

WELSH SOCIETY
VANCOUVER

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The Cambrian News

From The Editor:

Sadly this issue again pays tribute to two members of our Society who have contributed so much to its viability over many years of service. In addition we hear that our centenarian, Dorothy Walters has passed away. An appropriate tribute to her will appear in a subsequent issue.

The 'Celtic at the Cambrian' evening was a great success and all those who volunteered their services deserve our thanks. Especial thanks are due to Neville Thomas, not just for the idea but also for the immense amount of work he put into arranging the event and obtaining door prizes and sponsorships.

Our Anniversary Celebrations now command your attention, starting with the Dinner on the 16th and followed by the November weekend. Plan to attend and book early!

Readers should be aware that the society website, www.welshsociety.com is now available and will include issues of the Newsletter. Members who prefer to download or simply view issues will save the Society duplicating and mailing costs.

David Llewelyn Williams

Annwyl Cymdeithas Gymreig Vancouver,

We are a group of Welsh artists with an interest in connecting with Welsh links overseas. We are Welsh speakers with a great interest in showing our work in Canada. If you could recommend any non profit galleries or local government run sites that we could contact, we would be most appreciative. If we do manage to secure shows 2005/2006 in Vancouver, we would love to meet with your society.

Yr eiddoch yn gywir,

Nichola Hope

http://www.welshartsarchive.org.uk/galleries/nichola_hope.htm

Anniversary Dinner

Saturday October 16th

Celebrating 75 years at the Cambrian Hall
1929 – 2004

MENU

Assorted Bun Basket with Dairy Butter

Garden Salad
Greek Salad

Hot Mixed Vegetables
Potatoes au Gratin

BBQ Chicken Pieces
Meatballs in Burgundy Mushroom Sauce
Roast Beef

Anniversary Cake
Assorted Tarts
Fresh Fruit Tray

Tea and Coffee

The Red Dragon will be open at 6pm for cocktails.
Dinner at 7pm prompt.

Tickets at \$27.00 each.

Please call Gaynor Evans at 604-271-3134 ASAP to reserve tickets.

Thank you..... To the following members who have made generous donations to the “Leaky Roof” fund:

Nita Adams, Joan Brookes, E. Lloyd Edwards, Gwilym and Irene Evans, Rosa Havard, Sybil Jamieson, Roger and Mari Lloyd (Wales), Ken and Phyllis Owens, John and Llinos Pritchard, Gareth Prytherch, E. Wyn Roberts, Robert Williams (Lantzville).

Tax receipts will be issued if and when we receive charitable status.

My Little Welsh Home

Thinking of taking a well earned rest? Take a trip to Victoria and stay at a pleasant, comfortable Bed and Breakfast. We were fortunate to find the perfect place at 'My Little Welsh Home' B&B with hosts Teresa and Heldor Schafer. Teresa is originally from Abertillery and visits her mom there regularly while Heldor is from Hamburg. You can enjoy a real Welsh welcome with a special treat of Welshcakes after breakfast and there is a variety of Welsh tapes to listen to in your own private lounge.

You can visit their website at www.littlewelshhome.com to view the bedrooms (all with Welsh names) and make reservations. Their beautiful home is a 20 minute scenic drive to the centre of Victoria and about 20 minutes from the ferry terminal. We will definitely be visiting again!

Gwyn and Gaynor Evans

BEVERLY THOMAS

It was such sad news to hear that Beverly had passed away in August. Beverly was such a busy and interesting lady. She was either gardening, or sharing Gordon's computer research for their genealogy interests, or visiting with her children. Beverly liked to keep active and would go swimming or bicycle riding whenever possible, she loved life and tried to make the most of every day.

Beverly's introduction to the Society was through the Welsh lessons we used to hold of which she was an avid student and she soon became a faithful member. She became a trustee on the executive board and later on took on the role of membership secretary, which was a job she really enjoyed because she was able to meet lots of new people. Every month she would assist Gwen to set up for the

Church Service and it was Bev's job to look after and organize the cutlery draw. Whenever possible Bev loved to come to the hall on Saturday nights and revelled in the laughter and the storytelling of the others there.

