



Cymdeithas Cymry Sydney Sydney Welsh Society

15 January 2018

Blwyddyn Newydd Dda

A Happy New Year to members and supporters!

I hope you have all enjoyed a relaxing Christmas with family and friends and I wish you a happy and healthy new year. As we embark on the new year, we can reflect on 2017 - a period of rapid technological change, gender issues, greater connectivity (hopefully with loved ones), and look forward to even greater connectivity and establishing our place in an ever changing world in 2018.



But let's start with something lighter. Column 8 readers will have been

amused to see *William Williams* of Manly telling us of his fellow golfer named John Jones and neighbour Evan Evans. He said it was a 'Welsh thing' to

use the same name for both your Christian and surname. This prompted a response from *Beryl Jenkins* of Lindfield who said that in her 'valley village' they had a Griffith Griffiths, Watkin Watkins, Morgan Morgan, Lewis Lewis and Richard Pritchard!! I don't think anyone will beat that!!

After a brief hiatus, the Welsh Society lunches have started again at a city venue. The next get together is on Friday 19 January at 99 on York. A big thank you to Frances Richards for taking on the organisation of these lunches following Myfanwy's good work over many years.

This year the Celtic Festival will not be held as part of the Australia Day celebrations as in previous years. This is unfortunate as, although it catered mainly for the Scots and Irish, it did provide a forum for passing Welsh folk to stop by and chat. The Society has held a tent and stall there for many years.

St David's Day Celebration

The Sydney Welsh Choir is again organising the enormously popular St David's Day celebration on Sunday 4 March. The choir will give a short concert followed by a singalong for all with a guest speaker and a light meal. It promises to be another splendid occasion at the Carnarvon Golf Club Lidcombe. The cost is \$25 a head. To book phone 9617 0401.

Choir Musical Director Viv Llewellyn tells me the choir already has a good number of bookings for 2018 so keep an eye out for a concert near you.

How many Welsh speakers are in the world?



Go to braw.media to see the latest map.

We don't know exactly how many Welsh speakers there are but a new interactive map is helping to give a more complete picture outside of Wales.

As well as showing fluent Welsh speakers on five continents the map shows individuals and groups who are learning Welsh. As expected there are learners in the USA, Australia and Patagonia but more surprisingly there are learners in Saskatchewan Canada, Nigeria and Madagascar!

The company 'Braw Media' which is based in Scotland has produced the web site containing the map. Their aim is to show the passion that people have for the Welsh language. The site encourages people to get in touch with other learners throughout the world. More than 1,900 markers and 104 countries are included on the map as at January 2018.

Targeting 1 million Welsh speakers

The Cynulliad (Welsh Assembly) has introduced a target of 1 million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. That's about double the present number and is certainly a tall order. Now I know the whole issue of the Welsh language is controversial in the extreme and arouses furious debate among Welsh people. Many people believe the sooner the language dies out or is helped out the better. But a nation is defined by its language and when you lose a language you lose a wealth of culture, tradition and literature. So let's support this initiative in whatever way we can.

French woman lives in multilingual Welsh home



A young French woman (**Valériane Leblond**) who has made her mark creating illustrations for several Welsh authors and children's books is bringing up her young family in country Wales speaking only Welsh or French. The young children (whose father is a fervent Welsh

speaker) attend Welsh speaking schools and communicate with their friends in Welsh while the family has decided to speak French at home. So can you imagine being brought up today in Britain with English as a third language? These children will speak at least three languages fluently by the time they grow up. Wonderful!

And to finish up. I truly pulled this (corny) joke from my Christmas cracker at Christmas dinner this festive season.

Q How do you handle dangerous cheese?

A Caerphilly!

Best wishes to you all for a happy and prosperous 2018.

Cofion cynnes

Ian Williams
President, Welsh Society of Sydney

email: refine@bigpond.net.au