



St. David's Society of Utica



Newsletter, June 2021

Website: SaintDavidsSociety.org

Email: info@SaintDavidsSociety.org

FESTIVAL OF WALES 2021 COMES TO UTICA

The Welsh North American Association (WNAA) has chosen Utica for its 2021 festival – a four-day event held over Labor Day weekend.

The WNAA has held this annual international event since 1929 and this is the fifth time it has come to Utica. The last was in 1996.

Festivities will start with a flag raising at Utica City Hall followed by concerts, banquets, eisteddfod competitions and seminars, concluding with two gymanfa ganu services.

The home hotel will be the Delta by Marriott on Genesee

Street with a \$99 per night rate

The nearby Stanley Theater and Westminster Church will be used for some concerts and gymanfa services.

Tickets can be ordered for the four days or on an á la carte basis for specific events.

Information about making reservations can be found (after July 1) on the website: festivalofwales.org. There is an option to make a



Memorial donation in honor of someone to insert in the program.

Those without internet access can call 315-338-3538 to receive a registration form or mail in requests

76th Wedding Anniversary

Bob and Jeanne Jones of New Hartford will celebrate their 76th wedding anniversary July 22nd.



Congratulations poured in last year for their 75th despite no formal celebration, including a tribute from the NY State Senate honoring the couple's remarkable marriage.

Their son, the Rev. David Lloyd Jones says, "As far as I am concerned we could not have better role models than our parents. They maintain a

sense of gratitude that life, despite its challenges, has overall been good to them. They've worked hard and carried out their responsibilities in terms of family, church and serving their community through their musical talents."

Involved in Welsh music events since the 1920's, Bob and Jeanne

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Donations Invited

Our society maintains a trust fund used to preserve Welsh heritage among the people in the Mohawk Valley area. A part of this fund is used to provide scholarships to students of Welsh heritage who are pursuing higher education. A memorial in gymanfa ganu programs is one way of doing this, or you can donate directly to the scholarship fund.

Donation Form is at end of newsletter

Membership—a perfect gift!

Lifetime membership in St. David's Society of Utica makes a great gift—a bargain at only \$25! Checks can be sent to Cindy Gilbert, Treasurer, 3 Woodstock Court, New Hartford, NY 13413. Be sure to include the name of the new member, address, phone and e-mail address.



Welsh Rugby Party

About 60 people attended our second Annual Welsh Rugby party held in March 2020 at "The Celtic Harp" in downtown Utica .

Four TV's were tuned into the Wales v England Six Nations Rugby Match. Wales played well in an exciting game but lost by 3 points to England. (Result: 33-30).

Stewart and Esther Williams and Cindy Gilbert helped organize the party which concluded a week of events celebrating St David's Day.

Left: *Welsh team supporters at the party*

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are well known in the North American Welsh Community, welcoming into their home a steady stream of visitors from academics to historians to students. They helped develop a Welsh Culture collection at Utica College and are regularly consulted for information about Welsh history in our region.

The couple met at Utica Free Academy where Bob was a tenor soloist in the choir and Jeanne was accompanist, Bob's parents emigrated from Merionethshire in N.Wales in the early 1900's while Jeanne- of Scottish background – was originally from Amsterdam, NY.

They married after Bob completed his military service in WW2. One of his final duties was on a medical ship off the French coast during the D-Day invasion. While raising their five children, Bob worked for the NY Telephone Company and Jeanne gave private music lessons. Today they have seven grandchildren.

Bob's family were very active in gymanfa and eisteddfod events. In 1951, when he won the soloist prize in the Utica Eisteddfod the music adjudicator Dr Griffith J. Jones of Cleveland, Ohio, said: "He has a voice with a tear in it like the late Al Jolson."

Jeanne was similarly involved in music. As well as teaching, she organized recitals for students and performances for veteran artists She was also president of the B Sharp Musical Club of Utica, one of the oldest music societies in NY.

