



# St. David's Society of Utica

## Newsletter - April 2016



St. David's Society

### Upcoming Events

#### SPRING GYMANFA GANU

Sunday, May 1st, 3 p.m.,

Holland Patent First Presbyterian Church, (7835 Park Place )

Conductor is Jay Williams III and David Kolb is featured soloist. Organist is Sue Bartholomew, pianist is Jeanne Jones. Memorial donations are due by April 23rd

#### SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Applications can be found on our website. Deadline is June 1st.

More information about future events of the St David's Society of Utica can be found on our website [www.saintdavidssociety.org](http://www.saintdavidssociety.org) or 315-768-7115.

### Welsh Flag raised at Utica City Hall



Incoming President Ted Engle and Linda Walters with Mayor Palmieri Mayor of Utica, Robert Palmieri joined members in raising the Welsh flag at Utica City Hall, March 1st—St. David's Day. The mayor read a proclamation citing the many contributions of Welsh immigrants to Utica and Oneida County . The event was covered by local television stations WKTV and WUTR and shown on the nightly news. ( More on page 4)

### Saint David's Day

#### Banquet and Meeting

The St David's Day banquet held at Harts Hill Inn, Whitesboro, had a Welsh themed menu, including leek soup. Loaves of bara brith ( speckled bread) were also available.

Entertainment was provided by the Gospel Singers Remnants comprising Kelly Tripple and Marge Brooks ( photo page 2) who provided a melody of songs including Welsh classic "All



David Dudgeon

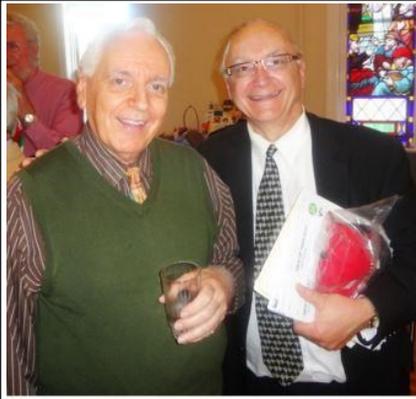
through the Night".

Outgoing Co-President David Dudgeon was master of ceremonies and conducted the annual meeting.

New officers elected for a two-year term were: Ted Engle-President, Linda Walters -Vice President, Dolores Pugh – Secretary, Cindy Gilbert – Treasurer, Robert Jones - Historian, and Patricia Williams. John Rzcuidlo, Mary LouRosecrants, and Janet

Washburn were elected to three-year terms as Members at Large.

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James Hanosh and Hugh Jones

## Fall Gymnanfa Ganu in New Hartford

The Fall Gymanfa Ganu, was held at the New Hartford Presbyterian Church. Hugh Jones, Director of Music Ministries at the First United Methodist Church of Oneida was the conductor. Jones, who grew up in Remsen, has degrees from Syracuse University and George Washington University and retired to this area after a career as a civilian employee with the U.S. Army at the Pentagon in Washington D.C.

The Rev. Dr. Susan Riggle was host pastor and her husband the Rev. Richard Riggle was featured vocalist. He sang the Lord's Prayer.



Rev. Richard Riggle and Rev. Dr. Susan Riggle.

The New Hartford Church Choir also sang, with Jeanne Jones as pianist and James Hanosh as organist. Hanosh is currently is Minister of Music at the church. Following the Gymanfa Ganu a Te Bach was held with tea and Welsh cakes.



Jeanne Jones accompanies New Hartford Church Choir

## Welsh goods sold at Barn Fest

Utica St. David's Society again staffed an informational booth, and also sold Welsh gifts, souvenirs and Welsh Tea Cakes at the Remsen Barn Fest last September.

Over 25,000 people attended the annual two-day event. Welsh Tea Cakes baked by members and assorted Welsh-themed items were sold to visitors. In addition, Welsh travel and vacation information provided by the Visit Wales government travel association was distributed.

**RIGHT: Gary Phillips, John Rzucidlo, and TJ Engle**



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Outgoing Co-Presidents Stew Williams and David Dudgeon, as well as departing board member Tom Grove were thanked for their contributions.

Roger Williams of the Waterbury Memorial Presbyterian Church gave the invocation and benediction.



