

# Cymdeithas Gymraeg



## Victoria Welsh Society

Newsletter: Rhagfyr 2012 December

### ***Board Members***

<b><i>President</i></b>	Nerys Hughes	250-479-8742
<b><i>Secretary</i></b>	Gillian Greydanus	250-642-2076
<b><i>Treasurer</i></b>	Jen Pearson	250-477-2548
<b><i>Ladies' Auxiliary</i></b>	Myfanwy Rutherford	250-382-9343
<b><i>Past President</i></b>	David Lintern	250-642-6747
<b><i>Trustees</i></b>	Margaret Lintern	250-642-6747
	Peter Gibson	250-386-0012
	Peter Murphy	250-383-4350
	Emrys Evans	250-652-5855
	Denis Brown	250-658-8701
	Lynne Thomas	250-383-3880
<b><i>Newsletter</i></b>	Denis Brown	fulbro@telus.net

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**Notice – 2013 memberships are now due - \$ 20 single, \$ 25 family.**

### From the Editor

Well, another AGM done and a new / old Board is in place. But what of the future? We have an ageing Society! We're all getting older and there's no new blood. Other matters also afflict us, notably the continuing economic squeeze in the U.K. which clearly discourages tours by Welsh male voice choirs. Victoria's public loves their concerts, as evidenced by the attendances in the past and our Society feels a warm glow (and makes a little money) when they perform.

All this combines to make some wonder if the Society is really viable and whether the best course would be to find the most worthy Charities to which we donate our funds, and then wind up the Victoria Welsh Society. However this view is not widely held, as yet, so we shall persevere and hope for better days. What do you think? Your Board would like to hear from you!

### Society News

The Annual General Meeting was held on October 18, 2012 at the James Bay New Horizons Hall. Only 15 persons attended. The meeting was called to order at 6.30 p.m. by the President, Nerys Hughes. The minutes were recorded by the Secretary, Lynne Thomas.

The first item of business called for acceptance of the minutes of the 2011 AGM. (Copies were available). These were approved on a motion by David Lintern, seconded by Gill Greydanus. **It should be noted that one of the decisions made at the 2011 meeting was that, as of September 1, 2012, the membership fees would rise to \$20 for singles and \$25 for couples and families.** This decision was reiterated at the present AGM.

The Treasurer presented a balance sheet and a statement of receipts and expenses for the year. The net loss for the year was \$ 1474.40. This was incurred mainly through the St.

David's Day event. Other smaller expenses such as the Newsletter also contributed to the shortfall.

In her report the President stated that the St. David's Day event was very successful with over 60 people attending. This was a considerable increase over attendance in 2010. She noted that whereas the lamb was undercooked, the salmon was excellent. In particular she singled out David Lintern and Emrys Evans to thank them for the success of the event.

Contact has been made with several Welsh choirs to invite them to perform in Victoria but as yet none have accepted.

There was some discussion around the viability of the Society. Some concern was voiced over the poor attendance at this AGM. The suggestion was made that the membership should be asked if they wanted to keep the Society in being. However this was not pursued. A motion by Denis Brown, seconded by David Lintern was carried, to the effect that, with the new Board, the Society would continue in its present form.

The election of officers resulted in a Board as shown at the head of this newsletter. The two new trustees are Margaret Lintern and Peter Gibson; they are to be thanked for their commitment as are those who agreed to serve for another year.

Rita Miller felt unable to continue as trustee; we thank her for her service.

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Long time member, Helen Steinle, is to be congratulated on her recent appointment as Secretary to the North American Welsh Association.

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Former VWS member, Blanche Powell is now living in a senior's home in Nanaimo. The address is 6304 Metral Drive, Nanaimo, V9T 2L8. (Beatrice Buchanan can give more information.)

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## News from Wales

Recently there has been more bad weather in North Wales. Severe flooding occurred on the river Elwy, affecting St. Asaph, particularly, but also over a wide area of Denbighshire. Many roads were closed. Volunteers from the lifeboat stations at Rhyl, Beaumaris, Moelfre and Conwy assisted North Wales Fire Service in rescues but a 91 year old died in her St. Asaph home.

