

# THE EYE OF THE DRAGON



Blwyddyn Rhifyn Newydd  
New Year Issue  
2014/15

Newsletter of the  
Gulf Coast St David's Welsh Society, Sarasota

## A LOOK BACK AT A TYPICAL YEAR:

### ANNUAL MEETING

Our **Annual Meeting** took place on Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at The Glenridge on Palmer Ranch in Sarasota. It was very well attended with over 40 members and guests participating in the afternoon's events all of whom enjoyed the excellent food in beautiful surroundings.

At the Business Meeting, Society affairs and other matters of importance were discussed including the appointment of Don Hughes as Lifetime Trustee, as well as prospective recipients of the Scholarship Fund.

During the past year, we sadly lost several loyal members and friends of our Society and they were remembered with fitting memorials by Rhianon Hardy, Don Hughes and Amy Ferrell. They will be dearly missed.



Don and Rhianon

No Welsh Society gathering would be complete without our Welsh singing. This was lead by Don Hughes and accompanied by Bob Griffiths.

An extra treat to the afternoon's proceedings was a presentation by Jeanne Dubi, President of the Audubon Society, who spoke about growing up in Wales and her brother's love of birding which rubbed off on her. This rounded off a most memorable event.

Many people took the opportunity to renew their Membership Dues for the coming year which is always a good sign that our Society is a vibrant and self renewing organization.



## SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The 2014 **Scholarship** was awarded to three students: Jessica Hogan, (Queen's, NY), Emily Sian Kinsey (Swansea University, UK) and Taylor Lynn-Jones (King's College, Cambridge, UK).



We congratulate these young students and wish them the very best for a fulfilling future in their chosen fields.

Do *you* have a member of your family who is eligible to receive an award from our Scholarship Fund? If so, contact:

David Rees (Scholarship Chair) [walesoz@verizon.net](mailto:walesoz@verizon.net) or Justin Rees at [JRees@rwbaird.com](mailto:JRees@rwbaird.com) to find out if they fit the criteria.

Alternatively, e-mail [sarasotawelsh@yahoo.com](mailto:sarasotawelsh@yahoo.com) or check out our website [www.sarasotawelsh.com](http://www.sarasotawelsh.com) for up-to-date guidelines and an Application Form.

***Awards are presented to qualifying recipients at the annual St David's Day Banquet on March 1st, so it is important to submit your application before the date of the Annual Meeting for review of eligibility.***



## ST DAVID'S DAY BANQUET

The **St David's Day Banquet** was again held at the Heritage Oaks Country Club, Sarasota on March 1<sup>st</sup> which is St David's Day. After a wonderful banqueting meal, we were entertained by Erik Sumner (Baritone) who thoughtfully included some Welsh music in his programme. He was accompanied by Robert Reeves on the piano.

The St David's Day Banquet event is regarded by the Welsh Society as the 'Jewel in the Crown' and this was especially evident in 2014 as we celebrated the Society's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.



Laurence Parry was honoured as 'Distinguished Welsh Citizen'. He gave us an account of growing up in Llandrindod Wells and his subsequent move to Sarasota. His greatest interest in recent years has been cricket. Parry Field is the home to the Sarasota International Cricket Club and was named in his honor in 2011 to recognize the enormous input and vision he has put into the Cricket Club since its inception in 1983.



## MEMORIAL DAY

The Annual **Memorial Day Service** held in Arcadia was attended by members of our Society who laid a wreath in honour of the cadets who were killed whilst in Florida, training for combat during WWII.

Our Society has always considered this an important event in our calendar and regard it as a privilege to show our respect each year to these young men, some of whom were from Wales.



## ANNUAL PICNIC

The Annual Picnic was held a little earlier in 2014, at the end of October. It was a huge success with a vast array of food for the 'Pot Luck' table. Burgers and buns as well as Hot Dogs were provided.



Olwen Hughes-Pool brought along some of her superb line drawings depicting places familiar to Dylan Thomas whose centenary was in 2014.



We have a growing element of young people attending our events so, to provide for their needs, we had many games, including bean bag throws, Polish Horseshoes, croquet, hop-scotch and skipping.



We would like to encourage more young people to join us in the coming years, so let us know what how we can accommodate your needs while preserving the integrity of our Welsh heritage.



The photograph above shows the Garrison children charming us, as always, with their beautiful Welsh singing.



