

Christmas at Cambria

In this issue Patrick Thomas gives us a welcome glimpse of Christmas past. I shall think of him at 9.30 am on Christmas morning as I sit in our nice warm church, doubly grateful that I am not there at that dark cold hour bridging night and day, however inspiring Daniel Rowlands might have been. Patrick will probably be surprised to hear that thanks to him the old tradition of Calennigs has been re-introduced in our village.

My boys and a few of their friends thought this a brilliant idea and now the afternoon of New Year's Eve is a fever of activity, decorating oranges with cloves, and turning them into candle holders, which are then hung from sticks and a merry troop, muffled and hopeful of rather more than a penny, do a tour of the village. The older residents generally give them a warm welcome, some jokers pay them to go away, (this could be down to the fact that they haven't practised quite as much as they should and are not as harmonious as they might be) but this is every bit as popular! Some ask to what charity is the money going, and when the boys say it is for them - the old tradition - they are turned away, and not always very politely.

It is something of a shock to realise that the year is nearly over; in many ways it hardly seems to have started and certainly hasn't conducted itself properly at all. Its unfolding has proved an illustration of that old Chinese curse: May you live in interesting times. Well, we certainly do here in the Cambria offices. When the magazine first started I was chronically mistaken in thinking that it would become a routine, although, of course, deadlines and an ongoing cycle of production dictate a certain measure of this, routine is definitely not the word I would use to describe our working life. The more we discover of our history, of amazing and interesting people, the wonders and beauties of Wales, the more apparent it becomes that there is still so much more to know. Recently, Robin Gwyndaf told me of how very privileged he felt to have been able to interview over 3000 people in the course of research during his time at the National History Museum at St. Fagan's. 'The greatest joy of all' he said 'is not to keep the treasure in a dark room ... but to share the treasure with others'. We feel that we are immensely lucky to be in a similar position.

'Presented to Henry Jones-Davies founder of Cambria and the National St. David's Day Parade by David Graham Thomas, 2008' - so runs the dedication engraved on a fine crystal vase presented to Cambria's publisher by David Graham Thomas of Castell Nedd last month. Mr Thomas is a man whose name, I would like to think, will one day be familiar to many. A proud and fearless patriot, he is an indefatigable letter-writer to politicians, statesmen and the media; always on the subject of Wales, her place in the world, highlighting injustice, hypocrisy and duplicity, speaking up for our people: praising where due, criticising - and excoriating - where deserved. I would like to thank him for the great honour he has done Cambria's publisher.

As you read Cambria there are many ideas for gifts, jewellery and books, nice things to eat, or give something different: a voucher or promise of a day out. I like the story of the man who walked many, many miles to deliver a coconut as a present to a friend. When the recipient remarked

on the great lengths the man had gone to deliver the gift the man
replied 'Walk part of gift!'

From all at Cambria, Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.

Frances Jones-Davies

Editor