



Y Bwletin

Gwasg y Nant – Valley Press Mis Rhagfyr 2006 – December 2006

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Cynnwys - Contents

- Page 1 – Upcoming Events, Notices, President
Page 2 – Noson Lawen, Poem, Love Spoons
Page 3 – The Guardian
Page 4 – Publications, Paul Birt, HELP

Digwyddiadau - Events for 2006-7

- Ottawa Welsh Choral Society Sunday, December 10
Carol Service Sunday, December 17
St. David's Day Banquet & Dance Saturday, February 24
Gymanfa Ganu Sunday, February 25

Ottawa Welsh Choral Society Christmas Concert

Sunday December 10 3:00 p.m.
St. Giles Presbyterian Church
Bank Street at First Avenue

\$15 adults Children under 16 free
(Tickets available at the door)

Christmas Carol Service

Sunday December 17 at 7 pm
Westminster Presbyterian Church
470 Roosevelt Avenue

(Everyone is invited to bring something to share with their tea or coffee after the service.)

St David's Day Dinner Dance

Saturday February 24th 2007
Crowne Plaza Hotel

We are very honoured to have the **Rev. Deian Evans** of Dewi Sant Church in Toronto as our guest speaker this year. He will be accompanied by his wife Annette. Deian and Annette have recently moved to Toronto from **Criccieth, North Wales**. We would encourage you all to join us at this popular event and to welcome Rev Evans to our community.

The cost of the dinner dance is \$54 per person if purchased before February 4th, and \$59 after that date.

For more information or to order tickets, please contact Alison Lawson at 613-725-2704 or email alisonlawson@sympatico.ca

President's Message

Croeso, welcome and greetings to all.

Many thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make our annual Faggots & Peas & Noson Lawen a great success. Special thanks to: John Price, our convener; & Wendy Wynne-Jones, who organized & acted as MC for the Noson Lawen. [See next page]

We have a number of events planned for December and next February and March.

Our Carol Service - Lessons and Carols - will be held on December 17th at 7 pm at Westminster Presbyterian Church.

The St. David's Day Dinner/Dance will take place on February 24, 2007 with MC Alan Thomas. Our guest speaker will be Rev. Deian Evans of Dewi Sant (St David's) United Church in Toronto.

We are holding our annual Gymanfa Ganu on February 25, 2007 at Westminster with special music by John Griffiths and the Ottawa Welsh Choral Society. Marilyn Jenkins (Director of the OWCS) will conduct the Gymanfa.

Our Annual General Meeting & Pot-luck supper will be held in May at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Please watch future newsletters for more information.

Please share the information about these events with your friends and neighbours.

More upcoming events worth noting:

The Ontario Gymanfa Ganu will be held in Kingston, Ontario the last weekend in April, 2007.

The 76th National Gymanfa Ganu will be held in Washington D.C. over Labour Day weekend, 2007.

Lezlie Wood, President

Faggots & Peas & Noson Lawen

The annual Faggots & Peas & Noson Lawen was a great success! Here is the Noson Lawen program.

| # | Type | Performer | Titles |
|----|--------------|---|--|
| 1 | Vocal | Barbershop Quartet: Alison and John Lawson, John Griffiths, Bruce Thomson | "Troyte's Chant" "He's the Lily of the Valley" |
| 2 | Reading | Christine Evans | Sequel to "The Lion and Alfred" |
| 3 | Vocal | John Griffiths | "Y Bugail" The Shepherd |
| 4 | Reading | David Jones | "A Bride's Advice to a Groom" |
| 5 | Instrumental | Alan Thomas | "The Dream of Olwen" a medley from "The Sound of Music" |
| 6 | Dance | Dylan Morris | "Let Go!" |
| | Draw | Myfanwy Davies | |
| 7 | Vocal | Cantorion Cerdd Dant: Alison Lawson, Maureen Carpenter, Jennifer Davis, Eirwen Thompson, Joy Roberts; Accompanied by Mary Muckle on harp | "Psalm 23" "Rhyfeddodau" |
| 8 | Reading | David Jones | "Christmas at King's University" |
| 9 | Instrumental | Mary Muckle | "Suo Gan", with harp |
| 10 | Reading | Wendy Wynne-Jones | "Sound Waves"; " Natural Highs" |

Memoirs of a Shop Girl

by Wendy Wynne-Jones, Dec. 1985

'Twas the week before Christmas and all through the Mall
Irascible shoppers were casting a pall.

