

St. David's Society News

Spring Gymanfa Ganu to be held in Chapel of Westminster Presbyterian Church, downtown Minneapolis, May 4

The Spring Gymanfa Ganu of the St. David's Society of Minnesota will be held **Sun., May 4, at 2:00 p.m.** We will sing in the **Chapel**, rather than in the Sanctuary, site of the 83rd National Gymanfa Ganu on Sun., August 31.

Our **director will be Sara Birkeland from St. Paul.** She's Minister of Music at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church,



Sara Birkeland

holds a B.A. in music from St. Olaf College in Northfield and an MSM from Luther Seminary. While Sara is going to be learning Welsh hymnody in more detail for this event, she has participated in and greatly enjoyed the robust singing at the cymanfaoedd held at St. Anthony Park in years past. She lives in St. Paul with her three children.

Our **accompanist, Ryan Jones**, grew up on his family's farm in Butternut Valley Township, northwest of Lake Crystal, Minn., where his family has been farming for five generations. Some of his ancestors were among the first of the Welsh settlers in Blue Earth County. Ryan has been piano accompanist for the annual Gymanfa Ganu at Mankato for several years. He also is some-time organist at the First Presbyterian Church in Lake Crystal. Ryan is the conservation engineer for several soil and water conservation districts in the Mankato area. He lives in Lake Crystal with his wife and two children.



Ryan Jones

If you are able, please bring a sweet or savory item for the treat table. Fruit, ready to serve, is also welcome.

MARCH 2014

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Parking at Westminster May 4

The church has kindly given us permission to use its surface parking lot. It's in the middle of the block on Marquette Ave., between 12th and Alice Rainville Streets. (*Alice Rainville St. was formerly 13th St.*) **This lot is next to the church and next to the entrance we will use. That entrance is also the handicapped entrance, with elevator just inside.**

The entrance is on Marquette Ave. (a one-way going North).

How to get to Westminster May 4

From the West:

→ Hwy. 394 to "Downtown/Hospital" exit. Follow the exit to 12th St. (one-way heading East). Follow 12th St. for about 8 blocks. Once you go by the church and cross over Marquette Ave., go to 2nd Ave. and take a right. Follow the street in front of the Convention Center until you come to Marquette Ave.

** Take a right on Marquette and go one block to Alice Rainville St. and then one-half block further. Parking lot is on the left, next to the church.*

→ Take 94 East to the 4th St. Exit. Take 4th St. into downtown until you get to 2nd Ave. S. Take a right on 2nd Ave. and follow the street in front of the Convention Center until you come to Marquette Ave.

** Then follow directions above.*

From the North:

→ Hwy. 394 to "Downtown/Hospital" exit. Follow the exit to 12th St. (one-way heading East). Follow 12th St. for about 8 blocks. Once you go by the church and cross over Marquette Ave., go to 2nd Ave. and take a right. Follow the street in front of the Convention Center until you come to Marquette Ave.

** Then follow directions above.*

From the South:

→ Take 35W South to the 11th St. Exit. Take a left on 2nd Ave. and follow the street in front of the Convention Center until you come to Marquette Ave.

** Then follow directions above.*

From the East:

→ Take 94 West to the 11th St. Exit. Take a left on 2nd Ave. and follow the street in front of the Convention Center until you come to Marquette Ave.

** Then follow directions above.*

St. David's Day luncheon held ON St. David's Day itself this year!



Longtime member, Betty Kinsey, received the Valued Member Award. She has served as a Society officer, on committees for the previous "Nationals," and is an advisor for the 2014 NAFOW, and has sent cards (that she makes herself, using photos she took) for decades. She remembered that several years ago she counted how many she'd sent—over 500 then!

After the singing of America, Laurel Bradshaw offered a table prayer in Welsh. Then, the 60+ people in attendance enjoyed a meal of Welsh Miner's Pie and Berry Trifle. After that, they were entertained by David Evan Thomas (piano) and Linda Wadsworth (flute) playing a medley, Three Welsh Songs, arranged by David. The folk songs were: A New Year Carol (*Mae'r flwyddyn yn Marw*); David of the White Rock (*Dafydd y Garreg Wen*); and When Morning is Breaking (*Pan gyfyd yr Helwen*).

