

Cymdeithas Gymraeg



Victoria Welsh Society

Newsletter : Mai 2011 May

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Notice – 2011 memberships are now overdue.

From the Editor

Now that Spring is here it's to be hoped that all our members survived the winter with no serious illness and no mishaps requiring a stay in hospital. We saw some of you at the St. David's Day celebration but wish that more could have attended. The weather wasn't very good that day, or for much of the preceding week, which may account for the rather low turn-out. However our friends from up-island, Tony Durkin and Co., made the long trip to Victoria to attend the celebration. We were pleased to see them again and gratified that they enjoyed the event.

At this time there are no plans for holding any summer events but that could change. The Board continue to hold monthly meetings at which ideas are mulled over and are open to suggestions for a get-together. So let's have input.

A vital ingredient for ensuring the future of an organization like ours is 'keeping in touch' and that is why the newsletter is important. I hope you read it!

Society News

The celebration of St. David's Day was held on February 26 at the University Club once more. A gathering in the bar from 1130a.m. with a buffet lunch served at 1230p.m. was followed by the usual toasts and reading of greetings from several Welsh societies, in Canada and the USA. During lunch a medley of Welsh airs and folk tunes were played by Ms. Susan Smedley at the piano. These were much appreciated by the audience. Entertainment followed and we wound up with some community singing. As in other years David Lintern as M.C. kept things moving.

For the entertainment we had some poetry read by Emrys Evans – verse by W.H.Davies, 'Stand and stare' and then a reading of Dylan Thomas' 'A visit to Grandpa's.' This was followed by the "Trounce Alley Barbershop Quartet", who gave a very polished

performance of some old and familiar songs. The audience loved it!

As has been noted the attendance (only 44) was rather lower than usual for this, the most important event in our calendar. However the weather was not good(there was snow in the offing) and also several members were away.

How many went to see "*Floating*" at the Metro Theatre in February? Several members of the Board did and enjoyed this piece of Fringe by Hugh Hughes, who was also half the cast. In the words of one person who attended it was 'slapstick' with a serious message, that being, "Wales exists, but it has problems of identity in the world, young people are leaving with the perception of a bleak future unless they go!"

Many thanks to Myfanwy Rutherford for inviting us all to her Xmas party on December 12. A number of us from the Society attended and enjoyed the abundance that she always provides along with the pleasure of a gathering at that special time in the year.

Mrs. Joyce Jones would like to thank all those members of the Society for their expressions of sympathy at the passing of Brynmor. She knows that belonging to the Society helped her through a difficult time.

At the last meeting on March 4 the Board decided not to participate in this year's Victoria Day Parade. Among other considerations the cost of insuring the Society, against injury to the public, for a single event, was thought to be prohibitive.

Do you ever visit our website? Recently our webmaster found that he no longer wished to manage the site on our behalf. At this juncture the Board has to decide whether to close it down or find another person prepared to take on the task. Does anyone know of someone competent who is willing to do the job, so that it can stay in being? If so, please let the President know. As well as being a good

advertisement for the Society, giving general information about us, the site will post notices of events and newsletters as they appear. Visit www.victoriawelshsociety.org

News from Wales

In an historic vote in the National Assembly, on December 7th 2010, Welsh became an official language of Wales. This overturned the 500 years of injustice that Henry 8th perpetrated when he proscribed the use of Welsh in any matters involving the Crown.

The January/February issue of the North American Welsh newspaper “*Ninnau*” has several items of news from Wales -----

- An important railway preservation project is nearing opening at Cynheidre, near Llanelli. Under the direction of the non-profit Llanelli and Mynydd Mawr Railway Co. a Heritage Centre that will include a station building, museum, café, locomotive shed and workshop, with a mile of track, is to open by late summer. Do I hear you say “*Not another of those great little railways in Wales?*”? Not a bit of it! This one is standard gauge but the real significance is that the track is laid on the original right-of-way of the world’s oldest railway. This Company, first known as the Carmarthenshire Railway, was established in 1802 by Act of Parliament . It ran from Llanelli to Cross Hands, initially, and the rolling stock was horse-drawn. In the burgeoning Industrial Revolution expansion was rapid- coal from the mines along the valley was transported to the Sandy area and Llanelli docks. Coal, ironstone and limestone were carried to the Raby furnaces at the Stradey Iron Works. Since 1844 the Company changed hands a number a number of times until it was absorbed by British Rail in

1947 and continued as the major means of cartage of coal from the Gwendraeth Valley until the closure of the Cynheidre Colliery in 1989.

- Dafydd Wigley, former leader of *Plaid Cymru* has been elevated to the Peerage. He was to take his place in the House of Lords on January 24th., and be known as Baron Wigley of Caernarfon. In an article written for *Ninnau*, Baron Wigley explains why *Plaid Cymru* reversed its policy to now nominate members to the Lords. This was because under the 2006 Government of Wales Act, any proposal to legislate by the Welsh Government has to be endorsed by both the House of Commons and the Lords. *Plaid Cymru* objects to an unelected body holding, in effect, a veto over the elected Welsh assembly. They dropped their former refusal to nominate Nationalists to the Lords so as to have some Welsh voice there.
- Archeologists have unearthed what is believed to be the remains of the 12th. Cent palace of the Princes of Gwynedd. The site is located at Abergwyngregyn and the foundations of a building thought to have been the royal court were excavated. After examination the site was re-buried, to protect the ruins. (*so presumably there’s nothing to be seen now – Ed.*)
- A wooden fireplace in a Rhyl hotel is thought to be part of a bedstead used by Henry 8th and his first Mrs. (Catherine of Aragon). The exquisitely carved piece now forms the mantelpiece in the hall of the Barratt’s of Tyn Rhyl. This is the oldest house in Rhyl. The owners, David and Elvira Barratt, are unsure that the frame was actually used by Henry and his unfortunate Queen but there is some evidence to support this belief in the following : a former owner, the writer Angharad Llwyd,

who lived there in the 1800s, had as an ancestor one Pierce Griffith who served as Sergeant at Arms to the king and was an usher to Catherine. So it is not improbable that the bedstead came into the possession of Pierce Griffith and was passed down through succeeding generations of the family until it became part of the fireplace at the hotel. The woodwork has been dated to the Tudor monarch's era.

