



Gair y Ddraig

The Word of the Dragon

Rhagfyr, 2021
December, 2021

CALGARY
WELSH SOCIETY
FOUNDED: 1906

*Nadolig Llawen!
Merry
Christmas!
to all members of the
Calgary Welsh
Society*



THE CWS BOARD

Officers:

President: Margaret Freedman

Vice-president: Tracy Burr

Secretary: Sandy Keating

Treasurer: Gwenda Raymond-Jones

Newsletter Editor and Website Manager: David Matthews

Directors At Large:

Membership Sec.: Jean Kuhn

Jane Thomas

David Matthews

Past President: Elaine Westlake



*Dear Calgary Welsh Society Members,
We are thinking of you all at this
Christmas Season. Once again we are
unable to gather for our Christmas
Brunch and Celebration.*

*Our wish for the next year, is to
once again get together and celebrate our
many events.*

*We hope you are all keeping well.
On behalf of the Board.
Nadolig LLawen
Blwyddyn Newydd Dda*



GOOD NEWS!! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

2020 MEMBERSHIP FEES EXTENDED TO COVER 2022

The CWS Board has determined that 2020 CWS 'paid-up' members will have their membership extended to the end of 2022.

Jean Kuhn: Membership Secretary

THE COINCIDENCE:

ON OUR JOURNEY TO *NAFOW* TO UTICA IN NEW YORK STATE

[submitted by David and Mona Matthews CWS members]

WE LEFT IN LATE AUGUST planning to visit friends and family on our journey across Canada before entering the USA in Ontario. It was the first time that we had travelled extensively since the beginning of the pandemic. We were on our way to Utica, NY, to participate in the North American Festival of Wales.

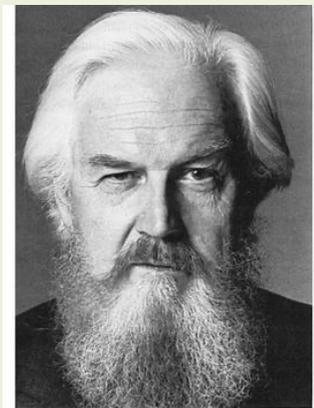
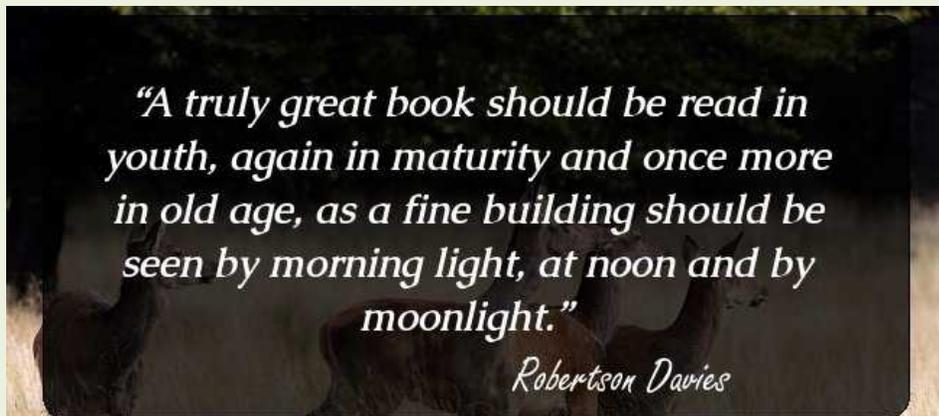
After dutifully paying a small fortune for PCR tests in Oshawa we reached the US border at the Thousand Islands and, surprisingly with little ado, entered New York State.

Our early morning ride of more than three hours or so made the first duty in the US a search for a washroom, so we took a turn off on Wellesley Island and drove for several kilometres before spying a restaurant, alas, closed. The area was largely deserted except for two people returning to their cars after a game of tennis. So I approached the man just as he was about to climb into his Jaguar sports car and asked him if he knew of a toilet close by. He did, pointing to one, not too far from the restaurant.



That was the beginning of a three-hour interlude on our journey during which, after accomplishing the reason for our diversion, we got to know this man.

We were soon to discover that the first person we were to meet in the USA, was a Welsh-Canadian whose ancestors were from the Welshpool area of Wales. His name was Eric Davies, the grandson of *Robertson Davies* the well-known and prolific Welsh-Canadian author, playwright and newspaper editor.



