



# Gair y Ddraig

*The Word of the Dragon*

Awst, 2020  
August, 2020

CALGARY WELSH  
SOCIETY  
FOUNDED: 1906



## We hope you enjoy another 'Special Edition' of *Gair y Ddraig*!

We have invited members to share some of their personal stories, and the latest news that may be of interest.

This time of social distancing and extra-care places unusual burdens on individuals and society in so many ways. So, we invite you to help 'lighten the load' by sharing your stories, photographs, jokes, and activities that help see you through each day.

This issue invites you into the lives of some members. It includes some reports that impact the CWS and future events. It also includes humour which is so important in times of difficulty and stress.

A HUGE thanks to those who contributed to this newsletter, let's keep the conversation going!!

Page 2 Board Members; Greetings from the President  
PLEA to members to pay CWS dues.  
Page 3 'Yr Hen Dyddiau'r Da!' .....Roly Thomas  
Page 4 'From Colwyn Bay to Calgary'  
....Dianne Williams  
Page 5 'A Love Story' ... Betty Watson  
Page 6 'A Love Story' ..continued.  
'Love in the Time of the Corona'  
A poem by Sherie D-Wilson  
Page 7 'Love in the Time of the Corona'  
Page 8 'A Precious Link' ..... Ann Williams [Part 1]  
CWS Zoo bench donation information  
Page 9 'Memories of Ten Childhood Years in Wales'  
... Audrey Thorner  
Page 10 'My Ten Childhood Years in Wales' [continued]  
'A Covid Tale' .... Brian Lewis

Page 11 'My Childhood in Wales 1940s-60s'  
.... Carol Weaver  
Page 12 'The Rise and Fall and Rise again  
Of the Welsh Language' [Part 1]  
....Heather Powell

## THE CWS BOARD

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## GREETINGS FROM YOUR CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY BOARD

Annwyl Ffrindiau/ Dear Calgary Welsh Society Friends.

Well it has been a long time since we were all able to get together with our Welsh Society friends. We do miss seeing you and wonder when it will be possible to socialize.

We hope you are all keeping well and safe, and keeping in touch by phone and emails

The Board contacted all members by phone, in regard to this newsletter, asking you for your stories and ideas. We enjoyed talking to you. To those of you willing to participate, many thanks, we love to know about you all.

If anyone has something they would like to see included, any ideas or suggestions, please send to: [calgarywelshsociety@gmail.com](mailto:calgarywelshsociety@gmail.com) or contact a Board member.

Many thanks to David for putting this newsletter together.

Take care of yourselves and families.  
On behalf of the Board

*Margaret Freedman* (President)



## 2020 MEMBERSHIP FEES EXTENDED TO COVER 2021

The CWS Board has determined that 2020 CWS 'paid-up' members will have their membership extended to the end of 2021.

**This is a request to CWS 'members' who have not paid their 2020 membership fees to do so by September 30th.** The benefit of doing this so will be the extension of your membership to the end of 2021.

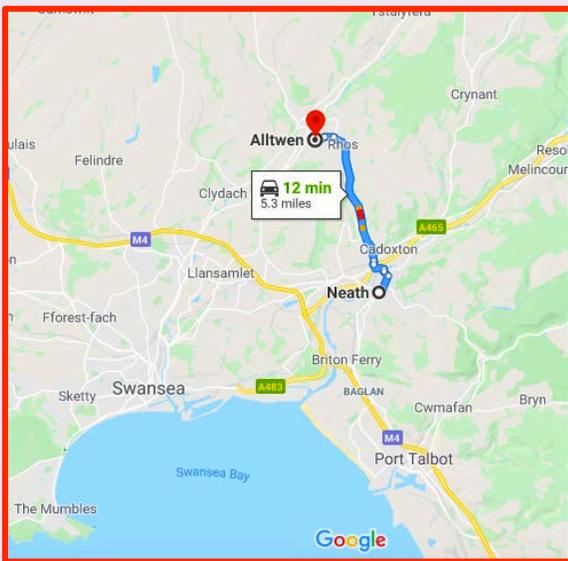
It is quite possible that COVID conditions may improve, for example, to hold a Christmas 'Do' – so don't miss out!

