

Newyddion o Gymdeithas Dewi Sant

St. David's Society News

Volume 44/Issue 4/Autumn/Hydfref 2026



2026 Annual Meeting Report

About 30 St. David's Society members met at OASIS Park in Roseville on a Sun., Aug. 16, for an enjoyable picnic (lots of good food!) and enjoyable visiting. Hywel Roberts shared progress on his upcoming film on King Arthur. It will debut at the 2027 North American Festival of Wales in Cleveland, Ohio.

New officers were elected by acclamation: co-presidents, Steve Griffiths and Larry Moore; treasurer, Pam Rose; and Board members; Janice Barbee, David Richards, and Hywel Roberts.

The treasurer's report was presented by Pam Rose and the investment report by Ron Adams.

Meet our co-presidents



Steven Griffith

Steven Griffith taught in the theatre and dance department at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn., for 27 years. For many of those years, Steve chaired the department. He has a BA and MFA in theatre, and a Ph.D. in higher education policy. From 2006 to 2016, Steve served as Senior Vice-President and Academic Dean at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa. *Continued page 2.*



Larry Moore

Larry Moore is a native Minnesotan raised in Edina. He is a graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College earning degrees in Accounting and Business Administration. When he wasn't crunching numbers, he could be found at the campus ice rink as an All-American hockey goalie.

After a brief post-graduation hiatus, he returned *Continued page 2.*

*Photos by
Ilene Alexander
2026 picnic.*

Steven Griffith – *continued from p. 1*

He regularly teaches Irish drama and history classes at the Celtic Junction Arts Center, in St. Paul, where he has served on the Board for the last six years.

Steve's great-grandfather, Lewis Griffith, immigrated to Utica, New York, from the Slate Mining area of North Wales in 1891. The Griffith family moved to St. Paul, Minn., in 1912. Steve has visited Wales four times.

From your editor:

*THREE CHEERS for our entire Board of Directors. Let's all find ways to support them, whether it's offers of assistance/support or regular attendance at Society events. **See contact information on page 5.** Contact them to offer program ideas, food, rides, or... And be sure note the dates below on your personal calendar NOW. The Board has worked to plan far ahead...for our sakes! Mary Morris Mergenthal*

Larry Moore – *continued from p. 1*

to the college and spent 17 years on the hockey coaching staff while also serving as a residence hall director. He holds a Master's Degree in Counseling and College Student Development from Minnesota State Mankato. He served on the board of the area youth hockey association with several terms as president overseeing the organization's charitable gaming license

Larry moved to Minneapolis for his marriage to Dianna Sether and a new career. He spent the next 17 years as property manager of the historic Art Deco classic 2615 Park Avenue, before retiring in 2018. It was there he befriended Betty Kinsey upon discovery of their mutual Welsh roots.

Larry is the son of a mom who was very proud of her 100% Griffith and Thomas, Lime Springs, Iowa, Welsh roots. His maternal great-grandfather was the Reverend Robert Vaughan Griffith, a distinguished preacher and author. Griffith arrived in the United States from Penmachno in 1868.

Larry's paternal great-grandfather was William Owen Thomas, a blacksmith and merchant, who emigrated from Llanbedr to America in 1853.

Mark your calendars:

Pub Gathering, Sun., Oct. 18, 2–4 p.m., hopefully, Merlins Rest, 2801 E. Lake St., Mpls. *Ilene Alexander coordinating.* PLEASE WATCH FOR EMAIL UPDATE BEFORE HEADING OVER.

Holiday Party, Sat., Dec. 12, 2–4 p.m. Location and details TBD.

David Richards coordinating. WATCH FOR LATE FALL NEWSLETTER WITH MORE INFO.

St. David's Day Celebration, Sat., Feb. 27, 11:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

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

Gymanfa Ganu, Sun., April 4, 2027, 2 p.m. Member Karen Wojahn directing.

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

Kay Thomas and Mary Morris Mergenthal coordinating.

Annual Meeting, Sat., Aug. 14, 1–3 p.m. Location TBD. *StDS Board coordinating.*

Well-Read Dragons 2026–2027

Join the group via zoom, now in its 22nd year.

