive of the Cumberland Seniors' Association for many years and a term as President of the Nova Scotia Senior's Association. Les is survived by Jennie, his wife of 65 years, son David, daughter Jennifer of Vancouver, five grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. We send Jennie and the family our sincere condolences.

Visit by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

On the evening of Thursday, August 27, our Society was privileged to be visited by Lord Roger Roberts, the President of Cymru a'r Byd (Wales International), who was on his way to attend the North American Festival of Wales in Pittsburg.

Although it was the holiday season, quite a number of members attended a very pleasant gathering in the Red Dragon to meet and welcome Lord Roberts. We soon found out there were many common connections. Traveling on the Rocky Mountaineer he had met Jennifer Roberts, and discovered she was Tecwyn's daughter. Meeting Lynne Fox again recalled his time as the minister at the family chapel, Bron Y Nant, when Lynne's grandfather, Morris Lloyd Hughes was a deacon and the *Codwr Canu*. Both Morris and his wife were heavily involved in chapel life and Rev. Roger Roberts was a frequent visitor at their home when Lynne was a small girl! Both he and I had coexisted as students at the University College of North Wales in Bangor from 1954 to 1957 and we enjoyed recalling many events and common acquaintances from that time. Several members present were long time members of *Cymru a'r Byd* and he also met Anne Bosch, whose grandfather, Thomas Edwards was the first Leader of the Overseas Welsh in 1948, the year *Cymru a'r Byd* was founded.



With Capt. Ieuan Lampshire Jones

Lord Roberts briefly addressed us as President of *Cymru a'r Byd*. He congratulated us on keeping alive an appreciation for Wales and Welsh Culture in our community. He dwelt on some of the contributions made by the Welsh to the cultural and political life of North America, citing the genealogy of American Presidents, the founding of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir by Welsh Mormons from Trelawnyd Choir; and a tongue-in-cheek reference to Prince Madog and the discovery of America.



(photos taken by Eifion Williams)

In his capacity as a member of the House of Lords, his particular areas of interest were Wales (naturally) and International Affairs, specifically with the idea of establishing contacts on a personal level between different countries in an effort to promote mutual understanding. He concluded by presenting our Society with a Welsh Love-spoon (front page photo) and 3 copies of the latest *Enfys*, the magazine of *Cymru a'r Byd*.

Past President Jane Byrne accepted the gifts and thanked Lord Roberts both for the gifts and for visiting our Society.

Once again, thanks are due to the Social Committee and its volunteers for making this evening possible and providing the refreshments. A most pleasant evening, full of warmth and hwyl.

VWMC European Tour

Several of our own members accompanied the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir on their European Tour, either as choir members, spouses or friends and I believe it was a great experience. Most of the concerts were local benefit concerts, starting with the first concert in Berlin with the Berliner Singergemeinschaft, a local mixed choir. This concert raised a significant amount for a children's charity.



Gwyn Evans with Maureen Knapp and Heather Davies in Berlin

In Dresden they visited the Frauenkirche, the cathedral recently reconstructed from the rubble of World War II bombing raid, and later performed in the Annenkirche with the Bergsteiger Chor. After the concert, both choirs and friends headed to a wonderful German restaurant called Feldschlösschen Stammhaus for a traditional sauerbraten (pot roast), potato and cabbage dinner.

The performance in Prague was held in the Concert Hall of Saints Simon and Juda, formerly a large church, now home of the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. The host choir was a women's choir whose voices fitted perfectly with the acoustics of the baroque interior of this beautiful venue. Another highlight was a visit to the Mozart museum in the Villa Betramka, the home of Mozart when he was in Prague. He apparently composed the overture to Don Giovanni in the garden pavilion.



Gwyn, Gaynor, Heather and Maureen with Mozart in Prague

In Salzburg, the choir was permitted by the Archbishop to give a twenty minute performance of sacred music *a capella* in the Cathedral, one of the largest gothic cathedrals north of the Alps. Later in the day the choir gave a concert in the local parish church at a ski resort village south of Salzburg called Abtenau.

The last concert on the tour was at Ybbs an der Donau (Ybbs on the Danube), founded in 1317, where they performed a benefit concert for the "children of Chernobyl", together with a local male choir. The evening didn't end with the concert; the whole party was hosted by the town at a restaurant in the country. Sounds like a very convivial send off!



John and Delyth Cann at Ybbs looking over the Danube

(I am grateful to Gwyn Evans and John Cann for the photos. The account is based on a report by Don Blake.)

