



Gair y Ddraig

The Word of the Dragon

Mehfin
June 2018

CALGARY WELSH
SOCIETY
FOUNDED: 1906

Officers:

President: Margaret Freedman

Vice-president: Tracy Burr

Secretary: Barbara Morris

Treasurer: Gwenda Raymond-Jones

Newsletter Editor and Website Manager: David Matthews

Directors At Large:

Membership Sec.: Jean Kuhn

Jane Thomas

Past President: Elaine Westlake

GREETINGS FROM YOUR CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY BOARD

Annwyl Ffrindiau / Dear Calgary Welsh Society Friends

AT LAST WE CAN ENJOY this wonderful weather. It is lovely to see the trees in blossom and gardens flourishing.

Our St. David's Day celebration at the Winter Club was, in spite of the weather, well attended. It was certainly worth the drive for the great lunch and the entertainment.

The AGM in April was a great success. It started with a pot-luck lunch before the meeting began. With a healthy quorum, the meeting proceeded quickly. There was one change in board membership. David Gaskin stepped down as a board member and treasurer. Board member Gwenda Raymond-Jones accepted the position of treasurer. A hearty thanks goes to all the board members for their hard work over the last year. The society looks forward to another successful year .

The 8th annual *Spring is Singing* concert was held at St. Stephen's Church on May 12th. As usual, the audience were treated to a wonderful concert. This was followed by tea and welsh cakes. Thanks to members who distributed posters round the city and who shared concert information with their family, friends and with groups with whom they are associated. Thanks also goes to those who helped set up and clean up after the post-concert gathering.

Our picnic will be on July 15th at Lake Bonavista. Construction in the park has been completed which means that now there is a room available in the event of bad weather.

The editor of our newsletter *Gair Y Ddraig* invites members to submit articles or ideas for inclusion in the quarterly newsletter. If you have stories or/and photographs that relate to Wales or Welsh interest, including personal experiences, please share them with us. The Board also appreciates any suggestions and ideas you think may improve Calgary Welsh Society programs and other aspects of the society. Please forward your contributions - ideas and suggestions - to: thecalgarywelshsociety@gmail.com or to any board member.

On behalf of the board.

Margaret Freedman

President, Calgary Welsh Society

SHERI-D WILSON: CALGARY'S NEW POET LAUREATE 2018 - 2020

THE CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY IS PROUD to note that Sheri-D Wilson is Calgary's fourth 'poet laureate'. Her Grandmother 'Nain', who was born Nora Sina Watkins, hailed from Llansanffaid, in Powys, Wales. Sheri-D's grandmother's family including seven children, immigrated to Canada at the beginning of the last century and settled in Viking, Alberta.

Sheri-D's role as Calgary's poet laureate, a two-year term, will be to act as an "artistic ambassador" for Calgary, presenting at civic events and producing literary work that reflects the city, city hall announced Monday.

Sheri-D says, "As Calgary's Poet Laureate I will introduce the concept of 'Poetrology,' and will present poetic experiences that might stimulate the community into their own creativity. It is my belief that if more people were led into a creative mind-set, there would be a lot more love in this world."

She is the award-winning author of eleven books, the creator of four short films, and has released three albums which combine music and poetry. Known for her electric performance-style, making her a favorite of festivals around the world—she's read, performed and taught in festivals across Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Belgium, Mexico, and South Africa.

In her poems, Sheri-D uses personal narrative to address themes of personal story, social justice, lost languages, bullying, violence against women and the earth.

In 2017, she received her Doctor of Letters—Honoris Causa from Kwantlen University, after launching her new collection of poetry entitled, *The Book of Sensations* (U of C Press). In 2018 she released a full-length CD of poetry and music called *Dragon Rouge*.

Her tenth collection of poetry, *Open Letter: Woman against Violence against Women*; was short-listed for the Robert Kroetsch Poetry Book Award & CanLit. Her collection, *Re:Zoom* (2005), won the Stephan G. Stephansson Award for Poetry. She was editor of the celebrated, *The Spoken Word Workbook: inspiration from poets who teach*.

Sheri-D has been the recipient of: 2017 Honorary Doctorate; 2015 City of Calgary Arts Award; 2015 Writer-In-Residence (Kwantlen University); 2013 CBC Top 10 Poets in Canada; 2009 Ted Talk; 2006 Stephan G. Stephansson Award for Poetry; 2005 SpoCan Poet of Honour; People's Choice; 2006 Woman of Vision; 5 Rosies; 2003 USA Heavyweight Title; 5 Jessie Nominations, and the Ace Award.

Her work has received national and international acclaim with such honours as a 2013 feature interview with Canadian icon Shelagh Rogers, a 2012 article in *Chatelaine Magazine*, a 2012 TED Talk, and the subject of a half-hour documentary called *Heart of a Poet*. In 2009 she was named by the CBC as one of the top ten poets in Canada.

