



**New Year 2006 NewsLetter Issue
Calgary Welsh Society**



Cymdeithas Gymreig Calgary

President: Wayne Davies (403) 289-3478; V-Pres: Maurice Benson 258-2588; Past-Pres: Alun Lewis 710-3032; Secretary: David Matthews 249-5483; Social Secretary: Kathleen Giffin 720-8127; Treasurer: Philip Morris 398-8331; Editorial & Membership matters: Roly Thomas at betrol@sprint.ca or 246-5093 at 134 Country Hills Gardens NW, Calgary, Alberta. T3K 5G2. If more information is required, don't forget our Website - www.calgarywelshsociety.com

BLWYDDYN NEWYDD DDA POB UN! A HAPPY NEW YEAR EVERYONE!

Another year older - and, hopefully, that little bit wiser as well! May the New Year be one of peace and joy to us all
ESPECIALLY DURING OUR CENTENNIAL YEAR - 2006!

We Regret to Advise!

Long-standing members will be saddened to hear of the passing of **Mair Bedford**, wife of the Rev. Mark Bedford, on Christmas Eve! Mair and her husband had been active Society members from 1971 until they relocated to Victoria in 1984! While in Calgary, Mark was pastor at McDougal United Church, Athabasca St. SW. Mair, born in Llantwit Major (Glamorgan) in 1931, immigrated to Canada with her husband in September 1958 just days after their marriage. Our sympathies are belatedly extended to Mark and to children Evan, Kathryn and Mary-Ann! A service in celebration of Mair's life was held at McDougal United on December 28, 2005!

DYDD GWYL DEWI 2006 A GALA DINNER IN CELEBRATION OF OUR PATRON SAINT - and - OUR OWN CENTENNIAL - WILL BE HELD SATURDAY FEBRUARY 25th at the BLUE ROOM U of C DINING CENTRE. Your presence is requested for 6.30 - so that dinner may commence promptly at 7.00 pm!

This year's traditional celebration will be an evening full of traditional Welsh musical entertainment. A number of talented Society members will be featured - including soprano Laura Styler - along with good food, good company and an appropriate keynote address! A silent auction is also planned following which dancing, to the strains of current Welsh pop-music, will suitably complete the programme! **Please make a special effort to attend what will be a memorable occasion for everyone!** Invite friends, colleagues and neighbours to share in this unique celebration of our heritage! A U of C campus map with a parking guide is included herewith for your information and convenience!(Page 4 - mailed NewsLetters ONLY!)

It would be a great help if TICKETS WERE PRE-PURCHASED. You are asked to phone Roly at 246-5093 (day or evening) or Kathleen (evenings only) at 720-8127. All cheques, addressed to the Calgary Welsh Society, should be sent to Roly (note address at top of this page) - since WE HAVE TO PAY IN ADVANCE for the use of the University facilities! Tickets are \$50.00 each (incl. GST). The Phoning Committee will still contact you in advance of the evening!

If anyone has a special dietary requirement - please advise Kathleen at 720-8127 - as soon as possible!

A great deal of preparatory work and expense will have gone into the setting up of this special evening and, inevitably, its success will depend upon the strongest possible support being forthcoming from our members! It should be borne in mind that despite a good attendance at our Christmas function - the Society still had to subsidise the evening's cost to a magnitude of some 20%! The very nature of our St. David's Day programme, therefore, could impose a heavy burden upon the Society's limited resources - should we fail to attract an adequate attendance!

2006 Annual General Meeting The date for this important meeting has been set for **SATURDAY APRIL 29, 2006 at the IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE, 6452 - 35 Avenue NW - 6.30 pm for a 7.00 pm start!**

To make our AGM's a predominantly social affair, the evening's formalities will again be cut to an absolute minimum. In order to speed up the process, your executive will prepare a slate of candidates for your consideration - with recommendations made seeking your approval! To minimize the cost aspect, members are asked to make this a 'Pot Luck Supper' event such that hall rental and barman costs can be contained within a \$10.00 per person charge!

During the evening, time will be devoted to matters relating to undertaking personal genealogical research - with hints and advice being forthcoming from a number of members who have made a special study of the subject!

To assist with the evening's formality - a **VOTING SLIP** is enclosed! (- with mailed Newsletter ONLY!)

The Voice of Ponty Honoured

A renowned entertainer, a Pontypriddian and later owner of our El Presidente's high-chair (so we are reliably informed) has again been recognised in a New Year's Honours List.

