

MALAD VALLEY WELSH SOCIETY

Volume 18 Number 2 – May 2023

HISTORY OF THE MALAD VALLEY WELSH FESTIVAL

It is difficult for those who have been involved in the Welsh Festival since its beginning in 2005 to believe that this will be the 17th Festival. (The Festival was cancelled for two years by the pandemic.)

In 2005 a small group of Malad residents determined that it was time to celebrate the Welsh heritage of the Valley. Many people, including Gordon Griffiths, John Roderick, and others, had advocated for such a Festival for many, many years, and they would be pleased to know their dream has come true.

The purpose of the Malad Valley Welsh Festival is to promote and celebrate the Welsh heritage of Malad Valley. Settled by Welsh pioneers in the 1860s, the Valley is said to have reminded pioneers of their native Wales. (They must have arrived in the spring when the hills are green.) Today Malad continues to have the largest number of people of Welsh heritage per capita of any place outside Wales.

From the 1880s to World War I, Malad and St. John or Samaria took turns hosting an annual *eisteddfod*, reminiscent of the event held in Wales since the 1100s.

Poetry, vocal, and dance competitions were highlights of the two-day event that brought people from as far as Salt Lake City to the Valley.

While the Malad Valley Welsh Festival is not an *eisteddfod* due to the variety of events and emphasis on pioneer heritage, the Festival continues to remind people of the history of the Valley, to educate people about Wales and all things Welsh, and to celebrate the courage, talent, and strength of those early Welsh pioneers.

17th Annual Malad Valley Welsh Festival Coming Soon!

As always, there will be something for everyone at the Malad Valley Welsh Festival, whether or not you are Welsh!

Many of the events at this year's Welsh Festival will be familiar (see attached updated schedule), but there are some new featured speakers or events.

Dean Hughes, Presenter

Noted award-winning author Dean Hughes will be a presenter on both days. He will speak about "What It Means to Me to Be Welsh." Dean has published 105 books, mostly historical fiction and children's books. He is best known for his *Children of the Promise* (set during World War II) and *Hearts of the Children* (set during the Vietnam War) series. His 2003 novel, *Midway to Heaven*, was adapted into a feature-length film in 2011.

In 2005 Hughes won the Smith-Pettit Foundation Award for Outstanding Contribution to Mormon Letters. In 2007 he received a Lifetime Achievement award at the inaugural Whitney Awards. In 2013 he received an Outstanding Achievement award from the Association for Mormon Letters.

Dean's presentation will be at 10:00 a.m. on both Friday and Saturday.

Dulais Rhys, Presenter

As a native of Wales, Dulais is proud of his heritage and delighted to share it at the Welsh Festival. Now a resident of Montana, Dulais will present "The Welsh National Anthem: Its History and How to Sing It." Everyone will learn to appreciate the Welsh National Anthem after hearing more about it.

Dulais will present at 11:00 on both days.

Lucie Washburn, Intro Speaker

At the Opening Ceremony on both days, Lucie Thomas Washburn will introduce the Festival's theme of "Kindness" and relate it to St. David, the patron saint of Wales.

Displays

The "Walk Through Wales" continues to expand with additional photos of the beautiful scenery and historic buildings in Wales. The histories of additional families will be displayed along with the "Walk Through Wales" in the Cultural Hall of the 2nd Ward Church.

More Welsh Food

Although the Welsh are not known for their food, there are some delicious foods associated with the country. Authentic (or almost authentic) foods will be available during the Festival.

The "Taste of Wales" booth will feature Welsh cookies, breads, and grab-and-go boxes of rolls, ham, and cheeses, much as one would find in Wales, all prepared by the Malad High School culinary arts students and their teacher, Shantel Tavoian.

Thanks to Luke Waldron's recent trip to Wales, several food booths at the Heritage Square in Samaria will offer traditional

Welsh foods. Look for Welsh rarebit!

Wagon Rides

The wagon rides to historic sites in Malad City will take visitors down South Main as well down Bannock Street. Signs will indicate owners of property, as shown on the earliest plat map available.

Music

The Youth Concert will feature talented young musicians again this year. The Piano Ensemble Concert will introduce new performers and pieces.

The Friday Night Concert will feature Cory and Jill Webster performing their popular “Radio Show” as if broadcast along the Mormon Trail from Illinois to Utah. Original songs and poetry will be interspersed with “commercials” and jokes that relate to Malad Valley’s history.

The popular Malad Valley Men’s Welsh Chorus will perform on Friday evening as well as at other events during the Festival.

Poetry

All past Festival Bards will join Monte John, the 2022 Welsh Festival Bard at the Adult Poetry Reading and Finale program. The 2023 Bard will be chaired during that program.

The semi-finalists of the Youth Poetry Competition will be invited

to read their poems at the Festival, competing for crowns as the winning poets for their respective grade levels.

Kids’ Activities

Once again the Malad After-School Program and Malad Middle School MathCounts Team will organize games and activities for children and young people.

Sunday Evening Program

For over 100 years, Malad was in the Logan Temple District, and many people still attend that temple, which closed in 2022 for extensive renovations. Bob Washburn will present about the history of this pioneer-era temple, completed in 1884 as the fourth temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Music will be by the Malad Valley Men’s Welsh Chorus. Refreshments will be provided by the Malad Stake High Council.

**17th ANNUAL MALAD VALLEY
WELSH FESTIVAL
June 30-July 1, 2023
Fireside on July 2, 2023**

FUNDING FOR THE WELSH FESTIVAL

Admission to the Festival continues to be free although some activities, including the food and craft vendors, may charge a fee.

The Festival is possible because of generous donors, including members of the Malad Valley Welsh Society and other individuals. Many businesses in Malad, including Nell J. Redfield Memorial Hospital, Hess Pumice Products, Thomas Market, Thomas Electric, the Dude Ranch, and others contribute to the Festival.

Grants from outside agencies partially fund specific events:
Idaho Humanities Council – presenters
Idaho Council for the Arts – art, displays
Southeast Idaho High Country Travel Council – print and television publicity
Bistline Family Foundation – outdoor music, displays, display boxes, concerts

OFFICERS

MALAD VALLEY WELSH SOCIETY

President – Jean Thomas

Secretary – Roxanne Albretsen

Treasurer – Brent Evanson

If you would like to volunteer to help at the Festival, please contact Jean Thomas at thomjea2@isu.edu or 208-509-2262. Help is always needed at the Information Booths, Country Store, setup and teardown, and other areas.

*Welsh Festival
Adult Poetry Competition*

Theme: “Kindness”

See guidelines on website:
www.welshfestival.com

**Still time to submit poems!
Deadline is June 2.**

Welsh Festival Fiction Writing Competition

Theme: Welsh or Western pioneer setting, theme, or main character

No Horror or Science Fiction please!
See guidelines on website:
www.welshfestival.com

**Still time to submit poems!
Deadline is June 2.**

ORGANIZATION OF THE FESTIVAL

The Festival depends on nearly 200 volunteers. The Festival is under the direction of an 8-member Executive Committee that directs the work of 21 committees. In addition, six other groups have liaison connections to the Festival by hosting activities or providing services that make the Festival possible.

See you at the Welsh Festival!