"Can I have this gift wrapped? I've two minutes to spare.

Do it free, do it fast, but better take care!

If I find a chip, I'll be back Boxing Day.

Isn't it done yet? I Haven't all day!!"

The bone-weary shop clerks have smiles nailed in place,

The soreness of feet starts to show on the face.

"Have you been served? Oh Lord, you work here!

I'll scream if anyone else calls me Dear."

"I'm so sorry, Madam, we sold out last week.

Of course I am sure, but I will take a peek.

No, there's no discount, yes, we did run an ad.

Misrepresentation? Now don't make me mad"

I'm tired and I'm hungry, sure could use a drink,

A holiday tour, a Blackglama mink,

But I'll keep on smiling and ringing up sales

'til the shelves are all empty and energy fails.

I'll sleep all through Christmas and Boxing Day too.

So 'til work starts the next day, Merry Christmas to you!

WELSH LOVE-SPOONS

After coalminers, rugby, male voice choirs and the prodigious drinking habits of Burton and Thomas, the next thing people think of if they are given pause to consider Wales would surely be the love-spoon. This simple wooden love token has been a part of Welsh courting practice since at least 1677 and remains a cherished symbol of both love and Wales to this day.

Likely, love-spoons were developed from cawl (soup) ladles which would have been an essential item in every Welsh cottage and which, in all probability, would be carved by the master of the house or one of his sons during the dark winter evenings when field work could not be undertaken. It has been theorized that as young men began offering these carvings to the young ladies who had captured their attention, the carvings became more and more ornate. It is likely that each man who carved one sought to outdo his rivals with a dramatic display of woodworking skill and romantic passion which would illustrate his value as a talented and devoted worker and would enable his message of love to be heard over all others. It has never been proven however, that the spoon's acceptance indicated a betrothal! While a romantic thought, it is far more likely that the spoon's acceptance by a young lady indicated a mutual interest rather than a bonding and gave the suitor the all-clear to continue his pursuit.

What separates the Welsh love-spoon from the matrimonial and dowry spoon carving common to many other cultures is the use of a powerful combination of love, luck and fertility symbols which are used to send rich, meaningful and deeply personal messages of love.

The Welsh love-spoon is often awash in hearts (love) diamonds (prosperity) chain links (strength and protection) balls in cages (desire for children) horseshoes (luck) locks (security) to name only a few of the wealth of symbols utilized by the fervent carver. This heavy use of symbolism allowed the young man's heart free rein and his passions could run wild, allowing him to "let off steam" in a time when he most surely would not have been able to speak his feelings directly.

But what of the poor swain cursed with ten thumbs; did the carving challenged young man have to forgo love?

Fortunately for him, professional carvers soon made themselves available for hire and filled the demand for top quality carving. To this day there are carvers such as myself who enable a client to realize a message of passion or great respect in wood for occasions ranging from engagements and weddings, to housewarmings, anniversaries, christenings and Valentines Day gifts.

The Welsh love-spoon's warmth, uniqueness and originality ensure that it will remain as a wonderful gift of deep personal sentiment and as a lovely symbol of Wales. To learn more about Welsh love-spoons and to see modern interpretations of an ancient craft, please visit:
www.davidwesternlovespoons.com

The Guardian - Thursday June 22, 2006

By Jude Rogers

In Big Brother, there are no secrets. Everyone can hear you speak, and understand what you say. Except, it seems, if you are Imogen Thomas or Glyn Wise. There they were in the Big Brother house, speaking in strange lilting accents, when the disembodied voice of authority ticked them off for speaking in "code". They were not, of course. The former Miss Wales and her schoolboy friend were speaking Welsh, a tongue that once seemed to be in terminal decline but is now thriving again.

"Welsh is British!" Glyn told Y Brawd Mawr (that's Big Brother to you). His supporters hear-heard, praising the language used regularly by 20% of the principality's population. The usual parade of politicians and nationalists banged their gongs for the language they call Cymraeg, and recalled the bad old days of the late 19th century, when children who spoke Welsh in schools had to wear a piece of wood called the "Welsh Not" around their necks, and the one who wore it at the end of the day would get a thrashing from the teacher.

But Glyn and Imogen also roused some less traditional flag-wavers: young, confident Welsh speakers wanting to promote their first language warmly and welcomingly, while speaking English regularly too.

