

CYMDEITHAS GYMREIG CALGARY

CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER ISSUE

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President: Wayne Davies 289-3478; Vice-P: Alun Lewis 710-3032; Secretary: Kate Coolidge: 257-4046, 140 Lake Tahoe Green SE, Calgary T2J 4X6, E-mail Coolidge@telus.net; Cultural/Social Sec: David Matthews 695-6928 supported by a committee incl. Brian Lewis 547-6626, Viv Ellis 239-5018, Kathleen Johnstone 257-9557 and Anne-Marie Nawton 288-1915; Treasurer: Norman Pierce 278-9371; Membership Coord: Elaine Westlake 256-4136; Editor: Roly Thomas 246-5093 E-mail betrol@shaw.ca; Phone Committee: Jean Kuhn 567-0507 with Margaret Kuyt 289-4676, Anne-Marie Nawton and Kathleen Johnstone. Web: [www.calgarywelshsociety.com](http://www.calgarywelshsociety.com)

Following the April 25<sup>th</sup> AGM, our Executive formula is almost the same except for the welcomed participation of the three fresh faces as underlined above! Thank you, one and all, for volunteering and thanks also to **Trish Coulson** and **Pam Hicks** who latterly bore the brunt of the social function! We are indebted to **Trish** and husband **Keith** who prepared the evening's Quiz. The winner, who shall remain nameless, barely improved on a 50% rating! Secretary Kate Coolidge's phone number was also misquoted in a number of previous newsletters for which sin your **Ed.** offers his profound apologies! Should such difficulties be encountered again **DO NOT HESITATE** to contact **HIM** by phone or E-mail - so that oversights may be quickly remedied! None of us is perfect ... not even your **Ed.**

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#### **SOCIETY EVENTS AND OTHER INFORMATION**

**CWRS CYMRAEG 2009** The popular *Cymdeithas Madog Welsh Language Course* is being held at the *Augustina Campus* of the *University of Alberta, Camrose* from **July 19<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup>**! Seven CWS members plan to attend!

**NORTH AMERICAN FESTIVAL OF WALES** Two members will represent the Society at this annual festival held in *Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania* on Labour Day Weekend (which occurs earlier this year) - **September 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup>**! The venue is the ***Pittsburgh Hilton Hotel*** in the heart of a city with a 300,000 population! The hotel, the largest in *Pittsburgh*, offers a special festival room rate at \$114 US (plus tax) per night. It faces *Point State Park* and the confluence of three rivers, the *Allegheny, Monongahela* and the *Ohio* - identifying it as the '*City of Three Rivers*'!

**TY DAFYDD ap THOMAS** This admirable *Edmonton St David's Society* project, at the *University of Alberta Devonian Botanical Gardens*, was officially opened May 24 last when some 35 members took advantage of transportation enabling them to attend the ceremony giving long overdue recognition to the remarkable achievements of a famous *Welsh* explorer, surveyor and map-maker, **David Thompson**! Recruited in 1784, by the *London (England)* head-quartered *Hudson Bay Company*, he was despatched to Canada to contribute to the company's colonial development - where he remained for the rest of his life! Calgary members appreciated the kind hospitality bestowed upon them by our sister society hosts! During a stop on the journey, *Pres. Wayne Davies* described the history of a now vaguely remembered early *Alberta Welsh* community, the *Wood River Settlement*, near *Ponoka*!

**GELLI GYMREIG** In order to give greater exposure to our presence in *Calgary*, an effort remains under way to locate a **WELSH GROVE** within the newly renovated gardens of the ***Calgary Zoo***. The concept is to plant bushes and daffodils in a designated garden area - together with a suitable plaque describing their **Welsh** association!

**SUMMER BBQ** Note **SUNDAY JULY 26<sup>th</sup>** is the date for this event! The lakeside picnic area of the ***Bonavista Community*** will again be our afternoon venue - **FROM 3.00 pm until 6.00 pm**. As is customary, please bring your favourite lawn chair, sunscreen but **NO alcoholic drinks** or **glassware**! The Society will provide main-course food and refreshment - with attendees (hopefully) bringing a selection of desserts for general consumption! The lake

facilities will be available for those wishing to cool off in appropriate seasonal fashion! Enter the picnic area at the security gate at **REAR** of the **Safeway** store in the shopping area - junction of **Acadia** and **Lake Bonavista Drives SE**.

**SENIORS' TEA** This year's *Seniors' Tea* has **TENTATIVELY** been arranged for the afternoon of **Sunday September 27<sup>th</sup>** at **2.30 pm**. The **DOVE'S NEST**, *Glenmore Landing*, will again be our venue! Formal confirmation to follow!