Third son of Senator William Rupert Davies born in Welshpool, Wales, *Robertson Davies* participated in stage productions as a child and developed a lifelong interest in drama. He attended [Upper Canada College](#) from 1926 to 1932 and went on to [Queen's University](#) from 1932 to 1935 as a special student not working towards a degree. He received a BLit in 1938 at Balliol College, Oxford. His thesis, *Shakespeare's Boy Actors*, appeared in 1939, a year in which he pursued an acting career outside London. He spent 1940 playing minor roles and doing literary work for the director at the Old Vic Repertory Company in London. That year he married Brenda Mathews, a woman he had met at Oxford, who was then working as stage manager for the theatre.

THE THIRTEEN-YEAR BAN ON CHRISTMAS

(submitted by Ann Williams..CWS member)

THE SERIES OF BATTLES called the English Civil War (although, of course, Wales was also involved) took place between 1641 and 1660. To get the facts straight I turned to *1066 And All That* by W.C. Sellar & R.J. Yeatman (pub 1964 Penguin) who summed up the combatants thus:

Cavaliers (Wrong but Wromantic)
Roundheads (Right and Repulsive)



The war was between King and Parliament - Cavaliers fought for the King, Roundheads for Parliament and its Puritan leader, Oliver Cromwell.

By 1647 England and Wales had a Puritan government which passed an ordinance banning Christmas festivities, services and celebrations.

A sign of resistance to the banning of Christmas was the closing of shops on Christmas Day – now supposedly a normal working day. According to the newspaper, *The Weekly Intelligencer*, almost all the shops in the City of London were shut on December 25th. In 1656 it was suggested that even Members of Parliament were ignoring the legislation for it was reported that on Christmas Day the House was “thin”.

The attempt at banning Christmas ended with the 1660 Restoration of the Monarchy.

Contemporary Reports: *Llanasa, Flintshire Parish Register:*

“Charles the first (being King of Great Britain, France and Ireland) was beheaded at London near White Hall the 30th day of January about two of ye clock in the evening 1648.”

John Evelyn’s Diary:

The diary notes the absence of Christmas Day services in London from 1652 to 1655. However, on December 25, 1657 he went to a service in the private chapel of a house in London. As they were receiving communion soldiers entered the chapel and “held their muskets against us, as if they would have shot us at the altar”. They let them finish communion but then took them all prisoner, some were allowed to stay in the house, others taken away. John Evelyn was confined to a room in the house. “In the afternoon, came Colonel Whalley, Goffe, and others from Whitehall to examine us one by one; some they committed to the marshal, some to prison. When I came before them, they took my name and abode, examined me why, contrary to the ordinance made that none should observe the time of the nativity, I durst [dared] offend and particularly be at common prayer, which they told me was but the mass in English, and particularly pray for Charles Stuart [heir to the throne]. I told them we did not pray for Charles Stuart, but for all Christian kings, princes, and governors. They replied, in so doing we prayed for the king of Spain, too, who was their enemy and a Papist, with other frivolous and ensnaring questions and much threatening they dismissed me with much pity of my ignorance. ... So I got home late the next day; blessed be God!

Contemporary story from Ann’s family history:

John Sellar was born in Christleton near Chester. Seven years later England went to war with itself and Parliamentarians used Christleton church tower as a look out. Royalists attacked the village on the night of January 14, 1645 – it was a disaster for the Royalists with 200 taken prisoner and others being killed or injured. Later Christleton was burned to the ground by Royalists, leaving only the Church and the Old Hall standing. John was eleven or so when these events took place and as an adult became a Quaker, perhaps attracted by its strong emphasis on peace-making. John’s children were baptised as Quakers and he and his wife were buried in the Quaker cemetery in Newton (near Manchester airport).

A TASTE OF WALES!



