

MALAD VALLEY WELSH SOCIETY

Volume 12 Number 1 – November 2016

WELSH SOCIETY EVENTS

Instead of having monthly meetings of the Malad Valley Welsh Society, the officers decided to concentrate on three big events this year: Halloween (*Nos Galan Graeaf*), Christmas (*Y Nadolig*) or New Year's (*Nos Galan*), and St. David's Day (*Dydd Dewi Sant*).

All members will receive a phone call, a text, or an email message to let you know about these events. If you did not get contacted about the Halloween party, please let Jean Thomas know via email (thomjea2@isu.edu) or phone call (208-766-5361 – leave voice mail). We tried to contact everyone, but we had no contact information for some members.

The local Malad members will work very hard to make these three celebrations fun, educational, and entertaining. We will always have refreshments and door prizes, so plan on attending the Welsh Society events this year!

MALAD VALLEY WELSH SOCIETY OFFICERS - 2016-2017

Jean Thomas, President
Susan Wittman, Secretary
Brent Evanson, Treasurer

WELSH SOCIETY HALLOWEEN PARTY

Welsh Society members and friends gathered for a Halloween party that combined Welsh and American traditions. Ancient Welsh traditions and myths were discussed and how modern Halloween

traditions have evolved from those Celtic beginnings. Everyone brought a treat to share, so good food was enjoyed as some of those who had gone on the Scotland/Wales tour in September told stories about the trip.

HALLOWEEN (*NOS GALAN GRAEAF*)

Nos Galan Graeaf, which evolved into All Hallow's Eve and then to Halloween, was a time of superstition and fear in ancient Wales. Beginning as *Samhain*, a Celtic celebration to mark the end of summer and the beginning of winter, *nos galan graeaf* was the night when spirits visited the earth. Welsh traditions on that night involved keeping evil spirits away and foretelling the future.

Families would light large bonfires to burn all night to keep away spirits. Family members would throw white stones into the fire and look for them the next day. Bad luck was sure to come during the year if someone could not find his or her stone.

Children would dance around and through the fire before running for home so that the fearsome tail-less black sow would not catch them. The threat of being caught by the black sow was sure to keep children on their good behaviour during this frightening night.

Instead of pumpkins, jack-o-lanterns were carved from swedes (large turnips) and candles placed inside so that evil spirits would be warded off by the light and the carved faces.

Apples are the only fruit to grow in Wales and are considered to have magical

powers. Apple bobbing was a serious activity because the person to grab the largest apple in his or her teeth would have good luck during the next year. Young girls would carefully peel apples and throw the intact peel over their shoulders. The letter formed by the peel would indicate who the girl would marry.

To keep evil spirits out of a village, one brave young man would put on his coat and vest backwards and walk around the church, reciting the Lord's Prayer backwards. Then he would block the keyhole of the church to keep the spirits inside. If anyone looked through the keyhole of the church, he or she would see the parishioners who were destined to die during the year.

Village elders went house to house to collect "soul cakes" for those who had died during the year.

So although Halloween in the United States has become much less serious and mostly for children, many Halloween traditions had Welsh roots.

Welsh Festival Honoured with Idaho's *Esto Perpetua* Award

Jim Johnston, representing the Idaho Historical Society, presented the Malad Valley Welsh Festival with the prestigious *Esto Perpetua* Award at the choir concert at the 2016 Festival. The *Esto Perpetua* award, named for Idaho's state motto, acknowledges and thanks people and organizations who make a difference in preserving and promoting Idaho history. The award had been presented to Malad Mayor Joan Hawkins earlier in the week at a ceremony held in Boise. The beautiful engraved glass award is on display in Malad City Hall.

CYMRU AM BYTH – WALES FOREVER!

13th ANNUAL MALAD VALLEY WELSH FESTIVAL JUNE 30-JULY 2, 2017

WELSH FESTIVAL PLANS

Plans are underway for the 13th annual Malad Valley Welsh Festival, to be held **June 30 – July 2 in 2017**. A new focus of the Festival will be poetry – both recitations of poems and readings of original poetry. Watch the new, updated version of the website (www.welshfestival.com) for more information as plans are finalized.

The planning committee has discussed the reasons for the small number of people at the 2016 Festival. While overall numbers were down, some events, including the quilt show, the kids' events, and the community meals, had large turnouts.

We are working to update the website, survey people to determine what to change and what to keep during the Festival, and how to get people excited about their Welsh heritage. The Malad Valley Welsh Festival is the only such Festival between Nebraska and California, so we need to get the word out about the Festival.

To make your voice heard about the Festival, please complete the enclosed evaluation form and return it to **Susan Wittman at 59 Bannock Street, Malad, ID 83252 before December 1, 2016.**

MEMORIAL EVENT HELD AT 2016 FESTIVAL

At the Friday evening concert of the 2016 Festival, Carrie Moore and Janice Taylor made a special presentation, thanking the people of Malad for the help they provided when a Swire Coca Cola plane went down near Daniels in northwestern Oneida County, killing all 16 aboard. The husbands of Carrie and Janice were the CFO and CEO, respectively, of the Salt Lake-based company. The tragic accident happened 20 years ago, but the memory of that event is still fresh in the minds of Oneida County Search and Rescue, the Sheriff's Office, and all who assisted in recovering the bodies and meeting with family members. On behalf of the families, Carrie and Janice presented the City of Malad with a special bench to commemorate their gratitude for the kindnesses shown at that time.

WANT TO HELP AT THE FESTIVAL OR IN PLANNING THE FESTIVAL?

Contact Jean Thomas
(thomjea2@isu.edu or 208-766-5361)

PLAN YOUR FAMILY REUNION AT THE WELSH FESTIVAL!

Contact Jean Thomas
(thomjea2@isu.edu or 208-766-5361) if you want to reserve meeting space, have your reunion advertised in Festival publicity, and receive coupons for the Festival food and craft booths for all of your Reunion attendees!

WATCH FOR WELSH FESTIVAL
INFORMATION AT
WWW.WELSHFESTIVAL.COM

Malad Valley Family History Books, Volumes 1-3, are available at Thomas Market, the Blue Goose, the Oneida Pioneer Museum, and Malad City Hall.

Become a "Friend of the Museum" to support the Oneida Pioneer Museum.

Annual: \$20 (2 years - \$35)

Handcart: \$50 (2 years - \$95)

Covered Wagon: \$100 (2 years - \$190)

Stagecoach: \$200 (2 years - \$390)

Send your tax deductible donation to the Museum at P.O. Box 79, Malad, ID 83252.

The Malad Valley Welsh Society Newsletter is published semi-annually. All members of the Malad Valley Welsh Society receive a copy as a benefit of membership.

To put stories, ads, or information in the Newsletter, contact Jean Thomas (208-766-5361) or thomjea2@isu.edu.

The Malad Valley Welsh Foundation is the nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that raises funds to support the Festival. All donations to the Festival and Society are tax deductible. To make charitable donations to benefit the Society and Festival, please send your donation to the Malad Valley Welsh Foundation, 59 Bannock Street, Malad, ID 83252.

To subscribe to the North American Welsh Newspaper--

NINNAU PUBLICATIONS

11 Post Terrace

Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

Phone: 908-766-4151

Email: ninnau@poboxes.com

LOOKING FOR A UNIQUE GIFT? Give a membership to the Malad Valley Welsh Society – just \$10. Contact Jean Thomas (208-766-4417).

MALAD VALLEY WELSH SOCIETY MEMBERS – 2016-2017

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