I just missed the great Welsh language revival of the 1990s. I turned 14 in 1992, the last year that the Welsh curriculum let English-speaking schoolgirls from Swansea drop Welsh language lessons in favour of French or German. The Welsh Language Act of 1993 changed all that. The country's mother tongue was given equal footing with English in the public sector, and soon after road signs began turning bilingual and the Welsh language became a compulsory subject in schools until the age of 16. Instead of withering on the vine like Cornish and the variants of Gaelic, Welsh budded, blossomed and bloomed. My younger brothers - 23 and 16 - grew up to be fluent in Welsh, and can roll their Rs much better than me.

Until the late 1980s, says Rhodri Llwyd Morgan, director of strategic development for the Welsh Language Board, the Welsh language was in sharp decline. The 1991 census showed the drop levelling, and the 2001 census the first rise in Welsh speakers in 100 years, from 508,000 to 582,000. The big increase of Welsh speaking was in the 5-24 age group. "Education made the change, obviously," says Morgan, "and S4C [Wales's bilingual version of Channel 4, which started in 1982] helped as well. But there's also been a huge change in attitudes among young Welsh people. They've reclaimed Welsh as their own. It's no longer the language of hearth, home and chapel - it's also the language of everyday conversation, of blogs and of music."

Until the 1990s, it seemed impossible for Wales to modernize, let alone become cool. Tourism still focused on the Dylan Thomas folklore - on the country's pub-&-chapel social history, its Christian non-conformism & its pagan Eisteddfods, group readings, folk dances & processions of bards in white cloaks & gold garlands. The tide turned when

young Welsh musicians & actors came along & showed that you could enjoy this strange heritage while adding your own spin. Bands such as Catatonia, Super Furry Animals & Gorky's Zygotic Mynci recorded albums in both English & Welsh, while people such as Rhys Ifans, Charlotte Church & Ioan Gruffydd spoke loudly & proudly of their Welsh backgrounds. They were not embarrassed to sing folk tunes or talk about choirs & daffodils. They were simply prepared to think outside the "bocs".

Bethan Elfyn, herself a Welsh-speaker, started presenting the Welsh strand of Radio 1's Evening Session in 1999, which came along in response to the country's burgeoning scene. "I think strong characters like Cerys Matthews or Nicky Wire brought the Welsh collective personality out of its shell," she says. "As a nation we're fairly shy until we're more familiar with our surroundings, then we're the life and soul."

Today, youth culture in Wales is booming. Cardiff, home to the 6-year-old Welsh Assembly, has a bustling music scene encompassing Welsh-language hip-hop, indie, metal & folk. More and more festivals are being held in Wales, from the Green Man in Brecon to the International Music Festival in Dolgellau. New record labels are popping up all the time, and music shows such as Bandit - S4C's weekly platform for the best new Welsh-language bands & artists - reach big audiences. "Thirty or 40 years ago, you'd have to up sticks to Liverpool or London to get successful," says one Welsh press officer. "Now, thanks to home recording technology & opportunities for gigs, you can just stay at home."

But can the Welsh language get too exclusive? Every time I go back to Wales, someone will insist on speaking to me in Welsh. After 10 years over the border, I have the vocabulary in spades but not the wherewithal to put the fragments together - and the people talking to me know this. More often than not, though, these offenders come from the older generation. "Young people are different these days," says Welsh primary school teacher and National Eisteddfod regular Rebecca Griffiths. "They're very proud to speak their own language & they want to preserve it, but hardly anyone turns up their noses at people who can't speak it. Welsh people spend half their time speaking English anyway."

Lots of people, she points out, speak Wenglish - a slangy mishmash of Welsh and English in which English words replace poor Welsh alternatives. My father's favourite phrase, "Pobeth yn all right?" ("Is everything all right?"), comes from this jumble of tongues. There are even Wenglish dictionaries.

Young Welsh people also have their own slang. "Gaib", which roughly translates as "extreme", is the latest faddy term to mean "drunk". It regularly pops out of characters' mouths on programmes such as S4C's long-running soap, Pobol Y Cwm (People of the Valley). The North Walian term "cont" (which translates as "mate", rather than anything more Anglo-Saxon) is catching on among teenagers and twenty-somethings. And Huw Stephens's co-presenter Huw Evans has started using "Sdigwydd?" to mean "What's happening?" on Bandit. "He just invented it, really, and it's starting to catch on," says Stephens, who is also Elfyn's co-presenter on Radio 1. "That's how Welsh works these days."

