

Newyddion o Gymdeithas Dewi Sant

St. David's Society News

Volume 43/Issue 3/Summer/Yr Haf 2025



Annual picnic set for Sunday, August 24, in Roseville

St. David's Society Annual Meeting & Picnic
Sunday, August 24th, from 1–3 p.m.
Rosebrook Park, 2590 Fry St., Roseville, Minn.

You are invited to our Annual Meeting and Picnic when we gather each summer to chat with other members, enjoy food together, learn more about Wales, and play some games. Members will also approve the next year's roster of board members and learn how our Society has used our funds. Bring your favorite dish to share and plan to have a good time!

We will hear about some recent trips to Wales and we hope you'll share some of your own favorite memories of places and experiences.

Many of you may remember meeting at Rosebrook Park in the past. We'll meet in the park building and enjoy its air-conditioning and its ample parking. Plus, it has kitchen facilities.

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If you are interested in joining the Society's board to help us plan engaging events and keep the Society going into the future, please contact the president, Janice Barbee, at janicegwb@yahoo.com. Some of our board members are not renewing their terms and we'd love to welcome some new members.

The Board meets on Zoom about four times during the year. Janice's term as president expires next year. After nine years as president (*previous presidents have served two-year terms*), it would be good for the Society for someone else to step up.



Photo by Ilene Alexander.

Betty Kinsey as she received her Award for Outstanding Service from the St. David's Society March 1, 2014.

Betty Kinsey just turned 98!

On July 2, Betty Kinsey turned 98! She has been an active and much-loved member of our Society for nearly 80 years! After coming to Minneapolis from her hometown of Ottawa, Minn., Betty worked for 40 years as an accounting supervisor at The Pillsbury Company. She learned about our society from other employees there.

For some 25 years, she was the secretary of this organization, faithfully recording all meetings [*long before laptops*].

She attended the National Gymanfa Ganu (now NAFOW) often, plus always the fall gymanfa in Mankato.

Betty entered her postcard collection at the State Fair for many years, often winning prizes.

For decades, Betty made her tasty Welsh cakes for every Society event. Betty has always been quiet, consistent, proud of her Welsh heritage, and she still is.

Should you want to send a card, write to
Betty at 2615 Park Ave. #519, Mpls, MN 55407.

Mankato Jubilee Cymanfa to be September 28

The 90th anniversary of organized hymn singing in south-central Minnesota will be celebrated during the Fall Cymanfa Ganu on Sun., Sept. 28, 1:30 p.m., at First Presbyterian Church, 220 E. Hickory St. There is no admission charge. Donations are gratefully accepted.

Dr. Mari Morgan of Llanelli, Wales (and, more recently, the banks of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania) will direct. Not only has Mari conducted past Cymanfaoedd, she has special ties with Minnesota and Mankato, having founded and conducted the inaugural concert of the North American Welsh Choir [Côr Cymry Gogledd America] at the 1999 NAFOW. Singers from that choir will provide special music, which will include the Mankato premier of *Nefol Dir* [Land of Heaven], commissioned by the Minnesota Welsh Association for a choral ensemble.

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Language class update

By Laurel Bradshaw

We have a small group of beginners that has formed a weekly study group that meets via Zoom at 7:00 on Tuesday nights. Plans are to work this up into a formal beginner's class which will start on Sept. 9.

The Welsh Conversation group has been meeting on the fourth Sunday of the month at 2:00 p.m. at 8844 Stevens Ave. S. in Bloomington. This group is more informal, and is designed to give all levels a chance to meet and talk with other learners. The exercises are intended to build vocabulary and fluency in speaking, and range from beginners to more advanced.

If there is enough interest, I'd like to meet twice a month, perhaps alternating beginners with more advanced. I would also like to do a once-a-month reading group for more advanced learners on Zoom. We'd read a Welsh-language novel. Date and time to be determined.

For more info, and/or to sign up, contact me at llawryf@yahoo.com or call or text 952-607-8670.

Nefol Dir (a poem written by Society member Susan Thurston) is not the only St. David's Society member's work to be featured at the Cymanfa. "Who Plays the Harp in Patagonia", a poem written by Shannon King and set to music by David Evan Thomas, will be recited (by Shannon) and sung by Donald Barbee.

Attendees will have time to visit during the *te bach* (tea, Welsh cakes and other special treats) that will follow the singing.