The afternoon celebration of our Patron Saint concluded with the singing of Mae Hen Wlad fy Nhadau.



Elfryn Thomas of Brillion, Wisconsin, charmed guests with the story of how he followed his grandfather's dream to come to Wisconsin, met his wife Tami there.

As the chaired Bard of Wisconsin, he favored us with his Wisconsin Eisteddfod essay, in Welsh and in English.

He also sang Calon Lan, to everyone's delight.

Photos by Ilene Alexander



Tom Parry, Long Lake, and Ellis Jones, St. Peter.

What a surprise to receive the St. David's Society's Outstanding Service Award for 2014 at luncheon on March 1.

My Welsh heritage is very special to me and the wonderful people in the Society are a joy to know.

Thank you so much for the honor.

Betty Kinsey



Don Barbee (left) served as master of ceremonies, telling some very funny jokes. Musician-in-residence David Evan Thomas accompanied national anthems and his own composition.



Before the meal and program, David Evan Thomas showed Morgan Compagnon how to tie his tie. (Morgan is the grandson of Judith Evans Warner.) It was a pleasure to have lively young people present.



Flutist Linda Wadsworth played the Welsh folk song trilogy arranged by David Evan Thomas.



Our honored guests from Wisconsin: Tami Thomas, Rees, Gethin and Ariana (front), Elfryn Thomas, and Ryan Thomas (rear).

Patrick O'Brian's first novel makes a splash with the Well-Read Dragons

By Robert Minish

On February 1, the Well-Read Dragons held their bi-monthly meeting at Black Bear Crossing at Como Park. *Testimonies*, originally published under the title *Three Bear Witness*, gave rise to a stimulating discussion.

Many St. David's members, no doubt, as well as a few of our book club members, are familiar with the bulk of O'Brian's works, the Aubrey/Maturin nautical historical novels. Those are vastly different from *Testimonies*, which is set in North Wales, where O'Brian and his first wife lived from 1946–1949.

The setting of the novel closely resembles Cym Croesor, a remote valley. Jim Perrin, writing in the New Welsh Review, tells of rereading three books, *Testimonies*, first published in 1952, John Wain's *A Winter in the Hills*, and *The Welsh Girl*. He describes the three as "markedly similar in settings among



the agricultural/industrial interface along the northern and western margins of Eryri: sheep country; slate country; Kate Roberts Country."

Our group found *Testimonies* to be a very compelling description of the dark side of life that can be found in some small rural communities. Though the main character, Joseph Aubrey Pugh, and the heroine, Bronwen Vaughan, fall deeply in love, their relationship is never consummated, and, they may have thought, had been kept hidden. The locals, stirred by a malevolent minister, Pritchard Ellis, jump to the conclusion of adultery and ostracize the two lovers, but especially Bronwen. Perrin observes that "O'Brian excels in the use of the unspecified to add imaginative force." This technique is apparent at the end when Bronwen either is poisoned or poisons herself.

Our discussion brought forth many quotations showing O'Brian's mastery with words and his observations on Wales and the Welsh.

Continued on page 10

U.K. government should help pay for Welsh storm damage, says Lord Wigley

The U.K. government has been accused of failing to appreciate the seriousness of recent storms in Wales, during a debate in the House of Lords.

The Treasury should step in to help pay for the clear-up along the coastline, said former Plaid Cymru leader Lord Dafydd Wigley.

A U.K. government minister said it was a matter for the Welsh government.

Meanwhile, Welsh Secretary David Jones said Wales would get a share of any extra funding spent in England.

Lord Wigley made his comments during a short urgent statement in the Lords.

"In some areas, such as Aberystwyth and other parts of the Ceredigion coast, and, indeed, the Pembrokeshire coast, the damage was so acute that it may run into many millions of pounds to put right."

Lord Wigley said this was "well beyond" the resources of small local authorities, while the National Assembly for Wales had limited reserves.

