

CELTIC NEWS

Bulletin of the Celtic League

Alba — Breizh — Cymru — Éire — Kernow — Mannin

SUMMER, 1966, No.13.

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C Y M R U +
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Plaid Cymru progresses: Since the General Election in March, Plaid Cymru has obtained still more steady progress. New members have been entrolled in good numbers. Young people, in particular, have joined. But older people, too, University lecturers and postmen, businessmen and hospital workers, for example, have come over to the national party.

By-Election in Carmarthen: Prospects are good for Wales in the by-election in Carmarthenshire. While I write the date is not known. It was caused by the death of Lady Megan Lloyd George, who was, ten years ago, the Chairman of the all-party campaign for a Parliament for Wales. Plaid Cymru candidate is Mr. Gwynfor Evans, President of the Party (and of the Celtic League). The Plaid Cymru vote there increased, in the last three elections, from 2,545 (1959) to 5,495 ('64) to 7,416, last March.

Forward: Most national movements in Cymru are moving forward. The Welsh-medium schools in anglicised areas are increasing in number and size; many more "nursery" schools (for under-5s) have been set up to prepare children for the elementary schools. The Urdd (Guild of Youth) held another most successful National Eisteddfod at Caergybi (Holyhead) in Sir Fôn (Anglesey); it has developed its camping facilities for young people; there is a special article on the Urdd in our Annual Volume. The Opera Company, the National Eisteddfod, the Welsh Books Council - all are progressing.

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Language: Plaid Cymru has adopted the newest invention for simultaneous or synchronistic translation at its bi-lingual Councils and Conferences. The English Government is delaying as long as it can, giving Welsh "equal status" with English, as recommended by the Hughes-Parry report; the Secretary of State for Wales justifies his party; yet, they are compelled to make minor concessions. The Welsh Language Society continues with its demonstrations, and Mr. Geraint Jones, its secretary, was imprisoned for refusing to pay a fine; he refused to fill in an English form for a Car Licence.

From Bad to Worse: The Labour Government is as bad as the Tories; fairer in words, but worse in action. It has not yet dropped its plan of a "new town for Birmingham overflow" in Mid-Wales. It has allowed the inspection of 29 valleys in Montgomeryshire, with a view to drowning them to supply water for England. It now talks of making "South Wales and the West of England into one region" of which Bristol would be the capital and Cardiff the satellite. The Government closes mines, refuses road-building schemes, etc., etc. Labour has betrayed Wales, and the people are coming to realise it.

In Brief: Gwennallt Jones, foremost poet, retired as Lecturer at the University of Aberystwyth: a meeting of tribute was held. A fund of £1,200 was raised to buy and renovate her old home as tribute to Dr. Kate Roberts, our novelist and short-story writer. At a special dinner at Carmarthen, Mr. Gwynfor Evans was complimented on having completed 21 years as national leader. The "Welsh Nation", the Plaid Cymru paper, has "National Freedom Around the World" as ones of its monthly features; Ireland, Catalonia, Roumania, etc. have been its subjects; annual subscription is 7/6 (to Plaid Cymru, 8 Queen Street, Cardiff). The Mineworkers Union has called for a Trade Union Council for Wales.

+++++ The 1916 Rising was commemorated officially.
E I R E | Quite a number of veterans of the Rising
+++++ | were still to be found. One prominent eye-
witness of all the events who did not quite

survive to grace the 50th anniversary was Horatio, Lord Nelson! The Proclamation of the Rising guaranteed "Equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens... and declared "its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole Nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally." The present government party, founded by Mr. De Valera, has had many years of office, but its efforts do not bear measure by this standard. Gaelicisation that has been unplanned and at half-cock has naturally served as an irritant rather than as an inspiration. The Gaeltacht, instead of spreading into the English-speaking areas has been allowed to diminish alarmingly. All this led "Misneach" to stage protest fasts concurrently in Dublin and Belfast during Easter Week. The electorate of the 26 Counties manifested their dissatisfaction when in the recent presidential election when Mr. De Valera's majority over his rival, Mr. O'Higgins, a relative nonentity, was a mere 10,717 votes. The spate of strikes has been a further symptom of the lip-service to 1916, without the will to make its aims a reality, with the inevitable result that sectional interests come before national interests.