For those with mobility issues, the church is accessible through a door near the parking ramp. On-street parking is also available.

This event is sponsored by the Minnesota Welsh Association. Contact Laurie Williams, lmw011@gmail.com for more information.

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If you could offer a ride to others who wish to attend, contact mary.mergenthal@gmail.com or 612-670-8510. **If you'd like a ride**, please do the same.

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A Jubilee Booklet is being prepared, and the MWA Board is interested in receiving pictures and memories (they need not be lengthy) of past Cymanfaoedd. If you have items to offer, please contact Sally Evans, stpaulsally@gmail.com or (612) 600-0520. She will be happy to come to you if need be.

Internship Program at Welsh Museum by Robert Humphries, Director

We are in the process of starting an internship program at Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project, Wymore, Neb., to begin in the fall semester.

We will be seeking two volunteer interns: one to assist in our museum and archive and another to help with marketing and fundraising (a role that could be performed remotely).

While our internships will be unpaid, we are in discussions to secure college credit for successful applicants. If you know a student (including mature students) who might be a good match for these internships, or if you are part of an academic program that can assist us in finding interns, we want to hear from you.

Please send inquiries to:
internships@greatplainswelsh.org

Cow talk over potato leek soup

At the potato leek soup meal following the singing and Welsh cakes, yours truly (*Mary Morris Mergenthal*) had the pleasure of sitting at the same table as **Bill and Lola Christianson**, from Roseville. Lola and I reminisced about our shared Shorthorn memories.

Lola grew up on the Roberts Farm three miles north of Lime Springs, Iowa, just below the Minnesota border (a very Welsh area back in the day). Her family raised pedigreed Milking Shorthorns. [*For those unfortunates raised in the city, "pedigreed" means each cow has a licensed pedigree with its name...such cattle are therefore sought after by other pedigreed breeders, who drive long distances to look them over in your barn and haul home their purchases.*]

Her family showed their cattle at the Howard County Fair and at the Waterloo Cattle Congress.

One winter, a buyer from Oklahoma came to the Roberts farm, bought several of their pedigreed cattle, and got "snowed in" in their home by a big early spring blizzard. Lola, in the fourth grade at the time, kept him busy with questions about Oklahoma, Indians, ranch life, etc. At Christmas time for many years, he sent the Roberts family the list of pedigrees of the resulting herd members. The name "Lola" was used for females and appeared in all of the pedigrees. Just before he died, his current wife wrote to find out who this Lola was!

...from your editor, Mary Morris Mergenthal:

My father, John Griffith Morris, Lafayette, Minn., was the secretary of the Minnesota Milking Shorthorn Association. Our farm was Sunny-side Farm and we showed cattle at the Nicollet County Fair and the Minnesota State Fair.

If you go to the Minnesota State Fair this year, check out the Administration Building, at the Snelling side of the grounds. There's a plaque there for my dad, because he showed cattle (you now know the breed) at the Fair for 40 years.

Unlike the cows on the Roberts Farm, ours were pedigreed Polled Milking Shorthorns, "The breed that fills every need (milk and beef). We don't cut the horns away; we breed them away."

Another Lime Springs Welsh story

Marveen Minish couldn't be at the Gymanfa to join our conversation. She never raised Shorthorns, but her forebears have been long remembered in the Welsh history of Lime Springs, Iowa.

Her great-great-grandfather, the Rev. John J. Evans, was a Calvinistic Methodist minister there.

In January, 1873, he and his wife and two youngest children went to visit neighbors. When they left to come home, they reached a point where the horse could not go any farther. He took the older daughter and carried her to their home. He left his daughter with the older siblings and went back to the sleigh. He took the baby and started back for home, but never made it. Searchers found him and the baby frozen and his wife frozen in the sleigh.

Editor's note: That story is legendary in Welsh-American history.

Consider a gift to the Society or Foundation.

Memorials/honoring gifts designated for the St. David's Society of Minnesota should go to Treasurer Pam Rose, 8514 13th Ave. S., Bloomington, MN 55425.

Such gifts are used for "regular" Society needs, e.g., programs, communication, or rentals. They are not tax deductible.

Memorials/honoring gifts designated for the St. David's Society of Minnesota Foundation should go to Treasurer Ron Adams, 3600 Wooddale Ave. S. #213, St. Louis Park, MN 55416.

These donations are used for larger projects requiring more funds. They are disbursed as grants. They are tax deductible.

