



Gair y Ddraig

The Word of the Dragon

Chwefror 2018
February

CALGARY WELSH
SOCIETY
FOUNDED: 1906

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GREETINGS FROM YOUR CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY BOARD

Annwyl Ffrindiau / Dear Calgary Welsh Society Friends

BLWYDDYN NEWYDD DDA!! I hope you have all managed to keep warm, and cope with the copious amounts of snow that we have had recently

The annual Christmas Brunch was a great success!! Dianne Williams entertained the good gathering with some wonderful singing. Dianne then led the crowd in some traditional carol singing. The brunch was excellent and everyone had a good time. Thanks to Barbara, Rebecca and Megan who, once again, shopped and wrapped all the great door prizes.

Once again, the society's involvement in Casino duties has been completed. Many thanks to all the volunteers who made this possible. Many had to drive through challenging wintry conditions to reach the casino.

The next event is the St. David's Day lunch at the Winter Club. This will be held on Saturday March 3rd, 2018. Deadline for purchasing tickets for the event is fast approaching...as is membership renewal! Further details regarding the St David's Day lunch menu and programme can be found in this newsletter. Our guest speaker, Dr. Gerry Turcotte of St. Mary's University, will be making a presentation on the Saint John's Bible. Dr. Turcotte will be bringing a volume of the bible for viewing.

The Society's AGM will be held on April 21st at Christ Church from 11.00am to 3:00pm. Once again there will be goodies and entertainment. This is your Society, so we hope to have you attend and bring your thoughts and ideas to the board and its membership.

We appreciate those of you who made suggestions & gave your opinions on our survey. The board will discuss these ideas. We want to hear from you. Contact us at thecalgarywelshsociety@gmail.com.

On behalf of the board.

Margaret Freedman

President, Calgary Welsh Society

Editor's Note: If you wish to contact a CWS board member or the newsletter editor please do so by emailing: thecalgarywelshsociety@gmail.com

There will be an Evensong Service in honour of Welsh Patron Saint, St. David, at Christ Church, Elbow Park [3602-8th St. S.W.] on Sunday, February 25th at 7:30pm. The church looks forward to having many Welsh voices in the congregation. *Dewch pawb!*

THE POETRY OF “A Welsh Immigrant to Canada: Edward Arthur Hopkins”

EDWARD ARTHUR HOPKINS, father of Calgary Welsh Society member John Hopkins, was born in Bridgend, Glamorgan in November 1903, ‘with music in his blood and poetry in his soul’.

John has kindly allowed *Gair y Ddraig* to share some of his father’s story and poetry with readers. John says that his father ‘never presumed to call himself a poet, but through the years he was often moved to put his thoughts into verse, and those scribblings illustrated, as well as anything, the way he thought about life and the way life worked to mold him.’ *Gair y Ddraig* will feature more of Arthur’s poetry in the future

Arthur spent most of his teenage years on the family farm Ty-Fri until *his* father ‘made the amazing decision’ to emigrate to Canada. Ivor, Arthur’s brother had already settled in Bangor Saskatchewan.

Arthur immigrated to Canada in 1922 where he was met by Ivor who had purchased, on behalf of the family, a farm in Vermilion, Alberta. John Hopkins says that ‘Bryntirion farm had to be the finest farmhouse for 50 miles around. It was a two-story house with 4 bedrooms and a huge living room, but no electricity. The fellow that had built it was an Englishman, a moneyed officer, who had quickly tired of the country and wanted to go back to England.’ They had a half-section of land – 320 acres. They didn’t realize it then but that was quite a small farm for that part of the country.

