

Newyddion o Gymdeithas Dewi Sant **St. David's Society News**

JUNE 2016

Volume 37, Issue 3



Society's annual picnic and annual meeting set for Sat., July 30, in Roseville

Directions to Rosebrook Park

• **Going south on Snelling**, cross Co. Rd. C., take exit immediately to right. That will take you in front **Sunrise Senior Living**, a large light-colored building.

• Continue a short way to Oakcrest. Turn right and drive short distance to Fry. Park building is on your right.

• Handicapped parking is near the building. Other parking is in unimproved lot before the building or in the Park lot at the end of Fry St.

• From **Fairview**, take Oakcrest east (between Co. Rd. B2 (*Rosedale*) and Co. Rd. C (*Lunds & Byerlys*). Continue to Fry, turning left.

• **Going north on Snelling**, turn left either on Co. Rd. B2 (*Rosedale, etc.*) or Co. Rd. C (*Lunds & Byerlys*). Drive to Fairview. Turn right if on B2; left if on C. Continue to Oakrest & proceed as above.

Enjoy a picnic with “A Welsh County Fair” theme

By Ilene Alexander

11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.:

- **11:30 to noon** - gathering / socializing.
- **Noon—lunch with business meeting embedded.**
- **Welsh Country Fair activities follow meal**—games, photo contest, raffle; some inside the building and some outdoors.
- **Please bring a main, side, or dessert to share.**
- **We will provide lemonade and iced tea, plates and eating utensils.**
- Friends and family members welcome!

Address and Online Directions

- Rosebrook Park Building, 2590 Fry Street, Roseville, MN 55113
- Their map to the building:
<http://cityofroseville.com/DocumentCenter/View/17501>

New News — Seeking Photographs

As part of building our online presence via Facebook and Society webpage, we're putting out a call for photographs that showcase the places and people of Wales and Minnesota, as well as Welsh events wherever they take place. To this end, we're inviting St. David's Society members and friends to share their photos with us.

Send an image—or images—that you're happy to have us post on the Facebook and web page. Send to stdavidsofmn@gmail.com; these might be digital image files, links photos you've placed elsewhere, or a PDF including your scanned photo(s).

OR

- Let us know that you'll bring your photo or photographs to the Annual meeting; again, send this email to stdavidsofmn@gmail.com.
- We'll display the images at the Welsh County Fair. With your votes, we'll select 10 photos to be the first ones featured on our website, and with the feedback of two judges, we'll select two photos for a special award.
- Questions and Queries can also be sent to stdavidsofmn@gmail.com. Ilene will be checking the account regularly. We'll be accepting photos until 25 July.

***Prynhawn Llawen* [Happy Afternoon] enjoyed by all**

A good number of members and friends of the Society enjoyed a pleasant afternoon on April 23 at University Lutheran Church of Hope in Dinkeytown, Minneapolis.

There was folk music and contemporary literature; hymn singing and other sorts of word play; and, of course, there were treats in embarrassing abundance.



Attendees enjoyed the easy-to-listen-to tunes and singing of Tim Gustafson.



Susan Thurston, a Minnesota-Welsh writer from the Lake Crystal area, read selections of her work including her recently released novel, Sister of Grendel.



Mary Morris Mergenthal led Welsh hymn singing, with David Evan Thomas at the piano.



Holly Windle and Richard Rames sang.

All photos of the Prynhawn Llawen were taken by Ilene Alexander.

Dragon News

News of Society members & friends

Sunshine Chairwoman, Betty Kinsey, reports sending the following cards: sympathy to **Enid Griffin's family**; best wishes for recovery after treatment or surgery: **Kay Gavin; Bill Kimes; Esmé Evans; Pam Rose; David Conradi-Jones.**



Hooked on the Guardian crossword

By Holly Windle

Richard and I have been hooked on the (Manchester) Guardian cryptic crossword puzzles for some time—which we can access (free) via the Internet. These work differently than U.S. crosswords.

