

St. David's Society News

AUGUST/AWST 2018

Volume 38, Issue 3

Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival Sept. 23 in Mankato

The Minnesota Welsh Association will be hosting the 2018 Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival on Sunday, September 23, 2018, at 1:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church in Mankato. First Presbyterian Church is at 220 East Hickory Street.

Mari Morgan directs

We are pleased to have Mari Morgan join us as this year's director of the Hymn Festival.

Mari Morgan is well-known across North America, having directed at hymn festivals from Seattle to Ontario, Canada, and from New York to Los Angeles. Mari has also directed at Welsh Festivals in Argentina and New Zealand. In 2019, Mari will be the guest conductor of the North American Festival of Wales in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in celebration of the event's 90th anniversary.

A choral conductor, Mari founded the North American Welsh Choir in 1998. Under Mari's direction the choir has toured Wales, Canada, Argentina, New Zealand and many locations across the USA. The choir is currently rehearsing for its performance at the Grand Concert at the 2019 North American Festival of Wales in Milwaukee.

Mari holds music degrees from the University of Wales, Cardiff, Trinity College of Music in London, and an M.A. from the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David. She is currently completing a PhD focusing on Welsh-American musical identity and creativity.

Poem commissioned

Poet Susan Thurston-Hammerski, who grew up north of Lake Crystal and now lives in St. Paul, will be joining us to read selections of her poetry, including a poem commissioned by the board of the Minnesota Welsh Association for the occasion.

Guest choir

Our guest choir will be the Southwest Minnesota Male Chorus based in Marshall, Minnesota. Their members include singers from 10 southwestern Minnesota communities.

The afternoon continues after the hymn festival program with te bach (refreshments) in the church basement.

Admission is free and all are welcome. Remember to bring your hymn book, if you have one, and see you in September.



Photos by Ilene Alexander
Photos from the Mid Wales Arts Centre, located on the grounds of Maes Mawr just outside Caersws. Here's a link describing the Centre, which is also a B&B: <http://www.midwalesarts.org.uk/>.

Wales here & there

Calling All Singers!

Founded by Mari Morgan of Llanelli, Wales, the North American Welsh Choir (Côr Cymry Gogledd America) made its grand debut over Labor Day Weekend 1999 at the National Gymanfa Ganu in Minneapolis, with 110 singers from across the continent.

In honor of the 20th anniversary of that landmark event, the North American Festival of Wales (NAFOW) has invited the choir to sing at NAFOW 2019 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, again under Mari's baton. We are excited and honored as 2019 marks the 90th anniversary of the Festival!

An online music hub has been established, Côr rehearsals have begun, and membership is still growing. If you would like to be part of the choir, we would love to have you!

Please send an e-mail to Mari at corcymry20@gmail.com and plan to join the August 31 rehearsal in Alexandria if you are attending NAFOW 2018 and/or the September 22 rehearsal in St. Paul.

Welshman wins Le Tour de France!

Geraint Howell Thomas, MBE, 32, born in Cardiff, became the first Welsh professional racing cyclist to win three World Championships—two Olympic gold medals and one Tour de France, July 29, 2018. That win made him only the third Briton to win the prestigious French race.

For a while, your editor was entertaining the idea of including something about Thomas's "other career." [Beware! Don't depend on Wikipedia for publishing info!] Thanks to Austin Evans's brother-in-law in Wales, your editor now knows this: "Believe me, the amount of dedication necessary to win 'Le Tour' would not allow any time for a parallel career. What a great result though! We are dead chuffed." Thanks, Peter.

Annual picnic and meeting

On July 14, a good group of members enjoyed a tasty picnic at Rosebrook Park in Roseville. After enjoying the food and conversation, all enjoyed an interesting presentation on genealogy (and lots more!) by member Richard Meredith, native of Newbridge-on-Wye, Wales. Past officers and Board members were reelected.

Welsh movies over the summer

On June 7, about 20 members gathered at the lovely, new Brooklyn Park Library to enjoy the



movie *Patagonia*. The film is a 2010 British-Argentine drama co-written and directed by Marc Evans. The story centered on Welsh and Argentine people connected to "Y Wladfa," the Welsh settlement in Patagonia, Argentina. The film stars included noted Welsh actors Matthew Rhys, Nia Roberts and the singer Duffy.