It was pioneer country they had come to. Arthur wondered what made people accept the challenge and take up that often bitter struggle:

‘Homestead’ by Edward Arthur Hopkins

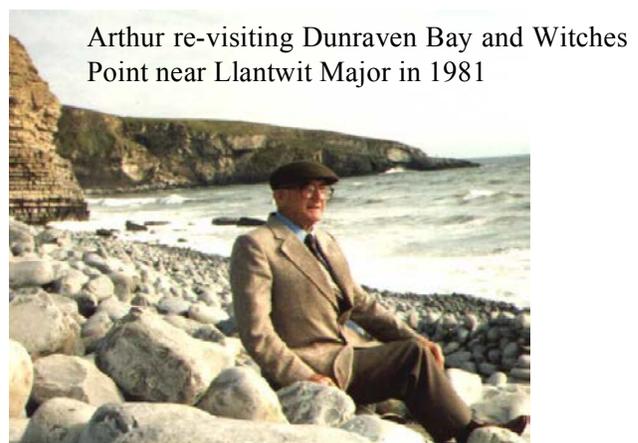
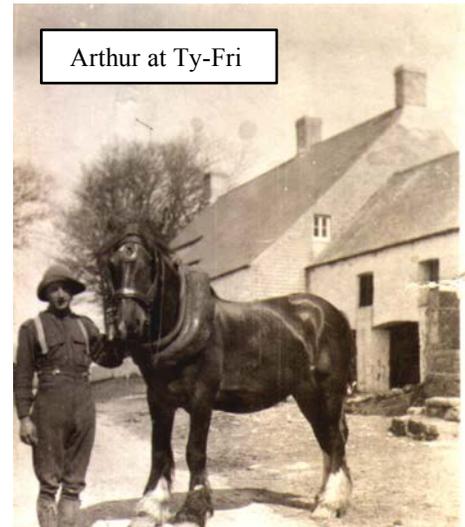
Somewhere, two lovers planned at close of day.

And thus a maiden's smile held a youth who would roam

And by the power of her gentle wiles,
Built this tiny home.

Love of life in the open air,
Labour of hope -- or of dark despair.
Need of a child who was sick and wan,
Prayer in the heart of a woman and man.
These are the portencies that gain
From stubborn wilds, these fields of grain.

Poems and photos copyright: John Hopkins



THE 2018 EUROPEAN SIX-NATIONS RUGBY COMPETITION

IN RECENT YEARS the success of the Welsh Teams in this competition has been disappointing. However if this years club teams can be any indication we might be pleasantly surprised by the outcome.

Round One of the current competition started with two games, the first featuring Wales v Scotland at Cardiff's principality stadium. The home team captained by Alun-Wyn Jones, in front of a capacity crowd of 74,500 got down to work with some exciting open play. The Scots too displayed an adventurous spirit in an entertaining game of rugby.

Happily for us Welsh folk the Scots weren't able to match the superior talents of the home team who accumulated 34 points against 7. The Wales points came from four converted tries and two penalty goals – a convincing win! Welsh scrum-half Gareth Davies scored the first try with the second and the 4th scored by full-back Leigh Halfpenny. The remaining try was made by prop-forward Rob Evans. Loose forwards Aaron Shingler and Josh Navidi also had impressive games.

France and Ireland also met on February 3rd in Paris in front of 79,000 spectators in what must have been a dull spectacle. Only one try was scored in the entire game with Ireland finally succeeding with a last minute drop-goal by Sexton. The final score of 15 points for Ireland all came from Sexton's boot. Interestingly the French try was scored by Teddy Thomas who, I hasten to add is not related to this CWS member of like surname.

England and Italy met on Sunday, February 4th where, as expected, the visitors gave the Italians a whipping by a total of 46 points, including 7 tries, against Italy's 15 points.

Round Two took place on the following weekend when on February 10th Wales played their traditional archrivals at Twickenham. On the same day, Ireland played Italy in Dublin while Scotland and France played in Edinburgh on Sunday.

In this round, Twickenham again became an unlucky venue for Wales where the reigning 6-Nations champions succeeded in beating Wales in a nail-biter of a game. In a 12-6 final score England's center Johnny May scored 2 tries while Anscombe kicked 2 penalties for Wales. A tough loss for Wales who had a second half try disallowed.

On Saturday, Ireland trounced Italy 56 points to 19 in Dublin while Scotland, on Sunday, in Edinburgh, managed to beat France 32-26 in a match that could have gone either way.

In the remaining 3 rounds, Wales has one game away in Ireland and home games against France and Italy. If Wales wins all their remaining games and Ireland and England suffer a loss, Wales could still win a 6 nations championship!!

