



## June/July Newsletter Issue - 2004 Calgary Welsh Society



### Cymdeithas Gymreig Calgary

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**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)

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**Forthcoming Events** At the May 28<sup>th</sup> executive meeting the following programme of events was agreed for your pleasure:  
1) A Pot Luck Picnic at Lake Bonavista / Sunday, July 25<sup>th</sup> - 2) Society support for the Annual Ponoka Gymanfa Ganu / Sunday, August 8<sup>th</sup> - 3) Welsh Food, Film & Fun Night / Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup> at the Irish Cultural Centre - 4) Society Christmas Dinner at Fort Calgary / Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup> - 5) Annual St. David's Day Banquet / Saturday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Please note that the Society's next AGM may precede the February 2005 banquet at a date and place still to be announced! Also, events Nos. 3), 4) and 5) will be advised in future Newsletters!

**Sunday, July 25 -- Society POT LUCK PICNIC at Lake Bonavista.** Members are asked to bring prepared salads or entrees or desserts to be shared with others. **The telephone committee will advise and coordinate.** Ample parking space is available adjacent to the gated entry to the community park. Make your way to this parking area located at rear of the Safeway store in the Lake Bonavista Shopping Plaza. **The picnic will start at 3.00 pm and will continue until 6.00 pm!**

**Sunday, Aug. 8 -- The 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Ponoka Gymanfa Ganu.** Society members are encouraged to support this unique Welsh event. The programme is held at the Ponoka United Church and commences at 2.00 pm. The gymanfa is followed by a sumptuous tea hosted by the Ponoka Welsh Society in the church vestry. Please advise Roly Thomas at 246-5093 of your intention by August 1<sup>st</sup>. If special arrangements are needed for your participation and travel convenience **please make them known EVEN EARLIER!** A large free car park is conveniently located in front of the church.

**The Cymric Choir Tour** After a very busy couple of weeks in western Canada, the Cymric Choir left for greener pastures (Wales, that is) on the evening of June 16<sup>th</sup>. Their final concert was in Calgary on the 15<sup>th</sup>. It was evident that the choir had been highly organized for this trip - complete with an informative pre-printed commemorative programme and a custom made tour CD! With successful appearances in Vernon, Jasper and Ponoka - it must have been very disappointing for them that both the Edmonton (87) and Calgary (170) audiences were pitifully small! Clearly, preparatory groundwork to promote concert appearances in our two major cities failed miserably to both equal the choir's abilities and its expectations! Regrettably, music lovers who were unable to attend the Grace concert, for whatever reason, missed a superb performance by a talented ensemble! The music programme was tastefully chosen! Notably, two audience requests (thanks to Gwen Johnson) consisted of the ever beautiful "Myfanwy" (sung unaccompanied) and "We'll keep a welcome!" - both succeeding in putting a big lump in the throat and a 'hiraethog' tear in the eye! The choir's guest artiste, Annwen Williams, possessed a beautiful soprano voice that delighted an appreciative audience. Accompanist Ian Lewis, tenor soloist (and MC) Graham Jones and Musical Director Gareth Sims were class performers - in a memorable evening of 'Cymric' entertainment!

**Rolls is Welsh Quality** The 'Rolls' part of the prestigious Rolls-Royce name (would you believe) has a distinctly Welsh flavour. Appropriate with 'good taste', Charles Stuart Rolls was born with a 'silver spoon' well entrenched in his mouth - the third son of the wealthy Lord Llangattock of Llangattock juxta Caerleon - a parish in the lower division of the hundred of Usk. The family name, an Anglicized version of Llangadog (*Llan* meaning church or village: *gattock/gadog* being mutations of Catwg, the name of a one-time saint). Catwg really got around in Wales - his name being seen all over the Principality. The name Cadoxton is derived from Catwg - Cadoxton juxta Neath, and juxta Barry being two other such S-Wales locations. This founding partner of the company studied mechanical engineering at Cambridge University and had a delight in motorcars that he shared with his father before he ever joined with Royce to build them. He was an adventurer and an aviator and, as such, became Britain's first aircraft fatality. That accident took place in 1910 (July 12) at Southbourne (near Bournemouth, Hants) when attempting a landing! A brother, Major John MacLean Rolls (who had then succeeded the father to the title) was killed on the Somme in 1916. One wonders, with two brothers - each bearing well known middle names relating to famous Scottish clans - if there was yet another Celtic connection to their family history?

