

Cymdeithas Gymraeg



Victoria Welsh Society

Newsletter : Rhagfyr 2009 December

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Reminder – 2010 memberships are now due.

From the Editor

Mea Culpa – your editor went out on a limb in the October issue of the Newsletter in suggesting that there would probably be a Xmas lunch this month. It turns out that he was wrong! The board considered holding this event again this year but finally decided against it. Why? you might say. The answer to this is several fold but ,not least, was a feeling that the cost would be more than many members are prepared to pay in these times of reduced incomes. Also, at the A.G.M. those present were canvassed for their opinion and by a large majority were against holding the event. Now if there's a strong reaction from members in favour of this event then the Board will re-introduce it in 2010.

One doesn't need any newspaper, radio, television or even this newsletter to tell us that the Christmas Season is upon us once again. Very recently I heard it said that at this time of year there grows a feeling of goodwill in the air. It behoves us to believe this and it will come about. **A Merry Xmas to all and a happy New Year. Nadolig Llawn a Flwyddyn Newydd Dda i pawb.**

Society News

The Annual General Meeting was held, on October 16, in the Eastern Star Hall. It was quite well attended – 28 members enjoyed a very good “pot-luck” meal, thanks to several ladies, before getting down to business. It is gratifying to report that there are three new Trustees, Emrys Evans, Nerys Hughes and Lynne Thomas. We welcome these volunteers, they are a sign that the Society is far from moribund. There being no new nominations for the offices of President, Past President, Secretary, Treasurer and President of the Ladies' Auxilliary the incumbents were re-elected by acclamation as were trustees Rita Miller and Peter Murphy. The new Board is listed at the mast-head of this newsletter.

Through a change of circumstances on their part the Risca Male Voice choir have cancelled their Victoria concert which, you will recall, had been arranged for August 23 , 2010. *However there will be a concert by a touring Welsh Male Voice choir a little later, on September 8th. This is the “Cor Godre'r Aran” They are a North Wales choir from Dolgellau.* We are fortunate to have learned of a Western tour by this choir and we look forwards to hearing them. Their programme will reflect mainly Welsh song. The concert will be held in the Alix Goolden Hall.

In Memorium

Dr. Trevor Lloyd Jones, LL.D

We are sorry to have to report the death of Trevor Lloyd Jones, in Victoria, on Nov. 29 at the grand age of 100. Trevor was a member of this society for many years. A North Walian ,Trevor came to Canada in 1926 and, with a farming background in Flintshire, first worked on the U5 Ranch in Edgewater, B.C. but decided to make a career in Veterinary Medicine. He was supremely successful at this and, after serving with the Canadian Army in W.W.2 was appointed the first Animal Pathologist for the Province of Alberta. In 1952 he became Dean of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Guelph and served there until retirement in 1974. He was a member of the World Health Organization, acting as Consultant in Veterinary Education.

Several members of the society accepted Myfanwy Rutherford's invitation to a pre- Xmas party on December 13th and enjoyed her hospitality. (Your editor was one). Representatives of other groups, in which she is active, as well as some neighbours were also there, enjoying a start to the festive season.

We shall celebrate St. David's Day on February 27th. 2010. A booking has been made at the University Club for an afternoon meeting, as it was this year. Please make a note of this date. *Byddwn ni'n dathlu Dydd Gwyl Dewi Sant yn y Clwb Prifysgol am Chwefror 27,2010, yn y prynhawn. Cofiwch hwn os gwelwch yn dda.*

And now for something different

Your President recently suggested that it would be very nice to learn something about individual members of the Society – nothing too personal of course – and have it published here. Your editor thought that was a splendid idea and so whom do we we start with?

The President of course!!

David Lintern was born in Paris. There because his parents were living in France. His father, being a student at the Swansea Bible College, was temporarily studying there. (He went on to become a Baptist minister.) However David grew up in South Wales, went to primary school in Bridgend, secondary school in Caerphilly and Medical School, Dublin for university education. So his Welsh credentials are very sound although, to his regret, he does not speak the language although his parents were both Welsh speaking. (*And so also say a number of us. – Ed.*)

Having trained in medicine, David has been a practitioner since qualifying. He's married to Margaret, who qualified in nursing and is a Welsh speaker from Aberystwyth.

They came to Canada in 1969 and he has practised in Victoria ever since, apart from a year in Cardiff in 1980. They have three boys, Kevin, born in Wales, Robert Owen and Gwyn who were born in Canada. There are four grandchildren.

If he wasn't a doctor David would have been an historian – his passion in this regard is for Celtic history and especially the Saints of the early church. Apart from history, which sounds more like unrequited love than a hobby, his hobbies are fishing, hiking and classical music. He's been a member of the Victoria Welsh Society for a long time (*this is his second stint as president*) and he's also President of the Sooke Philharmonic Society.

David stays close to Wales, having a sister in Newport. He visits at least every two years so is able to stay close to 'home'.

I should like to think that I can call on other members of the Society to let us know their background. So stand by your telephones and watch this space! --- Ed.

