

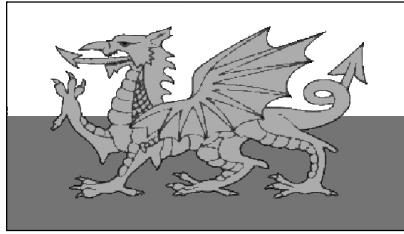
CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY, CYMDEITHAS CYMREIG

CALGARY: NEWSLETTER, OCTOBER 2010.

Executive Members.

President: Elaine Westlake,
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Vice-President/Social Convenor:
David L Matthews, 695-6928
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Secretary: Kathleen Johnson,
257-9557 (katehome@shaw.ca).

Treasurer: Norman Pierce,
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Membership Secretary: Jean Kuhn,
567-0507 (jeankuhn@shaw.ca).

Forthcoming Events

Saturday, November 6, 2010. Noson Lawen (formerly Poems and Pints Night).

Location: Irish Cultural Centre (lower level), 6452, 35th Ave., N.W. (Bowness area). Doors will be open at 6:30 p. m, for a 7.00 p.m. start. Cost: \$10.00. A Cash Bar will be available. Please bring a salad or a dessert to share. Savouries, tea, coffee and punch will be provided. Everyone is invited to participate. Please bring along a poem, song, joke, dance, instrumental piece, or story about Wales, etc.

Sunday, December 12, 2010. Christmas Dinner.

Location: Blackfoot Inn, 5940, Blackfoot Trail, S.E. Cocktails: 5:30p.m. Dinner: 6:00 p.m.
Cost: \$45 members, \$50 non members. A Cash Bar will be available.

(December 15 at 7: 30 p. m, Corpus Christi Male Chorale. Epcor Centre's Jack Singer Concert. Hall. Members may like to know that this choir will be performing their 10th Annual Christmas Concert to benefit the Mustard Seed Affordable Housing Project. The Special Guest will be JUNO award winning artist, Steve Bell. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$10 for children & students. They may be obtained through the Mustard Seed, from choir members, or by calling the ticket line at 403-717-3385.)

Saturday, January 22, 2011. St. Dwynwen's Day Family Celebration and Pot Luck Supper.

Location: Irish Cultural Centre (upper level), 6452, 35th Ave., N.W. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.
Pot Luck supper at 6:00p.m. More details will be provided by the phone committee.

Mid January. Theatre Visit. The Executive are working with Morpheus Theatre to establish a date when our members can go as a group to see their production of Dylan Thomas's play, 'Under Milk Wood'. Calgary Welsh Society is a proud sponsor of the play. Details will be provided in the next Newsletter.

Saturday, February 26, 2011. St. David's Day Dinner.

Location: Blackfoot Inn. Details will be provided follow in the next Newsletter.

Consult the website (calgarywelshsociety) designed by Quinten Beasley for additional information.

Discounts are available to CWS members at these stores on production of a CWS membership card.

British Pantry, 125-4820, Northland Drive, N.W.
Good Taste of Britain, Market Mall/Eau Claire.

Tea Trader, 1228A- 9th Av. (Inglewood).
Who's Who in the Zoo, at Airport and South Centre.

Greetings from your Executive!

The past few months have been an exciting period in the life of our society! We have put our casino funds to good use by being able to host three top notch musical events and our third annual Seniors' Tea.

We will always remember the fantastic reception Cor Godre'r Aran received and their excitement at performing to a full venue! Our long awaited Welsh costumes were ready in time for the Cor Godre'r Aran concert and five members wore them proudly that evening.

The annual Summer Picnic was another great success. Over 80 people confirmed that were coming and about 65 turned up on a very grey day. CWS provided all BBQ food and drinks. Members provided delicious appetizers, salads and desserts. Almost everyone ate before the rain came then continued to visit under the shelter. Unfortunately the carefully planned games were rained out. A great picnic despite the weather!

Planning is underway for our November 6 Noson Lawen and our December 12 Christmas dinner.

Work is continuing on our small garden area, (Gelli Gymreig), at the Zoo. Our donated bench, with its plaque dedicated to the memory of Welsh pioneers, is in place and awaiting a permanent foundation. Zoo contacts advise that planting of spring bulbs will soon be underway and we plan to invite members to join us in the spring to view the garden together. The garden is situated on the east side of the new conservatory building.

A donation has been made to the Lions Festival of Lights Society to encourage them to place our Christmas greeting, Nadolig Llawen in lights. Beginning soon after Thanksgiving, they will urgently require assistance when they start erecting their extensive annual light display at the Confederation Park site. If you can spare a few hours please let us know.