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There is a widening gap between Welsh and English policy in secondary education. Whereas Michael Gove, the education minister in Whitehall, seems set on replacing the GCSE exams with an English Baccalaureate, a major review of education policy and qualifications in Wales, just published, recommends keeping the GCSE along with setting up a single body to administer all matters in secondary education in Wales. The new body would be modeled on the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Relations between Whitehall and Cardiff have been cool as a result of a decision by the Welsh education minister, Leighton Andrews, to regrade the 2012 GCSE exam results, in English, that were obtained by students in Wales. This action has angered Michael Gove and Ofqual. (*There used to be a single exam body in Wales known as The Central Welsh Board – obviously an old fashioned idea! –Ed.*)

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From the BBC we learn that so far 1400 badgers have been vaccinated in Wales. (See *the Newsletter for July 2012.—Ed.*)

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A small fleet of electric cars has been leased by Swansea City Council for use by staff.

( *How small is “ small “? How big is a fleet? Who gets to use them?- Mayor and Corporation?- Perhaps names are drawn out of a hat!- Ed.*)

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## Welsh Sports

- Swansea City (*I want to call them Swansea Town! – shows how old I am –Ed.*) Continue to hold their own in the Premier league. As of the end of November their record is 5 wins, 5 draws and 5 losses, which put them eighth in the table. Most recently they convincingly beat West Bromwich 3-1, then Arsenal 2-0.
  - Cardiff City are also doing well, currently leading the Championship division.
  - Wrexham Town is once more striving for promotion from the Blue Square Bet Premier. Along with Newport County they share the head of that table with Grimsby.
  - In rugby internationals Wales are having a woeful autumn! The Welsh XV have lost all their games so far – to Argentina ( 12-26 ), to Samoa ( 19-26 ), to New Zealand ( 10-33 ) and to Australia (12 - 14 ). – We hope for better days!—Ed.
  - Just announced: Wales are in the same pool as England for the 2015 World Cup.
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## News from Canada /USA

Would you like to learn Welsh, in the comfort of your own house, from the Internet? Cymdeithas Madog informs us that the BBC has a website devoted to instruction of non-Welsh speakers. It's worth taking a look at and navigate your way through the various options. [www.bbc.co.uk/wales/learning](http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/learning)

Another site is provided by the Welsh television channel S4c. <http://hwb.S4c.co.uk/en>

The next formal instruction course organized by Cymdeithas Madog will be held at Elmhurst College, Elmhurst, IL , July 14-21. Further details will be provided later.

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The next North American Festival of Wales will be held in Toronto from Aug. 28 to Sept. 2, 2013, at the Fairmont Royal York hotel. Room rates are \$111 single/double and \$141 triple/quad, per night, plus taxes. There is no charge for children under 18 (but you need to inform the hotel when you book).

Book through Fairmont Global reservation centre, 1-800-441-1414 before Aug. 8, 2013 and state North American Festival of Wales, to get the preferred room rate.

The preferred room rate will be granted 4 days in advance of and 4 days following the Festival.

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Now some more of something different.

Three years ago we started on telling the stories of various members of the Society, starting with the then president, David Lintern. This was followed by a piece on Joyce and Brynmor Jones. In this issue the personages are our long serving Treasurer, Jen Pearson and her husband Dave.

Jen was born in Carmarthen and brought up in the village of Llangennech and Dave, who was born in Birmingham, lived in Prestatyn from a very early age.

Jen got her schooling in Llangennech Primary followed by Llanelli Grammar School and then a degree in geology from Swansea University, where she met Dave. He was also taking a degree in geology. He had attended primary school in Prestatyn and then Rhyl Grammar School.

With brand new degrees they set off for Norway for research at the Norway Geological Museum with Dave holding a NATO Scholarship to study for his PhD and Jen being employed as a laboratory assistant.

Subsequent to leaving Norway, on completion of Dave's post-graduate work, Jen took a Teacher's Training course back at Swansea.

In 1970 Jen and Dave left the U.K. for Canada to take up positions with the Saskatchewan Mines and Natural Resources Department. The work was in Regina. Dave dealt with Hard Rocks and Jen busied herself with Oil.