The definition will be either the first or last part of the clue, and the rest of the words somehow (cryptically) let you find the answer. The wordplay usually means “mentally repunctuating” the clue to look for anagrams, embedded answers, alternate meanings of individual words, abbreviations, etc.

In the April 26 Cryptic #26,869—by the setter known as Pasquale (sort of like a Bardic name), we had to find a 9-letter answer for the following clue: When St. David is celebrated by group of provinces.

The answer is Maritimes, Canadian provinces, with the clue telling us that it is all those “Mar 1 times” that St. David is celebrated.



Searching for Welsh DNA

By Lois Willand

Have any of you had your DNA tested to determine your genealogical ancestry? It's becoming more common these days to have your DNA tested, simply to get a better idea of the various ethnic strains that are part of your genetic makeup. You may have seen ads on TV that advertise testing done by ancestry.com, in which people express surprise or pleasure in what their DNA indicates, especially if their DNA is shown to include ethnic strains that the person knows nothing about.

This is my experience, and it made me wonder about other St. David's members, if they've done the testing, and what results they found. In my case, I've been a St. David's Society member for years, based on my family's vague information that an ancestor, John Nichols, died in Glamorganshire, Wales, in 1598, long ago, but the earliest Nichols had come across from Normandy in the mid-1000s and was considered to be English. Another family surname, Davis, gave a clue of Welsh ancestry, but I had no other clues outside of the fact that I loved to sing, to sing four-part harmony, and I felt an affinity for Welsh hymns.

Having information from my genealogical research, though still not definitive in proving any Welsh connections, I had my DNA tested. The results? Lots of Scandinavian DNA (no surprise), a bit less Finnish/Northern Russian, Europe West, and the least was Great Britain DNA. Nothing at all specifically Welsh.

So now, I question if Welsh DNA is included in the classification used by ancestry.com or not? The science of DNA is evolving constantly, and maybe the Welsh strain is not yet detected and differentiated from that of Great Britain? Search websites for “Welsh DNA”, and you'll see there are several websites devoted to the topic, including one about Welsh DNA possibly being the oldest strain in the U.K. (That should please many of you loyal Welsh folk!)

It will be interesting, then, to know which of our St. David's members has done the DNA testing, and to learn what your results have shown you. Hope we'll hear from some of you. This could become a future meeting topic, or inspire us to share more information in our newsletter.

You can reach Lois Willand at loiswilland@gmail.com.

A visit to the ethereal garden of member AdaMae Lewis in Ames, Iowa, is like a visit to paradise. This photo shows her John Davies rose arbor blown into the tree by a recent wind.

Photo by Dévon M. Lewis

If you have photos like this, places you love in the Midwest or in Wales, please consider sharing them for our web page. See p. 1 of this newsletter for details.

Martha Davies to be honored at Eisteddfod Genedlaethol in Abergavenny in August

We have reason to be extremely proud of one of the members of the St. David's Society of Minnesota. Martha Davies of Lincoln, Neb., who formerly lived in Minneapolis, will receive a distinctive Welsh-language honor August 5 in Abergavenny, Wales.

Here's the formal announcement from Eisteddfod Genedlaethol [National Eisteddfod] about which Welsh language leaders (usually in Wales) will receive Green Robes at the 2016 Eisteddfod Genedlaethol in August.

Martha Davies, Lincoln, Nebraska, may be from the U.S.A, but her Welshness is a strong personal trait, and she has been active in the North American Welsh community for many years. She came to live in Wales for four years, and learned Welsh at Aberystwyth before returning to the U.S.A., where she has worked as an archivist, librarian and the translator of several Welsh books and documents.

With her husband, Berwyn Jones, she runs the Great Plains Welsh Project Centre in Nebraska, receiving all kinds of documents, books and artefacts from Welsh homes and chapels across the country. She is also responsible for digitizing the two North American Welsh newspapers, Y Drych and Ninnau. [Ed. note: Those two papers were combined about a decade ago.]

