



Gair y Ddraig

The Word of the Dragon

Mawrth 2024
March 2024

CALGARY
WELSH SOCIETY
FOUNDED: 1906

SAINT DAVID DAY'S DINNER – A GREAT SUCCESS!!

The Calgary Saint David's Day Dinner was held this year at the Calgary Winter Club on Saturday March 2. Despite the very bad weather with blowing snow and cold temperatures after a heavy snowfall two days before, many CWS members and their guests came out to enjoy the afternoon. There were 61 tickets sold for the celebration, and most people were able to get there. They were glad that they had come to enjoy a delicious chicken dinner, leek soup, Crème Brulé and, of course, Welsh Cakes.

Many commented on the excellent entertainment this year. The "Harp Angel", Deborah Nyack, entertained us throughout the afternoon both before and after the meal, playing a variety of beautiful music on her harp. The very talented and personable, Brian Lewis, read excerpts from his book of memories of his childhood growing up in South Wales during WW II. He was assisted in the presentation of readings and photos by David Matthews, Elaine Westlake and Norman Pierce. It was very interesting and enjoyed by all.

Alun Lewis engaged us all in the Welsh County Call; and then we heartily sang the Welsh National Anthem before driving home on the snowy roads. It was a wonderful afternoon shared with Welsh friends.

Margaret Hunziker



GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT, MARGARET FREEDMAN

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

Annwyl Frindiau, Dear Friends:

Since our last Newsletter, we have held both our Christmas Lunch and our Saint David's Day celebration. And thanks to you, our members and their guests, they were well-attended. A special thanks goes to those who made the St. David's Day so very successful. Thanks to all those who organized and participated in the event. It was indeed very reassuring to see members arrive at the Winter Club, having braved the heavy snow and poor road conditions.

Our two days working a Casino was completed in January. Our appreciation goes to all those who volunteered. A special thanks goes to Julien Deshuter who managed our involvement. It has become more challenging for our society to fill the required number of workers to work a casino. Our plea is that you continue to volunteer in the future, perhaps garnering the participation of family members or friends to meet the requirements.

The North American Festival of Wales information is now available. Go to nafow.org to see details. This year NAFOW is being held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania! Application details for funding to attend will soon be made available.

We are looking forward to Spring after a cold and snowy start to 2024. Your ideas and suggestions are welcomed for future events.

On behalf of the Board

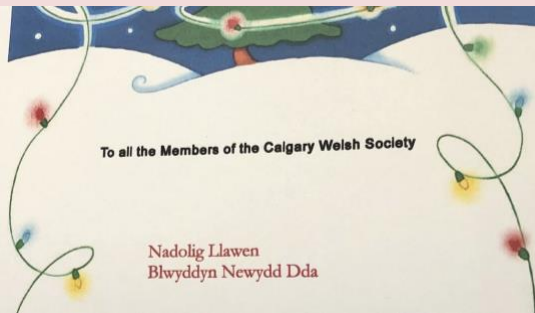
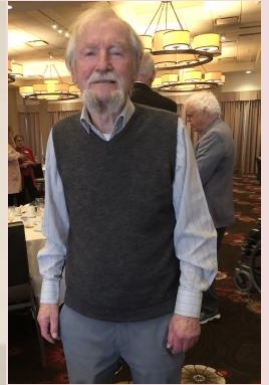
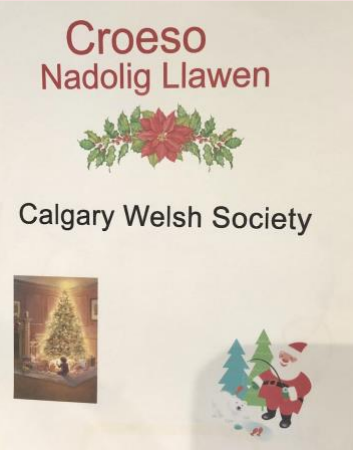
Margaret Freedman

(President)

Many thanks to all photographers who submitted photographs including Jane Thomas, Margaret Hunziker, Loyola Lewis, David Matthews et al.

OUR CHRISTMAS 2023 CELEBRATION

Our **Annual Christmas Luncheon** on December 17, 2023. This year, for the first time, we were hosted at the **Sheraton Cavalier Calgary Hotel**, and it was a very successful event attended by over 40 members and guests. . The hotel provided us with an excellent Plated Lunch. We sang carols accompanied by Cindy Watson [much appreciated], and were entertained by a reading from *Dylan Thomas* by our vice-president Elaine Westlake and her grandson Rhys. We will be returning to the same venue in 2024 and we are hoping for a much higher turn-out next year!



CARYS LEWIS: WRITER, DIRECTOR AND ACTRESS

We all remember Carys, daughter of Calgary Welsh Society member Alun Lewis, when she performed 'Beyond the Pail' for the society many years ago! This play written by Carys captivated the audience and perhaps, heralded her current success and involvement in so many aspects of creativity.