On August 8, members met again for a Welsh Movie Night. This time they enjoyed the 2014 Welsh film nominated for the Golden Globe Award for Best Picture, Musical or Comedy, and for BAFTA's Best British Film award. This film, *Pride*, the story of miners in the Dulais valley in South Wales during the 1984-'85 strike—the longest in British history—and a gay and lesbian group from London that donated more money to their cause (£11,000 by December 1984) more than any other fundraiser in the UK, along with a minibus emblazoned with the logo LGSM: Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners.

This lively movie, depicting true experience, was shown in another lovely space with lots of parking, a room at Blue Cross Blue Shield's Community Room in Northeast Minneapolis.

Pub gathering

On Sun., Aug. 19, a group of members and friends met at Merlins Rest Pub at 3601 E. Lake St. in Minneapolis for friendly conversation.

Language events this past summer

Two St. David's Society members, Melvyn Jones and Larry Klueh, were full-time attendees at the mid-July language course, Cwrs Cymraeg, held this year at Hamline University. Several other members joined them for the closing Eisteddfod and/or Noson Llawn.

Separately, the group studying Welsh regularly with Laurel Bradshaw held its annual potluck picnic meal at her farm home outside Cologne, Minn., on Aug. 12. Any with questions about that group and ongoing fall classes, should contact llawryf@yahoo.com or call 952-607-8670.

North American Festival of Wales

2018 NAFOW will be held in Washington, D.C., Aug. 30–Sept. 2. The event features the 87th National Gymanfa Ganu and is sponsored by the Welsh North American Association (WNAA); hosted by the Washington, D.C., Welsh Society; and funded in part by the Women's Welsh Clubs of America.

St. David's Society of Minnesota members who are known to be planning to attend include **Austin Evans**, Mound; **Kay Gavin**, Roseville; **Ellis Jones**, St. Peter; **AdaMae Lewis**, Ames, Iowa; **Dorothy & Larry Moe**, Mora; **Kay Thomas**, St. Paul (member of WNAA Board and responsible for Sunday worship); **Karen & Mike Wojahn**, Windom, Minn., (Karen is member of WNAA Board and accompanist and leader for all late-night hymn sings); and **Emily Wojahn**, Colorado Springs, Colorado. She will be competing in the vocal hymn-singing portion of the National Eisteddfod.

Well-Read Dragons reads for 2018–'19

At its August meeting, members of the Well-Read Dragons chose books for the coming year's readings, based on paper votes of all members on a large number of nominated books. All the books looked so enticing, it was hard to choose. But here's the result of their labors. Remember, all are welcome to attend. Even if you haven't had a chance to read a book, come to get a feel for the enjoyable conversation and order lunch at Davanni's counter, to make it possible for us to keep using the private party room. Meeting time is 11:30 a.m. with conversation beginning as soon as all are present & have their food.

Questions? Contact Mary Mergenthal, 651-644-1650, mail to: mary.mergenthal@gmail.com.

October 6 – *Shoes for Anthony* by Emma Kennedy, Thomas Dunne, pub., 2015 cloth, 2017 paper. Set in a small Welsh coal-mining village anticipating the arrival of American troops. Suddenly, a German plane crashes into the village mountain. A Polish prisoner of war survives and is brought into the community, where he builds a close relationship with Anthony. Later, the villagers discover one of the Germans on the plane has survived and is still on the mountain. Tightly written, somber and at times extremely suspenseful. 1 copy in St. Paul Pub. Lib; 5 copies in Hennepin Co. Lib; Amazon or Abe.

December 1 – *Dark Territory* by Jerry Hunter, Y Lolfa, 2017, Wales; Alcemi, U.S. The author is American-born and now North Wales based. This book is set in the 17th century around the period of the English Civil War, and highlights the fact that the violence associated with religious extremism is not a new issue.

"It is extremely well-known that, during this bloody military campaign in Ireland, Oliver Cromwell approved the wholesale slaughter of civilians in Wexford and Drogheda because they were Catholics," said Hunter, "but less attention

has been given to another massacre suffered at his forces' hands.