**Singers Kelly Tripple and Marge Brooks.**

An English visitor to a small Welsh village was approached by one of the deacons of the local chapel who asked him whether he would like to attend their chapel on the following Sunday.

"Wouldn't that be a little pointless?" replied the Englishman.

"After all, your services are held in Welsh and I don't understand the language."

"Ah yes," said the deacon, "but the collection is in English."

# Fun and games-and poetry-at Christmas Party



Gracie Ruganis and Stew Williams



Susan Bartholomew plays carols

About 60 people attended the Christmas Party on Sunday, December 27th at the First Methodist Church of New Hartford, New York. The party was hosted by Ralph and Lois Humphries and planned by co-presidents David Dudgeon and Stew Williams.

It was a covered dish dinner for members and their families and as always, there were games and crafts for the children and entertainment for everybody including trumpet and piano solos and gymnastics performances by the children. Stew Williams did some magic tricks and Susan Bartholomew played the piano and led the group in singing Christmas carols.

Three special guests recited their own original poetry. Martin Willitts Jr., David Forest Hitchcock, and Linda Griggs presented poems that will be inserted on our website. Willitts previously submitted his poem "Daffodils" to the inaugural University of Wales (Trinity-St David College) Dylan Thomas International Competition in 2014. His poem was selected first out of over 350 international entries.

This will be a yearly competition by that university to honor the great Welsh writer and poet Dylan Thomas whose 100th anniversary of birth was celebrated throughout Wales and the world in 2014. We also introduced a newer member of the society, Peter Watts, who recently immigrated to this country from Wales. Peter briefly discussed his background growing up in Swansea.



Poet Martin Willitts Jr

## Remsen Celebrates Welsh Heritage

The 54th Remsen Gymanfa Ganu was held in the Remsen United Methodist Church after the September Barn Fest with Hugh Jones as conductor, Susan Bartholomew as organist, and Dominic Fiacco as guest soloist. The host pastor was Reverend Pat Hubman and the Gymanfa Ganu was sponsored by the Fortnightly Club of Remsen.

The soloist Dominic Fiacco, although only ten years old, already has a reputation locally for his talent on the organ and piano. He currently serves as organist at St Joseph/St Patrick Church in Utica.

Accompanist organist Susan Bartholomew is a Remsen resident, a member our society and serves as organist at the First Presbyterian Church, Illion.

The Remsen-Steuben area is located north of Utica and was a center of Welsh immigration in the early 1800's. After the Revolutionary War, Prussian soldier Baron Von Steuben was granted 16,000 acres by a grateful NY State for his help in organizing the fledging Continental Army. His land agent sold the initial plots to six families from North Wales. They were soon joined by other Welsh settlers in Oneida County but others also emigrated to adjoining Lewis, Madison and Herkimer counties and the Welsh soon became a major ethnic group in upstate NY.



# Utica's Welsh Heritage is Celebrated



Mayor Palmieri reads the proclamation as members of Utica St David's Society prepare to raise the Welsh flag outside City Hall

Thirteen members of the St David's Society joined Utica Mayor, Robert Palmieri, in raising the Red Dragon (*y Ddraig Goch*) of Wales at Utica City Hall.

The mayor read a proclamation citing the many contributions of Welsh immigrants to Utica and Oneida County.

Revolutionary War hero Baron von Steuben of Prussia was one of the earliest settlers in Oneida, He received a land grant from New York State and sold parcels to newly arriving immigrants from North Wales in the Remsen/Steuben area North of Utica.

Soon many immigrants from primarily North Wales joined then and the Welsh became a major ethnic group in central New York.

Utica soon had many Welsh speaking citizens as well as many others spread out the surrounding towns and villages.



Although the Welsh retained their customs, religious practices and language, they quickly became patriotic Americans.

Two Civil War regiments of New York Volunteers, the 117<sup>th</sup> from

Utica and the 146<sup>th</sup> from the nearby towns and villages were heavily populated with Welsh speaking Union soldiers.

## Donations to Scholarship Fund invited

Please send contributions to St. David's Society Trust Fund in care of Treasurer Cindy Gilbert, 3 Woodstock Court, New Hartford, NY 13413.