Re-alignment: Fine Gael is evidently to become the English party. In the meantime, the ITGWU, the largest Trade Union in Ireland has affiliated to the Labour Party, while Gerry Fitt, the one Socialist Republican M.P. elected from the 6-Counties to Westminster has also joined.

Eamonn Andrews is the proud father of Jellyfish Eireann. From now on Britain is to enjoy the undivided benefit of Mr. Andrew's talents. Announcing his retirement, he indulged in unconscious humour in stating that he objected to the amount of Irish on the service. His namesake, Dr. C. S. Andrews, replaces him as chairman of the Telefis Eireann authority. Under Dr. Andrew's control we can be sure that the Jellyfish will have the chance to develop an Irish backbone.

Other Celts will not be heartened by this section. But it should warn them that though Home Rule is better for one's self-respect it can be as inefficient as alien rule. The

right goals need to be set and no ersatz substitutes tolerated.

+++++ Political situation: Last April three
B R E I Z H + young Bretons threw a molotov cocktail
+++++ at the sous-prefecture (govt. building)
of St. Nazaire, in S. Brittany. Arrested by the French police, they are still awaiting trial. Apparently the French authorities are anxious to play down the whole affair to avoid publicity about the Breton question. This direct action was the direct result of the French government's policy of mismanagement and empty promises. (Attention is drawn to the accompanying petition forms -Edr).

Trade: The Breton organisation CELIB continues to extend its activities abroad. A Breton-Galician Committee was formed (25/3/66) to represent Brittany in this Celtic enclave of N.W. Spain and so increase trade with one of her traditional customers. CELIB is also extending its influence in London through the Breton Centre. Recent activities included a meeting of the chairmen of Breton Chambers of Commerce, a Breton Produce Festival and a film show. In June the Agricultural Commission of the European Parliament was guest of CELIB in Brittany. Some Breton quarters hoped to interest the delegates in Brittany's plight.

French Parties notably of the left, periodically produce a 'Plan' for Brittany. First it was the Communists, now it is the Unified Socialist Party, next there will presumably be a plan from the Right. Most Bretons are coming to realise that there is only one road to salvation and that it turns neither to Right nor to Left. It is simply a matter of planning to gain control of our own affairs. Various organisations have come to realise this fact and are preparing themselves for such an eventuality.

Cultural Activities: S.A.D.E.D. (Committee for Secondary Education) is making a remarkable effort in the field of teaching through the medium of Breton in preparation for

the day when Bretons control their own schools, which are now an essential part of the French programme to assimilate us. 21 teachers give their services voluntarily to the cause of the Breton language. Everything operates on a slender budget of £1,000 per annum, but the number of pupils increases yearly. By the beginning of March, about 42,000 signatures had been collected for the teaching of Breton in the Schools and its use on Television. The support of many town councils also showed that Bretons are becoming increasingly interested in the fate of their own country.

The European Federalist Movement (Breton Branch) runs an international camp for young Europeans (over 18 yrs. of age) from July 17th to August 7th, in Brittany. (information from: Miss M. Keruhel, 12 Rue des Dames, Paris 17).

Jeun Ar Gow died recently, aged 68. Well known to many Celtic friends outside Brittany, his death is a great loss to Breton literature.

+++++ Cornwall treated as an extremity
K E R N O W + Daily realities could almost convince
+++++ us that in Whitehall there is a gnome
contriving to de-Cornicise us, for what-
ever else is the effect of reducing our
facilities or of putting these facilities outside Cornwall.

