

Cymdeithas Gymraeg



Victoria Welsh Society

Newsletter: Tachwedd 2007, November 2007

Board Members

<i>President</i>	Denis Brown	658-8701
<i>Secretary</i>		
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jen Pearson	477-2548
<i>Ladies' Auxiliary</i>	Myfanwy Rutherford	382-9343
<i>Trustees</i>	Lilian Fraser	592-3755
	Peter Murphy	383-4350
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Newsletter

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Dates, Directions, Developments

*Come - celebrate the
Festive season with us!*



Christmas Luncheon
Saturday, December 15th
Beginning at 11:30 a.m.

The University Club
on the campus of the
University of Victoria



A grand meal (roast lamb)
A lovely setting
Musical entertainment

This popular event is not exclusive to Society members, so bring along friends to share in the conviviality – \$25/person. Where else can you have a fireside drink, enjoy fine dining, sing carols, win prizes and also participate in a silent auction for such a modest cost?

Mail your responses to:

*Jen Pearson, 4277 Houlihan Place,
Victoria, V8N 3T2,*

and include the number attending, their names, your phone number, together with a cheque made out to the Victoria Welsh Society. The deadline is December 7th.

For additional details please contact our President, Denis Brown at 658-8701

This is the time of year for you to demonstrate support for the Society by completing and mailing the renewal form attached to this newsletter. It seems that we are dwindling in numbers as well as energy and enthusiasm. If

you could co-opt others to join, it would be an even stronger endorsement for the continued existence of the Society. Take a moment and insert that form, together with a cheque, into an envelope and send it to our Treasurer – consider this your pre-Christmas cultural goodwill gesture!

Members of the Puget Sound Folk Harp Society are going on tour next April and are planning to perform in Vancouver some time between April 17th and 24th in 2008. This group of folk harpers includes a number of Welsh performers. Their web site is found at: <http://psfhs.home.comcast.net/> The group's Project Director is the renowned harpist Beth Kollé: www.bethkolle.com Wouldn't it be a good idea to invite them to Victoria?

Comment on the AGM

The Annual General Meeting for the year 2006/07 was held at the CNIB Hall on Richmond Avenue on October 20th. Although fairly well attended (28 members present) the meeting was rather unsatisfactory as there was a poor response to the appeal for members to volunteer to fill the vacant positions on the Board of Directors.

The order of events was the reverse of that in former years in as much as the Business Meeting was held first, while the set-up for the meal was made. The Business Meeting concluded with the appointment of Mrs. Lilian Fraser as a trustee.

The dinner supplied by Goldstream Caterers was very satisfactory. It was followed by a new Video entitled "The Land of your Fathers". This was well received by the dozen or so members who stayed.

Denis Brown

The President's Annual Report



The past year has been one of relative quiet. The Society was not involved with a visiting Welsh choir and activities were 'domestic' in character.

In November a small party saw an adaptation of "A Child's Christmas in Wales".

This was a very good group outing and it is regrettable that we don't have more of this kind of activity.

A Christmas lunch at the University Club was well attended (43 paid) and a very enjoyable afternoon was passed: a good meal was followed by musical entertainment (a trio of young instrumentalists), an entertaining 'quiz' devised and conducted by Richard Adams and finally an uproarious visit from Santa.

St. David's Day was celebrated as we usually do, with our own Richard Adams as guest speaker. The University Club provided an excellent buffet meal and musical entertainment was provided by harp and voice. Comments on the evening were favourable.

However, it has to be said that all is not well with the Society. Unfortunately during the year two long time members and a former member died. Also Peter Murphy, a very conscientious trustee suffered a stroke. We are thankful that he is making a good recovery. Two other trustees have also resigned due to moving away from Victoria.



I would like to thank all members of the Board of Directors and Trustees for their support during the past year, and it is to be hoped that more members will step forward to serve the Society.

Denis Brown

Letters to the Editor

The September 2007 issue of the Society's newsletter included a letter and an accompanying article that decried the installation of electricity generating wind turbines in Wales. Here is one reader's response to those items:

Re: Turbines in Wales.