**Please send your membership fees by cheque or through interact to: Jean Kuhn, Box 11, Turner Valley, AB T0L 2A0. For interact use Jean's email [ja.kuhn@telus.net](mailto:ja.kuhn@telus.net)**

## ‘YR HEN DYDDIAU DA!’ ‘THE GOOD OLD DAYS!’ ...Roly Thomas

MOST OF US OLDER FOLK recall those ‘good old days’ with a great deal of fondness despite many horrendous issues that were beyond our control. It must be remembered that the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was be-devilled with two world wars. Happily we survived both.

I was born between those two world conflicts in the early 1920s. My place of birth was the village of Alltwen located in the Swansea Valley, a village adjacent to the small township of Pontardane and on the side of a small mountain that separated the Tawe and Neath river valleys. The town of Swansea was at the estuary of the River Tawe some eight miles downstream. The town of Neath, five miles to the east was some three miles inland on the Neath river that featured a significant tidal range of more than twenty feet at the town bridge.



Apart from from three years in the British Army, 1945 – 48, my entire young life was spent in Alltwen, Neath and Swansea areas, my junior ones in Alltwen and my senior school years in Neath. The ‘11 plus’ examination challenge gave me the opportunity to attend Neath Grammar School – an institution that enjoyed an excellent academic and sporting reputation. In those days the sports of rugby football and cricket flourished. Pontardawe, Neath and Swansea had splendid combined facilities for cricket in the summer and rugby in the winter.

Interestingly, the Neath rugby club in their all black rugby strip were known as the “All Blacks’ while the Swansea team in their white strip were known as the

“All Whites’.

The BBC [the British Broadcasting Corporation] was instrumental in making us conversant with the English language as well as keeping us up to date with world news. In my own case, the English News Broadcasts became the medium by which I first learned the language. Later, at my grammar school, emphasis was placed on the goal to speak the language “better than the English people could!”

Indeed, I can confirm that my initial Welsh years were good ones and that it was my good fortune to have experienced them!

**LONG MAY THE ADVANTAGE CONTINUE – ‘CYMRU AM BYTH’!**

## FROM COLWYN BAY TO CALGARY ....by Dianne Williams

I LANDED IN CANADA in September 1982 with my husband Tom and our family, to start a new adventure in a country neither of us had ever visited. Tom was the Welsh half of the equation, hailing from Llangefni in Anglesey where he had grown up speaking Welsh as his first language. We met in my home town of Stafford, where he was studying to be an electrical engineer, on a rather successful blind date set up by friends, since we ended up getting married in 1966. As time went on we moved to Peterborough, then to Colwyn Bay, by which time we had become the proud parents of four sons.



When the City of Calgary offered Tom a position, after an interview in London, we didn't hesitate but booked flights, sold up and were soon on our way (my first ever flight).

We hooked up with the Calgary Welsh Society very early on. Tom's brother had put us in touch with an old school friend who lives here, and he invited us to go along with him and his wife to one of the society's social functions.

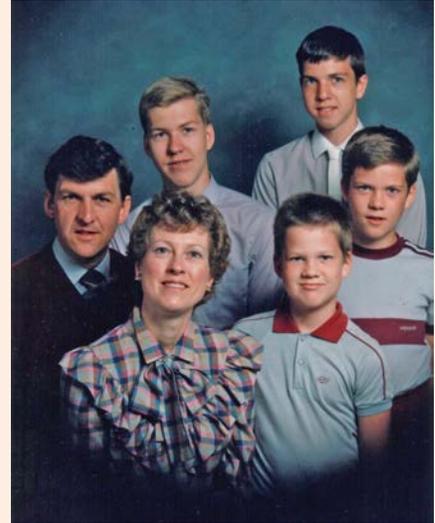
The warm welcome from Ken Mason, the President, and the rest of the group convinced us to become members right away. Tom was delighted to meet some Welsh speakers, with whom he enjoyed long chats in his native tongue. He was Vice President for a couple of years, and we became very involved in the society's activities.

The annual St. David's Day banquet was one of our favourite celebrations. Tom proposed the toast to Dewi Sant a few times, along with a short presentation on a topic of interest - I recall one which was all about Welsh castles - and for many years he presented the County Call, relishing the opportunity to pronounce each county's Welsh name in ringing tones. Being English, I don't speak Welsh, apart from a few everyday words, so Tom was keen to teach me the rules of Welsh pronunciation (including the place name *Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogogoch* where one of his cousins happens to live). This knowledge became very useful as I was the soloist on St. David's Day for many years, and wanted to sing a selection of the beautiful Welsh folk songs in their original language as well as in English. We always had a little rehearsal beforehand to make sure I'd got all the vowel sounds right!