Sir Thomas Jones (nee Woodward) now joins the ranks of internationally known Welsh personalities of stage, screen and sporting arenas who have been thus honoured in recent years! Tom, who has been at the top of his profession for nigh on 45

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years, had previously been awarded an OBE! Appropriately, Tom considers himself 100% Welsh despite living these days in the USA and has indicated he would never lose (or try to lose) his distinctly Welsh accent - and would, one day, consider re-locating to his place of birth! Seemingly he still puts 'petrol' (rather than 'gas') in his car and, upon meeting-up with Wayne Davies during his last concert visit to Calgary, clearly demonstrated he had not lost touch with the reality of his formative 'Ponty' years when suggesting (contrary to his own personal scholastic experience) that **OUR Pontypriddian** must have been 'a County Boy' - that is, a 'Grammar School type' and 11-Plus graduate! To his credit, Sir Tom had not lost sight of his humble beginnings - and of being 'condemned' at an early age to the wrong side of the academic coin that then prevailed! Regardless, his subsequent career has been a unique success story!

More about that Ponty - while on that subject! In an earlier NewsLetter article about 'His Ponty', Wayne Davies happened to mention that the birth of our stirring national anthem had actually taken place in Pontypridd. The composer's name was not mentioned at the time - but it can now be revealed the anthem was the product of a father and son duo, namely Evan and James James, in 1856! One wonders if the latter named was known as 'James Twice' when so many unimaginative like Welsh name combinations - like Thomas Thomas, William Williams, David Davies, Lewis Lewis and Evan Evans etc. - tended to be unflatteringly tagged by their peers? Regardless, the latest development in the Principality appears to be that a film has been commissioned to 'put pictures' to the anthem's words and music - as well as to recognise its 150th anniversary this year! A spokesperson for the sponsors (TV channel S4C) suggests, that no matter your own nationality, the film's musical presentation 'will make the hairs on the back of your neck stand on end!' The film will depict a whole range of scenes that make up Welsh heritage - be it old or new, urban, rural or industrial! It has been said that even a French rugby XV considered the Cardiff Arms/Millennium Stadium anthem experience - to be both moving and intimidating!

Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau (Land of My Fathers) was one of the first Welsh songs recorded when Madge Breese sang it on March 11, 1899, for the Gramophone Company! Since that time, the anthem's political existence (in UK parliamentary circles) may appear to have been somewhat lost - because, in 1993, a very 'red-faced' Secretary of State for Wales (one John Redwood MP) had obvious difficulty in trying to guess the anthem's words - and fail miserably in doing so! The recorded embarrassment of a non-Welsh government appointee (by a naïve British PM) continues to be a source of disgust and amusement to Welsh folk and little wonder there has been no credible opposition to the Blair government these days, eh?

Let's Talk of Barry - the seaport of Barry, South Glamorgan, that is - the birthplace of member Malcolm Page who would like to give us an insight into the town's unique history and background. Malcolm said this, "Barry is probably best known as a seaside resort where exhausted coal-miners from the Rhondda Valley vacationed for two weeks every year - during 'Miners Fortnight' - the last couple of weeks in July. In those days, Collins' fairground boasted one of the largest 'Big Dippers' in the UK and where Fortes' ice-cream parlour reputedly made the best 'North Pole' and 'Knickerbocker Glory' treats in the world - all year round!

I was born on Barry Island overlooking Jacksons Bay in that 'wonderful' WW2 year of 1942 - when Barry Docks and its coastal neighbour, Cardiff, were frequently located in the bombsights of the German air force. Apparently, so I was later told, I would be sat in my highchair, in the bay-window, where I watched my sea-faring father and grandfather's ships clear the harbour entrance - bound for 'who knew where!' I was also told that my first spoken word was 'Balloon' - doubtless from seeing the many 'Barrage Balloons' that protected the docks from dive-bombers at that time! After the building of the dock area in 1889, Barry Island ceased to be an island. Of the long history that preceded that time much has since been forgotten!

Barry took its name from St. Baruch who, on returning home from spending Lent on Flat Holme in the Bristol Channel - was shipwrecked around 700 AD and his body discovered on the island that then became known as Baruch Island.

The entire land around Barry - from Chepstow (on the English border) to Swansea - can boast a history second to none in the UK. The Romans left abundant evidence of their occupation - the ruins at Caerleon and Caerwent (in Gwent) are fine examples! Norman castles also abound with the most famous being in Chepstow itself, on the River Wye and on the boundary between Wales and England. Just up river lie the ruins of Tintern Abbey, the remains of a Cistercian monastery founded in 1131 and one of the ruins that Henry VIII 'knocked about a bit' during the dissolution of the monasteries in 1535!

Barry Island had also a haven for monks - major ruins being uncovered in more recent times at Nells Point when (Canadian) Sir Billy Butlin built his well-known monstrosity of a holiday camp. Those ruins are now carefully preserved behind a chain-link fence in the corner what was the camp car park! Also, the area had been no stranger to ruffians, smugglers and wreckers - Bartholemew Roberts (Black Bart - perhaps the most notorious pirate of all time) was from that area! Also, the old road from Barry to Cardiff became known as 'Felons Way' - from the fact that condemned smugglers and like 'souls' were taken by this route to the gibbets on Cowbridge Common. Also, old church and school records are numerous in the area with some dating back to the 1700's to shed light on traditional South-Wales exports other than coal - i.e., of teachers and parsons!

