



**Year-end Newsletter Issue – 2004  
Calgary Welsh Society**



**Cymdeithas Gymreig Calgary**

**Comments & Contributions:** Send to Roly Thomas at [betrol@sprint.ca](mailto:betrol@sprint.ca) or phone (403) 246-5093 or mail to 134 Country Hills Gardens NW, Calgary, AB. T3K 5G2. Visit our website for more information at [www.calgarywelshsociety.com](http://www.calgarywelshsociety.com)

**OUR MEMBERS' FIRST PRIORITY**

***CINIO NADOLIG - Christmas Dinner - Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. 2004***  
Cocktails @ 6.30 pm. - Dinner @ 7.00 pm. Entertainment to follow.

This seasonal event will be held at FORT CALGARY HISTORIC PARK, 750 - 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE  
... therefore, fellow members,  
our 'phoners' will soon be seeking the PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY at this dinner!

Tickets are \$30.00 each for members in good standing - and \$35.00 each for non-members.  
Please pay at the door. Cheques and Money Orders should be made payable to the Society!

In contacting you, the Phone Committee will also enquire regarding the number planned for your party that evening!  
Remember! 'A Promise is a Promise' where, within reason, we expect it to be honoured - whether you attend or not!

Any enquiries, please call Social Secretary Kathleen Giffin (720-8127) or Treasurer Philip Morris (398-8331)

**CASH BAR ----- PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ATTEND ----- FREE PARKING**

**Welcome to Winter** Our Poems & Pints evening (October 16) was a success DESPITE the untimely arrival of the dreaded 'white-stuff' that same day. However, thirty members braved the elements and enjoyed a surprise 'Faggots 'n' Peas' supper that was ably organized and prepared by Kathleen Giffin, husband Mark and help from their good friends Tamara and Keith. A challenging Welsh 'quiz' followed - prepared, directed and sponsored by Dave Matthews (and pre-tested on Veronica Everton-Williams). Finally, after endless months of waiting the entertaining Welsh comedy film, 'Very Annie-Mary' (shot in a typical south Wales valley setting) was screened and enjoyed by all! Interestingly, the very evident absence of dominant coal tips in that environment showed how things had changed - from what many remember as 'the norm' when they lived in that part of the world! During the evening a few jokes were inflicted upon the audience (by Alun and Dave (to mention just a 'few') while Dianne Williams stepped on stage to again make a more cultured contribution! Thanks to all participants - and congratulations to the 'quiz' prize-winners: Margaret Gilbertson, Tamara's Keith and Roly T!

**Now down to Business** For all keen rugby union fans, the European Six-Nations competition does not get started until Feb. 2005. This late start obviously allows for other international tour games with teams from south of the equator - and elsewhere - this winter. There are five WALES XV - SIX-NATION FIXTURES as follows,

<b>SAT. FEB. 05</b> - v - <b>ENGLAND</b> (HG)	<b>SAT. FEB. 12</b> - v - <b>ITALY</b> (AG)
<b>SAT. FEB. 26</b> - v - <b>FRANCE</b> (AG)	<b>SUN. MAR. 13</b> - v - <b>SCOTLAND</b> (AG)
<b>SAT. MAR. 13</b> - v - <b>IRELAND</b> (HG)	(HG) = Home Game: (AG) = Away Game

The remaining international fixtures all occur during November 2004. They are,

<b>SAT. NOV. 06</b> versus <b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>	<b>FRI.. NOV 12</b> versus <b>ROMANIA</b>
<b>SAT. NOV. 20</b> versus <b>NEW ZEALAND</b>	<b>FRI.. NOV 26</b> versus <b>JAPAN</b>

[All four games at Millennium Stadium, Cardiff]

This list represents a feast of international rugby. The British and Irish Lions will also be on tour during the summer of 2005! Keep your eyes focussed on the local newspapers - and on Channels 27 and 113 for telecast information on these games!

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**Booze & Culture Sandwiches** Readers will recall reading in these pages that the National Eisteddfod has finally caught up with the times (if not Alcoholics Anonymous as well) by making booze available on festival sites. People who object to this 'National' initiative may wish to sit down before reading further - for indeed, in November, an eisteddfod is to be held in a pub, at the *Pen-y-Bont Inn* in Llanrwst! A two-day event is planned, part of an offbeat festival called Llanast Llanrwst (in other words 'a Llanrwst mess'). The first day will be devoted to Welsh learners for them to compete in a variety of tasks while the second day will be for fluent Welsh speakers - in whose company learners could also attend. This 'cultural festival and competition' sports its own archdruid - actor Llion Williams, the star of the hit Welsh-language soccer sit-com, *C'mon Midffild*.

