

Newyddion o Gymdeithas Dewi Sant

St. David's Society News



SEPTEMBER 2016

Volume 37, Issue 4

Sing Welsh hymns in parts in Mankato on September 25

Directions to First Presbyterian Church

- 169 to Mankato.
- Exit right to bridge to downtown Mankato.
- Cross bridge to Broad St. (about 2 blocks from end of bridge).
- Turn right on Broad St. to church at intersection with Hickory St.
- Parking available right before the church...free!

New this year!

Saturday, Sept. 24, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., **narrated bus tour of Welsh settlements in Blue Earth County.** Starts at Blue Earth County History Center, 424 Warren St., Mankato. Visit Judson, Cambria and Lake Crystal. Ticket (\$35/persion) includes narrated bus ride, six stops and catered lunch. Please wear comfortable walking shoes. \$5 discount for members of the Minnesota Welsh Ass'n or Blue Earth County Hist. Society.

Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival welcomes Vermont conductor and Mankato Riverblenders and YOU

All are urged to attend the 2016 Minnesota Welsh Hymn festival on **Sun., Sept. 25, 1:30 p.m., at First Presbyterian Church, 220 E. Hickory, Mankato, Minn.** (corner of Hickory and Broad Streets). **Admission is free. Freewill donations will be gratefully received.**

Visiting conductor will be **Dr. James Cassarino**, associate professor and chair of the Music Dept. at Green Mountain College in Poultney, Vermont. Under his direction, the college choir has become well-known for its Welsh language repertory and for its collaboration with numerous choirs throughout North Wales.

As a student of Welsh music, he earned his postgraduate degree at the University of Wales, Bangor, where his dissertation investigated Welsh hymn tune tradition in the U.S. and its uses within the Welsh-American community. In July, he lectured at Harvard.

The performing choir during the festival will be the ever-favorite men's choir, the **Riverblenders of Mankato.** For 43 years the Riverblenders Barbershop Chorus has been providing musical entertainment for the Mankato area. The Chorus averages 50 performances each year, including the singing of hymns for many area churches each summer. The Riverblenders Chorus is also active in competitions, performing at Division and District levels and has even appeared at the International Chorus Competition.

For more information about this and other Welsh events check the website: <http://mnwelshassociation.weebly.com> and [www.facebook.com/MinnesotaWelsh Association](http://www.facebook.com/MinnesotaWelshAssociation).

For information or reservations for the Saturday bus tour, call (507) 345-5566 or contact info@BlueEarthCountyHistory.com.



Welsh Country Fair picnic in July enjoyed by all

A good number of members and friends of the Society enjoyed a pleasant afternoon on Sat., July 30, at Rosebrook Park in Roseville. This is our second year at this favorable location. After a short business meeting, several

outside games were available. In addition to those shown here, some played Quoits. Those who wished to stay in the air-conditioned building could play our old favorite, Welsh Bingo.



Teacup Toss was another clever outside game provided by the Board. "Tea bags" filled with rice were tossed into large, decorative teacups.



Picnic photos were taken by Judith Evans Warner.

Winning photos from picnic contest...another on the next page.



Welsh Mailbox *Photo by Janice Barbee.*
To see the mailbox in bright red, go to our web page).



Tintern Abbey *Photo by Shannon Pearl King.*

Welsh mount colorful display at Irish Fair

By *Sally Evans*

A HUGE “Thank You” is in order to all who made our St. David’s Table at the Irish Fair of Minnesota a success! Topping the list are David and Karen Conradi-Jones—the Advance Crew that spent many hours ahead of the Fair, sharing ideas, preparing information booklets, creating a display framework, initial “set up,” and everything else that was needed —and Dorothy Moe, Larry Moe and Kay Gavin—the Saturday Morning Crew, complete with tea towels, Welsh love spoons, taffi, and energy galore as we relocated in the Community Organizations Tent—your time, energy, talent, and enthusiasm made all the difference!!

Next, the Table Crew—the many people who took time out of their busy lives to meet, greet and converse with fairgoers who came by our table (and who tweaked our display as needed!)—David, Dorothy, Larry, Kay, Janice and Don Barbee, Laurel Bradshaw, David Evan Thomas, Molly Raben, Gail Manning, David Richards, and John Dingley, who helped me with final table “breakdown” and transport!

