

CYMDEITHAS GYMREIG  
CALGARY



JUNE – 2008  
NEWSLETTER ISSUE

### Society Executive for 2008

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**2008 AGM/SOCIAL** Thirty-two members (including one new and one prospective new one) attended this annual get-together to formally kick off the year's activities. President **Wayne Davies** conducted the necessary formalities in double-quick time where the only change in the Society Executive was to that of treasurer. Regrettably, other demands on **Carolynne Hewison's** time made it impossible for her to consider re-election and we are happy to report (Ex-Pres.) **Norman Pierce** agreed to be 'press-ganged' at very short notice! Carolynne's dedication to the Society is much appreciated - and Norman's return to duty is welcomed after a longish absence! Trish Coulson and Pam Hicks (supported by two hard-working spouses) deserve mention for again excelling with the catering effort!

**FUTURE EVENTS** A number of activities (**THREE fixed** and THREE tentative) are planned for our future enjoyment.

\* **SUNDAY JULY 27 - SUMMER PICNIC/BBQ - BONAVISTA COMMUNITY lakeside area - 3.00 to 6.00 pm.**

Members are reminded the **lakeside** entrance is behind the **Safeway Store** & shopping centre (intersection of **Acadia Drive & Lake Bonavista Drive SE**). The Society will provide sacrificial offerings while attendees should bring deserts for sharing! Bring picnic chairs - but **NO GLASS-WARE nor ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES!**

\* **FRIDAY AUGUST 22 - NOSON LAWEN - HOTEL ARTS, 119 - 12 Avenue SW - \$15.00 per head - 7.30 pm.**

A party of 48 visiting from the Llangollen/Newtown areas of north-mid Wales wishes to enjoy a social evening with us on a second visit to Canada. The cost will cover light refreshments provided by the hotel. Entertainment will be by visiting and local talent! Available Cash bar! Adjacent free street parking! ***Make a special effort to attend and enjoy a carefree evening with our visitors!***

\* **SUNDAY DECEMBER 14 - ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER at FORT CALGARY.** All details available in due course!

The Society has also been pursuing a programme of sponsored events to showcase our own native cultures in the Calgary/Alberta communities at large! One will involve Vancouver actor **RUSSELL ROBERTS** supported by talent from within our own membership. The second, it was hoped, would have been **Y TRI TENOR** [*the 3 Tenors*] a vocal trio - from Wales naturally! However, **August 2009** is now the most likely date for this visit - also allowing for other concerts to be arranged for them in the province. The three singers have performed widely in the UK as solo artists and as members of a well-known male choir. One also earned **Top Tenor** award at the *Royal National Eisteddfod* in 2007. The third event will be a **SENIORS TEA** at a fall date yet to be decided! **Full details of all events will follow!**

**GILBERT & SULLIVAN** The '**G & S**' **Calgary Choir**, conducted by Society member *Graham Wrightson* will perform at the **Easterbrook Theatre** (in the Storybook Theatre complex, Old Currie Barracks, Crowchild Trail SW) on **Friday** and **Saturday JUNE 13 and 14, 2008**. Tickets, \$10.00 each, may be purchased at the door. The concerts will begin at 7.00 pm both evenings. This successful local choir attracted an audience of 2,100 to its production of *Pirates of Penzance* at the *Pumphouse Theatre* earlier in the year! For more info, contact Graham at [gwimboy@yahoo.com](mailto:gwimboy@yahoo.com).

**NEFYN TO HARLEM** A 23-year-old singer from **Nefyn** (Gwynedd) is the very latest Welsh gal to hit the international music headlines! **Aimee Anne Duffy** who uses only her last name professionally (an apparent trend with many British artists these days) introduces her brand of '**soul**' music at the *Apollo Theatre, Harlem* (New York City). This is the historic theatre that launched the careers of *Ella Fitzgerald, Stevie Wonder, Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday* and so many other brilliant Afro-American entertainers where, it should be realized, a light skinned artist rarely topped the bill! At this upcoming engagement, she features her debut album *Rockferry* - having had a significant impact with it at home. Her future, in the style of music she also co-writes is being compared with what *Dusty Springfield* achieved years ago on the other side of the Atlantic. *Duffy* finished second in the Welsh version of *American Idol* in 2003 before 4,000 people - an audience size that happens to be larger than the population of her **Lleyn Peninsula** fishing village home. On the very same day, coincidentally, her album topped a million in sales!