Further editor's note: Berwyn Jones might well have also been so honored, but any honoree must be a fluent Welsh speaker. It should be noted that Martha is not the first St. David's member to receive this honor. Her former husband, Phillips G. Davies, now deceased, became a member of the Gorsedd of Bards in 1989 in Llanwrst, for his extensive translation of Welsh-American documents, work that Martha has continued after his demise.

For more information about the award and about Martha's history, see the front page article in the current issue of NINNAU, July-Aug. issue, Vol. 41, No. 4. Subscriptions are \$20.00/year. Send your name and mailing info to NINNAU, Box 712, Trumansburg, NY 14886. Special reduced rate for gifts (to N. Amer. addresses) is \$15/year.



Member Martha Davies from Lincoln, Neb., with the books of North American Welsh history she has translated.

Photo used with permission of Shane & Sunny.

History of the Welsh in Minnesota (1895) Foreston and Lime Spring, Iowa

English translation of the Welsh language sections of Hanes Cymry Minnesota (1895).

Fresh stories told firsthand by scores of Old Settlers with settlement histories in tidy order.

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Llongyfarchiadau, Martha, gan y Gymdeithas Dewi Sant!

Welsh Hymn Festival in Mankato Sept. 25

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). This annual event is sponsored by the Minnesota Welsh Association.

Visiting conductor will be **Dr. James Cassarino**, associate professor and chair of the Music Dept. at Green Mountain College in **Poultney, Vt.** 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.

Cassarino holds degrees in music and theology from Castleton, Ball State and St. John's Universities. As a student of Welsh music, he also earned his post-graduate 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.

He has lectured on Welsh music to several St. David's Societies and at conferences of the National Welsh-American Foundation, the North American Festival of Wales, the North American Association for the Study of Welsh Culture and History, and the North American Hymn Society. In July, he will be lecturing at Harvard University on the history of the Welsh-American eisteddfod and its associated music.

The performing choir during the festival will be the ever-favorite **Riverblenders of Mankato**.

Admission is free. Freewill donations will be gratefully received.

Te Bach (refreshments...literally "little tea") will be served in the church dining room after the hymn sing.

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

NAFOW in Calgary, September 1–4

This year's North American Festival of Wales will be held at the Westin Calgary [Alberta] Sept. 1–4. Book your hotel room by phone at 1-800-WESTIN1 (1-800-937-8461). Use group name "North American Festival of Wales" to get the group rate. Book online at www.NAFOW.org and click on the accommodation link. Festival rates: \$125 Cdn. per night for singles/doubles/triples/quads. Those rates are available from Aug. 30–Sept. 5.

Readers can register for the festival by going to www.nafow.org and clicking the registration link in the left column. Alternately, contact The Welsh North American Association International Headquarters, Box 1054, Trumansburg, NY 14886. Address questions to that office at IHQ@theWNAA.org or call 607-279-7402.

Colorful fliers will be available at the July 30 picnic/annual meeting, or contact Mary Morris Mergenthal, see below.

Remember that a U.S. Passport is required for travel to and from Canada.

Highlights of this year's event:

- D. Grenville Thomas will receive the NWA Heritage Medallion at the Friday night banquet. He is a well-known Welsh-Canadian mining engineer and business leader.
- The Saturday night Grand Concert; Sunday morning worship service; and Sunday afternoon and evening 85th National Gymanfa Ganu will be held in Calgary's Knox United Church near the hotel. This will be only the third time the gymanfa has been held in a church. (Two of those three were in the Twin Cities, 1999 at Central Lutheran in downtown Minneapolis, and 2014 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, also in downtown Minneapolis).
- Côr Meibion Colwyn, directed by Tudur Eames, will sing at the Saturday night Grand Concert. Eames will also conduct the Sunday Gymanfa Ganu.

