Beginning in the 1100s, groups of traveling bards would congregate in Wales to entertain each other with songs and poetry. In 1176 Lord Rhys invited poets and musicians from all over Wales to a grand gathering at his castle in Cardigan, where a chair at the Lord's table was awarded to the best poet and musician, a tradition that continues today.

The modern *eisteddfod* (meaning "to sit together") evolved from its ancient beginnings and has been held every year since the early 1800s except for 1914 and 1940 due to the World Wars. The Gorsedd of Bards was formed in 1819 as an association of poets, writers, musicians, and artists. Its members are known as druids, hearkening back to the pagan history of Wales when druids were the religious leaders of the country.

Every year the winner for best long poem receives an ornately carved chair as the coveted first prize. All poems must be written in the difficult Welsh language and in the Welsh poetic form. Pageantry and tradition are part of the Chairing of the Bard with the Archdruid waving his 9-foot sword over the winning poet. The writer of the best poem in free meter receives a crown, and the winner of the prose competition receives a medal.

The Malad Valley Welsh Festival is not an *eisteddfod* although music and poetry are major parts of the event. The Archdruid is replaced by a Knight of the Festival, who escorts the winning Bard to the stage. The beautifully carved chair remains with the Festival with the Bard presiding at the next year's Festival from the Bard's Chair. The Bard receives a medal.

The Patsy Price Scott Poetry Prize is named for a winning poet who lived her entire life in Malad Valley. Her family established the Prize when she died a few years ago. The winner of the Prize receives a Welsh-themed decorative plate.

Monte John, the 2022 Bard of the Malad Valley Welsh Festival, will preside at this year's Festival. Past Bards are Jan Crowther Myers (2017), Dotty Evanson (2018), and Cory Webster (2019-2021). This year's theme for poetry was "Kindness."