

Cymdeithas Gymraeg



Victoria Welsh Society

Newsletter: Tachwedd 2006, November 2006

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Dates, Directions, Developments

The Society's Annual General Meeting was held at the CNIB headquarters on Saturday, October 14, 2006.



The podium was draped with the draig goch, the buffet centre piece was a carved ice bowl that held fresh fruit, white table clothes set off the place settings, the mood was animated... but unfortunately

there were just over 30 members present. The banquet was splendid, there being an amazing variety and quantity of excellent food. The buffet table held a selection of salads, a whole salmon, lasagne, chicken cordon bleu, a hugely impressive hip of beef from which generous pieces were carved – all of which left little room on plates for the many vegetables. Seductive calorie-loaded desserts beckoned to accompany coffee and tea. Then came the business of the day.

Reports were received from the President and Treasurer. Our guest, Amara Heard, explored some of the mystery surrounding the repatriated Bagillt chair. Members directed that the traditional, festive Christmas luncheon should once again be celebrated at the University Club in December. A Questionnaire was completed that will allow a demographic profile to be constructed that should give insights into

what members think and feel about the Society. Our President and Treasurer renewed their key Board positions. No one volunteered for the position of Secretary. Had Sylvia Preto-Jones not stepped forward to fill one of the 3 trustee vacancies, the Board would be seriously diminished in size and effectiveness. The business section of the meeting concluded on a very positive note, with Margaret Lintern accepting a certificate that attested to her and David Lintern being appointed as Honorary Life Members; they were both founding members of the Society, and have been strong supporters of all its various activities. Following the clearing of tables, a video about Wales was watched through until 11:00 p.m.

At the AGM, members showed considerable interest in the possibility of an organized trip to see the musical *A Christmas in Wales* at the Chemainus Theatre. It runs from November 16th to December 31st and is an adaption of Dylan Thomas' *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. The production is being promoted as "a wonderland of Welsh carols, splendid words, and snowball mischief" Contact Denis Brown (658-8701) for more information.



The Canadian premier of Karl Jenkins' exciting *Requiem* will be a highlight of the concert scheduled for 8:00 pm

on November 6th, 2006 in the Farquhar Auditorium, at the University of Victoria. This renowned Welsh composer was raised in Penclawdd, Gower, educated at Gowerton Grammar School, read music at the University of Wales, Cardiff, and then commenced post-graduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music, London. He played in a variety of jazz and rock fusion bands in the 70s before composing the million-selling album *Adiemus* that topped classical and pop charts around the world. Reviews of his work describe his way of thinking and composing as being perfectly in tune with the spirit of the times. In 2005 *Requiem* topped classical charts in Britain, and has been called a stunning, lyrical work of great beauty that has both the flavour of Vaughan Williams and the driving rhythms of modern hip-hop. This work has captivated UK audiences and its performance will be a significant musical event for *all* Victorians. If you can't make it, there is another performance in Nanaimo on November 11th, 2006.



The last few issues of the newsletter have included updates on the re-designing of our Society's web site. The process is now almost

complete. The Board will be reviewing and approving content, and in early November the new site will be released. It is hoped that you will enjoy the dynamic design and promote its use among friends and associates. One new feature is a Photo Gallery, so all those snaps taken at various functions can now be viewed – from events such as St. David's Day celebrations to the recent AGM. Keep checking this address for the new web site:

www.victoriawelshsociety and report back to

the Editor on any item that you feel deserves comment.

Welsh Rare-bits

The Archbishop of Wales has instructed his clerical colleagues to start singing in the bath. In a bid to get clergy in Wales to become familiar with a new sung setting of The Welsh Eucharist, composed by John Harper. The Most Reverend Dr Barry Morgan has said on the Royal School of Church Music website: "It's just a matter of getting the tune in your head by practising it in the bath, or something. I was taught to sing it in ten minutes, so if I can do it, anybody can"... Hmmmm ... good advice *perhaps*, but as devoted wallowers know, a mere ten minutes is nothing like long enough for a bath.



