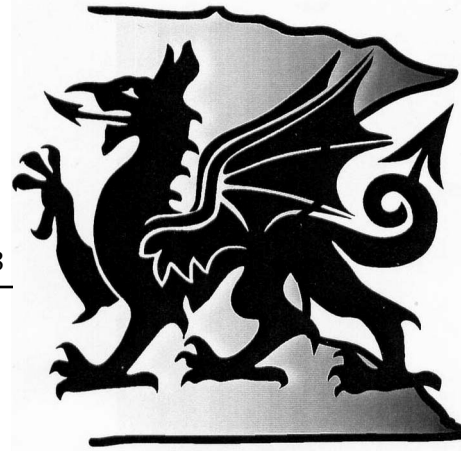


# Newyddion o Gymdeithas Dewi Sant

## St. David's Society News



MAY 2014

Volume 36, Issue 3

### Traed y Ddraig needs dancers

*By Laurel Bradshaw*

Traed y Ddraig, the Twin Cities' own Welsh dance group, is hoping to have a presence at the North American Festival of Wales over Labor Day weekend. Several of my current dancers will not be able to be there, so without a few more people we will not be able to do much. It is a possibility that we might be able to do a demonstration at the folk-dancing workshop which is scheduled for 1-3 p.m. on Friday, August 29.

We welcome new dancers at any time, but this would be an especially good time to try it out! Welsh folk dancing is similar to English or Scottish country dancing. The dances are not difficult. If you can walk, count to 4, and know your right foot from your left foot you can do Welsh folk dances! No special shoes are necessary, and we provide costumes if you choose to participate in performances. In the past, we have performed at the annual Festival of Nations in May. There is no commitment necessary to come and try it out. Children are welcome. We have had dancers as young as 8.

Rehearsal dates and times will be worked out as we go, but plan on one or two rehearsals per month through June, July, and August. **We'll have an initial gathering on Friday, May 30, at 6:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1917 Logan Ave S, Minneapolis 55403.** It is right on the corner of Franklin Avenue near the Lake of the Isles. If you are interested, but can't make the Friday gathering, please contact us so we can work out our rehearsals to include you.

**Laurel Bradshaw, 952-607-8670**  
[llawryf@yahoo.com](mailto:llawryf@yahoo.com)

**Audrey McClellan, 612-729-7270**  
[audreym@visi.com](mailto:audreym@visi.com)

### Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival...Mankato, Sept. 28

The 2014 Minnesota Welsh Hymn Festival will be held Sun., Sept. 28, at 1:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 220 E. Hickory, Mankato.

The visiting conductor will be the Rev. Joseph G. Corbin, Reedsburg, Wis. The performing choir will be the Southwest Minnesota Men's Chorus.

For more information:

<http://mnwelshassociation.weebly.com>;

[www.facebook.com/MinnesotaWelshAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/MinnesotaWelshAssociation).

### Potluck picnic and annual meeting Saturday, June 21, 11 a.m.

Falcon Heights Community Park, 2050 Roselawn Ave. in Falcon Heights (southwest of Roseville and northwest of St. Paul) at corner of Cleveland and Roselawn Avenues. One-half mile north of Larpenteur Ave. (site of Historic Gibbs Farm); 2-3 miles south of intersection of Cleveland Ave. and Hwy. 36.

- Park includes building with restrooms and full kitchen.
- Bring a dish to pass; beverages, glasses, cups and plastic ware provided.
- Plenty of parking near building, all level.
- Playground equipment.
- Barbeque grills.
- Natural prairie, with walking trails.

**Nominations are needed for two  
Board positions (3-year term).**

**If you'd like to find out more or have someone  
to suggest, please contact President  
Mary Morris Mergenthal, (651) 644-1650,  
[mary.mergenthal@gmail.com](mailto:mary.mergenthal@gmail.com).**

**The Board is proposing some changes to the  
Society By-Laws. See colored insert in this  
newsletter for official notice of them.**

**May 25 - Ecumenical Church Service in the Barn  
Little Farm in the Woods  
51209 State Highway 68, Lake Crystal, MN 56055**

**9:30 Coffee, Calories and Conversation; 10:30-11:30 Service**

Potluck follows service. Bring food to share, your own chair,  
non-alcoholic beverage and plasticware.