Several times I have been proud to sing *Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* while the Welsh flag was being raised outside City Hall, as part of the society's annual March 1<sup>st</sup> ceremony, followed by a folk song or two. Some of us would be wearing our Welsh costumes- it was often more than a little chilly! My dear Tom passed away on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2006, so the Welsh celebrations on that day, with daffodils and singing, are especially precious.

Our boys are all grown up now, of course, and I have eight grandchildren, scattered between Calgary, Stettler and Buffalo NY. They are proud of their Welsh heritage, along with various combinations of English, Canadian and Northern Irish.



## ‘A LOVE STORY’ .... by Betty Watson

BETTY WATSON WAS BORN IN LACOMBE, one of six children, in September, 1934. Her parents were farmers in the Gull Lake area of Alberta. Her mother, Nellie was of Swedish descent and her father, Melvin Morris, of Irish descent.

The farm practiced mixed farming raising dairy cattle and chickens. Betty remembers with a smile that, *once*, the children watered down the cream, one of the main sources of the family income. That month there was no cream cheque – it just didn’t reach ‘grade’.

Her teenage years were interrupted by a bout of TB, which sent a fourteen year-old Betty to hospital for about nine months in Calgary, during four of which she was bedridden. She graduated from high school in 1953. Her ambitions to join the airforce were thwarted at that time by that experience, as an airforce applicant had to be ‘five years free’ of TB.

After graduation, Betty spent some time working in a bank in Didsbury before moving to Red Deer to work in a home for children with disabilities.

But Betty’s interest in the airforce manifested itself in a different way. Living near the Penhold Airforce base, she was invited to a party for air force personnel in Red Deer. At that party, 19 year-old Betty was invited by a certain Dave Watson to dance. ‘And that was that!’ said Betty. On Oct 2, 1954, Betty and Dave were engaged. A few months later she got a call from Dave asking her if they could get married on Monday or Tuesday as he suspected the first of many moves in their lives. Twenty year-old Betty married Dave in Lacombe on the wedding anniversary of her parents on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1955. Dave’s mother came from Toronto for the ceremony. During their courting months, Betty said she was thankful that there was a graveyard close to her home where she and Dave could stop for a while before he dropped her off!!



Betty and Dave moved many times during their marriage – standard for the forces. They lived in Sunnyside, Prince Edward Island, Greenwood, Nova Scotia, Ottawa and Belleville, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories, Calgary and many other places - 21 moves in 25 years, as matter of fact. Betty felt the Maritime folk were some of the friendliest people she encountered.

Betty and Dave had four children, Ron, Bill, Cindy and John and is now the proud grandmother of seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

One of Dave’s year-long postings was to the Dew Line along the Northwest Territories Arctic coastline. Betty was left alone with the children in Red Deer at that time and Dave suggested that she learned how to fly!! So Betty did just that. In August, 1969. Betty obtained her private pilot’s license at the Penhold airbase. Betty added that this accomplishment satisfied her airforce ambitions.

Now you can imagine that with Dave away so much, communication was crucial. Betty still has over 100 love-letters that Dave wrote to her and to which she replied.



[continued on page 6]

In the '70s while in Ottawa, [her least favourite place], Betty took three years of nursing training for mature students, then nursed in the General Hospital before moving to Belleville where she continued to nurse. In 1979 the family moved to Yellowknife in the NWT where Betty did a refresher course in nursing at Stanton Hospital. Her son John attended Sir John Franklin high School where the editor of this newsletter happened to be guidance counselor! Betty's husband, Dave, was working for WardAir, a prominent Canadian company largely based in Yellowknife.

Living now in Calgary, Betty, in 1995, studied Hospice Care at Grant McEwan College and worked at the Rosedale Hospice for ten years. After retiring, Betty continued doing voluntary home visits giving palliative care until 2013.