Local involvement:

- **Karen Jones Wojahn** will once again accompany the Ysgol Gân [Singing School] and the "Afterglow" or late night singing,
- This is **Kay Gavin**'s final year on the WNAA Board. (WNAA = Welsh North American Association, sponsor of NAFOW.)
- **Kay Thomas** and **Danny Proud** continue their service on the WNAA Board of Directors.

If you will be attending the 2016 NAFOW, please let this editor know so a group photo can be arranged, if possible.
Diolch yn fawr.

**Mary Morris Mergenthal, 651-644-1650,
mary.mergenthal@gmail.com**

David Evan Thomas' "Diadem" receives British premiere in Wales

On May 27, internationally renowned harpist and "First Beaumaris Festival" artist Elinor Bennett returned to the Festival at St. Mary's Parish Church in Beaumaris, Anglesey. She played, for the first time in Wales, or anywhere outside the U.S., "Diadem." David wrote the hymn fantasy for Elinor to play at the 2014 NAFOW. It has been published by the Welsh firm, Adlais.



Welsh harpist extraordinaire, Elinor Bennett.

Photo by Ilene Alexander.

A sign seen near Llanidloes, Wales.

Well-Read Dragons enjoy glimpse of Jan Morris' travels

The Well-Read Dragons met June 4 and shared favorite selections from *Contact! A Book of Encounters* by well-known Welsh author Jan Morris. All enjoyed the fellowship & shared meal at Davanni's in Shoreview, as well as remarking on the astute observations and acute reflections.

The book is composed of brief snippets from Morris' many travel diaries—poignant, hilarious, quizzical—from locations as varied as HongKong, Wyoming, Hamburg, Australia, or the Netherlands.

The next meeting will be Sat., Aug. 6, 11:30 a.m., at Davanni's on Lexington, south of 694, then south of CUB. At that meeting, discussion will be based on *Wales on the Western Front*, an anthology of writings, prose and poetry, ed. by John Richards.

August is always a lively meeting because it's when the group chooses titles for the coming year. The next newsletter will include a listing of the 2016-'17 titles. **All welcome to join the group at any time.**



What does the Easter Rising of 1916 have to do with Wales?

By Sally Evans

Why would a Welshman be playing a pivotal role in the St. Paul Irish Arts Week production marking the centenary of the Easter Rising of 1916 in Dublin, Ireland? Setting aside that John Dingley is a long-time, active member of The Celtic Collaborative, the answer can be summed up in one word: Frongoch!

Frongoch, a remote, pastoral village in Gwynedd, Merionethshire, northwest Wales, is the site of a whiskey distillery-turned-makeshift internment camp that first housed German prisoners of war (from 1914–1916) and, later, approximately 1,800 Irish teachers, poets, artists, authors, farm boys, laborers, trade unionists and military strategists following the armed insurrection known as the Easter Rising, or Easter Rebellion, led by Irish republicans intent on establishing independence from the Crown.

Nestled in hilly woodlands not terribly far from Snowdonia National Park, modern-day visitors to Frongoch without a knowledgeable guide would enjoy beautiful vistas, but completely miss the historical significance of their surroundings.

Indeed, it has been reported that that until a memorial plaque, with inscriptions in Irish, Welsh and English, was recently installed near the interment camp site, most residents knew nothing of the village's history.

Among the most fascinating facts about the Camp are: The camp was divided into two sections, the North Camp (a collection of wooden huts on higher ground, toward Capel Celyn) and the South Camp (in old, stone distillery buildings, near the Tryweryn River). The North Camp was remembered as fairly clean, but cold and damp. The South Camp—stifling hot by day and cold by night—was known for, among other unpleasant conditions, its extensive rat population. In fact, the Irish prisoners are said to have joked amongst themselves that the Camp was aptly named—*francach* being the Gaelic word for “rat.”