KENT WILSON JONES — 507 947 3030

## Spring Gymanfa Ganu a joy for all

On May 4, the rafters of Westminster Presbyterian Chapel echoed with the strong harmonies of Welsh hymns as Sara Birkeland, St. Paul, and Ryan Jones, Lake Crystal, led the assembled congregation in song. It was wonderful to welcome many visitors, all of whom seemed to have a grand time. Sara sang "Dim Ond Iesu" as a solo, accompanied by Ryan.

After te bach in the delightful Heller Commons, all departed with promises to join in song again at the National Gymanfa Gau in Westminster's sanctuary on Sunday, August 31.

Thanks to Board members who staffed the kitchen and helped in other ways.



Photos by Ilene Alexander

***Sara Birkeland, St. Paul, sang and directed.***

***Ryan Jones, Lake Crystal, played the organ and piano.***



***Gaudy Welsh Jardinières  
Hand-decorated ironstone, ca. 1820–1850***

***These jardinières came to the United States from Wales in 1845 with Jane Owens Foulkes when she was two years old. Jane's great-granddaughter, Frances Williams Johnson (1910–2007), gave them to St. David's Society member Betty Kinsey in 2007. Betty gifted them to Westminster in 2009.***

***Gaudy Welsh patterns are based on the designs of Japanese Imari and are hand-decorated, an innovation from the earliest method of transfer (similar to applying a decal before firing.) Some Gaudy Welsh was produced in Wales, but most of it came from the potteries in Staffordshire, England.***

***The jardinières will be on display at Westminster during the North American Festival of Wales.***



## North American Festival of Wales

the Welsh North American Association

**AUGUST 28–31,**

HYATT REGENCY HOTEL, 1300 NICOLLET MALL

✓ **Register for the concerts and meals you'll attend.  
How?**

Go to [nafow.org](http://nafow.org) for all info & registration forms.  
Contact Mary Mergenthal for paper forms.  
[mary.mergenthal@gmail.com](mailto:mary.mergenthal@gmail.com) — (651) 644-1650  
What if I'm suddenly unable to attend?

All registration money is refundable until  
August 1, except for \$25 processing fee.

✓ **Must I select which seminars I'll attend?**

No, but look over the schedule carefully so  
you will know when you could be available  
to volunteer as a greeter, ticket taker, etc.

✓ **Help sell Only Men Aloud tickets for August 30.**

We need many more audience members than  
just our registrants. If you have friends who enjoy  
lively music sung by eight very talented young men,  
contact Mary Morris Mergenthal (see above).

What are they like? A member of the popular local  
men's group, Cantus, said that perhaps Only Men  
Aloud could be considered a cross between Cantus  
and The Sing Off on NBC.

**Mary has concert tickets to sell separate of  
event registration (\$40 each).**

✓ **Where is the Hyatt Regency?**

1300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, 55403.

✓ **Register for the Hyatt Regency to be handy to  
all activities, not have to drive home at night,  
and to be able to step away to rest if needed.**

Get the Festival rate of \$119/night single/double/  
triple/quad + taxes. (Regular rate=\$149/night.)  
Book on-line at [nafow.org](http://nafow.org) or call 1-888-421-1442  
and use the code "North American Festival of  
Wales 2014."

✓ **Where will I park?**

The Loring Ramp (a city ramp) is attached to the  
hotel. Enter from just south of the hotel's front door.  
NAFOW guests pay \$10/day. Regular guests pay  
\$17/day.

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 31**

83<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL GYMANFA GANU,  
WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
1200 MARQUETTE AVE. S.

✓ **What time?**

2 p.m. and 7 p.m., Meirwyn Walters, Esq.  
conducting and Steve Jensen from  
Wisconsin at the organ.

✓ **Where can I eat between sessions?**

A meal will be served at the hotel (across  
the street) for those who pre-register for it.

NO MEALS WILL BE SOLD ON-SITE, EITHER AT  
THE HOTEL OR AT THE CHURCH ON SUNDAY.

✓ **Can I attend only the Gymanfa Ganu?**

Yes, of course, but you must purchase  
a Sunday Single Day Pass for \$20.00,  
preferably earlier than that Sunday,  
but possible then.

SUNDAY PASSES WILL BE SOLD AT THE CHURCH  
FOR FRIENDS WHO WISH TO ATTEND THIS EVENT  
ONLY. A SUNDAY PASS COSTS \$20.  
IT'S FREE FOR YOUTH UNDER 18.