The group meets online the first Saturday of even months; each session starts at 11:45a.m. with conversation, and book discussion from noon–1p.m. Longtime facilitator is **Ilene Alexander**. Please let Ilene know if you'd like to be on her list for reminders/news/receiving the zoom link. ilene.dawn@gmail.com Thanks to the St. David's Society Foundation, there are loaner books for each title. Contact Ilene if you're interested in one.

October 3, 2026 – *Fresh Apples*, Rachel Trezise.

This Welsh writer won the inaugural Dylan Thomas Prize in 2006 with *Fresh Apples*. The Fantastic Fiction website says: "...the publication of a collection of short stories confirms the arrival of a major new literary talent which has grown organically out of the unpromising Valleys." Parthian Books, 2006.

December 5, 2026 – *Whale Fall* by Elizabeth O'Connor. In 1938, a dead whale washes up on the shores of remote Welsh island. For young Manod, who has spent her whole life on the island, it feels like both a portent of doom and a symbol of what may lie beyond the island's shores. The arrival of two English ethnographers who hope to study the island culture, then, feels like a boon to her—both a glimpse of life outside her community and a means of escape.

Whale Fall tells the story of what happens when one person's ambitions threaten the fabric of a community, and what can happen when they are realized. O'Connor paints a portrait of a community and a woman on the precipice, forced to confront an outside world that seems to be closing in on them. Vintage, 2024.

February 6, 2027 – *Something Wonderful: Stories*, by Jo Lloyd.

(U.K. title *The Earth, Thy Great Exchequer, Ready Lies*.) In this debut collection of stories that delight in language and shine with wit, wisdom, and deep humanity, a vainglorious mine owner dreams of harnessing all of nature to the machinery of commerce. Two women hunt rare butterflies in a pre-First World War landscape already experiencing the first bites of biodiversity loss. A young man tracks down the father who abandoned him inside

a festival exhibit. A rural Welsh community is fascinated and angered by glimpses of its invisible, wealthy neighbors. Whether seeking knowledge, riches, or a better life, the characters in *Something Wonderful* are united by a quest for lasting value, as they ask how we should treat our world, our work, our selves, and each other in both past and present. Tin House, 2021.

April 3, 2027 – *The Woman Who Helped Win the War: The Welfare Campaigns of Margaret Lloyd George, 1914–1918*, by Richard Rhys O'Brien.

This book tells the story of the multiple welfare campaigns—supporting troops, sailors, healthcare, food, temperance, and recruitment—conducted from 1914 to 1918 by Margaret Lloyd George, wife of Prime Minister David Lloyd George, 'The Man Who Won the War.' Y Lolfa, 2025.

June 5, 2027 *Cambrian Tales*, by Jane Williams

This is a collection of pieces written in the 1840s–'50s to defend Wales against the infamous Blue Books government reports which unfairly labeled the Welsh as ignorant, immoral, and barbaric! Williams' fiery and witty writing is filled with patriotism and defiance, not only dispelling the awful description of the Welsh but smashing it to pieces.

Cambrian Tales is a hilarious and fun comedy of manners with bold characters. Readers be warned, this book will have you snorting with laughter whilst being charmed with old fables and Welsh pride.

Quick and dynamic chapters are interspersed with poetry which showcase Williams' talent and make for a perfect "dip-in-and-out" book. Honno Press, 2023.

August 7, 2027 - Mystery book, selection to be determined.

Ilene's recommendations for finding books:

Used Books: [Biblio.com](https://www.biblio.com/), [BetterWorldBooks.com](https://www.betterworldbooks.com/), [abebooks.com](https://www.abebooks.com/)

New Books: Local independents – e.g., [SubtextBooks.com](https://www.subtextbooks.com/), or [NextChapterSellers.com](https://www.nextchapter sellers.com/).

[bookshop.org](https://www.bookshop.org) serves as a hub for independent booksellers. [Blackwells.co.uk](https://www.blackwells.co.uk) provides speedy, low-cost delivery to the U.S.

Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales sign pact

The leaders of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland signed a pact September 14 that threatens to lead to the breakup of the United Kingdom.

The first ministers of the three semiautonomous regions of the U.K. told Prime Minister Andy Burnham and his government to prepare for constitutional changes and that their future lies with the European Union.

“For people watching across these islands—for people watching around the world—there could be no clearer sign that Westminster’s time is coming to an end,” they said in a memorandum of understanding referring to Parliament.

The announcement came about 48 hours after President Donald Trump waded into the waters of the potentially contentious issue when he said he “would love to see” to a reunified Ireland during a trip to visit his golf course hosting the Irish Open.

It’s the first time the leaders of all three countries are either from pro-independence parties, or pro-unification in the case of Northern Ireland, which was partitioned and remained part of the U.K. when Ireland won independence from Britain over a century ago.

Pioneer Press, Sept. 15, 2026

A Welsh hymn on a village square in Maine

Holly Windle

StDS members Holly Windle and Richard Rames spend summers in Wilton, Maine—on a lake in the foothills of the western mountains. Their only source of heat is a woodstove, so they’re feeling the appeal of central heating, now that nighttime temps get below 40 degrees. “The loons are getting ready to leave, and so are we,” she adds.

Ed haunts the main street of this small town in Maine, telling people they will burn in hell unless they are saved, washed in the blood, etc. The police have banned him from certain places, but he hangs around the Post Office and grocery store. His prejudices are many and loud, and I’ve talked to him before many times, refusing his offer of literature and disagreeing with his categories of people that will be in hell.

There won’t be another newsletter before Nov. 1, so here’s a song you can sing that day, especially if you sing in a choir. Tune: CWM RHONDDA; Music: John Hughes, 1907; Words: Dean McIntyre, 1995.

Time Change Song

God of every choir member,
we need sleep to sing our best.
Help each singer to remember:
take that extra hour of rest.
Change those clocks one backward hour;
Don’t arrive at church too soon,
Or the anthem by yourself you’ll croon.

Today, with our departure looming and my patience wearing thin, I asked him if perhaps he might sing instead of shouting at people. He says he does sing, sometimes. I launched into “I am coming, Lord” – singing the verse, followed by the chorus in English and then Welsh. He was stunned. (I knew he’d like the “wash me, cleanse me in the blood” part.) He didn’t know the song, but he said he was part Welsh.

I recommended singing rather than shouting, and he was launching into a song as I left. It was one I knew, so I returned to sing it with him. And he said I had made his day. A big change from his usual ranting and telling me of the futility of my attending the Congregational church just down the block. Nice to have all those years of Gymanfa experience come to my aid.

How to tell one from the other...

What’s the difference between the Welsh nationalist party and a tartan Toyota?

One’s Plaid Cymru, the other’s a plaid Camry.

For the record: *Plaid* in Welsh is pronounced “plide” (rhymes with ‘side’) and means “party.”

Cymru, pronounced “cuhm-ree,” means the country of Wales.



© Beth Landmesser

NAFOW: St. David's Society members and friends who attended the 2026 North American Festival of Wales in Springfield, Mass., were: Front — Danny Proud and Kathy Gray. Back — Wendy Worner, Kay Thomas, Sally Evans, Laurel Bradshaw and Dawn Bradshaw.

NAFOW recollections

Dan Proud reports that he had a wonderful week at NAFOW. "Every musical event was outstanding," he said.

At the Friday night banquet, the North America Wales Foundation (NAWF) presents its Heritage Medallion. This year's winner was Phillip Davies from Scotch Plains, N.J. In his acceptance speech, Phil spotlighted our own Ellis Jones with a recollection of Ellis' 2004 acceptance speech. At that time, Ellis voiced the imperative that the Welsh-American community continue to foster strong programs and strong communities, saying, **"A lapse of one generation is all it takes to break the bonds that endure over time."** That made an impression on Phil, Dan said. [Ed. note: *Something for us all to consider in our own Welsh group.*]

Besides Ellis, other St. David's Society members to receive this award have been AdaMae Lewis (Ames, Iowa), 2015, and your editor, Mary Morris Mergenthal, (St. Paul, Minn.) in 2014.

St. David's Society leaders

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Welsh woman led the resistance to Infantino's World-Cup sell-off

Based on article by Megan Ferings at [nyt.com](https://www.nytimes.com), Aug. 3, 2026.

At an emergency meeting of UEFA, European football's governing body, two women demanded real action. One was Laura McAllister (Wales), a vice-president of the group and one of two women on the governing body's 21-member executive committee. The other who pushed UEFA to stop Giano Infantino's proposal to sell off stakes in FIFA* competitions was Lisa Klaveness (Norway).