Some of the wacky competitions to be featured include: inventing a proverb, singing the missing words from a popular song and finishing a limerick after hearing the first line! Meirion Davies, a member of *Menter Iaith Conwy* (Does that name mean, 'the hazardous language of Conway', we wonder?) suggested that the 'Steddfod Dafarn' (Pub Festival) harked back to centuries of musical and poetic entertainment in old Welsh taverns!

Llanast Llanrwst takes place in the Conway Valley town from November 21<sup>st</sup> to the 28<sup>th</sup> 2004. Perhaps, a span of eight days (for something announced as a 2-day programme) may allow for an extensive 'sobering-up' period for contestants and audience! The event could be a riotous 'laugh-in' venture - given adequate mind-freeing lubrication at reasonable prices, eh?

**Ridiculous to Sublime** Radical plans to scrap the GCSE and A-Level (senior school) exams in England may indicate that Wales may also intend to set its own education path in the near future. Mike Tomlinson, a former school inspector, recently unveiled proposals for the education of the 14 - 19 age group (in England) to replace the present system in favour of a four-level diploma, a reduction in coursework and fewer external exams. These recommendations closely mirror the work already being done in Wales with the Welsh Baccalaureate (university bachelor's degree) and its related 14 - 19 curriculum. It is expected that Welsh students will eventually follow an entirely different qualification to their English peers, in much the same way as Scottish students do!

Rather than simply following suit, the Welsh Assembly government is expected to fine-tune the 'Welsh Bac' and offer it as the only qualification for students in Wales! The chief executive of the Welsh Joint Education Committee piloting the 'Welsh Bac' model said that there was a lot of Tomlinson's thinking already in the 'Welsh Bac' and that it was important for Wales to develop its own system - to reflect its own economic and curricular needs. Compatible education standards would be maintained it is suggested, so that when people needed to take their 'results transcripts' into England or Scotland for work or university (or in the reverse direction) they could still be assured of consistency in education standards - as presently exists with the regimen in Scotland!

Many may recall the controversy that prevailed when grammar schools were scrapped in favour of the comprehensive school system - a decision favoured at the time by politicians and most teaching professionals! However, many of us still feel that scholastic standards were lowered by that change! Now, once again, we are led to wonder if the four-level concept may also equate to a further lessening of standards - to those of 'Average', 'Bad', 'Worse' and 'B-awful'?

It is suggested that replacements to the (established) GCSE and A-Level courses could provide advantages in .....

**Core Learning:** Getting basics right, developing generic knowledge, skills and attributes necessary for higher education, working life and community,

**Main Learning:** Chosen by the student to develop knowledge, skills and understanding,

**Teacher-led assessment:** Interlocking levels so that each module links to the next level to encourage progression to higher education or training,

**Exceptional Student recognition:** Providing an ability to work at their own speed and to move ahead more quickly,

**Results Transcripts:** These would be suitable for employers or university admissions tutors - to examine the break down of academic achievement,

**Coursework Reduction and the Encouragement of Independent Learning.**

Will our current batch of academic pundits get things right this time - or are the above objectives merely 'pie in the sky'?

**Our Owain** Back in 1401 Owain Glyndwr began a campaign for Welsh independence. Crowned Prince of Wales at Carrog on the banks of the River Dee, he set up a parliament at Machynlleth. A year later, Edmund Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore, was sent by Henry IV to put down the revolt. The two armies met at Pilleth, on Bryn Glas Hill, where Owain totally destroyed the English forces and captured Mortimer. Mortimer was persuaded to 'throw in his lot' with Owain - and eventually married his daughter. The revolt continued for several years and although it was finally suppressed, Owain evaded capture and disappeared into the mists of history and legend!

Six hundred years later, after fading into that proverbial woodwork, the name of national hero Prince Owain Glyndwr still invokes Celtic passions. Following the 15<sup>th</sup> century rebellion, when the hated strongholds symbolizing foreign Saxon sovereignty were destroyed, there were eleven years of independence! The English ultimately regained their political dominance - not least because Glyndwr's French and Scottish allies withdrew their promises of military support!

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**A Contemporary Edison** The name was **Lewis** and he lived in **Pontypool** but don't jump to a premature conclusion! This person was Canadian; by name Lewis Urry - and he lived in Pontypool (near Oshawa), Ontario! Lewis Urry (who only recently died) was the inventor of the long-lasting alkaline battery and thereby helped to start the ongoing mobile electronics revolution - and, incidentally, powered the Energiser Bunny's incessant drumbeat!