Lord Elystan-Morgan, an independent cross-bench peer who lives near Aberystwyth, said the U.K. Government did not seem to realise the seriousness of what had happened.



Aberystwyth's promenade is one of the places damaged by storm-driven waves.

"The scale of storm destruction is such that it is impossible for local authorities or, indeed, the Welsh Assembly to render proper remedy," he said.

"Aberystwyth, but (also) many other places on the Welsh coast, have been so badly hit it is far more desperate than the Government seem to appreciate.

"The scale of storm destruction is such that it is impossible for local authorities or, indeed, the Welsh assembly to render proper remedy.

"Although Westminster exercises sovereignty over the land and nation of Wales, with that sovereignty there is also a high and heavy moral responsibility to assist in situations of crisis such as these."

Lord Wigley will be giving seminars at the 2014 NAFOW.



North American Festival of Wales

**Register now for NAFOW
and get your room at the
Hyatt Regency Hotel in
Minneapolis, Aug. 28–31**

DETAILS BELOW & ON NEXT PAGES.

How to register for NAFOW

- Go to **www.NAFOW.org** & register on-line or print the registration form there and mail or fax it to:

NAFOW International Headquarters
Box 1054
Trumansburg, NY 14886.

- If you did not pick up a registration form at our St. David's Day luncheon, request one from Mary Morris Mergenthal, mary.mergenthal@gmail.com, or (651) 644-1650.
- Each registration form can be used for two people with same address.
- Children and youth need to be registered, but are not charged a registration fee.
- Registration forms may be photocopied.

You can choose the entrance fee you prefer:

- **3-day Festival Pass:** \$65.00 (\$55.00 WNAA members);
THIS PASS ALLOWS ONE TO ATTEND ALL DAY-TIME EVENTS,
INCLUDING THE GYMANFA GANU ON SUNDAY. ALL MEALS ARE EXTRA
AND MUST BE PURCHASED BY AUGUST 22.
- **Friday Single-Day Pass:** \$25.00 (\$20.00 WNAA members);
HOLDER WOULD STILL NEED TO PURCHASE A BANQUET TICKET IN
ADVANCE OF THE FESTIVAL WEEKEND.

- **Saturday Single-Day Pass:** \$25.00 (\$20.00 WNAA members)
DOES NOT COVER ONLY MEN ALOUD CONCERT.
- **Sunday Single-Day Pass, i.e., gymanfa attendance only:**
\$20.00 members or non-members.
- **Youth under 18 must register, but can get any of the above passes free.**
If they will participate in the children's programming on Friday and Saturday afternoons, please include their names and ages on the registration form.
- The registration form offers the chance to become a member of the WNAA (Welsh North American Association), sponsor of the NAFOW. Membership means you will get news of upcoming NAFOW events mailed or e-mailed to you in the quarterly publication "Hwyl" and, as you can see above, members receive a registration discount.

Opening Ceremony

Help welcome our guests from all over the U.S., Canada, and Wales. This free event occurs Thurs., Aug. 28, 4–5 p.m. Flags of the U.S., Canada and Wales will be presented, the Apollo Men's Chorus will sing and there will be more fun besides.

Apollo Male Chorus to open 2014 NAFOW

The Opening Ceremony of NAFOW, on Thurs., Aug. 28, 4–5 p.m., will feature singing of the three National Anthems and a short performance by the newly revived local group, Apollo Male Chorus, directed now by Sean F. Vogt.

There's also rumor that local Welsh personality, John Dingley, will appear and that a local 12-year-old will greet NAFOW visitors.

This is all at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on Nicollet Mall. This event is being organized by Steve Hughes.





North American Festival of Wales

If you did not get a paper reservation form and schedule of events at the luncheon and would like one, please send a SASE (legal size) to Mary Mergenthal, 2393 Bourne Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108

83rd Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu

Meirwyn Walters, Esq., from Massachusetts, will direct the four-part hymn singing at Westminster Presbyterian Church, across from our hotel. Wisconsin organist, Steven Jensen, will accompany. This is not a ticketed event, but attendees must have a Festival pass, either purchased at registration at the hotel earlier or available that day at the hotel and later at the church. Gymanfa Ganu hymnals will be available for purchase, for those who need them.

