

**CYMDEITHAS GYMREIG
CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY**



November - 2007

NEWSLETTER ISSUE

The Society Executive for our 102nd Year.

President: Wayne Davies (403) 289-3478; V-Pres: Alun Lewis 710-3032; Secretary: Kate Coolidge 267-4046 at 140 Lake Tahoe Green SE, Calgary, AB. T2J 4X6 E-Mail coolidge@telus.net; Social Secs: Trish Coulson 278-5613 & Pam Hicks 271-7753; Treasurer/Webmaster: Carolynne Hewison 293-7207; Memberships: Elaine Westlake 256-4136; Editor: Roly Thomas 246-5093; Phone Coord: Jean Kuhn 567-0507; Members-at-Large: Nan Davies 226-1208, Margaret Kuyt 289-4676 & Anne-Marie Nawton 288-1915. Check our Website at www.calgarywelshsociety.com

Sad Tidings We regret to advise that two senior Society members passed away during the late summer months.

Peggy Rowlands, a one time resident of Cochrane, died in Ottawa having returned there to be closer to family following the death of her husband, John, some two years ago. They had spent their working years in the capital city and had chosen the Calgary area in which to enjoy retirement. Both were supportive members.

Robert Parry, born in Boverton (Glam.), died at the age of 93 following injuries received in an unfortunate road accident at a road crossing near his home in south Calgary. His parents immigrated to Canada from north Wales when Bob was just eleven. In a letter sent to us a couple of years ago he admitted to still being proudly Welsh and believed Anglesey a 'veritable garden, from end to end!' Bob is survived by sons Ken and Ron who live in Airdrie.

Our sincere sympathies are extended to both families!

The Poems & Pints Social Evening of October 20th successfully rounded off our summer/fall programme of events. In particular the efforts of Trish, Pam, Carolynne and Elaine were much appreciated - as were the contributions and participation of all other attendees! It appears that the person who brought cheese and crackers may still be missing a very nice "Mikasa Whole Wheat" plate - that may be reclaimed from Pam. Please phone her at 271-7753.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER As announced in the September Newsletter, both date and venue are now fixed!

FORT CALGARY - SUNDAY DECEMBER 16, 2007 - \$35.00 per person - PAY AT THE DOOR

9th Avenue SE - downtown - due east of City Centre BEFORE Elbow River Bridge.

Again please make a determined effort to attend - **Cocktails from 6.30 and Dinner at 7.00 pm** - followed by a programme of cultural entertainment befitting the occasion and this historic venue's excellent reputation! The Phone Committee will solicit your participation in a timely way! **Fix the date and time firmly on your calendars!**

Lloyd George Following the 'Coulson Quiz' at the P & P social, a brief discussion on this famous Welsh politician's _ origins suggested that we should all learn more about him. Although your Ed's father did NOT know Lloyd George (to coin a phrase), his maternal grandfather did! Further, that grandson can still recall hearing the man speak on BBC radio and remembers a little of what he said - the very first time he had heard the word '**Mancunian**' used!

"David Lloyd George (1863-1945), a British Liberal Party leader, served as prime minister during the second half of

World War I. He was also prominent in drafting the Versailles Peace Treaty and led the British delegation at the conference that drew up the treaty ending those hostilities. D. L. G. was born of Welsh parents in Manchester, England, on Jan. 17, 1863. His father died when he was one year old and his mother took him to **Llanystumdwy** in Caernarvonshire. There he grew up in the home of an uncle, Richard Lloyd, a shoemaker and a Baptist minister. He was reared in an atmosphere of hostility to the landed aristocracy and to the Church of England. He became apprenticed to a law firm at 16 and began the practice of law at 21.

Lloyd George early associated himself with the Liberal Party. In 1890, on a platform of comprehensive social reform for Wales he was elected to Parliament from the **Caernarvon Boroughs** that he represented continuously for 55 years. He soon established a reputation as a 'radical' and became widely known for his attacks on the government's policy in South Africa, before and during the Boer War! When the Liberals returned to power in 1905, he served as **President of the Board of Trade** and from 1908 to 1915 as **Chancellor of the Exchequer**. Of note, he sponsored the **Old Age Pension Act** of 1908 and the **National Insurance Act** of 1911. His '**Peoples Budget**' of 1909 first introduced a tax on 'unearned income' and greatly increased land and inheritance taxes. The budget was rejected by a very 'Conservative' House of Lords - an ensuing constitutional crisis ending in victory for Lloyd George and his party with the power to veto financial legislation permanently removed from the 'upper house'!

