

---JUNE UPDATE FROM THE SOCIETY PRESIDENT---

Greetings to you all and **WELL DONE** for surviving the Japanese lockdown! How have you all been? This picture sums up my experience thus far this year!



We seem to be sorting out the virus at least here in Japan! It has been frustrating (and still is) for family at home and downright annoying not being able to go home for the summer vacation. We deserve to congratulate ourselves on making it possible to get back to some sort of resemblance of work /social life balance.

We are really looking forward to getting together again as soon as possible. We have many events we are looking forward to, including:

- our pub gatherings at the Craic
- a summer BBQ or picnic
- Shakespeare and Welsh event

and more!!

Through this unique period in all our lives, you were never forgotten. The committee and have had a few online Zoom meetings plotting potential online events for us all. We discussed ideas such as hosting an **online Zoom drinks party** (deemed not a good idea as we Welsh love to talk and Zoom only handles about 12 people - which doesn't really work for us given how sociable we all are!). Another idea was to hold an **online screening of the film**, Hedd Wyn. Sadly, this idea also fell due to issues with the need for all participants to hold a subscription to the same streaming platform.

Coincidentally our **founding President, Madoc Batcup**, a man many of us remember fondly, shared a translation of one of Ellis's poems – the Welsh poet and focus of the Welsh film, *Hedd Wyn* (1992), whose poem was mailed to the Eisteddfod while he was sent to the trenches of the First World War. It is a very moving story and was nominated for the Best Foreign Language Oscar. I showed the film as part of the season of Welsh films I organised with support from Harlech TV and the British Council back in the day!

---CONGRATULATION NEWS---

Catherine Nagashima, an important long-term member to the society, shared with us the wonderful news that the writer, Susan Burton drskburton@gmail.com, won the New Welsh Writing Award with a work on Catherine, entitled "**The Transplantable Roots of Catharine Huws Nagashima**". I know we will all want to give our congratulations to Catharine for this brilliant news!

If you want to know a little more about the New Welsh Writing Award:

<https://www.newwelshwritingawards.com/>

Catherine also shared with us the background history, explaining how she had been introduced to Susan Barton by her mother-in-law, also named Sue, who was her friend back when she attended Grenoble University in 1960-61. She told us Sue had travelled as her pillion passenger on a couple of scooter excursions in the Alps and Provence.

Interestingly, this achievement prompted another previous President of the St David's Society whom many will recall. **Richard Powell**, who as our President and a diplomat, arranged for us to hold our second Eisteddfod at the British Embassy - a hugely successful event that saw **Lady Boucher** being awarded the prize for best Haiku by Catherine Nagashima. I organized a **Tokyo International Schools Art contest** on the theme of **Welsh Dragons** with selected Dragons on display at the Embassy, and long-term members, **Rose and Masa Iwata**, presented the Ambassador with a large bouquet of Daffodils as a personal gift from them on the Society's behalf. Prizes were given out courtesy of the then **Welsh Development Agency**, a forerunner of the now Welsh Government.

Richard Powell got in touch after recognizing Catherine Nagashima, whose life was the subject of the Literary work that won the Welsh Literary award for 2019. Richard sent his best wishes to us all. I am sharing part of his letter below for all of us who knew and worked with Richard.

Dear Ursula, I hope this finds you well. I'm typing it at my kitchen table in Lewes, whither I retired back in 2011. After Tokyo I spent nearly seven

years in London, before returning to Helsinki and later spending time in Accra and Lagos. My final proper job was Deputy High Commissioner there - I had no wish to go abroad again and my mother's health had started to decline so I took early retirement when the opportunity arose. Mum eventually died in July 2014 at the age of 93; she was able to live independently until early 1992, when she had a fall. I was glad to be able to spend a lot of time in her last years....

I always felt guilty about my failure to reply to your letters from Tokyo, but I was never been the best of correspondents and as I saw no prospect of returning to Japan I didn't give a high priority to keeping in touch with people there - it was much more of an effort in those days, and I didn't have time on my hands.

I'm glad that the Rheidol Prize fortuitously gives us an opportunity to resume contact. The notes I made for last year's award (attached) explain how I came to sponsor it. I was delighted when this year's shortlist contained two essays I could strongly relate to - Susan's on Catherine, and another on Burry Port, walking distance from where I grow up.

Richard also attached his address given at the Hay-on-Wye Festival 2019 (see attachment titled "Notes for Rheidol Prize").

While we were mostly working from home, the Welsh Government team were busy strengthening Welsh-Japan ties. For light relief, Robin asked Yoko to share this with us:

<https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2020-05-28/four-year-old-boy-delights-with-welsh-rugby-star-impressions/>

As noted above, we have been actively scratching our heads for interesting ideas. If you have any suggestions, please send them to us!

In the meantime, I wish you all the best health! We are fortunate enough to be able to start getting back to some form of normal life again. So, let's wear our masks and stay well. Hope we can all meet at a St David's Society event soon!

Ursula Bartlett Imadegawa



Bethany Cummings

Chris Barnet