

CYMDEITHAS GYMREIG CALGARY

CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER - 2009

NEWSLETTER ISSUE

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CWRS CYMREIG & FESTIVAL OF WALES The ability of some members to attend these recent North American cultural events was, for the very first time, aided by grants made available from our casino generated funds. **A CWRS write-up by Elaine Westlake follows in this newsletter and the other, on the Pittsburgh NAFOW experience (incidentally, thoroughly enjoyed by Julie and Cledwyn Haydn-Jones) will be described in our November issue!**

SUMMER BBQ Again through the courtesy of *Lake Bonavista* residents *Ross and Pam Hicks*, our summer social in this community's lakeside facility was another highly successful event! The effort of *Cultural Sec. David Matthews* along with his hard-working team of wife *Mona*, *Brian* and *Della Lewis*, *Kathleen Johnson* and *Alun Lewis* deserve special mention! **47 adults** (including friends and potential members) and **10 youngsters** thoroughly enjoyed the occasion! Good weather favoured an excellent afternoon of friendship with a tasteful selection of food and drink! Left-over foods were appropriately donated to the *Mustard Seed* through the good offices of *Kathleen Johnson*.

PONOKA GYMANFA GANU The *Ponoka Welsh Society* held its *71st Gymanfa Ganu* on *August 9th*. A special motor coach made it possible for some 30 Calgary members to attend - an event, incidentally, conducted by our own *Susan (Grayson) Petker* to whom we extend our congratulations for a job well-done! The '*Solid Ground Trio*' along with soloists *Patricia Waites & Lindsay Zacharias* contributed to an enjoyable afternoon of song and the perpetuation of a truly Welsh tradition! The *Ponoka Society's* hospitality again excelled and was thoroughly enjoyed by all! The *Calgary Society* was able to reciprocate in a small measure with a financial donation to cover church rental costs! The enthusiastic effort of so many Calgary members to this outing was much appreciated!

ITEMS OF CONTINUING INTEREST With the objective of giving greater exposure to our Calgary presence, effort continues to: (a) establish a *WELSH GROVE* feature within the newly renovated gardens of the *Calgary Zoo* - and (b), the inclusion of a Welsh greeting within the *Lions Festival of Lights* Christmas display at *Confederation Park*.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SENIORS' TEA THIS IS ON *SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 27th* starting at **2.30 pm sharp!** The *DOVE'S NEST* located at *106A - 1600 90th Avenue SW (Glenmore Landing)* is again the venue of choice! **NOTE that ONLY 50 PEOPLE can be accommodated so CONFIRMATION should have been received by Elaine Westlake no later than September 12th!** Elaine may be contacted at 403-256-4136 - or by E-mail at welsh_gal13@yahoo.ca.

NOSON LAWEN This autumn social date is arranged for **SATURDAY OCTOBER 10th**. Meet at **6.30 pm** for a **prompt 7 o'clock start!** The *Irish Cultural Centre* in *Bowness, 6452 - 35th Avenue NW* will again be our venue, in their lower level facility! Snack foods will be provided by the Society and the usual charge of **\$10.00 per head** levied for food and rental costs. **You are invited to make a light-hearted contribution to the programme** - a song, a dance, a poem or a reading - or even a joke or two! **Phone Dave Matthews at 695-6928** - he will coordinate the evening! Ample free parking and the usual bar facilities exist - **so let us make this yet another successful carefree evening!**

ROSEBUD DINNER THEATRE Transport arrangements to attend a matinee performance of *Dylan Thomas's 'A Child's Christmas in Wales'* are fixed for **Saturday December 12th**. Note this theatre visit will be **IN PLACE OF** our customary **CHRISTMAS DINNER!** The excursion cost of **\$49.00** per person will include a **buffet lunch** (served around mid-day) prior to the actual performance. The matinee will begin at **1.30 pm!** Transport details will be published in due course! **To AVOID disappointment - ADVISE Social Sec. David as soon as possible - at 695-6928!**

