

Cymdeithas Gymraeg



Victoria Welsh Society

Newsletter: Mehefin 2014 June

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Notice – 2014 memberships are now due - \$ 20 single , \$ 25 family.

From the Editor

St. David's Day does not often fall on a Saturday but this year the date and day fell into place for our celebration. On March 1st. more than 60 members of the Society, with friends of Wales, gathered to mark the Day. An excellent turnout with some travelling from afar. This was a turn of events that puts heart into your Board and raises the hope that we as a Society will yet continue to exist even as we're a year older. However it should not come as a surprise to members that at times, especially following a poorly attended AGM,(and there have been a number of such) that more than one Board member has been heard to question the continuing viability of the Victoria Welsh Society. But more of this later – we hope to hear from you regarding the use of daylight hours for this year's AGM.

Society News

The highlight of the year for the Society is, as you know, the celebration of St. David's Day. The following short report on this year's event has been received from our President, Nerys.

We celebrated the day of our Patron Saint, David in style again this year. More than 60 members and friends gathered on Saturday, March 1st at the Gorge Vale Club for a buffet luncheon. The menu featured Welsh favourites, leek soup, roast lamb, trifle and Welsh cakes. Again, the golf club's Chef and staff did an excellent job.

Greetings from a number of fellow societies were acknowledged, including two from as far away as Australia.

Emrys Evans did a masterful job of emceeing the event and we were well entertained by our guest soloist, Eve Richardson, with her accompanist Taylor Winfrey. Eve's selection of songs included The Ash Grove, , Y Clychau Aberdyfi, and Ar Hyd Y Nos. These and others were enjoyed by all.

The guest speaker was our Past President, David Lintern. He took us back to Wales with stories evoking memories which brought smiles to all who heard him .

A splendid afternoon of celebration and we look forwards to St. David's Day , 2015.

In Memoriam

We regret the passing of Peter Gibson who died, unexpectedly, early this year.

The Board misses his presence.

(A donation has been made to the Schizophrenic Society, in his name.)

The Board met on March 7th. to hold a review (mainly) of the St. David's Day event but also deal with fresh business.

In the review Jen Pearson reported in some detail: there were 62 guests and 3 children and when all the bills had been paid the Society made a profit of \$7.

While it was acknowledged that ,overall, lunch and the entertainment was a success

there is room for improvement. In particular the sound system could have been better. As for the vocal programme, an introduction to the songs, in between each, would have enhanced that part of the entertainment. One Board member thought that ideas for different entertainment be sought for next year.

The questionnaire proved to be unhelpful as few were returned. It was proposed that in future these be distributed at the door, before lunch, and a table set up for members to fill them out.

The Treasurer reported that the Society's ING bank account now stands at \$8,045.65 with \$883.71 in the CIBC Chequing account. Member ship renewals are lagging – only 16 members have paid this year's dues.

While no Welsh Choir is planning a tour to include Victoria in the near future, the Toronto Welshmen's Choir has expressed interest for 2015. On the subject of visiting groups, it was reported that Shawnigan Lake School may host another Welsh school next year.

A significant item of business was the passing of a motion to dissolve the Ladies' Auxiliary at the 2014 AGM. Notice of this item will be put before members 21 days before the AGM

Would you like to help sponsor an archaeological dig at Castell Nanhyfer (Nevern Castle) in Pembrokeshire?

Just prior to St. David's Day our President received an E-mail from a pair of post-graduate students at Durham University who are appealing for funds.

If you would like to help you could get in touch with one of the students, Joe Raine, at the following address :

joseph.raine@durham.ac.uk

Otherwise, the mailing address is :

*Mr. J. Raine,
c/o Archaeology Department,
Durham University,
United Kingdom.*

If you are interested in the social history of the 19th century, especially as it touched South Wales, a couple of books have come to our attention via the Internet :

“The Last Rising” by J.V. Jones. – an account of the Newport Chartist Insurrection of 1839.

“ The Merthyr Rising” by Gwyn A. Williams. (This took place in 1832 and describes how a protest against a reduction in Poor Law support developed into a pitched battle between miners and iron workers on one side and a detachment of Scottish Highlanders sent from their barracks in Brecon.)

The price of each book is £ !9.99.