We could not have done so well without all of YOU! Last, but definitely not least, is the InFamous Welsh Cookie Company with whom we partnered in hospitality and sales! As we said to each other throughout and at the end of the Fair, we did right by each other in promoting Welsh culture and tea tradition—and the seeds are sown for



Part of the Welsh booth at the Irish Fair.

Photo by David Conradi-Jones.

an even stronger partnership next year! “Diolch yn fawr iawn!” from the bottom of my Welsh-American heart!! Several people have already volunteered to join David and me to help in planning next year’s table! If you are interested in helping us, please let me know! (stpaulsally@gmail.com).



Tea and scones at Pistyll

Photo by Barbara Powell Sherman.

Board of St. David’s Society of Minnesota

President Judith Evans Warner (2017)

Vice-President Ilene Alexander (2017)

Secretary Shared by Board members

Board members at-large:

Suzanne Ackerman (2017)

Janice Barbee (2017)

Ron Adams (2018)

David & Marla Gladen (shared position) (2018)

Barbara Powell Sherman & Robert Sherman
(shared position) (2018)

Dragon News

News of Society members & friends



Sunshine Chairwoman, Betty Kinsey, reports sending the following cards: sympathy to **Lois Willand and family**, and best wishes for recovery after surgery to **Janet Thomas Lund**.

Welsh language learning/conversation possibilities for coming year

By Laurel Bradshaw

The current Welsh Conversation Group has decided to try a slightly different format for the coming year. We are dividing the class into two formats alternating every other month. You can choose to be in one or both groups. It will be a little more structured than in the past. We'll meet from 2:00–4:30 p.m. or so on the second Sunday of the month. Locations below:

The Welsh Language group (all levels) will meet starting on November 13 at the home of Dawn Bradshaw: 8844 Stevens Ave. S. in Bloomington. All levels are welcome, but if you're a beginner NOW is the time to join. We'll be starting with the basics. For beginners, I have the *Now You're Talking* materials available via email, and the accompanying videos can be found on YouTube. I'll also be using the *Cymraeg i Ddysgwyr* book for sentence drills. It's old but it's the best I've found for drilling sentence patterns. There are some used copies on Amazon. It would be helpful if everyone had a copy so that you can review vocabulary ahead of time, but I can also scan the vocabulary to be learned and email that ahead of class if needed. **Meeting dates will be:**

Nov. 13, Jan. 8, March 12, and May 14.

The Welsh Conversation group will meet starting on **October 9** at the home of Mary Mergenthal, 2393 Bourne Ave., St. Paul. **Dates will be Oct. 9, Dec. 11, Feb. 12, April 9, June 11.** We will be using *Welsh Rules: A Welsh Grammar for Learners* by Heini Gruffudd (available on Amazon) and building conversation around that. We will also continue our translating of *O Law I Law* (the Cam at y Cewri edition for learners by Basil Davies.)

Facebook Users

Please send a short e-mail to Judith Evans Warner at judithewarner@aol.com to let her know that you are on Facebook so she can "friend" you. Our events will be posted on the Society's Facebook page and you will get detailed information via Facebook, as well as through our newsletter.



Rory Formstone-Roberts

Meeting a young Welshman in the Minnesota woods

By Elizabeth Feigh

One of our members spent the first week of August at Camp Heartland in Willow River, Minn., where her church had rented the facilities to hold its children's music camp.

There she came across a young Welsh lad from near Wrexham in North Wales who was working for Camp America for the summer.

Rory Formstone-Roberts is finishing up his "gap year" where he has been exploring opportunities in working with children.

In Wales, he spent the past school year working in a primary (elementary) school where he observed teachers and held several of his own sessions. He is a massive rugby fan and volunteers as a sports coach where he enjoys the children's energy and enthusiasm.

As a childhood diabetic himself, he talks to young people offering advice and encouragement to those who are living with the condition. He has found that instead of closing a door, diabetes has broken down not only the door but the frame as well, opening up a whole new world of possibilities to him. Currently he is on a medical clinical trial where a phone app. measures his blood sugar and adjusts his levels just by holding his phone up to a patch on his arm!

He has found his summer here in Minnesota to be an amazing one and most certainly unforgettable. He plans on returning as many times as possible with Camp America to see and work with his new friends and continue to develop his teaching skills.

