

Cymdeithas Gymraeg



Victoria Welsh Society

Newsletter: Rhagfyr 2014 December

Board Members

<i>President</i>	Margaret Lintern	250-642-6747
<i>Secretary</i>	Gillian Greydanus	250-642-2076
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jen Pearson	250-477-2548

<i>Past President</i>	Nerys Hughes	250-479-8742
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<i>Trustees</i>	David Lintern	250-642-6747
	Peter Murphy	250-383-4350
	Emrys Evans	250-652-5855
	Denis Brown	250-658-8701
	Taffy Richards	250-592-7842
	Myfanwy Rutherford	250-382-9343

<i>Newsletter</i>	Denis Brown	fulbro@telus.net
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<i>Information</i>	info@victoriawelshsociety.org
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<i>Address</i>	C/O 4918 Alamida Crescent, Victoria, B.C., V8Y 2T3
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<i>Web site</i>	www.victoriawelshsociety.org
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Notice – 2015 memberships are now due - \$ 20 single , \$ 25 family.

From the Editor

Another Annual General Meeting has come and gone and we have a new President – but no new faces among the Trustees. There is little doubt that the Victoria Welsh Society is not suffering from growing pains. The attendance at the AGM again showed this. Like other societies there is no growth . Are there no Welsh emigrants these days? Reports from Wales on the state of the economy suggest that the young should be leaving in droves (Mae'r economi, twp!) but if they are it doesn't show in the membership of the Victoria Welsh Society. Possibly the availability of cheap flights to the U.K. means that those Welsh immigrants can nip back to Wales at the figurative “drop of a hat”. No longer do they arrive, at the end of a long train journey following an even longer sea voyage, so full of “hiraeth” that the first thoughts are to find the nearest Welsh society . Times have changed!

Society News

The 2014 Annual General Meeting was held at the James Bay New Horizons Hall commencing at 6.0p.m.for a social gathering with the business meeting following at 7.30 p.m. There were 13 members present. Gillian Greydanus acted as recording secretary. The minutes of the 2013 AGM were read and their acceptance was moved and seconded.

Reports were given by the outgoing President and the Treasurer. A main point made by the President was that, apart from the AGM, only one event is now scheduled in the Society's activities i.e. the celebration of St. David's Day. This year's event attracted 62 adults and 3 children to the lunch at the Gorge

Golf Club. There was general satisfaction with the meal and subsequent entertainment.

Up to this time no Welsh Choir has expressed interest in visiting Victoria but the Toronto Male Voice Choir will consider a Western tour in 2016.

Shawnigan School may host a group of students from a Welsh school in 2015.

Under “ New Business” a motion was made to disband the Ladies' Auxiliary formally. That this group within the Society had been inactive for some years was the reason for the motion, which was passed without dissent. In the discussion of the motion, tribute was paid to this group which has made such a valuable contribution to the life of the Society. (*It may be noted that some years ago the Ladies Auxiliary made a significant donation to the Victoria Conservatory of Music and there are two plaques at the Conservatory which read “ donated by the Victoria Welsh Society.”*)

The election of Officers of the Society followed . All the offices were to be filled anew. and the following retiring members agreed to nomination :

President – Margaret Lintern

Secretary – Gillian Greydanus

Treasurer – Jen Pearson

Past President – Nerys Hughes

Trustees – Denis Brown, David Lintern,

Emrys Evans, Peter Murphy,

Myfanwy Rutherford, Taffy Richards,

Lynne Thomas.

As there were no further nominations the above slate was elected by acclamation.

Thanks were accorded to Nerys Hughes for all her work as President, to Lynne Thomas ,as Secretary and to Denis Brown (newsletter), over a number of years, and Jen Pearson as Treasurer for many years.

And now for a message from our new President

Dear Friends,

We had our AGM on October 16th and I am pleased to welcome our new slate of officers. Thank you all, I look forward to working with you in the upcoming year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Past President Nerys Hughes for her dedication to the Society over the last few years. She deserves a rest and also thanks to Lynne, our retiring Secretary who will be replaced by Gill.

As we have only one function a year now, “ St. David’s Day Celebration “, we hope to see many of you at that event at the Gorge Golf Club on **February 28th.2015**, mark your calendars and do invite your friends along as we love to have visitors!

We are still trying to attract a Welsh Choir to Victoria but since the downturn in the economy it is proving to be quite difficult. In the mean-time we are working on a possible new event for 2016.

Nadolig Glawen a Bwyddyn Newydd Dda.

Margaret Lintern,
President.