ST DWYNWEN'S DAY 2010 There is a proposal afoot that we suitably honour the *Patron Saint of Welsh Lovers* (a Welsh *St Valentine's Day* in effect) that traditionally occurs on **JANUARY 25th**! The story, we are told, is: *Princess Dwywen*, daughter of *Brychan Brycheiniog*, wished to marry a Welsh prince named *Maelon Dafodrill*. *Brychan Brycheiniog*, not being too enamoured by the young lad, forbade the union - thereby breaking his daughter's heart! *Dwywen* sought solace in the woods, became exhausted and fell asleep only to dream she and *Maelon* both drank a love potion that should have resolved their difficulty! But, being a *well-brung-up little Welsh gal*, she refused to run away with young *Dafodrill* before being properly wed to him! Poor chap, clearly a 21st century thinker even then, would have none of it - and turned into a block of ice! *Dwywen*, in a like frigid mood became a nun - and roamed around Wales preaching to all and sundry. Eventually she settled on the isle of *Llanddwyn*, off the Anglesey coast! Could this sad (yet romantic) tale provide an excuse for a *New Year's* social event, eh folks?

SUMMER RUGBY Two international matches in *Canada* saw severely depleted *Irish* and *Welsh* teams arrive with 14 key players absent from each of their ranks while engaged on the *2009 British & Irish Lions* tour of South Africa.. Regardless, the *Irish XV* beat *Canada* 25-6 (*Vancouver, June 23*) while the *Welsh XV* won 32-23 (*Toronto, May 30*)! With respect to the **Lions Tour** (May 30 - July 4) 7 regional games were played (6 won and 1 tied by the *Lions*) along with 3 international games. In the latter, *South Africa* won 2 matches (the second by only a narrow margin) and the *Lions XV* the last international fixture - and satisfyingly convincing too! The tour was an outstanding success for the *Welsh* contingent where *Cardiff Med-School* student *Jamie Roberts* (*Cardiff Blues*) became the *Lions Player of 2009!* *Ospreys* scrum-half, *Mike Phillips* with *Wales* outside-half partner *Stephen Jones* (*Llanelli Scarlets*), were outstanding in all three international encounters - while *Ospreys'* winger, *Glanamman's Shane Williams*, had the distinction of scoring two tries in the team's final international game!

The June 6-14 *Churchill Cup* competition, involved teams from *Canada, USA, England, Ireland, Argentina* and *Georgia* - the ultimate victor being the *Irish A* side. In a qualifying competition for the *2011 Rugby World Cup*, *Canada* finally qualified by heavily beating the *US* team in a second match-up - after narrowly losing the first game!

PAUL POTTS The *Bristol* born *Port Talbot* native enhanced a growing reputation with another fine display of his natural tenor voice at the *Jubilee Auditorium* on June 28 - his second visit to *Calgary* following an unheralded 'sold-out' performance last year at the *Jack Singer!* On this occasion he was accompanied by a 13-piece orchestra and shared the billing with an up-and-coming *Nashville* soprano, *Diane di Stasio*. With the '*Jube*' disappointingly only about one-half full (the local advertising effort being relatively ineffective) he modestly delivered an enjoyable music selection to an enthusiastic audience! In just two years he has become a popular globe-trotting performer!

CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY ASSETS Over the course of many years the Society has purchased, been given (or in some way acquired) many items that now qualify to be described as **Society Assets!** As a *Registered Society* in the Province of Alberta, items of this nature have to be formally recorded as such! It would therefore be appreciated if members and Society Officers who may now have such things in their care could advise the Society accordingly and as soon as possible! Please get in touch with the Newsletter Editor (Roly) by phone (403-246-5093) or E-mail at betrol@shaw.ca. These assets could be in the form of electronic equipment (projectors & screens, computers & software, video players and/or recorders), traditional *Welsh* costumes, *Welsh* banners & flags, items of literature etc.! **The timely cooperation of members in the preparation of an inventory of these Society Assets is solicited!**

