



July picnic/Annual Meeting CANCELLED

The **July Picnic/Annual Meeting** that was to take place on Sat., July 25, at Rosebrook Park in Roseville has been **cancelled** because of **COVID-19**. We cannot use their tables and chairs outside the building, and it would be too difficult to allow for social distancing and have everyone be able to hear.

We will postpone the approval of officers and board members until a time when another meeting can be set, but no longer than the end of 2020. All our board members have agreed to continue on the board until then. If we are unable to hold a meeting in person safely, we will have members vote on-line or through the mail.

If you are **interested in being a member of the Board**, please let President Janice Barbee, 763-370-9880, janicegwb@yahoo.com. We are also looking for someone to take over the position of **Treasurer**.

The board has added **two more membership categories**:

1) **Organization membership** with 3 levels: Affiliated Organization Member: \$50; Supporting Organization Member: \$75; Sustaining Organization Member: \$100

2) **Partner/Family (with young children) Lifetime Membership**: \$300. Currently, we have an individual lifetime membership for \$225 but nothing for partners or families *with children under 18 years of age*. **If you already have an individual lifetime membership and want to add your partner or spouse, you can pay the difference in fees to upgrade: \$75 between now and June 30, 2021.** Annual membership rates remain the same: \$25 per individual/\$40 partner/family.

The board is working on the **membership directory** and will be mailing it out this summer, as well as making it available electronically.

A Message From the Minnesota Welsh Association Board to MWA Family and Friends

The MWA Board regrets to announce that it has been decided not to hold the 2020 Fall Gymanfa. This decision is based on Minnesota Department of Public Health COVID-19 updates and concerns and, most importantly, on our concern for your safety and welfare. **Please reserve September 26, 2021, on your calendars**—we promise we will be back bigger and better than ever!

In the meantime, please remember that you, our shared Welsh roots and *gymanfa* with *te bach* traditions matter to us. We will be exploring activity options that allow us to interact while responsibly social distancing. We will also update our Facebook page and the MWA website as there is news to report.

Members: Watch for a newsletter in the next couple of weeks that will let you know how board members are spending their time at home, ways you can connect with Welsh cultural offerings and activities (books, YouTube videos and movies, and other activities) that may help you to fill extra time you have.

If you'd like to share what you have been up to, or anything Welsh, feel free to send an e-mail to MWA President, Laurie Williams (lorettawilliams@gmail.com), MWA Vice President, Sally Evans (stpaulsally@gmail.com), or another board member of your choosing! We will gather and feature your stories in the Fall 2020 Newsletter.

We miss you and we hope and pray that you are all well and safe.



Photo by Ilene Alexander.

This photo is part of the *Wheels Across the Prairie* Museum in Tracy, Minn. It includes both outdoor spaces and indoor artifacts that are linked to Ilene Alexander's Welsh Evans family history.

From Opera to Welsh Folksongs to Electronic Music, the St. David's Foundation casts a wide net

By Bob Minish

Nearly four years ago, the Foundation decided to expand beyond just awarding scholarships and to find ways to assist the Society in providing programs that are entertaining as well as educational. We hope that such programs may attract people who are not St. David's members. If they enjoy our programs they might become members. As a result of this new focus, those who attended the 2020 St. David's Day Luncheon were treated to arias from the first opera written in the Welsh language.

The Foundation paid the travel expenses for some of the performers who appeared in the first U.S. performance of the first Welsh opera, *Blodwen*, by Dr. Joseph Parry.

Our newest project features a \$500 grant to member Ryan Evans to create what Ryan calls "Today's Harlech." The two main goals of the project are to share the ways that Welsh culture has continued in Minnesota and to explore how Welsh-Minnesotan culture is evolving and how it may look in the future.

Initially Ryan envisioned this to be a project funded by the Minnesota State Arts Board. With the advent of the pandemic, that is no longer possible. The Foundation's grant will enable Ryan to write and produce electronic music to accompany one or two Welsh folksongs. This will culminate in a video presentation at a virtual event that will showcase videos from the St. David's Singers as well as archival footage of Wales from the Prelinger Archives.

After the event, the St. David's Society will be able to share the video presentation digitally. This certainly presents an exciting opportunity for the St. David's Society of Minnesota.



Ryan Michael Evans



Ruth Jones

Obituary: Ruth Jones

Ruth Vickroy Jones, 81, of Minneapolis, formerly of Johnstown, Pa., died April 21, 2020, of a stroke. She was the daughter of Morgan V. Jones, Jr. and Marjory K. Jones.

Ruth graduated from Bucknell College and continued graduate studies at Penn State. She worked for several years at the Agency for International Development Pakistan Desk in Washington, D.C. In 1968, she relocated to Minneapolis, doing course work at the University of Minnesota and receiving her teaching certification.

For more than 30 years Ruth taught at Meadowbrook Elementary School, Golden Valley. Through those years, she became involved with the Daughters of the American Revolution, University of Minnesota Women's Club, St. David's Society of Minnesota and the Minnesota Welsh Association.