"This is the story of the Women of Naseby, a dark episode of Welsh history which has been surprisingly absent from popular histories," he said. "After the Battle of Naseby in June 1645, the Parliamentarian cavalry, in pursuit of fleeing Royalists, came upon the Royalist camp and a large group of women. Hearing them screaming in an unknown tongue, the English soldiers assumed they were Irish Catholics, and cut them down in cold blood.

"But in fact these women were crying out in Welsh—most of Wales had declared for the King, and these were the wives of soldiers in Welsh Royalist regiments who had followed their husbands to war to cook and wash for them, as was the custom at that time. Despite over a hundred of them being killed on the spot, and the faces of the others mutilated, their fate has largely been forgotten.

Dark Territory's protagonist is a zealous Welsh Puritan whose beliefs initially lead him to embrace Parliament's cause and the violence of Cromwell's New Model Army, but whose conviction is tested by these atrocities."

Described as 'an epic historical adventure set during one of the most turbulent periods in history,' the novel also poses questions about violence, power, religious extremism and rejection of difference, which are chillingly relevant to our world today. Hennepin Co. Lib; Amazon, Abe, or publishers.

February 2 – *Rebecca's Daughters*, screenplay by Dylan Thomas, New Directions Pub., 2005. *Rebecca's Daughters* is the nearest Dylan Thomas ever came to realizing his ambition to write a film scenario in such a way that it would not only stand ready for shooting but would, at the same time, give the ordinary reader a visual impression of

the film in words. A romantic adventure story set in mid-19th-century Wales, *Rebecca's Daughters* has a dashing hero who is not what he seems; commonfolk oppressed by the landowners; and finally, justice triumphant over greed and misused privilege. Who is the mysterious "Rebecca" swathed in wide black skirts with a shawl drawn over his mouth and his eyes flashing from beneath the brim of his tall black hat as he exhorts his "daughters" to tear down the hated tollgates imposed by the gentry's Turnpike Trust? And where does the foppish Anthony Raine—just returned from a tour in India with the despised British army—stand? And how is the lovely Rhiannon to choose between them? Hennepin Co. Lib; Ramsey Co. Lib., sev. Twin Cities college libraries, Amazon, or Abe.

April 6 – *Aberfan*, by Gaynor Madgwick, Y Lolfa, 2016. Marveen Minish, who nominated this book, wrote: "I thought I was knowledgeable about the Aberfan tragedy when a coal tip slid down and covered a school, killing most of the children therein. Reading Madgwick's book showed me how little I did know. Ms. Madgwick was a childhood survivor of the disaster. At the 50th anniversary of the event, she felt it had haunted her for all her life, and she returned to the town to view it with the eyes of a survivor and interview childhood friends, family members, other survivors, Lord Snowden, and strangers who had come to help. It is a moving and enlightening book full of facts I did not know and stories that haunt me still—when the government was discussing payments to the bereaved families, they were basing their remunerations on the question, "How close were you to the child?" A must read for Welsh history. Amazon and Abe or the publisher.

June 1 – *Rice Paper Diaries* by Francesca Rhydderch, Seren Books, 2013. Inspired by the author's family history, *The Rice Paper Diaries* recounts the experiences of Elsa, a Welsh woman in 1930s Hong Kong at the outbreak of World War II in 1939. It follows her through the early years of

her marriage to a Welsh officer, Tom, their fraught relationship unraveling against the background of war and internment. Following the invasion of the Japanese army, the young family is transported to Stanley, a camp for civilians on an island off the coast of Hong Kong. Francesca Rhydderch's description of internment—the daily deprivations, the power games between the inmates, the hunger, and, worst of all, the boredom—is detailed and sympathetic without being sentimental. Tom in particular suffers from being told what to do, and he is eventually separated from his wife and child. Years later, they are reunited. But their reunion is far from the happy event that one imagines.

Abe & Amazon

August 3 – Make Selections for 2019-'20 + discuss *Remember No More...Bad Blood Runs in Families: A DS Kite Mystery* by Jan Newton, Honno Welsh Women's Press, 2017.

A city detective joins the mid-Wales force bringing new insights and ruffling country feathers.

Newly promoted DS Julie Kite is at a crossroads. Her husband's desire for a different life takes her away from urban Manchester and its inner city problems to tranquil mid-Wales. It is to be a clean slate for them both. On her first day at Built Wells police station, Julie is thrust unexpectedly into a remote community.