THE NATIONAL FLAG *Y Ddraig Goch (The Red Dragon)* has enjoyed a Welsh association for centuries. During the Roman occupation of Britain, Roman cavalry units then used dragon emblems on pennants and standards. Draco standards were also carried by cavalry units in the years between 250 and 400 AD consisting of a hollow beast's head made of metal with a windsock-style cloth tail fixed at its rear - and often with a whistle device to 'sound' as it was moved! The Welsh kings of *Aberffraw* (chief seat of the *Kings of Gwynedd*) used the emblem to symbolise their authority in the fifth century - the names *Pendragon* or *Pen Draig* also deriving their origins from that era! With the invasions of the Angles and Saxons, early Britons were driven westwards and, by the seventh century, the symbol became the '*Red Dragon of Cadwallader*' - after *Cadwaladr ap Cadwallon*, the legendary King of Gwynedd.

Following the Norman invasion, the dragon standard was adopted by the new conquerors of Britain. In 1138 it also became the Scottish royal standard and *Richard I (The Lionheart)* even took a dragon standard on the *Third Crusade* in 1191. This standard proved less fortunate for *Henry III* and his English army at the *Battle of Lewes* in 1216 - but he proudly had it installed at Westminster Abbey. It was later used by his son *Edward I* and even later still by *Edward III* at the *Battle of Crecy* (1346) where Welsh archers, dressed in green and white, played a key role!

In 1400, Owain Glyndwr raised a 'dragon flag' during his revolt against *Henry IV* - thereby echoing its role in Welsh mythology as a symbol of struggle and resistance. However, this did not confer exclusivity to Wales - the dragon reappearing alongside *Henry V* at the *Battle of Agincourt* in 1415! After the *Wars of the Roses* the dragon began to roar even louder when the Welsh dynasty, the *House of Tudor*, defeated the *House of York* at the *Battle of Bosworth* in 1485. As *Henry Tudor*, later to be *Henry VII* of England, marched his troops through Wales to the *Bosworth* battle field, he flew the *Red Dragon of Cadwallader* - from whom he chose to claim his true ancestry! Backed by the green and white *Tudor* livery, this combination became the origin of the '*Red Dragon*' flag as it is now known! A royal decree in 1959, merely a half-century ago, finally saw its adoption as the official flag of Wales!

THE TUDORS Recent Canadian TV serial-programme repeats have romanticised this particularly violent era of British history without necessarily referring to the *Tudors* as a *Welsh dynasty* that held the English throne from 1485 until 1603! The story all started with *Owain ap Marededd Tewdwr* (or *Tudur* - both spellings anglicised to *Tudor*) a Welshman attached to the household of *Henry V's* widowed queen, *Catherine of Valois*. The enterprising Owain (aka Owen) married *Catherine* in secret in 1428 - *Henry VI*, in due course, accepting his mother's shockingly low-born husband who had, fortuitously, become a loyal Lancastrian during the *Wars of the Roses*! *Owain*, however, was captured at the *Battle of Mortimer's Cross* in 1461 and beheaded on the orders of the *Earl of March*, who later became *Edward IV*. Fathering two sons, *Edmund* and *Jasper* and then, the grandfather of *Henry VII*, *Owain* was the true founder of *Tudor* political power in England that ended with the death of *Elizabeth I* in 1603!