The arrival of war in 1914 changed Lloyd George from pacifist to a staunch supporter of the war against Germany. As **Minister of Munitions** in 1915 he ended ammunition shortages and the following year succeeded Lord Horatio Kitchener as **Secretary of War** and in December of the same year replaced Herbert Asquith as prime minister of a coalition cabinet! Lloyd George is generally recognized as one of Britain's great war leaders whose example greatly strengthened civilian morale during those trying times. **[Interestingly, Winston Churchill, who led the country and achieved the same recognition during WWII, was a Liberal during the pre-WWI years.]**

At the **Paris Peace Conference** of 1919 Lloyd George successfully mediated between the idealistic US President Woodrow Wilson and the severe terms sought by Premier Georges Clemenceau of France. An easy electoral victory in December 1918 kept his coalition government in office. However, he failed to achieve the economic reconstruction he had promised in his campaign and his Irish policy led to the formation of the **Irish Free State** - as well as the loss of his Conservative support. His pro-Greek policy was also a dismal failure! Resigning in 1922, at the relatively young political age of 59, he never again held office. The Liberal Party divided at that time between his supporters and those of Asquith and although there was an attempted 'reconciliation' in 1923, the party failed to regain popular support - becoming a weak 'third' party!

Prior to WWII, Lloyd George visited Adolf Hitler at **Berchtesgaden** and returned with praise for the German leader but soon became a severe critic of Neville Chamberlain's appeasement attempts. In 1945, shortly before his death, he was created **Earl of Dwyfor**." [This little bit of British history was taken from **The World Book Encyclopedia** Ed.]

Down The Drain Yet Again Welsh rugby fortunes and your Ed's forecast regarding Rugby World Cup 2007 went hopelessly astray! **South Africa** was the ultimate winner of the **Webb Ellis Cup** - beating England narrowly (15 points - 6) and securing that honour for the second time - thereby denying England the retention of the coveted hardware! The 'Bronze' award went to Argentina who convincingly beat (France) the host country (34 points - 10).

Clouding the rugby scene in Wales is the recent death of rugby legend Ray Gravell. This Wales and British Lions centre had a suspected heart attack while holidaying in Spain. He hailed from **Mynyddgarreg** near Llanelli and was in the 1972 Llanelli side that beat the All Blacks. Gravell was a diabetic, losing a leg to that illness more recently. Following his playing days, he had become a BBC presenter and commentator. Famous for his passion for all things Welsh, he also became an actor appearing in Louis Malle's '**Damage**' alongside Juliette Binoche and Jeremy Irons. He is survived by wife Mari, two daughters, Manon (11) and Gwenan (8). He was just 56 years of age!

A Welsh Nobelist Sir Martin Evans of Cardiff University recently shared the 2007 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine (worth \$1.54M) with two other researchers, Drs. Mario Capecchi of the Univ. of Utah and Oliver Smithies of the Univ. of North Carolina. Their particular field of research was the creation

of 'designer mice', experimental animals in which genes had been added or removed to test theories about the links between genes and disease. The Nobel committee indicated the work had revolutionized life science to play a key role in the development of medical therapy! Dr. Evans' contribution was to isolate stem cells from mouse tumors providing a tool that could be used to introduce new genes into mouse strains. He is considered the 'father of embryonic stem cell research'. Capecchi and Smithies independently developed techniques to target individual genes within an organism and eliminate or replace them with a slightly altered form that could then be passed down to descendants. Dr. Evans was knighted by the Queen in the 2004 New Years Honours listing.

Dr. Smithies is Yorkshire born and was educated at Oxford. He immigrated to the USA in the 1950s. Dr. Capecchi's background may be the more dramatic of any recent Nobel winner. He was born in Verona, Italy, in 1937 and became a street urchin at the age of 4 when his mother was captured by the Nazis and carted off to the notorious Dachau concentration camp. He survived on the streets and in orphanages throughout the war years until reunited with his mother at age 9. Mother and son then moved to the United States to live with relatives!

Aber - the best in the UK A feature article in the June 6 edition of the Western Mail reported that Aberystwyth had been voted the best place in the UK to be a student! The Mid Wales town, home to around 7,000 students and a general population of just under 12,000 achieved the top rating in a survey of 34,000 students from 81 universities across the United Kingdom. Surprisingly, Aber's student population judged the town to have better nightlife than London, better shops than greater Manchester, better facilities than Loughborough and transport links as good as Crewe - home to one of the largest railway interchanges in the country. The UK's most satisfying bunch of universities featured some 22 establishments where only one got the top rating (Aber with 64%), seven sharing second spot with 62% and 14 (including Bangor, Cardiff, Swansea and Oxford) sharing the third with a 60% score. The 'Mail' writer suggested, 'students at Aber seemed to be more satisfied than those in a 'big city' campus!' Your Ed, renowned for 'sticking his neck out' if the credibility of something appeared suspect to him - would argue (wisely or otherwise) that the statistical exercise conducted by the **National Student Survey** could be somewhat flawed for a number of possible reasons (in his humble opinion, of course). Firstly, the statistical sample related, on average, to only some 425 student opinions per campus - maybe a less than adequate level to inspire confidence; secondly, the percentage difference between the highest and lowest in the top 22 appeared very marginal at 4% - and thirdly, from experience, nothing could really surpass UC Swansea's obvious advantages - eh?