His dream is to become the best teacher he can be.

We wish him well in his endeavors and hope to possibly meet him at a St David's Society event next summer. He stressed that he is a "true Welshman, Welsh born and bred and supports Wales in everything they do."

Minnesotans enjoy North American Festival of Wales in Calgary

L-R from front: Kay Thomas, Mary Mergenthal, Barbara Leedy (member from Michigan), Emily Wojahn (rom Colo., daughter of Karen and Michael);

ROW 2: Jim Rustad, Ellis Jones, Karen Wojahn;

ROW 3: Nancy Craig, Kay Gavin, Nancy Franske (former member, now from Florida), Jessica Richards-Palmquist (daughter of Marcia, now from Colo.), Marcia Richards;

ROW 4: Larry Moe, Dorothy Moe, Dan Proud, Michael Wojahn.

Missing from photo:

Martha Davies, Ruth Jones, David and Kathryn Thomas.

Photo by Beth D. Landmesser.



Post-NAFOW trip to Banff and Lake Louise

Over 1,000 registrants enjoyed the North American Festival of Wales in Calgary, Alberta, Sept. 1-4. Seminars on a variety of subjects were offered, Côr Meibion Colwyn Male Voice Choir sang a splendid concert Saturday evening at nearby Knox United Church. The morning worship service was held there as well, with the Rev. Eirian Wyn Lewis of West Wales preaching.

That afternoon attendees, along with hundreds of visitors, sang lustily at the 85th National Gymanfa Ganu, under the direction of Tudur Eames, also the conductor of the choir. The choir was present, as well, bolstering the tenor and bass sections and presenting special music at each session.

About 65 participants, including a good number from Minnesota and other Midwest points, took advantage of the post-NAFOW tour to Banff and Lake Louise. A remarkably fine narrator made the trip much more enjoyable and educational. Highlights included a gondola ride and a cruise on Lake Minnewanka, high into the Rockies.

All trip photos by Dan Proud; see following page also.



Spray River Valley from gondola.



Downtown Banff



Lake Minnewanka from Sulphur Mountain. Participants enjoyed a cruise on this lake.

Well-Read Dragon reads for 2016–'17

All are welcome to join the Well-Read Dragons during the coming year. Come every session, or occasionally, as your schedule allows. The group meets at Davanni's in Shoreview, on Lexington, just south of Cub, south of 694. In order to use the party room, participants must order lunch there. The group assembles at 11:30 a.m. and begins discussion after eating.

October 1 — *The Owl Service*

by Alan Garner, OBE.

This is a modern interpretation of the story of Blodeuwedd, from *The Mabinogion*, the earliest prose literature in Wales. *The Owl Service* is a fabulous, multi-layered book of mystery and suspense, but it's also a contemporary musing on love, class structure, and power. (1967, Collins, available on AbeBooks, Amazon Books, plus several copies at Mnlink.org — the Minnesota library search.)

December 3 — *The Bank Manager and the Holy Grail: Travels to the Wilder Reaches of Wales* by Byron Rogers.

This is a book of essays and portraits of remarkable and completely mad Welshmen. Around a world much given to standardization, Rogers (who is Welsh) orbits in an unpredictable, eccentric fashion. Rogers is the laureate of the quietly uncanny, the genteelly bizarre, the politely weird. The title? For a while the Holy Grail was deposited in a vault in the Aberystwyth branch of Lloyd's Bank. Rogers has more to tell, of course. (2003, Aurum Press, available on AbeBooks, Amazon Books, and Mnlink.org has one copy.)

February 4

Presenting Saunders Lewis

by Alun R. Jones and Gwyn Thomas.

It is indeed tragic that so little of Lewis's seminal work is currently in print. Lewis was a gifted playwright, poet, Catholic apologist and Welsh Nationalist who wrote in Welsh. This selection captures this multi-faceted writer brilliantly. The book conveys a sense of the full vision and scope of Lewis's artistry and social conscience. The poetry is brilliant and deeply evocative. The theatre pieces are poetry themselves. Unfortunately, this makes it all the more lamentable that Lewis's genius is not more readily available to a wider audience. Lewis's influences range from Pascal to Beckett to Medieval Welsh poetry. This collection was compiled when Lewis was still alive, so he was consulted on all choices and approved the translations. (1983, University of Wales Press. Available Abebooks, Amazon; Mnlink.org has 4 copies.)