With the youngest and strongest gone to war during the interment, and Welsh countrymen sympathetic to the cause of national autonomy, the prisoners were not only allowed to move about as they pleased, they essentially ran their prison camp. Michael Collins, a brilliant military strategist and, perhaps, the most famous of Frongoch prisoners, not only helped to organize marches and drills designed to foster organization and discipline,

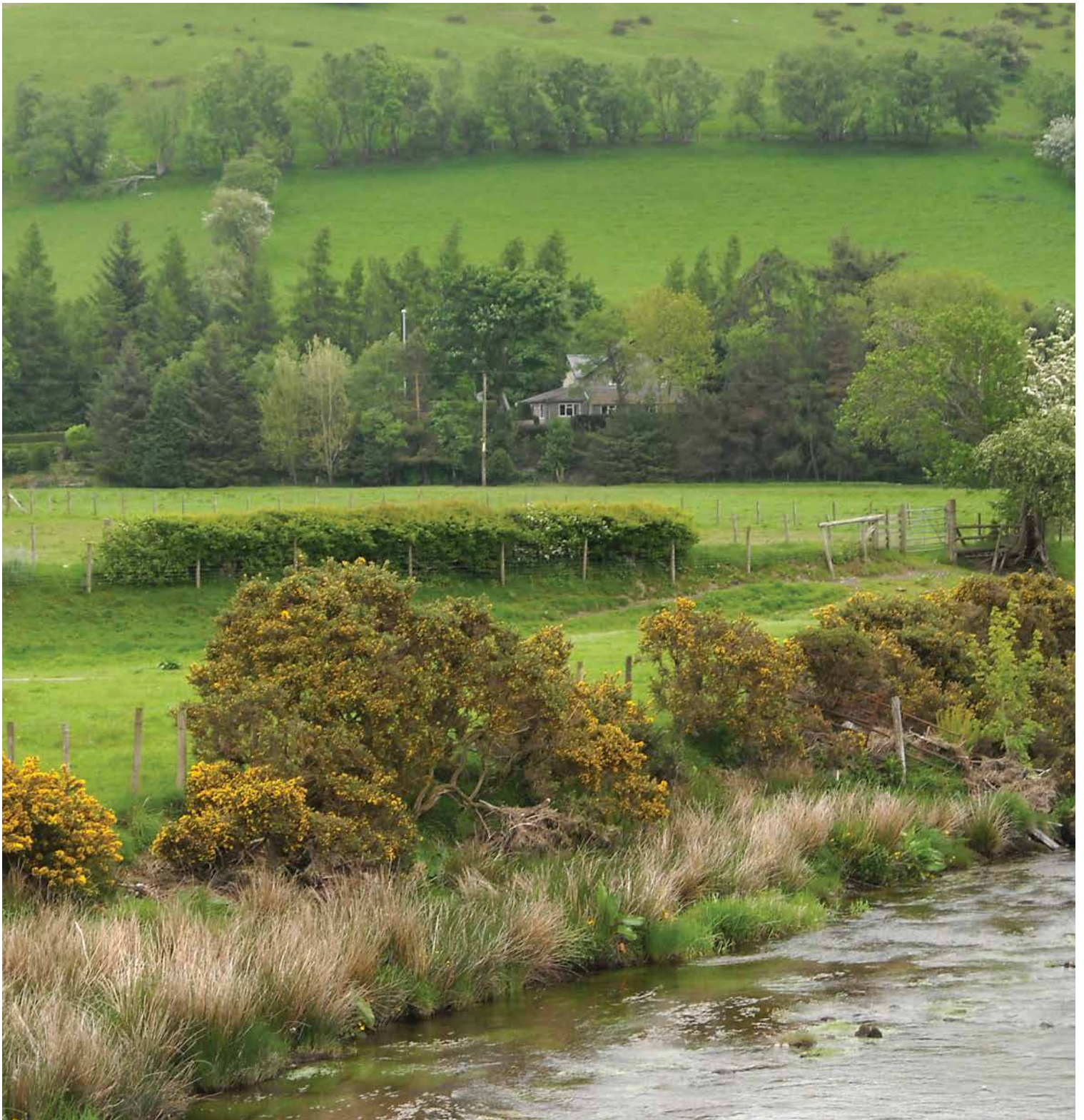
but also (along with other camp leaders) saw to it that all who were interested learned to read, write, and even speak the Welsh language! This led to Frongoch becoming known among the Irish as *ollscoil na réabhlóide*, “the university of the revolution.”

