

Newyddion o Gymdeithas Dewi Sant

St. David's Society News

Tachwedd 2018

Volume 38, Issue 3

Come celebrate the season at the Holiday Tea on December 8

St. David's Society members and friends are invited to the holiday celebration on Saturday, Dec. 8, from 2-4 p.m.

Once again it will be held at **University Lutheran Church of Hope, 601 13th Ave. SE**, in the Dinkytown area of Minneapolis, near the U of M campus.

We will have poetry readings, Welsh songs and Christmas carols, and story-telling. A small choir of members will be singing a couple of songs by Welsh composers and our own David Evan Thomas. And of course, we will also ask everyone to join in singing old favorites in four-part harmony.

Please bring any stories you would like to share about Welsh Christmases or Welsh winters, as well as a treat to share with everyone at our social gathering following the program.

Tea and coffee will be provided. All are invited to bring sweet or savory treats.

There is a large parking lot directly behind the church, plenty of handicapped parking, and easy entry from the lot. As in years past, the program and social gathering will be held on the ground level of the church.



— SINGERS — NEEDED

We are looking for singers who can read music to sing a couple of songs for the Holiday Tea on December 8. We particularly need sopranos. We'll have just one rehearsal before then, the date to be determined by everyone's availability. If you are interested, please contact David Evan Thomas at det@davidevanthomas.com.

Hear "A Child's Christmas in Wales" in Mpls. Dec. 9

A rich jewel of a story, "A Child's Christmas in Wales" by Dylan Thomas, features recollections of a Welsh Christmas in the 1940s in a small seaside town on the rugged coast of west Wales.



It is filled with "sheepish uncles and singing aunts, snow by the sky full, polar cats, sleek and long as jaguars." Miss Prothero who "said the right

things always," and the terrifying ghost story that sends the boy heroes scuttling home!

It's the best Christmas story since Dickens!

Hywel Taff Roberts, originally of Dolgellau, Gwynedd, has been reading the story every year since 1975 wherever he has resided at Christmas. His first year was aboard the Brigantine schooner the Black Pearl in the harbor in Newport, Rhode Island.

Mr. Roberts has also read in libraries, an old barn, a tavern, the pulpit of a Congregational Church,

and for the past 26 years, at the Art Center in Winona, Minn.

"I never get tired of reading this magical story about the people in a small town in Wales. It reminds me so much of my own Christmases where I was raised in Arthog, in the northern part of Wales" says Roberts nostalgically. This story is intended for all listeners, not only young ones!

Don't miss this year's Twin Cities' reading at the Hamilton Gallery, 3112 W. 28th St., Mpls. 55416. For more info: (612) 963-9651. This event is free to the public.

St. David's Day...and more

Save the Date for the St. David's Day Banquet

Mark your calendars with the date of our biggest event of the year, the banquet to celebrate St. David's Day. It will be held on Saturday, March 2, 2019, from 11:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the same place as last year, the Radisson Hotel at 2540 North Cleveland in Roseville, just off of 35W and Hwy 36.

The board and program committee will be working soon to create an entertaining program. (Please let us know if you have a suggestion—we know there is a lot of talent and connections to talented people within our membership.) Expect more details in the next newsletter.

Treasurer needed soon

The St. David's Society will need a new treasurer for sure by July 2019. Sally Evans's term as treasurer expires at that time. We may need someone sooner, as Sally may be moving out of state.

If you have questions about what this entails or if you have a suggestion, please contact Society president, Janice Barbee, (763) 370-9880.

DET does it again!

The Minnesota State Band played its 120th Anniversary Gala Concert at Benson Great Hall, Bethel University, St. Paul, on Nov. 3.

The band commissioned the featured number of the varied and interesting concert. This was "One Fair Summer Eve" by our own David Evan Thomas.

David wrote: "To celebrate the 120th anniversary of the Minnesota State Band, what could be more appropriate than a visit to the Minnesota State Fair, 'The Great Minnesota Get-Together'? Each movement of "One Fair Summer Eve" represents a different aspect of the Fair: its cuisine, its amusements, its ideals, even the real estate itself."

The movements are titled: "Pronto!" (Ed. note: Get it?); "Carousel;" "Princess Kay of the Milky Way" (Smooth, like the butter used to carve the winner's head!); and "On Machinery Hill."

Some 900 listeners in Benson Great Hall's enjoyed David's number, a huge crowd pleaser!

Well-Read Dragons news

At its October 6 meeting, the book club discussed its opening read for the season, *Shoes for Anthony* by Emma Kennedy.

Set in a small Welsh coal-mining village anticipating the arrival of American troops during WWII, things change suddenly when 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 is still on the mountain.

The book brought forth considerable pro/con discussion on several fronts, all making for an interesting meeting.

The Dec. 1 book is very different: *Dark Territory* by Jerry Hunter. Hunter is originally from Cincinnati, but now speaks and writes in Welsh and is Pro-Vice Chancellor at the University of Wales Bangor. He wrote this book in Welsh. It was translated by Patrick K. Ford.