The *Tudor* beginnings were humble! Initially in service to the princes of *Gwynedd* who included *Llywelyn ap Iorwerth (Llywelyn the Great)* and his sons, they became part of an aristocratic entourage of advisors, diplomats, servants and councillors! The first of the early *Tudors* was *Cynfrig ab Iorwerth* whose son *Ednyfed Fychan (Little Ednyfed)* was responsible for consolidating the family's status in the administration of the *Gwynedd* kingdom. A diplomat and an ambassador, he represented *Llywelyn* in negotiations with the English crown. He married *Gwenllian*, daughter of *Lord Rhys ap Gruffydd of Deheubarth (Deheubarth* the name for West Wales) to further elevate the family's social standing. This association produced at least six sons all of whom entered the service of the *Gwynedd* princes! *Goronwy*, the eldest son, replaced his father as chief advisor and councillor with legal and diplomatic powers - while his son, *Tudur Hen (Old Tudor)*, became *Lord of Penmynydd*, a *Tudor* settlement in Anglesey. *Tudur Hen's* grandson, *Tudur Fychan (Little Tudor)*, married *Margaret ferch Thomas (Margaret daughter of Thomas)* of the *Gwynedd* royal family - a descendant of *Llywelyn the Great* on her maternal side and the *Plantagenet* kings, *John, Henry III and Edward I* on her father's side! There were at least five sons and all were active in the rebellion of their cousin, *Owain Glyndwr*! The youngest son, *Marededd ap Tudur*, had a child named

Owain ap Tudur ap Marededd who became the key to the continuing rise of the family's status - while also managing to avoid the punitive measures issued against Welshmen in the wake of the *Glyndwr* insurrection! This '*Owain son of Tudor son of Marededd*' assisted the English King *Henry V* in his French wars and, as mentioned earlier, secretly married *Henry V's* widow, the dowager queen *Catherine of Valois* - daughter of King *Charles VI* of France! *Owain* had obviously acquired the knack of getting to know the right people - and being at the right place at the right time except once! The moral to the story, 'Don't ever lose your head in an argument over roses'!

An interesting postscript to this little bit of *United Kingdom* history is, the impact of the 16th century *Acts of Union* between England and Wales was that, by the reign of *Good Queen Bess*, *Tudor* settlements in Wales had won general acceptance since *Justices of the Peace* were then being selected from the ranks of Welsh gentry! Appointed to enforce the law, they became obliged to abandon semi-anarchic traditions - having acquired a monopoly enhancing their own powers over the lower classes! This abandonment of Welsh law saw that estates were passed intact to eldest sons to further concentrate land-ownership in the hands of the few! For the following 250 years, the Welsh historical record was dominated by the activities of landed families loud in their praises of the *Tudor* settlement that removed ambiguity in the status of *Welsh* folk. In effect this implied they had become English - but, by the same means, it also appeared there was no further advantage in boasting an English heritage either! Henceforth, everyone living in Wales became Welsh - a principle built upon over succeeding generations!

WORLD-SKILLS CALGARY 2009 The 40th biennial international competition, the largest of its kind in the world, was recently held here in Calgary between September 1st and 7th! Fifty-one member countries and regions were represented with participation by over 900 contestants covering some 45 craft disciplines. Our Society was formally advised by an aide at the *Welsh Assembly* of its involvement with a *WorldSkills Wales Team* of two young men within a complement of 26 UK representatives! *Calgary Stampede Park* was the local venue where permanent buildings and additional tented facilities provided sophisticated and well equipped arenas for all competitions. Over 50,000 school students from 112 areas of Alberta were registered to attend an event of Olympic proportions sponsored by local, national and international organisations and companies! The selected Welsh members of *Team UK* had excelled in UK competitions and proven themselves as UK's best! *Dean Jones* and *Cliff Williams* were the two successful Welshmen: *Dean*, 21, from Swansea, specialising in automobile technology was a past student of *Crosskeys College, Newport* - and *Cliff*, 22, a carpenter from *Talley (near Llandilo) Dyfed*, had studied at *Coleg Sir Gâr, Ammanford*. A chance meeting with the latter's parents revealed *Cliff* was also an international 'darts player' who had represented *Wales* in European competitions! The UK skills team did well getting 3 *Gold Medals*, 6 *Bronze* and 13 *Medallions of Excellence* - one going to *Dean Jones*. The Canadian skills team also did very well with a total of 20 medals, 3 Gold, 2 Silver, 3 Bronze and 12 Medallions! The next competition is in London UK, two years hence!