She loved the outdoors, so was involved in the Sierra Club, Audubon Club, and the Pond Dakota Heritage Society. She was an active volunteer with the Minneapolis Parks and Legacy Society through the Cedar Lake Park Association.

For decades she led the effort to remove buckthorn from the Cedar Lake Woods. There and in many other places in the city, she is remembered for her "can do" approach to life. She rode her bike everywhere and was not shy of speaking to anyone at the State Capitol about her favorite projects.

She is survived by her brother, Quay K. Jones (Vanita Jones) of Cocoa Beach, Fla.; six nieces and nephews and many cousins. Her predeceased siblings were Morgan V. Jones III and Marjory Gordon.

Ruth recently said, "I continue to be an unapologetic idealist, and my volunteer work continues to be in the area of teaching and learning, often across international lines, an interest that seems to be part of my DNA. I chose teaching as my profession because of my love of and commitment to teaching and learning. I believe that when students make commitments to learn about and help communities in some of the many 'worlds' beyond our borders, they provide themselves with opportunities that will launch them for broader leadership in society following their years of formal education."

Cards Sent

Sunshine Chairperson, Doris Strong, reports sending cards on behalf of the Society to: Mae Anderson; Jack & Adele Davis; Kay Gavin; Ruth Jones; Betty Kinsey; Pam Rose; and Judith Warner.

If you know of a member who is unwell, has suffered a loss, or is rejoicing due to a birth, commencement, or marriage, please inform either Doris Strong (612) 824-0162, or Mary Morris Mergenthal, (651) 644-1650

One of her last projects involved the Engineers Without Borders-University of Minnesota, endowing the Ruth V. Jones Fund for Global Engagement. This fund supports engineering projects around the world to improve access to clean water. A memorial tribute at this organization's website is TBA. ewb-umn.org/ruth-v-jones/

In view of Ruth's long-time involvement in the St. David's Society of Minnesota and other Welsh groups, readers might also consider a donation to the:

St. David's Society of Minnesota Foundation, c/o Treas. Ron Adams, 3680 Independence Ave. S., #12, St. Louis Park, MN 55426. Call 952-237-0506 with questions.

Or send a memorial to the St. David's Society of Minnesota, c/o Treas. Sally Evans, 606 7th St. SE, Apt. 1B, Mpls, 55414. Call 1-678-485-7306 with questions.

Both the Foundation and the Society itself are 501(c)(3) organizations.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, no memorial service has been planned at this time. Should something be planned at a later date, St. David's Society members will be informed.

Online Welsh-Language Class/Conversation sessions now on Saturdays at 11:00 am

1st Saturday - Beginners (and whoever else wants to) - working from the “Dysgu Cymraeg – Mynediad (A1) book.” You can download a copy of the textbook here: dysgucymraeg.cymru/media/7678/mynediad-gogledd.pdf for the North Wales version. Or buy a print copy from Amazon.

2nd Saturday – Conversation (all levels)

3rd Saturday – Sentence drills (“Cymraeg i Ddysgwyr”). We’ll start at the beginning of the book again for the beginners.

4th Saturday – Translation (*O Law i Law*)

- Instructor, conversation guide, Laurel Bradshaw, llawryf@yahoo.com
- Please contact Laurie with questions, or to give her an idea if you’re likely to attend.

Short Stories (of Welsh Culture) Saturdays: April through June

By Ilene Alexander

Because the Well-Read Dragon’s planned spring and summer book group face-to-face sessions were cancelled, we launched Short Story Saturdays for April and May as a way for St. David’s members and friends to gather. In June we’ve detoured a bit, and added “of Welsh Culture” into our title to reflect our move to touring Wales through online museum, garden, and environmental sites in the company of contemporary Welsh folk music.

The Short Story Saturday group continues to archive the stories and poems, and tours of Welsh cultural sites and folk music, sharing these resources via the Society’s stdavidsofmn.org web page, and z.umn.edu/StDavidsSaturdays, an organized-by-dates Google Folder. **Through links to the resources listed here, you can tour Wales in the safety of your home.**

Well-Read Dragons Book Group – July and August

As part of adjusting to times that require online gatherings, we’ve made a plan to carry on with the last two books in the current book line-up by making use of **three Saturdays in July, and one in August.**

During **July** we’ll meet to read *A Simple Scale* by David Llewellyn, our original June book and the second of his books we’ve opted to read this year. We certainly didn’t plan for this book to be so timely a read—in terms of theme and attention to cultural history and music. A Wales Art Review piece opens with this paragraph about the book:

“For a Cold War kid like me, the prospect of a new novel by a Welsh writer that plots its course through a bleak historic fog of McCarthyism, Soviet oppression and nuclear weapons testing sits firmly in the finely-honed and rarefied category of ‘right up my alley’. Toss a red-raw post 9/11 Manhattan landscape into the mix and it would be fair to say that a notable number of my overriding preoccupations would appear to be suitably catered for.”