The Passing of a Hero The WWII years, through coverage by news radio reports and cinema news films, highlighted countless acts of bravery and sacrifice by British sailors, soldiers and airmen! None would be more heroic than the deeds that earned the **Victoria Cross** for a young junior officer serving with the Welch Regiment! A September issue of the **Weekly Daily Telegraph** announced the death of Sir Tasker Watkins - a former student at Pontypridd Grammar School, and later a judge, who as a wartime officer led his company in a bayonet charge! The citation recorded, '*his superb gallantry and total disregard for his own safety during an extremely difficult period were responsible for saving the lives of his men and had a decisive influence on the course of the battle*' that resulted in the capture of 50,000 German prisoners and the elimination of 11,000 others! On August 16 1944, when commanding a company of the Welch Regiment, Lieutenant Watkins attacked a German machine-gun post while leading a bayonet charge. His battalion had been ordered to attack objectives near the railway at **Bafour** some 5 miles west of **Falaise** as part of a move to trap the 5th and 7th German armies in the Falaise 'pocket'. Watkins's company had to cross open cornfields containing booby traps, and while doing so came under heavy machine-gun fire from posts in the corn as well as targeted by other cannon fire. When heavy casualties had been suffered, Lt. Watkins found himself the only officer left and put himself at the head of his men. Although subjected to short-range German fire, he charged two enemy posts in turn, killing or wounding the occupants with his *Sten* gun. On reaching one objective, he encountered an anti-tank gun manned by a German soldier where, at the vital moment, his *Sten* jammed. Throwing the gun into the German's face he shot the man with his pistol before he had a chance to recover. Now reduced to just 30 men, he was counter-attacked by some 50 enemy whom he successfully dispersed by leading another bayonet charge! Yet again, while instructed to withdraw, he and his men found themselves surrounded in fading light and forced to try and rejoin the battalion by moving around the flanks of enemy positions in the corn. When again challenged, he ordered his men to scatter while he charged the post with a *Bren*

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gun to silence it. He finally led his group back to battalion headquarters where he gained promotion in the field to that of Major! Travelling home on leave to the village of Nelson, he arrived from Cardiff, by bus, unnoticed. In a later Interview, all he would say was that his men were Welsh and he was very proud of that fact!

Demobbed in 1946 he read for the Bar and became deputy counsel to the Attorney General at the Aberfan Disaster Enquiry in 1966. He also prosecuted in a number of cases involving extremists in the **Free Wales Army!**

A Welsh Dick Wittington All parts of Britain have, in the past, provided holders of this historic city office. Now the grandson of a Cothi valley (Carmarthenshire) sheep farmer becomes the 8th Lord Mayor of London, in a span of 800 years, to sport a Welsh heritage! Lawyer-businessman David Lewis was born abroad (Hong Kong) after his father moved overseas to work in the 1920s. Standing 6ft 4ins, he may also be the tallest to have achieved that illustrious office. He attended the same Oxford College as his father (dubbed 'Tiny Lewis') who won an Oxford scholarship and, after graduating, moved to the far-east where he ended his career as the most senior civil servant in Malaysia. The new Lord Mayor is the first to have a Welsh motto 'Anelwch i'r Haul' (literally, aim for the sun) and is learning Welsh. He is an enthusiastic supporter of Welsh rugby and intends providing lamb from the family's farm for the inaugural Lord Mayor's banquet! Interestingly, Dick Wittington was a former alderman in his ward, 600 years ago! As Lord Mayor, he can expect to spend 100 days abroad over the coming year to promote the City's financial services industry which accounts for 25% of the UK corporate tax revenue and 13% of its gross domestic product!

US Fighter on Beach The wreck of a rare American fighter plane, dating from WWII, has appeared on a north Wales beach. A **Lockheed-P38 Lightning** has surfaced after more than 60 years because of a change in the Harlech beach level. US experts have been to the site and confirmed that there are no other examples of that aircraft model in Europe. The plane, found by a member of the public, is visible at certain stages of the tide and still contains a lot of high octane fuel onboard. Gwynedd Council's maritime department is protecting the site while restoration plans are made! —

Future Functions Booking already made for the

2008 St. David's Day celebration

SATURDAY MARCH 1st

at the BLACKFOOT INN. Please note day and date!

Annual Gen. Meeting details will be published in due course!

2008 Membership Renewal Since the Society's financial year extends from January 1 to December 31, the approaching end of 2007 requires attention be paid to the membership renewal need. Again, for your convenience, renewal applications (complete with a stamped and addressed return envelope) are included with this Newsletter issue. Please be kind enough to complete and return them to Elaine Westlake in a timely manner! _

Society members are encouraged to take advantage of generous discounts available from these interesting speciality stores on the production of their current Membership Cards.

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