They moved to Victoria in 1973 where Dave took a position with the B.C. government and Jen raised the boys and did some substitute teaching. Whilst in the employ of B.C. Dave took some instruction on the geology of coal, a mineral that was neglected in the degree course at Swansea (only one lecture given). He became expert in a short time and in 1981 they formed their own consultancy on coking coal, (a vital ingredient in the making of steel.) This keeps them very busy.

They have three sons and three grandsons too, all in Canada. Membership in the Welsh society goes back to when it was re-formed and Jen has done a sterling job as treasurer for many years. As for hobbies or other interests, they used to sail but now don't have the time for it.

Jen admits that leaving Wales was a wrench for her. She still has family there and Wales is ever a big part in her life. When she visits her family the conversation is naturally in Welsh.

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#### And Now From The Past

Some time ago the *Countryman* magazine featured an article on a seventeenth century packhorse and footbridge across the River Dovey, near Dinas Mawddwy, on the border of Montgomery and Merioneth. The bridge, Pont Minllyn, provided a crossing on the drovers' route to Welshpool and the East. It was built sometime in the 17 Cent. and is recorded as the work of the then rector of the parish, Dr. John Davies. He was an eminent scholar who was involved with the production of the Revised Translation of the Welsh Bible of 1620. He may also have been responsible for an earlier bridge of timber supported on stone pillars.

These days the graceful stone arches are unused and grass covered and the bridge is protected as an ancient monument. Behind it, on the A470 north-south Wales road, the traffic roars by, not even on the single arch replacement bridge of 1845 but on a modern replacement. Drivers are largely oblivious to what lies alongside. (*Words and photograph are by David Viner.*)

(Photo on next page.)



Pont Minllyn

That excellent British magazine "The Countryman" often has an interesting article on Welsh country life ~~OR~~ an interesting town or village. The issue for September 2012 runs true to form with a piece on *Fishguard* titled

"More than a ferry port." (By Stephen Wade.) It is of course a ferry port and since 1906 has been the U.K. end of the "short route" to the Irish Republic, the Irish end being *Rosslare*. A short time before that year the harbour was built by the *Great Western Railway* which provided the entire service, train and ship communication from London. To-day the ferry service is by the *Stena Line*.

However this attractive place has been noteworthy ever since *Jemima Nicholas* with some others, pretending to be redcoats, rounded up a dozen rather sorry French soldiers. These had landed nearby, in a laughable attempt to invade Britain, in 1797. The rest were captured by the Pembrokeshire Yeomanry Cavalry but it is *Jemima's* exploit that is remembered as you will see at *The Royal Oak* and in a wonderful tapestry in the town library.

There is also a connection with Dylan Thomas. The upper and a lower town, the latter with its scenic bay and harbour, was the setting for the film version of *Under Milk Wood*, in which the town is known as *Llareggub*. (Which is not a Welsh name at all and we all know its meaning! – Ed.) By 1913 *Fishguard's* importance was stated forcefully in a guide book which claimed that in addition to being the port for carrying mails to

and from the south of *Ireland* it was also important for landing *American* mails carried by *Cunard* liners. The hinterland of the town, in the *Gwaun Valley* has all kinds of historical associations apart from *Jemima Nicholls*. One of these is that *Richard Fenton*, scholar and linguist, had his home close by at *Glyn y Mel*. He was a close friend of *Dr. Johnson* (of dictionary fame).

The town *and the nearby Goodwick* have many relics of social and military history. There is a very well known cromlech at *Penrhiw*.

The visitor will sense that this is a place with a strong Welsh identity; in the pubs and cafes Welsh will be spoken.

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### *The Merits of a well-bred Welsh Cat*

In the laws of Welsh king, Hywel the Good. (Hywel Dda in Welsh), circa 950 AD, the specification of a useful cat was laid down.

"It should be perfect of ear, perfect of eye, perfect of teeth, perfect of claw, without marks of fire and it should kill mice and not devour its kittens and should not go caterwauling every new moon" (Martin Wainwright, *The English Village*. – *The Countryman*, September 2012).

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*And now,  
A very Merry Xmas and Happy  
New year to a All.*

*Y rwan,  
Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn  
Newydd Dda i chi Gyd.*