

CYMDEITHAS GYMREIG CALGARY

CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY

APRIL - 2010

NEWSLETTER ISSUE

Pres: Wayne Davies 289-3478; Vice-Pres: Alun Lewis 710-3032; Secretary: Position unfilled; **Cultural Sec: David Matthews 695-6928** aided by *Viv Ellis, Kathleen Johnson, Brian Lewis and Anne-Marie Nawton*; **Treasurer: Norman Pierce 278-9371; Membership Coord: Elaine Westlake 256-4136; Phone Group: Jean Kuhn 567-0507** aided by *Kathleen Johnson, Margaret Kuyt and Anne-Marie Nawton*. Area Code **403** applies to **ALL** Calgary phone numbers!

Editor: Roly Thomas 246-5093; Webmaster: Quinten Beasley 477-0101; Website: www.calgarywelshsociety.com

NEWS and ACTIVITIES:

CWRS MADOG 2010 in CAERDYDD (i.e., in *Cardiff, Glam.*) and **NAFOW 2010 in PORTLAND, OREGON** Members are advised that Society casino funds have again been allocated to assist with attendance costs (for approved participants) at both events. Allocations totalling **\$6,000** (*Cwrs Madog*) and **\$4,000** (*North American Festival of Wales*) have been agreed. Applications are now under review and AGLC payment authorisation is being sought.

NEXT CASINO FUND RAISER The Society has been advised that **AGLC** has allocated a date for its next fund raiser! As before, it will be a 2-day event taking place on **WEDNESDAY** and **THURSDAY, JULY 28** and **29, 2010!** The designated location is **CASINO CALGARY**, situated off **Barlow Trail NE!** Volunteers will be solicited for the 3 shifts in each day's operations! **NOTE THE DATES & BE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE!** Your Editor will coordinate the event!

AGM AND SOCIAL EVENING As a registered Society we are obliged to have a formal **Annual General Meeting** each year. In past years it has been the custom to combine this with a social-evening to thereby limit tedious formalities to a minimum! This year's event will be on **SATURDAY, APRIL 17th** held at the **Irish Cultural Centre, 6452 - 35th Avenue NW. Nomination proposals** for office should be **SENT BY LETTER** or **E- mail** to **Alun Lewis** who has again consented to act as **Returning Officer**. His contact addresses are, **7 Citadel Drive NW, Calgary, AB. T3G 3X7 & alunlewis@yahoo.com**! Positions of **President, Vice-President** and **Secretary** will need to be determined while the remaining officers for 2009 have indicated their preparedness to stand for re-election! The Society will provide snack foods for the enjoyment of all attendees during the evening. **ATTENDANCE WILL ALSO BE FREE!**

LOCAL CWS EXPOSURE With the objective of giving greater exposure to our Calgary presence, a **Welsh Grove** feature will be incorporated within the gardens of the **Calgary Zoo** now under renovation! A donation of \$2,900 has been made to the **Zoo Society** for the cost of a garden bench with plaque describing the Society's initiative!

As previously mentioned, the very earliest an illuminated **Welsh Greeting** can appear in the Calgary Lions **Festival of Lights Society's** Confederation Park display will be the **2010** Christmas season! A donation of \$1,000 is being made to the **Festival of Lights Society** to secure the inclusion of a **Welsh Language** feature in the future!

PAST EVENTS:

ROSEBUD DINNER THEATRE VISIT This December 12th event attended by 54 members, family and friends was a resounding success thanks to the untiring preparatory work of **Social Secretary David Matthews!** Apart from enjoying an excellent stage production, our Society also gained a lot of positive publicity in the *Calgary Herald* (*'Neighbours'* section)! Following the afternoon performance, the Society made a \$2,000 donation to the Rosebud School of the Arts and in return received an autographed photograph of cast members on the *'Christmas in Wales'* stage set! The Dylan Thomas adaptation featured a number of well known Welsh songs - our expectations being exceeded when the cast gave a special rendering of *'Ar Hyd y Nos'* - and expertly done in our native tongue!

ST DWYNWEN 2010 The Society's first celebration of this romantic (if sad) occasion on the evening of January 16th was very successful! Some 80 people attended representing members, friends, children and grandchildren. It clearly appealed to the younger element when some 15 children and 10 teenagers attended. Special mention should be made regarding contributions to the evening's entertainment by the prime organiser (*Social Secretary*

David Matthews) ably assisted by Brian Lewis (aka 'Mr. Love-spoons'), Kathleen Johnson, Elaine Westlake, Della Lewis, Mona Matthews and Colin Lewis. Colin again kindly donated his time and his D.J. equipment together with a good choice of music for a carefree evening filled with song, dance and games!