IN MEMORIAM

Long –time member Lloyd Newsham,
who died in August, 2014 .

Lloyd was a native of Saskatoon and spent his childhood on a farm near the city. His mother was Welsh. He held a doctorate in Physics from McGill and, after service in the Canadian Army, had a significant career in Academia at the University of Alberta at Edmonton.

We are also saddened by news of the passing of Mrs. Violet Cray, wife of Raymond and we sympathise with him in his loss. As residents of

Shirley, near Sooke, they were faithful members of the Society for many years.

Further- more we were saddened to learn of the death of Margaret Brandon’s husband, Arnold, in September. The Society extends its sympathy to Margaret and her family in their loss.

News from Wales

Archeologists have discovered evidence which suggests that Offa’s Dyke is possibly 200 years older than we have been led to believe. Radio-carbon analysis from a stretch of the dyke near Chirk indicates that the second half of the 6th century rather than the generally accepted 8th cent. Is more likely to be correct. (*If this finding is upheld will this mean that a new name must be found? – Ed.)*

Llandudno has been named as the only Welsh tourist town in a list of the top ten U.K. holiday destinations. This was based on ratings from travellers who reported on website TripAdvisor. London was top with Edinburgh second but Torquay and Llandudno were the only seaside resorts to make the list.

Welsh house prices are at their highest for more than 5 years. The average price in February of this year stood at £ 158,791. (*My uncle Tom bought a house in Cwmgrach for only £600 in 1936! –Ed.)*

Wales’ unemployment rate continues to fall with figures for the first 3 months of 2014 showing a drop of 0.3%. The Newport based Office of National Statistics said that 99,811 people were out of work in the first 3 months of the year. Figures also showed that youth unemployment in Wales to be falling faster than any other part of the U.K.

However it is also reported that in Wales disposable income is less than in any other part of the U.K. The average disposable income in Wales was quoted as £14,623 whereas the average for the U.K. as a whole was £16,791. The figure for London is £21,446!

A land- lord is inviting guests to stay at his B&B in the Valleys by telling them “ It’s the pits.” The guest-hose has been transformed into a” coal-mine” with corridors like mine passages and miner’s lamps for lighting. The gents’ toilet is decorated with items from the 1984 Miners’ Strike. (*The reporting does not say where this gem in hostelry is.*)

In the June 2014 issue of this newsletter there was mention of salmon having laid eggs in the Sirhowy river for the first time since mining began in the Valleys. Now, to top that, the South- East Wales Rivers Trust reports that salmon are spawning in the upper reaches of the Taff for the first time in 200 years. They are now able to get upstream of the weir (CADW listed) that was built in the late 1700s to divert water to the Cyfartha iron works. Natural Resources Wales claims that the salmon population in the Taff is the most improved in all of England and Wales.

Support for Welsh independence has fallen to its lowest recorded level following the failure of the Scottish National Party in the recent referendum on Scotland’s Independence. A poll conducted for BBC Wales, a few days after the Scots voted, found that only 3% of those who responded were in favour of separation. But 49% supported the idea of more powers for the Welsh Assembly. The survey also found that 12% wanted to have the Assembly abolished.

The poll also found growing support for the United Kingdom Independence Party

(UKIP) at the expense of every other major political party.

The last remaining British survivor of the Great Escape Team who planned the break-out from from *Stalag Luft 3*, has died aged 93. Flight-lieutenant Ken Rees who joined the RAF at the age of 18 flew Wellington bombers until shot down over Norway in 1942. He was taken prisoner, and incarcerated in the infamous Luftwaffe run prison camp . There he became part of the Escape team who organised the mass break-out and was the last man pulled from the tunnel when it was discovered by a guard . Rees had been credited as the inspiration for the character played by Steve McQueen in the 1963 film but he always denied that.

One of the oldest steam locomotives in Wales is back on the rails in time for its 150th birthday. Tallyllyn Railway’s Locomotive No. 1 has been extensively repaired at the Ffestiniog Railway’s Boston Lodge Works.

The railway was built to haul slate from quarries and has operated out of Tywyn since the 1860s. It was saved from closure (and possible destruction) by a group of steam rail enthusiasts in 1951 and is claimed to be the world’s first preserved, volunteer run railway.

In the 12 months to August 2014 house prices in England and Wales rose by 8.4% on average. In Wales the average selling price was £ 118,814 and taking England and Wales together the price was £ 177,824. These figures pale in comparison with London where the average was £ 467,070. (I wonder how many of those in London are 2 up and 2 down? – Ed.)

The preceding snippets of news from Wales were first published in NINNAU, the North American Welsh newspaper. The Editor

recommends your subscriptions to this publication. It's very good value.