Golfing remains one of Betty's interests and, from time to time, enjoys getting on the course with granddaughters, Mallory and Jordan and daughter in law, Judy. She really enjoys her continuing friendship and involvement with the Calgary Welsh Society members and Welsh music. She feels real friendship amongst society members and looks forward to attending Society events once this frustrating pandemic is over.



## LOVE IN THE TIME OF THE CORONA

*by Sheri-D Wilson*

Our faces have changed  
and we don't yet know, what we look like,  
as we search for a new way  
to live and love

We oscillate between  
paralysis, monotony and flow,  
wonder if we will ever wake  
from this CoVid coma, if we will ever  
know anything again, wonder  
if we will only be able to dream –  
of trips to far-off places,  
sitting in stands cheering,  
standing O's for virtuoso's,  
or dancing wild to Motown live  
on a Sunday afternoon

Time changed places with space  
and dissolved, along  
with the high paced rat race  
of our lives – postponed  
indefinitely, cancelled –  
later is the new now,

every time we make an expedition  
into the outside world,  
zone out, reel, try to keep it real  
too real to feel – it's unreal –

To tell you the truth  
it took a pandemic for me to learn  
to bake a loaf of banana bread – yes  
I found Grandma Nian's recipe,  
fashioned the facsimile of a loaf pan,  
the wrong shape, it turned out  
the right taste, each bite of banana bread  
reminded me of her, each bite  
brought me closer to her  
and the memory of sweeter occasions –  
a beautiful boon at a time when  
the only way to touch someone  
is in their heart,  
to be touched by tenderness  
heart to heart

There will always be another ski pass  
another hill, another slope, breath of fresh air,  
after the age of asphyxiation and despair  
is behind us – we wonder  
what will become a thing of the  
past?

continued page 7

Maybe we'll become more human  
as the earth takes a moment to breathe,  
as the earth takes a moment to breathe,  
we wash our hands raw, wear homemade  
masks,  
try to learn the perfect distance  
that might save our own breath,  
and one day we might fill  
that empty space, with the beauty  
of a sunset, instead of a pending death,  
six feet above to avoid six feet below

One thing's for certain,  
I had no idea I touched myself so much  
hand to hair, sweeping it back  
fingers to face, nose, and lips,  
adjusting glasses, and the arid eclipse  
to remove sleep from my eyes –

Some days I just break down and cry  
grieving the life I once had, now gone  
along with hugs and kisses, shaking hands  
freedoms, and long good-byes  
Or those nights when I wake  
with a little cough, a slight headache  
and I think I caught it somehow  
in isolation – that it's the end,  
and I spend the rest of the night in a cold  
sweat  
in a deep tête-à-tête with death,  
that's when my heart goes out to the people  
on the front lines, the ones taking care

On those days, and after those nights  
the only thing that comforts me  
is a potato – I know, it sounds trite  
but sometimes the only thing  
that will lift my spirit  
is scalloped potatoes, spuds

I think of my other Grandma, the poet  
who arrived here from Ireland  
with five cents and a dream of love  
in her pocket – when she went to spirit  
all her writing was lost, scattered  
to the earth, and all that was left  
was a locket, with a small strand  
of her hair

A young couple ties the knot,  
handfasting at a distance  
they bind their own hands  
in the ancestral light, of fertility sighs  
in this time of pandemic,  
they speak the vows of their souls  
in a creation divination  
that humbles, that extols

My body holds back tears,  
as I wed them from afar, I am struck  
by the closeness of their hearts  
the first real day of spring

They are beaming  
global ghosts into dancing light  
it swirls around them,  
and the word corona  
returns to its original meaning  
aurora borealis, solar soma  
overhead, their light  
is likened to a crown,  
and I say to them,  
“you may kiss with joy”

©Sheri-D Wilson

**Attention Members:**

You may have noticed that the *Calgary Welsh Society* website is not available online at this time. Our webmaster is attempting to make some security changes.

Current information is available on the *Calgary Welsh Society* Facebook page. If you follow Facebook, simply type in Calgary Welsh Society in the search box. This should give you access to current information as well as posts from the past that include singing and some past events.