McAllister demanded a full-fledged boycott of football's 122-year-old global governing body. She and Klaveness are respected former internationals who know the sport intimately. Their playing pedigree (unusual for women to hold) has helped garner respect and authority in football governance and leadership during their time at UEFA, particularly around the principles and ethic that are supposed to underpin the game.

In 1992, McAllister, CBE,** was also one of three women to lobby the Welsh FA to formally recognize the women's national team. She pursued academia and governance after her playing career.

She became the first Welsh person to win a seat on UEFA's executive committee in 2023, taking the one female-designated space of the 21-member body. Two years later, McAllister had managed to expand UEFA's number of female-designated seats on its executive committee to two. Norwegian Klaveness took it.

More recent football update:

On Aug. 3, the Football Association of Wales withdrew support for the FIFA head. Plus, Wales finished top of their qualifying group for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup, securing 14 points from six matches, with four wins and two draws. They will enter the play-offs, with the first round scheduled between October 7 and 13, 2026, and must win both their Round 1 and Round 2 ties to qualify for the 2027 tournament in Brazil.

* FIFA = *Fédération Internationale de Football Association*, or International Federation of Association Football.

** CBE = Commander of the Order of the British Empire, presented by the King or Queen of England.

All-Welsh *Star Wars* coming

Thanks to member Trilby Busch for noting this online article by George Lewis, August 4, 2026.

Matthew Rhys is officially—at least we think so—joining the *Star Wars* franchise, though not in the way that you may imagine. Rather than being part of a new project from the sci-fi saga, the actor will be lending his voice. As per *Nation Cymru*, Rhys is part of the cast for a dubbed version of *Star Wars* (also known as *Episode IV: A New Hope*). The classic space opera is celebrating its 50th anniversary next year, and will be dubbed into Welsh for the first time.

The Widow's Bay actor will play Han Solo, the role that was immortalized by Harrison Ford in the original film. He will be joined by Rhys Ifans, Aimee-Ffion Edwards and Mark Lewis Jones, who portray Obi-Wan Kenobi, Princess Leia and Darth Vader respectively.

Osian Morgan will play Luke Skywalker, while Llyr Ifans, Nia Roberts and Richard Harrington will portray C-3PO, Aunt Beru and Grand Moff Tarkin. Owain Arthur and Rhodri Meilir are also onboard, as the Red Leader and Gold Leader.

The film, titled *Star Wars: Gobaith Newydd*, is being produced by Lucasfilm and Disney in collaboration with S4C and the Welsh Government via Creative Wales. It will debut on S4C Christmas Day.

Wordle? Wardle?

Josh Wardle, 43, is a Welsh software engineer best known for developing the viral web-based game Wordle and the collaborative experimental project [r/place](https://www.reddit.com/r/place) for Reddit.

In January 2022, the New York Times Company acquired Wordle from Wardle for a seven-figure sum. He lives in New York City and was named one of *Time's* 100 Most Influential People that year.

Wardle, from South Wales, and was brought up on an organic livestock farm near Llanddewi Rhydderch near Abergavenny.

He attended Royal Holloway, University of London, and earned a degree in Media Arts. A few years later, he moved to the U.S. to attend the University of Oregon, where he graduated with a Master of Fine Arts in Digital Arts.

One of his two brothers is the documentary filmmaker Tim Wardle, director of the 2018 film "Three Identical Strangers."

Membership Application/Membership Renewal Form

St. David's Society of Minnesota

<https://stdavidsofmn.org>

www.facebook.com/stdavidsofmn

PLEASE PRINT YOUR INFORMATION

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

Address (including city, state, zip):

Phone Number(s) for Directory

E-mail Address(es):

☐ 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

☐ Individual Annual (July 1–June 30) \$25/year

☐ Partner/Family* Lifetime (one-time payment) \$300

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

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

Membership status questions to: pamrosearch@hotmail.com

Mail this form and check to: Pam Rose, Treasurer/Membership Chairperson

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FIRST CLASS MAIL



Looking down on Glyntawe, a hamlet and parish on the upper reaches of the River Tawe in Powys, Wales, in the community of Tawe-Uchaf. It has always been sparsely populated. Today it attracts tourists for outdoor activities in the Brecon Beacons National Park and for caving.