Lewis Urry was the son of a schoolteacher and an auto-repairman who had immigrated to Canada from Ireland. He nurtured his love of machinery by helping his father tear apart and rebuild car engines. He was inducted into the (Washington) Smithsonian Institution's hall of fame in 1999 for his achievement - where he presented the museum with the prototype 'parent' of nearly every household battery on earth - an artefact displayed alongside Thomas Edison's light bulb and other landmark inventions of the modern age!

Can you believe this man was actually overlooked in the recent CBC search for 'The Greatest Canadian'? Urry missed being in the first 100 - let alone be a finalist! Even 'Grapes' was ahead of Gretzky in the latter! So, who cares who wins!

**Its Halloween Time** Yes, this event is upon us in North America - and in the Principality it would seem! When many of us were children, the Halloween 'phenomenon' had not drifted that far to the east across the Atlantic Ocean from our adopted continent. Now things are very different - by being so very much like it is here, complete with pumpkins, scary stories and Trick or Treaters! For some, Trick or Treat is an accepted part of the Halloween ritual and it can be fun. For others in the UK it is annoying - especially to the 'typical Brit' - by posing a frightening reminder of the extent to which the American tradition has now become ingrained into the British way of life! Not really cricket, eh what?

Even if many of us do not take ghouls, ghosts and goblins too seriously - there are more than a few who do - and Wales has its fair share of folk willing to spend time and effort investigating ghostly goings-on! One group who do just that is the North Wales Paranormal Research organization. It is dedicated to that pursuit - into 'hauntings' and other eerie phenomena.

They aim to research the paranormal from both the scientific and the more traditional perspectives and have grown into a nationwide society - no longer solely dedicated to 'happening' in North Wales! The society does not believe that Wales has more than its fair share of such activities but there are quite a number of supposedly haunted sites from the North to South of the country. However, the English cities of Derby and York have the reputation of being the two most haunted cities in the UK! In Wales, the NWPR believes the incidence of many (Celtic) stone circles and other areas of archaeological interest could explain why Wales can have its paranormal moments!

**Alice in a North Wales Wonderland** A seaside hotel in Conwy was once the holiday home of Alice Liddell, the little girl who inspired the Alice in Wonderland character of that name. It was recently sold for \$5.5 million. The developer plans to turn the *Penmorfa Hotel*, located on the west shore at Llandudno, into luxury apartments and that the link to Alice would be the heart of the new plans! Young Alice spent holidays at the house built by her father. Finished in 1862, it was designed by the Rev. Henry Liddell, dean of Christchurch, Oxford, as a holiday home for his family. He commissioned the house during a holiday to North Wales in 1861. A deacon at Christchurch, Charles L. Dodgson - alias Lewis Carroll - met Liddell's young daughter and was inspired to write both the 'Wonderland' and 'Through the Looking Glass' stories. Ivor Wynne Jones, a local historian and member of the Lewis Carroll Society, suggested Carroll never actually visited Llandudno (despite local legend to the contrary) but the house connection with the original Alice was a strong one! The Liddell family would customarily bring five servants with them to spend long holidays at *Penmorfa*.

There is evidence that Alice last visited the house at the age of 21 in a final tryst with Queen Victoria's son, Prince Leopold. Other visitors to the house included William Gladstone, some time before he became prime minister. Historically and architecturally, it was one of the most significant houses on the North Wales coast - but the town of Llandudno never really became interested in the property - preferring, instead, to only chase the ghost of Lewis Carroll. The hotel had panoramic views across the Conwy estuary and only recently reverted to the *Penmorfa* name after it was renovated following a fire. It had previously been called the *Gogarth Abbey Hotel!*

**Morrison Medical Research** A medical team at Swansea's Morrison hospital is aiming to save the UK National Health Service millions - by tackling the type of condition that led to the premature death of actor Christopher Reeve. The type of pressure wound that led to Reeve's death costs the Welsh NHS some \$200 million annually in treatment expenditures which fact has been instrumental in setting up a pilot investigation project at Morrison, funded by the Welsh Assembly government!

The project is raising awareness of the problem by talking to hundreds of doctors, nurses and other clinical staff within the Swansea NHS trust. It is also targeting prevention at source by visiting residential and care homes - and even patients in their own homes! Already some 130 patients have been referred and over 90 treated - and where, in some cases, they have been able to halve the length of stay of patients admitted to hospitals for treatment. The work is being evaluated by Birmingham University and, when completed next spring, the next project stage will be to get hospitals across Wales involved!

Many people do not realise the size of this particular problem - an issue that costs the NH Service in the UK between 4 and 5 billion dollars a year - and approximating to a significant 4% of the total budget!

Morrison Hospital was chosen for this work because it has a well-established plastic surgery and burns unit facility!