Two North Wales-based entrepreneurs are cashing in on paper made from sheep droppings. They hope that their unique Sheep Poo Paper will generate the sweet smell of success. They got the idea from elephant dung paper made in Africa and also the success of an Australian manufacturing firm that uses kangaroo poo. They collect sheep droppings from the mountains near Machynlleth, sterilise it and



recover the washed, undigested fibres. Sheep digest only about 50% of what they eat, so the recovered fibres are mixed to form cardboard and paper for a wide

range of stationery and gift products. The *Creative Paper Wales* has a plant based in

a former quarry building, Twll Golau, at Aberllefenni, near the Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth. Check out their very serious website – Sheep Poo Paper, where you can buy Valentines cards (*I Love Ewe*) and maps of Wales printed on this very special paper.

Cardiff University has joined the ranks of the world’s elite universities – it is the first from Wales to break into the *Times Higher Education Supplement’s* top 200 rankings. World-renowned universities such as Oxford and Cambridge in the UK, and Yale and Harvard in the USA head the league. Cardiff University’s present rank is 141, which shows that it can compete on an international scale in a broad set of academic disciplines. Cardiff is the ninth largest university in the UK.

The latest edition of the *Rough Guide to Wales* was published in the summer and it ranks the South Wales Valleys as the top places to see in Wales. The Valleys even beat out well-known attractions such as Portmeirion, and St. David’s Cathedral. Wales as a whole is described as one of the most “beguiling” parts of Britain, but the book warns about “vast and ugly caravan parks” and “gastronomic disappointments” This guide, now in its fifth edition, ranks the next four top attractions as: Pistyll Rhaeadre waterfall, Powys; Transporter Bridge, Newport; National Waterfront Museum, Swansea; and Soar-y-Mynydd chapel, Powys; lava bread came in at #10. The book also warns visitors that “*the worst thing you can possibly do is call a Welsh person English*”.



What do Brazil, Fiji, Madagascar and Wales have in common? The answer is that they are all in the top 10 of a new league table of the bluest skies in the world. A colour test developed by the on-line travel agent Expedia.co.uk, resulted in Wales being ranked # 9 out of twenty that were judged the best blue skies in the world. Multiple factors were developed by an optical radiation team at the National Physical Laboratory in the UK that examined colour, clarity, brightness, cloud density and the



impact on people. The top British blue sky was the view from the historic Castell Dinas Bran, overlooking Llangollen. It came out ahead of skies

traditionally considered wonderfully blue, such as in Italy, the Caribbean, Thailand, and Egypt. Along with the bright blue skies, the people of north Wales were found to be among some of the happiest, proving that “*blue skies can really enhance your bonhomie*” The sky ranked #1 in this table was Rio de Janeiro, Brazil – to see the complete analysis, log on to the dedicated website www.let-yourself-go.co.uk .

Language grows out of Life

Language is a significant ethnic/cultural characteristic that can help to define an individual as well as a nation. However, language and speech are not the same thing. Speech is a broad term referring to patterned verbal behaviour. In contrast, a language is a set of rules for generating speech. Often, where two languages are spoken within a region, people combine a limited amount of the vocabulary and grammar of the different languages. Also, language evolves in response to various social conditions, including technical developments. In North





Wales, people seem keen to insert Welsh language words when speaking English, while the rest of the country people often incorporate abridged Welsh words into spoken English – all of which leads to the development of what some call Wenglish. This can be viewed as either cultural corruption, or rich linguistic diversity.

Dig back into your memory banks, or simply



just try to decode the following - then check your responses against answers found on Page 6

1. *Ych a fi* - don't touch that.
2. There's *twp* for you!
3. Are you *mitching* today, boyo?
4. It was *tamping* down this morning
5. He think's he's *crahach*
6. *Cwtch* down here
7. Go and *twty* down behind that tree
8. Where are my *daps*?
9. *Chwarae teg, mun.*
10. Common *butty*, we're late.