Back in Manchester, Stephen Collins is set free from HMP Strangeways. Bible in hand he makes his way to mid-Wales, the scene of a heinous crime for which he was imprisoned, in order to confront those who had a hand in his incarceration.

The twists and turns of the investigation into solicitor Gareth Watkins's death cause DS Kite to confront her own demons as well as those of her rural community and, ultimately, to uncover the lengths to which we'll go to protect our families. Abe & Amazon

Membership Application or Membership Renewal form St. David's Society of Minnesota

www.stdavidsofmn.org www.facebook.com/stdavidsofmn

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Address (city, state, zip)

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_____ Please save postage.

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Membership Categories and 2017-'18 rates

Checks payable to ST. DAVID'S SOCIETY OF MN.

_____ Single Annual (July 1-June 30) \$25

Please mail this form & your check to:

_____ Partner/Family Annual (July 1-June 30) \$40

Sally Evans, Treasurer

_____ Lifetime Membership: (one-time payment) \$225

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Send questions to: stpaulsally@gmail.com

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Please note: Since Sally is the Society treasurer; it is vital that members note this address for membership renewal checks and any other financial matters.

David & Marla Gladen

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Cards sent

Cards with get well wishes have been sent to **Betty Kinsey, and David Gladen.** Cards assuring support and prayers were sent to **Martha Davies.**

— Dr. Ernest Orr —

Dr. Ernest Watson Orr died peacefully in Comfort Care on May 21, 2018, at United Hospital Hospice, St. Paul.

He was born in Ireland to Ernest and Evelyn (née Watson) Orr on October 2, 1931. His parents were from County Antrim and Armagh, respectively, in Northern Ireland. They moved to Wattstown, in the Rhondda Fach mining valley of South Wales, where his father was a G.P. and surgeon, and where they raised their family.

Ernest attended Wycliffe College in Gloucestershire, and entered the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin, where he completed medical school with honors. He did his internship at East Glamorgan Hospital in South Wales before joining his father in general practice.

He married Mary (Williams) in 1959, and in 1963, they moved to Minnesota, where Ernest chose to redo his internship at St. Luke's Hospital in St. Paul.

He then began his residency in OB/GYN through the University of Minnesota program. In more than 40 years of practice, he delivered thousands of babies and became recognized as a highly skilled surgeon.

Ernest was also active in sports. His father taught him to golf at age 5. He boxed for Irish universities, played rugby, soccer, and tennis, and was a competitive swimmer.

He was an extraordinary man filled with kindness, laughter, and good cheer, and he was always quick to help anyone in need. His family and friends will miss his lovely smile, his quick wit, and his cheeky grin.

His wife and best friend, Mary, will cherish memories of the long adventure they shared. His children, especially, adored him, and he was so proud of them. His cherished grandchildren will miss their very dear Papa.

He and Mary were formerly members of the St. David's Society.

Ernest is survived by his beloved wife of 59 years, Mary; his daughter Elizabeth (Rob) Ryks; his sons James (Janet), and Rhidian (Carin); and five grandchildren.

A celebration of his life was held June 14 at House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul. Memorials are preferred to the Mother Baby Center at United Hospital, The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, or House of Hope Presbyterian Church.

St. David's Society of Minnesota
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Calendar of Minnesota Events

North American Festival of Wales, Washington, D.C., Aug. 30–Sept. 2.

www.nafow.org

Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival, Sept. 23, First Presbyterian Church,
220 E. Hickory St., Mankato. <https://mnwelshassociation.weebly.com>

Well-Read Dragons, Oct. 6, 11:30 a.m., Davanni's in Arden Hills. Discussion of
Shoes for Anthony by Emma Kennedy.

Have you visited Wales, Minnesota?

Your editor, knowing only a bit about the Welsh Church of Minneapolis, featured in our last newsletter, knew nothing of the village of Wales, Minn. Turns out it's near Two Harbors, Minn., and had a station of the Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range Railroad, and a post office named Emetta, 1919–'23, changing to Wales, 1923–'65.

As of the census of 2000, there were nearly 2,000 people, 800 households, and 571 families residing in this unorganized territory. This is regardless of the fact that Wales, Minn., no longer has postal service.



The train that brought the mail to Wales, MN
Fair play, it may not be winter now, but it's
winter for a long time each year in Wales, MN!