Mere landscape and scenery should not be priorities at a time when the world's population is approaching its limits. Inventions like these represent man's efforts to show some respect

for the environment. Would we prefer to see more of those hazardous cell phone towers? When I read that people are disturbed by them appearing in Wales I wonder how closely those people have considered the alternatives in terms

of power supply. In a world where there is overpopulation, global warming, concern about world water supplies, and extinction of species it is foolish - nay, selfish - to try to preserve the past and its scenery for our own pleasure.

To me, turbines are anything but ugly. In a hectic age like ours it is a pleasure to see such things and what they represent. In one city I was taken on a drive to the top of a mountain with the sole purpose of admiring the local turbines. Windmills in Holland were never considered ugly; they simply became an integral part of the landscape.

There are more important problems to deal with today, so let's make these inventions a part of the current landscape. They are a step in the right direction.

Sylvia Preto-Jones

Welsh Rarebits

In 2010 the Ryder Cup will be played in Wales for the first time ever. The course is at the Celtic Manor Resort in Newport. Already homeowners in near by locations have begun cashing in by putting their homes up for rent. Some have sealed contracts up to a staggering £26,000 per week from players, the world's press, sponsors and fans keen to live in private homes close to the tournament grounds. It has been suggested that anyone living within a 90-minute drive of the Celtic Manor Resort might be able to enjoy such rental agreements!



Not since Ian Woosnam successes has there been such hype about a Welsh golfer. Rhys Davies has been dubbed the "Celtic Tiger" and he is generating much excitement in the golfing world having recently turned professional. This 22 year-old from Bridgend has demonstrated prodigious talent since winning the British Boys' Championship in 2003 and then going off to a golfing scholarship in the USA where he won 10 titles and had a better stroke average than Tiger Woods. He recently won both his single matches at the Walker Cup against the Americans and is expected to do well on the fairways of the European Tour.

Wales is similar to New Zealand in a number of respects: both countries are small, their populations totals are similar, there are lots of sheep roaming the slopes of both nations and, of course, there's the fixation on rugby. Now, respected authorities are suggesting that Wales could become 'the New Zealand of Europe' if it can market itself as a preferred eco tourism destination. Sustainable development points out how aviation has such a damaging carbon footprint in terms of climate change, and how Wales can offer a "clean, green and safe image" similar to New Zealand, which aggressively promotes its natural tourist attractions. Wales has an abundance of beautiful landscapes and coastlines that are on the doorstep of the large



European populations – there is no need to fly off to distant lands to enjoy great scenery. Eco, green and sustainable tourism in Wales can encourage respect for the environment whilst at the same

time they can contribute to local economic prosperity.

Immigration is changing the cultural make-up of Wales. The number of migrant workers entering Wales from Eastern Europe has increased significantly since the eight former Soviet Bloc countries were admitted to the European Union in 2004. Over the last 3 years almost 17,000 immigrants have entered Wales seeking work, with the biggest proportion (66%) coming from Poland; Slovakia and Hungary rank second and third. The actual numbers will be much higher when the families associated with these migrant workers are taken into account.

Roots, Reflections and Recall

An open invitation exists for members and readers to submit a short piece on any topic that demonstrates their link with Wales.

Here is an evocative piece of history entitled:

Etched in my Memory

Eureka! I found it! In this case "it" turned out to be the connection between geography on paper and geography in real.

As a thirteen-year-old the prospect of an outing to Snowdon, the highest mountain in England and Wales did not excite me unduly, especially since it would be in the company of three middle-aged men, my father and two somewhat austere uncles. However, the up side was that we had the luxury of a car, and I would also miss a day of school. On this fine June morning I at first argued against my father's insistence that I wear a warm coat as well gloves and scarf, but as we waited for the mountain train on the station platform at Llanberis, I appreciated his forethought. Though it was a brilliantly sunny morning, a biting wind nipped the fingers and reddened the cheeks of waiting passengers. Soon we were aboard, seated on wooden benches alongside paneless window openings. With a final hiss of steam and an accompanying shriek of its whistle, the sturdy little engine pulled away on the narrow-gauge track.