## A PRECIOUS LINK TO THE PAST...Ann Williams

I HAVE THE HONOUR of providing a home for the remaining pieces of a china tea set which has passed down through the eldest daughters of my mother's family for an unknown number of generations. The tea set pattern is *Original Bridal Rose* but the earliest pieces do not have maker's marks and have proved impossible to date. One of the large plates is obviously newer than the original set for the china is whiter and the floral decorations brighter. The maker's mark on this plate reveals that it is Bavarian *Oberpfalz* china, again of unknown date.



*Blodwen Annie Lloyd 1911-2000*

The tea set came to my mother, Blodwen, in England on the death of my Welsh grandmother and I remember going with my mother to Bentalls in Kingston (Surrey) to purchase a suitably-sized Welsh dresser. On delivery of the dresser my mother and I set out some of the pieces on its shelves while talking of the tea set and its history.

Almost forty years passed before it was my turn to host the tea set. I had it, and the Welsh dresser, shipped to Calgary where my daughter, Robyn, and I had the pleasure of arranging some of the pieces on the shelves.

With the arrival of my granddaughter, another link in the chain of tea-set ownership, I held a tea-drinking ceremony: three-month old Emily smiled at her mother while Robyn and I drank from the tea cups. A tape of the *Froncysyllte Male Voice Choir* played as we turned the pages of my grandfather's Welsh prayer book. To conclude the ceremony Emily was encouraged to "gum" one of the cups.



*The current and two future keepers of the tea set*

Five generations of my female ancestors have been identified – which was the first to own the tea set is not known but the last three women in this list are known to have been its keepers.

Frances Williams born 1813 married Richard Griffiths

Elizabeth Griffiths (eldest daughter) born 1839 Brymbo Denbighshire married Evan Lounds

Ann Lounds (eldest daughter) born 1861 Brymbo, Denbighshire married Robert Roberts

Elizabeth Ann Roberts (eldest daughter) born 1883 Summerhill, Denbighshire married Robert Lloyd

Blodwen Annie Lloyd (only daughter) born 1911 Flint, Flintshire

*An article on this topic has been published by the Alberta Family Histories Society in their newsletter Chinook*



**CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY  
DONATES \$5000.00 TO CALGARY ZOO TO  
MAINTAIN 'THE WELSH MEMORIAL  
BENCH TO WELSH PIONEERS' IT DONATED  
10 YEARS AGO!**

## MEMORIES OF TEN YEARS OF CHILDHOOD IN WALES

I WAS BORN NOVEMBER 9TH, 1933 in a small house, Upper Penishawain, four miles from Brecon, S. Wales. I was the first child of Evan Brychan Morgan and his wife, Lillian. My father's Welsh roots have been traced back for centuries, my mother was a Canadian. They had been married in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan in 1930. My father had travelled to Canada during the Depression to find farm work, unfortunately not successfully. They moved to Wales where they planned to live for a couple of years. This turned into thirteen years. My bosom buddy during these years was my cousin, Ray Morgan, who lived close by. I'll share a few of my Welsh memories and then tell you how I have kept a connection with Wales.

Our social life centered around our Baptist Chapel called Maesyberllan. I accompanied my parents to both morning and evening services on Sundays. When I was old enough I also attended afternoon



Sunday School with Ray. We would walk together for about half an hour as neither



family had a car. In strawberry season we would each pick a bunch of wild strawberries to give to the wife of our Minister, Rev. Prince. Social events were scattered throughout the year. I particularly remember "picnic day". We played lots of games, Rev. Prince threw sweets around the grass and then we would have a huge tea. What fun! On Easter Sunday all the children would have to recite a poem. After my first attempt my mother went to bed with a "bilious attack" (whatever that is), she had been so nervous. Apparently I did okay. Today Maesyberllan has only a handful of members who gather about once a month. I usually visit it when I am in Wales.

Most of my memories are during the war years. I was in the hospital, Sept.3, 1939, when my parents visited and told me that we were at war. Ray waved through the window. My mother had always wanted to return to Canada but they had no money. My father volunteered to join the RAF, hoping to be sent to Canada. He left our house in the spring of 1940, my brother was a couple of months old. Letters were censored, no phones, it was common to steam stamps off envelopes for brief messages. I remember my mother reading the message "N. Africa for sure". He would not join us until 1947 in Canada. Those must have been difficult years for my mother. An evacuee family from London moved in with us. Every night a heavy grey blanket covered our window. We had only a lamp, no plumbing, no electricity. I went on a bus every day to Mount Street School in Brecon. We all had gas masks draped over our shoulders. We had drills, I believe daily, to be sure we could have our masks on within so many seconds. When sirens sounded we would go to some dark room and sit shoulder to shoulder around the perimeter of the room. Our masks would fog! It was very scary! Many foods were scarce. Fortunately we had a big garden and my mother would bottle lots of vegetables.

