

St. David's Society News

Ionawr/January 2020

Vol. 40, Issue 1



St. David's Annual Banquet is coming up

We host this year's celebration of St. David's Day on **Saturday, February 29, 2020, 11:30 a.m. –2:30 p.m. at the DoubleTree by Hilton (new name, same place as last year), 2540 N. Cleveland Ave., Roseville.** To reserve your seat and lunch order, please **complete the yellow registration form, included with this newsletter, by February 21.**

The afternoon program will feature excerpts from *Blodwen*, the first-ever Welsh opera, composed by Dr. Joseph Parry in 1878, using a libretto by Welsh folk poet Richard Davies. Following the pattern of romantic-Italian opera, the story takes place in 14th century Wales and includes a wedding, lovers, dying heroes and a dramatic final twist.

Blodwen received its U.S. premiere only last year in Billings, Montana, in a performance using an adaptation by Dulais Rhys.

Our program will include several songs from the opera, sung by local professional singers KrisAnne Weiss and Wesley Frye, as well as a chorus of local singers performing the finale from Act III. The music includes "Men of Harlech" and the famous "Hywel a Blodwen" love duet. While we cannot present the full opera, we'll share a synopsis of the opera so you won't miss the big picture.



Photo provided to JosephParry.org by Dulais Rhys

This photograph is the only known portrait of Dr. Joseph Parry, composer of Blodwen, and his family, taken around 1886.

Back row, from left: Joseph Hayden Parry, David Mendelssohn Parry, William Sterndale Parry. Front Row, from left: Annie Edna Parry, Josephy Parry, Dilys Josephy Parry, and Jane Parry.

Please turn in your yellow registration form with your payment no later than February 21.

As a reminder, the hotel is northeast of the intersection of I-35 and Hwy 36.

- Take the Co. Rd. C exit off 35W, or the N. Fairview exit off Hwy. 36.
- The specific location, 2540 Cleveland Ave. N., is east of Cleveland and south of Oakcrest. There is ample parking around the hotel.

If you have questions about registration, contact Ilene at ilene.dawn@gmail.com. Our website, stdavidsofminn.org, includes program and location reminders, as well as a link to the registration form.



*Rip Van Winkle Daffodil
Photo by Ilene Alexander.*

The Board is preparing a 2020 Membership Directory. Janice and Sally have worked throughout the past year to ensure everyone's contact information is correct. **If you have moved since our last mailing, or if you simply wish to confirm your current contact information,** please send an email to the addresses below **by February 10 with subject line:** St. David's Society Directory Information Update:

1. Address/name changes (esp. from labels used for this mailing);
2. Update of your email address (if any);
3. Phone number you want listed (if any).

If you do not correspond via e-mail, feel free to drop Janice and/or Sally a note by U.S. Mail. Please **be sure to send your correspondence so that it is received by February 10.**

E-mail newsletter recipients will be sent an electronic copy of the directory via e-mail when it is available. You can pick up a printed directory at the St. David's Day Banquet, Feb. 29. If you are unable to attend the Luncheon and wish to receive a printed copy by mail, please let us know.

Important: At no time will your information be sold or given out for commercial purposes.

Thank you for your help, and thank you for being a member!

President, Janice Barbee, 3425 Wisconsin Ave. N, Crystal, MN 55427, janicegwb@yahoo.com
Treasurer, Sally Evans, 606 7th St SE, Mpls, MN 55414, stpaulsally@gmail.com

St. David's Society Calendar

Well-Read Dragons Book Group

Sat., Feb. 1, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

at Davanni's in Arden Hills

3673 Lexington Ave. N., 55126

Discussion of *Pigeon* by Alys Conran, more on p. 5.

Questions? Contact Mary Mergenthal, mary.mergenthal@gmail.com

Sgwrs Cymraeg, Welsh Conversation

Sun., Feb. 9, 2 p.m.,

8844 Stevens Ave. S., Bloomington

Contact Laurel Bradshaw with questions or directions.

952-607-8670 or llawryf@yahoo.com

St. David's Annual Banquet

Sat., Feb. 29, 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

at DoubleTree by Hilton

2540 Cleveland Ave. N.

New name, same place as last year.

Use the yellow insert here to register by Feb. 21.

(also available on web pg: <http://www.stdavidsofmn.org>)

Well-Read Dragons Book Group

Sat., April 4, 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church

836 Prior Ave. N., St. Paul, 55104

Discussion of *Flame in the Mountains: Williams Pantycelyn, Ann Griffith and the Welsh Hymns* by H.A. Hodges, ed. E. Wyn James. This meeting only at St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Ave. W., St. Paul 55108.

Questions? Contact Mary Mergenthal, mary.mergenthal@gmail.com

An Evening with John Dingley

Sun., April 19, 7 p.m.,

at Celtic Junction

601-13th Ave. SE, Minneapolis, 55414.

A presentation of stories, songs and poetry presented by John Dingley, local Welsh native, singer, poet, actor, author, and character extraordinaire. Following the performance, John will be selling and signing his newest book, *A Visit Home*, a collection of short stories and poems based on his native Wales.

LATE WINTER/SPRING

Watch your email box for news of possible **Welsh Movie Night**. If you don't use email but want to be informed of such an event, please call Janice at 763-370-9880.