✓ **If I come for the Gymanfa Ganu only, where  
can I park?**

Park in the Westminster lot off Marquette  
Ave. If that is full, try the Loring Ramp next  
to the hotel entrance.

### National Eisteddfod Competitions

#### Friday

Solo Adult Recitations: 10:00–10:45 a.m.

Solo Youth Recitations: 10:45–11:30 a.m.

Welsh Learners Recitation: 11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

**NEW THIS YEAR & SPONSORED BY ST. DAVID'S SOCIETY:**

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

#### Saturday

Hymn Singing: 10:30–11:30 a.m.

Solo Voice: 11:30–12:30 p.m.

Solo Voice, Semi-professional: 2:00–3:00 p.m.

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

**See more on following page  
about the Eisteddfod.  
Read David Evan Thomas'  
comments and consider  
entering this year!**

# “Let’s tuck the poems under our tongues, work the tunes into our voices, and enjoy the challenge. ... It’s a Festival!”

*By David Evan Thomas*

For me, one of the most heartening events of the 2013 NAFOW in Toronto was the Eisteddfod. I had never attended one, and was unprepared for the intoxicating effect of hearing Welsh verse recited from memory. Of course, I had no idea what the competitors were saying. But that they had taken the trouble to get their tongues around the soft consonants, to give the verse lilt or drive, to express themselves in a pretty darn tricky language made a strong impression on me. As it happened, there were exactly as many participants in the Eisteddfod as there were prizes: two in each category. I resolved that at the 2014 NAFOW we in Minnesota would bolster the numbers.

In Recitation, there are four categories: Adult; Youth (under 18); Welsh Learner. The poems are specified. For the first time this year, there’s an English Language category, celebrating the work of Dylan Thomas.

In Singing, there are three categories: Hymn Singing; Solo Voice; and The David G. Morris Memorial Award, given to a student or semi-pro to travel to Wales for the National Eisteddfod.

Choose a hymn from the Gymanfa book. If hymns aren’t your thing, sing a folk song. I would love to hear “We’ll Keep a Welcome” wafting across the Mall. An accompanist is

provided for the Eisteddfod, but we’ve got a number of handy pianists in the Society who I’m sure would be pleased to help with preparation.

Details are online at

[http://www.nafow.org/WNAA\\_NAFOW/PDFs/Forms/forms2014/eisteddfod\\_form2014.pdf](http://www.nafow.org/WNAA_NAFOW/PDFs/Forms/forms2014/eisteddfod_form2014.pdf)

I propose that we dive in, tuck the poems under our tongues, work the tunes into our voices, and enjoy the challenge. Forget about the awards; forget that there’s a winner; forget that it’s even a competition—it’s a festival! Let’s help each other explore that most important aspect of our culture: the Welsh language, and its expression in song, which is our heritage.

Lockport Journal, N.Y., 5/27/1905

## MOTHER TONGUE DYING OUT.

### Welsh Presbyterian Synod Faces Crisis With Official Language.

Pittsburg, May 27.—The loss of the mother tongue was the most important topic discussed at the annual Synod of the Welsh Presbyterian church of Ohio and Western Pennsylvania in the Oakland Welsh Presbyterian church. Rev. Dr. T. B. Thomas, pastor, presiding. The opening session was attended by 22 delegates. The Jackson county (O.) church, with its Presbytery and 18 churches, was largely represented.

“What Can Be Done to Meet Conditions of the Welsh Churches?” was discussed. The Welsh tongue is the official language of the church. The younger generation is not familiar with it and a change appears necessary to maintain the life of the organization. The congregations are being invaded by the English language. The financial report was read and assistance extended to the churches in Niles, Youngstown, Ebensburg and Johnstown.

