



Llanafernes C³

Many members report that they now speak Welsh to more people than previously, including within bilingual groups of friends and within family situations. Also, for many learners in this Anglicised area bordering England, this is their only opportunity to converse in a “real situation” with fluent speakers.

We emphasise that members attend events because they **want** to be there, not because they **should**. Fortunately, we find that attendance levels, though difficult to foresee, consistently exceed expectations!

Our members range in age from their early 20s to well into retirement age – the average is 35 - 45. We offer some “family” activities where children of members are welcome (provided that they are at Welsh-medium schools). For the 3 years of our existence, we have regularly attracted well over 100 members. We presently have 150 members - and our last activity on June 19th 2010 (a Hispanic themed Salsa/Tapas/Wine tasting evening) attracted 75 people.

Anywhere in Wales could follow our example, and also any minority-language group. The secret lies in creating links with existing social groups, providing guidance regarding making their activities accessible and attractive to those who are not yet fluent, by pitching the language and cultural context at an appropriate level, and building on existing goodwill, ensuring that all joint activities are sociable and enjoyable for all concerned.

This is a long-term, on-going project. We are planning the programme for our 4th year. We repeat and develop successful events and change/drop the less successful. We hope that other areas of Wales will develop similar groups, and are keen to create links with other areas of the country both through email “buddies” and through meeting at social events. It would be wonderful to compare notes with minority-language groups in other countries!

C³ is enthusiastically supported by **Bangor University** Welsh for Adults staff and tutors and many Welsh-speaking community groups and individuals in our area. We are grateful for their support and thank CILT for showing such an interest in our activities.

C³ Clwb Cymdeithasu Cymraeg

Dysgu Gydol Oes
Lifelong Learning



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Clwb Cymdeithasu Cymraeg C³

(Welsh Language Social group C³) was created to facilitate access to the Welsh-speaking community in North East Wales (20% Welsh-speaking) for fairly fluent and former learners through a wide variety of social events.

The group is co-ordinated by **Eirian Wyn Conlon**, Tutor-Organiser for Welsh for Adults in the area for Bangor University, aided by **Pauline Owen**, a tutor and former-learner.



Eirian & Pauline

This society was formed after Pauline and some of her former classmates came to Eirian (their former tutor) expressing a wish to develop opportunities for socialising with Welsh – speakers and present learners. After completing the learning process, those without direct links to the community (family, close friends, children in Welsh-medium education) can easily lose touch with the language in a practical sense.

Some learners have said that the Welsh community seems like a “closed shop” to them. We decided that a social group mixing the fluent, the nearly-fluent and members of advanced classes would benefit many individuals keen to make friends through the medium of Welsh. A number of now fluent ex-learners were also keen to “give back” something to the Welsh for Adults system by supporting those who are present learners.



Social Evening



Visit to Wrexham Football Club



St Patrick's Night

Fortunately membership has remained approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ fluent speakers, $\frac{1}{3}$ ex-learners and $\frac{1}{3}$ present class members from Intermediate (pre-GCSE level) upwards.

Learning a language in the country where it is spoken demands contact with fluent speakers. However this is sometimes easier said than done in an area of Wales where English predominates. We aim to involve the Welsh-speaking community as much as possible by asking societies and groups to invite us to events.

We work with the organisers to create situations with maximum opportunities to chat with members of the established group. This helps our members to forge links and gain confidence to join the group if it is of interest to them. Many students report improved confidence in speaking with fluent Welsh speakers.

We benefit from the goodwill of the Welsh-speaking community towards those who choose to learn our language. However, it takes time for 1st language speakers to understand the expectations of advanced learners.

When we co-organise activities, 1st language speakers often require guidance from our teaching specialists to ensure the language level is suitable for learners without being too simplistic for fluent speakers. The key is to create many opportunities for conversation within each situation. It is essential that the medium of communication is Welsh only – to keep 1st language speakers involved and to “stretch” our learners.

The last thing they need is a patronising attitude – adults must be accepted as equals. It has been a learning curve for all involved. Now, rather than inviting “the learners” to a token evening, these social and cultural societies welcome us as equals and we participate fully – and we bring a substantial percentage of (often younger) fluent Welsh-speakers, and potential new members.

A number of learners and ex-learners have joined established groups of Welsh-medium social/cultural clubs as a direct consequence of our “joint” events.

We organise a number of activities throughout the year. It is essential for us to attract fluent Welsh speakers, as the *raison d'être* of our club is for learners to become fluent themselves through socialising.

Our programme is as varied as possible to attract many members – e.g. salsa/tapas evenings, folk nights, walks, film & theatre trips (including talks with directors/actors), daytrips to culturally significant locations & events, a visit to the local soccer club with an ex-international player, wine-tasting, family-friendly events, quizzes, restaurant meals following events, discos and parties.

We are “twinned” with a local Welsh choir and active folk groups.

We also extensively publicise and promote activities and functions that may be of interest to our members, through email and our monthly article/diary in the local Welsh-language community newspaper. Our programme is included on the **North Wales Welsh for Adults** website and newsletter.