Relentlessly do the Railways debilitate branch lines, announce closure of them (now Newquay and Falmouth) and tell us we may keep our main line IF we do their work of getting custom notwithstanding the penal charges.

Snagging our main road through Plymouth is the Minister of Transport's idea of linking us with the outside world, though we say repeatedly that the unimpeded route goes out through the centre, direct to Exeter and beyond. Editorially, "The West Briton" comments that "The driver... who chooses Plymouth, either has a personal whim or needs an elementary course in reading an A.A. map" (2.6.66).

The nearest Polytechnic and the nearest cobalt therapy unit must be given to Plymouth because finance is more important than that a people should be served on their own territory. Likewise separate police organisation in Cornwall is to be ended. Our Hospital Board says "there is no "immediate prospect of the conventional X-ray therapy treatment at Redruth coming to an end", but that, "the radio therapy service in Cornwall should be renewed again in the light of experience gained from the first unit at Plymouth" (The West Briton 12.6.66).

Parliamentary Representation is to be cut from five members to four. Asks "The Cornish Times" (20.5.66), "Has the time come for Cornwall to opt out like the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man?" In Local government, at Falmouth the Mebyon Kernow candidate got 638 votes against a strong Labour candidate with 744 votes in a 54% poll; at Padstow Mebyon Kernow won a further seat on the council.

+++++ SNP In Ascendant: The results of the last
A L B A + General Election were more than encouraging
+++++ + for the Scottish National Party. A total
vote of 128,479 was cast for the party and
its aims, a mere 35,000 behind the vote cast for the Scottish
Liberal Candidates. The Nationalist vote as a percentage of
the total vote in SNP-contested divisions was just over 15%.
This figure, coupled with the percentage in favour of the
Liberal policies in Scotland (which includes Home Rule) indicates
that in such a high-powered activity as a General Election
where vested political interests can be seen at their
most powerful and worst, the people of Scotland, almost 40%
of them, voted for control of their own affairs. The result
of the Election is that the SNP is now accepted as a major
party in Scotland. Only in one of the 23 seats fought by the
SNP had the SNP vote fallen.

Emigration again: During 1965 an estimated 45,000 people

left Scotland for other parts of the globe. This drain is virtually a haemorrhage of life, ability and prosperity. It must stop soon. Or is it now too late? The number of jobs created during the year was also less than in other years. It is no wonder that emigration is the only rational answer to Scots folk who have families to support.

A New Image for Gaelic: A Gaelic Information Centre has been set up at Culloden Battlefield. The aim is to present a focal point where information about Gaelic, the Gael and the Highlands area can be obtained. This venture is the first of its kind, and is surely unique for few languages are in such need of a public-relations activity. With an estimated 80,000 speakers of Gaelic, and the number declining, any effort to maintain, if not improve, at least the numerical status of the Language is to be commended.

Nation of Servants: The much-heralded Highlands and Islands Development Board seems to be taking a turn for the worse. There seems to be of late rather an excessive emphasis on the value of tourism. This type of industry, whatever anybody says, is women's work. As such it is not for the patriarchal society of the Highlander. Tourism can offer much, of course, but only in the Summer season. What the Board must do is to get right back to the full use of the resources of both land and sea. Though the social organisation of the Highlands, in the past, left not a few things to be desired, the area was productive in that it met its own needs and had something left over for others. In one instance, the development of the Minch fishings in the 16th and 17th centuries by the Dutch prove this.

No Man is an Island! - Except when one is on an ISLAND. The Seamen's strime hit hard at the small populated islands of Scotland, the Hebrides, Shetlands and Orkneys. Industry was hit badly and life being so precarious the blow to the economy will be felt for a long time. Economic hardships are very much like the broken bones of an old person; they take much longer to heal. And they have telling side effects, such as depopulation.

Tailpiece: There are those who doubt Scotland's vitality. Yet two local councillors, elected recently on a Scottish National ticket, in East Scotland are... Englishmen!