**Welsh Patagonia** The first Welsh settlers arrived in Patagonia in 1865. Lewis Jones and Love Jones Parry went to this area of southern Argentina, surveyed the land and then recommended it as a possible homeland for Welsh folk seeking to escape social and religious injustice in the Wales of that era. A Michael D. Jones became the founder of the settlement. His son, Llwyd ap Iwan (Lloyd, son of Iwan) was supposedly shot by American outlaws Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid on Christmas Day 1909 during an outlaw raid on the cooperative that he managed. It is now generally believed

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that the outlaws were associates of Butch and Sundance and not the real McCoy's! The settlers faced such a harsh life in the early years that many returned to Wales: some resettled in the eastern United States - and some arrived in Alberta!

Eventually, the Patagonian settlement flourished. Lewis Jones, born in 1836, was a printer from Caernarfon and first visited Patagonia in 1862. One of the largest Patagonian townships, Trelew, is living memory to his influence. A large statue was erected in his memory some years ago. He became the only Welshman to be chosen Governor and also spent some time in prison fighting for the rights of Welsh settlers! He started two Welsh newspapers *Ein Breiniad (Our Privilege)* in 1878 and *Y Drafod (The Transaction)* in 1891. *Y Drafod* survives to this day! Jones also wrote a book, *Y Wladfa Gymreig (The Welsh Colony)*, in 1898. Daughter Eluned Morgan is considered to be the finest Welsh writer that Patagonia has produced.

Llwyd ap Iwan, with his father Michael D. Jones, were the most influential of the early settlers and led the campaign to found a settlement where Welsh language and culture could thrive free of English influences. Described as 'the Father of Modern Wales', M.D. Jones's idea for a settlement in Patagonia intensified following a visit to the U.S. in 1848-9 where he saw the Welsh failing to sustain their 'Welshness' in the face of English dominance - much as it was being threatened at home. Before deciding on Patagonia, Syria had also been considered! Think of it - there could have been blue-eyed Welsh sheiks in the Middle East even before the *Blue Eyed Sheiks* of Alberta got involved in our oil patch! I don't think the former would have played rugby though - due to all that sand around the place, maybe! One Pancho Jones was a popular member of an Argentine team that visited the UK some years ago - so, by the same token, could there still be any possibility for a Ibrahim Jones to appear in a future Syrian international rugby side? Did a romantic 'Jones boy' dismount his camel and remain there long enough to hatch such a plot? A \$64,000 question you may well ask? Oh, the reputation of those Victorians!

**The Greatest of Us** Who is/was the most famous Welsh person ... Dylan Thomas, Haydn Tanner, (our own) Alun Lewis or hymnist William Williams, Pant-y-celyn? None of 'em! In a recent Internet poll Aneurin Bevan, the accredited 'father' of Britain's National Health Service, topped the published list of 100 - beating Owain Glyndwr (the 15<sup>th</sup> century patriot and freedom fighter) into second place. Tom Jones was third - then Gwynfor Evans, Richard Burton, Gareth Edwards ... down to Elizabeth Andrews (whoever she was) who came in last! It was not a poll conducted without animosity it appears and the campaign's acrimonious end arrived on St. David's Day, 04! There were surprises in the list of 'notable' Welsh men and women - including Bertrand Russell, comedian Tommy Cooper (the wrecker of conjuring tricks), the real King Arthur (not the Sean Connery look-alike) and Laura Ashley - all of whom few of us would have thought were from areas west of the river Taff! Where was Henry V - or Anthony Hopkins or Harry Secombe in this line-up of possibles?