- Two brothers, Scott and Rhys Jenkins, from Cardiff, have run 2000 miles across the USA, starting in Boston and ending in Austin, Texas. The pair ran an average of 35 miles per day, hoping to raise \$ 250,000 for the charities "Help for Heroes" and "Salute American Heroes".
- The river Wye, which rises in mid-Wales and flows through the Welsh Marches to the Severn estuary has been voted their favourite river by the public in England and Wales.
- The Scottish Whisky company "Famous Grouse" has included six Welsh pubs in their list of the U.K.'s 100 most famous hostelrys.
- Twin sisters Ena Pugh and Lily Millward are named in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the oldest twins in the world. They were born on January 4, 1910 in a farm cottage in the village of Garthbrenny, near Brecon. They still do their own grocery shopping each week.

The *Weekly Telegraph* for April 13-19 relates how 12 year old Jenny Wright of Llanfairpwll, Angelsey brought about a much needed improvement in safety, locally, on the A4080 road. For some time Jenny and her younger brother, Tom, aged 9, took their lives in their hands as they walked to school along the road. There was no pavement (sidewalk) and, in Jenny's words, "It was scary walking along the road and there is no path or pavement. It is

very dangerous. I wanted the council to make it safe to walk to school, to slow down the cars and make a safe path." Now believe this!! The council told Jenny that she would have to back up her complaint with a survey of her neighbours. She did this with her mother's help and subsequently received a reply from the council saying that "there may be an opportunity to apply for a grant but a community travel plan would need to be drawn up." This was done and it was found that there were numerous other problems that prevented residents from walking safely around the village. All has ended happily – the Welsh Assembly in faraway Cardiff awarded a grant of £345,100. The council is now planning several improvements for the safety of pedestrians in addition to the pavement for Jenny to walk to school. (*But why did it take such prompting for the council to act? No applause deserved! ---Ed.*)

Welsh Sports

As some of us know the boyos (a.k.a. Wales' Rugby XV) had a rather unsatisfactory time of it in the Six Nations competition. They lost to England, narrowly, beat Italy, not by much, defeated the Scots, beat Ireland, surprisingly, and were beaten by France!

Before the Six Nations got going, David Barry, writing in *Ninnau*, summed up the team as suffering from "an overall lack of strength in depth." Subsequent events suggest that he was correct.

 In soccer, Cardiff ,and Swansea too, remain in contention for promotion to the Premiership. But that's a tough neighbourhood; as the many teams who have got there for just one season can attest to. -----

 Again, according to David Barry in "Ninnau" all is not well in Glamorgan County Cricket. A decision to appoint the South African one day international, Alvio Peterson, captain for this season did not sit well with the coach, Matthew Maynard, captain Jamie Dalrymple or President Peter Walker and all resigned. Perhaps it's all resolved, though, as the team had an emphatic win over Gloucestershire recently.

Tall Tales from Wales

A Welsh American was entertaining a distant relative, from North Wales, who was visiting the States. They were driving around the town (in the mid – West) and Hank Jones (yes , indeed that was his name) was pointing out the landmarks of which he was proud. “Yeah! My great-grandfather founded that bank which financed the town’s water and sewage as well as the power company and most of the retail you see.” His guest was very impressed. A couple of years later Hank Jones visited his relative in North Wales and in turn was being driven around. As they were passing Bala Lake Hank exclaimed “ that sure is a pretty little lake! Has it been there long?” “Not very long” came the reply,” my grandmother started it.”
(That’s enough of that you say! Quite right too.

And now for something different.

Nerys Hughes, the President, is also a dog fancier- not any old dog but a Welsh Terrier. It appears that there are a number of these little fellows around Victoria and a “ Welsh “ club of like minded owners. Nerys sends the following account of the breed and a couple of photos:

What did John F. Kennedy ,Clement Attlee and the late Prince of Wales have in common? They were owners of Welsh Terriers. Although less well known than the Corgi, the Welsh, as commonly called, is none-the-less a well loved breed originating in Wales. It has been claimed to be the oldest existing breed of dog in the U.K. and a descendant of the old Black and Tan Terrier.

This sturdy, boxy dog rarely exceeds 15 inches in height or 22 lb in weight and is always black and tan in colour, although variations in shades are not uncommon. The tail is usually docked “ to the width of a man’s hand.” Having boxy muzzle and beady brown eyes the Welsh resembles the much larger Airdale. However most experts insist that the Welsh is not related to the Airdale, although some believe that the latter was bred from the Welsh. Unlike the Corgi the Welsh has a non-shedding coat but it does require regular care.

While the breed was originally developed for hunting badgers, otters and vermin the

Welsh is a playful and loving companion, happy to sit and watch television with its owner. Being full of energy the dog needs regular exercise but will be content with short walks. For the most part the Welsh is not given to barking so is ideal for apartment and townhouse dwellers.

The photos are of a group of Welsh owners at Beaver Lake for a St. David’s Day meeting and of Nerys’s ‘Taffy.’



Dyma Taffy, ci bach yn perthyn i Nerys.

Dyna fe – Diwedd.
That’s it – the End.