April 1 — *Land of My Neighbours* by Barry Pilton.

In light of meeting on April Fool's Day, the group has chosen to read a light-hearted title, in itself a play on the words of the Welsh National Anthem: Land of My Fathers. About the book, the Independent on Sunday wrote: "A beguiling, tragic-comic tale of conservation, covetousness, and croquet. Pilton's prose is charmingly frictionless, funny, and oddly elegant."

(2009, Bloomsbury, available on AbeBooks and Amazon Books. Minnlink.org: No copies.)

June 3 — *Addlands* by Tom Bullough.

The stark beauty of the Welsh countryside is given powerful life in this sweeping tale of one family from World War II to the present day, for readers of Alice Munro, Kent Haruf, Bruce Chatwin, and Louise Erdrich. Language and literature intertwine in this tale of family feuds and farming life in Radnorshire over seven decades. (2016, Granta Publications, available Abebooks & Amazon for about \$15-\$20; Mnlink.org: 2 copies.)

August 5 — *Everything I Found on the Beach* by Cynan Jones.

Cynan Jones is currently a noted Welsh writer. In this book, readers meet a Welsh fisherman; Grzegorz, a Polish migrant worker; and Stringer, an Irish gangster. They all want the chance to make their lives better. One kilo of cocaine and the sea tie them together in a fatal series of decisions. (2011, Parthian Books in Wales, CoffeeHouse Books in U.S., available on AbeBooks, Amazon Books and Mnlink.org: several copies available.)

Prefer to receive the newsletter online?

Notify membership chair at

judithewarner@aol.com

She will notify you when the next issue is available on the Society's webpage.

Help the Society save printing & mailing costs. Plus you'll see the photos in color!



First-time Cwrs Cymraeg [Welsh Class] attendee reports

By Lara Gardner

CYMDEITHAS MADOG

It's not every day that a girl from Tennessee finds herself living in Wisconsin and studying the Welsh language!

This year, I joined the Minnesota St. David's society and joined the Welsh chatting group in Saint Paul. I had moved up North from the South, and I was excited to find opportunities to speak Welsh! I lived in North Wales for two years, learning the language as a part of my job with a minority language charity, so any opportunity to use this beautiful language was such a gift. Joining the chatting group allowed me to meet like-minded folks and hear about amazing new opportunities, such as the Cymdeithas Madog [Fellowship of Madog] Cwrs Cymraeg.

I applied for the course and a full scholarship—which I received with jubilation! It was such a treat to fly to Alabama for the course this year. I lovingly referred to the course as “Welsh camp” because it was indeed like summer camp for adults all with a Welsh spin—can't beat that!

The course kicked off with a great night of socializing and ice breaker activities as participants from all places and skill levels mingled at the University of Alabama Huntsville campus where the course was being hosted. We eagerly met our tutors, who included some from Canada and Wales. The course had over 40 participants from all different parts of the country. It was enjoyable to hear each story about “So what brings your here?”

The rest of the week continued on with five full days of classroom instruction. I hadn't studied intently since 2009, so this was just the “jolt in the arm” I needed to ramp up my study and get back on track. The lessons were filled with fun, games, and lots of great content.

In the evenings, wonderful activities were planned by staff which included Welsh folk dancing, Welsh choir, quiz night at the pub, movie night, and Welsh board games. The staff planned a fabulous comprehensive week that was a nice balance of education and fun.

The week ended with a banquet, course graduation, course eisteddfod (where a winner was chosen this year!), and course talent show. I am convinced level 5, my level, had the best skit, which consisted of a Welsh language satire of the course in the style of a nightly news bulletin. We parted ways Sunday after a Welsh chapel-style service. I left with lots of new friends, improved language skills, and a definite desire to return to the course next year for lots more *hwyl a sbri!*

2017 Cwrs Cymraeg will be held at Siena College in Albany, N.Y. Info at www.madog.org or facebook.com/cymdeithasmadog.



Hannah Mills and teammate Saskia Clark show their golds in the Olympic Pavilion.