**ROSEBUD DINNER THEATRE** Transport arrangements for, and attendance at a lunch/matinee performance of *Dylan Thomas's A Child's Christmas in Wales*, has been arranged for **Saturday December 12<sup>th</sup>**. **NOTE** this *Rosebud* visit will **BE INSTEAD OF** our customary Christmas Dinner function! Performance and lunch costs are **\$49.00** per person - for a **11.00 am to noon buffet lunch**. The matinee performance will follow at **1.30 pm**. Transport details will be published in due course! **If you are interested - PLEASE INFORM Social Sec. DAVID as soon as possible!**

**LIONS FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS** Negotiations remain under way for the Welsh seasonal greeting '**NADOLIG LLAWEN**' to be added to this display at **Confederation Park Golf Course** bounded by **14<sup>th</sup> Street** and **24<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW**.

**Y TRI TENOR** These singers have indicated their inability to fulfill a Calgary visit this summer! The Society regrets to learn of this last minute decision and would re-invite them only if a firm future commitment were to be made!

**USE OF OUR CASINO WEALTH** Bureaucratic pettiness met when seeking provincial approval for the use of our casino funds has proven frustrating and particularly time consuming for the few people who have been involved to date! It would be of assistance if more members could submit ideas for the use of these available funds - especially if they could also offer time and effort to follow-through on them! Get your comments to Social Sec. *David Matthews* as a matter of urgency! A meeting of the Society Executive (May 28<sup>th</sup> last) clarified the fact that it, as a formally elected body, had the authority to allocate available Casino funds without limit on the Society's behalf!

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**ANOTHER WELSH PEAK** It seems to be a little known fact that the highest mountain in the world is named after another colonial based *Welsh* surveyor - a *Surveyor-General of India* from 1830 to 1843! The honour, a tribute to **Sir George Everest** who, for more than 25 years and despite numerous hardships, prevailed in surveying the longest *arc-of-the-meridian* ever accomplished at that time. This survey extended for some 2,400 kilometres in distance from *Cape Comorin* northwards to the *Himalayas*! Born on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1790 in the *Manor of Gwernvale, Crickhowel (Powys)*, *George Everest* was first commissioned into the Royal Artillery and, in 1818 as a lowly subaltern, became assistant to *Col. William Lambton* who had worked on the *Great Trigonometrical Survey* of the *Indian* sub-continent since 1806. *Everest* succeeded *Lambton* as survey superintendent in 1823 and was appointed to the ultimate post of *Surveyor-General of India* in 1830! Retiring in 1843 he returned to the United Kingdom and became a *Fellow of the Royal Society*. Knighted in 1861 he became a Vice-President of the *Royal Geographical Society* one year later. He died in Greenwich (1866) and was interred at *St Andrew's Church, Hove, Sussex*! **Mount Everest** was named in 1865 despite his objections - that part of the survey done by his successor, *Andrew Waugh*!

**ABER PYTHONISED** The present *Aberystwyth* mayor, *Sue Jones-Davies*, along with *Michael Palin*, *Terry Jones* and the late *Graham Chapman*, starred in the 1979 *Monty Python* film, *The Life of Brian*. Long before becoming town mayor, Mrs. Jones-Davies played *Brian's* girlfriend, *Judith Iscariot*, in the movie. But alas, since its first showing in the town, a 30-year-old ban has existed on further viewings following cinema picketing by religious groups - in a belief the film mocked *Christ*! The *Python* team was further accused of blasphemy with its story about a *Jewish* man who had been mistaken for the *Messiah* and then crucified! Some Aber churchgoers still objected to further showings - but the enlightened mayor had received assurances that nothing could interfere with a 2009 charity performance - to which she had invited the two listed surviving cast members! It is not beyond the realms of possibility that, in the not too distant future, mixed bathing may be permitted at this popular *Cardigan Bay* resort!

