



President's Message: "Do the little things" – St. David

When I first drafted this message in early March, I was in Wales with several family members enjoying the company of friends and relatives as we celebrated St. David's Day. COVID-19 was a specter looming on the horizon, but we had only a superficial understanding of its potential impact on our day-to-day lives.

Now, in the last few days of March, the epidemic is affecting us in many different ways. Here in New Jersey, almost within sight of Manhattan, we are particularly concerned as we practice social distancing and sheltering in place. We realize that all of you will be affected in one way or another, and we wish you safe passage and good health throughout this crisis.

That said, let me return to my narrative, as drafted shortly after St. David's Day.

We hope that you were able to celebrate St. David's Day in your home and community. For us as a family, it was a special time as we spent the occasion in Wales.

We had planned to meet Dafydd Jones, Osborne Roberts Blue Riband winner at the Llanrwst National Eisteddfod, in London. As has become a tradition for Osborne Roberts recipients, Dafydd will perform at our joint banquet with WNAA at NAFOW in Philadelphia. At present, he is studying at the Royal College of Music in London.

A few days before our arrival, Dafydd let us know that he had been asked to participate in a

recital of American songs at the college on the evening of our arrival in London. He was good enough to arrange for us to attend the concert.

It turned out to be a marvelous evening. Dafydd and several of his fellow students treated us to a dazzling display of their talents. Their repertoire ranged from Samuel Barber, Charles Ives, and Aaron Copland to Ned Rorem, Jake Heggie, and Libbie Larsen, among others. Dafydd contributed two songs: "Barber's Solitary Hotel" and "The White Swan" by Ernest Charles. We very much look forward to welcoming Dafydd and his family to Philadelphia.

In Wales, we arrived in our hometown of Carmarthen on the eve of Leap Year Day. Reputed to be Wales' oldest town, dating back to Roman times, Carmarthen remains one of the best places to live in Wales according to Wales Online (2017). It was a bright, blustery, but sunny day, bringing much relief after the recent serious flooding that had affected much of the principality. The hedgerows and gardens were ablaze with daffodils in full bloom. For us, this was the first time in over fifty years to be in Wales on March the first.

Many things have changed in and around the community, but the spirit and remembrance of our patron saint is, if anything, stronger than ever. Peter Hughes Griffiths, a distant cousin, good friend, and former mayor of the town, had briefed



The Sunday Times Best Places to Live in Wales, reprinted in Wales Online

us beforehand on the many planned events to celebrate and commemorate St. David.

The highlight for us was the morning of March 1st. This brought us to the historic Capel Heol Awst in Carmarthen for an inter-denominational service. It was a celebration and reflection on the vibrant teachings of the great man – albeit he being so short that he had to stand on a miraculously emerging hillock in Llanddewi Brefi so that all could see and hear him.

Legend tells that in his sermon on the Sunday before the Tuesday on which he passed away, he preached, "Arglwyddi, brodyr, a chwiorydd, byddwch lawen a chadwch eich ffyd a'ch credd, a gwnewch y pethau bychain a glywsoch ac y gwelsoch gennyf i." This translates as, "Lords, brothers and sisters, be joyful, and keep your faith

and your creed, and do the little things that you have seen me do and heard about."

The service was indeed a joyful one, as children from local chapels – Penuel, Elim, Priordy, and others – read, prayed, and sang. The theme of *gwnewch y pethau bychain* resonated throughout the service led by the prominent scientist Dr. Hefin Jones, (<https://annibynwyr.org/hefins-new-post/>), Dean of the National University of Wales, and one of the leaders of the Union of Welsh Independents movement.

He engaged in a dialogue with the children as to what they considered important "pethau bach" to do well. The answers varied from cleaning the car to saying thank you and making the bed in the morning. Much food for thought for us adults as Dr. Jones expanded on

this theme of doing things well in a joyful way on this and all other days.

The service was an opportunity to see Rhian Evans and Sulwyn Thomas, who had made possible Menna Elfyn's recording of her recent biography of Eluned Phillips for Myra Thomas Lawrence.

Carmarthen is now the base of Dan Rowbotham, our board assistant, who spent such a productive internship with Jeanne Jones Jindra at the Madog Center at Rio Grande University. Dan is now, among his other activities, managing Atom (in Welsh – "to us"), a Welsh Centre in Carmarthen sponsored by Trinity St David's University. We had many other visits with relatives and friends during the visit with an abundance of hospitality and good company.

Now, just a few weeks later, none of these happy events could have taken place. Wales, like many of our communities in North America, is subject to social distancing and sheltering in place. However, Wales has responded with *Côr-Ona*, a Facebook group responding to the pandemic by singing their way through adversity. May these upbeat activities help you when observe these strict precautions. St. David's advocacy of doing these little things well rings very true in these troubled times. May you be spared from the virus so we can return to a more normal and carefree way of life.

John K. "Jack" Evans, Founder of the National Welsh-American Foundation

Jack Evans possessed the unusual quality of being a visionary who translated his ideas into action by his leadership. This he achieved in several walks of life. Welsh America is fortunate in that preservation and promotion of Wales and things Welsh remained prominent in his many initiatives. Without Jack, our foundation would not exist, much less continue to flourish. His life epitomizes the essence of the fulfillment of the American dream, while always remembering and nurturing his Welsh heritage.

Born in Wales and orphaned in Edwardian-era poverty, Jack suffered the loss of both his parents and the Welsh society of his childhood when, without a support system, he immigrated to America. Those hardships marked him all his life – and were the source of his philanthropy to encourage hard work and self-determination. Denied the community of his early youth, in his later life, he used his resources to support Welsh culture in America and to encourage cross-cultural exchange.

Jack Evans was born in Porthmadog, a slate shipping port on the Llŷn Peninsula in North Wales in 1907.

