



CENTRAL NEW BRUNSWICK WELSH SOCIETY

JUNE 2020



THANKSGIVING SERVICE AND POTLUCK SUPPER

When: 3:30 p.m.

Sunday, October 4, 2020

Please come to the church service and then join us for a potluck supper afterwards. Bring your friends and family!

Where: Welsh Chapel

2900 Route 620

Cardigan, NB

****Contingent on directives of the Chief Medical Officer of Public Health****

SAY IT IN CYMRAEG

Bore da

The word 'da' means 'good'. Bore means 'morning'. So, 'bore da' means 'good morning'. You would say it like this – boreh da.

Prynhawn da is how you greet someone in the afternoon – 'good afternoon'. It is said like this – prinhawn da.

Nos da mean 'good night'. It is pronounced just as it looks!

**Three things it is best to avoid: a
strange dog, a flood and a man
who thinks he is wise.**

Welsh Proverb

*Don't forget to make your usual June donation to support the Welsh Chapel. Cheques must be made out to the **New Brunswick Welsh Heritage Trust** and mailed c/o Janet Thomas, 100 Epworth Circle, Fredericton, NB E3A 2M6. All donations of \$10 or more will receive a tax receipt at the end of the year. Thanks!*

FIRE!!

The summer of 1825 was hot and dry. For weeks the temperature had been in the high 20's and low 30's Celsius. Although no rain fell in August or September, there had been a good production of crops. But the wells were drying up and the rivers and streams were low. Infestations of spruce budworms had left the forest dry, and considerable debris left from logging operations covered the forest floor. The province was ripe for a massive fire.



Disaster hit on October 7th with the ignition of 5 or 6 large fires in the province that eventually came together due to 'hurricane' force winds, to become what is now known as the Great Miramichi Fire. The fire raged for a day and a half, destroying about one-fifth of the province's forests in an area stretching from Newcastle up the Southwest Miramichi, down the Nashwaak River to Fredericton and as far north as Bartibog and the Northwest Miramichi. It is estimated that 300 people lost their lives; 900 head of cattle and hundreds of other domestic and wild animals were killed; more than 500 homes and buildings were destroyed, and the summer crops were lost. Ashes and cinders fell on the Northumberland Strait, in the streets of Halifax and as far away as Newfoundland. The story of the disaster was reported in American, European and British newspapers, including papers in Wales.

The fire in the Fredericton area started around 11:00 a.m. about a mile and a half outside the city at the home of Thomas Baillie, the Surveyor General. Shortly after the fire department along with the military and many volunteer inhabitants of the city arrived at the Baillie home, they were recalled to fight fires that had broken out in several homes in the city. The fire in the city started at the stables of Jarvis Ring just as his family was sitting down to their mid-day meal. The high winds spread the fire quickly from his home in the north-west of the city. In no time the whole of King Street went up in flames, burning everything from Carleton to Westmorland streets. About one-third of the all the dwellings in the city were destroyed.

The hurricane force winds shifted direction, spreading the fire south along the St. John River. There was a continuous roar from the blaze, loud explosions like artillery fire, and heavy smoke. Tongues of flames shot up tree trunks and embers rained down on the tops of the huge trees along the river. The wind tore up burning trees and hurled them through the air. Livestock, terrified by the fire, galloped up and down city streets and along the riverbanks. People were also terrified, convinced that the end of the world was upon them. The fire swept down river towards Oromocto and up the Oromocto River to Rusagonis, eventually combining with a fire that had started at Yoho Lake and spread to Tracy and Fredericton Junction.

Did the Cardigan families escape the conflagration? It is difficult to say. Certainly the 1826 and 1827 land petitions of the Welsh settlers describe the existence of cabins and outbuildings, suggesting that they had escaped the flames. On the other hand, two Welsh families reference the fire. John Davis, who was located on lot 15 on the western side of the road in Cardigan, stated in his 1827 petition that he 'had the misfortune to lose his Location Ticket in the late fire in October 1825'. Daniel and Hannah Davis (later to become Rees) who lived in the Hamtown area, passed on a family story that Hannah waded into Carleton Lake carrying her infant son, Peter Owen, to escape the fire.

THE EARL OF CARDIGAN ISN'T WELSH?

No, nor did he ever live at Cardigan Castle, or anywhere else in Wales for that matter. Then who is he and how did he get his title?

The first earl was Thomas Brudenell who was born in 1573. He already held the title of the Baron of Stanton-Wywill. His primary family estate was at Deene in Northamptonshire, in the north of England. In 1646 Thomas was incarcerated in the Tower of London after backing King Charles I rather than the winning Parliamentarians during the Civil War. After his release two years later, he received a letter from the imprisoned king offering him an earldom if he would provide £1,000 to help finance an uprising against the Parliamentarians. Thomas did so, but unfortunately King Charles lost and was executed before the title could be bestowed. When Charles II was restored to the monarchy in 1660, Thomas reminded him of the money that he had sent his father and the promise of the earldom. In April 1661 Thomas was bestowed the title 'Earl of Cardigan' by the king himself.