Special ticketed events

Opening Concert, Thurs., Aug. 28

6:30 p.m., social hour; 7:30 p.m. concert.

Tramor, a Welsh folk group from Phoenix, Arizona, will present a fun-filled and spirited evening led by multi-instrumentalist, Welsh piper, singer/songwriter, storyteller, composer and poet, John Good.

\$25.00 adult/\$10.00 youth under 18

Volunteers will be needed to take tickets.

Contact Mary or Kay to volunteer.

Gala Awards Banquet & Entertainment,

Fri., Aug. 29, 6:00 p.m. social hour; 7:00 p.m. banquet

The banquet honors Mary Morris Mergenthal, this year's recipient of the National Welsh-American Foundation 2014 Heritage Medallion Award. The 2013 National Welsh Eisteddfod winner, tenor Joshua Owen Mills, will sing.

\$70.00 — Meal choices on registration form.

Volunteers will be needed to take tickets.

Contact Mary or Kay to volunteer.

GRAND CONCERT, ONLY MEN ALOUD

Tim Rhys Evans, MBE, founder and director

Sat., Aug. 30, 6:30 p.m., social hour; 7:30 p.m. concert.

Hear Wales' premier male chorus, now eight singers + founder/director Tim Rhys Evans MBE! They'll bring a whole new dimension to the experience of Welsh male voice choir singing.

\$40.00, adult/\$10.00, youth under 18.

Volunteers are needed to take tickets for all these events.

Contact Mary or Kay to volunteer.

Under Milk Wood

Saturday, 10:30–noon and 2:00–3:30 p.m

This Readers' Theatre Dylan Thomas production directed by Bill Kimes, was seen first at our Centennial Banquet. Most of the cast will be the same as appeared then.

This production honors the Dylan Thomas Centenary, as well as the memory of his late daughter, Aeronwy, a friend of the Kimes family.

Note: While no specific theatre tickets will be sold, all who wish to attend will need to have some sort of Festival Pass—either the 3-Day Pass or a one-day Pass, purchased in advance or at the registration desk.

Meal reservations

All meals must be reserved in advance, no later than August 22.

The registration form offers menu choices for Thursday evening; Friday's Gala Banquet; Saturday Pre-Concert Dinner and the meal to be served at the Hyatt between gymanfa sessions on Sun., Aug. 31.

There is a vegetarian option for each meal and **all meals are sit-down, not buffet.**

Any special dietary needs must be communicated to International Headquarters no later than August 12.

**A really important volunteer opportunity:
Greet attendees at the hotel door.**

This makes a big difference in newcomers' feeling of being welcome. We need LOTS of volunteers, so no one has to be on duty too long. Volunteers need not be members. Tell us about a willing friend or relative.



Contact a local co-chairperson to volunteer:

**Kay Gavin, (651) 484-1778,
kaywgavin@hotmail.com**

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

NAFOW Seminars

FRIDAY, AUGUST 29

9 a.m.–noon

- **"Armchair Tour of Welsh History in Minnesota"**
Start your seminar experience with the screening of this DVD recently filmed and prepared by Dr. Robert Douglas, St. Peter. It will be shown twice with presentation on Welsh history in Northern Minnesota by Dr. Alexis Pogorelskin, Duluth, between showings.

9–10 a.m.

- **"Issues of Welsh Identity in Contemporary Wales"**
Tecwyn Vaughan Jones, University of Wales, Bangor
- **"Putting Welsh History on Television"** Colin Thomas.
- **"St. John's Bible"** by Tim Tiernes, St. John's University.
See spectacular pages, produced in Wales!

10:30–11:30 a.m.

- **"If Scotland Leaves the U.K., What Happens to Wales?"**
Lord Dafydd Wigley, Welsh politician.