**STUNT FLYING** A 'South-Walian' calling himself, the '**Flying Vet**', was recently held in a psychiatric ward after landing his plane near the US President's Texas ranch! **Maurice Kirk** of *St. Donats, Vale of Glamorgan*, was arrested after landing his plane near G. W. Bush's *Crawford* home with the intention of personally thanking the president for his rescue by US Coastguards when forced to ditch in the sea on an earlier flight. Wife **Kirstie Kirk** lost no time in telling the world about it all by making a number of entries on her husband's website to say her unfortunate mate was due to have a psychiatric check-up and further questioning by US secret service personnel. She mentioned he was still in handcuffs, was very 'rattled' and worried about the security of his plane because of severe storms expected in that area. In a further web entry she hoped his difficulties would be resolved by May 1<sup>st</sup> - since 'it was then his turn to do the washing-up!' Isn't it so very true, 'birds of a feather DO flock together' or should that read, 'some spouses DO really deserve each other'? The McLennan County deputy sheriff who arrested our grounded flyer originally held him (would you believe) for being drunk and was also aware he had been a drinking buddy of late actor *Oliver Reed*! The *College of Veterinary Surgeons* expelled Mr. Kirk in 2002 for disgraceful conduct following a string of court cases! It has not yet been reported if the **St. Donats** native was able to return to his home (and his wife) so as to honour that important pre-scheduled 'kitchen-sink' commitment!

**WEMBLEY 2008** The **Cardiff 'Bluebirds'** were the first soccer side to take the **FA Cup** out of England - a feat accomplished in 1927 and only a couple of weeks before another notable event occurred in the Principality - your Ed's arrival in this world! A second Wembley appearance by the Cardiff team on **May 17** failed to repeat this early success! In a close game, the *Premier League* **Portsmouth (Pompey)** beat their *Division 1* opponent by the only goal scored that afternoon! Next season **Cardiff City** will also have to contend with **Swansea City**

(*'The Swans'*) with its entrance into the same division following a particularly successful year - and a well-deserved promotion!

**2009 CRICKET ASHES** The first match, in the next '*Ashes*' series with **Australia**, will be played at **SOPHIA GARDENS**, Cardiff. This recent historic announcement (printed in our *Globe and Mail* under the heading, '*England sets dates for Ashes series*') while being ground breaking also, regrettably, indicates local sports journalists are some way behind the times - even for a 'quality' Canadian newspaper! Enlightened sporting enthusiasts would be well aware the British cricket fraternity happens to be governed by a body calling itself **The Marylebone Cricket Club** - the **MCC** in other words (or letters)! Thereby, the neighbouring country east of the **River Taff**, is certainly unable to lay sole claim to the nationality of **British** players engaged in international competition because for many years a number of prominent Welsh (**Glamorgan**) county cricketers have been chosen for competition between Britain and other cricketing nations! The recent **MCC** initiative is a most welcomed recognition of Welsh cricket interest and in the continuing contribution of talented Welshmen to that 'noble' game! The choice of the **Glamorgan CCC** ground, for the very first 2009 '*Test*' against Australia, now suitably endorses those realities!

[NB. Again there are five test matches in the 2009 schedule - Cardiff (July 8-12) then Lords (London) followed in succession by Edgbaston (Birmingham), Headingley (Leeds) and finally at the Oval (London, August 20- 24) to close the series. The usual Trent Bridge (Nottingham) fixture has obviously been dropped in favour of Sophia Gardens!]

The brand new **SWALEC** stadium, completed ahead of schedule for the 2008 season, also happens to be on hallowed ground, the site of the old **Cardiff Arms Park** located between *Cathedral Road* and the *River Taff*, These two designated 'ends' at the new stadium will perpetuate two well known *Arms Park* features! A number of entrances provide access to the ground with the main one in Cathedral Road, fittingly, being through the **Wilfred Wooller Gates!** Many will recall Wilf Wooller played centre for Wales in the days of rugby legends Vivian Jenkins, Claude Davey and Haydn Tanner. Following WW2, Wooller demonstrated his sporting versatility by captaining the *Glamorgan County Cricket Club* - interestingly, in the stuffy old days when **Gentlemen** (the then popular term for non-professional players) held all county club captaincies! A regular **MCC** fixture of that era was the annual *Gentlemen v Players* game - always played at **Lords Cricket Ground** (London home of the **MCC**) and rarely, if ever, won by its so-called 'elite' participants! (*Lords* also happens to be home of the **England & Wales Cricket Board!**)

**CALZAGHE TRIUMPHS** As many fight fans would have seen, Welshman **Joe Calzaghe** from Newbridge succeeded in his world middleweight title bout against American *Bernard Hopkins* in Las Vegas on April 19. The 'fight', featured on **TSN** that evening, was attended by **Tom Jones** and **Catherine Zeta Jones** who were conspicuous among a number of other notables. Tom stood in the ring with the boxers and sang **Hen Wlad Fy'n Nhadau** to the delight of 5,000 Welsh fans who'd invaded Vegas for the occasion. The decision, over 12 rounds, was a close one!