Beverly was president of the Women's Auxiliary and on the third Wednesday of the month she would arrive at the hall early to put the kettles on so that the tea would be ready for the ladies to have with their lunch. After lunch and a good chat it was down to business of fund raising and other activities. The membership of the group had become less and less over the years but Beverly was so proud of how much the W.A. members contributed to the Society although there were so few of them. Beverly was a wonderful and unique lady who will be missed very much.

Gaynor Owen.

Welshman Remembered (abstracted from an article by Idris Hughes in Yr Enfys)

The new terminal at the Comox Valley airport has been named F/O C Cottingham Terminal to commemorate Flying Officer Cyril Morgan Cottingham who was lost over the North Sea during World War II. Idris Hughes of Comox was present at the ceremony in April 2004 as were Cyril's brother and sister. Cyril's family left Wales in March 1927 crossing the Atlantic to New Brunswick; followed by a week long train journey to Vancouver and then crossing to Comox on a small ship to settle on a plot of land in Lazo. His father was a coal miner from Goginan near Aberystwyth. Cyril was nine when he arrived and with Glyn, 7, and Doreen 12 joined the one room local school where the schoolmistress failed to understand anything they said because they spoke only Welsh. Cyril joined the RCAF after he left Comox Secondary School in 1939 and went to Britain to join the RAF in 1942. His plane and its crew of six was lost in November 1943 when he was only 25. As Idris said, "He represents a number of young men from the Comox Valley who were killed during World War II."

TONY TONACK

Just five short weeks after losing his dear wife Gwen to cancer, Tony died from a heart attack. Tony will be missed very much at the hall especially on Saturday nights where he loved his pint of beer and a few games of darts. Apart from being an almost resident bartender, Tony spent a terrific amount of time at the hall usually cleaning the beer pumps or the fridge or tending to the garden, all while waiting for a delivery. Tony took a personal approach to tending the bar and would sometimes get upset if someone else did not do it correctly.

Tony and Gwen were very active members of the social committee and both became quite excited when we started planning the Christmas events. They loved to sit and watch other people dancing and having a good time, they were also pretty nimble on their feet and would often dance the night away. Tony always came to the hall prepared for anything and on the occasions when we decorated the hall he would walk in with his little stepladder under his arm and go crazy with the stapler.

Then when it was time to take down the decorations he would get upset because so many staples were used.

Whenever we had a function one of Tony's jobs was to supply the flowers, as he always did for the church service. The flowers usually came from his own garden and he fussed over the presentation until it was just right, then at the end of the day he would carefully wrap them up and present them to some of the ladies as they left. There are plenty of reminders of Tony in the lower hall with notices he printed up or things that he made. Sometimes I had to go behind him and straighten things that he had done because his eyes were failing but he always managed to throw a dart straight. I always said he had a cataract taken out of his eye and a telescopic sight put in. Gaynor and I will surely miss our weekly social committee meetings when the four of us would get together, usually at Kit's Coffee or Bert's Diner and discuss the upcoming events or just simply talk. Don't worry Tony I will look after your darts.

Jeff Owen

The Cambrian Hall
75th Anniversary Celebrations
November 5-7, 2004

Friday, November 5.....Noson Lawen

Saturday, November 6.....Open House
Ploughman's lunch and a variety of Welsh entertainment at the Cambrian Hall

Saturday, November 6.....GRAND CONCERT
Featuring the Vancouver Welsh Men's Choir and guest soloist Eifion Thomas

at 8.00 p.m.
St. Patrick's Catholic Church
2881 Main Street, Vancouver.

