

Cymdeithas Gymraeg



Victoria Welsh Society

Newsletter: Mehefin 2016 June

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Notice – 2016 memberships are now overdue - \$ 20 single , \$ 25 family.

■ If in arrears you can still pay for 2015

From the Editor

We're not folding our tent and departing just yet. Once more we celebrated our Patron Saint's day on February 28th and all who attended were pleased to be there. Some were unavoidably absent through illness - we were the worse for that. But some, as in former years, travelled a long way to join us and we thank them for their continued support.

Society News

There was a fair turn-out at the Gorge Vale Golf Club to celebrate our Patron Saint's Day. Not as good as most former years but still 41 members and friends attended. A good meal was provided, roast beef with the usual vegetables and salads, a dessert, tea and coffee. The bar was also open.

After lunch, and a lot of talking between old friends, who perhaps hadn't seen each other since last year, and with Emrys Evans as M.C., we got down to the business of hearing greetings from other Welsh Societies across Canada, toasts to the Queen and Canada, Wales and St. David. (These were interrupted from time to time by items from David Lintern's inexhaustible stock of jokes.) A moving poem, "The Gresford Disaster" was read. This was a bitter comment on the mine disaster in the Denbighshire village of Gresford which left 262 miners dead as a result of an underground explosion and fire that occurred at 2.08 a.m. on September 22, 1934. Three rescuers also died. (The reading of this poem was amazingly apt because one of our guests was related to one of the rescue team.)

The reading was followed by a delightful music rendering by a duo called 'Black Angus'. They were not Scots whatever we might have

thought. The leader and vocalist with guitar was Board member Joan Hurley's son. He, being ably accompanied on Bass, and disclaiming any ability with Welsh words, entertained us with a medley of Welsh and English folk songs. The Welsh renditions were excellent. (The duo must come back next year.)

Once more, a very satisfying celebration of the Festival of our Patron Saint has occurred. It's to be hoped that next year, those of us who were unable to attend, for various reasons, will join us.

Now some unwelcome news :

*We deeply regret the death of
long time , stalwart member,
Myfanwy Rutherford ,who died
peacefully in her sleep on May 17, 2016
after a short illness..
Our sympathies go out to members of Myfanwy's family
and to her good friend and companion, Catherine.*

All members will join the Board in expressing their sorrow to Catherine.

In deference to Myfanwy's wishes there was no formal funeral.

News from Wales

200 million years old dinosaur bones have been found on a Glamorganshire beach. Those who know about these things say that the creature was related to Tyrannosaurus Rex. He or she has been named Draco raptor Hanigani, which is Latin for dragon robber.

Archeologists in Gwynedd have unearthed what is thought to be a buried village on Anglesey. The discovery was made at Rhuddgaer using equipment to map underground features without digging holes. The village is believed to be from the 7th or 8th Century, after the Romans had left. In the 1870's a four or fifth century coffin, now in Bangor museum, was found on the site.

A lasting memorial to the 500 Welsh archers and 23 men-at-arms who, in 1415, helped win the battle of Agincourt for Henry the Fifth (who, if you remember your Shakespeare, was born in Monmouth and hence a countryman), has been created. It's known as the Agincourt Trail and links eight locations across Breconshire and Gwent. The trail tells the stories of people and places and the role they had in the battle.

Conwy has a growing reputation in Japan as a place to visit. The mediaeval walled town was voted one of the prettiest in Europe and the only U.K. location to be included in the top 30. It is being promoted as a 'must visit' destination for the Japanese tourist.

In response to this accolade the local tourist bureau 'Visit Conwy' has commissioned its own sushi – known locally as 'wushi'. The traditional Japanese dish has been recreated with Welsh ingredients including lamb, leeks, cockles, Welsh cheddar, sewin (sea trout from Welsh coastal waters) and laver-bread, by a Llandudno pan-Asian restaurant. (See Conwy and die.- Ed.)

Carwyn Jones, First Minister of Wales has announced a £ 31 million EU backed investment for a world class computer science facility at Swansea University. Known as the Computational Foundry (a nice

touch which recognises Wales' part in U.K.'s heavy industry) it will also be backed with £ 17 million from the European Regional Development Fund. The new facility will build on Swansea's existing achievements in the field of Computational Science research. The department is recognised as first in Wales and eleventh in the U.K in the application of computer solutions to complex problems in science.