Nye Bevan's vitriolic and abusive turn of phrase was from the 30's depression era - a chip he carried on his shoulders for the rest of his life! Regardless, his harsh wit is worth recalling - like, 'We know what happens to those who stay in the middle of the road: they get run over!': or, 'I read the newspaper avidly; it is my one form of continuous fiction.': and, 'Dam it all; you can't have the crown of thorns and the thirty pieces of silver.' Unfortunately, the only Bevan of uninhibited quality your Ed. would have favoured was a brewer with a 'hevanly' name whose parents, alas, lacked any imagination - one Evan Evans Bevan! 'Bevan's Best' compared favourably with any local brew - even Felinfoel Ales, 'Best in Wales' - and yet, the Vale of Neath Bevan didn't 'evan' get to the starting gate! Could this competition, therefore, have possessed any serious intent? Nah!

**Did You Know** ..... about Llanwenarth, Monmouthshire - the one time home of one of our committee members, Veronica Everton-Williams? Veronica volunteered this information about her native village - and wrote:

"In the 1868 *National Gazetteer of Great Britain & Ireland*, Llanwenarth is described as 'a parish in the upper division of the hundred of Abergavenny (Y Fenni), county of Monmouth, 2 miles NW of Abergavenny, its post town, and 9 miles from Crickhowell. It is situated at the foot of *Sugarloaf Hill*, called here Pen-y-Foil, and is watered by the river Usk. Coal and ironstone are obtained. The village is considerable. The living is a rectory in the diocese of Llandaff, value with the curacy of Govilon, 470 UK pounds. The church is dedicated to St. Peter. The charities amount to about 4 UK pounds per annum.' (This info. transcribed by researcher Colin Hinson in 2003. Also, for those who may have forgotten its meaning, a 'hundred' is the ancient subdivision of a county or shire having its own court - and, very likely, its very own 'un-elected' M.P. to boot!)

Since those days, times have changed. Llanwenarth is still a couple of miles northwest of Y Fenni: it is still on the banks of the Usk: and St. Peter's church is still alive - but the village is not likely to be described as 'considerable' today. Still home to only a few tenacious inhabitants, many who are not 'local' and who inhabit the converted rectory and church school. Those who are 'local' enjoy their 'autumn years' in aging cottages!

It is easy to miss Llanwenarth - even when you are purposefully looking for it. The most noticeable indication that it exists is the '*Llanwenarth Arms*' - a public house on the main road from Y Fenni that happily welcomes the passer-by with a cheery countenance. If you stop and wander around nearby you will still notice a narrow winding road (even by Welsh standards) leading through trees and fields down towards the river. You will notice a few scattered, shyly hidden cottages and then the beautiful little stone church - mulling over its ancient memories amid the mist of forgotten graves!

This is where my family over the last 200 years have been born and raised, loved and married: where they laughed and cried: toiled, sighed - and died! For me, Llanwenarth has a magical mystery about it - for, during my visits, I am able to tune into those spiritual echoes that ring quietly inside my head ..... still!"

From your Ed's recollections of that area - he must have been close to Llanwenarth in 1946, during the very severe winter

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of that year (45/46) when involved in army training in nearby Crickhowell. Heavy snows had been packed solid to the top of the hedgerows as he and his fellow army misfits were accustomed to trudge those country miles to Y Fenni 'for relaxation'. There would have been a legitimate excuse if Veronica's delightful parish just happened to escape his attentions on those exciting winter rambles! The Govilon name also rings a bell (with something of a splash) for it was there in the following hot summer he and his cohorts were accustomed to 'march' in the canal with rifles held high - while also towing a little squirt of a 2<sup>nd</sup>. Lieut. barking commands while also basking in the relative dry comfort of a dinghy behind them! Regardless of that experience - the Thomas 'lad' still enjoys returning to the rich and picturesque Usk valley; they happened to be formulative years for him too! Thank you Veronica for sharing your memories with us - and for making it such a small world as well!