10:30 a.m.–noon

- **Welsh Language I**
Hefina Phillips, Toronto, Ontario

11:00 a.m.–noon

- **"A Musical Journey Through Life"**
World-class harpist, Elinor Bennett, Bontnewydd, Wales

1:00–3:00 p.m.

- **Welsh Folk Dancing—*Twmpath Dawns***
Led by Siân Frick.

1:00–2:00 p.m.

- **"Revival of Welsh Folk Customs as Ethnic Markers"**
Tecwyn Vaughan Jones, University of Wales, Bangor
- **"The Dragon and the Eagle,"** Colin Thomas,
With extracts from programs he has made for all U.K. broadcast channels.
- **"St. John's Bible"** — see above.

3:00–4:00 p.m.

- **"The Welsh Language—Another Crisis?"**
Lord Dafydd Wigley, Welsh politician.
- **"Holy Wells of Wales"**
Phil Cope and Suzanne Iuppa.
- **"In the Words of Merêd and Phyllis"**
Elinor Bennett (see above) presents BBC documentary she produced on life and work of Meredith Evans and Phyllis Kinney.

Volunteers will be needed to all seminars to check badges.
Contact Mary or Kay to volunteer.

Seminars, *continued*

SATURDAY, AUGUST 30

10:30 a.m.–noon

- **Welsh Language II** — See previous column for leader.

10:30–11:30 a.m.

- **"If Scotland Leaves the U.K., What Happens to Wales?"**
Lord Dafydd Wigley, Welsh politician.

Noon–1:00 p.m.

- **"Putting Welsh History on Television"** Colin Thomas.
See Friday listing.
- **"Revival of Welsh Folk Customs"** Tecwyn Vaughan Jones.
See Friday listing.
- **"Holy Wells of Wales"** Phil Cope and Suzanne Iuppa..
See Friday listing.

2:30–3:30 p.m.

- **"My Musical Journey Through Life"**—Elinor Bennett.
See Friday listing.

3:00–4:00 p.m.

- **"Issues of Welsh Identity in Contemporary Wales"**
Tecwyn Vaughan Jones. See Friday listing.

3:00–4:00 p.m.

- **"The Dragon and the Eagle"** Colin Thomas.
See Friday listing.

There is no charge for seminars
and one need not pre-register.

However, attendees will need
appropriate Festival passes.

National Eisteddfod Competitions

Friday

Solo Adult Recitations: 10:00–10:45 a.m.,
Youth Solo Recitations: 10:45–11:30 a.m.
Welsh Learners' Recitation: 11:30–12:15 p.m.

NEW THIS YEAR:

English Language Recitation: 12:30–1:15 p.m.

Saturday

Hymn Singing: 10:30–11:30 a.m.,
Solo Voice: 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Solo Voice, Semi-professional: 2:00–3:00 p.m.

EISTEDDFOD WINNERS' CONCERT: 4:00–5:00 p.m.

Marketplace and Tea Room

Tea Room open 12:00–3:00 p.m., Thursday

Marketplace open 12:00–5:00 p.m., Thursday

Both open: 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Friday;

9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Saturday and

9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m., Sunday

Volunteers will be needed to staff the Tea Room.

Contact Judith Evans Warner directly at

(763) 522-1612 or judithewarner@aol.com

Or contact Mary or Kay to volunteer.

Tours & Walking Tour

Ruth Jones will be leading a bus tour of Twin Cities Highlights on Thursday and one of the Arboretum and Lake Minnetonka on Monday (with lunch on the lake).

Local attendees are welcome to register for these tours.

Use the green registration sheet, or register on-line.

Volunteers are needed on Thursday at Minnehaha Park (at noon). Contact Mary or Kay to volunteer. See below.

David and Kris Jones lead a **walking tour 7:30–8:30 a.m., Sat., Aug. 30**, from the hotel to the Sculpture Garden.

You do not need to register in advance for this event.

Cinema Wales

Friday & Saturday, 1 p.m.–5 p.m. Films TBA.

Children's Activities

Friday & Saturday, 1 p.m.–4 p.m.