Thank you for your overwhelming support of our recent events. We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions.

Best Wishes,
Elaine Westlake, President

Report on Choir Events by David Matthews (Vice President).

Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir

On August 3rd, 2010 at the Grace Presbyterian Church the Toronto Welsh Male Voice Choir, together with William Woloschuk, artistic director, and accompanist Julia Sankey, delighted an audience of nearly 500 with a wonderful evening of music. Milo Marie Grubbe was guest soloist. Presentations on behalf of the Calgary Welsh Society were made by long-standing member, Margaret Kuyt. The choir presented the Calgary Welsh Society with a beautiful plaque commemorating the occasion. After the concert, the choir along with some members of the audience retired to Classic Jack's to share in the afterglow!

Cor Godre'r Aran

On September 12th, 2010 at the Grace Presbyterian Church, Cor Godre'r Aran Welsh Male Voice Choir, under the keen eye of musical director and accompanist Eirian Owen, brought a concert to Calgary that will be remembered by many of the 900 or so who attended for years to come. Feedback from members of the audience suggests that people were simply captivated by the quality of the singing and the variety of the program which included blue ribbon winner baritones and the 'three basses'! Presentations on behalf of the Calgary Welsh Society were made by long-standing member Kit Duckett. After the concert, the choir and some members of the audience enjoyed a social evening at the Toad N' Turtle that went into the early hours of the morning.

Thanks go to all members who attended and helped publicize these events. Your involvement was terrific!

The following report was submitted by Brian Lewis, on behalf of David Matthews and Brian Lewis.

Report on North American Festival of Wales, Portland, Oregon. Sept. 2- 5, 2010.

David and myself attended the North American Festival of Wales organized by the Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu Association based in Granville, Ohio. The Local Venue Committee, chaired by Janet Figini did an excellent job considering there are so few active members in Portland and there had been a poor response to the request for volunteers. David and I represented the CWS and appreciate the assistance the Society gave to cover many of the costs to attend. The next festival will be held in Cleveland, Ohio and CWS members are encouraged to apply for assistance to go to it.

In Portland we thought we should learn as much as possible since we had a duty to report back. At the next festival in Cleveland, instead of trying to attend everything to get a broader perspective and “feel” for the Festival we will cover all our own costs and concentrate on those sessions we find personally appealing. At Portland I attended at least part of practically everything that was scheduled so I did a lot of hopping around. David did likewise but as a member of the Executive he attended both the session on governance of the Gymanfa Association as well as the one on affiliated societies like our own.

I got a direct flight to Portland on Sept 2 and attended the opening flag raising ceremony outside the hotel at 4.00 pm. I learned right away that many fewer people than expected had registered for the festival-- around 350. The main reasons cited for the small numbers were the state of the economy and the fact that the high concentrations of Welsh people are in Pennsylvania and Ohio. By contrast the Cleveland, Ohio venue is expected to attract 800 or more.

On Thursday evening there was an opening concert that was a delight. It featured a harpist, Bronn Journey and his wife Katherine from Sultan, Washington State. Katherine is originally from Calgary where her mother Nel Sanderse still lives. The couple perform at Welsh events all over North America though they are not Welsh. They simply have the Welsh spirit and the audience in Portland loved them. After the concert the informal Gymanfa Ganu took place in the foyer where people shouted out the numbers of their favourite hymns and a volunteer conductor tried to provide a little direction above the shouting of page numbers of hymns to be sung next. The official Gymanfa Ganu hymn book was available at the Market, along with other Welsh items for sale, though many brought their own hymn books from previous festivals. This event took place every evening, enhanced very powerfully by the choir, Cor Codre’r Aran, the main performers at the festival.

On Friday the Eisteddfod began but there were so few entrants that six members of the choir volunteered to compete among themselves in a special event.

On Friday morning I attended a presentation by Dr. Gethin Matthews, a lecturer in Welsh history at Cardiff University, on the Welsh involvement in the Cariboo Gold Rush of the 1860’s. This had been the subject of his doctoral thesis, a very important study since he is Welsh speaking and had access to letters written in Welsh to families in Wales as well as to Welsh language newspapers, Y Gwladgarwr and Y Drych. Dr. Matthews also made interesting presentations on his favourite 25 Welsh Americans and on Welsh involvement in various important military campaigns.