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The Seamen's Strike has stirred up quite a lot of somewhat unexpected national feeling in the Island and people are saying on all sides that we should make more use of our independence, that Manx seamen should have their own national union and not be involved with the English one, that we should re-organise our economy on a more self-supporting basis, and so on. Mec Vannin held a well-supported public meeting recently to emphasise this, and suggestions were made of working towards a Negotiated Declaration of Independence - N.D.I. - which achieved banner headlines in the Manx press.

Manx Gaelic lessons on Radio Manninagh, conducted by Douglas Faragher have proved very popular all through the past winter and he is already arranging for their resumption, with a system of student enrolments and examinations, in September. Manx-speaking excursions are also being held regularly this summer by Yn Cheshaght Gailckagh and several church services in Manx Gaelic have been held.

Aeglach Vannin has recently recorded a number of folk songs in the Manx Gaelic for Radio Manninagh, some of which should be on the air shortly, and continues to present Manx Gaelic programmes from time to time. In May it entered 7 competitors for the "Junior Solo in Manx Gaelic" class of the Manx Festival, which had been threatened with exclusion, because there were not sufficient entries. A member Audrey Corran, carried off the 1st prize with 87 marks. Another, much younger member came second.

Ellynyn ny Gael is to provide an exhibit of Manx traditional and modern arts and crafts at the Royal Manx Agricultural Show to be held in Ramsay on August 6th and is already planning for its next Festival, to be held in November. New President of the Society is Wing-Commander Roy MacDonald, M.H.K., who is regarded as a national leader.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Annual Conference of the Celtic League was held in Dublin on April the 9th and 10th. The Saturday morning was devoted to internal business, a meeting for all the members who had come to Dublin and a Central Council Meeting. Public meetings, which drew average attendances of about 150 people, were held on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. The historic Tomás Aghas Hall where the meetings were held was decorated with the flags of the Celtic countries.

Welcoming members, Seán Óg Ó Tuama alluded to the inspiring idealism of the men and women of 1916, but castigated those in Ireland who would make "the Golden Calf the god of our race". He hit in particular at Irish Television, "a venal creature of commercial enterprises... which seems to have been devised to hold up to ridicule and insult our ancient culture and our hallowed language and is a ready platform for all the enemies of our tradition and civilisation." Mr. Gwynfor Evans, opening the meeting, said that the other Celtic peoples were encouraged by the example of Ireland to believe that their subjection to England and France was neither inevitable nor permanent.

The Secretaries' Reports showed that membership of the Celtic League is increasing quite satisfactorily; there was a greater increase during the last year than during the previous 18 months. The League has the support of the major nationalist organisations in the countries which are not free, while Wales provides nearly half our total membership. Our financial position is sound, yet we must strive to win more members, by publicising our work, by distributing leaflets, etc. A new leaflet, giving details of the C.L. and a letter of appeal to potential members have been printed. Schemes are being tried in Ireland and Brittany to bring members to take a more active part in C.L. activities.

U.N.O.: The permanent representatives of member states of the Council of Europe have received a copy of the Celtic League resolution calling on the U.N. to continue and develop the discussions initiated at Ljubljana on the rights of minority nations. Two of them have replied, one showing great interest in our work. The U.N. Division of Human Rights has sent copies of the C.L. Memorandum on the right of Brittany, Scotland and Wales to self-determination and international protection to the governments of France and England.

Kurds & Basques: The Celtic League has signed an appeal, from the Comité de Solidarité à la Revolution Kurde, asking "the peoples of the world, in particular those who are struggling for their national rights and autonomy and who suffer from the policy of cultural assimilation (Brittany, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are mentioned among others) to support the struggle of the Kurdish people for their legitimate cultural, national and democratic right to autonomy and self-determination. A message of solidarity was sent to ENBATA (The Basque National Movement) by the General-Secretary of the C.L. on the occasion of the national feast "Aberri Eguna" (11/4/'66).