The following information is taken from her website: caryslewis.ca Please visit it!

Carys is a Welsh Canadian writer and director. Her recent directing credits include *The Jury: Murder Trial*, [Channel 4]; *Father Brown*, [BBC]; *Vandullz*, [BBC comedy]; *Casualty* [BBC]; and *Hollyoaks* [Channel 4].

Carys is developing her feature debut, *Blue Mother* with the support of BFI network and co-wrote the film *How Black Mothers Say I Love You* with writing partner Trey Anthony [Telefilm Canada and FFilm Cymru, Wales]. The team have adapted the story for TV under the title *How We Say I Love You* in development with Chemically Altered Productions, untitled entertainment and Clement Virgo's Conquering Lion Pictures. The writing duo are also developing a new half hour drama /comedy for CBC with Sienna Films [Sphere Media].

Carys was the filmmaker in residence at the Welsh National Opera where she created a trilogy of films: *Gram Girl*, *Alt* and *Fluorescence LFF '19*. She wrote and directed a BFI Network comedy, *Stuffed* which was nominated for a Welsh BAFTA in 2019 for Best Short Film. Her LGBTQ + Welsh-language short *Aviach* premiered at the Iris Prize Festival and was screened on BBC iPlayer and SC4. In 2018 Carys collaborated with revolutionary filmmaker Erika Lust and created an experimental short film with LUST films.

As an advocate for equal representation of women in front of and behind the camera, Carys is the founder of FEM SCRIPT LAB, a writing lab for female and non-binary screenwriters in Toronto, and has launched the sister branch of the lab in the UK.

She is currently part of the FILMONOMICS 8 Cohort and has been a Writer in Residence at Theatr Clwyd, selected for the 2019 BFI London Film Festival NETWORK cohort, the Screenskills Mentoring Program, BAFTA Mentorship and was part of BAFTA crew from 2018 to 2020.

Carys is a proud graduate of George Brown Theatre School. She splits her time between Canada and the UK.



THE HARP ANGEL....Elaine Westlake

We were delighted to have Deborah Nyack, the Harp Angel, with us at our 2024 St. David's Day banquet. She entertained us with quiet background music and formal presentations of well-known tunes including Welsh favourites.

Deborah is the resident harpist at the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise and Fairmont Banff Springs Hotels. She is on the Faculty of the Banff Centre of the Arts.

She performs in concerts world-wide from small intimate settings to famous concert halls such as Carnegie Hall, N.Y. and Washington Centre D.C. She has performed for royalty, heads of state, movie starts and numerous fans.

Deborah has degrees in harp performance from the Royal Academy of Music and Trinity, UK, from Julliard and Eastman in New York and from the Banff Centre in Canada. She is especially proud of the years she spent training with Osian Ellis, the famous Welsh harpist, in England and Wales. It was under his tutelage that she received her Masters in Graduate studies in London, England.

She has over 25 years of experience, has Produced 5 best-selling CD's and teaches harp to 23 students world-wide; even through Zoom! Deborah is available for weddings, receptions a



It was in 2014 when David Matthews and I (Elaine Westlake) were looking for NAFOW 2016 venues that we heard beautiful harp music in the lobby of Chateau Lake Louise. What good luck to accidentally meet up with Deborah Nyack, the Harp Angel! It took 10 years to arrange for her to perform for C.W.S. but Deborah was well worth waiting for!

Members who were present at our St David's lunch were enthralled by her playing. One member commented on how peaceful it was to listen to her. Another guest said he had never heard harp music before and it brought tears to his eyes.

The 'New Yorker' described her as, "The Stradivarius of Harpists". We couldn't agree more!

ST DAVID'S DAY DINNER: PRE:DINNER CHATS



LOST IN WALES....Phil and Barbara Morris

Barbara and I flew to the UK in January to attend my late brother's funeral. We flew from Calgary to Heathrow, then onto Manchester. The co-pilot on the Manchester flight announced that we would experience some heavy turbulence as we approached Manchester due to heavy winds – but not to worry the plane was built to withstand the wind! The cabin was silent the entire flight dreading what was to come. The flight was relatively calm except for some slight bumps as we neared Manchester – it seems we were lucky to land before the winds hit.

Luggage in hand we exited the airport in a heavy downpour, only to find ourselves waiting in the deluge for our bus to the car rental depot. Car secured we headed for Oswestry in what was now a light rain. All went well until we reached Ruabon, just past Wrexham. Here we found the A483 to Oswestry closed and only one unclear sign of the diversion route. Having only had 20 minutes of sleep my brain could not comprehend where we were and I was sure we were on the Llangollen road by Chirk. We tried several routes, always ending back at the Ruabon roundabout and the road closure.