Traditional Welsh Christmas Eve Taffy

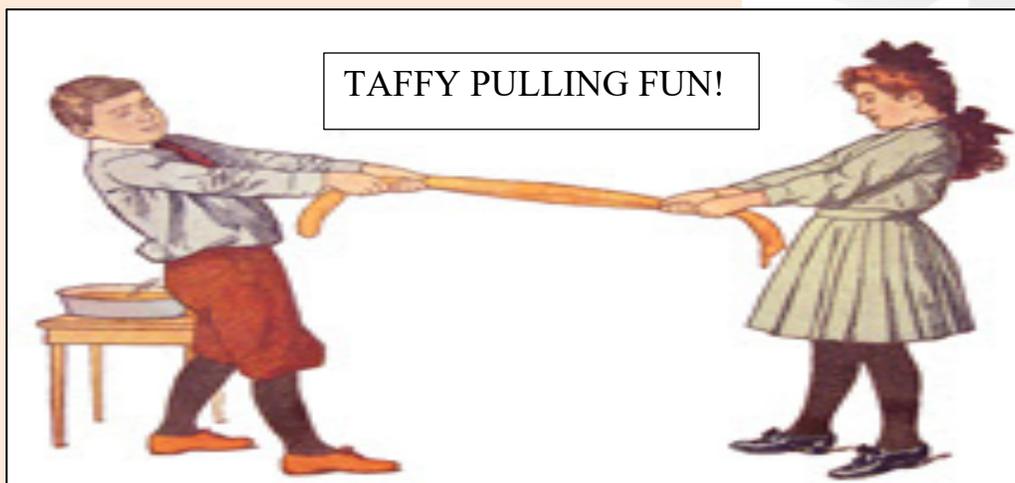
This night was known as Noson Gyflaith (Toffee Evening), when friends and family would get together to eat and await Christmas day with games, music and making Christmas taffy. It was a great way to make a treat that otherwise would be too expensive.

INGREDIENTS

- 110g salted butter
- ½ lemon's juice
- 75ml water
- 650g soft brown sugar

METHOD

- Warm the water and add sugar until it dissolves.
- Add the lemon juice and the butter.
- Boil for 15 minutes and then drop a little piece into cool water.
- With dish a palette knife, start to shape it until you can handle it



Submitted by Jane Thomas...CWS member

MAGICAL CHRISTMAS MEMORIES FROM MY CHILDHOOD

Submitted by CWS member Elaine Westlake

UNTIL I WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD I lived in Nantyffyllon, a small mining community in the Llynfi Valley of South Wales. Like so many others in the mining valleys, ours was a small terraced house. Every home had a front parlour, a special room which was rarely used unless someone like the chapel minister came to tea. However, the front parlour played a special part in our Christmas celebration.



Salem Welsh Baptist Chapel

When my sister and I went to bed on Christmas Eve the front parlour appeared to be the usual formal, unused space, but my Mum asked us to place our stockings on the sofa there.

Then she closed the door and off we went to bed full of excitement that Father Christmas would come before morning. When morning arrived our parents led us slowly to the front parlour. We opened the door with great trepidation to discover it had been converted into our very own magical space, a real 'fairy land'! A beautiful tree full of sparkling lights and glass ornaments stood in the corner and decorations were hung across the room. A fire blazed in the hearth, our stockings were full and other Christmas packages bearing our names were under the tree. What a lovely time we had opening presents and searching our stockings for the small toys, mandarin oranges and nuts tucked inside!

Sometimes, my Dad, who was a policeman, would be working the night shift on Christmas Eve. How exciting it was to hug him goodbye with the knowledge that he would be seeing Father Christmas when he came to make his deliveries in Nantyffyllon. Dad used to tell us what a very busy man Father Christmas was and how he appreciated Dad's help!

Oh, the innocence of childhood and the unwavering acceptance of how a bare front room could be converted into a 'magical fairy land'! It was years later that my parents explained the lengths they went to to create my magical space. Along with my older cousins and aunt who lived next door they had cut down a tree earlier on Christmas Eve and hidden it at my aunt's house. After Chris and I went to bed the tree was transported to our front parlour and a team of 'elves' set about decorating it and the room. This was back in the day that if a set of lights didn't work every single bulb had to be tested to make that string work! They persevered and worked long into the night. I'm very grateful to them for the wonderful memories they created for me and I can still feel the magic of those long ago Christmas mornings!



Nadolig Llawn a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda oddiwrth Elaine!!

Beth's Bara Brith Recipe

1 package dried fruit - 3 cups
1 cup white sugar
1/2 cup butter
1 1/2 cups milk

Bring first four ingredients to boil and simmer

3 eggs **3 min or so - then cool**
3 cups flour
2 tsp mixed spice
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp baking powder



Mix eggs with fruit, then add dry ingredients. Bake at 350 for 1 hour then leave in the oven for 10 minutes with heat off.

Nuts may also be used.

Beth indicated "I like to buy my dried fruit and mixed spice in Wales as my recipe did not turn out right with ingredients from our stores. I bring 6 or 7 packages of dried fruit home from Wales."

This is from Norm's sister-in-law, Audrey Pierce, from Wales.