It's sad to relate but those two giants of Welsh Rugby in the past, Haydn Tanner and Bleddyn Williams died in this past year. They have been called Wales' and the British Lions' greatest players .

As an eighteen year old, Haydn Tanner, from Penclawdd, played in winning teams for Swansea and Wales against the touring All Blacks in 1935. His international career carried on into the post-war era. He died at the age of 92 in June and was Wales' oldest surviving international cap.

Bleddyn Williams, regarded as that "Prince of Centres", because of his pace and classic sidestep, led both Cardiff and Wales to victory over the All Blacks on successive week-ends in 1953. He was one of several Taffs Wells born brothers who played for Cardiff. He died in July at 86.

Still with rugby, Wales' winger, Shane Williams scored two tries in the British Lions' win over South Africa's Springboks in the third Test. Prior to the South African tour a Welsh touring squad to Canada and the USA played their opening game against Toronto's York University. This young Wales team had their work cut out to win 32-23 in front of a large crowd. They later played in Chicago, beating USA Eagles 48-15. This young team is said to show a lot of promise.

However in their Autumn Test series against the "down- under " teams the senior Wales squad had mixed success. They were beaten by both New Zealand and Australia but won against Argentina and Samoa.

In the " other game", soccer, Cardiff City have move into their new stadium at Leckwith, which they share with Cardiff Blues rugby. Currently both Cardiff and Swansea are doing quite well in the "Coca-Cola Championship" division. Is it possible that two Welsh clubs will be promoted to the Premiership? We shall see.

Now , concerning cultural events, the National Eisteddfod that was held in Bala, Gwynedd, in August was outstandingly successful. It is reported in the September-October issue of

“Ninnau” that there were more entries than usual in the competitions and there were 41 choirs competing. Attendance over the week was 9000 more than that at Cardiff last year. However, there were some disappointments. In particular the Bardic Chair was not awarded as the adjudicators were not satisfied with the standards of the submitted poems. The Sword of Peace was placed on the empty chair. In the words of *Hafina Clwyd* who wrote the account of the Eisteddfod “ it was a beautiful chair made from local oak grown on the Rhiwlas estate, where the Eisteddfod was held, and it was donated by the North Wales police.” The recently retired Chief Constable for North Wales was on the stage in his Bardic robes. It is quite remarkable that he came to North Wales as a monoglot Englishman but retired as a fluent Welsh speaker. It seems that he has a well developed sense of humour as he chose as his bardic name “ Prif Gopyn”, which means “Chief Copper”.

Every year a prize is awarded to the non-Welsh speaking person who succeeds in mastering the language, to become fluent. This year it was won by an American, Megan Lloyd Prys, a native of Ohio. It seems that she met her husband while he was studying in the States and on her wedding day promised to learn Welsh! (*With a name like that she had to succeed – I wonder if she also promised to obey! – Ed.*)

Next year (2010) the Eisteddfod will be held in Ebbw Vale.

Forty years have elapsed since Swansea was granted city status. To mark this, the city council were searching for people to help celebrate and invited those Swans (if that is the right term) born on July 3, 1969, or married on that date, to attend a series of garden parties at the Lord Mayor’s plush Mansion House. In the past four decades Swansea has seen many changes, most prominently in the development that has seen the old grubby waterfront transformed into to-day’s mixture of modern residential buildings, offices and restaurants. But a local historian is vocal in his demands that the city should shout loudly about its qualities and achievements – the city needs to draw more on the talents of many

able people who live there especially the young musicians, artists, poets, novelists, actors and athletes. (*Yes, perhaps he has a point – wasn’t there a poet called Thomas from there and I recall an actress – Zeta something- was born there too!-Ed.)*

In this year’s Queen’s Birthday Honours list an entry stands out! Mrs Violet Weston, 87, who received the M.B.E. has been working at the same place , Ye Olde Worlde Cafe in Bosherton, for 70 years. “Auntie Vi” started when she was 17, helping her mother make cups of tea during the Second World War. She opens the cafe every morning at 9am and prides herself on the customer service. (*Makes me ashamed to admit that I took early retirement after only 44 years! – Ed.*)

‘Cambria’, Wales’ National magazine is causing some disquiet amongst members of the National Assembly through the questions it is raising regarding employment of family by the members and also by releasing figures for expenses claimed by them. It is claimed that more than a quarter of the members employ or have employed, until recently, their relatives at a cost of millions of pounds since the Welsh Assembly began. Another sore point is that more than 430,000 pounds has been claimed for food over a 4 year period, without the need to show receipts. It appears that up to 400 pounds may be claimed each month.

Welsh politicians in the European Parliament have won a small victory. People can now address their concerns to the European Commission in Welsh – costs of translation will be met by the Welsh Assembly – however Welsh is still not one of the 23 official languages of the EU.

“ Only Men Aloud “, the 20 man, award winning choir from Cardiff (winners of the BBC reality show ‘Last Choir Standing’ in 2008) will become the first choir to headline Sin City (Las Vegas) in time for St. David’s Day in 2010. Recently they signed a multi-million dollar recording contract with Universal Music – a far cry from early days of singing in church halls.