No charge, but children it is preferred that they be registered on NAFOW registration form, with age indicated.

A parent or caretaker must accompany each child participating.

NAFOW T-shirts

Yes, they will be available, but by pre-order only.

NO T-shirts will be sold at the Festival.

Cost is \$12.00 and payment must be made with registration. Indicate size(s) wished in space just before name/payment information. T-shirts will be white, with small NAFOW logo and words "NAFOW 2014."

Don't delay on hotel registration

Registration at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Minneapolis (1300 Nicollet Mall, Mpls. 55403) has been open for some time and people around the country and elsewhere are booking rooms. Better not to tarry if you don't want to drive home late each night and back early each morning.

Festival Rate: Single, Double, Triple or Quad:
\$119/night (plus taxes).

To make your reservation and to secure the NAFOW rate, book online through www.nafow.org or call 1 (800) 421-1442 and use the code "North American Festival of Wales 2014."

Parking: Overnight parking is available onsite at a parking garage connected to the hotel. NAFOW has a discounted rate of \$10/24 hours.

Preferred Festival room rates are available for an extended stay 4 days in advance and 4 days following the Festival dates, subject to room availability.

Advertising at NAFOW

If you have a business or social group that could benefit from advertising to the people with Welsh interests who will converge on Minneapolis August 28–31, click "Advertising" on the web page www.NAFOW.org to get rates and deadlines.

If you do not have computer capability, contact Mary Morris Mergenthal at (651) 644-1650 to get the information.

Advertising helps not only the business/organization whose message/logo is presented, but it also helps the WNAA pay for the NAFOW program books.

From the airport to NAFOW

If you have friends or relatives coming in for NAFOW by plane, give them detailed information on how to get to the Hyatt from either airport quickly, inexpensively and safely.

Contact Mary Mergenthal or Kay Gavin (contact info below) to receive printed information prepared by Ruth Jones for our visitors. It will appear in an upcoming issue of Hwyl, the WNAA newsletter.

VOLUNTEERS will be needed for each of the meals and to check badges for the Eisteddfod.

IN ADDITION, VOLUNTEERS WILL BE NEEDED TO GREET GUESTS AT THE HOTEL DOORS AND TO ASSIST WITH DIRECTIONS AT MAJOR EVENTS.

Contact a local co-chairperson to volunteer: Kay Gavin, (651) 484-1778, kaywgavin@hotmail.com

or Mary Mergenthal, (651) 644-1650, mary.mergenthal@gmail.com.

Mary Mergenthal to receive national Welsh award

By Kay Gavin

We are proud and thrilled to tell you that our very own Mary Morris Mergenthal will be awarded this year's Heritage Medallion Award presented by the National Welsh-American Foundation (NWAFF). Mary will receive the award at the Grand Banquet on Friday, August 29, 2014, at the North American Festival of Wales at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Go to www.nafow.org for details of the Grand Banquet. We hope that many of you will be in attendance to honor her.



The Heritage Medallion is awarded each year at NAFOW to recognize members of, and who have provided exceptional service to, the Welsh American community at large.

Besides being the current St. David's Society President and the long-time newsletter editor, Mary has a long history of being involved in the Welsh Community both locally and nationally. She was the owner, editor and publisher of *Y Drych* for 12 years. She has directed *cymanfaoedd* in several states and at the 1994 National Gymanfa Ganu held in Bellevue, Wash. Mary worked on the committee for the 1978 and 1987 Nationals here and was co-chairperson with Ellis Jones in 1999 and is in 2014 with Kay Gavin.

Mary was the Organizer for Cwrs Cymraeg for several years, as well as serving on the Board of Directors for that group. There are many more Welsh events that Mary has been involved in—too numerous to mention here.

Mary is Welsh to the core! She is a true friend and mentor to all of those who have an interest in anything Welsh. MMM (as she signs her e-mails) always provides a warm welcome for you in her home for a "cuppa" and a chat.

Editor's note: Our Society may be unusual in that two other Society members have received this award: Martha Davies and her husband Berwyn Jones, in Portland, Oregon, in 2010; and Dr. Ellis Jones in 2004 in Buffalo, N.Y.