People are playing with language and sharing strange words. It's about having a laugh as much as it is about preserving the language. It helps that Welsh sounds so vibrant and lively."

But how does Welsh respond to English innovations? By changing letters slightly and awkwardly. Factory becomes ffactori, mobile phone y ffon mobil, and physiotherapy ffysiotherapi. This even happens to words that have long had Welsh equivalents. Teacher Nia Williams points out some classics: "snogio" meaning to snog, "licio" to like, "practiso" to practise and "ffag" for a cigarette.

There is a humour that arises when the most prosaic phrases gets translated. Catrin James, Welsh-speaking manager of Cardiff band the Automatic, points out her favourite. "I sit in the office every day hearing robotic voices coming out of lorries saying 'This vehicle is reversing' in Welsh - 'Mae'r cerbyd yn mynd yn ôll!' - and it just makes me laugh." What is clear across the board is that the new breed of Welsh speakers are not afraid to poke fun at themselves.

But that is not to say the campaign ends there, Stephens insists. "Welsh is still not really recognised as an official language of Wales" - something the Welsh Language Board says is more complicated because the UK does not have a modern constitution. The bands that have crossed over have all been bilingual, and those that sing in the language that comes naturally to them face an uphill struggle to succeed outside Wales. Only when people outside Wales start accepting Welsh as a modern, living language used by hundreds of thousands of people, will it travel any further. Then all you monoglots beyond Offa's Dyke will be able to wrap your tonsils around words like Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch and clear your spit into a hankie with the rest of us.

Publications of Interest

Ninnau – The North American Newspaper.
\$33.00 Cdn, per year; cheque or money order
11 Post terrace, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
phone: 908 766-4151; Fax: 908 221-0744

Yr Enfys – Journal of Wales International
£ 15.00 UK per year – to **Cymru a'r Byd**
Mail to: J Bryan Jones
Heulfryn, 7 Lon Fictoria, Hen Golwyn, LL29 9SN UK

Y Byd – Welsh-language daily newspaper
In the spring of 2007, the first-ever daily newspaper in Welsh will be published. It will be called **Y Byd** (The World). It is unlikely that many living in Canada would wish to purchase a Welsh "daily" newspaper but many of us believe that the effort to create this paper is very important as a support for the Welsh language and, ultimately, for the Welsh culture and Wales as a country. It is planned to have Y Byd available to subscribers over the web which would save the cost and delay of having it mailed to Canada. If you want more information or wish to support this venture, go to <http://www.ybyd.com> or email neges@ybyd.com .

Welsh Books Council Website

To order books in Welsh or books in English published in Wales see www.gwales.com . If the site comes up in Welsh, click on the word English on the right side of the top red bar.

TV in Welsh

If you want to watch TV in Welsh over the web, go to http://www.s4c.co.uk/bandllydan/c_index.shtml
Over 30 different programs are available and as many as 10 episodes of some of them. One I really enjoy is "**Wedi 7**" which is chat show talking to a number of interesting people around Wales 4 days a week. The **France versus Argentina Rugby** game is there and so is the recent documentary on the **Aberfan** disaster. One of great import to my family is "**Jones Jones Jones**", a 65 minute show of the gathering of over 1220 "Jones'" in the Millennium Center in Cardiff Wales in November 2006 when they broke the Guinness World record for the number of members of the same surname gathered in one building at one time.

Dr. Paul Birt Honoured

The June issue of Ninnau featured a photo of Dr. Paul Birt as he received the Robert Morris Award from the Welsh Society of Philadelphia for his work on behalf of the Welsh Language and literature.

>> Help Wanted <<

Our last request for help was very successful and we'd like to welcome **Robin Williams and Dale Jones** to the executive. We will still need a couple more people, however, to assist us to keep the Society vibrant without overloading the few.

Remuneration: Satisfaction and new friends
Experience: Optional
Tasks: LARGE or small, such as

- Becoming a member of the executive
- Chairing or assisting at a function
- stuffing envelopes
- serving food at a function

We DO have a lot of fun but we are below our normal number of volunteers and some things are NOT going to be done if we don't get more assistance.

If you can assist please contact our President, Lezlie Wood, at (613) 225-8845 or by email to ldwood7@sympatico.ca or by mail to 205 - 1465 Baseline Road Ottawa ON K2C 3L9