

Cymdeithas Gymraeg



Victoria Welsh Society

Newsletter: Medi 2007, September 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>	Peter Murphy	383-4350
	Sylvia Preto-Jones	382-0627
	Gwerfyl (Taffy) Richards	592-7842

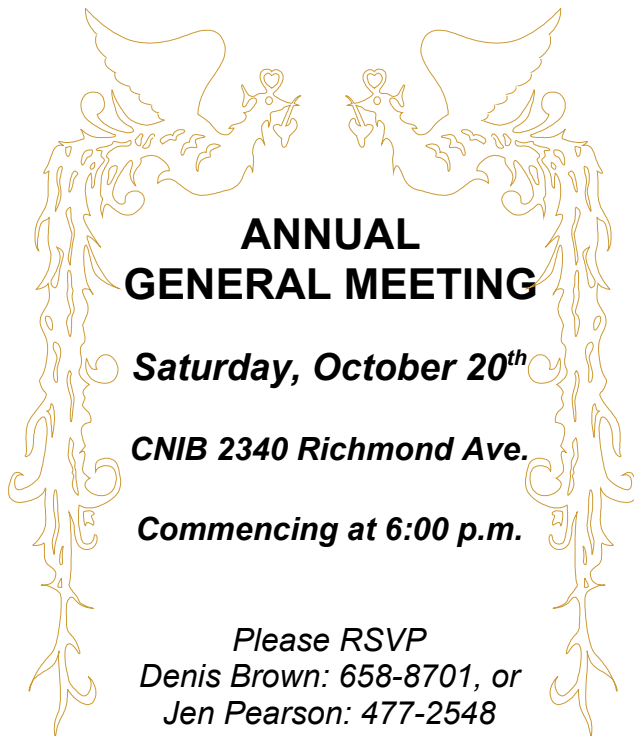
<i>Newsletter</i>	Richard Adams richardadams171@shaw.ca	370-0937
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<i>Information</i>	info@victoriawelshsociety.org
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<i>Address</i>	P.O.Box 30201, Saanich Centre, Victoria, V8X 5E1
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<i>Website</i>	www.victoriawelshsociety.org
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Dates, Directions, Developments



The agenda includes ...

- * a buffet dinner catered by the company, which received plaudits last year. The cost of the meal is only \$12/person, as it is subsidized by the Society
- * a speaker - *David Western*, will talk about the history and carving of Welsh lovespoons and he will also display some examples of his remarkable work - check out his splendid web site at:
<http://www.davidwesternlovespoons.com>
- * the obligatory business component of the AGM, which provides the opportunity to both review the past year and direct procedures for the coming year
- * a new video about Wales, if time permits.

This is a vital meeting. Many crucial positions on the Board must be filled and very significant decisions that impact the future of the Society have to be made.

You are urged to attend.

BBQ June 24th, 2007...

A small but select band of our Society enjoyed Myfanwy's hospitality at the annual barbecue in her house and garden this past June. Only eleven attended but were joined by another seven of Myfanwy's relatives and friends. Good food and fellowship were enjoyed – everyone brought something – salads, hot dishes, deserts, and our hostess provided a fine salmon. As well as a repast and much conversation, we were entertained with a harp recital by Anabel Vitek, who is principal harpist of the Victoria Symphony. Ms. Vitek provided rare entertainment with a good helping of traditional Welsh melodies which were very much appreciated. She was impressed by the attentiveness of the audience and expressed her pleasure at this.

Thank you Myfanwy for a nice afternoon.
Denis Brown, President

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Vancouver Welsh Society ...

is celebrating its centenary year. In addition to being a significant feature of Vancouver's cultural scene for 100 years, it is distinguished by being the only Welsh Society in North America that owns its own hall. The Cambrian Hall was first opened in 1929 and has been a welcoming home to the city's Welsh community ever since. A variety of centenary celebrations have been planned for November – review them by visiting the Society's attractive website at <http://www.welshsociety.com>



Advanced notice ...