We are indebted to the North American Welsh Newspaper “ Ninnau “ for the preceding items from Wales. Annual subscriptions cost \$27 in Canada. The address is :
NINNAU, 11 Post Terrace, Basking Ridge,
New Jersey, NJ 07920, USA.

The “ Countryman” magazine invariably contains at least one article about Wales, not necessarily about farming. The August 2009 issue has a piece that may interest you, if you are intrigued with the doings of the Celts, or even the pre-Celts, in Wales. A two-woman company called ARCHAEO TOURS offers tailor made tours to individuals and small groups to visit Britain’s ancient sites. The principals, Mary Baker and Shirley Matthews have backgrounds in archaeology, Welsh Tourism, smallholding and social work. Their area of interest and expertise is Pembrokeshire, for the wealth of pre-historic sites it affords. In addition, Shirley is a volunteer warden on the island of Skomer. Transport is by People Carrier with picnics and hot chocolate along the way.

So, if you want a somewhat different holiday in Wales the next time you visit, investigate what they have to offer:

Archaeotours 07890 155538

www.archaeotours.co.uk

The October issue of the “Countryman” (it really is a rich source of information) has an article by Sian Ellis with the intriguing title “ The other patron saint of Wales “ She refers to St. Illtud who founded a monastery in what is now Llantwit Major, around 500AD. The monastery is long gone but John Wesley, in 1777, in speaking of St. Illtud’s church in Llantwit Major, said “ I suppose it has been abundantly the most beautiful as well as the most spacious church in Wales.” High praise indeed! Sian Ellis goes on to say that the church is something of a forgotten jewel : a sturdy, largely mediaeval building beside Ogney Brook, a few steps from the town square. Inside the church are treasures and tales that reach almost back to Roman times. You’ll find mediaeval wall paintings, a rare Jesse Niche and a pre-reformation altar. Curious memorials include one to a Reverend Voss (1405-1534)! But to get back to St. Illtud : he founded a monastery, church and school, the latter

claimed to be the oldest seat of learning in Britain. The name Llantwit Major is derived from Llanilltud Fawr or ‘the great church of Illtud’. So great was Illtud’s influence that there are some who think he should replace David as the patron saint. The present vicar, Rev. John Webber, asserts that in historical terms Llantwit Major is the equal of Iona or Lindisfarne and he intends to project this importance nationally. Every year on November 6 the church celebrates the feast day of Illtud with a commemorative service and activities. So who was St. Illtud? Stories claim that he was , variously, a Breton, a disciple of St. Germanus, a cousin of King Arthur (!) or a soldier who entered monastic life in Wales. His date of birth is unknown but around AD 497 he was living in what is now Llantwit Major, possibly as a hermit. His fame as a charismatic, godly man soon attracted followers and he established a centre for education and evangelism. Students included St. Samson, St. Paul Aurelian and Gildas, who wrote the first book on Welsh history. The most reliable written text on Illtud is *The Life of St. Samson of Dol*, which was written about AD 610. It reveals that he was ‘ *the most learned of all the Britons in the knowledge of Scripture and in poetry ,rhetoric ,grammar and arithmetic.*’ He was also a magician who could foretell the future! ! In keeping with the monastic tradition he also worked the land (and here the tales of his activities are in keeping with his reputation as a magician). To-day there are 16 churches in Wales and 7 in Brittany that are dedicated to St. Illtud – only St. David has more – so we can see that he had a profound effect on the rooting of Christianity in Wales. His students spread the Word from this very early outpost of learning. Nothing remains of the original settlement and the saint’s burial place – he died about AD525 – is unknown ,although some are drawn to believe that his grave is on Mynydd Illtud, near Brecon. Why then did St. Illtud fade from view? John Webber thinks ‘politics and the Normans intruded. Rome decided to make David the Patron Saint of Wales.’ Regarding Llantwit Major as a focal point for worship, John Webber says “ It was more convenient to place the cathedral for this diocese in Llandaff, closer to Cardiff Castle, to be under Norman control.”

So Llantwit Major became a rural backwater under the sway of a handful of wealthy families.

The original Celtic building probably stood on the site of the present West church. It was rebuilt by the Normans and again in the 15th. Cent. The East side dates from the 13th.Cent.

For guided tours of the church you should contact the parish office at 01446 795551, Tues – Fri, 10am – 1230pm.

Forthcoming Events

St. David's Day will be celebrated in the afternoon of February 27. 2010 at the University Club. (Mark this date, more information later.

Cor Godre'r Aran will hold their concert in the Alix Goolden hall,Victoria on September 8, 2010. (Underline this date, more information later.)

Now in Conclusion

If you haven't yet renewed your membership for 2010, please do so as soon as possible. Send your cheque (\$ 16 single, \$ 24 family) to :

**Mrs. J. Pearson,
4277 Houlihan Place,
Victoria, B.C., V8N 3T2.**

Thank you - Diolch yn Fawr

A Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i chi gilydd.