More information can be obtained from c.harries@press.wales.ac.uk or from ;

University of Wales Press,
10 Columbus Walk,
Cardiff, Wales, U.K., CF10 4UP

Whilst on the subject of books , the Society was given recently a gift of three, all dealing with the history of Merthyr Tydfil and surroundings, from the early Celts to recent times . They would be of special interest to members who know the area. If you would like to borrow them please call Denis Brown.

We are obliged to a lady named Meg Seaker (who lives in Vernon)for these interesting publications.

If you are drawn to tales of the supernatural then “ The Sin Eaters” is the book for you. This, written by Gwyneth Edwards is an anthology of

tales set in the towns and villages that lie along the “ Heart of Wales” railway from Swansea to Shrewsbury. It can be bought from Amazon and the link to them is :

www.amazon.com/dp/BOOHDEPX6M

At winter’s end an e-mail was received from one Iwan Williams who ran in the London Marathon to raise money for an international charity named CONCERN WORLDWIDE, which is currently helping to relieve poverty in Syria, South Sudan and the Philippines.

Williams , originally from Llandysul works for the Older Peoples’ Commissioner for Wales and spent 6 years in Brussels on behalf of the Welsh Local Government Association. He ran his 4th marathon this year, having run London, New York and Helsinki previously.

For more information on CONCERN you can visit www.concern.net.

Donations can be given through the web page <http://www.justgiving.com/iwanwilliamsLondonMarathon2014>.

It is good to learn that Marion Richards is back at home after recovering from a knee operation. We’ll be pleased to see you at the AGM, Marion, if not before then.

A Joke (Mark Twain - 1897)

Names are not always what they seem! The common Welsh name Bzjxllwep is pronounced “Jackson”.

That BBC television show “ Coast” recently aired an episode describing the South Wales coastline from Cardiff to St. David’s Head in Pembrokeshire. Of particular interest was the description of Swansea’s former copper industry and the assertion

that the Royal Navy’s ascendancy during the Napoleonic Wars was partly due to the copper sheathing applied to ships’ bottoms, thus leaving them clear of marine growth. A piece of sheathing from H.M.S. Victory, bearing the stamp of the rolling mill in Swansea, was shown. At that time Swansea was copper capital of the world. Unfortunately the price of this industrial success seriously polluted Tawe valley.

Anthony Hontoir is a film-maker with a small company based in Porthcawl. For 18 years he’s been making local history films on various towns in South Glamorgan.

A selected number of titles are available as downloads, including “Ghosts of Glamorgan”. If you would see them go to :-

www.downwoodfilms.com

Several titles have excerpts on YouTube, on the downwood films channel.

The company address is :
Downwood Film Productions , 13 Marlpit Lane, Porthcawl, Glamorgan, U.K. (Tel. 1656 771775)
And the e-mail is anthonyhontoir@hotmail.co.uk

News from Wales

At the Llangollen International Eisteddfod ,in July , Bryn Terfel will perform the lead role in a special production of Stephen Sondheim’s opera “Sweeney Todd; the Demon Barber of Fleet Street.”

Acclaimed Welsh composer, Karl Jenkins will showcase a new work at Llangollen also and Dutch jazz singer, Caro Emerald will make her Llangollen debut.

International talent will perform in the Carnival of Nations Acts, including Cirque du Soleil’s Bruce Bilodeau .

The majority of Wales’ youngest make good progress in learning Welsh. The education watchdog said that standards in language, literacy

and communication skills in Welsh- medium schools are similar to their English-medium counterparts. More than four-fifths of children aged 3 to 7 make good progress in learning Welsh as a first language in the Welsh-medium schools.

The price that sheep farmers in Wales get for their wool has more than tripled over the last 5 years. This is largely due to strong demand from China.

The famous Pembrokeshire Early Potato has been awarded Protected Geographical Indication status by the European Commission. Only potatoes grown in Pembrokeshire can be called Pembrokeshire Early Potato. “Earlies” have been grown in the county since the mid-eighteenth century.

The centenary of the birth of Alexander Cordell will occur this year. He is famous as the author of “Rape of the Fair Country”, first published in 1959. The novel details the Chartist Rising and march on Newport. It has been published in 17 languages and more than 3 million copies have been sold. A tribute to the Author has been written by his friend, Newport writer Chris Barber, M.B.E.