Cor Cymraeg De California has contacted our Society – it is the first Welsh concert choir to be based in Southern California. It is planning a tour of the Pacific North West in the summer of 2008 and hopes to add our

city to its itinerary that includes Portland, Seattle and Vancouver. Despite being relatively new, the choir has already sung in many of the cathedrals in England and Wales, has performed in front of a selection of distinguished audiences in the USA and has recorded CDs. Its repertoire is 100% Welsh and draws on the full spectrum of both sacred and secular Welsh music. Organizers are seeking our Society's support.

A very big event ...

has been brought to our attention by Society member Gwyn Solomon. She wishes



readers to be advised that our native son, big Bryn Terfel, will be singing at the Chan Center for Performing Arts at UBC in Vancouver on Saturday, April 12, 2008. We know that this engagement

will allow us to confirm all the praise that is usually heaped on Bryn – a great voice, immaculate diction, a flair for acting and a commanding stage presence. Gwyn is definitely going and would love to hear from anyone who is interested in attending this concert; she can be contacted at: g_solomon@shaw.ca

Board member - Taffy Richards ...

reported on the Bardic Chair that left Sylvia Preto Jones's basement, here in Victoria, to be repatriated to the Bagillt History Club, Flintshire, in 2006. It was displayed to great effect in the Flintshire County Council Pavilion at this year's Welsh National Eisteddfod in Mold. Thousands of people saw it sitting on a roped off dais, near a banner that read "*Cadair Farddol Eisteddfod Bagillt 1889*". Colin Sheen, the President of the Club, reported that the story of the Chair was once again captured on television and radio. He also described how this 19th century Chair that we onced owned, was

displayed along side the one carved by the firm that made this year's Bardic Chair.

Letters to the Editor



Readers are encouraged to respond to anything that they have read in our newsletters, or to react to any issue that they believe will interest members of our Society.

Dear Editor,

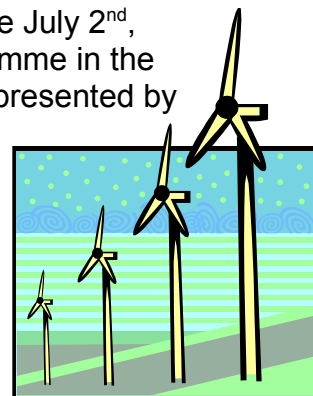
I wonder should the Welsh Society of Victoria express its concern about the ugly windmills going up all over the Welsh hills. Perhaps they should put them instead in the Great Windsor Park near London. It was quite windy last time I visited and there is a large area of open parkland adjoining the Royal Apartments.

David Lintern

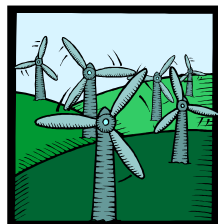
Editor's Note: the following passionate article on the proposed installation of windmills was sent to many Welsh expatriates around the world:

Turbulent Turbines

No one who viewed the July 2nd, 2007 television programme in the series, "Cefn Gwlad", presented by Dai Jones, Llanilar, can have failed to appreciate the scenic splendour of the Meirionydd hills of North Powys near the village of Llanerfyl. Here is a totally unspoilt, beautiful area of Wales. The views across Dyffryn Banwy, Cwm Nant yr Eira, Aran Fawddwy, Snowdonia and Llyn Efyrynwy (Lake Vyrnwy) were superb - Welsh landscapes at their best. Therefore, what sort of people - what sort of nation - would be so stupid and so shortsighted as to wil-



