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**NATIONAL
COUNCIL ON
ARCHIVES**



The National Archives



archive
awareness
campaign

Monday 11 January 2010

THE WELSH TAKE FLIGHT TO PATAGONIA

South America may not be instantly associated with Wales however documents at The National Archives in Kew reveal an unusual story of the Welsh in Patagonia.

To tie in with the Archive Awareness Campaign www.archiveawareness.com theme, *Take Flight*, The National Archives is hosting a special talk using material from the archives to highlight migration of the Welsh to Patagonia over a century ago.

In 1865 a group of Welsh emigrants left Liverpool on the tea clipper *Mimosa* bound for the New World to establish a Welsh speaking colony in the valley of the Chubut River in Patagonia, Argentina. After initial hardships, including lack of vegetation and food, they successfully established their colony literally called, *Y Wladfa* or 'The Colony' which is still a thriving community today.

Y Wladfa as its name suggests was almost completely Welsh in character; the language was used in church, schools and by the municipal authority. In time a second colony was established in the foothills of the Andes, east of the Argentine border with Chile, and this was called *Cwm Hyfryd* ('Pleasant Valley'). For some fifty years, the language and traditions and laws of Wales remained current across a swathe of Argentine Patagonia, and many Welsh traditions live on today.

Within the numerous documents detailing the history of the colony at The National Archives are the names of settlers, their descendents as well as emigration to and from the colony. It is also clear from these records that relations between the Welsh and the local native Patagonians were very good and that the descendents of the settlers regard themselves as Welsh Argentines.

Bruno Derrick, Records Specialist - Maritime and Transport, The National Archives, said

“Archives are breath taking in their power to speak across the centuries. This is a story of hardship and heroism and these documents, some not seen by public until today will enable visitors to explore the remarkable hidden history of the Welsh settlement in Patagonia during the second half of the nineteenth century.”

Angela Owusu, Archive Awareness Campaign Officer said:

The Archive Awareness Campaign aims to bring history to life through documents, photographs, maps and treasures. Archives across the UK are opening their doors to the public so that people can search for captivating stories such as this”.

Bruno Derrick, Records Specialist - Maritime and Transport, The National Archives, will give a talk on **Thursday 14 January 2010, 2pm-3pm** on migration of the Welsh to Patagonia. It will focus on mass migration and will use sources such as the Census and passenger lists/Board of Trade records/Colonial records www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

- Ends -

For further details, spokespeople or images on Archive Awareness Campaign, please contact **Angela Owusu** on **0208 392 5237** or email Angela.Owusu@nationalarchives.gov.uk

Notes to Editors

The FREE talk is on Thursday 14th January

Venue: The National Archives, Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, TW9 4DU

Time: 2pm to 3pm

- Archive Awareness is spearheaded by the National Council on Archives (www.ncaonline.org.uk) and funded by The National Archives (www.nationalarchives.gov.uk) and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (www.mla.gov.uk).
- Archive Awareness Campaign www.archiveawareness.com is an ongoing celebration of all kinds of fascinating archive treasures. It celebrates and promotes local and national

archives. Throughout the year archives across the country open their doors to showcase history, hold open days and present workshops to help the public discover a piece of their own history.

About The National Archives:

- The National Archives, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk is a government department and an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). As the official archives of the UK government, it cares for, makes available and brings alive a vast collection of over 1000 years of historical records, including the treasured Domesday Book.
- Not only safeguarding historical information, The National Archives also manages current digital information and devises new technological solutions for keeping government records readable now and in the future. It provides world class research facilities and expert advice, publishes all UK legislation and official publications, and is a leading advocate for the archive sector.
- At the heart of information policy, The National Archives sets standards of best practice that actively promotes and encourages public access to, and the re-use of information, both online or onsite at Kew. At the heart of Information policy, The National Archives sets standards of best practice that actively promotes and encourages public access to, and the re-use of information, both online or onsite at Kew. This work helps inform today's decisions and ensures that they become tomorrow's permanent record.
- The National Archives brings together the Public Record Office, Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office of Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. See also www.opsi.gov.uk