In 1976 Bob and Jeanne formed the Saint David's Choir that had about 50 members and performed regionally. Bob was also song leader and Jeanne an accompanist for gymanfa ganu services throughout the state and led similar events for the Utica St David's organization as well as at Remsen, Steuben, and Nelson

The couple were also instrumental in organizing the Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu services held in Utica in 1981 and 1996 and both have served as president for the Utica St David's Society, where Bob was Historian for many years. He is now an Emeritus Executive member of this society and a lifetime trustee of the Remsen-Steuben Historical Society.

While music has been an integral part of Bob and Jeanne's marriage, so also is their long involvement in New Hartford Presbyterian Church. Says Pastor Sue Riggles, "They are just people of high moral standing and their integrity is above reproach. They genuinely like each other and are good friends."

Now 97 and 95, respectively, Bob and Jeanne have cut down on their schedules although Jeanne still plays keyboard at various functions. Utica St David's Society president, Linda Walters, sums it up. "When you think of Welsh heritage and the St David's Society in Central New York, the first names that come up are Robert and Jeanne. To all of us, they mean an awful lot because they were active long before us and through them, we learned so much about Welsh history in this area."

2020 DINNER AND BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual dinner and business meeting was held at the Hart's Hill Inn, Whitesboro in March 2020.

President Linda Walters welcomed guests and described future events and David Dudgeon explained some changes to the constitution.

After dinner, President Walters introduced officers and members. Elected officers for the coming year are: Linda Walters – President, Judge James Griffiths -Vice President, Dolores Pugh – Secretary and Cindy Gilbert – Treasurer.

Returning officers include: Wendy Divine-Historian, Pat Williams – Membership, David Dudgeon – Scholarship, Stewart Williams – Events, Ted Engle – Past President.



Bob Jones and Frank Tolbert

New Board members are Gene Falvo and Brian Hughes. Returning Board members include Ralph Humphreys, Norm Jones, Shirley Tolbert, Leonard Pugh, Barbara Robinson, and Mary Lou Rosecrants.

Rainer Morgan Rzucidlo and John Rzucidlo resigned their positions as they are relocating to the West Coast. John was our technical manager who maintained our website and mailings.

Rainer is a Wales native who wrote our newsletter and organized continuing education seminars about Wales at the local community college. Both will be deeply missed for both their contributions to our society and the close friendships they developed over the years.

For entertainment, we viewed one of the episodes from the Welsh television show, Codi Hwyl. Week two of the series was filmed in Utica and the Remsen-Steuben region and many of the attendees were featured in the show.

As a benediction the Rev. Jay G. Williams led the group in singing , 'Cwm Rhondda.'

Robert Jones led the group in singing 'Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau' and Rev. Roger Williams gave the Invocation

Breaking News: Utica is front page story in Ninnau newspaper

The July-August edition of the North American Welsh newspaper 'Ninnau' has a big front-page spread about Utica hosting the 2021 North American Festival of Wales and other articles about Utica and our St David's Society. You can check out the newspaper on our website: saintdavidsociety.org, or—buy a paper copy! (Ninnau Publications, PO Box 712, Trumansburg NY 14886.)

St. David's Day Flag Raising



Society members watch the flag raising .(L. to R.) Ralph Humphreys, Janet Washburn, Cindy Gilbert, Linda Walters, Mayor Palmieri, Brian Hughes and Stew Williams.

The Society held its annual flag raising ceremony at Utica City Hall in February last year to promote our heritage and kick-off the yearly St David's celebration.

About 20 members braved the brisk windy weather to assist in the ceremony. as Utica mayor, Robert Palmieri, raised the flag. Society officers President Linda Walters, Vice President Judge James Griffith, and Past Presidents Stew Williams and David Dudgeon organized the event.

The mayor officially declared March 1st as St David's Day in Utica and acknowledged the rich Welsh heritage in the area.

Several city officials attended to listen to the speeches, sing the Welsh Anthem (Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau) and enjoy the tea cakes supplied by Janet Washburn and Cindy Gilbert.

SCHOLARSHIP DONATION



From: _____

Amount: _____

Clip form and send with donation to: Cindy Gilbert, 3 Woodstock Ct., New Hartford, NY 13413

Make checks payable to St. David's Society of Utica

Thank you for your generosity. We appreciate your support!

Saint David's Society of Utica
c/o Roger Williams
4 Fairlane Drive
Whitesboro, NY 13492