Meet an NAFOW seminar speaker in St. Paul March 20

Tecwyn Vaughan Jones, from the slate quarrying town of Blaenau Ffestiniog, teaches Identity Studies, Globalization and Ethnic Cultures, Contemporary Wales and Folklore at Bangor University.

In 2000, he was appointed to his current post as Resident Director of the Central College Iowa Study Abroad Programme at Bangor University. Since his appointment, over 1,000 American students have completed the programme.

At the NAFOW in August, he will offer these seminars:

- Issues of Welsh Identity and Contemporary Wales;
- Revival of Welsh Folk Customs as Ethnic Markers.

On March 20, Tecwyn will be in the Twin Cities to visit Augsburg College, before heading to Central College in Pella, Iowa.

NAFOW Express

If you or a relative live south of Twin Cities, take the bus to Minneapolis

By AdaMae Lewis

There is interest in a bus from Iowa and southern Minnesota to Minneapolis for the Welsh North American Association's North American Festival of Wales in late August, 2014. People from Nebraska, South Dakota, Missouri, Kansas, Illinois, Wisconsin and any other place are welcome to come to Iowa or southern Minnesota to meet the bus and finish the trip with us. Based on the information we have now, the bus will start in Iowa City and head west on I-80 and then north on I-35 just north of Des Moines. Once in Minnesota, depending on interest, the bus could head west to the Mankato/Lake Crystal area to pick up those folks or pick them up in the Owatonna area along I-35.

The bus would begin the trip, Wednesday, August 27, and return Monday, September 1. This would give festival attendees the day Thursday to volunteer at the NAFOW or take the Twin Cities Highlights tour, or visit the area on their own and still be at the hotel for the late afternoon opening ceremony.

At this point, we need to know how much demand there is, so please express your interest and desired pick-up point in an email to bus@nafow.org.

We will know by June 10 if there is enough interest to proceed with the bus or if you will need to find another way to get to the NAFOW. However, if there is very little interest by April 1, the bus idea will be canceled, so let us know asap if interested.

The price will depend on the number riding, but estimated to be between \$150 and \$200. The price for those in Minnesota will be reduced as we will be over half-way there by the time we cross into Minnesota. Leave your worries and car behind and join us for a relaxing ride and no parking fees in Minneapolis. *Editor's note: NAFOW's discounted parking rate is \$10/day, i.e., at least \$50.00 for the event.*

He has arranged his schedule so as to "leave the entire day of Thursday, March 20, for the St. David's Society." We are fortunate to have this opportunity to talk to him casually and then to hear his informal talk on the topic: **"Welsh and Celtic?"**

Members of the Well-Read Dragons who had an opportunity to visit with him last spring when he came through the Twin Cities, will agree this is a special opportunity.

Meet him Thurs., March 20 at noon or at 6 p.m. at the home of Mary Mergenthal, 2393 Bourne Ave., St. Paul, 55108.

Please let Mary know if you hope to attend. A simple lunch and evening meal will be provided. Those who wish can contribute to the food's cost that day. Mary will contact all registrants closer to the time to review parking possibilities.

If you contacted Mary earlier or signed up at the luncheon, you're on the list. If you've tarried, there's still time to contact Mary at (651) 644-1650 or mary.mergenthal@gmail.com.

Dragon News

News of Society members & friends



SUNSHINE REPORT: Betty Kinsey, the Society Sunshine chairwoman, reports sending get well greetings to Mike Gavin, Don Anderson and Karen Davis (health issues); Jack Davis (broken hip); Marveen Minish (knee surgery); and to

Kristin Johnson (death of her father).

Please let Betty know when you know of a member who is ill or has suffered a loss, or is rejoicing over a birth, marriage or something else. You can reach her at (612) 871-7587.



DAVID EVAN THOMAS' new work "Bamboo Cottage," based on poems by Doug Westendorp, was premiered at various venues in Minneapolis and St. Paul in January. The new works presented in those concerts were thanks to the voters of Minnesota who voted for the 2013 Minnesota Legacy Amendment.