Membership Forms and leaflets giving information about the C.L. are now available. They can be sent to you or to any potential members whose addresses you send to your national secretary.

Breton Members who have not already done so are requested to complete the form sent to them recently by Mr. E. Gwalereg.

An Open Painting Competition on the theme "Aisèiri" (Insurrection) has been announced by the Irish Centre in Liverpool in commemoration of the 1916 Rising. There is no restriction on entry, as regards nationality. Entries must be received by the first week in October and the first prize will be £70 and the second prize £30. Further details obtainable from: The Irish Centre, 127 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool.

Obituary: The London Branch of the Celtic League lost one of its staunchest members with the recent death of Paul Dyer. In spite of his very impaired health, Paul could always be relied on to help with any Irish, Welsh or indeed Celtic cause. Our sympathy goes to his family in their bereavement.

Conditioned Toleration Our Celtic heritage has been submitted to a merciless onslaught over the centuries by the neighbouring cultures of France and England. As for our peoples, their fate was to be expatriated or assimilated. In the present century of universal education and large-scale military service the process of assimilation has an ever increasing intensity. The position now is that in each of our countries native Celtic speakers have been reduced to a minority of the population. In any linguistic flux the advantage lies with the language which has a large number of monoglots in the transitional area. Celtic monoglots are few, so that the dice is loaded heavily against us. When assimilation first began to have its effect, none of the Celtic languages had any legal standing; neither did the mass of the people have any say in government policy; nor did the mass of the English or French people, for that matter, but their cultures were not being threatened.

The assimilation system gains momentum, all the time and has powerful allies in the Cinema, Television and the newspapers. Whether they speak their own language as well as the assimilating one or only the latter, our people have been conditioned by generations to thought patterns approved by our assimilators. At this crucial stage of our national survival we are asked to exercise moderation, restraint and tolerance.

Thirty years ago Frank Ryan commented: "We will not allow Free Speech to traitors!" During the last few years West Anglians** in Ireland have become progressively bolder. At the end of June, the (English) Language Freedom Movement held a meeting in a Dublin hotel. The meeting was broken up by a group of Irish Language Freedom enthusiasts who felt

that the Ryan axiom was still apt. The LFM is shy about nailing its colours to the mast, but their unwelcome guests did this for them when they delivered a spirited rendering of "God Save the Queen". When Celts see fit through misguidedness or through pusillanimity to push the work of assimilation they warrent no more toleration than was shown to our own people who were forcibly "civilised" in former years. While our very national survival is threatened toleration is neither a strength nor a virtue but a sign of imbecility! "Let all who love Foreign Law, Native or Sassenach, Out and make way, for the Bold Fenian Men!"

** In deference to our Cornish and Welsh friends the term "West Anglian" ought to replace the more traditional "West Briton."

S u p p l e m e n t : Annual Conference (Cont.)
Resolutions Adopted:

- (1) Urging the need for our nations to plan both their economic and cultural growth, to end emigration and to claim the allegiance of all their people who are forced to emigrate.
- (2)(a) Welcoming the decision of the Roman Catholic Church to use the vernacular in liturgy, but expressing concern at its misinterpretation in the Breton-speaking areas where the almost exclusive use of French reinforces the State's assimilation policy;
- (b) Urging the Catholic Church in Ireland to follow the fine example of the Archbishop of Dublin in arranging facilities for Irish speakers to hear Mass in Irish every Sunday in their own parish.
- (3) Deploring that those in control of Telefís Éireann have little sympathy with the Irish language and noting that the time allowed for programmes in Irish was negligible in proportion to the number of those who know Irish and wish it to be restored.

- (4) Condemning the action of the French government in proceeding with their plans for the installation of a nuclear base in the Breton-speaking area despite unanimous protest from the Bretons.
- (5) Sharing the concern of the Cornish people at their inclusion with part of England in regional organisation, which nevertheless recognises the specific national character of Scotland and Wales, this inclusion being a further threat to the continuing identity of Cornwall.