Swansea are getting the cash but Cardiff University Physics Department are sharing in the kudos for their key role in 'one of the biggest breaks-through in physics in the last 100 years'. Theoretical models developed by researchers in Cardiff were used to verify that gravitational waves had been detected, so confirming the prediction that was made by Albert Einstein in his famous 'Theory of General Relativity'.

The 10 best places to live in Wales have been revealed by the Sunday Times 'Best places to live' guide. These 10 are among the 30 best locations in the whole of Britain and heading the 10 is the Victorian seaside town of Penarth.

Now if you want to live in a house on Wales' most expensive road you'll need more than £ 800,000. The exclusive address in 2015 was on Sanderling Way in Porthcawl where the average price is £ 855,000.

At the other end of the scale the least expensive road in Wales, in 2015, was Caerau Crescent in Newport. Here the average house price was £ 23,500.

Yes, it's worth learning Welsh, or any other language, if you want to arrest the mental decline that affects many through aging.

Professor Antonella Sorace, founder of the Bilingualism Centre at Edinburgh University is investigating the potential benefits of studying minority languages. Previous research has already shown that being multilingual can improve thinking and learning ability and may reduce mental decline that occurs with age.

If policymakers could be persuaded to retain languages such as Welsh, Gaelic and Cornish there could be a beneficial impact on health, she said and added that this is another reason why "minority" languages should be saved from extinction.

Welsh Sports

- As we know Wales disappointed their supporters in the Six Nations competition last winter. In the opening game they tied Ireland 16-16. The next two home games saw them beat Scotland by a small margin, 27-23, then France, 19-10. Thus the stage was set for the Championship decider against unbeaten England at Twickenham and there Wales put up one of their poorest displays – until the second half – when the Dragon roared into action. England were rocked and late tries by Faletau and Biggar brought the score from 25-7 to 25-21. Another five minutes and Wales would have had an unlikely win.

The final game was an anti-climax as Wales crushed Italy 67-14. However the Italian XV was not at full strength through injuries.

For their tour of New Zealand in June Wales must show improvement – we know what New Zealand can do!

- In football (European kind) Swansea City improved their playing in the last month or so of the season to finish about halfway up the Premiership Table. Cardiff City and Wrexham both appeared heading for playoff places but each fell short. So no change of status for either next season.
- It's another story for Wales in the current European Cup competition. As we may know this is the first time for many years that Wales has got through the preliminary matches and into the last 32. Along the way they even beat Belgium. Their competition group includes England, Russia and Slovakia and at this time they have a win against Slovakia but lost to England. (but in leading 1-0 at one stage they must have given the Saxons a fright) Next game is against Russia.
- Cardiff has an ice-hockey team – known as **Cardiff Devils**. Will they be good enough to

beat Montreal? Not likely, but perhaps **The Leafs!**

- Former Olympic Steeplechase bronze medallist, John Disley, has died aged 88. With the late Chris Brasher he founded the London Marathon.

And, Jim Pleass, the last surviving member of Glamorgan's 1948 County Championship winning side has died aged 92. A middle order batsman, he played for the county for ten seasons.

News from Canada/USA

The North American Festival of Wales (NAFOW) will be held in Calgary this year, September 1 – 4. The headquarters hotel is The Westin Calgary, 320 4th. Ave. SW, Calgary, AB, T2P 2S6.

The room rate is \$ 125 for single, double, triple or quad occupancy. King or double rooms. Give the group name when you book : North American Festival of Wales 2016.

For reservations call 1-800-937-8461 or visit the website www.nafow.org and click on the accommodation link.

A full programme of seminars, workshops and entertainment will be offered. The cost of most of these is included in the Festival Pass, the exception being the workshop on September 1st. (*Raining in Aberfan : 50 years of the Welsh Industrial Landscape.*)

Welsh music and drama seminars will be offered. In particular Elsa Davies and Ceri Jones (of the musical group DEUAIR) will present “ The history of the Welsh mediaeval harp” and will play airs and sing from old manuscripts. They will also host the Noson Lawen on the Friday evening.

UK Pavilion Dance Troupe with 25 dancers (taking time out from Winnipeg's multicultural festival) will also perform traditional Welsh folk dance and clogging with Welsh musicians and singers.

