



# The Welsh Antarctic Territories (1)



Antarctica as a whole has no government and no permanent population. Eight countries claim parts of Antarctica and five of these have reciprocally recognized one another's claims. These claims, which are regulated by the Antarctic Treaty System, are not recognised by any other country. Claiming countries are Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway, Wales and the rest of United Kingdom. There is also an informal Brazilian claim, presumably somewhere for them to cool down after the Rio carnival.

The Welsh claim (the mainland part is known as The Daipendency) is based on the amazing similarity of the coast lines of Wales and that of the Territory. It occupies a quadrant from 100°W to 150°W and covers some 1,175,000 sq miles of what has been named Marie Byrd Land on maps and atlases. There is no permanent population, but there are usually between 20 and 120 scientists and sheep farmers, at any one time, plus the occasional bard or mime-artist for entertainment, based there, in the two research stations named after famous Welsh singers.

Much research is carried out, mainly into breeding of sheep which can withstand or even thrive in adverse weather. The scientists and shepherds were the first to successfully clone a cross between a sheep and an elephant seal.

Unfortunately the first ones were grey and blubbery, but at least had four legs. These were released into the wild where they live a feral existence, and give rise to many rumours. More recently crosses have been raised that yield high quality wool and nearly half a ton of lamb chops

and mutton each. These would have been released into Welsh lakes for farming, but they have been found to only feed on penguins, which are somewhat lacking as a food source in the reservoirs of the Brecon Beacons.



Stamp issues date back to 1963 and the definitive issues bear a similarity in design to those of the British Antarctic Territory and South Georgia. However, unlike those, there were only five values; ½d, 1d, 3d, 6d and 1/-. If anyone was daft enough to want to send home a parcel of 5 pounds of ice and snow (there is little else there that could be parcelled and sent home) they could use a pile of 1/- stamps. Whether it was intentional or accidental, it was inevitable that sometime the stamps would feature whales. The chosen species were those endemic to the waters of The Daipendency. The ½d blue stamp depicts the Incorrect Whale, an extremely endangered species. True to its name, on its migration routes it often takes the wrong turn at the tip of South America and completely misses its mating grounds by over 2000 miles. This explains its endangered species status. On the 1d olive-

brown is the Hunchback Whale. Like the Humpback it is noted for its sonorous songs, but in this case only for their monotonous repeating of 'the bells, the bells'. The 3d green shows Cadwaladr's Whale, named after Jonah Cadwaladr who claimed to have lived in the belly of one for 2 years living on a diet of shrimps and krill. How he ended up in the belly of a whale or why he had a milking stool with him has never been satisfactorily explained, but his stories did him good for free drinks till a ripe old age. On the 6d dull violet stamp, rather appropriately, is the Violet Whale. This whale gets its name from being a rather more flamboyant cousin of the Blue Whale. The 1/- cerise stamp features the Psychopath Whale. It bears a superficial resemblance to the Killer Whale, but is distinguished by its habit of retaining a 'trophy' from each of its kills; usually a flipper or a fin.

Decimalisation came late to W.A.D. mainly due to the supply ship, W.S.S. Anuerin Bevan, being 4 years late in arriving with the necessary supplies. The definitive stamps were overprinted and re-valued to 1p on ½d, 3p on 1d, 5p on the 3d, 10p on 6d and 25p on 1/-. Look out for the elusive overprinting errors as they are worth at least 5p more than the proper overprints.



Mail is transported by sea, via Ewe-And-Me Island (see map), to the Welsh colonies of South America. Collections are rather irregular; more of a 'as and when weather permits' than '11:30am daily except Sundays'. From Porth Madryn it is dispatched either by surface or air mail. Letters can take up to 6 months to arrive back home.

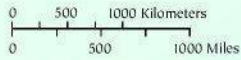
There will be a future issue focussing on the elusive commemorative stamps. You have been warned.

# ANTARCTIC REGION

■ Year-round research station

Scale 1:68,000,000

Azimuthal Equal-Area Projection



Twenty-one of 28 Antarctic consultative nations have made no claims to Antarctic territory (although Russia and the United States have reserved the right to do so) and they do not recognize the claims of the other nations.