fully destroy those wonderful landscapes and that irreplaceable beauty? The answer is the Welsh people and their elected representatives in the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). This outstanding hill area, from Lake Vyrnwy in the north to Carno in the south is about to be totally desecrated as part of WAG's conceived, criminal TAN 8 wind energy proposals. The beauty of Wales means nothing to ambitious, innumerate self-serving politicians as they seek to suck up to their political masters in London. The politicians know this huge region at the heart of Wales as Strategic Area B. It is here that WAG seeks to install at least 200 MW of wind energy. This will mean at least 100 monster turbines being driven, like giant nails, into the unprotected spine of Wales. Each turbine will be 400 feet in height, or almost treble the height and width of the 103 tiddlers in nearby Llandinam (this is the height of Nelson's Column). In fact, if the recommendations of the infamous Garrad Hassan Report are adopted, there will be over double that in Area B. It suggests 430MW of wind energy and 215 gigantic turbines. Incredible! Cefn Gwlad featured the nationally renowned folk singer, Sian James (she lives near Llanerfyl just to the east of Strategic Area B). Her lifestyle and inevitably the lives of those unsuspecting people



in North Powys will be a thing of the past. The scenic beauty of a vast area will be destroyed, as the turbines will be clearly visible from a 30-mile radius.

Such huge turbines will be plain as daylight from Snowdonia, so that wild beauty will also be ruined. The tourist industry of much of Wales will be decimated. The racket that will emanate from such a massive wind farm will permeate the homes of North Powys day and night, for miles around. It will drive people to distraction. Many will also have their television re-

ception ruined. These turbines will be far taller and have far thicker blades than anything currently in Wales. Will the people of Powys gain anything? Of course not - green-washed politicians are sacrificing them in order to generate a trifling of "stop/go" electricity for the West Midlands of England, where the sporadic 50MW to 100MW will barely be noticed, compared to the area's huge consumption. Sian James was shown in her own recording studio at her peaceful home in the hills, where she records wonderfully quiet, atmospheric folk songs - they will soon be accompanied by thumping turbine sounds, far louder than the bass of any rock song, that will reverberate through the foundations of her home. Are the people of Powys going to be sacrificial lambs, or are they going to speak up and fight back to prevent the Armageddon that is about to be unleashed on their lives?

Safwn yn y bwlch,
Lyn J Jenkins
Clyn-yr-ynys, Gwbert, Cardigan. SA43 1PR

Welsh Rarebits

Llandoverly College, one of Wales' best-known public schools, is to become one of the first schools in the country to offer lessons in Mandarin. This language will become an option because the school believes globalization will be part of the life and times of young people in the years ahead. Hence, it is assuming the responsibility of preparing them for the future, in addition to teaching them about their proud Welsh heritage. Instruction will start in the prep school and a Chinese teaching assistant, sponsored by the British Council, will join the school in September. This move reflects the need to understand the language and culture of China, as it is one of the world's fastest growing

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economies and largest exporters of an amazing variety of products.

The seaside town of Aberystwyth has been voted the best place in the UK to be a student. This was determined by a survey of 34,000 students from 81 university towns across the UK. The qualifier is that the survey concentrated solely on extra-curricular activities and did not consider academic factors. It seems that Aberystwyth's appeal is based on factors such as being on the coast (beach BBQs are big), having a nightlife that rivals London's, and enjoying more pubs per head of population than anywhere else in Britain. So if students fail courses, they will do so in a very merry milieu.



This summer, a forgotten Welsh explorer who mapped extensive areas of Canada, was honoured when a plaque dedicated to his name was unveiled at Grey Coat Hospital School, in Westminster. David Thompson (1770-1857) has been largely forgotten in Wales, but has heroic status, and a river named after him, here in Canada. He is considered one of the greatest surveyors/land geographers in history, having explored and mapped immense areas of Western Canada. He was the first to map the Columbia River from source to mouth, he worked on the international boundary commission, was a fur trader, justice of the peace, business man, and author. The London plaque, erected 150 years after his death (he is buried in Mount Royal cemetery, Montreal), acknowledges some of his amazing accomplishments.

