

Cymdeithas Gymraeg



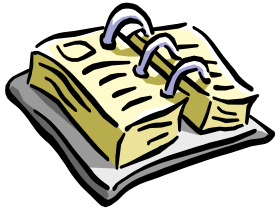
Victoria Welsh Society

Newsletter: Ionawr, Chwefror 2006 / January, February 2006

Board Members

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------------|
| <i>President</i> | Denis Brown | 658-8701 |
| <i>Secretary</i> | Marion Kelbrick | 250-743-3432 |
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Directions and Dates



FORWARD:

VWS will be holding its **St. David's Day celebration** on Saturday, March 4th. Ink this date in on your calendar. The University Club has been booked, music and entertainment planned and Spring weather has been ordered. Please fill out and send in the form attached to this newsletter as soon as you can; you will note that for the second year running there has been no cost increase. Gwych!

In September the Cwmbach Choir returns. The Board plans to book the auditorium at the University for an evening program on Saturday, September 2nd. Further details will be given in a later newsletter.

BACKWARD:

Fewer than 40 members gathered to herald Christmas at a lunch on December 10th. The setting was splendid, the food was excellent and Dr. David Lintern, our MC, related a succession of remarkable jokes and generated a most convivial atmosphere. There even was a visit from Santa Claus and his helper who distributed the draw prizes. David earned second place in the Christmas Quiz – his prize of a packet of Smarties should ensure first place next time! The winner was an anonymous submission whose entry was distinguished by humour rather than correct answers. This person is now challenged to claim the valued *a pecin creision* prize.

Myfanwy's Christmas party was on December 18th. A small but merry crowd enjoyed themselves immensely. Unfortunately, the household is obliged to eat leftovers through to Spring.



STRAIGHT AHEAD:

It's time for you to renew membership in our Society, and so **you are urged to complete and forward the attached form**. Fees remain the same as in recent years, despite increased costs in running various activities. The VWS is very dependent on these contributions, so please don't delay in submitting this year's renewal form.

Welsh Rarebits

Wales set another world record when on December 3rd '05, the annual Santa Run was held in Newtown, Powys. Over 4,500 racers donned red and white robes for this sixth, fund-raising event. But it is not only the world's biggest gathering of galloping Father Christmas athletes; they all spin yo-yos at the beginning of the race and so set another world record for the number of Santas yo-yoing at the same time! Almost \$700,000 has been raised for various charities over recent years.

Farmer Rees from Pencoed, near Bridgend, in Mid Glamorgan, captured headlines last year when he claimed that his female pig called "Mouse" could speak – and with a French accent indeed! He was interviewed on CBC's "As It Happens" last November

and the clip was re-run on January 2, '06. But why wouldn't that mochyn fawr say "Shw mae", rather than "Ullo"?



Bryn Terfel is 40! Now, despite rave reviews as one of the greatest ever performers in the role of the chief god Wotan in Wagner's Ring Cycle, our superstar is considering taking 2008 off from the opera stage. His travels have been keeping him away from his wife and sons and their home in Bontnewydd, near Caernarfon, and he doesn't want the life of an absentee Dad. Bryn is now so well known that his record company didn't use his last name on his most recent CD, *Simple Gifts*. This is a crossover album of classical standards and modern interpretations; guest artists include John Williams and Aled Jones. Did you know that Bryn's last name is also Jones, but he took his middle name for his professional career because there was already an active singer called Bryn Jones?

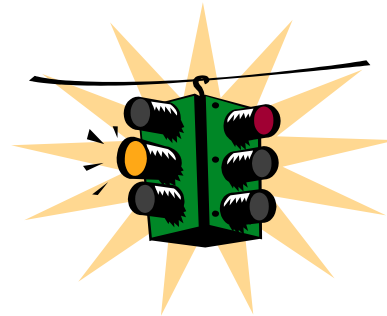
Sir Anthony Hopkins - was honoured with the Cecil B deMille Award at the Golden Globes in early January. This was an acknowledgement of his lifetime achievement in film work. Born in Margam, near Port Talbot, our boyo was knighted in 1993, but he now lives in Los Angeles having taken out US citizenship in 2000.

What's new pussycat? Well, it's Sir Tom now that the Queen has knighted our big-voiced singer from Pontypridd. To Tom Jones, it's *Not Unusual* to have been put on the New Year's honours list to receive the Order of the British Empire. Now, he's up there with those other rocking knights such

as Paul McCartney, Cliff Richards, Mick Jagger, and Elton John. So perhaps the *Green, Green Grass* is to be found in the Rhondda Valley.

Tryweryn

Tryweryn is a name that will live in infamy in the psyche of the Welsh. For the benefit of the readers from other lands, the name is synonymous in Wales with the heavy-handed autocratic government legislation by Westminster involving the destruction of an area of natural beauty in rural Wales to build a reservoir for Liverpool. This egregious piece of legislation successfully initiated by the city of Liverpool was met with an intense, widespread and cohesive opposition from all parts of Wales, and by 35 of the 36 Welsh MPs of all parties. Despite the most strenuous opposition, the Macmillan government of the day sanctioned the Bill that resulted in the erection of a dam and the subsequent flooding of 800 acres in the Tryweryn Valley, a pristine countryside near Bala in North Wales.