What was the ultimate fate of the Irish prisoners? W.J. Brennan Whitmore, author of *With the Irish in Frongoch* (The Talbot Press, Dublin, 1917), reports that some were released as “wrongly arrested,” and that the number of long-term detainees was closer to “five or six hundred.” Of those remaining prisoners, less than ten were tried before the tide of public sympathy turned and the remainder of prisoners were “simply released just before Christmas 1916.” The war for Irish independence continued, of course, and the site of the prison camp was put to other, less controversial uses. Indeed, the *Ysgol Gynradd Bro Tryweryn* (The Tryweryn Valley Primary School) is located on the Whiskey Distillery and South Camp site.

Are you interested in learning more about Frongoch? There are several articles from which the information and quotes in this piece were obtained are: “Welsh Village Summons Ghosts of Ireland’s Revolutionary Past,” Maev Kennedy, *The Guardian* (Dec. 27, 2015) (<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/dec/27/welsh-village-frongoch-summons-ghosts-irelands-revolutionary-past>); “Frongoch: Whiskey Makers and Prisoners of War,” Elwyn Edwards, *Y Casglwr* (No. 60, Summer 1997) (<http://www.ballinagree.freeservers.com/fronwhisk.html>); “Frongoch: The University of Revolution,” George Herd, *BBC News Wales* (Mar. 26, 2016) (<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-35876886>); “Frongoch, Wales – A Unique Place in Irish History: Frongoch Internment Camp” (<http://www.easter-rising-frongoch.wales/7/>); and “Frongoch, Wales – A Unique Place in Irish History: Memorial Plaque” (<http://www.easter-rising-frongoch.wales/memorial-commemorations/>)

(Note – the second-to-last website includes a link to the Irish channel TG4’s documentary “*Ollscoil na Réabhlóide*” (University of Revolution)).

Are you interested in learning more about the Easter Rising? The Celtic Collaborative will be presenting its production of “The Ghosts of 1916” at The Irish Fair of Minnesota, on Saturday August 13th and Sunday August 14th! (and you can check out Wikipedia’s extensive article on the topic in the meantime!)



Severn River near Llangurig, Wales

Photo by Ilene Alexander

p.s. - You can see this photo and the rest in color online at our web page www.stdavidsofmn.org

You are invited to share photos for our new web page.
Send to stdavidsofmn@gmail.com or bring to the picnic.

Memberships are due July 1.
Use form on p. 11 to renew or subscribe.

Next Deadline: October 10

MAIL COPY TO: Mary Mergenthal
2393 Bourne Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55108-1618

OR E-MAIL TO: mary.mergenthal@gmail.com

**Please consider a tax-deductible
contribution to the
St. David's Society
or
the St. David's Foundation.**

**Gifts can remember
or honor a Welsh friend or relative.**

**You are also encouraged to remember the
St. David's Society or Foundation in your will.
For information, please contact
Ron Adams, (952) 237-0506.**

Directory changes/additions

Maria Bartholdi
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Please...when attending St. David's Society events, eschew cologne, aftershave, etc., to be respectful of members with fragrance allergies and to allow their attendance/enjoyment.

**PLEASE HELP US MAKE ALL
SOCIETY EVENTS FRAGRANCE-FREE.**

Diolch yn fawr.