**Festival of Wales 2004** Members are again reminded of this important North American event planned for the next Labour Day Weekend (September 2 to 5) in beautiful Buffalo, NY. The NAFOW contact information is included for your convenience: the website at [www.nafow.org](http://www.nafow.org): International Headquarters address, POBox 215, Hartland MI 48353-0215 - and your required phone numbers of 1-800-477-0090 & 1-810-632-7850 - or also contact [wngga@comcast.net](mailto:wngga@comcast.net)

**Opening Shortly** Y Canolfan Mileniwm Cymru (TheWales Millennium Centre) - 'a very special place in Cardiff where the world's best performing arts will be seen in the form of musicals, opera, ballet and dance - where new dynamic artistic productions will be created - and where people of all ages and abilities can develop their skills and interests through the arts Explorer programme.' So writes Judith Isherwood, the Centre's chief executive officer. Its scheduled opening date is November 26, 2004! As well as being a receiving house for world-class productions, the Centre will also provide a home to seven of Wales's national cultural organisations - including Welsh National Opera (a touring company): Urdd Gobaith Cymru (one of the leading youth organisations in Europe): Diversions, Dance Company of Wales (Wales's premier dance company): Ty Cerdd 'Music Centre of Wales' (representing more than 25,000 amateur musicians): Hijinx Theatre (touring community theatre): Academi (the Welsh Literature Agency): and Touch Trust (a charity offering music therapy for profoundly disabled people). Clearly, Cardiff's transformation continues to be 'millenniumized' at a fast pace!

The new Centre's facilities include a world-class lyric theatre seating audiences up to 1,900 in size (about the capacity of our Jubilee Auditoriums): a studio theatre seating 250: a dance studio: recording and therapy studios: orchestral rehearsal rooms: foyer bars and function rooms - and a main concourse that will include shops and restaurants!

This ambitious project is now working at full stretch to raise the final \$10 million needed to complete the building. It offers a 'Adopt a Slate' option to the general public - where a slate at the front of the building can provide a personal link to the facility! If anyone would like to help with this promotion - please send your e-mail to [james.clayton-jones@wmc.orh.uk](mailto:james.clayton-jones@wmc.orh.uk)!

**Wales Summer Rugby Tour** A Welsh XV is now on tour in the southern hemisphere - after inflicting a heavy defeat on a Barbarian side (42 - 0) in a game (for some mysterious reason) that was played in Bristol on May 26<sup>th</sup>. Their first of two tour fixtures against Argentina was on June 12. This they lost (50 - 44) but could have easily won in the final seconds - if a player had not 'died with the ball' with a healthy overlap outside him! Despite the cricket style score, it was not a particularly good rugby display - so some pundits reported! The second game was on June 19 - and the result was a good win, 35 - 20. The final tour international, against South Africa, will be on June 26. We wish our team well!

The 'old enemy' (England) was trounced 36 - 3 by New Zealand on its current tour: Ireland also lost to South Africa and Scotland to Australia. While the England soccer team also lost to France (beaten by 2 stoppage-time goals) - most UK sports fans are now in mourning! England won its second Euro 2004 fixture against Switzerland (3 - 0) - so there may yet be hope!

**A Bit More Rugby News** The Llanelli Scarlets have signed ex-Welsh fly-half Arwel Thomas to a one-year deal following the Steven Jones departure to Montferrand. Thomas was with French team Pau last season and had signed a deal with the Celtic Warriors (Bridgend/Pontypridd) before they bit the dust! Forward Gareth Llewellyn (Ospreys) broke the 'Welsh Cap' record (88) in the first Argentina game. He previously shared the honour with Neil Jenkins.