The coal industry changed the face of Barry. The docks that had been built catered solely for the export of coal and, it would seem, became a reality almost by accident due to a feud that developed between two Rhondda Valley coal owners and the Marquis of Bute, owner of Cardiff docks. The latter had stubbornly refused to expand his Cardiff coal handling facilities to meet the growing demands of the valley coal industry - hence the Barry Docks alternative!

The dock facilities at Barry are now silent: 'King Coal' has long gone, the loading tips removed and the berths emptied of ships - yet the area remains seemingly unchanged since my father served his apprenticeship there before WW2! Sadly, Barry

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has not kept pace with Cardiff and Swansea in dock area re-development to cater for new cultural and historical venues able to attract tourists from around the world! In a like way, it appears, the M4 motorway also managed to pass Barry by! However, not all is lost: the blight on the landscape that was the Butlin Holiday Camp has now gone and the area is in the process of being turned back into the parkland it once was - before a supposedly 'enlightened' town council saw fit to allow the area to become a self-contained holiday resort! In those days, once inside the confines of the 'camp', the holidaying 'inmates' would only emerge some two weeks later - to travel home! Who knows what further ancient history could surface during this latest reformation process?" (Thanks Malcolm for your caring views on the busy seaport that was!)

Pineapple-picker to PM A man who climbed from being a humble immigrant pineapple-picker to occupying the highest political office in his adopted country was born of Welsh parents in a London slum. His mother died when he was at an early age and he was sent to live with an aunt in North Wales. Leaving for Australia as a 19-year-old, he began a meteoric rise to becoming its Prime Minister during WW1. However, the Billy Hughes achievement at that time was seemingly overshadowed by a contemporary Welsh figure - Britain's wartime PM, David Lloyd George!

Author Aneurin Hughes (no relation to his namesake) was at one time the European Union's ambassador to Australia from 1995 to 2002. In a new book he describes Hughes reputation as a mass of contradictions - deduced from reading many volumes on the man and from a wealth of material left to the National Library of Australia by Hughes' widow!

Before entering politics Hughes did anything and everything to earn a living. His introduction to politics came by way of the trade union movement. He founded three political parties - only to be expelled from all of them. He maintained a deeply rooted passion for Australian nationalism - while still remaining acutely aware of his Welsh roots! Hughes played a major role in persuading the Australian Labour Party to adopt the 'caucus solidarity' principle - so as to compel party parliamentarians to support decisions taken by unelected party members. However, when he later tried to enforce conscription as part of the Australian war effort, he quickly turned his back on the principle! From his humble origins, he always claimed to be the voice of ordinary Australians and yet remained an ardent advocate of British Imperialism. He also spoke out in support of family life - and fathered six children by a woman who never became his wife!

As the Aneurin Hughes book relates, Billy Hughes was a very controversial character. As the story goes, following an outbreak of plague in Sydney in 1900, he travelled from door to door in attempts to aid the sick and dying - yet his own daughter described him as a 'diabolical hypocrite' and a 'black hearted villain' when he refused to increase her allowance. On another issue, he wanted to extend a 'White Australia Policy' to prevent non-whites (including Asians and southern Europeans) from entering the country - and called Aborigines 'rightful owners of Australia', seeing them as worthy citizens!

The book is published under the title, '*Billy Hughes: Prime Minister and Controversial Founding Father of the Australian Labour Party*' - by John Wiley & Sons Australia Ltd.

Canadian Welsh Newsletters Those with Internet capability may wish to read a number of regularly published newsletters by accessing the following easily available Websites:

Ottawa at www.ottawawelshsociety.com - Vancouver at www.welshsociety.com - Victoria at www.victoriawelshsociety.org

All make interesting reading - from which you see 'how the other half' of us enjoy 'Welsh life' in Canada!

Can you really see 'Nothing' It was recently reported that Welsh astronomers have claimed the discovery of 'an invisible galaxy' - a huge, massive, yet starless place that emits no light and is made of a type of matter that cannot be seen or directly detected - and that is 50-billion times more massive than our sun! UC Cardiff has spent five years on this study and have actually made a presentation to the American Astrological Society on their findings!

As Dai Galileo was not heard to say, 'If you believe this - like our American friends you may believe almost nothing, eh?'

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS Please take the fullest advantage of the generous discounts offered by these local businesses!

<p>GOOD TASTE of BRITAIN (1985) Ltd. at Eau Claire Market and Market Mall</p>	<p>WHO'S WHO in the ZOO at Int. Airport: Eau Claire & South Centre</p>	<p>TEA TRADER at Inglewood 1922-9th Ave. SE. Over 100 blends</p>	<p>MYSTIQUE HAIR STUDIO at 4006 - 16th St. SW. in Altadore</p>
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**DON'T FORGET - THE U of C 'BLUE ROOM' on FEBRUARY 25th.
SEE OVER FOR LOCATION MAP and PARKING GUIDE**