We finally spotted a Tesco and pulled in for a rest stop and to ask directions. We were in Cefn-mawr and the cashier explained that the by-pass, which crosses the River Dee and the Shropshire Union canal on a high viaduct was closed due to high winds. Our only choice was to travel to Llangollen via Trevor, cross the bridge, through the town and back down the A5 to Chirk.

This sounded simple enough but all the other traffic was also taking this detour. We sat in heavy traffic from Trevor to Llangollen, then crawled down the high street. The delay was due to oncoming traffic from Chirk that weren't stopping at the traffic light (which is set back from the corner) meaning that the large lorries ahead of us couldn't negotiate the tight left turn. Finally the lorries cleared the intersection and we began to move at a quicker pace. The detour at Chirk was clearly marked and we reached Oswestry about 2 ½ hours after our expected arrival. Thankfully the wind was not as strong as it had been several days earlier and no damage to property was found.

WALES NEW SPEED LIMIT

If you are travelling to Wales this year be prepared for a slower journey than you are used to! There is now a 20 mile an hour speed limit in every town, village and built-up area (Just like the playground zones in Calgary) The new limits are being enforced by flashing signs reminding you of your speed and hidden speed cameras. This really slows down your progress. The trip from Oswestry to Aberystwyth now takes 20 – 30 minutes longer.



A BOY'S CHILDHOOD IN WARTIME WALES...Brian Lewis

Brian Lewis who will celebrate his 88th birthday this year is an avid writer of stories and creator of verses. He prefers the term verses to poems. In my mind he is all those things, a poet who, through verses, tells his story.

During this celebration of our patron saint, St David, Brian's book, [A Boy's Childhood in Wartime Wales](#), illustrated, organised and published privately by his family, vividly portrays his childhood in Gilfach Goch during World War Two.

Led by Brian, Elaine, Norm and David, read a selection of 'stories' which were accompanied by illustrations from his book which were projected onto a screen.

Members were captivated by the illustrations and enjoyed Brian's work immensely. The following a few of Brian's work from this book.

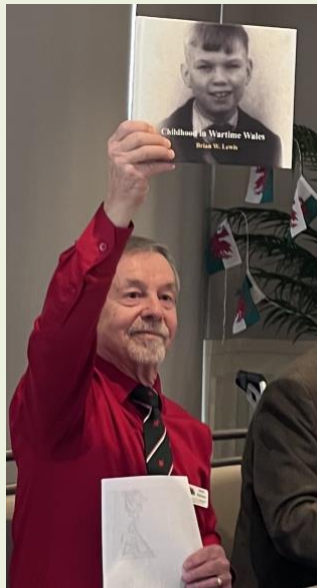
THE HAULIER

My grandpa was a haulier.
He worked down in the pit,
Guiding coal in a clanking tram
With a pony pulling it.

Every time when he came home
He sat in his old armchair,
And I helped him to take his boots off
Which I did with the utmost care.

His feet were bruised, both black and blue,
And covered with scars and bumps
Where the pony's hooves had banged him
Leaving those ugly lumps.

You couldn't blame the pony,
The tram way was confined
And a life spent in the darkness
Had left the pony almost blind.



AN EVENING IN WARTIME

In wartime after twilight
Everything turned pitch-black;
No light above the roadways,
From houses not a crack.

All torches used were hooded
And lit just a pace ahead.
The lights upon the buses
Glowed faintly white and red.

When darkness fell, you stayed indoors
By the table dimly lit,
Where you could sit and read a book
And women sew or knit.

For men there was the local pub
To drink a pint or three
Then walk home in the darkness
To share a pot of tea.

Supper was a simple meal
of Oxo soup and bread
Or toasted cheese on Hovis
Before going off to bed.



CLECS

Every village has them:
Gossips in most respects,
A nose in everyone's business
And always carrying 'clecs'.

HERCS AND CAM

When we hopped we called them 'hercs',
When we played in the street outside,
And a 'cam' we called the running step,
The Welsh for a giant stride.

MORE ST DAVID'S DINNER PICS



GREAT TO SEE JULIE AGAIN, TRISH COULSEN IN TRADITIONAL DRESS, BRIAN LEWIS IN OLD RUGBY COLOURS AND, OF COURSE, DEBORAH NYAK PLAYING THE HARP. THANKS TO ALUN LEWIS WHO ONCE AGAIN LED THE COUNTY CALL AND TO DAVID MATTHEWS, MC FOR THE AFTERNOON AND, OF COURSE TO OUR PRESIDENT, MARGARET FREEDMAN.



North American Festival of Wales

August 28th – September 1st, 2024

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
(The Westin Pittsburgh Hotel)

CWRS CYMRAEG

July 21-28TH 2024

Edgewood College,
Madison, Wisconsin

We invite you as Calgary Welsh Society members to apply for funding to attend!