DYDD GWYL DEWI 2010 The principal event of our year was again held at the **Fort Calgary's Officers' Mess**. It was well attended by over 80 adults and children! In the absence of our *President & Vice-President*, the evening's formalities were conducted by *Elaine Westlake* and *David Matthews* (the younger edition) with other contributions from members *Norman Pierce* (Blessing and County Call), *Brian Lewis* (Loyal Toast) and *Graham Wrightson* (Formal Address). The entire celebration was masterfully planned by *Social Secretary, David Matthews* and included entertainment by three young members of the **Rosebud Theatre** group - *Aaron Krogman, Cassia Schramm* and harpist *Rachel Peacock*. Their talents were much enjoyed by a very appreciative audience! The evening concluded with community singing in the capable hands of the accompanist, member *Susan (Drayson) Petker!*

FUTURE ORGANISED EVENTS OF NOTE:

EDMONTON ANNUAL GYMANFA GANU The St David's Welsh Society will be holding its annual **Gymanfa** and **Tea** on **SUNDAY APRIL 11th** at the **KNOX METROPOLITAN CHURCH**, 8307-109 Street, Edmonton. The 2-hour programme will include the **St David's M.V. Choir**, harpist & vocalist **Gordon Ritchie** and organist **Warren Mack**. Attendance by CWS members is encouraged - with the assurance our sister Society's hospitality is always of superb quality!

SOCIETY SONG RECITAL **CHRIST CHURCH Anglican Church** at **3602 - 8th Street SW**, is the location of a **SOCIETY SPONSORED** event on **SUNDAY, MAY 16th** starting at **7.00 pm!** It will feature local Welsh artists supported by a number of other Calgary performers in a varied programme of music. Selections will include music from popular light opera and musical theatre - with a sprinkling of tuneful Welsh melodies to complete the evening! **CONCERT ADMISSION WILL BE FREE** - while donations to the Society by grateful non-members would be much appreciated!

CHOIR VISIT - TORONTO WELSH MV **Grace Presbyterian Church** will be the setting for a concert by this visiting male voice choir on the evening of **TUESDAY, AUGUST 3rd, 2010!** From our sister Society in **Toronto** the choir, of some 40 voices, has gained an enviable reputation over the 15 years of its existence. Widely travelled in North America it has also successfully appeared on a tour of Wales. The visit to western Canada this summer will give us the opportunity and pleasure to arrange a Calgary concert for them - with further details to appear in due course!

VISIT BY A CHOIR FROM WALES Another 40 member male-voice choir, **Côr Godre'r Aran** from the **Bala** area of North Wales will be the featured choir at Portland's **Festival of Wales** next September. The choir will be returning home by way of Calgary following their Portland visit and plan a **CALGARY CONCERT DATE** for **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th** - with the down-town **Grace Presbyterian Church** again being the venue. This choir has appeared extensively in the **UK** and boasts a record of three previous **Canada/US** visits, eight **Australia** tours with stops in **New Zealand, Tasmania and Hong Kong**. A second South American visit, after an absence of 30 years, was also made to the Welsh part of **Argentina - Patagonia** that is! The choir enjoys an enviable reputation - having been successful at the **National Eisteddfod of Wales**, the **International Llangollen Eisteddfod** and, in 2005, winning the **BBC Radio Cymru** male voice choir competition! The choir is based in the village of **Llanuwchllyn** and takes its name from the range of mountains that provides a picturesque vista to the west of the **Bala** Township and its adjacent lake more familiarly known in the Principality as **Llyn Tegid!** Concert details will follow!

WELSH COLONIZATION HISTORY The United Kingdom **National Archives** can be the source of a great deal of history relating to early Welsh colonization efforts in the Americas. As early as 1865, these archives show that a British vessel, the **SS Mimoso**, took the first party of Welsh immigrants to Patagonia. The logs of subsequent British naval vessels visiting those parts also reveal further information on Welsh South American settlements. In 1871 the log of **HMS Cracker** indicated she visited the **Chubut River** in **Patagonia** and the **Nuevo Gulf**. In 1880 another vessel, **HMS Garnet**, recorded details in her log of The Welsh Chupat (Chuput) Colony. A number of **Patagonian**

settlers, however, chose not to remain there - some deciding to move to *South Africa* after the *Boer War*. These plans failed to materialize and in 1902 some *Patagonian* settlers departed to *Australia* instead and several hundreds more left with the intention of re-settling in *Canada* where they had been promised sections of land near *Saltcoats*, in *Saskatchewan*! It appears their chartered vessel, the *SS Orissa*, did not directly set a course for North America - first sailing to *Liverpool* where her passengers (whose journey had probably been paid for by the Canadian government) agreed to remain onboard while at the *Merseyside* stop-over! This may not have happened entirely; a number of passengers probably taking advantage of an opportunity to quietly slip back into close-by *Welsh-Wales* with or without licence to do so! The vast majority, however, did transfer to the *SS Numidian* in *Liverpool* and left on January 12, 1902 for *Montreal* - and the long train journey westwards to *Saskatchewan*!

