

CYMDEITHAS GYMRAEG

VICTORIA

WELSH SOCIETY

Llythyr newyddion - newsletter
Ebrill 2008 April

Board members

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Secretary	Gillian Greydanus	
Treasurer	Jen Pearson	477-2548
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From the editor

This is the first number of the Newsletter under new management. Your editor hopes to produce as acceptable a product as those of Richard Adams. His will be a hard act to follow. It will be immediately noticed that the dragon has disappeared from the mast-head. This is due to some formatting changes that have made it difficult, if not

impossible, to re-produce the former design However it is to be hoped that we can return to the dragon in later issues. My intention is to produce four numbers in the course of a year, aimed at covering significant events in the life of the Society and its members with comment on Welsh affairs, wherever taking place, past and present.

St. David Remembered.

We celebrated our Patron Saint's day, fittingly, on March 1st. this year with dinner and an evening's entertainment at the University Club. Including guests there were 58 attending. A buffet meal, of the usual high standard, was provided. This was followed by the usual toasts - the Queen, Canada and Wales and St. David.

Instead of a speaker a showing of Welsh Ladies' Costumes was held. These were made a good number of years ago by the Ladies' Auxiliary and this was the first public showing in some time. The models were friends of Myfanwy Rutherford and we are grateful for their participation. Thanks are also due to Joan Brown for narration of the description of the gowns and to Myfanwy Rutherford for directing the event.

The evening was rounded out by a Celtic music duo (Celtic Reflections), who accompanied themselves on a variety of instruments, and finally with the reading of greetings from absent friends and from fraternal Welsh Societies. We heard from Sylvia Preto (in Whitehorse), Maggie Nixon (in Kelowna) and Richard Adams in Mongolia! In tradition the evening concluded with the singing of *O Canada* and *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*.

Once again this is the time to ensure that you've paid your dues for this year Dues are due on January 1st (our year is the same as the Income Tax year.) Thanks to those who have paid but for those who have overlooked, please send a cheque to our

Treasurer, Mrs. J Pearson

4277 Houlihan Place,

Victoria, V8N 3T2

Still at the same low

price of \$ 16, single and \$ 24 family.

NOTICE

Ontario

Welsh Festival, Stratford, Ontario.

May 2nd.- 4th. 2008

ARDEN PARK HOTEL 1-877-788-8818

The Festival is a celebration of Welsh music and culture which draws visitors from all over the USA, Canada and Wales. Highlights are :

Friday night - Noson Lawen

Various events all day Saturday.

Banquet and concert on Saturday night with the Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir with Catrin Davies, soloist.

Sunday, Gymanfa Ganu at Parkview Church.

Summer programme

Your Board is offering to organise a tour of the Ciderworks and a winery in Saanich if there is enough interest in this activity. To make it worthwhile it should involve at least a dozen participants. Please call the President or the Treasurer if you are interested in such a tour.

How about a group visit to the *Chemainus Theatre* for lunch and *South Pacific*. The show runs through June to the end of August. We need numbers to make this go so please call the President or the Treasurer.

One event that has been fixed is that of the **Summer BBQ at Myfanwy's** . This is scheduled for **June 29th**. And this year we shall be hosting the **Welsh Choir of Southern California**. The choir is 25 strong and with their travelling guests we expect a party of up to 38. We must establish numbers for this event so if you want to attend **please book up for this now by using the form at the end of the newsletter**.

BBQ time is anytime after 2.00 p.m. and there will be the usual \$5 charge.
(Note that the choir are singing Evensong in Cobble Hill at 7.00p.m.that night)

News from Wales

Once again Wales are Grand Slam champions, as they were in 2005. This was achieved with a win over France at the Millenium Stadium , the Welsh XV having disposed of England, Italy, Scotland and Ireland in previous games. After their less than heroic performance in the World Cup last year (remember their loss to Fiji) this return to success was somewhat unexpected. Does it have anything to do with their English coach? Whatever the reason all Wales is proud of them.

We cannot leave the subject of sport without noting that Cardiff City are finalists in the F.A. Cup to be played at the new (and expensive) Wembley Stadium on May 17th. Cardiff are finalists for the first time since 1927, when they won. Will there be a repeat of history or will Portsmouth, who last won in 1939 prevail? And we must also report that Swansea Town F.C. have won promotion from League 1 to the Coca-cola Championship division. It's a banner year for Welsh sport but a pity about Wrexham Town F.C.-they're certain to be playing non-league next year.

Dim tyrfa yw tri – Three is not a crowd.

Britain's oldest surviving identical male triplets - Idwal, Ivor and Morgan Llewellyn are alive and well and living in the Rhondda. Born in 1928, with a combined weight of 17lb. they are but in second place behind three Yorkshire born girls. in longevity, if not in weight. After the event Mrs. Llewellyn was known as Mam Trip.— *Thanks to Rita Miller.*

Ydych chi'n hoffi 'Scotch'?

If you like 'Scotch' you should love 'Welsh' also. Jim Murray, author of the *Whisky Bible* gave *Penderyn Whisky* a rating of ninety-one percent in 2005. Other reviewers have heaped praise too. Penderyn is a small village just inside the Breconshire National Park, three miles from Hirwaun on the Brecon Road. It's a fact (to quote *Countryman Magazine*) that a little known village is taking the whisky world by storm as it revives a distilling tradition established by Welsh ancestors hundreds of years ago. Archeological digs have established that small distilleries were in being in the fourth century Coming nearer our times there was a distillery at Dale in Pembrokeshire by 1705 and that the owner. Evan Williams left to set up the Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey Company. This was in the region of Kentucky that now supplies Penderyn with barrels! The last Welsh distillery to close was the Ffrongoch, near Bala, in 1895 It has been a long hundred years until Penderyn.

