

Letter from the Editor - Autumn 09

A WONDERFUL SYNCHRONICITY OFTEN COMES INTO PLAY WHEN PUTTING Cambria TOGETHER. One starts with an idea of what is going in the magazine several months ahead - the production list - but then it almost acquires a life of its own, and the end product tends to become something quite different from the carefully planned version.

On our way to Bala for the Eisteddfod, Alison Mostyn of our editorial staff put forward the idea that there should be more about women in Cambria. I had never particularly thought about this one way or the other, but a few days later the matter was raised again by Gwenllian Meredith when visiting our stand. She suggested a series on women in Welsh history, starting with Nest. I have an innate belief in the parity of men and women, accompanied by a reverence for 'a difference', but I am inclined to think that a true belief in equality actually means that the gender of itself is of little consequence, although it is not of course that simple, for by its very nature gender gives differing points of view and action, all of which contributes to a balanced whole. As the artist, Philippa Jacobs says 'Balance is at the root of why we re here'. In any case you will find Gwenllian's feature on Nest in this issue.

There is much talk of improving the infrastructure of Wales, the creation of better north/south links, improving the speed and service between west Wales and Cardiff and on to London, Clive Betts lays out plainly the plans covering the latter, for electrification as far as Swansea. The trains between north and south involve a ridiculously circuitous route, with several changes, a crossing into England and many hours of travel, and there seems no remedy in view. The silver lining is the beauty of the view. Whichever route you take the scenery is phenomenal, making the journey a pleasure. Much of what I have said about rail is applicable to road travel especially the point about scenery. The approach to Bala and the view of the Eisteddfod pavilion rising from the woods across the lake, framed by mountains was as if out of a fairy tale. Thanks to David Williams's wonderful photographs you can get a sense of what a successful Eisteddfod this was in Bala.

Due to popular demand Miranda Morton is returning as a regular contributor. Her articles in iaith y nefoedd will follow the same format as before with a glossary for those wishing to build on their Welsh.

Recently returned from Lesotho she talks here about the links between our two countries. Her articles are designed to be of general interest, simple enough for those who have done a year of Welsh but want to build up their vocabulary and knowledge of idiom.

Reading through the proofs of Cambria this edition is tinged with sadness: it was a terrible shock to hear, only days before the Eisteddfod, of the sudden death of Keith Nurse, a regular contributor and correspondent. Keith had just sent us a fascinating article on Wat's Dyke, which is reproduced in this issue. His friendship and support will always be warmly remembered. Shortly after the Eisteddfod that 'master of the traditional metres whose like had not been seen since medieval times'; Dic Jones, Prifardd and Archdruoid of Wales also died. Meic Stephens looks back on his life and achievements.

The day of the inaugural Friends of Cambria lunch was glorious, sunny and warm, making lunch in the garden possible. Hywel Teifi was, as always, in fine good humour; our thanks to him for a rousing and amusing speech. Sadly, being a weekday - and lunchtime - there were many who couldn't make it, but thank you to everybody who came or couldn't and especially to the Friend who sponsored the lunch but wishes to remain anonymous.

Frances Jones-Davies

Editor