Forthcoming Events

November Welsh Weekend Plans to Celebrate the 80th Anniversary of The Cambrian Hall.

November 6th **Noson Lawen**
November 7th **Anniversary Dinner**
November 8th **Church Service followed by Tê Bach** in the morning, followed by **Gymanfa Ganu** in the afternoon.

We are fortunate that two musicians from Wales will take part in these activities:

Eifion Thomas, tenor soloist from Llanelli and Director of the Llanelli Male Choir, Côr Meibion Llanelli. Eifion is well known to us both through his choir visits and as the conductor of our Centennial Celebration Gymanfa. This time he will be accompanied by soprano and harpist **Joy Cornock**. Joy, who is from Abergwaun, (Fishguard) excelled at the 2008 National Eisteddfod in the solo competitions for 19 – 25 year olds. She won the Welsh Solo, placed 2nd in the Operatic Solo and was 3rd in the Lieder competition. A rising star! The whole weekend promises to be a memorable experience. Enter it in your calendars! More details later!

Sunday, September 13th at 11.00 am
Church Service followed by Tê Bach

Monday, September 14th at 7:30 pm
General Meeting

Thursday, September 17th at 10.00 am
Work Party Day

Monday, September 21st at 10.30 am
Welsh Speaking Group

Wednesday, Sept. 23rd 11.30 – 1.30,
Lunch at the Cambrian.

Saturday, September 26th at 7.30 pm
Quiz Night
This will be our 3rd Quiz Night arranged by Eifion Williams. A light supper will be served as usual and we will ask for a donation to cover our costs. These evenings have proved to be very successful and lots of fun and we look forward to seeing you there.

Wednesday, October 7th at 7.30 pm
Executive Meeting

Sunday, October 11th at 11.00 am
Church Service followed by Tê Bach

Thursday October 15th at 10.00 am
Work Party Day

Monday, October 19th at 10.30 am
Welsh Speaking Group

Wednesday, October 28th 11.30 – 1.30,
Lunch at the Cambrian.

Gwenno Dafydd

Gwenno, as one of the organizers of the 2008 St. David's Day Procession in Cardiff and the creator of the words to the official song is attempting to spread the word through Welsh Societies across the world, so that they can come together and feel part of the celebrations either through singing the official song and/or through the creation of a banner such as the one made by the Pembroke-shire women which they carried in the St. David's Day procession. The official song is available in four versions in electronic format (see next page).

**Only Men Aloud and Bryn Terfel:
The First to support the Song for
Saint David's Day**

Internationally famous opera singer, **Bryn Terfel** and **Tim Rhys Evans**, Musical Director of '*Only Men Aloud*', came together to support the launch of a manuscript on the web, a special song for Saint David's Day, which has been adopted as the official song of the National Saint David's Day Parade. (NSDDP) and launched by Lord Dafydd Elis Thomas, Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales at the Assembly in January 2008.

The launch of the '*Cenwch y Clychau i Dewi*' manuscripts on the web, were celebrated by the presentation of the very first copies to Bryn Terfel and Tim Rhys Evans. The manuscripts have been available for sale from 'Y Lolfa' website www.ylolfa.com since the 5th February 2009 - this is the very first time that a Welsh medium publication has been sold in an electronic format.

"It's a great pleasure and honour for all of us in 'Only Men Aloud' to be the first to receive this exciting new song to celebrate our Nation's Patron Saint. All the best to the 'National Saint David's Day Parade' for many years of continued success in song and spirit." said Tim Rhys Evans.

Bryn Terfel received the very first copy of the Piano and Voice arrangement and Tim Rhys Evans the first version of the Male Voice Choral arrangement from Gwenno Dafydd, who wrote the words both in English and Welsh. Heulwen Thomas composed the original music for piano and voice and the Male Voice, Female Voice and Mixed Voice (SATB) arrangements were made by Eilir Owen Griffiths, winner of the Gold Medal for Composition at the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales at Cardiff 2008.