Croeso i Gymru indeed! Tourism is now very big business in Wales, having attracted over 11 million



tourists who injected over £3 billion into the economy last year. Since the abolition of the Wales Tourist Board, a more sophisticated marketing approach has been developed by the four regional tourism partnerships. Each of these regions e.g. North Wales, South West Wales etc. is developing its own approach to publicizing natural strengths and particular assets. In addition to targeting specific countries and age groups, new approaches are being used that focus on green tourism, outdoor activities and alternative lifestyles involving many optional pursuits.

An Ear to the Ground

The Welsh word for society translates as 'cymdeithas', which also has connections to the concept of 'travelling together'. So, in celebration of our links to Wales and our interest in its culture, here are some sketches of artists who have garnered attention over recent years:

Gee Williams – novelist

Her writing has been described as offbeat, subtle, haunting and fresh.



You can confirm this by reading her novel "Salvage", a literary thriller about possession and betrayal, set in coastal West Wales and Chester. She is the first author to be published by Alcemi (July 2007), the English language imprint of Y Lolfa, a company operating out of Talybont, Ceredigion, that has been publishing in Wales for 40 years; it concentrates on original, contemporary fiction that will resonate within Wales and far beyond.

Further insights into what makes Gee Williams tick, can be gained by reading her diary/blog at: <http://www.geewilliams.blogspot.com/>

Llyr Williams – pianist

He has taken the classical music world by storm, and usually cautious critics are describing his piano performances as awe inspiring, wondrous and spellbinding. Born in 1976 in Pentrebychan, North Wales, he graduated from Queen's College, Oxford, and went on to gather every prize and honour during his postgraduate scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music. A man of few words, which he uses sparingly, he is the antithesis of the showman on stage. Nevertheless, he is equally as impressive in the role of soloist, accompanist, or chamber musician. He has a wide repertoire and his recordings clearly demonstrate a great musical intelligence.



Gwawr Edwards – singer

Here is a stunning young woman, with a soprano voice that has captured the attention of discerning musicologists. She's been described as "an up-and-coming Katherine Jenkins". At the age of 23 she's won nearly every major singing competition in Wales and also enjoyed a variety of concerts in which she has performed with well-known singers, such as Jason Howard. She has a CD to her credit – a family production in which she sings with her sister and Dad; he farms near Llanon in Ceredigion. In September she will continue her studies at the Guildhall, London, as she aspires to a concert and operatic career. She is a finalist in the Young Welsh Singer



of the Year contest to be held at Brangwyn Hall, Swansea on September 15th, and can also be seen on youtube, singing the Jewel Song from Gounod's Faust. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehCRKVRABM>

Gwyneth Lewis – poet

Born in Cardiff, her work has received many accolades, including the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival Prize, and the Welsh Arts Council Book of the Year Prize. She has published 6 books of poetry in Welsh and English, and one book of prose. She is responsible for composing the 6-foot high words (the world's biggest poem!) in front of the iconic Welsh Millennium Centre. She is a member of the Welsh Academi, and was Poet in Residence at the Physics and Astronomy Department of Cardiff University. She was appointed Wales' first National Poet from 2005-06 and although not obliged to compose verse specifically for special occasions, she did write an elegy for Gwynfor Evans, commemorating his life and achievements. In addition to all this, she has written 3 libretti for the Welsh National Opera.



Roots, Reflections and Recall

A number of past editions of our newsletter included reminiscences by Society members about their connections with Wales. Here is another such piece of living history, written by Myfanwy Rutherford and entitled