Beware Jellyfish.

Millions of the genus *Pelagia noctiluca* are set to invade South and West Wales beaches this year, so if you brave the chilly waters watch out for these mauve stingers which vary in size from a 5p piece to a clenched fist. Swansea University has been granted 50,000 pounds to estimate how many of them there are between Wales and Ireland. (I wouldn't mind getting a hapenny per head! –Ed.)

And in the Welsh Diaspora

The March-April copy of *Ninnau* (*the North American Welsh newspaper*) contains a report of new street signs in Welsh appearing in the town of Gaiman, Argentina. This is one of the towns most visited by Welsh visitors from all over the world.

The January issue of *Ninnau* commemorates the life of George Jones who ,virtually singlehandedly, founded the Brantford, Ontario Rugby Club in 1950 (he and his wife arrived as immigrants the previous year) and subsequently with his brother were the *Patriarchs* of getting rugby into Ontario High Schools despite much resistance.

Closer to home Maggie Nixon writes from Kelowna on the concert given by the Vancouver Welshmen's Choir on March 8th. A varied repertoire with a good helping of Welsh,(*Men of Harlech, Gwahoddiad, Bryn Calfaria, Myfanwy,*), Selections from *Pirates of Penzance*, Two American folk songs and the Canadian song *Four Strong Winds*.

The conductor, Jonathan Quick is a fine tenor and sang solo with the choir.

Your Society was recently made a very attractive offer by *Welsh Country Magazine, of Haverfordwest*, to reproduce in our Newsletter one of their articles each month of issue. No strings attached. Needless to say the Editor jumped at the chance of free and interesting copy. We are very grateful to *Welsh Country Magazine* for this valuable gift. So in this issue we shall print a precis (by Lilian Fraser) of an account of the life of an unsung Welsh heroine of the nineteenth century.

Betsi Cadwaladyr

Described by Florence

Nightingale as “that wild woman from the Welsh hills”, Betsi lived an eventful life. Born in 1789, she was sent, at the age of nine to live with a family where she learned domestic skills and, most importantly for her future, also to speak English. At the age of fourteen she ran away to Liverpool, where she got a job in domestic service, and changed her name to Davis. Subsequently, having had several employers and obtaining varied experience, including nursing, she found herself in Brussels at the time of the battle of Waterloo. Putting her nursing skills to good use she helped tend the wounded in the days following the battle. Back in Liverpool in 1816 she prepared to marry a Captain Thomas Harris but two days before the wedding he was lost when he went down with his ship the *Perseverance*.

Later, defying her father's dictum that she return home to Wales, she moved to London. By 1820 she was nanny to a sea captain's family and travelled the world, experienced an earthquake in Peru, was horrified by rattlesnakes in Chile and became acquainted with opium dens. Along the way she married a native of the East Indies. The well-travelled Betsi finally returned to England, penniless, but secured a position as a nurse in Guy's Hospital before going on to make a living caring for private

patients in their homes. However life held further adventure and even greater challenges in store for Betsi Davis.

The Crimean War broke out and the newspapers were full of the terrible suffering of so many wounded. Such news spurred Betsi into action notwithstanding her age being sixty-four. In the National archive in Kew there is a letter that she wrote volunteering for nursing duties in the Crimea. Part of it reads :

My age forty-four robust Constitution

And I will endeavour to do the utmost of

My power to sirve the sufferers in the War.

Thus, Betsi, lopping twenty years off her age, embarked on the most significant part of her life. She would soon meet Florence Nightingale who, some time earlier had established a hospital at Scutari, a long way from the battlefields in the Crimea, believing that it was too dangerous to work any nearer the front. Betsi was incensed at this decision and insisted that such a distant location could not provide the immediate care that was so badly needed. The two women, both determined and opinionated, clashed repeatedly until at last Betsi's superior washed her hands of the wayward Welsh nurse. So Betsi set off for Balaclava to attend the neglected casualties, who lay dirty with often maggot-infested wounds. Her skills in caring and coping with the adversity of the situation showed her superior ability. After a few weeks she was asked to assume further responsibilities so as to further improve conditions. The *red tape* of those days did not deter her from dispensing government supplies as she saw fit.

Despite their previous bitter confrontations, Florence Nightingale, after two visits to Balaclava, recognised Betsi;s work as worthy of receiving a government pension. However Betsi remained unforgiving of the great lady and even after returning home in 1855, exhausted and in poor health, she continued in her criticism of the legendary *Lady with the Lamp*. Betsi died in poverty in 1860 at the age of seventy-one, and was laid to rest in a pauper's grave numbered 25513. However she has not been entirely forgotten- her name lives on, honoured and remembered at an annual nursing lecture, held in Cardiff, in recognition of her having *advanced the cause of patient care*.

BBQ , June 29th 2008

I / we shall attend the BBQ

Name (s)

Address

Postal code

Telephone #

E- mail address

I enclose : \$ 5 (single)

\$ 10 (couple/family)

Make cheque out to **Victoria Welsh Society** and mail to :

Mrs. J Pearson, 4277 Houlihan Place, Victoria, V8N 3T2

And finally ;

*As you will have noticed the Society has a Secretary once more!
The board are very pleased and grateful that Mrs Gillian Greydanus
volunteered to join them and take on this task. Thank you Gill.*