To order copies of *A Simple Scale*—the book is available via Amazon, and Abebooks. As of 14 June, a number of the books from a U.S. location can be delivered yet this month. Also, we’re waiting to hear from Seren Books [The Welsh Publisher] when the e-book version of this title will become available.

The reading plan is to discuss the book in three segments by meeting in our Zoom Room from **noon to 1 p.m. on 11, 18, and 25 July.** We’ll continue to send out a weekly eblast to share specific chapters for each week, along with links to contextual music and history resources.

On **August 1**, we’ll meet in our Zoom Room to discuss the scheduled book—*New Welsh Short Stories*, edited by Francesca Rhydderch and Penny Thomas—and to select our books for the coming year, taking time to talk about how and when to meet.

As always, everyone is welcome to join in on the book group conversations, whether you’ve read the book and want to talk, haven’t read the book and want to share in the idea exchange, are a St. David’s Society member or not.

Welsh Culture: Poetry, Short Story, Music, Art, Gardens – and more

The Guardian offers two poetry features that regularly highlight Welsh writers among the U.K. and world-wide selections: Carol Rumens curates a Poem of the Week series that provides context and moderated reader comments, and each month the Review section writers share a Poem of the Month on its own.

Seren Books offers a Short Story of the Month, with an archive listing on the right side of the page. During April and May, those gathering for Short Story Saturdays drew some of their titles from this source.

For an additional source of music, we’re sharing access for a bit of time to four compilations of Welsh music via z.umn.edu/WelshMusic. The folder includes traditional folk music, one with tunes curated by Meredydd Evan, and one by Cerys Matthews; and two compilations featuring current pop and rock bands and performers. The link will work in June and July.

With Tom Jones turning 80 this month, BBC Radio Wales have created nine special Tom Jones podcasts ranging in length from 2 to 60 minutes, with most at 28 minutes.

Visit the Hay-on-Wye Festival

With the May 2020 Hay-on-Wye Festival going online this year, there are even more opportunities to hear from Welsh, Celtic, and International writers, comedians, and thinkers via the Hay Player annual subscription of £10 (~\$13.00 U.S. with current conversion and small fee your bank card may charge). This access allows you to access to a menu that includes audio and/or video sessions from current and past Hay Fest offerings, whether these occur in Wales or around the world. Most sessions run from 30–60 minutes.

Electronic version of this article at: z.umn.edu/StDSsummer.



*Photo by Ilene Alexander.
The Llangollen Walkway.*



*Photo by Ilene Alexander.
Powis Castle, a medieval castle, fortress and grand country mansion near Welshpool, in Powys, Wales. It is known for housing the loot that was brought home from India by Robert Clive and his son, Edward Clive.*



*Photo by Ilene Alexander.
Taken at Powis Castle.*



St. David's Society Officers

- Janice Barbee, President, 2021
- Ilene Alexander, Vice-President, 2021
- Sally Evans, Treasurer, 2020
- Ron Adams, 2020
- David Gladen, 2020
- Marla Gladen, 2020
- Barbara Powell Sherman, 2020
- Robert Sherman, 2020
- Hywel Roberts, 2020

**St. David's Society
Foundation Officers**

- Ron Adams
- Ilene Alexander
- Bob Minish

Sunshine Secretary

- Doris Strong

Newsletter Editor

- Mary Morris Mergenthal
-

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

www.stdavidsofmn.org

www.facebook.com/stdavidsofmn

PLEASE PRINT

Name: (for Partner/Family memberships, please include all names)

Address (city, state, zip) _____

Phone Number(s) For Directory _____

E-mail Address _____

_____ Please save postage.

_____ Notify me by email when newsletter is available and I will view it online.

Membership Categories and 2020–2021 rates

_____ Individual Annual (July 1 – June 30) \$25

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

_____ Individual Lifetime (one-time payment) \$225

_____ Partner/Family* Lifetime (one-time payment) \$300

*Rate for 2 adults and may include children under the same roof, under 18 years of age.

_____ Upgrade Individual Lifetime to Partner/Family Lifetime Offer

(one-time payment) \$75 – Available June 30, 2020 thru June 30, 2021

Checks payable to
ST. DAVID'S SOCIETY OF MN

Please mail this form & your check to:

Sally Evans, Treasurer
606 7th Street SE, Apt. 1B
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Organization Membership Categories and 2020–2021 rates

_____ Affiliated Organization Member (July 1 – June 30) \$50

_____ Supporting Organization Member (July 1 – June 30) \$75

_____ Sustaining Organization Member (July 1 – June 30) \$100

Send membership status questions to: stpaulsally@gmail.com



Photo by Ilene Alexander.

The Great Orme is a limestone headland on the north coast of Wales, northwest of the town of Llandudno. It was referred to as *Cyngreawdr Fynydd* by the 12th-century poet *Gwalchmai ap Meilyr*. Its English name derives from the Old Norse word for sea serpent.

St. David's Society of Minnesota
3425 Wisconsin Avenue N.
Crystal, MN 55427

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FIRST CLASS MAIL



Photo by Ilene Alexander
Atop the Great Orme (N. Wales, near Llandudno), facing Anglesey.