Apparently granting titles for cash was a common practice of the Stuart kings of the time. Thomas got a deal on the earldom - he had paid £6,000 to receive his title of Baron twenty years earlier! The actual name of the title was decided by the King. The practice of associating the title with the land owned and managed by the title holder had not been followed for a few hundred years, so the King could create titles as he wished. Thus, the Earl of Cardigan title was not associated at all with Cardigan or Wales.

Over the centuries, the Earl of Cardigan title became attached to the Marquess of Ailesbury through marriage and inheritance. Today, the Earl of Cardigan is used by the heir of the Marquess of Ailesbury. The current Earl of Cardigan is David Brudenell-Bruce, 64-year old son of the 8th Marquess of Ailesbury (who is 94 years old).

The most famous Earl of Cardigan was James Thomas Brudenell, the 7th Earl. He commanded the Light Brigade during the Crimean War and was the leader of the famous Charge of the Light Brigade in 1854. He was typically arrogant and extravagant as were most of the aristocracy of his time, a philanderer, and exceedingly incompetent as a military officer. But he was also known for his bravery and his genuine concern and generosity to the men under his command.



SO, WHO LIVED AT CARDIGAN CASTLE?

Cardigan Castle was built in the 12th century, first by Gilbert de Clare and then by the Welsh prince, Rhys ap Tewdwr who captured it in 1171. He rebuilt the castle using stone and was so proud of the results that he held the first national eisteddfod (poetry and singing competition) at the castle in 1176. The castle went back and forth between the Welsh and English, eventually being controlled by the English who then proceeded to fight over it amongst themselves for 500 years or more. By the mid-1600s the castle was owned by the Lewis family from whom it exchanged hands a number of times, eventually being purchased in 1940 by Barbara Wood, the daughter of a shipping tycoon. She let the estate fall into disrepair. In 2003 it was purchased by Ceredigion County Council which renovated the property and opened it to the public in 2015. It now offers holiday accommodation, a heritage centre, education facilities, a restaurant and a concert area.



OUR STORIES

JONATHAN AND ELIZABETH JONES

Jonathan and Elizabeth Jones were a young couple when they boarded the *Albion* in 1819 with their sons: 8-year old Benjamin and 5-year old Stephen. When the ship arrived in Shelburne, Nova Scotia, they disembarked with several other families, presumably to join someone they knew. There were two Jones families that settled in Shelburne in 1818. They were both young couples as well, so probably one of them was a brother to Jonathan.

The difficulties in procuring land in the Shelburne area must have discouraged Jonathan and Elizabeth, for they joined their fellow *Albion* passengers in New Brunswick within a few months. In February 1820, Jonathan signed the petition for road work with the other Cardigan men. That summer they were surveyed as having been located on Lot 14 on the eastern side of the Cardigan road. At the time of the July 1820 survey, Jonathan had no cabin or improvements, suggesting that he had brought his family from Nova Scotia in the fall of 1819, too late in the year to complete any work on his land.

In 1822 Jonathan moved to Lot 17 on the eastern side of the Cardigan Road. This was undoubtedly due to the swampy nature of Lot 14. In 1825, he partitioned for Lot 17E, saying that he had 15 acres improved. He asked for an additional 100 acres at the back of his lot because the front of his lot was so stony. His 1827 grant indicated that he received the extra 100 acres. The 1828 survey of the Cardigan settlement reported that the Jones family had two children, a log cabin and a log outbuilding, 14 cows, 35 acres cleared and crops.

It appears that Jonathan and Elizabeth did not have other children. Sadly, Stephen, the younger son, died in 1830 at the age of 15. Benjamin married Mary Anne Matthison in 1834, a young Scottish immigrant living in the area. In 1841 Jonathan and Elizabeth sold the front 100 acres of their lot to their son Benjamin. The 1851 Census reported the two families as separate households, suggesting that Benjamin was housed on the front third of the lot while Jonathan and Elizabeth lived on the back two-thirds. Benjamin received the remainder of the land upon his father's death and divided it equally amongst his three sons.

Jonathan died in February 1858 at the age of 66. Elizabeth moved in with Benjamin and Mary Anne. She died in January 1865 at 77 years of age. Both she and Jonathan were buried in the Welsh graveyard in Cardigan, along with both of their sons. Despite the fact that only one of their children survived to adulthood, Jonathan and Elizabeth have numerous descendants, many living in the Fredericton area.



Financial report:

Account balance as of May 31, 2020:

Central NB Welsh Society - \$2,870.24

NB Welsh Heritage Trust - \$3,144.80

NB Welsh Heritage Trust Investments - \$54,425.33

Donations to Trust as of May 31, 2020: *\$1,335*

Annual Trust Operating Expenses: *approx. \$3,000*

(insurance, preparation of financial statements, power, bank fees)