The main feature on Friday evening was the Grand Banquet featuring baritone Glynn Morris from Abergwyngwyn near Bangor. Nine of his relatives in North America flew from as far away as Florida to hear him sing. The people honoured at the banquet were Berwyn Jones and Martha Jones of Lincoln, Nebraska. They created the Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project at Wymore, Nebraska and were awarded the Heritage Medallion in recognition of their work.

On Friday night following both the Grand Banquet and the nightly Gymanfa Ganu, Bronn Journey, who I have already referred to, was the emcee for the Noson Lawen. Other activities on Friday included beginners Welsh language class and lessons on singing in four part harmony.

On Saturday morning while David attended meetings on governance of the Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu Association and on the activities of affiliated societies like the CWS I listened to a talk given by an incredible woman. Her name is Rhys Bowen of Welsh descent who writes Agatha Christie type mysteries and is a captivating speaker and has a large following. She has written ten novels about a Welsh policeman, Evan Evans who lives in the fictitious place called Llanfair in Snowdonia. Her book

titles are puns: Evan Above, Evan Help Us, Evan Blessed and Evan Can Wait and so on. It's not great literature but she has a fine sense of place, her characters are wonderful and she has great powers of invention. She's a born storyteller in the best Welsh tradition. Also on Saturday morning I watched several Welsh films on loan from the Welsh Assembly, one on Patagonia, one on Ivor Emmanuel* and one on the new face of Welsh Male Voice choirs, "Only Men Aloud".

Sunday was almost completely dominated by the Gymanfa Ganu, beginning after the morning's religious service and continuing throughout the evening until the final Noson Lawen.

Observations

1. There were far too few people on the ground for putting on a festival of this magnitude, even with the reduced numbers. As a result there were many technical and organisational glitches.
2. The Festival planning is done from Granville, Ohio but there is also a Local Venue Committee. This means a constant tug of war.
3. More volunteers were clearly needed but in the registration package registrants received there was little indication of what type of help was needed. People were likely uncertain about how they could help.
4. At one of David's meetings Calgary was suggested as a desirable future venue since three festivals in a row will have been held in the US: Pittsburgh, Portland and Cleveland.
5. On Monday, when most people had left, I was asked by two women to join them at lunch. They were Janet Figini, the Local Venue chairperson and Betty Pierce, an 86 year old originally from Abertillery who was the most visible of all the local organizers. They were curious about the Calgary Welsh Society – the availability of volunteers and expertise to run the festival. It seemed as though they were trying to promote Calgary since Easterners have heard of Banff and the Stampede and may be attracted to attend despite the long distance, and of course Portland people and many others in the west would be able to drive. The last Festival in Canada was in Richmond, BC in 2003.
6. Although the centrepiece of the Festival was the Gymanfa Ganu there was no religiosity. Sometimes it seemed more like the prelude to a rugby match or a sing along on a coach trip. Most of the hymns were familiar.
7. There were several activities to meet special interests and to involve local people from Portland. There was a dog show featuring Pembroke and Cardigan corgis sponsored by local breeders. There was also Welsh folk dancing with a local Celtic band and a folk dance instructor.
8. After around 30 visits to Wales since 1961 I found this experience in Portland brought me more in touch with the Wales I remember than visits I make to Wales via Heathrow. I'll likely get most of my future Welsh experiences by attending the Festival of Wales in North America. I can't speak for David on this matter.
9. The nightly Noson Lawens were very popular but many of the men and women who participated were self indulgent and long winded. Contributions should be much shorter so that more can participate. If something is short but bad it wouldn't matter. If it's good it will fulfill the old music hall adage – leave your audience begging for more – and you can always oblige by going back later.

In case the CWS is interested in obtaining the services of Bronn and Katherine Journey at some time in the future they can be contacted at Box 1108, Sultan, Washington 98294. Ph. 360 793 1610. Katherine's mother, Nel Sanderse lives in Calgary, the only Sanderse in the phone book.

Recommendations

1. Since Calgary seems a possible location, sometime in the future a feasibility study should be undertaken.
2. That our president Elaine Westlake be fully funded to attend the next Festival of Wales in Cleveland.

Personal News

- 1) The Hewison family celebrated three events on Oct. 9th: Dai's 22nd birthday, Rhys's 18th birthday and Greg. and Carolynne's 25th Wedding Anniversary. Many congratulations on this triple event.
- 2) Tony Duckett reminds members that he is an avid stamp collector. If you receive any unusual stamps on your mail please send them to him at: 56, Arbor Cliff Court, N.W., Calgary, T3G 3W6.
- 3) Short messages may be included in Newsletters if there is room. Submit to an Executive member.