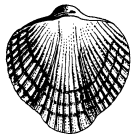
Old Times in Wales

My Da was the second of four boys born into the Morgan family on Woodlands Terrace in Swansea at the end of the 1800's. This was a time when one word of Welsh at school would earn a caning, but that did not curtail the boys' mischief. One of his pet stories which came out in the preparation for my homework time in



the 20's was of the wooden lead pencils which required careful sharpening with special pocket knives of which he would make a great show and rightly so because as he was an expert at it. Then would come the tale of a new School Master who came from Glasgow with a wonderful Lowland "burr" to his speech but who was, unfortunately, quite deaf. What boy could resist saying, very quietly, in imitation of that broad accent, "burr" and all, "Jimmie Burns, you're as deaf as a post". To which would come back "Morgan you're muttering," followed by, in normal volume "No please Teacher, I was just asking for the loan of your penknife". Then the whole class would burst out laughing to the amazement of the Master, but only momentarily, as he was "on to" boys and all their tricks and had them back to work in jig time. The boys all ended up loving Jimmie Burns - he was such a good teacher.

One of the brothers' favourite Saturday bicycle adventures was to go "down the Gower" and go to a cottage for lunch, where the family served "fresh oysters on the half-shell, tea and bake-stone bread".



Father sat outside in a wooden armchair and cracked the oysters' shells open; Mother was in the kitchen, tending the kettle and the bake-stone bread; the two grown daughters, in aprons and caps served in the parlor. Well, soon after the boys arrived, there would break out (and I am not saying who or what started it) a great argy-bargy in that lovely, lilting, accented Wenglish, "And WHO is attending to the gentlemen in the corner?" Snap back came the reply, "I am attending to the gentlemen in the corner" voice rising to forte, "and please to mind your OWN business" Then Mother, also in her apron and cap, would come from the kitchen, "Now girls, indeed to goodness! Peace to

the house!" and so it would go. Meanwhile, outside, Father would smile, lay down his tools, tilt back in his chair, take out his pipe, leisurely tamp in a fill of tobacco and light up with a long sigh of pure pleasure, knowing he would have plenty of time for a good, long smoke before anyone would be getting "fresh oysters on the half-shell"!

Myfanwy Rutherford

Letter from the Editor

To: Members of the Welsh Society of Victoria:

It is with some sadness that I relinquish the position of Editor of this Society's newsletter.

Compiling important announcements, including the splendid stories from our members, offering some snippets on events and occurrences that have happened in Wales, etc. was very rewarding. However, after over two years, I believe that it is time for a fresh perspective. Therefore, I urge someone to accept the exciting challenge of putting together our Society's bi-monthly newsletters.

Advice and encouragement will be given to whomsoever takes over the position.

Thanks to everyone who has given me support over the last two years. Diolch am Bopeth.

I wish you all, and the Victoria Welsh Society, success in future.

*Cofion cynnes,
Richard*

Postscript:

*Once gain, I urge members to attend the Annual General Get-together on **October 20th**.*

I believe that this is a pivotal event that will determine whether or not our Society will continue to exist in the immediate future

Late Notice

Just prior to this issue going to print, our Society was contacted about a “*must see*” Harp and Voice Concert, scheduled for next month, that involves two very popular musicians from Washington State:

**Bronn Journey, a harpist of Welsh descent,
and his wife, soprano Katherine Journey.**

Two performances will take place at Knox Presbyterian Church, 2964 Richmond Road, Victoria - on Friday, October 12th at 7:30 p.m. and Saturday, October 13th at 2:00 p.m.

Bronn Journey writes that although the harp is well known, it is not “*well heard*”, so his program will include a wide variety of musical types, from classical works to spirituals; Katherine will sing a number of selections.

The couple has performed widely across the USA and recorded many different types of CDs. They have a splendid web site that includes biographical information, a photo gallery, and opportunities to digitally download some of their extensive repertoire: <http://phileomusic.com>



This will be a very popular program - enquiries are already being received. Contact the church office for group seating: Email: knoxpcvic@telus.net. Phone: 592-6323. The church’s web site includes a map: www.knoxpcvictoria.org

Tickets are available at an advance sale price of \$15 until September 15th after which they will be sold at \$20 - the Society was assured that this is still a bargain! Ivy's Bookshop, Russell Books, and Long & McQuade Musical Instruments are some of the locations where tickets can be bought.