

Cylchgrawn Cymdeithas Gymreig Vancouver Vancouver Welsh Society Newsletter



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In June, the Welsh Society lost two of its core members, and I wanted to make sure their passing was noted in this newsletter. I've put a link to the obituary below the photo, but I can't hope to encapsulate who they were and all that they did in just a few words here. I hope that sharing a small part of who they were to me as I knew them through the Society sparks similar warm memories in you.

Er Cof am / In Memory of

Gwyn Evans



Oct. 29, 1938– June 5, 2024
[Obituary in the *Vancouver Sun*](#)

A hundred years from now, Gwyn Evans will most likely be remembered for the Vancouver Male Voice Choir, which he co-founded in 1980 shortly after immigrating from Aberdare. Gwyn sang (and travelled) with the Choir for forty years, bringing the music and an important part of Welsh culture to Vancouver and the world.

Those of us who knew Gwyn have a more well-rounded picture. He practiced Tai Chi, and was a fierce ping-pong player. He had a unique sense of humour, the kind that sometimes made you laugh and sometimes—okay, often—made you roll your eyes. I always remember how, when asked how he was, he would always answer with a fluent “*Weddol dda o dan yr amgylchiadau presenno!*” (Not bad, under the present circumstances). The

Mary Lewis



June 21, 1932–June 23, 2024
[Obituary on the Welsh Society webpage](#)

This picture of a smiling Mary in her Welsh Lady costume is how I often think of her. She loved an occasion to put it on and represent Welsh culture, whether at the Hall or out and about in the Lower Mainland.

Mary grew up in Liverpool, but she was born on Anglesey and spent some of her childhood there during the War. After becoming a doctor, Mary immigrated to Canada, serving the community in northern Manitoba before retiring to Vancouver.

Mary was a cornerstone of the Welsh Society, and never missed an opportunity to volunteer. I attended her memorial service in July at her church, the Anglican cathedral downtown, and met people from all facets of her life. I had no idea that she brought the same energy and commitment to other

joke was that he never varied his response, having just memorized the one phrase!

Gwyn was stalwart and resilient. He and his young family left Wales and became Canadians, but never ceased being actively, proudly, and vocally Welsh. Gwyn experienced life-changing injuries in a car accident long before I knew him, and I get the impression that we never saw the tremendously hard work that went into recovery—all the learning and relearning that came afterward—only the results: a happy, positive man.

I'm very conscious that there were so many facets to him I didn't know (I only learned his legal name, Frederick Gwynfryn, from reading about him in the *Sun*, linked above). I hope you will come to the Hall next weekend to share more memories and celebrate his life.

domains that she did to the Welsh Society: Mary was an absolutely indefatigable woman. One of the most moving moments was when the great cathedral bell tolled nine times for her, in honour of her 92 to years, heard across the city as we sat in communal silence remembering her.

Mary used to come to my Welsh classes, even though she herself had had good Welsh in her childhood. She understood speakers from North Wales very well, and when she read, she pronounced everything in a perfect Anglesey accent: she would read D-O-D as *dŵad*, for example, which an English speaker would never think to do! I don't know that I had much to teach her, but her support of Welsh learners meant a lot.

Mary's combination of quiet determination, strength, and kindness changed us all for the better.

I will miss Mary and Gwyn profoundly. *Heddwch i'w llwch* (may they rest in peace).

My Summer in Wales by Pat Morris

Each year I travel to visit friends and family in the U.K. This summer I joined the group Welsh Heritage Week for an experience of Welsh language and culture with people from across North America. The weeklong course is held at various locations, but every fifth year travels to the little village of Nant Gwrtheyrn, near Llithfaen, Pwllheli, on the Llyn peninsula. This small, isolated community is situated at the base of the steep cliffs of a previously active slate mine. The road across the peninsula, full of twisting harepin bends, was navigated with great skill by our coach driver, who had met our party of 24 seniors (mostly) at Manchester Airport.

We arrived at Nant Gwrtheyrn on a fine Sunday evening. Slate workers' cottages and other buildings on the site have been renovated and converted into comfortable accommodation now used for weddings, a holiday getaway, or an overnight stop on the Wales Coast Path. We settled into our cottages, then joined our companions for an evening meal and a chance to explore, including Meinir's tree, with its legend of the tragic tale of the bride who disappeared on her wedding day.