Petition launched to make St David's Day a bank holiday

19 Oct 2021 *Picture by the National Assembly (CC BY 2.0)*

A PETITION HAS BEEN LAUNCHED to make St David's Day a bank holiday. The UK Government has so far refused to devolve the powers to create bank holidays for Wales to the Welsh Government. This is despite Scotland and Northern Ireland already having the power to designate respective patron saint Bank Holidays and despite the then National Assembly for Wales voting unanimously in favour of a St David's Day bank holiday in 2000.



In 2014 it was reported that First Minister Carwyn Jones had written to the Secretary of State for Wales to seek legislative competence to make Wales' national day a bank holiday, but the move was rebuffed. In the petition by Elfed Wyn ap Elwyn to the UK Government and Parliament, it is argued that it is "time to make this special day a bank holiday in Wales".

If the petition receives 10,000 signatures the UK Government will respond to it, and if it receives 100,000 signatures it will be considered for debate in the UK Parliament. The deadline for the petition is 14 April 2022.

Remembering Liz Crawford.....

It's with great sadness that we announce the sudden passing of Elizabeth (Liz) Crawford. Liz and her husband Ted (who died 5 years ago) loved attending our Calgary Welsh Society events and were proud adopted "Welsh Canadians"! Liz and Ted were born in Toronto but moved to Calgary almost 50 years ago. Until COVID stopped us holding society events, many of you will remember Liz as one of our society phoners. Sincerest condolences are extended to Liz' family and friends!

Fancy some Welsh rum with your eggnog this Christmas?

Submitted by 'Owain Glyn Dwr'



AHOY MATEY... Welsh Pirates along the Pembrokeshire coast have a long tradition of shipwrecks, rum running, smuggling and drinking. Sir Henry Morgan (Harri Morgan; 24 January 1635 – 25 August 1688) was a Welsh privateer born in Llanrhymny, Monmouthshire. He captained a ship called Fancy and later became Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica. From his base in Port Royal, Jamaica, he raided settlements on the Spanish mainland, becoming a wealthy man. With the booty money from the raids, he purchased three large sugar plantations on the island. He is immortalized in the liquor, Captain Morgans Rum. Another Welsh Pirate is Bartholomew Roberts (17 May 1682 – 10 February 1722), born John Roberts he became a Welsh pirate of significant repute born in Casnewydd Bach near Puncteston, Pembrokeshire, Wales his nickname became Black Bart (Barti Ddu) of which there is now a Welsh rum. Shiver me timbers! In addition, John Evans (died 1723) was a Welsh pirate who also sailed within the Caribbean. He had a brief but illustrious career as a self-made Captain of his captured ship he named "Scowerer" looting boats in the West Indies before walking the plank.

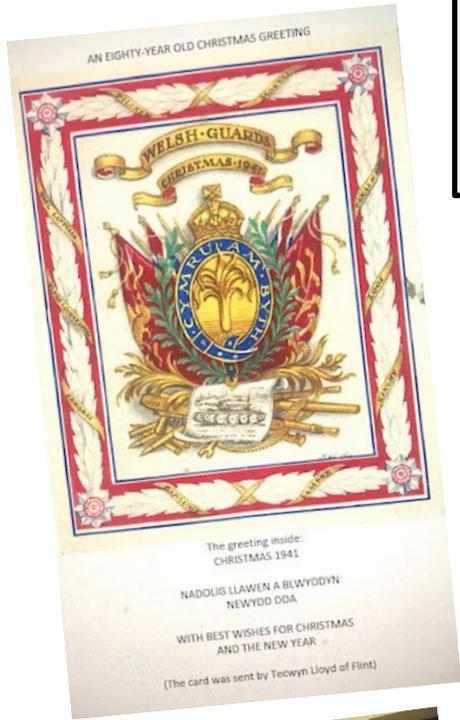


"Pirates of the Spanish Main" Trade cards from the series (N19), issued ca. 1888 in a set of 50 cards to promote Allen & Ginter brand cigarettes. Allen & Ginter (American, Richmond, Virginia) Public Domain