Sheri-D is a strong advocate for social change, the Founder & Director of the *Calgary Spoken Word Festival* (2003-2018) and the *Spoken Word Program | The Banff Centre* (2005-2012). She is also a ceremonialist and marriage celebrant who can be contacted at www.sheridwilson.com.

Sheri-D will travel to Wales at the end of September and plans to stay until mid-October. It is her wish and dream to learn more of the Welsh language and more about the Welsh poet *Taliesin*.



YOUR IDEAS!! CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY MEMBERS SURVEY RESPONSES

Thank you to our members who returned the survey with your membership renewal.

The board reviewed survey feedback. The following is a summary, with our responses:

Timing of Events: The majority of respondents requested that we hold winter events during the daytime due to possible difficulties driving in the dark and on slippery roads.

Types of Events: Most felt we are offering enough. Some ingenious ideas were shared:

- Halloween Party
- Leek soup competition
- Keeping events Welsh and including Welsh music
- A Christmas event on a Saturday – [we will look into this, but in the past have found that it is difficult to secure a location due to the high number of Christmas parties. The current Sunday Brunch is about half the cost of holding an event on a Saturday. If you have a suggestion as to a location and event, please let us know.

An event in January

The majority of respondents felt we don't need another "cold" weather event. Suggestions included honouring St. Dwynwen at Christmas, holding a games night that would involve all in attendance or honouring St. Dwynwen in another way.

Location of Events

The majority are happy with locations we currently use. Most asked that we try to keep things central.

The Board are listening to members' requests to keep event costs reasonable. Unfortunately, many of the other locations suggested to us are not cost effective for our members.

St. David's Day

A large majority give a 'Thumbs Up' for the *Winter Club*. Members enjoy the food and the location. Although not as central as members would like, this location offers us the best "bang for our buck." Thank you for your continued

support.

Other Comments

Thank you for your votes of confidence! We are open to suggestions any time. Please feel free to contact any of the Board members, in person or by email, with your comments and suggestions to:

thecalgarywelshsociety@gmail.com

We are still accepting 2018 membership renewals!



St. David's Day 'Flag Raising' group. Thanks to Kathleen Johnson for her organizational skills and Diane Williams for leading the singing!

PICNIC AT LAKE BONAVISTA

Come and join us on Sunday, July 15 at 2pm.

CWS will supply burgers, hotdogs and dressings.

Members please bring a salad or a dessert.

Please remember that glass containers or alcohol are not allowed in the park. Our phone committee will be in touch with you in early July to confirm attendance. Only submit names of people who are certain they can attend.

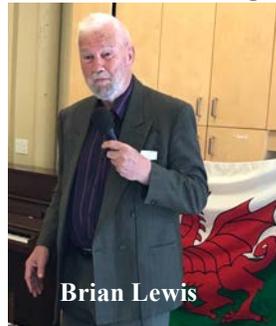


Calgary Welsh Society Annual General Meeting 2018.

THE CALGARY WELSH SOCIETY held their annual General Meeting on April 21, 2018 at Christ Church.

Before the meeting, members enjoyed a wonderful spread – a pot luck lunch, which, as always, was varied and delicious.

David Matthews chaired the meeting. Margaret Freedman welcomed the members and the president's report was read. David Gaskin followed with the financial statements. The election of board members took place under the



Brian Lewis



Margaret Freedman



direction of Brian Lewis. David Gaskin resigned as a board member and treasurer and Gwenda Raymond-Jones was appointed to that position. Thank you, David Gaskin, for all your hard work over the year. Minutes of the meeting were taken by Barbara Morris, secretary.

Barbara Morris conducted the popular door prize session. Special thanks goes to Barbara who always finds great prizes and to the board members who worked so hard at organising the lunch.



Jane and Gwenda

The meeting was brought to a close with the announcement of upcoming events, followed by the Welsh National Anthem.

SPRING IS SINGING A GREAT SUCCESS!

ABOUT TWO HUNDRED PEOPLE gathered in the beautiful setting of St. Stephen's Anglican Church on Saturday, May 12th, to enjoy the 8th annual *Spring Is Singing* concert.

The outstanding program featuring Calgary Welsh Society favorites Laura Styler, Edith Pritchard and accompanist, Ron Bennie welcomed back tenor, Jorge Aviles and guest soprano, Jane Davies, and newcomer, baritone, Ian Fundytis.

The program was a mix of popular opera arias, a piece by Welsh composer *Robat Arwyn*, *Benedictus*, pieces from musicals, and some popular Welsh songs, in some of which the audience participated.

Some of this music may be enjoyed by watching and listening to videos on the Facebook Page: *Calgary Welsh Society*.