My last memory is of leaving Wales to move to Canada. At last my mother had enough money to travel. Because she was a Canadian citizen she was allowed to book a passage. Everything was very secretive. My mother stripped our house down to the bare necessities. One day in August, 1943, I was spending a few days with our friends, the Prices. Someone sped up on a bicycle to take me home immediately. We had to be in Glasgow in two days. We made it by train. We then stayed in some sort of accommodation for a few days when we were picked up and driven to the port. It was exciting to see the Queen Elizabeth ship a few miles out. Wow, we were taken out to board it! We sailed on a Sunday evening, had a rough crossing and landed in Halifax on a Friday morning, Sept. 3. I was too young to appreciate how dangerous it was to make that trip.

I wouldn't see Wales again until 1960 when I went on a trip. We were warmly welcomed by my Welsh family. Over the years I have visited every two or three years. From 1970 to 1973 we lived in England (Frimley Green) and visited Wales frequently. My four children have wonderful memories, especially when Auntie May, Ray's mother, would put on a tea to rival Herrod's! Ray and his late wife, Sylvia, and my late husband, Bill, had many holidays together. Ray had a full life in Brecon. In 1999 he was invited to Buckingham Palace where Prince Charles presented him with an MBE for his services to Brecon. In 2017 my daughters and I travelled to Llangollen where my granddaughter, Nadia, sang with the *Calgary Girls Choir* at the *International Musical Eisteddfod*. What a wonderful experience!

About twelve years ago, at an exercise class, I met a new member whose accent sounded familiar. Would you believe we both came, not only from Wales, but from Brecon! It feels like "family" to meet a Welsh person. You may know Jenny Stott, we have been good friends. She told me about the Welsh Society and that is how I joined. We pretty much lived for the weekend at the hotel when we had the big Welsh celebration in Calgary. My granddaughter sang with Laura Styler's group. It brings a smile to my face as I remember my Italian son-in-law reading the screen and belting out the Welsh National Anthem in Welsh!

I have had a good life with its ups and downs. I was widowed twice, the first time with four young children. I have had a few careers, the most important as mother to my children. When they were older I returned to work as a psychiatric social worker in two Toronto area hospitals. My children have all grown up to be good citizens and I have four grand children. Now that you "know me" I'd love to chat with you. I'll be one of two white haired ladies arriving with Jenny. Let's hope we can meet before too long!



Author: *Audrey Thorner*

**‘A COVID TALE’** *by Brian Lewis*

At first old Gwilym thought Covid was a hoax,  
A cruel trick to frighten older folks.

Guidelines on crowds and distancing were reviled  
By some as the crazy government gone wild.

Then he heard it was nothing worse than flu  
That old Gwilym always easily pulled through.

At last one night as Gwilym lay dying  
He said the deadliest disease is all the lying.

Then he heard it was a sort of plague  
Spread by bats or rats or something vague.

Each expert and politician had his say  
But to Gwilym the threat seemed far away;

Yet every day he heard of something new  
Telling him what to do or not to do.

Some said a mask made you look like a crank  
Ready to mug someone or rob a bank!



## ‘MY CHILDHOOD IN WALES, 1940s-1960s’ by Carol Weaver (nee Storey)

MY CLAIM TO FAME in the Calgary Welsh Society is that I am the proud elder sister of my one and only sibling Teena Ellis (nee Storey), a long-time member of the Society until her passing in 2008. Both Teena and I were born in Resolven, Glamorgan, during the 1940s. I emigrated to the USA in 1964 but moved to Calgary later in 1965 when I married Ken Weaver, a grammar school boyfriend from my teens in Port Talbot. In 1968 Teena married Viv Ellis, also from Port Talbot, and they emigrated to Calgary in 1968. We both had three children and three grandchildren.