Roly Thomas



CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY ST. DAVID'S DAY LUNCH SATURDAY, MARCH 3 AT THE CALGARY WINTER CLUB

Doors open at 11:30 with a 12:00 start time for the meal.

If you require a special diet or have an allergy these can be communicated through us to the Winter Club, who will try to accommodate your dietary needs.

We hope you will be able to join us as we pay tribute to our Patron Saint, enjoy a County Call, learn about the St. John's Bible and enjoy some entertainment.

Guest speaker: Dr. Gerry Turcotte of St. Mary's University.

Lunch menu

- Leek & Potato Soup
- Sirloin Steak
- Crème Brûlée
- Welsh cakes

YMA O HYD (Still Here)

MANY CWS MEMBERS only know Viv Ellis (along with Derek Freedman) as the co-chair of our Casino committee, and his wife Judy as the key to our use of the Calgary Winter Club for our St. David's Day Banquet.

A native of Port Talbot, Viv trained as a machinist. He emigrated in 1968 and three days after landing in Calgary was working for CPR.

Although not active in the Calgary Welsh Society right away he became enthused many years later. Serving as secretary, vice-president and president (three years) during the nineties Viv was a great believer in teamwork. He took over as President from Dot Bader. His team must have been effective however since these were exciting years with an emphasis on choirs. Viv helped bring in the following: Kenfig Hill (1995), Pontardulais (1996), Aberavon (1997), Maelgwyn (1997), Cornwall (1998) and Abertillery 2000.



To many the most memorable group to visit was a twelve women group from Pontypool Gwent. In one of his articles Ross Hicks covered their impromptu activities around Calgary in the spring of 1997. Here's a short version of it (with his permission).

"It was a very busy two weeks as the Calgary Welsh Society hosted the "Bridgette Thomas Girl's in Harmony" from Pontypool, Gwent.

The girls' aged 16 – 35 planned an Easter-break sight-seeing tour of Alberta. Viv Ellis arranged for accommodation. A van was rented at a discount price with the help of member Mac Davies.

The girls entertained first at Brewsters Pub in Lake Bonavista on March 29. They helped Dot Bader celebrate her birthday. Someone dining in the pub loved them and arranged for them to sing at Monty's Bar and Grill in Parkland. Somebody else arranged for the group to sing at Canyon Meadows Retirement Residence." It sounds like a whirlwind tour and the article by Ross gives the full flavour of the fun and energy of that period.

Yma O Hyd [continued]

But it wasn't just choirs that demanded time and effort. Car Rallies beginning at Chinook Centre and ending at Deadman's Flats attracted as many as 30 people. Poems and Pints had its beginnings too.

As with any Society not everything was plain sailing. Viv recalls a St. David's Day banquet at the Highlander Hotel. A prominent columnist with the Calgary Sun was chosen as guest speaker. He forgot to show up. The regular accompanist also forgot to come. When it came to the County Call, Mac Davies, usually a ball of fire (rarely quiet), couldn't remember anything and froze.

All those years later the glitches are largely forgotten. The Society moved on and what people remember are the great choirs, the car rallies, the Poems and Pints and the exposure of Calgarians to the very best in Welsh Culture.

Note: Thanks to Viv Ellis, Ross Hicks and our unofficial archivist, Della Lewis for details of this period.

Brian Lewis

CWS Casino

ON FEBRUARY 4th and 5th, twenty-six society members braved the cold, snowy weather to work a total of 36 Casino shifts at the Cash Casino on Blackfoot Trail.

Many thanks to Derek Freedman and Philip Morris, Casino co chairs and to the many who worked one or two shifts.

Elaine Westlake (for Derek Freedman)

GET WELL SOON DEREK!!

Thinking of You:

GET WELL WISHES are extended to:

Maura Frezell who is recovering at home after a long hospital stay

Morfudd Jones who is currently at the Glenrose CareWest Facility

Anne Evans, now at home after undergoing successful hip replacement surgery

Sincerest condolences go out to the families of society members, *Rene Bracegirdle* and *Alun Davies*, who died recently. They'll be missed at Society events.