On the days following, after breakfast together we set off for Welsh language classes. I opted for the beginners' group with six others and it turned out to be a casual, light-hearted affair, loosely using the course book *Cwrs Mynediad* ("Entry Course"), North Wales version. The class was relaxed, with

humour and encouragement to participate in casual conversation. Later in the morning the Ysgol Gân ("singing school") was more demanding, as we learnt and practised unfamiliar hymns, in harmony, ahead of our participation at the National Eisteddfod Gymanfa Ganu.

After lunch there was a choice of cultural activities including folk dancing, folk singing, band, harp, or Welsh poetry and literature. Each evening after dinner, there was a social activity: a Nosen Lawen, a concert performed by the teaching staff; a Twmpath. On Friday evening there were several entries for the in-house Eisteddfod competitions (in English) to win a Crown or Chair for poetry, either a limerick or else free or blank verse on a set theme. There were some very good efforts but the adjudication was

seriously rigorous! An Eisteddfod ceremony followed, complete with two dancing flower girls and the call for peace with the druid's sword partly unsheathed.

After our time at Nant Gwrtheyrn, we set off on a road trip to explore Wales by bus. We were accompanied by very competent Blue Badge Guides: first Delan, from Rhosgadfan, with an interest in contemporary Welsh history. "Cymru is my country, and Cymraeg is my mother tongue." We first travelled to the country house and contemporary art gallery Plas Glyn y Weddw at Llanbedrog. Recently, the adjacent 12-acre woodland, Winllan, was purchased, and the whole area of woodlands and gardens, as well as cafe and theatre, has been developed to provide a popular tourist destination. Its trails form part of the All Wales Coastal Pathway.



The afternoon was spent at Criccieth, with the ruins of windswept Criccieth castle located on a rocky headland overlooking Tremadog Bay. Our reward for the climb was excellent ice cream on the seafront. We then spent two nights in Caernarfon, with sightseeing tours of Beaumaris and a boat trip to Puffin Island just off Ynys Môn (Anglesey). The weather stayed fine, but no puffins were to be seen!

On August 4th, we left North Wales, travelling south with Blue Badge Guide Griff Harries towards the venue of the National Eisteddfod at Pontypridd, though our hotel was about 1½ hours away in Llandeilo. We were booked to take part in the Gymanfa Ganu on the evening of Sunday August 4th, and also had seats in the Pavillion on August 5th to see two special Americans honoured by being inducted into the Gorsedd of the Bards: Mari Morgan, the longtime conductor and director of the Côr Cymry Gogledd America, and Megan Williams, who took the Bardic name Megan Ninnau.

We were free to explore the attractions of tents of all the Universities of Wales, the all sorts, government promotions, and of some healthy, Welsh, organic; others not so *byrgyrs*. The weather was mostly fine and Tym Morys from Red Deer; Mary Price, Jane Byrne's sister Mair, whose daughter was and an old friend, Kathy Gittens, who each year markets her high-end womens' fashions there.



the Eisteddfod around the Maes ("field"), National Library of Wales, charities of course a large area for food and drink—much, but tasty: *pysgod a sglodion* and often I ran into someone I knew such as past president of the Overseas Welsh; competing with her choir in the Pavillion;

To round out our cultural tour of Wales, Griff took us to two more castles, Caerphilly and Cardigan. We had a short time in Swansea market for some retail therapy and trips to the National Wool Museum, Dre-Fach Felindre, Llandysul, the Nantgarw China Works and Museum and a small shop in Mumbles,



the Lovespoon Gallery, which had some lovely spoons by very skilled carvers for sale. We drove to a well-known area of natural beauty in the Gower, Rhossili and the Worm's Head. Unlike most places we had seen, Rhossili is managed by the National Trust, not Cadw, so there were fewer Welsh pieces or signage in the gift shop. We also really enjoyed the views and the wildlife at Bracelet Bay lighthouse, walking along the coastal path among the flowering gorse and heather, glimpsing a pair of hawks overhead and seagulls on the rocks below.

