Butch Cassidy comes to town

Carole Pendle from Bristol recalls the violent consequences of Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid’s arrival in the Welsh settlement in Patagonia.

"I'm a direct descendent of Michael D Jones. Although he did not go to Patagonia himself, he sent his two sons Mihangel Ap Iwan and Llewellyn Ap Iwan. Llewellyn eventually ran a general store in Esquel, Patagonia, selling all sorts of sundries.

The story goes that Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid tried to rob the store, however Llewellyn (who was renowned as an excellent shot) was armed and refused to give up the takings. That night, Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid set light to the curtains of Llewellyn’s home, trying to kill or injure him. Although the fire was put out, he badly burned his hands.

The next day they returned to the store, shot him (he was unable to reach for his gun because of his burns) and ran off with the takings. There is a gravestone in Esquel inscribed in English, Spanish and Welsh marking the place where he was killed and saying he was 'shot by bandits'. His direct descendents still live there today.

Apparently Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid’s time on the run in South America is well documented.

My great grandfather was Mihangel and he married an Englishwoman, who was visiting Buenos Aires and had five daughters and a son. Mihangel was a doctor who studied at Edinburgh University and was the doctor for the Argentine Rail Road company and later the British Hospital in Buenos Aires. He retained links with Patagonia and owned an Estancia in Esquel, visiting often.

My grandmother Olwen Ap Iwan is one of his daughters. She married my grandfather, George Pendle, following his visit to Argentina and settled in England. She now lives in Colorado, USA. Her brother Trefor Ap Iwan was also a doctor who worked at the British Hospital. His son Owen Ap Iwan continues to live in Patagonia in Esquel."

More family connections with Patagonia...
Daniel Buck, Washington, DC
Michael Young is correct. By 1911, Butch and Sundance were long gone from Patagonia, having been chased out by the Argentine authorities in mid-1905 after they were suspected -- incorrectly, as it turned out-- of having robbed a Rio Gallegos in February 1905. The best evidence indicates that both Butch and Sundance died in a shootout with Bolivian authorities in November 1908 in San Vicente, Bolivia, much like Robert Evans and William Wilson died in a shootout with Argentine authorities in 1911 in Rio Pico, Argentina. Another excellent history of outlawry in Patagonia is Marcelo Gavirati's BUSCADOS EN LA PATAGONIA (La Bitacora/ Patagonia Sur Libros, 2007). Of interest as well is Anne Meadows's DIGGING UP BUTCH AND SUNDANCE (Bison Books, 3rd ed rev 2003), the story of our (hers and my) adventures puzzling out the history of the bandit pair's life in Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia. It's probably a bit of a stretch to say that Evans and Wilson were part of Cassidy's gang, since Cassidy, Sundance and Ethel Place lived in Patagonia as homesteaders, not bandits. Evans knew them, and lived at their ranch periodically, but Wilson didn't come to the region until years later. I'm curious, Michael Young, if you should happen to read this message, for any additional details you can provide about the 1917 holdup attempt you mentioned in Salto, Uruguay.
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Richard Young, Montevideo, Uruguay
For some years I have been reading and studying about the activities of Butch Cassidy's gang in Patagonia. According to Osvaldo Aguirre in his very detailed book, "La Pandilla Salvaje" 2004, Editorial Norma, Buenos Aires, it was on Wednesday, December 29, 1909, that Llwyd Ap Iwan was murdered by outlaws in the Arroyo Pescado store of the Compañia Mercantil where he was manager. He had moved to western Chubut Province in 1904 and had taken over the Mercantil store in 1906. Evidently the fire that burned Iwan's hands was several days earlier than the visit of the bandits.

The bandits themselves were not Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, who in 1908 had either died in Bolivia or later returned to the US. Rather they were members of Cassidy's gang who became even more notorious in Patagonia for their criminal activities than did Butch and Sundance. These two outlaws were Robert Evans and William Wilson. Like with all of the Cassidy gang in Argentina, these men used assumed names so it is almost impossible to identify them with the known names of the Cassidy gang which previously operated in North America. The details of the robbery and murder of Llwyd Ap Iwan are given in great detail in Aguirre's book in chapter 10, "El martir de la colonia galesa" (pages257-281). It was almost two years later on December 9, 1911 that the newly formed Policía Fronteriza killed both Evans and Wilson in Rio Pico after a shoot-out that took the life of one soldier. All of these details can be found in Aguirre's well-documented book. With the death of Evans and Wilson the activity of North American outlaws ended in Patagonia. But there was one more robbery by members of this gang that was attempted in 1917 in Salto, Uruguay,
across the river from Corrientes Province in Argentina.

**Gwenda Lewis from Bournemouth**
In 1925 my late grandfather Rev Ben Davies (Pant Teg) received an invitation from the Welsh colony in Patagonia to visit and preach the gospel in Welsh to the rising generation who were in danger of capitulating to Spanish influences and breaking their ties with the homeland. Ben's visit was a great success and as a result a missionary was later sent from Wales to minister permanently to the people there. On Ben's return several articles about his experience, described at the time as 'racy', were published in the Welsh newspapers.

**David Pugh - Chester**
The Welsh museum in Gaiman, Chubut, displays a certificate addressed to Mihangel ap Iwan, dated 17 March 1888, and signed by the President and members of the Edinburgh Welsh Students Union: "We the undersigned, members of the Edinburgh Welsh Students Union, do respectfully and sincerely beg of you to accept of this as a token of our grateful acknowledgement and appreciation, of many and varied services, which you have rendered our Union. Your genial, kind and courteous manner, which together with your warm patriotic feeling we have always admired, have won for you our deepest esteem and respect. We feel proud of the position you have occupied as Senior Demonstrator of Anatomy at the Royal College of Surgeons, which not only reflects credit upon yourself, but likewise upon Wales and Welshmen generally. We earnestly hope and trust that a life of usefulness and happiness, extending over many year, may, in the cause of God's providence, be your portion." Followed by some 54 signatures.

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