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**The Gathering of the Clans** On October 22, Dave Matthews convened and hosted a lunch-time meeting with an executive member from each of the Irish Cultural and the Scottish Schiehallion societies - to ascertain if our three representative Celtic groups could and should work more closely together to mutual advantage! It was agreed that a closer relationship should exist and that we would immediately set up a system whereby we could effectively communicate and distribute information of our individual activities and special events - and our newsletters - to each other!

It was evident that both the ICS and Schiehallion groups had far busier programmes than us - where the former, with the advantage of its own club premises, was very much into operating in an entertainment mode plus the ability to host other business and social functions. The latter group, Schiehallion, held regular monthly meetings at the Danish Canadian Club with varied cultural emphases. Just like our St. David's Day celebration, the Scottish Burn's 'Nicht' Dinner is their annual keynote event - which, on Jan 15 next, will be at the downtown Calgary Commerce Club (Tickets \$45.00 each).

There are at least two more Scottish Groups in Calgary - including a strong Caledonian Society and another dedicated to Scottish dancing! Hopefully, all will realize the merits of contributing to a network of Celtic associations within our city!

**The Neath Achievement** 'Faggots and Peas' have been on the menu at Katie's Kitchen for more than 60 years. It is a dish that has been as much a part of Neath Market as 'Cockles and Laverbread' have been to Swansea Market! Neath Market is recalled as a covered sturdy stone-walled market square situated between the Castle Hotel on one side, the cattle market on another close to the railway station, 'Marks & Sparks' on yet another and 'Burton's The Tailors' finally closing it off on the fourth side! The present owner of Katie's suggests the meal helps to revive the nostalgic taste buds of expats around the world and the dish they miss the most when they emigrate! Neath would not be Neath without its 'Faggots n Peas'. It is the reason why it is aiming to be recognized as the 'Faggots n Peas' capital of Wales!

When your Ed. grew up in that town, he remembers the market had competing butcher-shop stalls along two walls of the building. A number could accommodate a dozen or so 'diners' on benches within their stall areas where patrons could enjoy the subject delicacy! Andrew Shufflebotham, the town centre manager (with such a family name - he has to be the son of a chap in my year at school) appropriately describes it as 'Welsh Haggis' adding Neath was optimistic it could 'take the crown' in any 'Faggots n Peas' challenge. His confidence stemmed from a seminar of city managers held in the town when some 15 of them thought the market was excellent - with so many food outlets and such an impressive waiting list for new tenants!

If Neath did aspire to becoming the 'Faggots n Peas' capital of the Principality it would rank alongside other towns and cities that have become traditionally associated with food dishes. Consider Cornish pasties, Yorkshire puddings, Caerphilly cheese, Stilton and Cheddar cheeses, Pontefract (or Pomfret) cakes, Melton Mowbray pies, the Bath Oliver (cookie), Everton toffees, etc., etc. - the list from the 'Old Country' (the UK that is) becomes 'mouth-wateringly' endless!

In the Middle Ages, the faggot was called 'A Savoury Duck'. It was subsequently re-named after the Latin word for 'bundle' - because 'faggot' often described a bundle of herbs, like a bouquet garni! Originally, its prime components were pig liver and offal - the idea being to use up all the bits of the animal that would otherwise be discarded! The recipe now used by the principal maker in Neath Market (Cole's the Butcher) is a closely guarded secret - having been handed down within that family for many generations. However, it is no secret that they tend to use pig liver and lights, onions, rusk and a specially devised seasoning of pepper, salt and a number of different spices. All the ingredients are mixed together and rolled into meatballs prior to cooking in trays of 80 - 100 to be finally cooked for some 90 minutes at 180 Celsius.

The food writer for the South Wales paper, *Western Mail*, happens to also be chef at the Wynnstay Hotel in Machynlleth. He is an 'aficionado' of 'Faggots n Peas' and stipulates that they have to be 'real' faggots containing plenty of meat and herbs - with not too much breadcrumbs! (That last statement reminds us older guys of the popular WW2 sausage in the UK - in which, with so much bread content, it became a toss-up whether it should be garnished with HP sauce or marmalade!)

Mrs. Giffin, you really whetted the appetite of us Taffs at the last 'P & P' get-together! Thanks for the memory!

**Don't forget to shop at these interesting stores. Generous discounts available to all CWS members in good standing!**

**GOOD TASTE OF BRITAIN (1985) Ltd.**  
Eau Claire Market, Downtown Calgary

**WHO'S WHO IN THE ZOO**  
Int. Airport: Eau Claire: South Centre

**Note: THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL BE PUBLISHED AHEAD OF ANY PLANNED FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

**DO NOT FORGET OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup>.**

so

**LET US MAKE IT A MEMORABLE EVENT!**

**NADOLIG LLAWEN I CHI GYD! A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO EVERYONE!**

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