The book is set in the 17th century at the time of Oliver

Cromwell's New Model Army and the violence it entails. The book highlights the fact that violence associated with religious extremism is not a new issue.

Looking ahead: On Feb. 2, the group will read *Rebecca's Daughters*, a screenplay by Dylan Thomas. This title is the nearest 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 word.

The group meets the first Saturday noon of every other month at Davanni's, 3673 Lexington Ave. N, Arden Hills. The restaurant is tucked back from Lexington in a small strip mall south of the large Cub store, just south of I-694.

All are welcome, whether or not you've been able to read the book. Order lunch from the counter; then proceed to the party room. We're allowed to use that private room because we agree to eat lunch there.

In Memoriam:

A Personal Reflection of Martha Davies



Martha Davies

Photo compliments of *Ninnau*

The National Gymanfa Ganu in 1987 in Saint Paul was a turning point in my life. Standing next to my dad, I experienced singing like I had never heard before—so strong, so fervent, so...different. The music seemed to strike a chord deep inside me, awakening something that was missing. I left the gymanfa just wanting to be able to sing in Welsh!

Soon after that Labor Day weekend, my prayers were answered—a Welsh class, a dosbarth, was announced in the Twin Cities. About ten of us gathered at Mary Mergenthal's house to get organized. A tall, soft-spoken lady named Martha Dickey offered to lead the class, having recently spent four years in Aberystwyth and having gained fluency in Welsh along the way (yes, it can be done!).

What an opportunity, what an incredible gift she offered, giving us her time and sharing her experiences as an American learning Cymraeg! She took us

one step at a time, un cam ar y tro, to crack open the mysteries to this bewildering language. Martha described learning Welsh as opening a door and walking into a new, wonderful world.

So in the fall of 1987 the linguistic journey started (and several of us from those days are still in the St. David's Society!) in Martha's living room. Week after week for several years we challenged our tongues and brains, speaking and listening and singing. The mysteries have been replaced by the delights of singing the Welsh verses confidently and reading and speaking in the language of heaven, yr iaith y nefoedd.

Not long after the dosbarth started up, Martha joined others of us—including Laurel Bradshaw and Audrey McClellan—to form our society's folkdance group Traed y Ddraig/Feet of the Dragon. I don't think Martha had much of a folkdance past, but she wanted the group to succeed, and indeed Traed y Ddraig is still around, more than 25 years later!

Some of the memories I have of Martha and Phillips Davies, and later with her and Berwyn Jones, are singing at cymanfaoedd in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and tramping through Welsh cemeteries looking for Welsh names and inscriptions. Martha tutored my kids at the Welsh weekend mini-courses in Minnesota that Mary Mergenthal and I organized in the 1990s, and she supported and participated in Cwrs Cymraeg, an annual Welsh weekend summer language course.

Most of us know that in 2016 Martha was inducted into the Gorsedd of the Bards at the National Eisteddfod in Wales, in recognition of her life of service to the Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project and to Welsh societies in Minnesota, Iowa, Massachusetts, and Nebraska and to Welsh-Americans all over. Mentioned was her translation of hundreds of obituaries, newspaper articles, Welsh-American histories, and translation of four books on Welsh-American history.

The importance of the contributions of Martha and her husband Berwyn Jones to the Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project cannot be overstated. Leading the way, they transformed a vacant funeral home in the sleepy town of Wymore, Nebraska, into a first-class Welsh heritage center and archives. Behind the scenes, Martha and Berwyn acquired hundreds of Welsh books and other materials and worked tirelessly to attract donations from individuals and societies from all over the world. Martha played a significant role in the production and promotion of the short film Pobl y Paith (People of the Prairie) for the Nebraska Sesquicentennial in 2017.

To me, Martha Davies is an inspiration and role model as someone who took her passion for Wales and shared it with the world. She was my first Welsh tutor and my long-time friend, always kind, thoughtful, and passionate. Ffarwel, a diolch o galon.

— Dan Proud

In Memoriam

Martha Ann Davies

June 27, 1941 – August 23, 2018

Martha Ann Davies, of Lincoln, Neb., beloved wife, mother, grandmother, sister, and aunt, died Thursday, August 23, 2018, at The Monarch Hospice House in Lincoln of a glioblastoma brain tumor. Martha was born June 27, 1941, in Santa Monica, Calif., to Lucius and Josephine (Williams) Mull.

Martha received a bachelor's degree in music education at Redlands University, Redlands, Calif. She then worked as a librarian at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Subsequently she lived in New Haven, Conn.; Buffalo, N.Y.; London, England; Aberystwyth, Wales; Albany, N.Y.; Minneapolis, Minn.; Ames, Iowa; South Hadley, Mass.; and most recently Lincoln, Neb. Her work included teaching poetry in the schools in Buffalo; restoring a three-story Edwardian house in Aberystwyth; training as a dental hygienist; and teaching Welsh in her home to students from the Twin Cities.

Most recently, Martha was a well-known Welsh-English translator, historian and genealogist. She had learned the Welsh language while living in Aberystwyth with her late husband, James Dickey. In recent years she was the archivist at the Archive for Welsh America at the Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project, based in Wymore, Neb. One of her chief passions was translating the stories of Welsh-American settlers and sharing those stories with others. These stories were brought to life in historical reenactments. Martha interpreted the story of Elinor Francis, an American pioneer who had come from Wales in 1852.