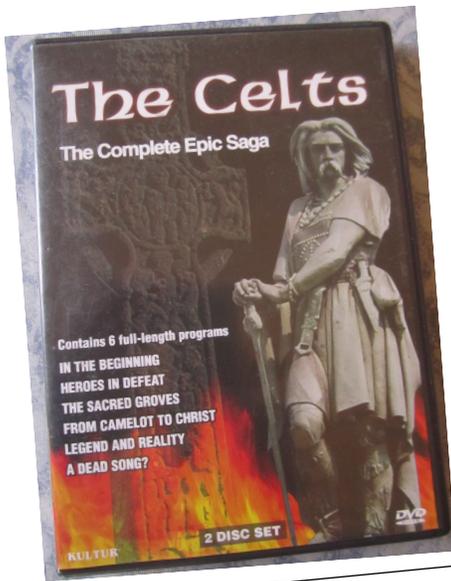
A decade ago, there wasn't a drop to be had of Welsh produced rum in the principality but Wales has now weighed anchor and there are over two dozen rum products to sample from. In 2009, the UK distilling laws changed again that made small boutique distilleries favourable to business interests and suddenly just one distillery in Wales has now escalated from six in 2014 to approaching sixty in 2021 creating an industry that is now employing Welsh people and providing quality product locally and beyond. *Pob llwyddiant i'r achos dirwestol!* Some of the names on various labels are a reflection of Welsh patriotism and pride in the people and places of the nation and its botanicals. Barti rum is distinctive in that it utilizes laver seaweed. Bullion rum is another bounty of gold liquid treasure sure to be had.

Please leave some rum out to keep Siôn Corn jolly and to enjoy a very Nadolig Llawen. Yo ho ho and a bottle of Welsh rum! **Iechyd da!**

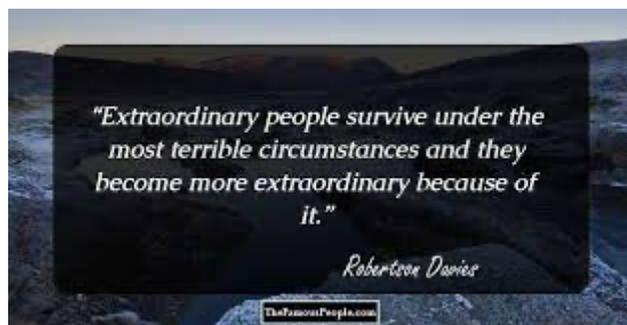
A 'POT POURRI' OF MEMORIES



THANKS TO:
Kathleen Johnson, Margaret Hunziker, Ann Williams, Robertson Davies and Michele Henderson for these 'memories' and suggestions...



A fascinating history with a lot of Welsh information – *The Hendersons*



MY WELSH CONNECTION – HIRAETH FOR WALES

by Margaret Hunziker.

I HAVE BEEN A MEMBER of the Calgary Welsh Society for the past few years, and have enjoyed participating in our events and attending NAFOW three times.

Most of you do not know my Welsh history, so thought I would share my story.

Both my parents were from South Wales; my father born in Tredegar, Monmouthshire and my mother in Pontypridd, Glamorgan. Although they lived within a short distance of each other, there was a long and circuitous route until they met, and ended up in Alberta.

My father immigrated to Canada with his widowed mother and two brothers when he was a 15-year-old teenager in 1927. My grandmother, who I never met, already had 2 sisters here so the family ended up on a farm at Minburn, Alberta. After a few years my grandmother and her youngest son went back to Wales. My father, Clifford Badmington, stayed in Alberta working on farms and eventually in Edmonton. There were stories that during the Depression my father and his brother and cousins jumped on a freight train to Vancouver to go and look for work.

Early in World War II, my father joined the Loyal Edmonton Regiment. His brother Edward joined the RCAF and trained as a flight engineer in Winnipeg.

On his first trip overseas, my uncle's plane crashed in the ocean. We had always assumed that it was in the middle of the Atlantic, but only a few years ago learned that the plane crashed shortly after take-off near Greenwood, Nova Scotia.

My father was eventually posted overseas.

My mother, Mary Lewis, had moved to Eastbourne, England and with her mother managed a post office. During the war, they also helped with a Red Cross canteen, and served at dances. It was at one of these socials in 1942 that some Canadian soldiers attended that my parents met, had a dance, and eventually fell in love.

I have recently been reading some of the many letters that I now have, that my mother had saved for sixty-five years. My father wrote these "love letters" from the warfront, from England, Italy, and Holland. On occasional leaves, he could visit my mother in Eastbourne. They were able to get married in 1945, and thus she was a War Bride, who had married a Canadian soldier. After the war, my father got back to Edmonton, and in May 1946 my mother arrived at Halifax Pier 21, and took the long train trip across Canada to finally be with her husband. Sadly, they were only together in Edmonton for ten years.