English humour is often about class. Traditional American humour is frequently about gender and race, with the telling of the story being as significant as the punch line. Welsh humour that is often about us "getting above ourselves", about putting on airs and graces but laughing at ourselves for doing so. Members might recognize some of the following phrases:

*I'll be there now in a minute.
 Who's coat is that jacket hanging on the floor?
 Don't look at me in that tone of voice.
 Are you reading that newspaper you're sitting on?
 Died lovely he did (= in his sleep).*

Profiles, Patterns & Problems

At the AGM a questionnaire was issued that was designed to allow a profile to be developed as to who we were as a Society and what was the strength of members' affiliation with the organization. Some of the dangers of "profiling" were discussed before the questionnaire was distributed, and assurances were given that this was a rather "shallow" probe into the background information of participants. The focus was on attitudes about and activities with the Society, and the patterns that might emerge could help the Board to build for the future. Responses to the questionnaire have been briefly summarized into 3 categories:

Background Information

Q. *Years of membership in the Society?*

- 14% - 3-5 years
- 4% - 6-9 years
- 82% - >10 years

Q. *Command of the Welsh Language?*

- 29% - fluent
- 17% - somewhat fluent
- 53% - a few phrases and songs
- 11% - no familiarity

Q. *Years lived in Victoria & BC?*

- >10 years for both

Q. *Attendance at Society functions?*

- at the St. David's Day Banquet: 92% - always or frequently
- at the Christmas luncheon: 89% - always or frequently
- at the Summer BBQ: 56% always or frequently
- at Special events: 52% always or frequently

Expressed Beliefs, Perceptions & Opinions

	Yes
I read & enjoy the newsletter:	100%
I've Welsh pals not in the Society	54%
I involve friends in the Society:	60%
I would buy a Welsh Society:	
Tee-shirt	76%
Lapel pin	84%
Neck tie	56%

Bumper sticker	69%
I would participate in:	
theatre visits	83%
golf games	9%
bridge evenings	10%
I would lead a Special Event:	32%
I would work for the Newsletter	59%
I'd accept a reasonable increase the Society's membership fee	92%

Optional Input

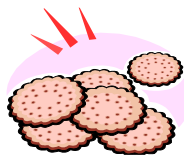
Members were invited to give direction to the Society. Suggestions included:

- revive informal sing-alongs
- advertise activities more widely
- plan special events for young people
- do more together e.g. soirees
- run elementary Welsh lessons
- bring in older children of members
- have more activities (not in homes)
- reach out to the rugby community
- share the resources of our members
- appeal more to the public in general
- link with other Welsh organizations
- sponsor choirs and scholarships

The Board will review all suggestions at the next monthly meeting

News Leek

In the July newsletter, there was an appeal to review what could be described as "the definitive recipe for Welsh cakes".



Margaret Brandon responded with the following:

"When Victoria held the Gymanfa Canu in 1989, I worked in the hospitality room, where I saw so many variations of the "same" recipe for Welsh cakes. The hosts of the next Gymafa - in Cincinnati, had a promotion desk with Welsh cakes. I asked for a copy of their recipe which they kindly sent me. Here it is:"

2 cups sugar, incl 2 tbsp of brown sugar
 1 cup softened butter
 3 eggs & enough milk to make one cup
 4 cups of sifted all purpose flour
 1 tbsp baking powder
 1 tsp salt
 1 tsp nutmeg
 1½ cups dried currants

In a large bowl, cream butter & sugar, add eggs & milk & mix well. Mix dry ingredients with flour. With electric mixer, add flour – one cup at a time. With spatula, fold in currants & refrigerate to *thoroughly chill* batter.

On floured pastry cloth or board, roll 2 to 3 cups of the batter to about ¼" thick. Cut into 1½ or 2" rounds with floured cutter. On a 340 griddle, bake 3-5 minutes on each side until light brown *and* baked through. Cool on clean kitchen towel. Store in air tight container.

Keep reserved batter refrigerated until ready to roll out. Keep utensils and work surface floured to prevent batter from sticking. The cakes freeze fairly well, but are at their best 2-3 days after baking – without freezing.

Answers

to Language Quiz on page 5

1. nasty or unpleasant
2. stupid or dopey
3. skipping school
4. raining heavily
5. posh or superior
6. snuggle or lie down (also space under the stairs)
7. crouch or squat down
8. plimsolls or running shoes
9. fair play
10. friend or pal