



Gair y Ddraig

The Word of the Dragon

Hydref 2023
October 2023

CALGARY
WELSH SOCIETY
FOUNDED: 1906

Officers:

President: Margaret Freedman

Vice-president: Elaine Westlake

Secretary: Tracy Burr

Treasurer: John Hopkins

THE CWS BOARD

Directors At Large:

Membership Sec.: Jean Kuhn

Margaret Hunziker

David Matthews

Newsletter Editor and Website Manager: David Matthews

NOSON LAWEN

SILENT AUCTION

SLIDE SHOW

POETRY, JOKES, SINGING, STORIES, ETC

WHEN: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21 AT 12:30PM

WHERE: EMMANUEL CHURCH, 3020 52 ST. SW

THIS WILL BE A POTLUCK LUNCH – Please refer to detailed notice emailed recently....

GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT, MARGARET FREEDMAN

Annwyl Frindiau, Dear Friends:

We hope you all had an enjoyable Summer.

We held our *Annual Picnic* in July at Lake Bonavista. There was a disappointing turn out, but those who attended had a lovely afternoon. Ideas about how we could make this event more attractive to members would be most appreciated.

Some of our members were in Wales this summer and we are looking forward to hearing of their experiences. Others attended the NAFOW in Lincoln, Nebraska. By all accounts it was a very successful and interesting event. Next year the NAFOW will be in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Our Noson Lawen/ Pot-Luck will be held on October 21. An advance notice has been sent and details are included in this newsletter. It's going to be great!

Our Christmas lunch has been booked for December 17th. This year it will be held at the Sheraton Cavalier Calgary Hotel off Barlow Trail N.E.

As our numbers at events have not fully recovered since Covid, we would appreciate your suggestions about how we can attract more attendees. Please share your ideas with members of the board in person or by email:

In order to ensure that you receive all our communications, please let us know any changes to your email address or phone number. That will help keep our records up to date.

On behalf of the Board

Margaret Freedman

(President)

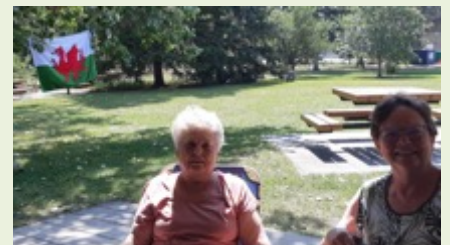
Calgary Welsh Society Stampede Picnic 2023.....Jane Thomas

Stampede Picnic 2023 on **18 July** pulled us out of the Pandemic as a new start to our usual fall and winter calendar of CWS gatherings. The afternoon treated us with a blue Calgary sky. Perfect weather as long as you had a bottle of water from Margaret to keep you hydrated and one of the comfortable benches or chairs to relax while visiting with fellow CWS picnickers. Our Y Ddraig Goch kept a watch from the surrounding trees. We all brought our own lunch: Subway treats, Scotch eggs, chicken, chips and dip, sandwiches and salads were consumed as we visited around the two large picnic tables. We missed our absent members including those travelling in Wales.

Margaret Freedman and Jean Kuhn loaded a dessert table with cakes, cookies and delicious squares. We did our best to enjoy them all and took some home to prolong the sweet taste buds.

Da iawn! Hosts Ross and Pam Hicks met us at the gate and gained our entry to lush Lake Bonavista park grounds where we enjoyed our private picnic spot.

Dreams of CWS Stampede Picnic 2024 might include Western dress and barbecue, a Welsh sing song with instruments, a campsite size scavenger hunt, readings, a game or two suited for a lazy afternoon.



WALKING THE *CAMBRIAN WAY* THROUGH THE HILLS AND MOUNTAINS OF WALES

Back in 2014, David and Mona Matthews, members of the *Calgary Welsh Society*, walked the 1300km *Coastal Path of Wales* from Chepstow to Chester. In 2019, they walked the 285km '*Offa's Dyke*' starting in Prestatyn and finishing on the coast just beyond Chepstow. They achieved their goal of walking around the most beautiful country in the world. In doing so, over \$22,000 was raised for cancer research.