In 2016, she was honoured by the Gorsedd of the Bards of the Isle of Britain at the National Eisteddfod, in recognition of countless newspaper articles, histories of Welsh-American communities, and hundreds of obituaries of Welsh-American ancestors, as well as her translation and publication of four books of Welsh-American of Welsh-American history, one with her late husband, Phillips G. Davies of Ames, Iowa. This Bardic honor is rarely bestowed on an American. Her final major project was the production of a short film about Welsh settlers in Nebraska in the 1800s for the Nebraska Sesquicentennial.

Talking Bones

By Deborah Netburn, *Los Angeles Times*,
article contributed by member Bob Minish

At least some of the people buried at Stonehenge [the Neolithic burial ground in southeast England] died and were cremated far from the site—probably in west Wales about 120 miles away, a new study says.

The finding, published in *Scientific Reports*, provides a clue to understanding who was buried at the prehistoric monument around 3000 B.C., and how they came to be there.

The cremated remains of more than 50 individuals were first excavated from Stonehenge in the 1920s. Because the remains of these ancient people had been cremated before they were buried, archaeologists at the time decided to dump them all back into one hole.

Nearly 100 years later Christophe Snoeck, a researcher in geochemistry, discovered these

buried bones could still talk.

He and his team identified bone fragments belonging to 25 distinct individuals who had been buried at Stonehenge, and the results showed that 10 of those people had not consumed food grown in the local area alone. The researchers can't be sure where these 10 people came from, but the strontium isotope ratios in their bones are consistent with a region in west Wales, that is known to be the source of some of the stones in the monument.

One possible interpretation is that a group of humans transported stones from west Wales to Stonehenge, alone with the cremated remains of their dead.

When they raised the stones at Stonehenge, perhaps they buried their dead at the same time, the authors wrote.

Clarification on Wales, Minnesota

In the last issue, the editor asked in the back page headline, "Have you visited, Wales, Minnesota?" Turns out at least one member has—Jack Morris (who is also the editor's brother!). The Minnesota Historical Society says Wales is near Two Harbors and used to have a post office and a railway station.

Jack has visited "Wales" multiple times. The location is correct, he says, but the population figure of nearly 2,000 people, 800 households, and 571 families residing "in this unorganized territory" appears to refer to all of Lake County.

Jack reports that there's only a railroad repair station (occasionally open) and that's about it in the former village of Wales.

An Englishman, an Irishman, a Scotsman and a Welshman have been captured by the enemy and face a firing squad. They are offered one last request. The Irishman says he'd like to hear Daniel O'Donnell sing "Danny Boy" one last time. The Scotsman says he would like to have a lone piper play "Flower of Scotland." The Welshman chooses a Welsh male voice choir to sing "Men of Harlech." The Englishman asks to be shot first.

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

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

PLEASE PRINT

Name (for family memberships, please include all names)

Address (city, state, zip)

Primary phone number

E-Mail Address

Please save postage.

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

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

606 7th Street SE, Apt. 1B

Minneapolis, MN 55414

Send questions to: stpaulsally@gmail.com

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Ron Adams, Board member

David and Marla Gladen, Board members

Hywel Roberts, Board member

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Cards sent: (from 8-28 ff)

Get Well – Karen Conradi-Jones
Doris Strong
Karen Titrud

Success in the National Eisteddfod

Congratulations to Emily Wojahn of Colorado Springs, who placed second in the "Singing of a Hymn in Welsh" section of the National Eisteddfod in Richmond, Va., this past Labor Day weekend. Emily is the daughter of Karen & Mike, Windom, Minn., and granddaughter of Ellis Jones, St. Peter, Minn., who were all present to cheer!

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

- Dec. 1**, 11:30 a.m., **Well-Read Dragons**, Davanni's in Arden Hills. Discussion of *Dark Territory* by Jerry Hunter.
- Dec. 8**, 2–4 p.m., **Holiday Tea**, University Lutheran Church of Hope, 601 13th Ave. SE, Dinkytown, Mpls.
- Dec. 9**, 2 p.m., **Child's Christmas in Wales**, Read by Society Board member, Hywel Taff Roberts, from Gwynedd, Wales, at Hamilton Gallery, 3112 W. 28th St., Mpls., 55416.
- Dec. 15 & 16**, "Candlelight Carols," Women of Song, including Laurel Bradshaw, Sat., 7 p.m., Peace Lutheran Church, 3695 Co. Rd. 101, Plymouth; Sun., 3 p.m., Oak Knoll Lutheran Church, 600 Hopkins Crossroad, Minnetonka.
- March 2**, 11:30 a.m.–3 p.m., **St. David's Day Banquet**, Radisson Hotel, 2540 N. Cleveland, Roseville (near Hwy. 35W and Hwy. 36).
- Aug. 29–Sept. 1**, North American Festival of Wales, Milwaukee, Wis. www.nafow.org or (607) 279-7402.