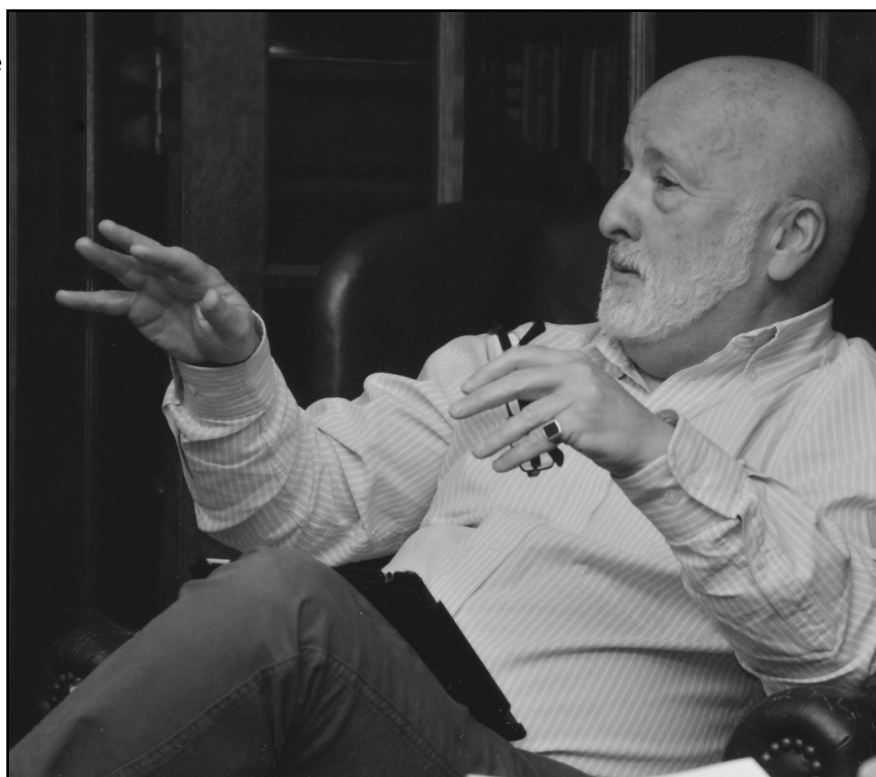


Photo by Nancy Powell

## Tecwyn Vaughan Jones visits in March

On March 20, 2014, two cheerful groups of St. David’s Society members gathered at the St. Paul home of Mary Mergenthal. Jones was pleased to see his first snow of the winter! (He’s from Blaenau Ffestiniog, where wild winds and rain had been the winter weather.) Attendees were lamenting the snow’s return.

After fellowship over lunch or dinner, the group gathered to hear Prof. Jones comment on some aspects of current day Welsh culture as signs of renewed interest in Welsh folk history, Jones’ chief field of study.

NAFOW attendees can hear Jones at the Hyatt Regency on Fri., Aug. 29, 9–10 a.m., or Sat., Aug. 30, 3–4 p.m. (“Issues of Welsh Identity in Contemporary Wales”); also Fri., 1–2 p.m., or Sat., Aug. 30, noon–1 p.m., (“Revival of Welsh Folk Customs as Ethnic Markers”).

# News of the Well-Read Dragons

By Ilene Alexander

In early April, the Well-Read Dragons met to nosh and discuss Stevie Davies' 2010 novel *Into Suez*, a novel that does—in the spirit of an opening epigram—"raise the curtain of illusions and lies" in order to reveal "the pain felt by most people" who live behind the curtain and those who, in reading, must see what has been hidden – willfully often, personally and politically.



Art by Dan Proud.

The following short excerpt from The Guardian's April 2010 review of Davies' 11<sup>th</sup> novel provides an apt summary of the overall plot that weaves across the year's spanning 1947 and 2003: The first date coinciding with the initial stages the post-WWII Suez Crisis involving British military forces and linked to the formation of Israel; the second date marking both the year Davies began writing the novel and the year in which Nia, the contemporary protagonist of the novel, returns to Suez as an adult to understand her father's death, her mother's life after returning to Wales, and her own accumulated (mis)understandings about childhood events that impact adult life:

"In Davies's story, Ailsa is an intelligent, self-sufficient young woman from the Welsh valleys who, accompanied by her young daughter Nia, sails out in 1947 to join her husband, Joe, who is serving in the RAF at Ismalia in the Western Desert. Life in the world's largest military installation has some compensations, such as unrationed cherries in the company store. But the salt marshes of Suez are pitilessly inhospitable—a lunar landscape as flat as Suffolk and sterile as death"—which leaves Ailsa to wonder "how many Arab labourers died to dig this . . . ditch the Roberts family was arriving to defend as somehow British as the Manchester ship canal"?

"Wives of the rank and file are expected to keep their heads down and confine themselves to quarters. Yet Ailsa is spell-bound by a sophisticated, dark-skinned concert pianist named Mona with whom she forms an attachment on the boat. Mona's husband, known as Habibi, is an Israeli army psychologist, which leads Ailsa to assume Mona must be Jewish; yet it transpires that she is an exiled Palestinian Arab Christian.