**DAI-NOSAURS** Experts believe South Wales was once a world leading area for dinosaurs - but more as a **Triassic** playground for small meat-eaters than the domain of terrifying gargantuan creatures! Along with the south coast of England, Oxfordshire and the Isle of Wight, the region was a popular 'dino' destination. A recent study, published in the **Geological Society Journal**, draws attention to the British Isles being part of a land bridge between the continents of Europe and North America in the **Cretaceous** period, some 140 million years ago. From this position it evolved as one of the top five places in the world for concentrations of dinosaurs. A large number of fossils have been unearthed there over a long time - including **Middle Jurassic** and **Early Cretaceous** period species of long-necked dinosaurs! In Wales, fossils were generally from the **Triassic** period that preceded the **Jurassic** age with coastal sediments, especially in the Vale of Glamorgan, being estimated at 230 million years old.

Significant dinosaur remains were first discovered in Wales at the **Jolly Sailor** pub in **Nottage, Porthcawl** during the 19th century. When work was done on the structure of that building, a doorway stone slab revealed five big footprints on it. More footprints, identified at the **Captain's Wife** pub on the **Isle of Sully** in the Bristol Channel, were particularly revealing - being described as the **tracks of a small dinosaur running at 22 kph** as determined from footprint length and stride calculations - a mind boggling conjecture to be sure! Unfortunately, a cynic might also be easily persuaded to the view that such a precise conclusion could also be consistent with the experience of many local folk where, by sheer coincidence, a public house '*just happened*' to be in the general area of something of interest! However, adding a little more colour to what prevailed during prehistoric times in that part of the world, the environment would have been hot and dry and, even if desert conditions had prevailed, it would have been subject to flooding and sediment footprints thereby preserved. There had not been much bone evidence found locally but again, in the 1800s, at **Stormy Down** also near Porthcawl, a rock in a stone wall had been cracked open to reveal an impression of the lower jaw of a meat-eating dinosaur. However, the bone itself had dissolved!

**DAFYDD ap THOMAS** If **David Thompson** (aka **David son of Thomas**, as the heading describes) had retained his given name upon joining the *Hudson's Bay Company* in 1784, his Welsh origins would have been more readily acknowledged along with his recognition as the foremost Canadian explorer and map-maker of the 18th Century! The *Central Alberta Historical Society* honoured him at a recent Red Deer conference dedicated to **The Man and his Legacy** (Ref: April 08 newsletter) which **Dave Matthews** was able to attend. In reporting on it for our benefit he indicated the conference again drew deserved attention to the impressive exploits and achievements of this Welshman - **the very first 'white' person to set foot in the Bow Valley!** Effective lobbying by local citizens (led by historian, **Pat MacDonald**), by Western Canadian historical societies and by Welsh societies in Alberta - persuaded the Federal Government to more adequately recognize the historic value of the *Rocky Mountain House fur-trading post* on the *North Saskatchewan River* and making a substantial financial investment into its preservation! Its close association with the David Thompson legacy, as a result, has also been significantly enhanced - and *Parks Canada's National Historic Site Interpretive Centre* now very much 'an on-going concern'!

A prominent Thompson contemporary, physician and author **John Bigsby**, wrote about him in these terms upon first meeting him, '*I was placed at table, between one of the ladies and a singular-looking person of about fifty. He was plainly dressed, quiet, and observant. His figure was short and compact, and his black hair worn long all round, and cut square, as if by one stroke of the shears, just above the eyebrows. His complexion was of the gardener's ruddy brown while the expression of his deeply furrowed features was friendly and intelligent, but his cut-short nose gave him an odd look. His speech betrayed the Welshman, although he left his native hills when very young ..*'

Of course, it is on record Thompson (1770 - 1857) was born in Westminster, to Welsh parents. Because of his aptitude for mathematics he was recruited by the *Hudson's Bay Company* whose head office then happened to be in London. Thompson was just 14 years old at the time and was to spend the rest of his long life in North America to become the best explorer and map-maker of his generation. So good were his maps of Western Canada that they were the best available for 100 years! At the age of 29 he married *Charlotte Small*, a 14 year-old *Metis* girl from northern Saskatchewan. They were together for 59 years and died within months of each other! There were 13 children - two of whom cared for them in later life in Montreal when Thompson had become penniless due to some bad business deals! Their graves in Montreal remained unmarked for 60 years - until geologist, explorer and historian, **Dr. Joseph B. Tyrrell** (himself honoured at the *Drumheller Museum of Palaeontology*) recognized the importance of Thompson's work - and saw fit to erect markers in memory of both David and Charlotte Thompson! *Tyrrell* also edited Thompson's **Journals** and his **Narrative** - and had them published by the *Champlain Society*.

Gradually the remarkable story of **Dafydd ap Thomas's** explorations and map-making talents are being unfolded at the *Rocky Mountain House Interpretive Centre* - even if under the anglicised name of one, *David*

*Thompson!* His outstanding achievements are again honoured and made known to a wider public. The *Thompson Narrative* makes wonderful reading - a series of adventure stories that should be on everyone's book list!  
**Check your local library!**

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