

# Y Bwletin

Gwasg y Nant - Valley Press  
Gwanwyn 2015 - Spring 2015



[www.ottawawelsh.com](http://www.ottawawelsh.com)

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**Editor's comment:** We are happy to share your good news and successes with the rest of the OWS. Please send your contributions to the secretary at:

[marilyn.e.jenkins@sympatico.ca](mailto:marilyn.e.jenkins@sympatico.ca)

Y Gymdeithas ar y We / The Society on the Net:

[www.ottawawelsh.com](http://www.ottawawelsh.com)



Ottawa Welsh Society/Cymdeithas Cymry Ottawa

**GAIR Y LLYWYDD/  
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**



It is almost time for the end-of-year report, though you'll have to attend the AGM to hear that in all its glorious detail. Suffice it to say that the last year in the life of your Society has been reasonably successful and good times have been had by most of us. Reports on three of our events may be found within this issue. If you missed them, perhaps a New Year's (at least on the Society's calendar) resolution might be to attend such events next year, if you are able to do so. If they sound too much like old hat, why not consider providing your suggestions for alternatives to the Committee?

After all, "the times, they are a-changing," as Bob Dylan, that Welshman by adopted surname, famously sang. A necessary corollary of that profound line is that we too are changing. However loath we may be to admit it, much of that change consists of ageing. As I pointed out in my last message, we cannot expect the current members of the Society's Executive to keep doing their jobs for ever. In fact, during the next month or so, many of you will be contacted by a member of the Executive to see whether you might be able to give some time to the Society by either joining the Executive or helping those who are members of the Executive.

I urge you to give very serious consideration to that possibility because without a Society and people to organize it, there will be no more of the kind of events reported in this newsletter. While Welsh culture will continue to exist and will no doubt flourish, there will be little evidence of it here in Ottawa. If that possibility does not give you any pause for thought, then that's fine but if it causes you concern, then please give some thought to what you might be able to do to help the Welsh Society here in town to continue and flourish.

In any event, I look forward to seeing you at the AGM in large numbers.

JOHN PRICE

**Ottawa Welsh Society AGM  
Wednesday, May 20, 2015  
at**

The Barley Mow, 399 Richmond Road  
next door to Tubman's  
close to corner of Roosevelt and not far from  
Westminster Church  
Dinner at 5:30 p.m.

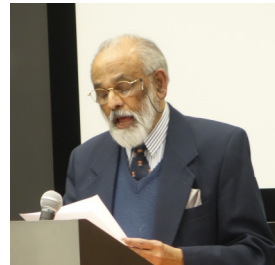
**Digwyddiadau/Events:**

- |             |                                                |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------|
| April 24-26 | Ontario Welsh Festival in<br>Niagara Falls, ON |
| May 1-3     | Celtic Festival in Montreal, QC                |
| May 20      | AGM at Whispers 6:30 p.m.                      |

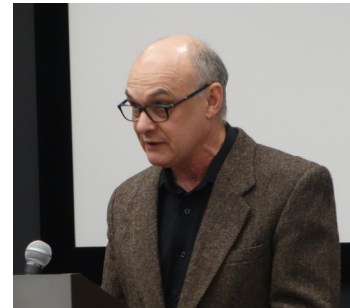
**Celebration of Dylan Thomas**

On a typically cold January 30 evening, close to 70 members and friends of the Ottawa Welsh Society gathered, courtesy of Mr. Howard Drake, the British High Commissioner, at the splendid premises of the British High Commission in the city to celebrate the life and work of Dylan Thomas and, slightly belatedly, to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Thomas' birth. After the High Commissioner had welcomed those attending, Ottawa poet Asoka Weerasinghe talked to the group about the development of his relationship with Thomas from reading his poetry at school in Sri Lanka to becoming Poet in Residence at 5 Cwmdonkin Drive in Swansea, where Dylan spent a large part of his life. He even slept in the bed Dylan had used! Some of those attending noted that the cadences and rhythms of the few snippets of Asoka's own poetry that they heard were very close to Dylan's, evidence that Asoka had truly immersed himself into Cwmdonkin Drive and that his time there had been well spent. His talk continued with a brief account of Dylan's life and was followed by fine dramatic readings given by Ottawa actor John Koensgen from *Under Milk Wood*, *A Child's Christmas in Wales* and Dylan's poetry. The following members of the OWS Executive, Alison Lawson, Wendy Wynne-Jones, Gaye Brittle and Judith Winstanley were responsible for organization and food, while liquid refreshments were purveyed by the skilled bar staff of the High Commission. The evening was MC'd by Society president, John Price. We are confident that it was an evening that Dylan himself would have enjoyed. A big thank you to all who contributed.

JOHN PRICE



Left: Asoka Weerasinghe presenting the life of Dylan Thomas



Above: Actor John Koensgen reading from Dylan Thomas



Above and below: OWS members and guests at the British High Commission for the celebration of Dylan Thomas.



### Annual St David's Day Luncheon

Members of the OWS Committee once again did a magnificent job of organizing the Annual Luncheon, at the elegant premises of the Royal Ottawa Golf Club in Gatineau, Quebec. Although numbers were down slightly from last year's luncheon, over 60 members of the Ottawa Welsh Society and their guests were seated at tables named after some of Wales' most famous castles (which were featured in the quiz). They enjoyed the excellent food, during which guests were entertained by a reading of telegrams from societies of Welsh exiles around the world relaying greetings on the occasion of our patron saint's day, participated in a challenging and slightly zany quiz on matters Welsh (in which, and this was perhaps the most zany aspect of it, Brecon featured hardly at all, even though it has a castle) and sang "Happy Birthday" to Jean Don and Frances Shaw.

The meal was followed by an eloquent talk from Society member Melanie Courtemanche about her experiences of studying Welsh at the University of Ottawa and in Wales, which led to her work for her Master's thesis on Welsh artist and poet David Jones. The afternoon ended after a wonderful performance of songs in a multitude of languages (including *yr hen iaith*) by the Ottawa Choral Society Ensemble.

Also, special thanks to those "in the know" who kindly stayed mum (at least in public) concerning the result of the rugby international in which Wales defeated France and played in Paris while we were honouring our patron saint. Grace was said in Welsh and English by Gwyneth Watkin and Lezlie Wood respectively, the loyal toast was given by Charles Bassett and the toast to Wales and St David by John Williams. A huge thank you to all the committee members who worked so hard and to all others who contributed to the most enjoyable proceedings. Roll on, next year!

JOHN PRICE



OWS members at the Royal Ottawa Golf Club for the St. David's Day luncheon.



### Gymanfa Ganu

St David's Day itself was the date of this year's Gymanfa Ganu, which was held at Westminster Presbyterian Church and attracted at least 80 members of the Welsh community and people interested in Welsh hymnody and singing.

The conductor was Alan Thomas, the organist at the church, and the accompanist was Dr Deirdre Piper of St Matthias Anglican Church. In addition to many favourite Welsh and other hymns, sung in Welsh and English, guest performances were given by John Griffiths, who sang *Cymru fach*, members of the Power-Evans family, who sang *The Gift of Love*, and the Côr Alltudion Westminster\*, which sang *Awn Ymlaen Dan Ganu* and *My Redeemer*.

The Call to Worship and the Blessing were given by Rev. Neil Wallace, retired Minister of Cityview United Church in Ottawa. The Gymanfa was followed by a Te bach in the Church Hall featuring Welsh cakes and many other goodies. Diolch yn fawr iawn to all who helped make this occasion such a success.

## Summer Welsh Language Course

### Cwrs Dwys Haf Aberswyth

Annwyl Ottawa Welsh Society

Sylwais ar wefan eich Cymdeithas Cymraeg wrth edrych ar y we, a meddwl y byddwn yn anfon y wybodaeth yma atoch ynglŷn â Cwrs Dwys Haf Aberystwyth. Os hoffech mwy o fanylion am y Cwrs, ewch i'n gwefan:

[http://www.learnwelshinmidwales.org/uploads/na100\\_manylion.pdf](http://www.learnwelshinmidwales.org/uploads/na100_manylion.pdf) neu e-bostiwrch y Ganolfan cymraegioedolion@aber.ac.uk.

Mae yna ddsbarth yn rhedeg ar gyfer bob lefel am y 4 wythnos a does ddim rhaid i chi fynychu am y 4 wythnos cyfan. Mae llety hefyd ar gael gyda opsiwn o lety en-suite ac heb en-suite. Am brisiau, cysylltwch â'r Ganolfan: cymraegioedolion@aber.ac.uk.

I noticed the website of your Welsh Society whilst looking online, and thought you may like to see the information for this year's Intensive Welsh Course in Aberystwyth. If you would like further information please see our website:

[http://www.learnwelshinmidwales.org/uploads/na100\\_manylion.pdf](http://www.learnwelshinmidwales.org/uploads/na100_manylion.pdf) or e-mail the Centre [welshforadults@aber.ac.uk](mailto:welshforadults@aber.ac.uk).

There is a class running for each level for 4 weeks however you can attend any number of weeks. There is also accommodation available, with the option of en-suite and non en-suite. For prices, please contact the Centre on [welshforadults@aber.ac.uk](mailto:welshforadults@aber.ac.uk).

Cofion gorau

GWENLLIAN

## Laurie Jenkins' Art Show

Laurie Jenkins is presenting her first art show at the MET Gallery at the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Home from April 15 through July 8, opening on Wednesday, April 15 at 1:30 p.m.

Artwork will be on display and for sale, with a percentage of the sales going to the facility in support of their programs. Artwork that is sold must remain on display until the end of the show, July 8.

**Everyone is invited to visit anytime from 1:30 p.m. on April 15 until the end of the show.**

Laurie says:

When I had my first stroke at age 46, I decided to get more serious about my art.

Inspired by a get-well gift from a consulting firm I had worked with, I started to dabble in water colour. Honestly, it was the least expensive option. Previously I had always considered water colour too difficult a medium with which to work but, since I have pursued it more seriously, I have become more and more familiar with its value and possibilities. Once I retired from my career in the public service, I decided to make art a priority.

Why do I paint? I have discovered... given my Christian upbringing, I feel a strong underlying duty to use a God-given talent. Because of this initial impetus, I have discovered a great deal of satisfaction in pursuing this craft. I find that I'm not a great planner when I'm painting and sometimes in my eagerness to get to the paint I forget to sketch what I'm going to paint so I'm never really sure how it will turn out. Sometimes I surprise myself and on occasion it is a pleasant surprise.

Painting helps me to get what's inside of me out to the light of day.

Finally, it gives me joy - and I hope you will sense this.





**Celtic MTL 2015**

We are very pleased to announce our Friday night Film night and Q&A with Kevin Tierney (Producer/Director), G. Scott MacLeod (Director) and renowned Irish Storyteller Mike Burns!

This night will also be the premier of G. Scott MacLeod's full feature film; The Water of Life

We hope to see you all there for this amazing evening of film and Q&A!

Date: Friday May 1<sup>st</sup>

Place: The de Seve Cinema

1400 deMaisoneuve O.,  
Montreal, Quebec

Time: Ticket sales start at 6 pm,

Show begins at 7:30 pm

Admission: \$12

Editor's note: We would like to remind everyone that this is only the start of an exciting weekend celebrating Celtic culture in Canada.

Taken from the web site:

[ashermediarelations.com/festivals-associations/montreal-celtic-society-celtic-mtl-2015](http://ashermediarelations.com/festivals-associations/montreal-celtic-society-celtic-mtl-2015)

Celtic MTL 2015 is a convention to promote and educate the population about the Celtic Nations. Here in Montreal we have a habit of defining Celtic to be an Irish term. However the Celts also include the Cornish (Cornwall, UK), the Manx (Isle of Man, UK), the Breton's (Brittany, France), the Welsh (Wales, UK), the Scottish (Scotland), and the Galicians (Galicia, Spain).

This convention will have numerous Celtic societies and organizations who will be present to showcase their heritage, and introduce themselves to people who are interested in learning more about their Celtic background or even Celtic culture in general. Furthermore, this show will include artists, musicians, guest speakers, and performances by locals and visitors from outside of Montreal. This event will have the Celtic spirit in many different varieties!