"Also on the voyage is a young German refugee travelling to be reunited with her British husband and a querulous Welsh woman whose hostility towards anything foreign encapsulates the narrow, British fear of displacement. It's a cast of characters whose nationalities and circumstances are as confused and combustible as Suez itself; and though the story culminates in a distressingly well-executed denouement, in which Nia returns to Suez to unravel in the company of Mona (with Nia, the lone survivors of the original group), Davies's main theme is what occurs when protocols are breached and privates' wives drawn into ungarded intimacy with the officer class. "What was Ailsa guilty of? Just getting out of line. Being, not even a black sheep, but a piebald sort of sheep in a field of whitish fleeces."

The conversation over our lunch addressed gender (the roles allocated to women including the shifts in roles after WWII generally as well as in relation their presence in international territory and the ranks of their military husbands); church (Joe's growing up a "chapel boy"), {Mona's cultural identity as an Arab Christian and her husband's Judaism, for example), and violence (within marriages, between enlisted men and local men, among the novel's cross-rank cluster of friends, and as a factor in international political strife).

*Continued following page*

## It's our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

If you've ever been part of the Well-Read Dragons, please feel welcome to come to our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary party on Sat., June 7, 11:30 a.m., at the home of Mary Mergenthal, 2393 Bourne Ave., St. Paul 55108. Please bring a dish, other than dessert, to pass.

After conversation over food, we'll discuss this month's title, *One Moonlit Night* by Caradog Prichard. It's a 2009 novel set in Bethesda, North Wales.

Please come to the anniversary party even if you've not read the book. It's available in several Twin Cities libraries or contact Mary to see if a private copy is available.

Word of warning: the local street festival will be in progress. Come via Hwy. 280 to Eustis, or Larpenteur to Eustis. Avoid Como Ave.

**Prefer to receive the newsletter online?**

**Notify Kay Gavin at [kaywgavin@hotmail.com](mailto:kaywgavin@hotmail.com).**

**She will notify you when the next issue is available on the Society's web page.  
Help the Society save printing & mailing costs.**

# Dragon News

## News of Society members & friends



SUNSHINE REPORT: Betty Kinsey, the Society Sunshine chairwoman, reports sending congratulation cards to grandparents Karen and Michael Wojahn and greatgrandfather, Ellis Jones, after the birth of **Gwendolyn Irene Feltes** to Elizabeth and Michael Feltes in Alma, Neb., on April 8, 2014.

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.

## IN MEMORIAM: Jeane Hougen

Jeane M. Hougen, of Edina, was born August 27, 1924. She died March 22, 2014.

Jeane volunteered at Abbott Northwestern for 25 years, was a member of the St. David's Society, and was a lifelong member at Oliver Presbyterian and current member at Hope Presbyterian.

She is survived by her husband of 67 years, John; son, John (Jinger) and their children, Jennifer, John, Johanna, Justin; and daughters, Judith and Janice (Luis).

Her memorial service was held March 26 at Hope Presbyterian Church in Richfield.

## Membership News

### New Members:

#### **Shirley & Scott Buchberger**

1650 Walnut Lane  
Eagan, MN 55122  
952-210-9874  
slbuchberger@Comcast.net

#### **Mary James-Johnson**

358 Cimarron Rd.  
Apple Valley, MN 55124-9728  
952-454-6545  
gjohnso267@yahoo.com

### E-mail change:

#### **Barbara Leedy**

barbaraleedy@outlook.com

### Phone number correction:

#### **Kay Gavin**

Correct number: 651-484-1778

**Please make these changes in your directory.**

**Contact Mary Mergenthal at (651) 644-1650**

**or**

**mary.mergenthal@gmail.com if you need a directory.**

## From preceding page

During the discussion I found myself mulling an earlier Dragons' reading —*The Dragon and the Crescent: Welsh Encounters with Islam*, by Grahame Davies—that provides vital British and Welsh contexts for this novel via a chapter focusing on David Lloyd George's connections to Palestinian-Israeli state formation before, during and after his WWI-era Prime Ministership. Grahame Davies positions Lloyd George as lending support to establishment of the area known as Palestine as an Israeli state via loyalty to a Protestant evangelical Christianity "which believed the Biblical promise that the Jewish people must return to their ancestral home and must convert to Christianity as necessary preconditions of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ." (160)

He further quotes Lloyd George positioning his Welshness as factor influencing support for the 1917 declaration favoring Palestine as a Jewish homeland: "You call yourselves a small nation. I belong to a small nation, and I am proud of that fact....But all I know is that up to the present it is small races that have been chosen for great things." (162) An Arab Palestine would also be, presumably, a small nation, but not a reliable pro-British nation in the then contemporary formulations so that Lloyd George described himself as "a very strong advocate of the conquest of Palestine."