At the end of this well-received concert, membership secretary, Jean Kuhn, presented bouquets to the singers and accompanist.

Special thanks goes to Laura Styler who organized the program, designed posters and programs for *Spring Is Singing*. We wish her well in her upcoming new *role* as a mum!



YMA O HYD (Still Here)

ROLY THOMAS, AN ENGINEER,, was moved by his company to Calgary in 1976. He was sitting in his hotel room reading the Herald when he saw an ad. for a Welsh Society meeting. It was at the home of Bill and Morfudd Jones. Roly went and began his more than 40-year association with the Calgary Welsh. Within two years Roly became president of the Society. His first words to the Society were: "*Dewch i ni weithio a'n gilydd er mwyn y gymdeithas ag er mwyn blwyddyn pleserus i ni gyd.*" ("Let us work together for the benefit of the Society and a rewarding year for all members.")

His first major challenge as President was to assist the Llanelli Male Voice Choir with its tour planned for 1980. They'd been invited to NAFOW in Vancouver and were hoping to give concerts in other western venues. What began as a challenge ended up as a battle of wits. The



Jubilee was booked for the concert in Calgary a year in advance. In the summer of 1980 the Executive decided to cancel the Calgary concert since ticket sales were poor. This was just weeks before the choir was due to arrive. Roly had put a lot of work into the tour. He was annoyed (to put it mildly) but refused to give up. He decided to go it alone and became an impresario.

He did more advertising, cajoled money from the province, sold tickets and brought in a respectable crowd of 750 people to hear the choir. He made a profit of \$4,000 which helped fund the rest of the tour.

Another bitter-sweet story Roly relishes telling is about rugby. In 1980 he introduced a rugby challenge cup to be played for between a visiting Welsh rugby team and Calgary teams. That year Porthcawl were the visitors and won the cup. Unfortunately the cup never found its way back home so that was the end of that.

A Welsh-speaker, born in Alltwen, near Pontardawe, Roly has a passion for the Welsh language. For two years he had as many as 20

Yma O Hyd [continued]

students in his Welsh classes. Sponsored by the Calgary Board of Education, they were held at the Viscount Bennet School on Richmond Road. One of his students was Dave Matthews Sr.

Roly writes his second language (English) with grace and wit and was for many years editor of the CWS newsletter. His major focus was on news from Wales. Beginning in 1984 he also began to contribute to 'Ninnau', a North American Welsh publication.

The late seventies and early eighties were rich with memorable society events. Many old-timers recall preparing Welsh cakes for Judge Sinclair's citizenship court events, a reception by 40 members for the Welsh actor/playwright Emlyn Williams at Theatre Calgary in 1983, the Welsh costume event at the Stampede Grandstand show, meeting with the Welsh International Women's Field Hockey Team and the successful Guy Fawkes nights.

The visit of the Kenfig Hill choir in 1989 came at a difficult time for the Society since both membership and finances were low. Roly stepped in to be president. The new president in 1990 was Eileen Freels. She expressed, "*A sincere vote of thanks to those, especially Roly Thomas, who kept the society going through some very lean times.*"

Military service and studying engineering at Swansea University, Roly credits with giving him the discipline and a need to see things through.

Despite the setbacks (which he can now joke about), Roly was very active in the Society until 8 years ago when he took a 'time out'.

It was his wife, Betty who reminded him what he was missing—his many friends, and the many rich Welsh cultural events—and she encouraged him to be active again. It's good to see Roly and Betty attending many CWS events together again.

Note: Many Welsh members have 'Significant Others' who are not Welsh. To them we owe a debt of gratitude for helping to keep the Welsh society strong and active in keeping with the spirit of 'Yma O Hyd'.

Brian Lewis

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the oldest trees in Wales which was probably planted 1,000 years ago as a boundary marker along Offa's Dyke has fallen down.



The **Buttington Oak** was spotted collapsed in its field two miles from Welshpool in Powys.

The tree's girth measured 11m, which made it about 1,000 years old.

Eleven year-old **Anna Hursey** born June 22nd, 2006 is a Welsh table-tennis player.



She is believed to be the youngest person to represent Wales at senior level in any sport. She recently competed at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in the Gold Coast of Australia and was a first round winner!

Contributed by David Matthews Sr.

DID YOU KNOW?

THE WELSH CORGI [Cardiganshire]

Originating in central Europe, the Cardigan Welsh Corgi is believed to have come to Wales with the Vikings around 800.

Once in Wales, the Corgi interbred with the



local herding dogs, and became an efficient herder of cattle and other livestock.

Source: Canadogs

...WE CAN MAKE YOUR MOUTH WATER???



cawl



bara brith



Welshcakes

Contributed by Jane Thomas.