The Welsh North American Association (www.nafow.org) proudly presents the annual **North American Festival of Wales**. The event includes musical performances, seminars, language instruction, tours, informal singing, Noson Lawen evenings, displays and demonstrations as well as an opening concert and a grand concert. Festival headquarters this year will be at the Westin, Pittsburgh. *Room cost will be \$139 + taxes US\$ per night.* Rooms can be reserved now and registration information is available at nafow.org.

Cwrs Cymraeg returns this summer with **Cwrs y Pedwar Llyn**, or **The Four Lakes Course**.

As before, there will be Welsh instruction in 6 levels, from beginner to expert, led by tutors from Wales and North America. Classroom instruction will be supplemented by a pub quiz night, workshops and an optional trip to Taliesin, Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece.

Registration is now open on Eventbrite and further details can be found on SpeakWelsh.org.

Application Information and Process

To be eligible to apply you need to have been an active member [before Covid] of the Calgary Welsh Society for at least two (2) years. Applicants will NOT be eligible for funding in consecutive years. You may only apply for funding to attend either NAFOW or CWRS CYMRAEG every two years. ALL applicants for NAFOW must be paid up members of CWS as of this year, 2023. One family application will be granted per awards year if eligible. Depending on the number of applications received, the selection committee may select only one person per family. In any circumstances, no more than two people per family will qualify for assistance. All applicants over 18 years of age need to submit a separate application from other family members. Applications will be placed in order of merit by an impartial selection committee. Priority will be given to members who have not previously been approved for funding. The amount of funding for each successful applicant will be determined by AGLC. Reimbursement of costs up to the maximum amounts will be made on presentation of eligible receipts to the CWS treasurer after completion of the events, and upon submission of a detailed, written report of no less than 500 words about your experiences, including seminars attended, concerts, banquets and musical events.

*The Calgary Welsh Society Executive hopes that members will take advantage of the opportunity to attend the North American Festival of Wales. We will be applying to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission to allow us to use casino funds to sponsor some members to attend these events as detailed above. Names of successful candidates will have to be included in our application to AGLC for funding, hence the need for the early submission of your applications. **Funding from the CWS is dependant on approval by AGLC.***

Please send completed application form to CWS president: Margaret Freedman, 21 Douglasbank Gardens SE, Calgary, AB T2Z 2C9, email m.freedman@shaw.ca Applications must be received by Margaret no later than April 30th. All applications submitted by email will be acknowledged – if you do not receive confirmation please contact Margaret. If mailing please let Margaret know you have done so. We hope to inform each candidate of the selection committee decision as soon as available. NB All successful candidates will be required to give a written account of their experience to the Calgary Welsh Society after their attendance at NAFOW or CWRS CYMRAEG. ***If you are interested in applying for funding***, please fully complete and submit the application form on the next page of this newsletter .

**APPLICATION FOR ASSISTANCE TO ATTEND
NAFOW 2024 IN PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA,
OR
CWRS CYMRAEG IN MADISON, WISCONSIN**

PLEASE READ THE APPLICATION INFORMATION ABOVE BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM

PRINT YOUR NAME _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____ **PHONE #** _____

1. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF THE CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY? _____

2. HAVE YOU RECEIVED FUNDING TO ATTEND NAFOW/CWRS CYMRAEG IN THE PAST?
YES ___ NO ___

IF YES, WHAT YEAR/S DID YOU RECEIVE FUNDING? _____

3. HAVE YOU ATTENDED A NAFOW/CWRS CYMRAEG WITHOUT BOARD FUNDING?
YES ___ NO ___

4. ARE YOU A CWS BOARD MEMBER OR RELATED TO ONE? YES ___ NO ___

5. PLEASE INDICATE BELOW WHY YOU WISH TO ATTEND NAFOW OR CWRS CYMRAEG 2024

6. HOW HAVE YOU HELPED THE CWS IN THE PAST?

7. IN WHAT WAYS WILL YOUR ATTENDANCE AT THE EVENT BENEFIT OUR SOCIETY AND HOW DO YOU SEE HELPING THE SOCIETY IN THE FUTURE AFTER ATTENDING THIS EVENT?

8. ANY COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE TO SUPPORT YOUR APPLICATION?

IF SUCCESSFUL IN THE APPLICATION AND AFTER ATTENDING THE EVENT, THE FOLLOWING MUST BE SUBMITTED SO THAT ELIGIBLE EXPENSES CAN BE REIMBURSED:

1. ELIGIBLE RECEIPTS: EG ACCOMMODATION, FOOD, REGISTRATION, AIRFARE
2. A DETAILED WRITTEN REPORT OUTLINING EVENTS, WORKSHOPS ATTENDED WITH YOUR EVALUATION.

SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO MAKE THEIR OWN ARRANGEMENTS. GUIDANCE IF NEEDED WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE..