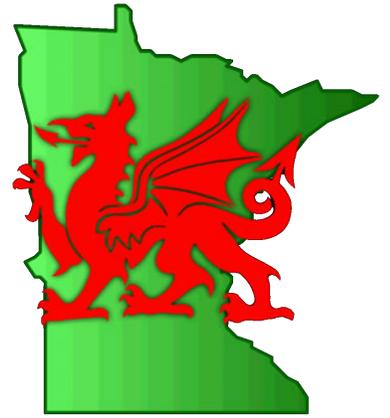


*Newyddion o Gymdeithas Dewi Sant*

# St. David's Society News

Volume 44/Issue 1/Winter/Gaeaf 2026



## SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR ANNUAL ST. DAVID'S DAY CELEBRATION

**Sat., February 28, 2026, 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.**

**St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church, 2323 Como Ave., St. Paul**

The St. David's Day Celebration is our main event of the year—a day to celebrate Wales and all things Welsh, and enjoy each other's company. Once again, we will enjoy homemade *Cawl Cennin* (leek soup) and sandwiches from D'Amico's. Registration details will be sent out the beginning of February. As always, we will have music and singing, plus the chance to buy arts and craft items brought by our members and a pen and ink drawing by Tom Hutchinson in a silent auction.

For our program this year, we are fortunate to have author **Sarah Woodbury** come to us via Zoom to talk to us about Welsh history.

The title of her talk: **"None could go against the King of England: Crouchback and the History of Medieval Wales."**

After the assassination of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd in 1282, King Edward I of England set about eliminating Welsh language, culture, and history to the best of his ability, even to the point of expunging any mention of the Welsh royal court from public documents and placing himself in the lineage of the great Welsh hero, Arthur.



**Sarah Woodbury**

He took the crown, the piece of the true cross, and even the title, Prince of Wales, which from then on would be bestowed on the eldest son of the King of England.

The talk places the ambush and murder of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd within the context of Welsh history,

traces its origins and consequences, and then asks, "How do those who survive the end of their world keep on living?"

About Sarah Woodbury: With over two million books sold to date, Woodbury is the author of more than 50 novels, all set in medieval Wales. Although an anthropologist by training, and then a full-time homeschooling mom for 20 years, she began writing fiction when the stories in her head overflowed and demanded that she let them out. While her ancestry is Welsh, she only visited Wales for the first time at university. She has been in love with the country, language, and people ever since. She even convinced her husband to give all four of their children Welsh names.

Sarah is a member of the Historical Fiction Author Cooperative (HFAC), the Historical Novel Society (HNS), and Novelists, Inc. (NINC). She splits her time between Oregon and Wales.

If people care to read one of her books before the talk, *Crouchback*, the first book in the Welsh Guard Mysteries, is available in ebook for free at all retailers worldwide. You can also find it in audio and paper.

Go to <https://www.sarahwoodbury.com/books/crouchback/> for the links.

Webpage: [www.sarahwoodbury.com](http://www.sarahwoodbury.com)

Woodbury's books are also available at both the St. Paul and Hennepin County Libraries, in many forms—hard copy, e-book, plus audio.

## Apollo Club celebrates 130 years of brotherhood

Plan on a full day of music and joy on Saturday, Feb. 28. As noted on p. 1, our St. David's Society of Minnesota's St. David's Day celebration will be held that day. That evening, go to The Ordway Concert Hall in downtown St. Paul at 7:30 p.m. for a magnificent musical celebration of The Apollo Club's 130th anniversary, featuring the Minnesota Boychoir, along with a Festival Chorus representing voices from Minnesota and across the nation.

This well-known men's choir participated in the 2014 NAFOW event we hosted in Minneapolis. An early director of the group was none other than Dr. William Rhys-Herbert.

Tickets at [www.bit.ly/130Brotherhood](http://www.bit.ly/130Brotherhood)

## New St. David's Society leadership needed SOON

Current president, Janice Barbee, cannot continue in her office past our summer annual meeting. Because no one stepped forward at the 2025 meeting, she already has served well over the constitutional limit for the position.

The Society simply cannot afford to wait to solve this problem. **Without new leadership, the St. David's Society of Minnesota, in existence for 115 years, will cease to function.**

What are your ideas? Can you offer help? Do you have questions about what leadership involves? Please contact Janice using contact info on page 4.

*Diolch yn fawr*, thanks a lot.

**Dan Proud's new music website:**  
[DannyProudMusic.com](http://DannyProudMusic.com)

Member Dan Proud lives in Madison, Wis., but was president of our Welsh Society some years ago. He is active in Wisconsin and national Welsh affairs. Check out his new music offerings.

## SIX Welsh ZOOM classes scheduled

### Welsh History via zoom from St. Paul's Celtic Junction

StDS member Steve Griffith has arranged for Dan Rowbothan of the Madog Center for Welsh Studies at the University of Rio Grande in Rio Grande, Ohio, to present a three-night class on the history of Wales for the Celtic Junction.

**Dates will be March 19 and 26, and April 2.** Sessions will be online. Sign up at <https://celtic-junction.org/product/welsh-history/>

This three-part introductory lecture series offers a concise journey through the history of *Cymru* [Wales], tracing how a small country developed a strong and lasting national identity. Designed for those new to Welsh history, the series moves briskly across the timeline, highlighting key moments, people, and ideas rather than exploring events in deep detail.

### The Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project Seminars

Check [greatplainswelsh.org](http://greatplainswelsh.org) to see the updated webpage for the Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project in Wymore, Neb. It is the home to the only museum and archive dedicated primarily to interpreting the legacy of Welsh settlers on the Great Plains, as well as the history of Welsh immigrants throughout North America.

On the webpage, you'll find zoom links for Sunday afternoon zoom seminars this winter, plus more about the presenters.

**Great Plains Welsh Heritage zoom seminars:**

- **Sun., Jan. 25, 1 p.m.**, "The Siege of Pembroke, 1648." Presented by Terry John. Sponsored and hosted by the Welsh Society of Western New England.
- **Sun., Feb. 15, 1 p.m.**, "The Cambrian Guards of the American Civil War." Presented by Dr. Jerry Hunter, Bangor University.
- **Sun., March 15, 1 p.m.**, "Madame Hannah Hughes-Thomas and Her Royal Welsh Ladies' Choir." Presented by Dr. Bill Jones, Professor Emeritus, Cardiff University.



*Kilverts Pub-with-Rooms, Hay-on-Wye, Wales.*

*Photo by Ilene Alexander.*

### **Welsh Anniversaries in 2026**

- 100<sup>th</sup> – Jan Morris, journalist historian, and travel writer**
- 150<sup>th</sup> – Gwen John, painter**
- 150<sup>th</sup> – John Jones Owen, violinist and composer**
- 200<sup>th</sup> – John Thomas, composer & harpist (born on St. David's Day)**
- 250<sup>th</sup> – John Parry, composer & harpist**
- 850<sup>th</sup> – Rhys ap Gruffydd hosts the first recorded eisteddfod in 1176**

### **Little-known Welsh facts**

#### **The first castle**

- Scientists believe that Britain's first stone castle was built in Chepstow. Begun just one year after the Norman Conquest of 1066, it marks a major transition in castle design—the end of the rough-and-ready strongholds made from earth and timber, and the beginning of powerful, stone-built fortresses.

#### **The “sleeping giant”**

- Britain's second-largest castle is located in Caerphilly, near Cardiff. This “undiscovered” masterpiece of military architecture covers 30 acres, only slightly smaller than Dover Castle's 34 acres.

*From Llyfr Bach Cymru/The Little Book of Wales by Roger Thomas, 2001*

## Upcoming Well-Read Dragons book conversations

Conversations take place in Zoom space, with Ilene Alexander serving as able moderator. She also provides lots of background information for preparation. The group meets the first Saturday of every other month with the Zoom room opening up at 11:45 for conversation and poetry. The book discussion begins around noon.

Please contact Ilene at [ilene.dawn@gmail.com](mailto:ilene.dawn@gmail.com) for more info. The dedicated Zoom link for Well-Read Dragons' gathering is <https://bit.ly/4fkXGPh>.

All are welcome, whether or not they are St. David's Society members.

### Sat., Feb. 7 – *Earthly Creatures* by Stevie Davies.

Honno Welsh Women's Press, 2024.

One of the group's favorite Welsh writers writes about Lübeck, Germany, and East Prussia at the time of Hitler. (StDS member and poet Kristin Johnson will be our guest for an opening conversation about and sharing of poetry from her collection *Pickles and Paradise*.)

### Sat., April 4 – *How the Irish Saved Civilization* by Thomas Cahill. Doubleday, 1995.

Amazing historical information about the important activity of Irish monks.

### Sat., June 6 – *The Ladies* by Doris Grumbach.

Harper Collins, 1984. According to Goodreads: "The Ladies is a touching, imaginative retelling of the story of two of history's most interesting characters: Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby, well-born Irish women who defied all conventions of their 18th-century Irish homeland and eloped to the small hamlet of Llangollen in Wales, where they lived as a married couple."

Sat., Aug. 1 – *Welsh [Plural]: Essays on the Future of Wales* by Darren Chetty, Grug Muse, Hanan Issa, and Iestyn Tyne. Repeater Press, 2022. Fifteen essays focusing on a diverse and contemporary Wales.

All books are available online, plus Ilene can share loaner copies of past and upcoming books, graciously provided by the St. David's Society Foundation; just contact her by email if you'd like to "check out" one of the loaner copies.

## Check out our international newspaper *NINNAU & Y Drych*

"Ninnau" literally means "us" and we (the St. David's Society of Minnesota) are represented in the January/February 2026 edition. You'll find photos of four members—**Sally Evans, Ellis Jones, Allison LaPointe, and yours truly**—plus I wrote an article about a book you really should read in February: *LINCOLN: A Foreigner's Quest* by the late, noted Welsh author Jan Morris.

In addition, **Ilene Alexander**, has an article inspired by our very own book group, Well-Read Dragons.

You can also read about the 175th anniversary of NINNAU & Y Drych. Perhaps you'll be inspired to contribute to the celebration fund.

If you don't already subscribe, please consider doing so. For a paper subscription to this bi-monthly publication, send \$30.00 to NINNAU & Y Drych, Box 712, Trumansburg, NY 14886. E-subscriptions cost \$20 annually. Please email [ninnaupublications@gmail.com](mailto:ninnaupublications@gmail.com)

*Diolch yn fawr* [thanks a lot] for keeping the ancient Welsh love of letters alive.

### St. David's Society Names to Know:

**Janice Barbee, president:**

[janicegwb@yahoo.com](mailto:janicegwb@yahoo.com), (763) 370-9880;

**Pam Rose, treasurer & membership:**

[pamresearch@hotmail.com](mailto:pamresearch@hotmail.com), (612) 483-4980;

**David Richards, board member:**

[david.richards0805@gmail.com](mailto:david.richards0805@gmail.com),

(612) 710-3858;

**Hywel Roberts, board member:**

[hywelroberts@gmail.com](mailto:hywelroberts@gmail.com), (507) 458-8637;

**Ilene Alexander, Well-Read Dragons contact:**

[ilene.dawn@gmail.com](mailto:ilene.dawn@gmail.com), (612) 237-6121;

**Laurel Bradshaw, Welsh language instructor:**

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

**Mary Morris Mergenthal, newsletter editor:**

[mary.mergenthal@gmail.com](mailto:mary.mergenthal@gmail.com), (612) 670-8510.

# Membership Application/Membership Renewal Form

## St. David's Society of Minnesota

[www.stdavidsofmn.org](http://www.stdavidsofmn.org) [www.facebook.com/stdavidsofmn](http://www.facebook.com/stdavidsofmn)

PLEASE PRINT YOUR INFORMATION

Name (for Partner/Family\* memberships, please include all names): \_\_\_\_\_

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Address (including city, state & zip): \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone Number(s) for Directory: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address:

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\_\_\_\_\_ I do not use or seldom use email. Please send newsletters by post.

### Individual and Partner/Family Membership Categories and Rates

- \_\_\_ Individual Annual (July 1- June 30) \$25/year
- \_\_\_ Partner/Family \* Annual (July 1- June 30) \$40/year
- \_\_\_ Individual Lifetime (one-time payment) \$225
- \_\_\_ Partner/Family\* Lifetime (one-time payment) \$300

\* Partner/Family Rate covers 2 adults and may include children under the same roof under 18 years of age.

### Organization Membership Categories and Rates

- \_\_\_ Affiliated Organization (July 1- June 30) \$50/year
- \_\_\_ Supporting Organization (July 1- June 30) \$75/year
- \_\_\_ Sustaining Organization (July 1 - June 30) \$100/year

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

Send membership status questions to: [pamresearch@hotmail.com](mailto:pamresearch@hotmail.com)

Mail this form and check to: Pam Rose, Treasurer

8514-13th Ave S.

Bloomington, MN 55425

IN PREPARATION FOR A NEW MEMBER DIRECTORY, OUR TREASURER, PAM ROSE,  
IS CONTACTING PEOPLE WHO AREN'T UP-TO-DATE WITH THEIR DUES.

PLEASE REACH OUT TO HER IF YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION HAS CHANGED  
AND/OR IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PAY YOUR ANNUAL DUES.

**St. David's Society of Minnesota**  
**Janice Barbee, president**  
**3425 Wisconsin Ave. N.**  
**Crystal, MN 55427**

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