CALENDAR OF COMING WELSH EVENTS NOT SPONSORED BY OUR SOCIETY

Sun., July 10, 2:30 p.m., *Gymanfa Ganu* [Sacred Song Festival], First Christian Church/United Church of Christ, 887 Bonnell Ave. (south of Hwy 21), Redgranite, Wis, 54970. Trefor Williams, Milwaukee, directing.

Sun., July 10, Celebrate 170th anniversary of Welsh Congregational Church of Old Man's Creek near Iowa City. Worship service at 10:00 a.m. Traditional Welsh Tea follows. Take a walk in the lovely Welsh cemetery. 1:00 p.m., *Gymanfa Ganu*. Richard Tiegs, of Coralville, directing. Contact Conni Lynch, 319-631-0171, or Keili Rozinek, 319-321-7924.

Thurs., July 14, Super Furry Animals, Varsity Theater in Dinkeytown. A Welsh post-alternative rock band from Cardiff, Wales, that revels in eclectic output. The group was formed in 1993. Doors open at 8:00 p.m. Varsity Theater, 1308 4th St. SE, Minneapolis, 55414. <http://www.varsitytheater.org>

Sun., Aug. 28, 2:30 p.m., 94th annual *Gymanfa Ganu*, Peniel Chapel, Picket, Wis. Karen Jones Wojahn directing. Peniel Chapel is at W9644 Zoar Road, Oshkosh, WI 54904 (7 mi. N. of Rosendale, 5 mi. S. of Oshkosh).

Sept. 1-4, North American Festival of Wales, Calgary, Alberta. *See article on p. 6.* Contact www.nafow.org

Sept. 25, 1:30 p.m., Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival, First Presbyterian Church, Front and Broad Sts., Mankato. Dr. James Cassarino, Poultney, Vermont, visiting conductor. *See article on p. 6.* Riverblenders of Mankato, performing choir. Te Bach follows the singing. <http://mnwelshassociation.weebly.com> or www.facebook.com/MinnesotaWelshAssociation.



St. David's Society of Minnesota

St. David, the Patron Saint of Wales

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

St. David's Society members celebrate & cultivate all things Welsh - in literature, history, music, dance, art, or ideas, traditional & contemporary.

Membership Application or Member Renewal Form

PLEASE PRINT

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

Address (city, state, zip)

Phone (primary phone number, please)

E-Mail Address

Please save the high printing and postage costs—notify me via email when the newsletter is available and I will view it on-line

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

 Yes No

****Our Fiscal Year runs from July 1 to June 30.****

Note that membership feeds have increased.

To avoid future increase, we encourage you to consider a Lifetime Membership.

Send a check for \$175 before June 30 to avoid the \$50 increase.

Membership Categories and **2016-17** Rates

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

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

Lifetime Membership (one time payment) \$225

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

Mail your membership form and check to:

Judith Evans Warner, President
St. David's Society of Minnesota
5049 Brooklyn Boulevard
Brooklyn Center, MN 55429
Send questions to: judithewarner@aol.com

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CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Sun., July 10, 2 p.m., *Sgwrs ar y fferm*...Welsh conversation at the farm. 10775A 166th St., Cologne, 55322.

Contact Laurel Bradshaw at llawrf@yahoo.com.

Sat., July 30, 11:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m., picnic/annual meeting, Rosebrook Park, 2590 Fry St., Roseville, 55113.

See article and directions on p. 1.

ALL WELCOME.

Sat., Aug. 6, 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 Mary Mergenthal at mary.mergenthal@gmail.com

ALL WELCOME.

Sept. 1–4, North American Festival of Wales, Calgary, Alberta. *See article on p. 6.* Contact www.nafow.org

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

See article on p. 6. Contact mnwelshassociation.weebly.com

**If you need a large-print version of the newsletter,
please call Mary Mergenthal, (651) 644-1650.**