So ended our Welsh experience as we left for a day's sightseeing in Bath. My son arrived and he and I spent an evening together with his partner. I spent the last days of my holiday on a river cruise from Westminster pier to Greenwich, exploring the Royal Naval College Museum there. It was a very hot day and I was glad to be in the cool stone buildings. It was almost a bucket list occasion, as my dad had been at school in these buildings in 1911, with stories of "bun fights in the refectory" the imposing [Painted Hall](#), a smaller, 18th-century version of the Sistine chapel with the monarchs William and Mary.

After a week at home, I am off on another Welsh adventure, this time to Pittsburgh, for the North American Festival of Wales, a celebration of all things Welsh in America.

Summer Volunteering

It takes many hours of labour to keep the Cambrian Hall upright and fit for habitation. A work party at the end of June saw volunteers descend on the Hall to clean, tidy, and organize, and have a bit of fun besides. A big thank you to all who came out! There will be another opportunity shortly—keep an eye on the Bulletin for dates.

There is a lot still to do, of course: the cupboards need cleaning and the parking lot is always accumulating loving donations from the neighbours who kindly disperse their rubbish in what I'm sure they think is an artistic statement. There's always a list of minor repairs and major organization: if you have some time and / or energy, please contact the board at mail@welshsociety.com and let us know!

If you have a Serving It Right certificate, or would like to get one, the Welsh Society would *love* to have you help with tending bar at the regular pub night and other events. We have only a couple of regular bartenders and it would be a kindness to let them see the other side of the bar once in a while.

Don't be shy: every little bit helps!

Paned o De

The Welsh conversation group continues to be lively! The group has met most Saturdays this summer, sometimes at the Hall and sometimes at the park down the road, with everyone contributing ideas on how to push themselves to learn the language. *Da iawn i bawb!*

Adolygiad: *Sut i Ddofi Corryn* gan Mari George



(A book review of a recent Welsh-language novel.)

Fe ddes i ar hyd i'r llyfr hwn yn siop lyfrau Gŵyl y Gelli.

Roeddwn i'n edrych drwy'r llyfrau Cymraeg, ac yn siarad amdany'n nhw efo merch o'r enw Francesca oedd yn gwirfoddoli yno. Fe ddweudodd hi bod y llyfr yma yn dda, a byr hefyd (dim on 170 o dudalennau). Gwerthwyd!

Hanes gwraig, Muriel (“Cymraes gydag enw hen Saesnes”) a'i phrofiadau gyda chanser ei gŵr a'i hofn o “gorynnod,” sef pryfed cop. Mae hen draddodiad ei theulu yn peri iddi feddwl y bydd posibilrwydd iacháu ei gŵr gan wenwyn corynnod arbennig Gwatemala. Wrth ei thaith i mewn i'r jyngl, bydd rhaid iddi hi wynebu ofnau colli ei gŵr ac wrth gwrs ofnau pryfed cop! Nid un sy'n hoffi pryfed ydw i, ai cop neu beidio, ond er hynny roedd y profiad o ddarllen y nofel hon yn wych. Mae'r llyfr yn tueddi at yr hudol, ond yn y byd gwirioneddol y mae popeth yn digwydd.

Pan ddechreuais i, un o'r tri llyfr yn cystadlu am Wobr Ffuglen eleni (2024) oedd *Sut i Ddofi Corryn*.

Prynais i hefyd *Anfadwaith* gan Llŷr Titus (ond heb ei ddarllen eto) a *Raffl* gan Aled Jones Williams yw'r trydydd. Ar ôl i mi orffen, dyma *Sut i Ddofi Corryn* yn ennill y wobwr: Gwobr



Ffuglen a hefyd Prif Wobr Gymraeg Llyfr y Flwyddyn 2024!

Croeso i unrhyw un fenthyg y llyfr yma ohono fi.

Wrexham Night



On Friday, 26 July, we welcomed Wrexham team supporters at the Red Dragon ahead of the next day's Vancouver game. Gillian Taylor did a fantastic job in organizing and helping to make the event a success, and of course Gwyn Jones is our contact with sports fans. A lot of new people came to the Hall, many of whom expressed an interest in the Welsh Society. New (or renewed) interests are always a benefit to the Society: here's to our new sports fans!



Gwyn Jones, Gillian Taylors, and two mysterious strangers. . .