JAN and BILL KIMES performed their reading from the book *The Wind in the Willows* (by Kenneth Grahame) in Cook, Minn., on

Dec. 29, at a fundraiser for the restoration of the historic Alango School.

If you did not get a 2014 membership directory at the St. David's event and would like one, please contact Mary Mergenthal, (651)644-1650, mary.mergenthal@gmail.com. Advise if you need a paper copy, or if a pdf will do. Diolch yn fawr.

Well-Read Dragons from page 4

"Where's the Welsh Gentry? It is either extinct or anglicized."

"You know the great importance of the chapels here, and the prestige and influence a deacon has: you can hardly overestimate in the high farming valleys where there is no other authority or public opinion--where public opinion is integral and undiluted, I should say."

That quotation prompted Austin to tell about a chapel in Wales where the deacons acted as little gods. There was a time when a local garbageman was elected a Deacon. The head Deacon welcomed him and said they would be pleased to accept his contributions, though they doubted that there would be many. The garbageman replied that he was always sent to where there was rubbish to be collected.

"His wife [Bronwen] was a big help to him. She was very pretty when she was young; she came from the same part of the country as he did but I had not known her before she came to our valley."

"They said she was not very great as a housekeeper; however that may be, she was a great help to him."

Clearly, her failure as a housekeeper was a fault not fully overcome by her being "a great help to him. . . . working before the light and after it."

"There is Rousseau's saying that every man is inwardly sure he is the most virtuous being alive. But how far down can that go? All the way to an atheistic parricide who lives by robbing the blind? Or is there a point where it must be abandoned, and if there is, what does it feel like after."

The Preface by Delmore Schwartz praises the quality of O'Brian's writing:

At first one thinks the book's emotional power is chiefly a triumph of style; and indeed the book is remarkable enough for the beauty and exactness of phrasing and rhythm which can only be characterized by quotation: . . . But the reader soon forgets the style as such—a forgetting that is the greatest accomplishment of prose—in the enchantment and vividness of the story.

What Schwartz quoted was the opening paragraphs of the "testimony" of John Aubrey Pugh. Jim Perrin in his review also quotes from the opening paragraph. What better way to encourage people to read this novel than to repeat the first few sentences from the beginning of Pugh's testimony:

It was September when I first came into the valley: the top of it was hidden in fine rain, and the enclosing ridges on either side merged into a grey, formless cloud. There was no hint of the two peaks that were shown on the map, high and steep on each side of the valley's head. This I saw from the windows of the station cab as it brought me up the mountainous road from the plains, a road so narrow that in places the car could barely run between the stone walls."

With that quality of writing, Perrin is "grateful for the one 'Welsh' novel O'Brian did write before the rigging of his imagination became entirely salt-encrusted." I believe all members of the Well Read Dragons would agree.

A lively discussion about all things Welsh and a good lunch—what better way to spend a Saturday? **For our meeting on April 5 we are reading *Into Suez*, by Stevie Davies.** The New Welsh Review, [Winter 2013] describes Davies as: "one of Wales' finest contemporary writers and yet, despite being both long- and short-listed for the Orange and Booker Prizes, and having many other prizes and awards to her name, she continues to be relatively unknown. Expectations that her last novel, the superb *Into Suez*, would bring her the critical acclaim and wider readership for her compassionate writing. One can only hope that *Awakening* [her latest novel] will finally stir the masses."

Anyone is welcome to join us. April 5, we will meet in the "Back Room" at Scalzo's Italian Grille at the Plaza Ramada Hotel (site of the recent St. David's event, but different room).

Looking ahead, our book for June 7 is *One Moonlit Night* by Caradog Pritchard, a 2009 novel set in Bethesda, North Wales, in the 1910s.

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LOTS OF NAFOW DETAILS on pages 5–9 inside.

Get warmed up at our Spring Gymanfa Ganu, Sunday, May 4, 2 p.m.

Westminster Presbyterian Chapel (see page 1)