Alongside this I carried Stevie Davies comments from a 2010 video introducing personal and artistic contexts for *Into Suez* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4cIOiHBkNw>). In this 4-minute film, she remarks on "the casual racism that the British took around the world with them," and on the ways in which a child—Nia in the novel, Stevie in the author's autobiographical narrative—"can bring a very radical view and ask questions that go somewhere beneath the parents' radar." This novel meets that goal—to take readers beneath the radar. And as she notes near the video's end: "If writing doesn't convey sympathy, doesn't open hearts—the readers' hearts—to the different possibilities and the mistakes people make and the complexity of what we are, then I think art is a completely useless thing. I do see writing as very much within an ethical world."

The novel *Into Suez* does exist within an ethical world, drawing readers into a story that is at once personal and political without either parochial perspectives or polemical tones that can too often hamper the very engagement via veil lifting that Davies' narrative and characterization make possible. Each of us brought to that lunch conversation personal views about the topics addressed and the politics enmeshed in the book. For me, this was an important reading as someone weighing the narratives I carry from friends who are Middle-Eastern Arabs living in diaspora in the US, Palestinians living under occupation in the West Bank, or religious or cultural Jews who have also support a two-state "solution," whether they live in the U.S. or Israel. I emerge from the reading with a newly nuanced story to ponder thanks to Stevie Davies ways of weaving the Welsh into this tale, and my tablemates' ways of weaving their understandings of literature into our conversations.

## OFFICERS & REPRESENTATIVES

**President** Mary Mergenthal, 651.644.1650, '15  
mary.mergenthal@gmail.com

**Vice-President** Judith Evans Warner, 763.522.1612  
*Pro-tem.* judithewarner@aol.com

**Secretary** Pam Rose, 952.854.4743, '15  
pamresearch@hotmail.com

**Treasurer** Ron Adams, 952.237.0506, '15  
cymraeg@comcast.net

### Directors

Ilene Alexander, 651.645.4475, '15  
ilene.dawn@gmail.com

Janice Barbee, 763.544.9396, '15  
janicegwb@yahoo.com

Investments — Ron Adams

Archivist — Ilene Alexander, 612.237.6121

Cards & Remembrances — Betty Kinsey, 612.871.7587

Past-President — Pam Rose

Membership Chairperson — Kay Gavin, 651.484.1778

Newsletter Editor — Mary Mergenthal

Officers of St. David's Foundation —

Don Anderson (pres.), 612.789.8923;

Mae Anderson, Betty Kinsey

## Next Deadline: September 13

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  
Don Anderson, (612) 789-8923, or  
Ron Adams, (952) 237-0506.**

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.

**Please check your mailing label.  
Memberships were due July 1, 2013.**

## St. David's Society of Minnesota MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

If family membership, include all names to be listed.

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Membership category: Single Annual (\$15) \_\_\_\_\_; Couple/Family Annual (\$22) \_\_\_\_\_

Supporting Annual (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_; Life (\$175) \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Make check payable to St. David's Society of Minnesota, note "membership")

Mail to: Kay Gavin  
2737 Aglen St.  
Roseville, MN 55113-2046  
or contact Kay at: [kaywgavin@hotmail.com](mailto:kaywgavin@hotmail.com)

**Membership year is July 1-June 30.**  
You may pay for multiple years in advance.

Diolch yn fawr.

*St. David's Society of Minnesota  
2737 Aglen St.  
Roseville, MN 55113-2046*

**Visit us on the web:  
[www.stdavidsofmn.org](http://www.stdavidsofmn.org)**

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**FIRST CLASS MAIL**



North American  
**Festival  
of Wales**

**the Welsh North American Association**

**AUGUST 28–31, HYATT REGENCY HOTEL, NICOLLET MALL  
SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 83<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL GYMANFA GANU,  
WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NICOLLET MALL**

**MORE INFORMATION on pages 3 & 4 inside.**

**It's vital that you register SOON and get your hotel room soon as well.**