The Celtic Youth Congress: It was decided that the League and the C.Y.C. would remain independent from each other, but that they should foster mutual good relations and co-operation in all activities compatible with the constitution of the Celtic League.

Session on European federalism and the Celts Dr. Yann Fouéré, main speaker, advocated the creation of a European Commonwealth in which each ethnical group would constitute a political entity controlling its internal affairs and delegating powers to a federal government in all areas of common interest. Dr. Marie Kerühel proposed the adoption of basic economic and cultural measures and the redistribution of the present states' powers between regional and federal authorities. M. O Riordáin, from the floor, argued that membership would be a regression from the ideal of a free Ireland, perhaps helping the other Celtic countries, but impeding national progress in Ireland. Dr. Roy Johnston (Dublin Wolfe Tone Society) traced the concentration of population in metropolitan areas and the depopulation of the countryside. Controlled and not free movement of capital was necessary. Re-organisation of Europe may take place, the meeting was concerned with the safeguarding of Celtic interests within such a framework.

Ljubljana Seminar: A Report on the Seminar by George Thompson, was read by J.B.Thomson, a fellow Scot. It can be read in the 1966 Book of the Celtic League. The meeting adopted the resolution that "We call on the United Nations Organisation to continue and develop discussions initiated at Ljubljana Seminar on the rights of minority nations and national groups in multi-

national States and we call on these States, such as England and France, to implement the conclusions on which there was agreement in the Seminar".

Gwynfor Evans in his lecture "The Place of the Nation" showed the necessity of the nation as a political unit, if our peoples are to fight successfully against the modern barbarism of the rootless masses. Our task is to energise our peoples and help them to recover their self-respect. Pádraig Ó Snodaigh, lecturing on "Testimonies on the Struggle for Freedom in Irish Writing", summarised the works published since 1922. Thanks to him the Celtic League contributed to the series of lectures which marked the commemoration of 1916.

Easter Monday, a large crowd of Celts from all nations gathered near Collins Barracks and marched behind a Breton pipe-band to Arbour Hill. A wreath, with ribbons in the colours of the 6 countries, inscribed "On gConradh Ceilteach go dilis" laid on the grave of the 1916 leaders, while two pipers played "Let Erin Remember".

From 4-7 April the Celtic Youth Congress held a very successful Conference. Although most participants were Irish and Welsh the other countries were also represented. Public meetings organised every evening drew large attendances.

Symposia organised by An Cumann Gaelach, Univ. Col. Dublin and An Chualact Ghaelach, Univ. Col. Cork were addressed by speakers from the Celtic League. The influence of 1916 on the other Celtic countries was discussed.

The manuscript of the 1966 Book of the Celtic League is with the printer and should be available almost immediately. Please notify your secretary if you wish to obtain copies for sale.

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Readers will join in congratulating the Breton National Secretary on his forthcoming marriage.

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Dos Cymru Lan

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Along with his jubilant fellow countrymen, who welcomed him at Paddington station, Mr. Gwynfor Evans, the first Plaid Cymru M.P., was met by a good leavening of other Celts, hardly less jubilant. The Scottish piper there, in a sense, personified the Celtic rather than the purely Welsh nature of the victory.

Mr. Evans set the pattern of his representation, when after duly taking the oath, in English, he requested to take the oath in his own language. Though this most modest request was overruled by the Speaker he had the sympathy of many people, both inside and outside Westminster.

It has been demonstrated that a Nationalist vote, need not necessarily be a wasted vote. The lesson will be applied in other Welsh constituencies; neither will it go unnoticed in Scotland! Westminster will find that the Wind of Change is not an exclusively African phenomenon.

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The Prodigal Daughter Returns: As most of the English papers failed to draw attention to the event, we should perhaps remark that Ireland, both pieces, now forms part with Great Britain of a Free Trade area.

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