Recent Books on Wales and the Welsh.

The University of Wales Press announces the following :

Dylan Thomas' Swansea, Gower and Laugharne. (new edition) – James A. Davies.
\$ 20.00

The author gives a unique literary guide to the geographical and cultural associations found within Thomas' poetry.

Wales on the Western Front

Edited by John Richards
\$ 35.00

Provides many diverse impressions on what it was like on the Western Front in the Great War. Prose and poetry from such famous names as Edward Thomas, Robert Graves and Saunders Lewis.

The Fascist Party in Wales

Plaid Cymru, Welsh Nationalism and the accusation of Fascism.

Richard Wyn Jones
\$ 25.00

A deft, incisive and terse dissection of Welsh political culture in the twentieth century.

The above are part of a selection distributed by the University of Chicago Press.

www.press.uchicago.edu

Welsh Sport

- Swansea City continue with a respectable showing in the Premier league. Their manager, Gary Monk, was named as 'manager of the month' in August following their hot start .
- However Cardiff are having an indifferent season following relegation from the Premiership at the end of the season in 2014. Their manager, Ole Gunnar Skolsjaer left by mutual consent.

- In European competition Wales were fortunate for two goals by Gareth Bale, when they played Andorra. The next two matches are against Bosnia followed by Cyprus – both notably tougher opposition.
 - In International rugby Wales had the worst of it against the big Southern sides in the Autumn series of games, although the results were not so one sided. They lost narrowly against Australia but were convincingly beaten by New Zealand. However they finally beat South Africa by a very narrow margin. They did defeat Argentina and Fiji. Now look forwards to the start of the 6-Nations series on February 6th. against England.
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News from Canada/USA

A very successful North American Festival of Wales , NAFOW , was held in Minneapolis at the end of August, 2014 . It was jointly hosted by the St. David's Society of Minnesota and the Minnesota Welsh Association. The venue was the Hyatt Regency in downtown Minneapolis. Over 650 people attended the four day event. This included seminars, folk dancing, a Marketplace with Tearoom, Cinema Wales, the hugely popular Opening Concert and the annual National Gymanfa Ganu.

Cinema Wales presented films with diverse subjects as diverse as ' Coasteering' in Pembrokeshire to Chicago gangsters . This latter was doubly interesting as it took a look at the career in crime of one Llewellyn Morris Humphreys, aka Murray the Hump . He was the son of poor Welsh immigrants .He entered a life of crime and became Al Capone's right-hand man. The film was doubly interesting at this NAFOW because the guest of honour, Lord Dafydd Wigley (who is well known for his Nationalist sentiments) is a third cousin of

Humphreys. After the film Lord Wigley provided the audience with details of Murray's life that were not included in the film. He stressed that in no way should Murray be glorified but pondered the question of the man he might have become if he had chosen another path .

You can start planning to attend the 2015 NAFOW which will be held in Columbus ,Ohio, September 3 – 6 ,2015 at the Hyatt Regency, 350 North Street, Columbus, Ohio, OH43215. Room rates are \$ 119 plus tax for single, double, triple or quad occupancy. These rates are available until August 12, 2015 or until the block of rooms is sold out .(State your intention of attending NAFOW when you book.)

Book by calling 1-888-421-1442 or do it on-line by visiting <http://www.nafow.org> and clicking on the link for NAFOW.

Ohio has some strong connection with Wales and within a couple of hours of Columbus one can arrive at what were the Welsh settlements Venedocia & Gomer and Radnor and the beautiful Welsh Scenic Byway ,featuring the Madog Centre for Welsh Studies at the University of Rio Grande.

We ,the Victoria Welsh Society will celebrate St. David's day in 2015 with a lunch at the Gorge Golf Club once more. The date will be February 28th. The fare will be traditional Welsh, with some variation, followed by what we usually do but with a little difference in the entertainment. After gathering at 11.30a.m. we'll sit down to lunch at 12.00 noon. The cost will be \$ 40. Bring your friends and if you haven't paid this year's dues yet, you can do so on the day.

But now for further sad news – We have just learned that Sandra, Gwerfyl (Taffy) Richards' wife, died suddenly, just before Christmas, in Toronto. They were there, as usual, to celebrate Christmas with their family.

Our deepest sympathies go out to Taffy and family at this time.

It had been your Editor's intention to end this newsletter on a high note but that is now changed. It merely remains is to (belatedly) wish all a happy and peaceful New Year.

Blwyddyn Newydd heddychol a llawen ichi gyd.