**Only Men Aloud a Bryn Terfel:
Y Cyntaf i Gefnogi
'Cân Gwyl Dewi'**

Daeth y canwr fyd-enwog, Bryn Terfel a Tim Rhys Evans (Arweinydd 'Only Men Aloud') at eu gilydd i gefnogi lansio cyhoeddi maniwscript ar y we, cân arbennig dydd Gwyl Dewi, sydd wedi cael ei mabwysiadu fel cân swyddogol Gorymdaith Genedlaethol Gwyl Dewi (GGGD) ac wedi ei lansio gan Yr Arglwydd Dafydd Elis Thomas, Llywydd Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru yn Y Cynulliad mis Ionawr 2008

Dathlwyd cyhoeddi maniwscript y gân, '*Cenwch y Clychau i Dewi*' ar y we trwy gyflwyno'r copiau cyntaf o'r gân i Bryn Terfel a Tim Rhys Evans, ac mae'r gan ar gael i'w brynu o wefan 'Y Lolfa' www.ylolfa.com ers y 5ed o Chwefror 2009 - y tro cyntaf erioed i gyhoeddiad Cymraeg gael ei werthu ar y we ar ffurf electronaidd.

Derbyniodd Bryn Terfel y copi cyntaf, sef yr un i Bianco a Llais o'r gân a Tim Rhys Evans y fersiwn cyntaf o'r gân i Gôr Meibion oddi wrth Gwenno Dafydd, wnaeth ysgrifennu geiriau'r gan yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Heulwen Thomas gyfansoddodd y gerddoriaeth wreiddiol i bianco a llais ac fe wnaethpwyd y trefniannau Cor Meibion, Cor Merched a Chor Cymysg gan Eilir Owen Griffiths, ennillydd 'Medal Aur Y Cyfansoddwr' yn Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Caerdydd 2008 .

Meddai Garmon Gruffudd o'r Lolfa: "Bu'n bosib prynu e-lyfrau Saesneg oddi ar y we ers peth amser, ond mae'n ffrainc gyda ni nawr i fod y wasg gyntaf i werthu e-lyfrau Cymraeg. Yn ogystal â gwerthu'r pedair fersiwn o '*Cenwch y Clychau i Dewi*', mae'n fwrriad gennym i werthu nifer o nofelau a gwrslyfrau ar ffurf eLyfrau."



Bryn & Tim showing their copies.



Pembrokeshire Banner Sir Benfro

The song's title is in blue, Sir Benfro in green, the Shire's motto *Heidiwch i'r Cwch fel Gwenyn* means Swarm to the Hive like a Bee (so "all rush together back home") and surrounds the hive. The lower blue *Gwnaeth Ef Y Pethau Bychan* (He did the small things) is a reference to St. David's advice.

Canadian British Pensioners

The pensions of British Pensioners living outside the U.K. are not indexed. The following report on an appeal for equitable treatment to the European Court was sent to John Morris, who felt it would interest our British members. I have abstracted the main parts:

Dear Member 2nd September 2009

1) The "Hearing" in Strasbourg.
The President of the Court opened the proceedings by introducing the Counsel and then, rather surprisingly, referred to the fact that nine of the applicants (our representatives - five from Canada) were in Court. This of course brought to the attention of all the judges (17 in total) that we were there. I am glad to report that our case was presented in the best possible manner and when both counsel had spoken three of the judges asked questions which gave our barrister the opportunity to further underline that in terms of the total UK annual pension budget, indexing our pensions would add less than one percent to the cost. The President of the Court then announced the session over and said the Court would now deliberate and the verdict would follow.

2) Timing of the verdict ---- The most likely scenario is that the verdict will follow in six or seven months --- around April 2010. A favourable verdict would force the British Government to submit to the Council of Europe its proposals on remedying the situation and during that period the CABP, along with its sister organisations in the International Consortium, would lobby extensively to ensure that the Government proposals are as acceptable as possible.

Peter Kennan (Chairman CABP)

The first mobile phone for Welsh-speakers has been launched, with menus and predictive text in the language.

The Samsung S5600, provided via the Orange network, will be available from September. The National Eisteddfod has also seen the unveiling of an iPhone application, or app, for Welsh learners. Professor Chris Price, a Welsh learner and the head of computer science at Aberystwyth University, helped design the Learn Welsh app.

Heritage Minister Alun Ffred Jones joined Orange and Samsung to unveil the Welsh phone at the eisteddfod in Bala. Sian Doyle, Orange's head of retail, said: "Orange is really proud to be the first network to introduce this truly innovative service to Welsh speakers. This initiative is part of a broader commitment by Orange to provide Welsh speakers with more choice."

More than 44,000 Welsh words will be available on the phone.

Meanwhile, the Learn Welsh phrase book will be available to download from Apple's iTunes. Based on Prof Price's own experience of learning Welsh, the phrase book is divided into 12 themed sections that include greetings, common phrases, food and drink, and travelling. Prof Price has also recorded each phrase, a feature he hopes will help with pronunciation. Another feature is a practice mode, which offers learners an opportunity to test themselves.