This year David and his son Ioan completed the *Cambrian Way*, a 497km trek through the hills and mountains of Wales, to raise money for the *Canadian Cancer Society*.

While this was a great 'father and son' cooperative challenge, it was also a memorial to the many who have lost their lives to cancer. Back in January, Ioan lost a good friend, colleague and teammate. Darrel fought a brave and courageous battle with colorectal cancer. Darrel's fight has been one that too many of our friends and family have had to take on.

Our journey started on June 27th when we started our walk from Cardiff. Our trek of 433kms took 24 days including a two-day break in Borth, David's childhood home.

It turned out to be a challenging hike in some of the worst July weather seen in Wales for years. Pelting rain in gale-force winds obscured many of the great views that Wales is famous for.

However, we made it and raised over \$7300 towards cancer research.

The following photographs are a few of many that recorded our walk.



More pictures..next page



NAFOW 2023 IN LINCOLN NEBRASKA.....Phil Morris

With a certain amount of excitement, the decision was made that Barbara and I could attend NAFOW together this year (the past years since 2018 Barbara was involved with university move-ins the same weekend) But now that Rebecca has graduated (and purchased her own condo) and Megan returned to Nanaimo at the end of July for her classes we were able to travel on our own. We did our due diligence (or should I say Barbara was busy), checking out flight options and driving options the decision was made to drive the 2300 km over 2 ½ days.

We found the Lincoln Cornhusker Hotel, although “Google Maps” couldn’t figure out the road was closed for a Welsh Street Festival!

The hotel was an impressive red brick building and would be our base for the next 5 nights. The street festival saw the closure of the avenue in front of the hotel and a stage and market area set up.

An early start on Thursday morning to join a coach tour to the Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project in Wymore: a popular trip which saw 3 coaches set out to visit the sites in different orders. The Project was like a museum for Welsh Artifacts and was a beacon of hope in what appeared to be a run-down and dying community of Wymore. It was interesting to note that the Welsh Heritage Centre was located in the former mortuary, with an addition of an artifact room that was “Tornado” proof. The museum was full of treasures connected with Wales.

The Welsh Dresser depicting ladies in traditional Welsh costumes in the homesteads and their churches. We learned that this particular dresser was for sale for several hundred dollars and when the seller realized that the museum did not have one – it was donated!

The museum was brought alive with photos and portraits (e.g., Celia Charles Evans Morris whose husband Aneurin Morris moved to Lincoln after Celia died. Her piano has its home there. There are also several photos of congregation members outside of their church/chapel.

Our next stop was the Bethel Welsh Cemetery, just outside of Wymore – here several descendants dressed as their relatives may have dressed during their lifetime and described the hardships they endured settling in a new country.

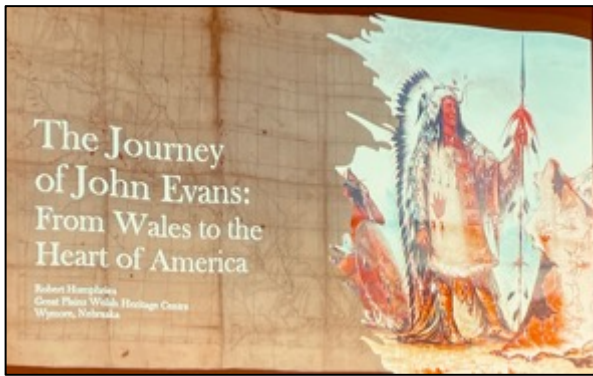
A visit to the local schoolhouse provided an insight into life at the turn of the century. We enjoyed a bagged lunch of a Pasty, fruit, and a Welsh Cake (which interestingly was iced!)

Our final stop was at the Homestead National Historic Park, where we learned about the hardships endured by settlers of all nationalities.

I enjoyed Lincoln NAFOW very much and putting pen to paper brought back many happy memories. Our journey home took us to Mount Rushmore, Rapid City South Dakota and Helena, Montana. In total we put 4600 kms on the car.

Thank you to the Calgary Welsh Society for your sponsorship to attend this memorable gathering.





THE JOURNEY OF JOHN EVANS FROM WALES TO THE HEART OF AMERICA



Robert Humphries
Historian

Robert Humphries, a historian of Welsh descent presented an intriguing talk on John Evans at the *North American Festival of Wales*. The following is a summation of some of the ‘adventures’ of John Evans.

John Thomas Evans (April 1770 – May 1799) was a Welsh explorer who produced an early map of the Missouri River. Evans was born in Waunfawr, near Caernarfon.

In the early 1790s there was an upsurge of interest in Wales in the story of Madog having discovered America, and there were persistent rumours in North America of the existence of a tribe of Welsh Indians, identified with the Mandan. Iolo Morganwg had originally intended to explore the Missouri to discover these Welsh Indians, and Evans was to have gone with him. However, Iolo withdrew from the expedition and Evans embarked for the United States alone, arriving in Baltimore in October 1792. In the spring of 1793 he made his way to St. Louis in Spanish Louisiana, where he was imprisoned for a while on suspicion of being a British spy.

In April 1795 he set off on an expedition with Spanish backing to explore the Missouri and to try to discover a route to the Pacific Ocean from its headwaters. He found the Mandan in 1796 and spent the winter with them before returning to St. Louis in 1797. However, he found no trace of Welsh speakers among them. He had travelled 1,800 miles up the Missouri from its confluence with the Mississippi, and he produced a map showing the course of the river. This map, passed on by Thomas Jefferson, was later used by the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

While John Thomas Evans did not find what he came to discover, but had produced what was to be one of the most important maps available to Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in planning and executing their famous expedition up the Missouri River in 1804.

Evans's map shows his route up the Missouri River from Fort Charles, located in what is now north-eastern Nebraska near modern Sioux City, Iowa, to the Mandan and Hidatsa villages at the mouth of the Knife River in present-day North Dakota. The map illustrates in detail the major features of the Missouri River channel and shows all of its principal tributaries. It is a landmark of Missouri River cartography. Later mappers relied heavily upon it, as no less than ten secondary English, French, and Spanish maps of the period from 1797 to 1811 bear unmistakable evidence of their dependence on Evans's work.¹

Evans remained in the service of the Spanish authorities, but died in New Orleans in May 1799.



**PHOTOS FROM LINCOLN AND WYMORE, NEBRASKA
[and on the way to the North American Festival of Wales!]**



COR CYMRU GOGLEDD AMERICA IN ABERGAVENNY WALES,..JULY, 2023



A COMMUNITY choir that spans a continent concluded its summer tour of Wales with a rousing finale concert in Abergavenny.

Côr Cymru Gogledd America (North American Welsh Choir) features choristers from across the United States and Canada, including the descendants of Welsh immigrants and expatriates.

St Mary's Priory Church was the venue on Saturday evening (8 July) for the culmination of a tour that also saw performances in Conwy, Aberystwyth and Cardigan.

Founded in 1998 by renowned cymanfa ganu conductor Dr Mari Morgan, who is originally from Llanelli and moved to the US in 1996, this was the choir's first significant tour of Wales since 2002 and a celebration of its 25th anniversary.

Monmouth MP and Secretary of State for Wales David Davies, a fluent Welsh speaker, met the choir before officially opening Saturday's concert. He was invited to attend by local resident Deborah Haylock – a friend of Dr Morgan's from university days – who helped to ensure a packed audience gave the choir a very warm welcome to Abergavenny.

Mr Davies said: "It was an honour to meet the choir beforehand and have a chat in Welsh, as the choristers are all learning the language. "They actually only got together in person for the first time last week and had been practicing online. Singing for us were 50 choristers from 18 American states and three Canadian provinces, many of whom have family ties to Southeast Wales. "We were treated to a wonderful evening of uplifting music, with a moving rendition of Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau at the end. The whole event was a credit to Abergavenny and I very much hope the choir comes back again on its next tour of Wales.

"My thanks to the Rector of Abergavenny, Reverend Canon John Connell, for his hospitality and for hosting the choir at St Mary's Priory."

Côr Cymru's repertoire included three newly commissioned works from some of Wales' most notable contemporary composers and writers, sung in both Welsh and English.

Since 1999 the choir has performed the world over, from New York to New Zealand, and released several recordings

submitted by Margaret Hunziker