LOADING THE LORDS As in *Canada*, 'party games' continue to be the popular sport played by *politicians* (at great public expense, naturally) by those lucky enough to be in political power and the others, the less successful ones who bear different 'stripes'! Back in the *UK*, of course, three additional sets of regional parliamentarians (the *Northern Irish Stormont* lot in *Belfast*, the *Scottish* lot in *Edinburgh* and the *Welsh Senate* 'boyos' in *Cardiff*) also get involved with the 'master' *Westminster* crowd still with its original representation from all four *UK* regions! The business of advancing (or retiring) to that '*upper house*' becomes a more complicated affair especially when political leaders and their hireling advisors develop tendencies towards dysfunctional attention spans! In Welsh political circles, for that very reason, the big question now is, if the former *Plaid Cymru* president, *Dafydd Wigley*, will be able to wriggle his way into a very English *House of Lords* - with the assistance of his once arch political rivals, the *Welsh Assembly Labourites* and despite the obvious disinterest shown by the *Labour Party* dominated *Westminster* parliament? With this apparent dilemma, an observer could be tempted to think, on the one hand, political self-service knows no bounds while on the other, the question could well be if like thinking *AMs* and *MPs* can really trust each other? Reciprocal back-scratching is seen as an odious pre-occupation - except by politicians!

CWRS CYMRAEG 2009 Elaine Westlake was one of 6 Calgary Welsh Society attendees at the *Cymdeithas Madog* language course in *Camrose, Alberta* - locally organised on this occasion by the *Edmonton St David's Welsh Society* and entitled, '*Cwrs Goleuni'r Gogledd Camrose*', the *Camrose Northern Lights Course*! Elaine prepared an account of her experience and expressed her appreciation for - the opportunity of attending such an enjoyable, informative and enriching cultural event - and for the Society's generous funding to assist with course expenses! Elaine wrote:

"Our base was the *Augustana Campus* of the *University of Alberta*, formerly the *Camrose Lutheran College*. Although we easily adapted to 'dorm' life, it was a shock to be sharing shower and toilet facilities after 45 years away from college life! My room - or should I say 'sauna' after a week of plus 30 C temperatures - was Spartan and had the hardest bed ever experienced! However, meeting many wonderful people (all living in close proximity) made it manageable! There were sixty course participants, including seven 'leaders'. Of these, two had travelled from Wales while all but one hailed from Wales and had been born into Welsh speaking homes.

The course days were filled with an array of experiences including delicious food - three meals a day plus snacks! Work began with a plenary information session that included a Welsh 'sing along'. The aim was for everyone to be able to sing the Welsh National Anthem from memory by the week's end - and It worked! Classroom instruction included three sessions at each person's appropriate fluency level, two in the morning and one after lunch. There were two compulsory workshops on such topics as, '*Taith yr iaith*' (language history), '*Y Cynghanedd*' (poetry composition), history of the harp, '*Y Mabinogion*' (Welsh tales from the 14th century) and a *David Thompson* session! Following an early dinner we had choir rehearsal and by 7.15 pm, the evening sessions had begun. These activities included a *Welsh folk dance* night, a film night, a quiz night at the off-campus *Scallywags* pub with team participation, a BBQ at the historical *Railway Gardens*, an *Eisteddfod*, a *Noson Lawen* and a final visit to *Scallywags* for a 'karaoke' night! The locals were 'taken by storm' when some of the group sang, '*This is Our Land*' in Welsh and attempted to teach them the words to, '*Oes Gafr Eto*'! The course also had a half-day field trip to historical *Fort Edmonton* and a scavenger hunt around the *Augustana campus* - with clues, of course, written in Welsh! In addition to all these listed activities, homework had to be completed most evenings and a paper written for the *Eisteddfod* competition. It was no wonder all participants suffered from a lack of sleep by the end of the course!

The week finished with a Sunday morning non-denominational, mostly Welsh, church service led by *Deian Evans*, pastor of Toronto's *Dewi Sant Welsh United Church* - a gentle, friendly man, also my choir director and instructor!"