"There are many apps for learning other languages available to iPhone users, amongst them 27 for French, 23 for Italian and even ones for Irish, and Tagalog, which is spoken in the Philippines," said Prof Price. "I felt it was high time that help of this kind was made available for those learning Welsh."

Teachers set up free language course SaySomethingInWelsh

Sep 1 by Martin Shipton, Western Mail
SaySomethingInWelsh.com – which emphasises the spoken word – was set up by teachers Iestyn ap Dafydd and Aran Jones because of their frustration with more conventional courses. The site has been inundated with plaudits from the more than 3,500 people across the world who decided to sign up for a more user-friendly way of learning Welsh. Available in MP3 files which can be downloaded and played at any time, it claims to eliminate the time spent on reading and writing in order to help people learn to speak and understand Welsh far more quickly.

Aran from Pwllheli, the chief executive of the Welsh language communities group Cymuned said "I'm pretty bad at learning languages. But I've been surprised to see how much difference some of the techniques developed in the last 10 years have made. I can actually just about manage to speak Spanish now, thanks to some excellent new courses. And Iestyn and I agreed that it would be great if it was much easier for people to learn Welsh as well."

The course is free because it is possible to distribute electronic files for very close to zero cost. "We realised that the work involved in putting the course together, the writing and recording, was something we were happy to do as volunteers to make sure that this kind of material is available in Welsh," said Iestyn of Maescymmer, "It costs us virtually nothing to distribute, so we thought it would be a boost to Welsh learners, and to the language itself, if we offered it for free." The course is available in both southern and northern dialects of Welsh, to make it accessible to as many learners as possible

A Chance to Save a Piece of Welsh History

The beautiful monk's valley at Cwm Mynach in Snowdonia in North Wales is a magical place of historical importance and filled with natural wonders.

The historic Welsh valley is located between Dolgellau and Barmouth in a breathtaking area of the Snowdonia National Park. It lies on the north side of the Mawddach estuary, with a beautiful vista of the surrounding mountains, including the majestic Cadair Idris.

The Cistercian abbey of Cymer was founded in 1198 under the patronage of Maredudd ap Cynan, a grandson of the Welsh Prince Owain Gwynedd, famed for his wisdom and diplomacy. Cwm Mynach means the monk's valley and it once belonged to the Cistercian monks of Cymer Abbey who cared for the Welsh people and taught them practical skills such as iron and lead smelting.

The valley was planted with conifers in the middle of the last century and its ancient trees overshadowed. Coed Cadw (The Woodland Trust) has launched a campaign to purchase the stunningly beautiful valley, described as 'one of the treasures of Meirionnydd', to restore it to its former glory and bring back the native trees and flowers of the ancient Welsh forests of our ancestors.

Eryl Roberts, Coed Cadw operations manager in Wales, says: "Opportunities to re-create wildlife habitats throughout almost an entire valley like this are rare indeed. We have the opportunity here to bring back the oak, the ash and the rowan where the Sitka spruce has held sway and allow the ancient Welsh woodland to flourish once again."

Dr Ray Woods, of Plantlife Wales, a lichen expert who has surveyed the site describes the valley as "The Celtic Rainforest" and "one of the finest and rarest woodlands on the planet".

In order to secure the future of this wonderful site Coed Cadw must raise £865,000 by the end of the year. Those wishing to support the campaign can do so, securely online by visiting the campaign website, which includes more about information about the campaign and a video of this fantastic valley, at www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/snowdonia

Anna Heslop
Swyddog Ymgyrchoedd/Campaigns Officer
Cyfeiriad/Address: Unit 3, Coopers Yard, Curran Road, Cardiff CF10 5NB
Rhif Ffon/Telephone: 07824416518/08452935735

Aqueduct crowned a world 'wonder'
200-year-old Pontcysyllte aqueduct near Wrexham has been named a World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. The structure, built by Thomas Telford and William Jessop, is the longest and highest aqueduct in Britain. It is regarded as one of Telford's greatest civil engineering achievements. A cast iron trough on top of 18 stone piers carries the Llangollen canal 126ft above the River Dee. The aqueduct's honour was confirmed by a panel representing 21 nations at a UNESCO meeting in Seville, Spain.
The aqueduct, built between 1795 and 1805 at a cost of £45,000, is the UK's 28th World Heritage Site.
Story from BBC NEWS: