



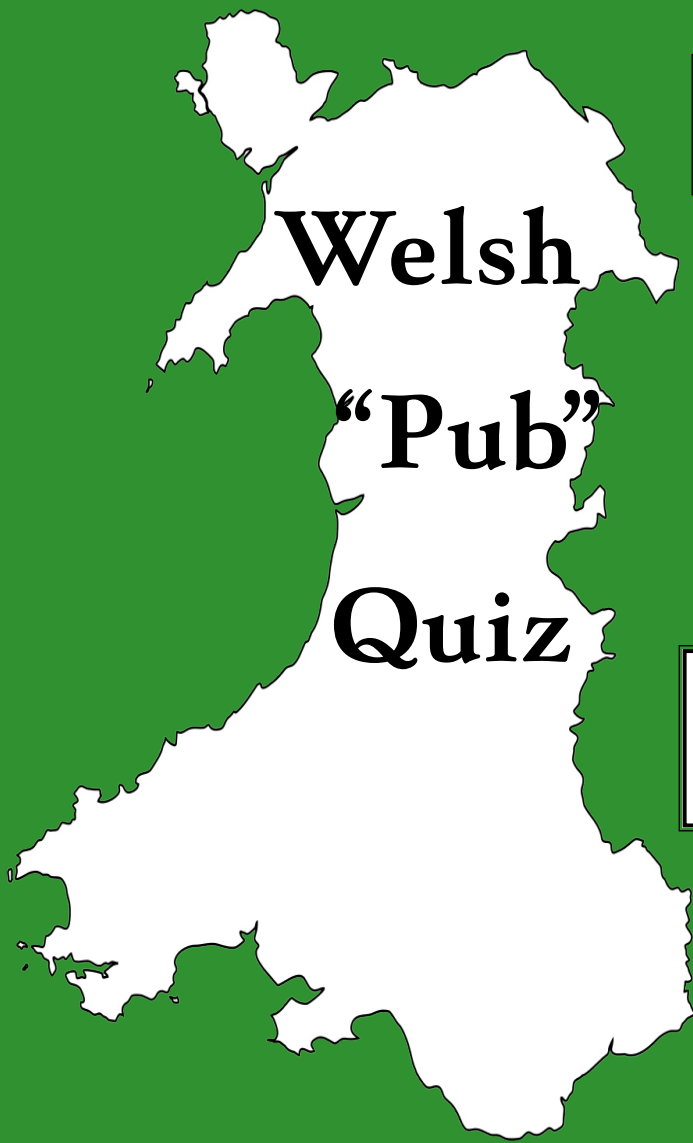
Dragon Speak

Welsh Society of Oregon Newsletter

[Image source: en.wikipedia.org]

TACHWEDD (NOVEMBER) 2017

November 4th Meeting:



Test your mettle, and vie for tasty chocolate prizes!

Held at the "Fireside Pub" at Kenilworth Presbyterian Church



Tracing my grandmother's roots—a Trip to Wales

by Kathy Winther

My sister (Patty) and I recently got home from a trip to my grandmother's homeland of Wales. It was the trip of a lifetime for us, as when we were youngsters we would hear her talk of places like Rhyl, Meliden, and Dyserth. They were just names then—when you're young, you have too many things to do than worry about a different country a whole ocean away.

But as the years rolled on, we became very aware of our heritage and how important Wales had now become to my family. One day while working on my genealogy, I found a picture of my great-grandmother, Harriet (Edwards) Thomas, on Ancestry.com. Until then, I had been sure I had the only copy of that picture. Through that connection, I was able to connect to the other owner, Paul Richards, who lives in Wales and turned out to be my 2nd cousin. The picture was of his great-great-grandmother, and it turned out his great-grandmother (Maria Thomas) and my Grandmother (also Harriet, like her mother) were sisters.

Paul Richards lives in Colwyn Bay, in Northern Wales. After about six years, my sister and I decided to make the trip. Paul and his wife opened their homes, hearts, and lives to us. We spent 15 lovely days in a beautiful country. It was the best trip I have ever had. We toured Northern Wales, the Cardiff area, and London.



The picture of Harriet that started it all

The Thomas family was last together 106 years ago. My grandmother, her brother, and her father moved first to Greenwood, then Trail in British Columbia. In 1908, Harriet and her brother both moved to Spokane. Her father, Thomas Thomas, remained in Greenwood working in his tailor shop on Copper Street.

Harriet married a Welshman, Robert Hugh Jones, who was born in Minnesota. His father and mother had come from Penygroes, Llandegwing, Carnarvonshire, Wales. They were married in 1910 in Idaho and lived in Spokane, WA. Robert died in the flu epidemic of 1917/1918. He left Harriet alone living in a new country with three young children, working as a cook in the wealthy homes of Spokane. Her children lived in the children's home, coming home with her on weekends. She never remarried.

During the years she lived alone, she continued writing to her father in Greenwood. No letters have been located between the families in Wales. The Welsh family moved to London, and during WWII their house was bombed. After this tragedy, the Welsh family returned to Wales. Because all was lost in the bombing, the communication to and from America was lost.



After 106 years, my 2nd cousin once removed (Paul and wife Marcia Richards) met my sister and I at the Manchester Airport on September 12, 2016. We have talked over the years over email and a few Skype calls. But that contact was nothing like when we met. It was as if we had known each other since childhood. They made our trip to Wales a dream come true. We went



Joan Weighill Richards (center)

to all the places where the families lived and worked and were introduced to other relatives. We were also able to meet Paul's 83 year old Mum (Joan Weighill Richards, center in photo on the left). She looks exactly like my Grandmother Harriet. We were able to find the tailor shop in Llanrwst where my Grandfather (Thomas Thomas), had had his original business. It was such a special time. I shall never forget what a wonderful place Wales is and how warm and friendly all the people we met were. It was awesome!

WSOR at the Samhain Festival

The Welsh Society made a wonderful presence at the 2nd annual Samhain Celtic Festival in Salem. Janet Figini, Betty Pierce, and Chris Darr demonstrated how to make Welsh cakes to an audience made hungry by the delightful smell of the Welsh cakes, and we sold loads of Welsh cakes and other Welsh goods from our display table in the Gymnasium.

Making its debut appearance at the festival, the Welsh Society Choir let Welsh heritage shine through song in a varied program of our core folk and hymn repertoire. Lively performances by soloists, small groups, and the choir at large entertained appreciative audiences, first during lunch in the cafeteria, then later on the main festival stage.

Many thanks to all those who participated and those that helped make it happen!



The Welsh Society Choir at the Samhain Festival



Welsh Society Youth at Halloween Violin Recital

Zora Blunk (violin), Dylan Burns (violin), and Phoebe Burns (folk harp), along with singer Andrea Wild, represented Welsh folk song traditions in concert as part of Mirabai Peart's Halloween studio recital. Zora is the daughter of Jamie Webster, and Dylan and Phoebe are Andrea's children.

Zora played a solo version of *Beth Yr Haf I Mi*, and Dylan, Phoebe, and Andrea joined forces on *Suo Gan*.



Zora Blunk, Phoebe Burns, and Dylan Burns

Welsh Weekend coming up in Vancouver, B.C.!

Noson Lawen, Fri. Nov 3 featuring Portland band *Three Pound Note*. Finger food will be served.

Gymanfa Ganu, Nov 5, 2pm

For more details, see:

<http://www.welshsociety.com>

The Welsh Society of Oregon presents 



A Christmas in Wales

featuring The Welsh Society Choir, musical guests *Three Pound Note*, and A Reading of *A Child's Christmas in Wales* by Jonathan Nicholas

7:00pm Sat. Dec 16, 2017
suggested donation \$10

St David of Wales Episcopal Church
2800 SE Harrison St, Portland, OR



The SaySomethingInWelsh Online Eisteddfod

An Eisteddfod is a Welsh cultural festival that celebrates music, performance, art, poetry and literature. Eisteddfodau (the plural of Eisteddfod) happen at all levels, from the National Eisteddfod (arguably the biggest cultural contest in Europe) to events like the mini-Eisteddfod held at the annual Welsh Course run by Cymdeithas Madog in North America. One of the more unusual Eisteddfodau is the one run by SaySomethingInWelsh (SSiW) - an annual Online Eisteddfod where entries are submitted by Welsh learners all over the world and voted on by the members of the SSiW Forum (an online discussion group for learners). There are submission categories for prose, poetry, photography, book review, recitation and singing. The Online Eisteddfod is meant for fun, and to give an opportunity for learners to practice. But this isn't to say that the competitors don't take the competition seriously—they do! The quality of the entrants this year was remarked to be of a high standard by members of the Forum.

This year, two of the entrants in the singing categories hail from our own Welsh Society choir. In the category for “Traditional Song - Solo,” Andrea Wild submitted a beautifully performed rendering of *Tra Bo Dau*, showcasing her characteristic lilting voice (the song for each category is chosen by the organizers, so everyone contestant sings the same piece). Likewise, for the “Traditional Song - Group” category, Jamie Webster and Jeff Lewis submitted a newly composed duet arrangement of *O Gymru*, leaning on Jeff's rich baritone and Jamie's sweet mezzo-soprano and vocal dexterity.

When the winners were announced, it was good news for our Portland contingent. Andrea tied for a win in the Solo category, and Jamie and Jeff won the Group category. Aran Jones, the owner of SaySomethingInWelsh, commented: “I thought the singing entries were particularly remarkable—hugely enjoyed them—especially that very creative group piece.” It's all in good fun, and our Portland winners are looking forward to receiving a special package from Wales—and finding out what prizes they won (probably a t-shirt, and maybe a book or CD—who knows!).

To find out more, see <https://forum.saysomethingin.com/c/welsh/online-eisteddfod-2017>

Happy Birthday to WSOR'ers born in November!

Penblwydd Hapus i chi! May your day be full of good friends, family, and good cheer!

Nov 5 : Zora Blunk
Nov 10 : David Jewel, Ruth Takahashi
Nov 28 : Jonathan Gray
Nov 29 : Mary Reece



[Image source: pixabay.com]

*If we missed you, we may not have your birthday on the list. Please call or email Jeff Lewis (see below).
Also note: we are including only 2016 & 2017 paid members*



We welcome all contributions to this newsletter. Please send your news, stories, anecdotes, poems, jokes, or anything else that you would like to share with the Welsh Society.

Contact: Jeff Lewis
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Portland, OR 97212
jeff@nwlewis.com

Membership

Membership in the Welsh Society of Oregon is open to all people interested in Wales.

To join, please contact our Treasurer:
Claudia Sterling
20600 SW Shoshone Dr
Tualatin, OR 97062
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Our mission: The Welsh Society of Oregon develops, and perpetuates Welsh heritage, culture, and music in Oregon. We strive to sustain: pride in being Welsh, support for learning about Wales, the Welsh language, and exploration of Welsh-American issues by our members and for others in the community.

The Welsh Society of Oregon is an IRS-approved 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

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www.oregonwelsh.org

Our Meetings:

November 4
Welsh “Pub” Quiz

(no regular meeting in Dec)

December 16
Christmas Tea 4:30pm
A Christmas in Wales 7pm
at St David of Wales

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at:

Kenilworth Presbyterian Church
4028 SE 34th Ave. at Gladstone St.
Portland, OR 97202
Potluck starts at 12:30
Program starts around 1:00