The Welsh-speaking village of Capel Celyn was effaced from the map. Seventy people were displaced and twelve farms and portions of four other farms were expropriated for the development. It was only a matter of time before the thirst of the Liverpoolians would be slaked at the expense of a unique area of great cultural value to Wales. This gross insult inflicted a grievous wound in the consciousness of the Welsh people and fanned the resurgence of

nationalism in the land. Graffiti on boulders and overpasses in Wales are still extant today and are a painful reminder of those tumultuous times in the mid-sixties when the entreaties of a fragile nation were ignored by the stroke of a pen of an unsympathetic and dismissive Westminster government. On the rare occasions that a very dry summer visits the area and the water level is low in the dam, the remnants of the village stand out grotesquely on the valley floor in mute testimony to a distant government's disdainful rejection of a nation's wishes.

Now, some forty years later, the conscience of the current Liverpool council has been pricked by a touch of guilt over the Tryweryn affair, and it is in the process of penning an apology to the citizens of Wales. The wording has not yet been released. It will be an interesting exercise in diplomacy to see how the Liverpool council of today can honestly and effectively indite and issue a formal apology about something that it was not directly involved in at the material time. It is highly improbable that any so-called apology issued on a piece of paper, however skilfully couched, can possibly atone for the vile deed that was committed in the sixties at the instigation of their Liverpool council predecessors.

Gwilym Evans. The Calgary Welsh Society

Annwyl Gyfeillion

Our Society recently received an e-mail from Mike Short who lives in Aberfan. He has approached us hoping that we could link him up with a pen pal here on the Island. Mike is a family man who works in heavy industry, and both he and his children are Welsh speakers. If anyone is interested contact him at mikeshort@ntlworld.com

The Welsh North American Chamber of Commerce (WNACC) has also contacted our Society. This organization is designed to strengthen business and professional links between Wales, the United States and Canada.



It intends to promote and facilitate bilateral, multi-sector trade by offering a range of services to companies from Wales and North America, from initial market entry to mentoring of more established companies. Members of the Chamber also wish to develop their networks and effectiveness as ambassadors of Wales. You are invited to browse its web site where you'll find a mission vision statements, information on members and links to current and past newsletters: www.waleschamber.org

Another contact has been received on behalf of Welshman Rob Allen. In late November '05, he released his CD entitled "My Tribute to Wales". Some regard him as the best singer-songwriter to come out of Wales in a long time. The CD can be ordered online at amazon.co.uk and is also distributed through HMV, WH Smith, and Virgin records. More details are available at Rob's web site:

<http://www.roballenmusic.co.uk>

Welsh influences – far and wide

For centuries dedicated whisky drinkers have believed that nothing could be more Scottish than a wee dram of Glenfiddich.

That fine concoction will always be correctly recognized as truly Scottish in origin - but *not* the revered name on the bottle, we are now informed!



Following extensive research, a new book by William Oxenham entitled, '*Welsh Origins of Scottish Place-names*' puts a very different perspective on how Scottish names originated, because some are 1,000 to 2,500 years old. They existed when the language spoken across Britain was the forerunner of modern Welsh! Many names survived, though in forms that may be somewhat distorted, to still retain sufficient traces of their earliest ancestry, thus allowing their original forms and meanings to be discerned with reasonable certainty. In some instances this could be easily achieved: for example '*Perth*' (as pronounced by a native Scot, of course) means the same as in the Welsh - the word for a bush or a hedge! Explaining other Scottish place names took more language detective work - as in '*Penicuik*', a name derived from '*pen y gog*' meaning 'hill of the cuckoo' in the Welsh vernacular! Even Edinburgh, the Scottish capital city, is an anglicized version of the Welsh *din Eidyn* - Eidyn's fort. And *Glasgow*, would you believe, is derived from '*cae glas*', green field! As for '*Glenfiddich*', the name had once been *Glyn Fiddich* and *Glen of Guidid* where *Guidid* was a Pictish king whose name may have derived from '*gwydd*' (woods or goose). So, put all that in your Welsh crystal glass ... and sup it with relish!

As for Ireland ... it may claim to be the ancestral home of more than a dozen

American presidents, but very little has ever been mentioned about the significant Welsh contribution to all walks of American life! In a letter to *The Mirror*, Sid Hill of Dowlais, Glamorgan, wrote that the facts of the matter were very noteworthy. How many of us realized that a significant twenty percent of the Pilgrim Fathers were from Wales - as was the captain of the *Mayflower*; or that fifty percent of the signatories to the Declaration of Independence were Welsh (or of Welsh descent) - as were no fewer than 9 U.S. Presidents? Further, it was a fact that the American War of Independence had been partly financed by industrialist Robert Morris (the name recalled in the New Jersey township of Morristown); that Pennsylvania had been founded by William Penn and Rhode Island by a Roger Williams - all Welshmen! Yet again, more enterprising Welshmen established Yale, Princeton and John Hopkins universities. Even more surprising, if you were to venture about half way up the steps inside the Washington Monument (leading to the observation level) you would come across a stone inscribed by Thomas Jefferson that read, '*Cymru am Byth*'. Jefferson must have been 'one of us' too

Margaret Kuytway – *Calgary Welsh Society*

Untrue – perhaps



Have you heard the one about the Aberystwyth landlady who said to her lodger "*It's going to be very cold tonight so I've put another dog on your bed*"?

Cymdeithas Gymraeg Victoria Welsh Society

2006 Membership Form

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*

Cut -----

St. David's Day Banquet

Saturday, March 4th. 2006

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____

Tel. Phone #: _____

E-mail address: _____

Number of people: _____ Cheque for: _____ (\$35.00/person)

*Make cheque out to "Victoria Welsh Society" and mail to
Jen Pearson 4277 Houlihan Place, Victoria, V8N 3T2*