The slow and jerky ascent gave us ample time to observe fully the unfolding panorama as ridges, valleys, and mountain lakes fell below. Faint narrow trails made by wandering sheep criss-crossed the sparsely grassed mountain sides. The sheep themselves appeared as tiny white blobs as they grazed, oblivious to the beauty surrounding them. An hour or so later, after continuous upward chugging, our journey was at an end. With whistle blowing shrilly, the little train announced its arrival as it steamed its way into the highest rail terminus in the British Isles. However, this still was not the summit of Snowdon, as the final stage of the ascent had to be made on foot. When we stepped off into the open, the full force the wind buffeted us, taking my breath away. I then tied my scarf more tightly around my head and followed in my father's footsteps to climb the final short distance to the mountain top.



Finding secure footing and balancing against the wind, I dared to look down. That was the exquisite moment of discovery. I now realized geography was a living dimension. On this particular day the summit was not shrouded in cloud, enabling us to see the entire north coast of Wales as well as the west coast down towards Cardigan Bay. In one direction the

Lleyn Peninsula stretched its arm west, resolutely pointing the way across the sea to Ireland, while the islands of Anglesey and Holyhead lay like emeralds, separated from the mainland by the glistening Menai Straits. Further along the Great Orme's Head pushed a craggy finger into the Irish Sea, while over to the east, clearly defined, were the deep vee of the Dee Estuary and the long rectangular Wirral Peninsula.

From my standpoint I could see the nature of the terrain for miles around as it rolled to the sea. The mountains gave way to the hills, and they in turn flattened out before reaching the coast. I stood, awestruck, drinking in this magnificent sight, imprinting it on my mind forever. I felt as though I were standing on a page of a giant-sized school atlas, and really understanding it for the first time. I could now relate the crooked outline of a map to actual land. It had been translated into reality.

We stood in silence, my father and I, long after our fellow train-passengers had left. I could not tell his thoughts, and at the time I could not have expressed my own. Even now, many years later, the memory of that experience lies deep in my heart. I am forever grateful for it.
Lillian Fraser

Christmas Challenge

In preparation for the Christmas Lunch, here is a challenge for Society members, friends and relatives.

The Board is confident in the assumption that not only do members enjoy strong links with that most musical of nations, but they are also "closet" poets who can conjure a verse with the best of our Celtic competitors. So in preparation for the season's festivities, you are challenged to compose a pastiche, a spoof, a take-off, or a parody of any poem, nursery rhyme or Christmas carol of your choice by giving it a Welsh twist and submitting it to the President of our Society before noon on Saturday December 15th. He will then read out the best submissions (and even some of the worst) at the Christmas Lunch and the audience will identify the winner by clapping loudly.



Here (recited to *This little piggy went to market*) is a sample of what we might expect:

*This little dragon went to market
This little dragon stayed at home
This little dragon ate roast leeks
This little dragon had none
This little dragon sang "Oes gafr eto"... all
the way home.*

Surely there are rhymer, minstrel, and coupleteers out there that can do better than this!!

Accept the challenge. Write and submit a verse to Denis Brown and give a kick-start to the Christmas celebrations there might even be a prize.

Directory Enquiries ?

Can anyone validate these two stories?

Story # 1

Caller: "Hello, is that Directory Enquiries?"

Operator: "Yes Sir, how may I help you?"

Caller: "I'd like the phone number for the Argoed Fish Bar in Cardiff, please."

Operator: " I'm sorry Sir, there's no such listing. Is the spelling correct?"

Caller: "Well, it used to be called the Bargoed Fish Bar, but the 'B' fell off the sign".

Story # 2

A Caller asked Directory Enquiries for a knitwear company in Wales:

Operator: "Woven?" Are you sure that is the correct name for the location, Madam?"

Caller: "Yes. That's what is says on the label: Woven in Wales".

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2008 Membership Form (Jan. – Dec.)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Tel. Phone #: _____

E-mail address: _____

Amount enclosed: \$16 (single) \$24 (couple / family)

Make cheque out to “Victoria Welsh Society” and mail to

Jen Pearson, 4277 Houlihan Place, Victoria, V8N 3T2