**ABER LATINISED - PATAGONIA STYLE** The *Andean* township of **Esquel** in *Patagonia, Argentina*, has recently been twinned with *Aberystwyth, Dyfed*, on the occasion of its (*Esquel's*) 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday! Commemorating the event, a new town feature, *Aberystwyth Square*, was unveiled with due ceremony that included the attendance of a newly appointed *British* ambassador to *Argentina* - a brilliant ambassadorial choice on the part of the *English* dominated *UK* government (it will be noted) since *Margaret Thatcher's* South Atlantic conflict remains a bitter memory in that part of the world! But, *Patagonians* were seen to wear their Welsh hearts on their sleeves with the local 'crachach' (big-wigs) turning out in force to see the square's formal unveiling by the *Chubut* provincial governor and *UK* ambassador **Shân Morgan** - in her first official visit outside the country's capital, *Buenos Aires*! A wooden sign bearing the words '**Aberystwyth y Esquel**' (*Esquel's Aberystwyth*), carved by local craftsmen, had been erected to record its new Welsh association! So called '*Welsh townships*' in *Argentina* all happen to be in *Chubut Province* it appears - and, true to the occasion, the *Esquel* mayor happened to be a '*Williams*', a *Rafael Williams* no less! The *UK* ambassador addressed the gathering in fluent Welsh and Spanish! It may have been very fortunate by being unknown to the locals that *Dame Margaret* was a member of the '*Roberts clan*' before marriage - a possible *Welsh* association, way back in time, that could have cast an unfortunate shadow on the happy *Esquel* proceedings!

**MORE ABOUT MAGGIE** A recent article in the *Western Mail* drew attention to an event back in the 1980s, when *Mrs. Thatcher* 'pulled the plug' on what could have been an exciting pioneering research project at a north Wales colliery! It also suggested it could have averted the disastrous miners' strike of 25 years ago as well as heralding a bright new future for Welsh coal-mining! The *Point of Ayr* colliery in *Flintshire* was the site chosen by the *National Coal Board* (supported by the *National Union of Mineworkers*) to explore the potential of oil extraction from coal following promising field tests and experiments already conducted by *NCB* scientists! But, extra state funding needed to continue a development that could have led to the ultimate construction of a coal liquefaction plant was denied! Sadly, *Mrs. Thatcher's* traditionally influenced *Conservative Government* had second thoughts - by being more intent upon reducing state subsidies to the likes of the *NCB* than pursuing research that had already stimulated world-wide interest! A publication, *Shafted: The Media, the Miners' Strike and the Aftermath*, describes the story as told by BBC journalist *Nicholas Jones*! Edited by *Granville Williams* it is published by the *Campaign for Press and Broadcasting*. Available online at [www.cpbf.org.uk/shafted](http://www.cpbf.org.uk/shafted) - it should be well worth a read!

**MUSICAL STARS OF STAGE & SCREEN** It is worth recalling '*the Principality due west of England*' has produced many such artists over the years! Since the first-ever *International Festival of Musical Theatre* held in *Cardiff* in 2002, Welsh musical theatre has been continuously in the news - with a great deal of history to support it! The *UK* musical theatre is as old as theatre itself - with most of *Shakespeare's* plays containing songs and most actors always accepting the fact that they could have to sing in some of their roles! The development of opera in the 18<sup>th</sup> century also promoted the birth of the ballad opera where *John Gay's* '*Beggars Opera*' actually 'invented' musical theatre in the form it is known today! This was given a big boost in 2004 with the opening of the impressive *Wales Millennium Centre* in *Cardiff* designed to give the best possible venue for musical theatre! Among the foremost exponents of the art, the name of *Ivor Novello* must be one of the most popular and on a par with that of *Noel Coward*. His shows were instant and lasting successes: *The Dancing Years* ran on the London stage for a decade from 1939 while his *King's Rhapsody*, in which he took a central stage role, but did not sing, was equally popular! *Novello* actually died in harness a few hours after a performance in *King's Rhapsody*! His mother, *Madame Clara Novello Davies*, gained fame as the conductor of the successful *Cardiff Ladies Choir* during the 1930s!

There are so many other Welsh composers, librettists and artists worthy of mention - notably *Harry Parr Davies* (creator of '*Full Swing*' and '*The Lisbon Story*') and *Julian More* who wrote the texts of '*Grab Me A Gondola*', '*Irma La Douce*', '*Expresso Bongo*', '*Quick, Quick, Slow*' and '*Can Can*'. Whether in operettas by *Gilbert and Sullivan* or in shows based on imported musicals from *Paris, Vienna* and *New York*, Welsh artists were also making their mark in musical theatre from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century! *Henry Bracy* was a Victorian comic-opera tenor along with

comedian *Lionel Brough*; singers *Gladys Homfrey* (described as a musical comedy 'dragon' who appeared in '*The Geisha*'), *Catherine Lewis* (who performed with the *Carl Rosa Company*) and *Olive Gilbert* for whom *Ivor Novello* composed most of his best roles! More recently, the name of '*Goon*' (and tenor) *Harry Secombe*, comes to mind - then *Richard Burton's* role in '*Camelot*' on New York's Broadway; *Peter Karrie* (star of '*Phantom Of The Opera*', '*Les Miserables*', '*Chess*', '*Evita*' and '*Jesus Christ Superstar*') and *Jonathon Pryce* in both '*Evita*' and '*Miss Saigon*'. There are so many more successful Welsh performers - including *Michael Ball*, *Ivor Emmanuel*, *John Owen Jones*, *Daniel Evans*, *Steve Balsamo*, one-time boy-soprano *Aled Jones* - and, not forgetting *Catherine Zeta Jones* who at the age of 11 took the part of '*Annie*' - and at age 17 following it with the leading role in '*42<sup>nd</sup> Street*' in *London's West End*!