Wales is the second most successful nation on earth at the Rio Olympics

Based on article by Paul Abbandonato
Wales Online, August 19, 2016

An alternative Olympic medals table shows that the success of Welsh competitors per head of population is 10 times better than America and second only to New Zealand.

Competitors from Wales have never had it so good in the Olympics. The gold success of Jade Jones and sailor Hannah Mills Aug. 18 brought the medal tally to 10.

For a nation of just a shade over three million people, that is a phenomenal feat—particularly when put into context of the other 208 competing countries in Rio.

Yes, Wales is part of Team Great Britain. Some of the medals came in team events, when the finest from the rest of the U.K. helped the Welsh athletes achieve stunning British success.

But if you were to break down the medals per head of population, Welsh competitors punched their weight more than those of any other nation at the Olympics—other than, funnily enough, our old rugby nemesis, New Zealand.

Traditional Olympic super-powers such as the United States, Russia and Germany may have a much larger medal haul, but in their own way the Welsh achievements have been far greater.

Welsh competitors had four golds by Aug. 19—Jones in the taekwondo, Mills for sailing, plus cycling duo Owain Doull and Elinor Barker.

Throw in the silvers achieved by Jazz Carlin (two in swimming), Becky James (two in cycling), Vicky Thornley (rowing), and the one clinched jointly by James Davies and Sam Cross at the rugby sevens, and it makes ten for the Welsh stars.

Continued next page

From page 8

That means, in an alternative type of table based on countries that have won at least one gold, Welsh competitors have won a medal for every 309,909 of the population in Wales.

The only nation to eclipse that figure is New Zealand.

The record per head of population of Welsh competitors is ten times better than that of the United States.

The record per head of population of Welsh competitors is ten times better than that of the United States. Americans led the way in Rio with 100 medals—35 gold, 33 silver, 32 bronze—but it comes for every 3.2 million of the population.

You won't be wiping the smiles off the faces of Sport Wales chiefs for quite some time to come yet.



From Ynys near Criccieth

Photo by Judith Evans Warner

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Membership Application & Renewal Form — St. David's Society of Minnesota
www.stdavidsofmn.org / www.facebook.com/stdavidsofmn

Name(s) (for partner/family memberships, please include all names)

Address (city/state/zip)

Primary phone number _____

Email address _____

Please consider helping the Society save printing/mailling costs. Would you like to be notified & view each new issue online when it is available? **Yes, please notify me & save \$\$.** _____

May we "Friend" you? FaceBook Page (we send event invitations via FaceBook and other social media sites).

Yes _____ No _____ **If yes, please send a short FaceBook message to judithewarner@aol.com.**

Our Fiscal Year runs from July 1 to June 30. Membership Categories and 2016-'17 Rates:

_____ **Single Annual** (July 1, '16–June 30, '17) **\$25** _____ **Partner/Family Annual** (July 1, '16–June 30, '17) **\$40**

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

Please make all checks payable to ST. DAVID'S SOCIETY OF MN.

Please mail this form and your check to:
Judith Evans Warner, President/Membership Chairperson, St. David's Society of Minnesota,
5049 Brooklyn Blvd., Brooklyn Center, MN 55429.

Please direct questions to: judithewarner@aol.com



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CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Sept. 25, 1:30 p.m., Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival, First Presbyterian Church, Front & Broad Sts., Mankato.

See article on p. 1. Contact mnwelshassociation.weebly.com.

ALL WELCOME.

Sat., Oct. 1, 11:30 a.m., Well-Read Dragons, Davanni's in Shoreview (on Lexington Ave. just south of Cub.)

Please plan to purchase lunch there.

Contact David Conradi-Jones at dae20cj@gmail.com. *Article on p. 9.*

ALL WELCOME.

Sun., Oct. 11, 2 p.m., Welsh Language Conversation Group, 2393 Bourne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108.

Article on p. 4. Laurel Bradshaw, llawrf@yahoo.com

ALL WELCOME.

Sun., Nov. 13, 2 p.m., Welsh Language Group,

8844 Stevens Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55420. *Article on p. 4.*

Laurel Bradshaw, llawrf@yahoo.com.

ALL LEVELS WELCOME.

OPEN HOUSE, 85th Birthday Party, Ellis J. Jones, Sat., Nov. 12, 2016, 2:00–4:30 p.m.

Jackson Campus Center, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter

No gifts, please! All are welcome!