St. David's Society Officers

Janice Barbee, President, 2021

Ilene Alexander, Vice-President, 2021

Sally Evans, Treasurer, 2020

Ron Adams, 2020

David Gladen, 2020

Marla Gladen, 2020

Barbara Powell Sherman, 2020

Robert Sherman, 2020

Hywel Roberts, 2020

St. David's Society Foundation Officers

Ron Adams

Ilene Alexander

Bob Minish

Sunshine Sec. & Newsletter Editor

Mary Morris Mergenthal

Welcoming the holidays in style

On Sat., Dec. 14, 2019, members and friends of the St. David's Society gathered at University Lutheran Church of Hope to welcome the upcoming holidays. Program committee composed of David Evan Thomas, Ilene Alexander, and Janice Barbee prepared a most enjoyable program.

Three seasonal poems provided welcome: "Y Plygaint" by Nigel Wells; "Mother Christmas" by Siân James; and "For Christmas" by Christine Ford.

The highpoint of any Christmas gathering is the singing, and no one was disappointed with the quality of the offerings. The St. David's Chorus (enlarged by talented volunteers from around the city) sang "Now Dawns the Holy Winter Day" by T. Hopkin Evans and Dafydd Ddu Eryri. "A Child's Christmas in Wales," read by Richard Rames and Holly Windle, featured choral selections, too: "Bright, Bright the Holly Berries," "Christmas is Coming," and "The 12 Days of Christmas."

All in attendance sang "Good King Wenceslas" and "Silent Night," with second verse in Welsh.

The program closed with the poem "Guardians" by Sarah Westcott and "St. Leonore and the Robin" by Pippa Little, and everyone singing a hearty "Joy to the World."

During the reception, with treats provided by attendees, member Esme Evans played her harp.



Photos by David Gladen.

Top Left: The St. David's Singers with David Evan Thomas at the piano and directing.

Top Right: Also St. David's Singers with Melvyn Jones reading poetry.

Bottom Left: Betty Kinsey (left front) and Karen Titrud (right front) look over the assortment of goodies at the Te Bach [Small Tea] table. (Note several containers of Welsh cakes in front.)

Bottom Right: In a characteristic cheerful pose, Sally Evans is shown in the tea room.

NAFOW and local Welsh bits

It's not too early to register for the **2020 National Festival of Wales in Philadelphia, Sept. 3–6**. Go to the festival website: <http://www.nafow.org> for info. It's definitely not too late to sign up for a room at the headquarter hotel: DoubleTree Philadelphia City Center. Book on online or call 1-800-HILTONS using group name "**North American Festival of Wales.**"

Closer to home, we each promote Wales and Welshness as we're able. Likely this sign found in a St. Peter apartment building is one-of-a-kind. Outside #205 there's a sign on the wall with Y Draig Goch [the Welsh Red Dragon]. Below it

says "**JONES Un Sy'n Gwau.**" Below that it translates "Jones The Knitter." Some readers will be able to guess who the knitter is.

Bob Minish recently pointed out a fine article in the January 2020 issue of National Geographic: "Epic Wales, Jump into Coastal Adventures, Then Hike Trails at the Speed of Sheep." It's a must-read!

"Quiet in the court: Music's now in session" was the title of a Nov. 11, article in the Star Tribune, provided by member **Karen Titrud**. It's a review of a Schubert Club Courtroom Concert that featured



compositions of our own **David Evan Thomas**. Members and friends of the St. David's Society can enjoy David's musical genius adapting a very long score for *Blodwen* into an enjoyable program for us at our St. David's Day Luncheon, Feb. 29.



*Banks of the River Wye,
outside Hay-on-Wye.
Photos by Ilene Alexander.*



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

www.stdavidsofmn.org

www.facebook.com/stdavidsofmn

PLEASE PRINT

Name: (for family memberships, please include all names)

Address (city, state, zip) _____

Primary Phone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

_____ Please save postage.

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

Membership Categories and 2019-'20 rates

_____ Single Annual (July 1 – June 30) \$25

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

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

Checks payable to ST. DAVID'S SOCIETY OF MN

Please mail this form & your check to:

Sally Evans, Treasurer
606 7th Street SE, Apt. 1B
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Send questions to: stpaulsally@gmail.com

Update on Well-Read Dragons

The group met, as usual, at Davanni's in Arden Hills, 55126, on the first Saturday in December. Discussion that day was on *Ibrahim and Reenie* by David Llewellyn. Members had a lively discussion about the unusual plot and the various devices used by the author to flesh-out the plot.

Join us for our next meeting, whether or not you've read the book.

The date is **Sat., Feb. 1, 11:30 a.m.**, (location noted above) and we'll be discussing *Pigeon*, a coming-of-age novel that turns into a murder mystery.

That book is the debut novel of Alys Conran. It has the distinct privilege of having been published in its original English (which we'll use) and in Welsh translation at the same time!

Please join us so you can get a feel of the group and of our April 4 title: *Flame in the Mountains*, Williams Pantycelyn, *Ann Griffith and the Welsh Hymns* by H.A. Hodges, ed. E. Wyn James.

NOTE: We will meet at a different location for this meeting only. More details at the Feb. meeting or by contacting Mary, below.

Contact Mary Mergenthal,
mary.mergenthal@gmail.com,
651-644-1650 calls, 612-670-8510 texts,
for more information.



St. David's Society of Minnesota
3425 Wisconsin Avenue N.
Crystal, MN 55427

Visit us on the web & Facebook



www.stdavidsofmn.org



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FIRST CLASS MAIL



Photo by Ilene Alexander
A winter scene in Bath.