The convention will be taking place in the downtown campus of Concordia University both in the EV and Library buildings. There will also be demonstrations of song, dance, literature, and culture during the course of the day in the DeSeve Cinema located inside the LB building. We will have associations from across the country who will attend this event to proudly represent their Celtic Societies.

Come out for this historical weekend event where you will have the chance to meet the entire Celtic Nation in one giant setting! You might be surprised what you learn and or discover about your own background.

Free admission!

Editor's note: As reported in the winter bulletin, the OWS will be represented by the Executive with a table and information. As well, Dr. Paul Birt will be giving a talk.

Why not stay the weekend-there is special pricing offered for convention visitors at the Novotel Hotel, located nearby- <http://tinyurl.com/ous4ddq>

If anyone is interested in helping with the OWS display for the weekend, please contact Alison Lawson at 613-725-2704 or e-mail at [alisonlawson@rogers.com](mailto:alisonlawson@rogers.com)



### The Three Welsh Tenors coming to Ottawa in 2016

I am very excited to let you know that the Ontario Welsh Festival is going to be in Ottawa in 2016. Arrangements are well in hand. The Festival will be based in the Lord Elgin Hotel and the concert and Gymanfa will take place in Dominion Chalmers United Church. I am sure the whole Ottawa Welsh community will welcome this news. The last time it was here was in the late 1990's.

As the guest choir we have booked Côr Dydd – a really excellent choir from Cardiff (see [www.cordydd.com](http://www.cordydd.com)). And I'm very pleased to announce that as a huge bonus, we have invited as special guests no less than the **Three Welsh Tenors!** I'm sure you will agree this will make for a spectacular concert which should attract a wide audience and really put the Welsh of Ottawa in the limelight.

However, as you probably know, the Ontario Welsh Festival operates on a limited budget. So I have undertaken to try to raise sponsorship money from the Welsh community to cover this extra expense. Some OWS members have already been extremely generous and we are up to \$5600. But, we will need a few thousand more, I'm afraid.

I would be extremely grateful if you would be willing to help out in this respect – any amount would be received most gratefully. All donors will be publicly acknowledged and thanked in the Festival brochure. We are also hoping to arrange a reception during the weekend for the Three Tenors to meet with the sponsors.

If you feel you can help out, please contact Alison Lawson at 613-725-2704, or e-mail at [alisonlawson@rogers.com](mailto:alisonlawson@rogers.com).

You could also send a contribution directly to the treasurer of the Festival, Brian Hughes, 25-4360 Millcroft Park Drive, Burlington, On, L7M 4T7. Please make the cheque payable to the OGGA.

Alison Lawson (on behalf of the Ontario Welsh Festival committee)

### The Future of The London Welsh School Hangs In The Balance

The London Welsh School could be homeless if a new home is not found by September 2015. The London Borough of Brent Planning Committee refused a planning application to convert a disused Bowling Pavilion in a local Wembley park into the school's new premises. The School, which is a registered charity, has been in existence for almost 60 years and based at Stonebridge School near Wembley for 15 years. But Brent Council has not included them in Stonebridge School's re-development plans or the larger regeneration programme of the local area.

There only two Welsh language schools outside of Wales offering full time primary (elementary) education one being in Patagonia, Argentina and the other The London Welsh School. The school's history started in 1958 due to a group of parents who understood the benefits of bilingualism, but wanted more than just a Saturday morning language class. They felt that a more profound education was called for that encompassed the language, culture and heritage from "the Land of their Fathers" for their children and the London Welsh community.

Perhaps one of the most amazing things about this school is its sense of community. Dedicated families commute quite a distance to get to London Welsh School traveling from all over London and the surrounding counties. The school run can take over three hours to and from school on public transport or by car for some. It offers a teacher-pupil ratio of around 16-1 and has village school-like atmosphere. This is highly unusual in the heart of the sprawling London metropolis.

The loss of the school would devastate the 35 pupils, their families, the staff and the London Welsh community in general. It would also be a loss to the London Borough of Brent who prides itself as a borough that believes wholeheartedly in multiculturalism. Brent Council are now being urged to offer more support as it is their actions which have caused the school this trauma.