You, too, could be a life member if you choose.

For membership info, look for the green "Become a Member" link at <https://stdavidsofmn.org/>

Poets in our midst

The Welsh have always been noted as poets, three in our Society are among them.

Shannon King's new poetry collection

Shannon King, has just published a collection of over 70 poetical thoughts on nature, unique and interesting people, memories of pandemic times, and much more.

Any Point on the Circle: Poems & Diversions: Collected Works is available from Lulu.com



Photo by
Ellen Stekert.

Shannon, a member of our StDS Board and participant in Well-Read Dragons, lives in Minneapolis. A few of the poems reflect experiences there. One was written at St. David's in Wales. That one is appropriately titled "Seals." According to one reviewer, the book's "lyrical and well-crafted lines," include "insightful rhythms and music."

Some are funny, some sad, all thoughtful.
An example:

Worries

The grass doesn't worry
No matter how many times it is stepped on,
Smashed, trampled underfoot, driven over,
Mowed down,
Over and over and over,
It knows
Its nature is to rise again, delicately,
Greenly, celebrating the soil, the sun.

Wisconsin Eisteddfod poetry winner is St. David's member

At the Wisconsin Welsh weekend event May 3–4, Dan Proud, Madison [formerly of Mpls.], entered this poem. The theme for the eisteddfod competition was "Come Home Again to Wales," and he gave the poem that name.

Contestants had to remain anonymous to avoid partiality from the judges. To throw them off a bit more, he chose the pen name "Gwen Fach," a woman's name (*Fach* is a feminine adjective for small/little/dear).



Dan Proud, Madison, at the Wisconsin Eisteddfod Chai-
ring Ceremony. Dan was formerly president of our St. David's Society.

See Dan's poem on next page.

NOT A POEM...JUST FOR FUN...

An Englishman, an Irishman, a Scotsman and a Welshman have been captured by the enemy and face a firing squad. They are offered one last request. The Irishman said he'd like to hear Daniel O'Donnell sing "Danny Boy" one last time. The Scotsman said he would like to have a lone piper play "Flower of Scotland." The Welshman chose a Welsh male voice choir to sing "Men of Harlech."

The Englishman asked to be shot first.

Come Home Again to Wales by Gwen Fach

In a low voice Grandma said to Gwen small,
“Never forget you are Welsh!”

That’s all.

Gwen learned to remember the voice as a call:

“Come home again to Wales.”

Gramma died.

On to school the girl would now

Pass a grove each day, and she would allow

That her favorite song, The Ash Grove, was how

The voice whispered, “Come Home.”

The girl as a woman with a brood of her own

Was happy,

But she had an urge like a light that shone

To find her roots, to not feel alone.

At her first gymanfa, she felt she’d Come Home.

Grandmother’s voice gave the girl a clue;

When she listened, that voice felt so true.

When she sang with the throng she suddenly knew

That it was the voice,

“Come home again to Wales.”

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Trilby Busch in Ninnau/Y Drych again

*Trilby Busch’s family memories are featured
again in the July/August edition on p. 22.*

Trilby, a longtime StDS member, lives in Duluth.

A Child’s Childhood in Wales, Part III

“A window into village life in north Wales in the 1880s, this is the next section of Hugh Curtis Jones’ (1880–1969) memoir of growing up in Froncysyllte, north Wales. Hugh was my grandmother Annie Edwards Busch’s nephew.

Curt Jones, Hugh’s grandson, has the original manuscript.” — *Introduction by Trilby Busch*

Next installment: Henry Morton Stanley visits the Jones family and David Lloyd George gives legal advice.

*For more information about Ninnau/Y Drych,
go to <https://www.ninnaudydrych.org>*

*The bimonthly North American Welsh newspaper
is published bimonthly out of upstate New York.*

Kristin Johnson is in the spotlight again

In an earlier issue, we highlighted the new book by StDS member Kristin Johnson, St. Paul. *Pickles and Paradise* is self-published under the imprint of Fourscore Press.

Johnson was featured on the front page of The Minnesota Star Tribune’s Variety section on June 6. Entitled “The poet laureate of pickleball: Eighty poems devoted to the paddle sport are published in a recent book,” the article tells it all.

Richard Chin, author of the article, begins in an intriguing way:

“Baseball fans might read ‘Casey at the Bat.’

Runners have ‘To an Athlete Dying Young.’