**Well Deserved Bouquet** Nadia, daughter No.1 of Pres. Alun and wife Katharine, recently graduated from the U of C (with First Class Honours in history). She merits our heartiest congratulations and should be aware of our pride in her achievement! She will be off to Halifax NS in the fall to pursue a Master's Degree at St Mary's University. We wish her well in the Maritimes - a part of the world we are sure she will enjoy - especially more frequent lobster dinners!

**Brickbats to Canada Post** It would appear that some Society members (other than the Ed) are not too happy with Canada Post's delivery service these days! A number, who usually get their CWS Newsletter by conventional mail, failed to get the issue published immediately after our April AGM! The Society apologises for any inconvenience this lapse may have caused. Problem addresses will be checked - to ensure faulty records were not to blame!

**Minutes & Membership Cards** Minutes of the April 2004 AGM are included on Page 4 of this newsletter. New membership cards, valid until 31-12-2004, are also included in this mailing. Recipients of e-mailed newsletter will get their new cards by conventional mail!

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**Minutes of the 2004 Annual General Meeting of the Calgary Welsh Society.**

**Held Saturday April 24/2004 - at the Irish Cultural Centre, 6452-35<sup>th</sup>. Avenue NW**

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President Alun Lewis welcomed the members present (some 30 in number) and then gave a brief summary of the social events of the past year including an appearance on Shaw Cable 'Channel 10' prior to St. David's Day. He also announced that we had developed our very own Website [www.calgarywelshsociety.com](http://www.calgarywelshsociety.com) - plus new membership and business cards that feature the Welsh flag!

Alun noted that the Cymric Male Voice Choir from Port Talbot would be performing at Grace Presbyterian Church (1009-15<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW) on Tuesday June 15, 2004 (at 7.30 pm). Tickets would be \$15 each (Seniors \$10) and that Past-President Viv Ellis (239-5018) should be contacted for more details. Roy Bracegirdle advised that tickets for these choir concerts can sell out quite quickly and suggested that members should purchase them in advance rather than at the door. The choir will also be visiting Ponoka on Saturday June 12<sup>th</sup>. Philip Morris pointed out a potential conflict with that Ponoka date due to Churchill Cup rugby matches scheduled for that same weekend in Calgary. The final competition games would be in Edmonton on the following weekend. Philip also mentioned that a Llandovery Under-19 rugby team was also expected to visit Calgary during August.

Kathleen Giffin then presented her Treasurer's Report (available to all members upon request) - which showed a balance of \$2,374.20 as of December 31, 2003. Website expenses amounted to \$250 and some \$700 was taken in as Membership Fees. Both Kathleen and Alun mentioned the need to increase our membership base - which now stood at some 85 paid-up members.

Roly Thomas conducted the Election of Officers procedure. He announced that all positions had been filled (as recommended in an earlier newsletter) and that no other nominations had been received prior to the date of this AGM. The only changes from the previous executive were that Kathleen Giffin had agreed to relieve Katharine Lewis as Social Secretary, Philip Morris agreeing to replace her as Treasurer and Veronica Everton-Williams agreeing to join the Board as a Member-at-Large. The meeting appreciated the hard work done by Katharine Lewis during the tenancy of her role as Social Secretary.

Minutes of the 2003 Annual General Meeting (distributed to all present by Secretary Dave Matthews) were accepted - and the meeting then adjourned to enjoy an excellent buffet meal provided by Vice-President Maurice Benson and family.

The remainder of the evening was planned to be a showing of a Welsh film kindly provided by Wayne Davies. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties with the TV monitors, it could not be presented that evening and will be shown at a future event!

Minutes prepared by H.D. Matthews, Secretary - May 27, 2004.

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**Don't Forget to Shop at these Interesting Stores: Generous Discounts Available to All Members in Good Standing!**

**GOOD TASTE OF BRITAIN (1995) Ltd.**  
Eau Claire Market, Downtown Calgary

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

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**\* NOTE: THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL BE PUBLISHED AHEAD OF ANY PLANNED FALL ACTIVITIES \***