### **OTHER EVENTS WE ATTENDED OR ORGANISED DURING 2014:**

**Selby Library Display** - In January, the display of Welsh artefacts and memorabilia at the Selby Library, Sarasota, drew a lot of interest from the general public. This 'window on Wales' not only helped promote Wales but also brought awareness of our Society. We plan to extend this display to more libraries in the coming years.

**Festival of Wales** - The 2014 Festival of Wales (Gymanfa Ganu) took place in Minneapolis, Minnesota over the Labor Day weekend, August 28th to August 31<sup>st</sup>. At the Banquet, Wales' premier Male Chorus, Only Men Aloud, were featured. They were directed by Tim Rhys Evans, MBE

For information on the 2015 Festival of Wales, visit their website, [www.nafow.org](http://www.nafow.org)

**Musical Theatre** – A group of us attended the Booker School performance of Annie Get your Gun. The musical was preceded by a dinner provided by the popular restaurant, Carrabbas. The performance by the students of Booker School was fantastic and made us realise what a wealth of talent we have in these young people in our area.

**Sunday Brunches** - Our ever popular Sunday Brunches continued throughout the summer at various restaurants in Sarasota and Manatee counties.

One very unique brunch was held at Bob's Train, Sarasota where we dined in one of Bob's refurbished dining cars. The walls of the carriages were lined with photographs and memorabilia of the Ringling Circus in its heyday. A very interesting experience and well worth another visit.

### **CHOIR CONCERT**

After a chance meeting whilst on holiday, Laurence Parry invited the Bois Afan Choir from Port Talbot to Sarasota for the Cricket Club Annual Thanksgiving week-end competition and banquet. At the request of the Welsh Society, the choir agreed to present a public concert in Sarasota.

The event took a lot of organizing but all the hard work paid off after a wonderful concert at the First United Methodist Church. The choir entertained us with popular songs from the 1950's as well as with some favourite Welsh hymns.



Church packed to capacity

Along with our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Banquet, this concert was a highlight of our year

**Sincere thanks to First United Methodist Church for including this concert in their 'Open Door' series**

**Hope you enjoyed this glance back at 2014 and maybe join us for future events**



## A QUICK LOOK FORWARD

### Annual Meeting

Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at The Glenridge on Palmer Ranch, Sarasota. Commencing at 11.00 am, the Society will hold its *first ever Gymanfa Ganu* prior to a Social Hour at 12.30 pm and Luncheon at 1.00 pm. This will be followed by the annual meeting.

Reservations are required, so contact Ronnie Crain by telephone 941-922-4801 or e-mail [rcrain61@verizon.net](mailto:rcrain61@verizon.net) by January 15, 2015. There will be no 'walk-ins' for this event. Cost is \$14 for adults and \$7 for children.

If cancellation is necessary, please let Ronnie know to avoid payment for a meal. Thank You.

### St David's Day Banquet

The Banquet will take place at Heritage Oaks Golf and Country Club, Sarasota on Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. Social Hour at 6.00 pm followed by dinner and music program.

Check [sarasotawelsh.com](http://sarasotawelsh.com) for full information.

**JOIN US IN 2015 AS WE EMBARK ON THE  
NEXT DECADE OF OUR SOCIETY**



## OTHER NEWS IN BRIEF

### GET WELL WISHES:

Sorry to hear you've been unwell. We hope you soon return to good health:

Bill Fell  
Don Hughes  
Muriel Patram

Do you have any news? If so, contact any Board Member

## CONTACT US

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### Website:

[www.sarasotawelsh.com](http://www.sarasotawelsh.com)

	<b>Board of 2014</b>	
President:	Amy Ferrell	941-349-6069
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President:	Pam Edmunds	941-485-5348
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President:	Ronnie Crain	941-922-4801
Treasurer:	Al DiFiore	941-955-2858
Corresponding Secretary:	Muriel Patram	941-925-8481
Recording Secretary:	David J Rees	813-633-7867
Trustees:	Sandra Rees	941-951-6407
	David Rees	941-914-3267
	Meryl Fell	941-524-2914
Lifetime Trustee	Don Hughes	941-374-1941
Choirmaster:	Don Hughes	941-374-1941
Chaplain:	Bob Griffiths	941-921-6812
Newsletter:	Meryl Fell	941-524-2914
Song Leaders:	Don Hughes John Garrison	941-374-1941 724-840-2812
Website:	Meryl Fell	941-524-2914