It is also evident that some of these 1902 *Canadian* immigrants were not as committed to the *Patagonian* objective while of the same people who first went to *Patagonia* in 1886 on the *SS Vesta* to help with the building of a railway line linking Welsh settlements in the *Chubut Valley*! They may not have had the same patriotic motives either when earlier *Patagonian* emigrants (before 1874) had a prime interest in maintaining Welsh language and culture rather than be in a home society dominated by 'things English'! It became very apparent the *Patagonians* who arrived in *Saltcoats* settled quickly into a less harsh environment and, in a very rapid integration process, lost their Welsh language fluency in a span of about thirty years - because the 'colony' structure on the lines first introduced in *Chubut* had not been re-introduced!

One archive document, relating to the summer of 1884, recorded information prepared by a naval officer aboard *HMS Algerine* refers to the formal appointment of a *Mr. Lewis Jones* as '*Comisario*' (a spokesman or leader) in the *Chubut* colony. It also mentioned the translation of a report by the *Minister of the Interior* to the *Argentine Congress* in July 1883 describing the Welsh Colony and where, at that time, the settlers held property valued at 617,325 national dollars! It further indicated some settlers were about to leave *Chubut* to land promised to them 'by a *Mr. Casey*, an Irish gentleman, living in Buenos Aires Province!'

The integration of the Welsh *Chubut* community within the country by the Argentine government, from 1884 onwards became problematical such that frequent reports and complaints went back and forth across the Atlantic to ultimately culminate in a petition sent to London by two settlers (*Llwyd ap Iwan* and *Thomas Benbow Phillips*) calling for the *Patagonian Colony* to be made a British protectorate!

Closer to home, *Canada* that is, Welsh explorers were among the very first Europeans to visit the *North American* continent! Even before *David Thompson's* time, *Sir Thomas Button* (1601-1634, also of Welsh descent) explored Arctic waters in search of the elusive *Northwest Passage* when also commissioned to find out what had happened to *Henry Hudson* while on a similar quest! After a second voyage, when *William Baffin* was his navigator, *Button* was forced to conclude the much sought after 'Passage to the Orient' - just did not exist!

Sir William Vaughan (1571-1641) a writer, explorer and colonial investor (a *Carmarthenshire native* and an early entrepreneur to boot) even attempted to establish a Welsh settlement on the *Avalon Peninsula* on the island of *Newfoundland*. In 1616 he purchased a grant of land from the *London and Bristol Company* (extending from *Calvent* to *Placentia Bay*) and, the following year, despatched some Welsh colonists with a view to establishing a permanent colony named *Cambriol* in that part of eastern *Canada*! Due to ignorance regarding the severity of *Newfoundland* winters and, because of the inadequacy of the shelter they had built for themselves in that environment, these ill-equipped Welsh settlers were unable to survive - and *Vaughan's* venture failed!

Economic circumstances and post-war work opportunities in the 20th century contributed to the arrival of many more Welsh folk to what first was a largely rural *Alberta*. The *Wood River* area (near *Ponoka*) saw the development of a predominantly Welsh farming community complete with its inevitable church/chapel focal point! The headstones in an adjacent cemetery, as many of us saw on an *Edmonton* coach trip, bore witness to the probable place of origin of these early settlers! The development of an *Alberta* coal industry in the *Drumheller* and *Crowsnest Pass* regions in particular, later persuaded many Welsh miners to seek greener pastures even if that colour failed to materialise in the product of their labour! More recently, *Alberta Oil*, *Natural Gas* and *Oil Sands*

resources attracted even more people - contributing to Calgary's establishment as the oil capital of Canada! Interestingly, Alberta and Venezuela own almost the entire known world oil sands wealth - in 49% to 51% ratios!

ONLY ONE LEFT That's right - and in Wales too! A bridge often provided the main entrances to a medieval township - probably linked to a gate in its protective wall and forming an important part of its defences. During the great castle-building era of the 13th and 14th centuries many of Europe's strategically important bridges, along with castles, town walls and gates were built and fortified with impressive-looking defensive devices like arrow-slits, machicolations (holes in the floor through which unpleasant items could be dropped on unwelcomed visitors) and castellated parapets! Many good examples survive in mainland Europe: in *Tournai (Belgium)*, *Orthez (France)*, *Toledo (Spain)*, *Verona (Italy)* - and in the town of **Monmouth** in good old Gwent! The *Monnow Bridge*, on the confluence of the Wye and Monnow rivers, is the only remaining medieval fortified river-bridge in Britain to feature a gatehouse within its structure! A stone bridge, it was built around 1270 on the site of an original wooden structure that dated from about 1180. Actual timbers from this earlier bridge were discovered during the construction of a local flood prevention scheme in 1989 and were dated by tree-ring analysis! The gatehouse, not an original bridge element was added as an improvement to the town's defences in 1300. In the 18th century the gatehouse, when no longer needed as a defence feature, was converted into a dwelling of a unique type - having a plentiful supply of water running under it as well as within its internal plumbing! A castellated parapet was also converted into an integral wall at that time! 'Hands Up' anyone who may have known about this rare bit of history!