At the urgings of my children, I have been writing my biography and completed my childhood in Wales (birth to 21 yrs) almost three years ago, giving a copy to each of my children and three grandsons. I thought they would simply gather dust on their shelves and not be read. Surprisingly, to them and to me, we are constantly discussing events and stories about that time in my life, triggered by current events. For example:

### Keeping busy during Covid 19 :

How did you keep busy Grandma without electronic toys? Well according to p.30 of my biography, it went like this:



“ For the most part, we only had our imaginations and the simplest of equipment to play with, such as: marbles, cord, string, balls, packs of cards, chalk ... Snail racing only required a garden to find them in and a flat surface to race them on and, more gruesome-like the boys would pour salt on them to watch them

froth up and die. For Hopscotch, we used chalk and a sliding stone



(slate was best because it was flat and readily available in Wales). The sidewalk slabs in Wales were ideal - just the right size and staggered in the right pattern for writing the numbers or letters on...



‘Marbles’ deserves an honourable mention because it was my most loved game - I was fascinated by their colours, sizes and patterns. To

this day, I have jarfuls of marbles - they make good bookends.



And who can forget playing ‘Conkers’ using a non-edible horse-chestnut with a hole bored in the middle (using a screwdriver or nail) and a 12” piece of string (e.g shoestring) threaded through it and knotted at the bottom to keep the chestnut on. The game has two players taking turns to strike each other’s conker until one breaks. It was always played in the Autumn (Fall) when the horse-chestnuts had ripened on the trees. The game of Conkers is serious

business these days - World Championships are held annually, for charity, and it’s cheating if you harden your conker by baking it or soaking it in vinegar, as we used to do.

I had a skipping rope and, surprisingly, a bicycle - it was old, second-hand and barebones-looking but it served me well. My hobbies were doing jigsaw puzzles, stamp-collecting and train-spotting. The latter entailed getting “Locoshed”, a printed list of train numbers with locations, and trying to spot as many of the numbers as possible, usually at train stations. The more stations, the better - vacations were good for that.”



# THE RISE AND FALL OF THE WELSH LANGUAGE

## - 4000 YEARS OF HISTORY

### RISE

- The Welsh language evolved from “British” which was the name of the Celtic language spoken by Ancient Britons during the Bronze or Iron Age. There are four distinct phases of the language.
- Primitive Welsh: In the Early Middle Ages the “British” language started to separate as dialects became differentiated. “Welsh”, as we know it, can be traced to the Brythonic languages forming at this time although it is not clear when it was distinctly separate (500AD-800AD).
- Old Welsh: From the 9th-11th centuries also the time of new borders being formed as a result of colonisation by other groups.
- Middle Welsh: 12th-14th centuries and the time of the oldest sources of prose and literature e.g. manuscripts of Mabinogion prose stories compiled from oral traditions. The phonology of Middle Welsh is quite similar to today’s language
- Modern Welsh (Early & Late): Current iteration has been around since the 16th century and is still referred to as Late Modern Welsh. The timing of this matches up with when the Bible was first translated into Welsh (1567) as it formalised the language.



### FALL

- In 1536 the Act of Union deprived Wales of its official status. During King Henry VIII’s reign an united Wales was formed and English decreed the official language. Wales had 27 representatives in parliament and all had to speak English. This was the start of the decline of the language.
- Fast forward to 1800: the majority of inhabitants of Wales spoke Welsh. However by the time of the 1901 census, this amounted to little over half of the people living in Wales. Paradoxically because of a population explosion (industrialisation and people relocating for work), more Welsh-speakers were accounted for in 1911, at over 1 million people. Even so this was approximately only 50% of the population.
- The situation continued to deteriorate in the 1840s when the Chartist movement took hold in Wales. Members of the English establishment thought the Welsh uneducated and this was the root cause for the instability. Chartists could coordinate their actions in a language that was not understood by the English establishment!
- Following a public inquiry in 1847 a report was commissioned ostensibly into the state of Welsh education. The commissioners also looked into the Welsh language and Welsh morals. Reporting all of which was bad. The commissioners had inherent biases (non English speakers) and relied on Anglican ministers to translate (Welsh people were predominantly nonconformists). Education was in a bad state throughout the British Isles but the push was for English Anglican organisations to manage Welsh schools to bring uniformity and better education standards

Lookout for 'The Rise Again and Future of the Welsh Language' in our next issue.

*Submitted by CWS member, Heather Powell*