You can also learn about Welsh wildlife if you attend Iolo Tudur Williams seminar. (He is a popular BBC presenter.)

The major events are the Grand Concert on Saturday night, September 3rd and the Gymanfa Ganu on the Sunday. Both events will be held in Knox United Church, a few blocks away from the Westin.

The invited choir comes from Old Colwyn, North Wales – Cor Meibion Colwyn. They will have performed in Vancouver prior to Calgary. (Their schedule was not quite elastic enough for a concert in Victoria. We did try to persuade them to sing here but it was not possible.)

The present choir was formed in 1972 – the original began in the 1890's. They have 52 choristers aged 17 to 83 but the number who will sing in Calgary may be less. In 2015 the choir won two firsts at the International Pan Celtic choral competition and placed third in Male Voice Choir at the 2015 International Eisteddfod in Llangollen. The guest soloist appearing with the choir will be Edith Pritchard, a classically trained vocalist, who was born in Edmonton. She has sung with virtually every major opera company in the U.K.

On Sunday, September 4th we shall all look forwards to the enthusiastic singing, that is the hallmark of every Gymanfa, to wind up the festival.

General questions about the Festival can be directed to : Dr. Megan Williams, 607-279-7402.
The e-mail address is IHQ@thewnaa.org

(I hope to see you in Calgary!—Ed.)

We are indebted to NINNAU, the North American Welsh Newspaper for all the news items. For 27 CAD per year it's tremendous value. TRY IT!

Although this section of the newsletter is meant to report items of Welsh interest in North America the

next comes from the Southern Hemi-sphere where Welshness was planted more than a century ago.

It may be common knowledge that the Welsh settlement in Patagonia is still in existence and making its presence known. The people are, of course, Argentinean and have been for more than a century. That, however is another matter but the important fact is that Welsh culture involving language, song, poetry and literature has survived and we might say is growing in that far-off region.

In the May-June issue of NINNAU Jeremy Wood writes of a "massive community project in Trevelin and Esquel in Welsh Patagonia" The objective is to build and equip a full-time Welsh Language school for 3 to 11 year olds and promises of financial support had been made by the Argentinean government. However the doors will not open as planned " due to broken promises, rampant inflation and over- zealous school inspectors."

Prior to this project Welsh was taught, exclusively, in a tiny village school in Trevelin known as " Ysgol Gymraeg yr Andes." This started out as the house for the minister of Bethel Chapel. Welsh has been taught here for a couple of generations and can claim to be the only school in the World to have produced two winners of "Dysgwr y Flwyddyn " (Learner of the Year) at the Welsh National Eisteddfod in Wales. Until last year adults and children would come in to the school for their lessons. Adults would then leave for home and children would go to their State school for non-Welsh instruction. Ysgol Gymraeg yr Andes did not qualify for State support. (The Argentine government of the day banned Welsh-only primary state schools more than a hundred years ago.)

Plans had been made for 3,4 and 5 year olds to start in the new school on the first day of the school year, March 1,2016. More than 50 parents had signed up.

But the Government school inspectors insisted that heating be installed even though it was mid-summer and that all sorts of things in the grounds had to be tidied and sorted before they gave approval.

The school was opened on March 9 with two classrooms, 31 children, much "papering over" and no heating.

The community is short of funds and any donation will be much appreciated. They have a website www.ysgolycwm.com This will give details of its bank account in the U.K. For details of the account in the USA Ysgol y Cwm can be contacted at gwybodaeth@ysgolycwm.com

Now Stop Press.

What an eventful week we've had with the solid rejection of membership in the European Union by Wales and England.

On top of this the England football team was bundled out of the European Cup tournament by those pesky Icelanders who are fielding a team of part timers. (At least some are.)

Then on Thursday we learned that the favorite candidate to be prime minister in October, the unforgettable Boris, won't put his hat in the ring after all!

And who is carrying the torch for U.K.'s football? It's Wales – their side is in the semi-finals for the first time. They beat Belgium convincingly,(3-1),on Friday. Their next opponent is Portugal whom they'll meet on Wednesday, July 9. Who knows how much further!!! What a final it would be if they and Iceland battle in the final. (I can dream too! – Ed.)

Dyna fo -- diwedd