A 210 FT. DRAGON With its gaze fixed upon neighbouring England across the border from the town of **Chirk** in the north of the country, a ferocious dragon could be Wales's answer to New York's *Statue of Liberty* and other such well known world structures. As a 210' sculpture, it is set to become the tallest public artwork in the UK and is intended to focus upon Welsh pride! Consisting of a 75' tall rampant bronze beast with a wingspan in excess of 150' (bigger than that of a Boeing 737 airplane) and mounted on a 135' glass and steel tower, this \$10 million project is to be entitled 'Waking the Dragon' - brainchild of local art dealer *Simon Wingett* who plans to build it without tax-payer money! Plans were unveiled in Wrexham last St David's Day, the *Waking the Dragon* theme is a dedication to the fight against cancer from which Mr. Wingett's father died in 1988. The structure with staircase (and elevator) to its top would give the public a panoramic view of the surrounding area! How does it compare with other like structures, you may ask? Well, the **Chinese Spring Temple Buddha** is 502' tall; the more well-known **United States Statue of Liberty**, is 305' high - and *Nelson's Column*, in **Trafalgar Square**, rises to a height of 169'! The venture should be open for public viewing by September 2011. We all hope these plans will not drag-on, eh!

NOT A GOOD YEAR Such is the opinion of Welsh fans regarding the **6-Nations** exploits of the **2010 Wales XV**! There was so much expected of them and they failed miserably by in turn losing to **England**, **France** and **Ireland** and (almost) losing to **Scotland** - had it not been for some last minute heroics that suddenly changed the threat of another defeat into victory to save the day! The final **6-Nations** game, against **Italy**, averted the ignominy of joining **Scotland** (Home Countries) and **Italy** (the 6-Nations) as inglorious 2010 *Wooden Spoon* holders! That final match of the series saw a revitalized **Wales XV** redeem some reputations by defeating **Italy** in Cardiff in convincing style by 33 points to 10! In total it was a very mixed-up rugby year: **Scotland** suffering defeat against **Italy** and yet beating **Ireland**; **England** only able to draw against **Scotland** and barely able to beat **Italy**! No **Triple Crown** in 2010 with **France** deservedly achieving the **Grand Slam** for the 9th time. *Tres bien mon amis!* It is sadly ironic; had it not been for an individual stupidity by a Welsh player during each of the England and Ireland matches - Wales could well have won that vacant mythical **2010 Triple Crown**! Both the **Magners League** and **Heineken Cup** competitions remain in full swing. Welsh teams are presently in 5th, 6th, 7th & 9th positions (**Ospreys**, **Dragons**, **Blues** & **Scarlets** respectively) in the **Magners** - with the **Ospreys**, **Blues** & **Scarlets** at 2nd spot in their **Heineken** groupings and the Newport **Dragons** lying 4th in theirs. There is a way to go yet in both competitions - so hope still lies eternal!

NEWS EXTRA

SUPPORT IS SOLICITED - where the Calgary Society aims to have greater involvement in learning about events and occurrences in the lives of individual members and of any special interests they may have as described below - it would be much appreciated if members could contribute and/or advise the Society about them. For example,

* **Items of Compassion or Congratulation** - regarding someone who would appreciate a card or message from the Society! Please contact **Elaine Westlake** by phone or E-mail – at 256-4136 or at welsh_gal13@yahoo.ca.

* **Interest in setting-up an Informal Singing Group** - if you love to sing and wish to join a singing group that meets in members' homes, say once a month - contact **Elaine** or **David Matthews** at 695-6928 or at dawirae@yahoo.ca.

WELSH LOVE-SPOON PROJECT Earlier in March an E-mail was received from **David Western**, a Welsh love-spoon carver presently residing in Victoria BC. He mentioned he had just begun a project that could be of interest to us and asked if we would also give it some publicity in our newsletter or Society website. On this project he is working with an Ohio based carver, **Laura (Jenkins) Gorun**, to design and craft this year's **Left Coast Eisteddfod** spoon. It will be the second running of this West Coast event and will take place in **Portland, Oregon**, from **October 3rd** to the **10th**. It, of course, follows the **NAFOW** event occurring a little earlier in the same city. The objective of the project is to raise money for this Eisteddfod where donors would be eligible to win the specially crafted work, **Left Coast Love-spoon Mark 2**. Website contact can be made with the eisteddfod organisers through **Americymyu** as well as by looking up David Western's own website that operates under his own name.