General Admission \$20 Seniors/Students \$15
Tickets from Gwyn Evans 604 271-3134 or Heather Davies 604 734-5500

Sunday, November 7, 11 a.m. ...Bilingual Church Service
Lower Hall followed by a light lunch

Sunday, November 7, 2 p.m.....Gymanfa Ganu
Conductor: Eifion Thomas
Musical Director, Cor Meibion Llanelli
(Sponsored by Grenville Thomas)

The Society would like to record its thanks to our donors for the 'Celtic at the Cambrian' evening:

Major Sponsor: Coastal Ford Sales Ltd 3333 Main and 5750 Lougheed Hwy.

**Door Prize Donors: Datum Computer Solutions, Hillcrest Plumbing & Heating
Lux Karaoke Shop, Windjammer Inn, Five Point Bar,
Celtic Treasure Chest, Mr Pickwick's Fish & Chips,
Foggy Dew Irish Pub, British Home Store,
Irish Fancy Store, O'Hares Pub & Bistro.**

On Common Ground; Gwaenysgor, Flintshire; An Exploration of The History of a North Wales Village from 1850 to 2000 by Roger Hadley. ISBN 0-9546108-0-6

This is a magnificent book, full of life; the lives of the real people who lived in this small perhaps otherwise easily overlooked Welsh village just over the hill from my home town of Prestatyn. As the author states, "It is the story of how the people of a small North Wales village were affected by the economic and social changes of the period and how they responded to them." Two examples of the characters portrayed may suffice to provide some of the flavour:

We have photographs of the midwife, Ann Williams, "Nain Plas Gwen", who delivered 1300 babies by her eightieth birthday and a grand total of 1336 in her lifetime. She also watched over 170 people in their last hours and was a great source of strength with her prayers in these circumstances. As she was approaching her eightieth birthday Ann was given a special presentation by the villagers. Following her death at the age of ninety, Henry Hughes, the village bard, penned a prizewinning poem in her honour and twenty-seven years later, the Prestatyn Weekly reported that Goodman Ellis delivered his excellent lecture on "Nain Plas Gwen, saint of the last century (1810-1900)".

Of some interest to Canadians might be the Macdonald family. Thomas was born in Gwaenysgor in 1843 and married to Margaret Hughes, Henry Hughes' sister. He was a lead miner and a dedicated Methodist. Despite their surname, all spoke Welsh as their daily language. The 1902 Gwaenysgor Workmen's Choir pictured on the front page included three Macdonalds, Oswald (who was later my father's employer in his Prestatyn business), Clement and Alun (in the front). But the village's claim to fame rested with Gordon Macdonald, their cousin and son of another miner. The family moved to Lancashire and Gordon worked underground in the coal mines for twenty years before becoming the miners' agent. In 1929 he was elected to Parliament. After a successful career he resigned in 1942 to become Regional Controller, Ministry of Fuel for Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales. In 1947 he was knighted and appointed Governor General of Newfoundland until it became Canada's tenth province in 1949. When he returned to Britain he was made a peer. He was BBC Governor for Wales from 1952-1960. He was fiercely proud of his Welsh origins and frequently returned to visit his relatives. He chose Lord Macdonald of Gwaenysgor, his native village, for his title and as was his wish, when he died, his ashes were scattered close to his old home.

The author was Professor of Sociology at the University of Lancaster. After he retired in 1996 he began research into the village where he lived with his wife Professor Clare Wenger. He learnt Welsh, researched documents and met and interviewed people to create this eminently readable social history. To quote the author, "It is the work of an amateur rather than a professional historian. Amateurs, in the original sense of the word, are people who love their subject." There can be little doubt that Professor Hadley loved his subject. Sadly Roger Hadley died shortly after finishing the second draft of the book and is buried in nearby Coed y Llan. His wife Clare has edited and brought this work to publication. This is a beautifully produced book full of historic photographs and well researched details. Because I know the area and many of its inhabitants, perhaps I am especially appreciative of this work. However anyone interested in Welsh social history will find this book fascinating.

D. Llewelyn Williams