Basketball star Kobe Bryant wrote an ode to his sport called ‘Dear Basketball.’

And now there’s a poem celebrating pickleball. Actually, there are 80 of them.”



Kristin Johnson on the pickleball court.
Her book *Pickles and Paradise* has recently gained more acclaim.

A Welsh woman made a Glenwood, Minn., house famous

Ann Jones Bickle lived in what is now the Ann Bickle Heritage House in Glenwood, Minn., from 1936 until her death in 1984 at 98.

She was born in Wales, emigrated to Canada in 1904, and moved to Minneapolis in 1910. She married her second husband, Frank Bickle, in 1936, and moved with him to this house, which he had commissioned in 1913.

Ann was tireless in her work with social, cultural, and civic organizations, in particular with the Glenwood and Minnesota Hospital Auxiliaries and as director of Women's Services in Civilian Defense in Pope County during World War II.

Several decades ago, the St. David's Society of Minnesota received a number of pieces of Gaudy Welsh China from the estate of Howard Y. Williams. We then chose to re-gift that pottery to the Ann Bickle Heritage House, where it is on permanent display



Photos compliments of Leora Mathern.

The house is on the National Register. It is open to the public at designated hours. Check popecountymuseum@gmail.com



Gaudy Welsh (shown here at the Ann Bickle Heritage House, Glenwood, Minn.)

Gaudy Welsh ceramics were handmade Welsh goods, made and sold in Britain, and exported and collected in America, while remaining a significant part of Welsh culture.

REMEMBERING:

Judy Adams, of St. Louis Park

Judith Ann Nielsen Adams died June 10, 2025.

Judy was born Dec. 3, 1941, to Virgil William Nielsen and Genevieve Agnes Damm in Waterloo, Iowa. She graduated from Cedar Falls, Iowa, high school in June, 1959, and received her BS in Library Science from the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls in June, 1963. She married Ronald D. Adams Aug. 25, 1962, at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

She began her career as a librarian, working for two years for the Kansas City, Mo. public library system. From late 1965 to November, 1969, she was employed by the Dun & Bradstreet Business Library in New York, N.Y.

In 1970 Judy began working for the Hennepin County Library system as a Children's Librarian. She worked in that capacity in Mound, Golden alley, and St. Louis Park; retiring in 2004. She continued volunteering for some years in the Hennepin County Library system and also for the St. Louis Park High School Library and at the Lenox Community Center in St. Louis Park.

Judy and Ron entertained visitors from around the world in their home in Mound, Minn. They later moved to St. Louis Park. They always enjoyed camping and travel by themselves and with their children all over the U.S. and Canada, later with grandchildren as well. They traveled in Mexico, Japan, Wales, England, and took a European cruise on the Rhine, Main and Danube Rivers sightseeing in places of interest along the way.

Judy was an avid reader, especially mysteries. She loved Harry Potter and books by Janet Evanovich.

In 2016 Judy was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. She continued to enjoy travel for several years, and always impressed others with her sunny disposition. Upon the advice of her doctor, in the spring of 2024 she moved into memory care.

She is very much missed by her husband, Ron; daughter, Jaime Adams (David McLaughlin) of Des Moines, Iowa; son, Steven Adams (Nancy Wright) of Minneapolis; and her granddaughters, Naomi and Erin Adams of Des Moines and Akira Adams of Minneapolis.

Judy was predeceased by her parents, her grandson, David McLaughlin, and her beloved brother, Kenneth Nielsen.



Longtime St. David's Society member, Judy Adams, died in June.

Visitation and burial have been held.

Should readers wish to send cards to Ron Adams, the address is: 3600 Wooddale Ave. S., #213, St. Louis Park, MN 55416.

REMEMBERING:

Roseann Lloyd, of Minneapolis

Roseann Lloyd, 81, died June 7, 2025. She was a respected educator, local author and award-winning poet. She also won a Bush Fellowship.

She earned two master's degrees, taught English, Norwegian, and creative writing in high schools and colleges.

Roseann published 12 books, of which five were poetry. Her 1997 poetry collection, "War Baby Express," was honored with the Minnesota Book Award for Poetry. Roseann's life work is preserved in the University of Minnesota Women Writers Archive.

In addition to her intense Norwegian interest and involvement, Roseann also took pride in her Welsh heritage and took part in our Society's book group, Well-Read Dragons, on occasion.

St. David's Society of Minnesota
Janice Barbee, president
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