After they had 3 children, my father got sick and died in 1956. As I was a young child then, I was not able to know much about my father and his history. I have visited Tredegar twice and met the brother who hadn't come to Canada. One day I hope to go there again and learn more.

My mother stayed in Edmonton and brought up her three children alone. She participated in Edmonton Welsh Society events for many years and we were both in a Welsh choir there. We also enjoyed going to the "Gymanfa Ganu" in Ponoka many times. My mother, Mary, never got over her love of her homeland. She definitely always had "hiraeth" for Wales.



PAUL ROBESON HONOURED IN BLACK HISTORY MONTH

DURING BLACK HISTORY MONTH in the UK, we're looking back over the life of actor, singer, lawyer, athlete and civil rights activist, Paul Robeson. Here are five things you should know about him:

- ◆ Born in the USA in 1898, Robeson based most of his time from 1928 – until the outbreak of WW2 – in London.
- ◆ Robeson often visited Wales; a meeting with a group of protesting South Wales Miners saw him become an ardent supporter of the Welsh working class.
- ◆ He appeared on stage all over Wales in the 1930s, giving generously to Welsh causes.
- ◆ 1940's The Proud Valley saw Robeson star in a film inspired by the true stories of Black miners in Wales. It tells the story of a Black American sailor who docks at Cardiff and is adopted by a Valleys mining community.
- ◆ Robeson even sang at the National Eistedfodd in Ebbw Vale in 1958.



CADW: the Welsh Government's historic environment service working for an accessible and well-protected historic environment for Wales.

SPORTS REPORT with Norm Pierce

RUGBY

Wales have had a disastrous Autumn Nations Series losing their first game to New Zealand 54 - 16 and losing to South Africa 23 - 18 . **Something** of a comeback in the next two games saw Wales beat Fiji 38 – 23 and Wales beat Australia 29 -28. The Six Nations look a real challenge for this Welsh team!

Nigel Owens , the well respected referee , by fans and players alike , who was the first to take charge of 100 tests has decided to retire to his farm in Cardiganshire .

FOOTBALL

Hollywood actors Ryan Reynolds and Rob McElhenny are now the new owners of Wrexham FC Aaron Ramsey , captain of the Welsh football team , is a Welsh speaker along with his teammates Joe Allen and a few others .

DARTS

The World Grand Prix in September saw Jonny Clayton beat fellow Welshman Gerwyn Price in the final to become World #1 .

FATHER CHRISTMAS

**Father Christmas is a Welshman
They call him Dai the sledge
His beard is made of lamb's wool
He finds it in the hedge**

**Father Christmas is a Welshman
If you're good and sound asleep
He'll creep into your bedroom
And leave a fluffy sheep!**

**Yes! He's definitely a Welshman
And he has quite a cheek
If you've been bad he'll only leave
A welsh cake and a leek!**

**Yes, Santa is a Welshman
He likes bara brith best
If you leave out mince pies for him
He'll say, "Where is the rest?"**

**Oh! Santa is a Welshman
The best one yet by far.
So Nadolig Llawen everyone,
And Blwyddyn Newydd Dda!**



UPCOMING EVENTS

In the NEW YEAR!!



ANYONE INTERESTED IN A WEEKEND WELSH COURSE?

SpeakWelsh.org is offering their second virtual course on January 21-23, 2022. SpeakWelsh.org is a sister site to the long running Cymdeithas Madog society for Welsh language learning in North America. Instruction is offered in beginning, intermediate and advanced levels. Details and registration are available on the *SpeakWelsh.org* website, under "Calendar." Monthly chat sessions, or 'Siop Siarad' are also offered on the website. *Submitted by Tracy Burr*

NORTH AMERICAN FESTIVAL OF WALES

September 1 – 4, 2022

in

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Room reservations are now available!! Check out program details and other useful information at *naflow.org*

WANTED!! WANTED!!
Members to contribute to the newsletter..it could be a story you wish to share, a joke, a memory of Wales, a news report, a photograph, etc etc. Simply connect Dave Matthews through *thecalgarywelshsociety@gmail.com*

THE CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY IS PLANNING TO RESUME EVENTS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

The venue for our St David's Day Dinner has already been booked and, if all goes well, a January get-together may be possible. Such an event would require members planning to attend to be at least double-vaccinated, mask-wearing and observing other covid related protocols.

In the mean-time, **BEST WISHES FOR A SAFE, HEALTHY CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION AND A NEW YEAR THAT REALIZES YOUR HOPES AND DREAMS!!**