**HEINEKEN HEARTBREAK** The *Cardiff 'Blues'* rugby team, in their *Heineken Cup* semi-final game at *Millennium Stadium* on May 3<sup>rd</sup> were 14 points behind their *Leicester 'Tigers'* opponents just 6 minutes from full time - and scored two converted tries to tie the game at 26 points each! Twenty minutes of overtime followed without score - then a '5-kick-a-side' penalty competition saw both teams again tied at 4 goals apiece! A 'sudden death' shootout finally went *Leicester's* way! On May 23<sup>rd</sup>, in a final match-up, *Leicester* narrowly lost to *Leinster* at *Murrayfield*!

Two recent friendly internationals in *Canada* saw severely depleted *Irish* and *Welsh* international sides arrive with 14 key players absent from both ranks otherwise engaged on the *South Africa* tour with the *British & Irish Lions* squad. Still, *Ireland* defeated *Canada* (25-6) on June 23<sup>rd</sup> in *Vancouver* and *Wales* triumphed (32-23) in *Toronto* on May 30<sup>th</sup>! Both recent *Grand Slam* countries appear to have a depth of talented young players available to them! From **June 6-14**, *Rugby Canada* is involved in the *Churchill Cup* - in games with *England*, *Argentina* and *Georgia*.

**PAUL POTTS HERE** The **2007 *Britain Has Talent*** winner from *Port Talbot* is on a brief western Canada tour in June - beginning in *Vancouver*, **June 25<sup>th</sup>** at the *Centre for Performing Arts*. An *Edmonton* performance follows at the *Winspear Centre* on **Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup>** then a *Calgary* performance at the *Jubilee Auditorium* on **Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup>**. The tour moves on to Ontario for two performances, *Kitchener*, **June 30<sup>th</sup>** and finally, *Toronto*, **July 18<sup>th</sup>**. As members would have read in a previous newsletter, *Paul Potts* has a natural and tuneful tenor voice and almost outdoes the legendary *Pavarotti* with a version of the latter's theme song, *Nessun Dorma*! He is a 'MUST' to hear!

**TO GREENER PASTURES** After seven years of service, nine-year-old *William Windsor* recently retired as a member of the *British Army* amid scenes of pomp and ceremony. Otherwise known as *Billy the Goat*, the veteran mascot of the *Royal Welsh Regiment* was led into his trailer by the battalion's *Goat Major* (in full ceremonial dress) destined to live out the rest of his life (the goat that is, not the *Goat Major*) at *Whipsnade Zoo*. The route from the pen to the trailer was lined with soldiers from his regiment who bade him a fond farewell after his years of colourful service! A 'regimental goat' tradition has existed for over 200 years since, interestingly, the *American War of Independence* - when a wild goat wandered onto a battlefield and ended up leading the *Regimental Colours* off the field of battle! In 1884 *Queen Victoria* presented a *Welsh* regiment, the *Royal Welsh Fusiliers*, with a goat from her Royal herd - and the tradition has remained! The 'regimental goat' is considered a full member of the battalion leading it on all ceremonial occasions! A full time 'carer' (a goat-batman in effect) ensures the welfare of the animal at all times! *Billy Windsor's* replacement is to be announced virtually as you read these words of wisdom when a young kid will be collected from a herd on the *Great Orme*, *Llandudno*, sometime this month! Adding a little more colour to *Wales's* regimental history - it all began in 1881 when the *Welsh Regiment* was founded under the *British Army 'Cardwell Reforms'*. A spelling change was introduced in 1921 (to *Welch Regiment*) - then by amalgamation with the *South Wales Borderers* in 1969, the *Royal Regiment of Wales* came into being! In 2006 after yet another amalgamation with the *Royal Welsh Fusiliers*, the *Royal Welsh Regiment* was born! Your Ed remembers being one of the '*WELSH with a C*' lads - and his particular contribution to the successful outcome of WW2. The story, he modestly professes, is that when news of his promotion to *Acting/Unpaid/Lance-Corporal* was announced (the very first rung on the promotional ladder) - *Adolf Hitler* promptly shot himself in his *Berlin* bunker!