The National Eisteddfod will be held in Llanelli, August 1-9, 2014. The first time in Carmarthenshire since 2000. Go to www.eisteddfod.org.uk/english for details.

Llandudno’s Lauriston Court hotel has been named the World’s third best in the Bargain category and the best in the U.K.

Wales is the place to be for stargazers. The National Botanic Garden of Wales, in Llanarthne, Carmarthenshire, is the 6th site in Wales to be awarded Dark Sky Discovery status. Another location in the Brecon Beacons National Park was awarded International Dark Sky Reserve status in 2013, an even higher honour.

The Welsh economy, as a whole, is growing faster than that of other regions of the U.K. with the exception of North-West and South-East England. Official figures show that the Gwent valleys had high growth (5%) whereas there was a fall in South-West Wales and also in Monmouthshire and Newport, demonstrating the unevenness of the recovery. However Wales remains bottom of the table in productivity.

On a brighter note, salmon have laid eggs in the River Sirhowy for the first time since the mining industry began in the Valleys. Three nests have been spotted in the river at Blackwood (Gwent) after the stream was made more fish friendly. National Resources Wales, in partnership with other bodies have worked towards bringing the Atlantic Salmon back after an interval of a century.

Welsh Sports.

- As we all know Cardiff City did not have the ability to stay in the Premier League. As well as trouble on the pitch there was trouble in the office. As a result the club have a new manager, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, who used to play for Manchester United. His managerial experience has been obtained in Norway.
 - Swansea will be in the Premier again next season , although they had a rather difficult time in late winter this year.
 - Welsh rugby coach, Warren Gatland, will stay with Wales until the 2019 World Cup.
 - The Welsh XV on tour in South Africa were humbled by the home team 38-16 in the first Test in Durban but came very close to a win in the second. The score was 31-30 for South Africa. Wales lost through a last minute penalty try.
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The 2014 North American Festival of Wales will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in downtown Minneapolis, with the opening concert on August 30. It will be sponsored by NAFOW and hosted by the St. David's Society of Minnesota and the Minnesota Welsh Association.

The new Welsh choir 'Only Men Aloud' will perform for the first time in North America. Their varied repertoire includes Welsh folk songs and hymns, musicals and opera, barbershop, swing and pop. They will be joined by the Apollo Male Chorus of Minneapolis.

Hotel rates are discounted and start at \$119 per night. The hotel telephone number is 1-888-421-1442. State North American Festival of Wales 2014 when booking.

If you wish to fly to Minneapolis NAFOW has an arrangement with Delta Airlines. Visit <http://www.delta.com>, choose 'More search Options' and use Meeting Code NMH6Y to receive a discount.

For registration and to buy tickets and passes online visit <http://www.nafow.org> or if you prefer contact Megan Williams, Box 1054, Trumansburg, NY 14886 or phone 607-279-7402, or e-mail IHQ@thewnaa.org.

A significant part of the NAFOW is the Eisteddfod to be held on Friday August 29 and the following day, at the Hyatt Regency. Applications to compete are invited from anyone who wants to put their singing and linguistic talents to the test.

The Eisteddfod Information Sheet and Entry Form are available on the website for NAFOW, <http://www.nafow.org>. Details of the Eisteddfod schedule and entry fees are listed on the entry form.

The 38th annual Cwrs Cymraeg (Welsh language learning course), sponsored by Cymdeithas Madog will be held in St.

Catharines, Ontario, the week of July 20-27. All levels of knowledge are welcome. For information and registration go to www.madog.org.

An international conference on Welsh studies will be held at the Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario, July 23 – 25. For information go to www.naaswch.org.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual general meeting of the Victoria Welsh Society will be held in the James Bay New Horizons Hall, 234 Menzies Street, Victoria, on October 16th, 2014.

6.30 – 7.30 p.m. Social Hour

7.30 – 9.00 p.m. Business meeting.

One item of business for debate will be the formal disbanding of the Ladies' Auxiliary. The Board of Directors will be up for election. Please consider standing for any of the offices.

In conclusion the Editor hopes that you all will enjoy the summer and anticipates seeing numbers out for the AGM – it's your Society.