Head teacher Julie Griffiths said of the recent decision, "On Tuesday (March 3<sup>rd</sup>) our wonderful school was at

Parliament singing in front of MPs to celebrate St David's Day. We were praised for our contribution to the diverse cultural balance of the borough of Brent and the UK. The families, staff and school board will not be defeated by this set back [of the planning application]. We remain positive that there are people from all walks of life who will support us and help ensure our future".

The school is currently seeking donations and patrons to raise vital funds for a new home and to help establish a more secure future. Currently, the school's patrons include; Hollywood actor Matthew Rhys, Stephen Jones, the most capped Welsh rugby player, a variety of members of parliament and highly regarded established members of the United Kingdom's arts, education and business communities.

For more information about the school, the move or how to a donate contact:

eleribrady@ysgolgybraegllundain.co.uk

SARA-ELLEN SCALISE

**Welshmen In Canada  
From the Manchester Guardian  
July 9, 1902**

Arrival of the Patagonian Party

The Welsh emigrants from Patagonia have safely reached their new Settlement in the North-west territory of Canada, and as will be seen from the sub-joined letter received by our Cardiff correspondent they are in good health and the best of spirits, and look forward confidently to the new life and new experience that await them. The writer of the letter, Mr. H. M. Howell, KC is President of the St. David's Society of Winnipeg, and like and his compatriots in that town have extended to the immigrants every possible welcome and hospitality, Mr. Howell writes under date of June 27, from Winnipeg:

On the 25th inst [sic] over 200 of the Patagonia Welsh arrived in this city rather tired after their long

journey from their late southern home. They left Patagonia more than six weeks ago, by steamship that specially called for them and took them to Liverpool, where they stayed for a few days, and then left on another steamship for Canada. At Liverpool they left a couple of families behind them, one because of an attack of measles among the children and the other on account of sickness and general weakness, but these families are to follow in the course of two or three weeks. They are in the charge of the Rev. Mr. Davies, and while in this City remained at the Immigration Hall, where they were medically treated, housed, and fed at the expense of the Government. Three of the children died during the long voyage and four were born on the way, one of whom had the good fortune to make its advent in Canada. The majority of them left here this morning by train for Saltcoats, a place about 240 miles west and slightly north of Winnipeg, which place is the nearest railway station to their "reserve." A few, however, remained behind, having secured profitable employment here, so as to keep things going until their farms are productive. Last night the Winnipeg St. David's Society gathered at the Immigration Hall and exchanged mutual greetings, joined in their songs, and otherwise entertained the party. It was rather a surprise to many of us to find that a very large portion of the younger generation were quite unable to converse in English, their languages being Welsh and Spanish. The older members of the party could all speak English, with a rather foreign accent. We were equally surprised to find that during their long years of exile they had kept up all the hymns and songs of their old mountain homes. The men seemed to be in good health, the women fairly well but very tired. Most of the children, however, seemed pale and rather exhausted, the long confinement on shipboard and on the railway having necessarily told most seriously on them. Their pallid faces showed that they needed the bracing effects of our prairie air.



The party seemed to have a fair amount of money with which to start life if one could judge from the amount their good clergyman was getting exchanged for them in the bank here. We all hope that they will have quite enough to pull them through until their harvest, which cannot be until a year from this coming autumn. In the meantime, of course, all can obtain profitable employment here at good rates of wages until winter, but during the winter necessarily many of them must be idle. This party, together with the few who came a little time ago, will have up about 30 homesteads out of the 190 which is within their reserve. But of course all other homesteads in the North-west are open to them, so that there be no fear of free grants giving out before others arrive.

I was struck with the bravery and courage of all, particularly of the women. I quite expected to see them worn out and disheartened, but they seemed brave and cheerful with great confidence as to their future success. They will have before them some hardships without doubt, and they will not have their homes comfortable for a considerable time yet. There cattle can feed anywhere, and hay is abundant. For a time many of the party will be downhearted and at times discouraged, and it may be that at times they will even wish themselves back in their old Southern homes, but if they are frugal and industrious there is no question as to their success.

Contributed by Christopher Smart