

ARTICLE RE: WELSH FESTIVAL

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CROESO! Welcome to the 18th annual Malad Valley Welsh Festival! Everyone is invited to enjoy the Welsh and pioneer traditions featured at the Festival. Come and learn about the history and traditions of Malad Valley!

The 18th annual Malad Valley Welsh Festival will be all day on Friday and Saturday, June 28-29, with a Fireside on Sunday, June 30, 2024. The Festival will include something for everyone, whether or not you have lived in Malad all of your life, recently moved here, or just passing through, whether or not you have Welsh blood, and whether or not you know anything about Wales.

If you had been living in Malad Valley in the late 1800s, you would be well acquainted with Malad's version of the Welsh *eisteddfod*. Held in Wales since the 1100s, the *eisteddfod* is the most prestigious poetry and choral competition in the world. Welsh pioneers brought those traditions with them, and Malad Valley hosted its own *eisteddfod* – one year in Malad and the next in St. John or Samaria – until World War I. Participants, spectators, and judges came from as far away as Salt Lake City to be part of the Malad Valley *eisteddfod*.

POETRY and FICTION

This year's Festival will be presided over by Blaine Scott, the "2023 Bard of the Malad Valley Welsh Festival." Blaine will preside over the Festival from the decorative Bard's Chair after being led into the Festival during the Opening Ceremony by the Knight of the Welsh Festival. The past Bards have formed a Bard's Circle, and all will read or recite a poem based on this year's theme – DRAGONS. At the Finale of the Festival, next year's Bard will be chaired.

Poetry readings and competitions for youth and adults began weeks before the Festival with judges reading over 400 poems before determining the youth semi-finalists. All semi-finalists are invited to read their poems at the Festival and vie for cash prizes and the first place crown in each grade category.

Twenty poems have been submitted by accomplished adult poets, and they, too, will be competing for cash prizes and the opportunity to be the "2024 Bard of the Welsh Festival" or to receive the "Patsy Price Scott Poetry Prize." Several authors will vie for the fiction prize; all stories must have a Welsh or Western theme or main character. The carved "Bard's Chair" resides in Malad City Hall throughout the year, and plaques engraved with the names of winning Bards, Patsy Price Scott Poetry Prize winners, and fiction winners hang on the wall there.

WELSH LANGUAGE CLASS

New this year will be Welsh language classes, conducted by John Shaw of Cache Valley. He will provide one-on-one or small group instruction in pronunciation

and simple word use in the 2nd Ward Church after the presentations on both days. Once again, pictures can be taken with the Knight of the Festival in the Church.

MUSIC

Similar to the larger Welsh *eisteddfod*, music is a huge part of Malad's Welsh Festival. Celtic and Western musicians will perform on the outdoor amphitheater on both days of the Festival. Bards and Nobles, Finch and Magpie, Vanessa Carpenter, Runestone, Ken Currier, and Lee Ivie will be among those providing toe-tapping music on both days of the Festival. The Malad Valley Men's Welsh Chorus will perform several times throughout the Festival.

The Friday evening program will open with the Malad Men's Welsh Chorus welcoming everyone with the traditional Welsh song "We'll Keep a Welcome in the Valley" (with words altered to fit Malad Valley). Nurture Harps will demonstrate why the harp is the traditional instrument of Wales. Bards and Nobles will perform Celtic songs while in traditional costumes, and local musician Lee Ivie will perform Western music.

Twenty talented young musicians will perform vocal, piano and instrumental numbers at the youth concert on Friday. Adult pianists will perform at the piano ensemble concert on Saturday, concluding with Mack Wilberg's rousing 2-piano, 8-hand arrangement of "Stars and Stripes Forever."

YOUTH ART

Winning youth art will be on display in the 2nd Ward Church throughout the Festival. Youth artists submitted their Welsh-themed works of art before school was out, and judges selected 15 winners and honorable mention recipients from each classroom in Malad Elementary School.

Events on Both Days

- Opening ceremony with the 2023 Bard being led to the Bard's Chair by the Knight of the Festival, welcome from the Malad Men's Welsh Chorus, and introduction to the Festival theme of DRAGONS by Lucie Thomas Washburn
- Presentation by Luke Waldron, who will share an appreciation for traditional Welsh foods
- Presentation by Blaine and Tara Scott, who will share their love for traveling in Wales
- A "Walk Through Wales" to remind those who have visited Wales of the historic sites and beautiful sights of the country and to make those who have yet to visit Wales yearn to make the trip
- Displays of family history trees and census information of early pioneer families that settled Malad Valley
- All-day performances by Celtic and Western musicians on the amphitheater
- Displays of winning youth works of art at the Church

- Welsh language classes
- Opportunity for pictures with the Knight of the Festival
- Quilt show and bake sale at the Co-op Building, sponsored by the Oneida Quilters
- Wagon tours of historic routes on North Main and Bannock Street
- LOTS of activities in Samaria (6 miles southwest of Malad), including a scavenger hunt and self-guided tours of historic sites and pioneer-era cabins in Malad Valley Heritage Square
- Dunk tank sponsored by the Malad High School wrestling team
- Displays at the Oneida Pioneer Museum
- Tours of historic 140-year-old Presbyterian Church
- Huge book sale at the Oneida County Library, sponsored by the Friends of the Library
- LOTS of food and craft booths, including the Taste of Wales booth (sponsored by the Malad High School FCCLA and Malad Valley Heritage Square) and the Welsh Country Store

Friday Events

- Display of model of USS Idaho
- LOTS of activities for kids with face painting, castle and dragon coloring, and Welsh games, sponsored by the Malad After-School Program
- Youth poetry reading and competitions with winners in each age category being crowned
- Youth concert, featuring pianists, vocalists, and instrumentalists
- Evening concert, featuring harp, Celtic, and Western music

Saturday Events

- Heritage games played by Welsh pioneer children as they left Wales and journeyed across the Plains to Malad Valley, sponsored by the Malad Middle School MathCounts Team
- Piano ensemble concert
- Bard's Circle poetry, adult poetry reading, announcement of fiction winners, presentation of poetry prizes, including "Chairing of the 2024 Bard", and *gymanfa ganu* (sing-along) at the finale event

Sunday Fireside

- Presentation by Bob Crowther on how the Welsh Bible saved the Welsh language; displays of Welsh Bibles; refreshments

SUMMARY

The Malad Valley Welsh Festival will have something for everyone, whether or not you have Welsh heritage! Admission is free although some activities may have a small charge. The Welsh Festival cannot be called an *eisteddfod* (very few

druids reside in Oneida County), but it is becoming an opportunity to celebrate Malad Valley's pioneer heritage.

The Festival is partially funded by the Idaho Humanities Council, Idaho Commission on the Arts, Blue Cross of Idaho Foundation, Bistline Family Foundation, Malad Valley Welsh Society, Hess Pumice Products, Nell J. Redfield Memorial Hospital, Thomas Market, and other local businesses, families, and individuals.

The schedule of events is printed in this paper and on the website: www.welshfestival.com.