He is quoted as saying "my family were all sailors," for previous generations of the Evans family had built and captained boats in the age of wind-powered maritime trade during the great age of sail. But by the early 1900s, his family were local merchants. His father died first, and then, when Jack was

13, his mother. Orphaned and impoverished, he left school at age 14. It was either the mines or the sea for him. At 17, after working many jobs on boats and then in London, he arrived in Halifax, Nova Scotia, under the auspices of a special immigration scheme for orphaned children.

He made his way with a variety of activities, including prospecting for gold in northern Ontario, and briefly, as an actor in Toronto. In 1924, he crossed the border into the United States on the International Bridge to Buffalo, New York, "illegally," he is quoted as saying. This brought him to New York City during Prohibition, where he worked initially as a waiter at a speakeasy. He moved up to headwaiter and then restaurant captain at the elegant Tuscany Hotel.

One hotel patron was O.H. Bond, a vice president for Shell Eastern Petroleum Products. Recognizing Jack's talents, he offered him a position as a trainee. This led to a rapid ascent up the corporate ladder, leading to a 27-year career with the Royal Dutch Shell Group.

His activities took him across the globe to, among other places, Puerto Rico, Brazil, China, and England. He became the Royal Dutch Shell representative in Washington, D.C. and, in 1955, the company's director of governmental affairs. Earlier, World War II saw him enlist in the U.S. Army, where he served as an advisor to the Army-Navy Petroleum Board of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For his contri-



Jack and Jean Evans at his 1907 birthplace, Lombard Street, Porthmadog, in 1985

butions, he retired in 1961 with the rank of full colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves.

Retirement from his corporate position was only a state of mind for Jack as he forged a further career as an entrepreneur in the oil industry. This led to his establishment of successful petroleum facilities in several locations, notably Hawaii.

During these years, he became a prominent philanthropist. Rotary International and the Shriners Hospital for crippled children received major donations. He established his

family-based Golden Rule Foundation, which has benefited many charitable organizations, including the North America Wales Foundation as we will describe below. At various times, he served as chairman of the Korean Orphans Fund and the Washington, D.C. Heart Fund.

These activities did not prevent him from remembering his roots and the well-being of Wales and the Welsh. While his tree of life blossomed in the United States, his roots remained firmly embedded in

Wales. Philanthropic donations were made in Porthmadog and elsewhere in Wales.

As a longtime active leader and president of the local Welsh society of Washington, D.C., he met numerous fellow immigrants and Welsh-Americans. Among these was Hywel Davies, well known to us for his many activities in Welsh-American life. Hywel recollected that Jack became increasingly committed to providing resources for developing entrepreneurship in and bringing business to Wales. He envisioned forming an organization that would facilitate such activities by seeking financial resources from individuals and companies to establish appropriate infrastructure for and in Wales.

Working with Hywel and Howard Patrick, who generated the necessary legal and constitutional documentation, in 1980 he spearheaded and underwrote the formation of the National Welsh-American Foundation as a charitable 501(c)3 organization, bringing in Gilbert Hsaio to do the day-to-day administration and development of the foundation. At this time, a number of Welsh Americans were recruited to the board, together with several prominent leaders in Wales, including Sir William Crawshaw. (See photograph in the March-April edition of *Ninnau*). Jack served as president of the foundation for two years, after which he was succeeded by the Hon. Emlyn

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Berwyn Jones and Martha Davies, Recipients of the NAWF Heritage Medallion, Remembered

At the 2010 North American Festival of Wales in Portland, Oregon, Dr. Berwyn Jones & Martha A. Davies received the NAWF Heritage Medallion. In their honor, we at NAWF would like to celebrate the lives of Berwyn Jones and Martha Davies by quoting from our 2010 Souvenir Journal. Martha died 23 August 2018 [articles on her life can be found in Ninnau, Vol. 43, No. 6, (November-December 2018), pp. 1 & 33]. Berwyn died this past 26 February 2020; his obituary can be found in this issue.

XXXth Anniversary Celebration – Twenty-third Annual Heritage Award Dinner – Souvenir Journal: Honoring Dr. Berwyn Jones & Martha A. Davies – Conservators of Welsh History in America

It is difficult indeed to consider all of the contributions of these two energetic scholars have made in documenting and celebrating Welsh-American history. Individually, and as a team, they have honored the work, life habits, and achievements of our Welsh mothers and fathers. In doing so, they have enabled all of us to understand and reflect on the immigrants experience and the difficulties of life in settling in North America.

John Jones Reinhardt, President, NAWF [NAWF]

On behalf of the WNGGA [WNAA], I am honored to pay tribute to Martha and Berwyn for the foresight and skills to achieve their vision and their ability to muster volunteers, secure grants, and attract donations. It is a confirmation of what vision, focus, dedication, and hard work can achieve.



*NAWF 2010 Heritage Medallion Honorees
Berwyn Jones and Martha Davies*

AdaMae Lewis, President, WNGGA [WNAA]

Greetings from Wales! – You have brought Welsh life and tradition to the North American community. Thank you.

Paul E. Loveluck CBE, JP, Vice President, NAWF [NAWF]

from the Souvenir Journal: “Honorees: Berwyn Jones and Martha Davies”

Both Berwyn Jones and Martha Davies had been active in Welsh-American activities long before they met and married 9 years ago. In fact, they met at a Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu Board of Director’s meeting in Waterloo, Ontario. Berwyn assisted in the creation of the St. David’s Welsh Society of Georgia and aided in reviving the Colorado Welsh Society. Martha, who lived in Aberystwyth for 4 years, acquired exceptional linguistic skills while mastering

the Welsh language and has spent many years translating materials and books originally written in Welsh. In addition, she has taught Welsh classes in Minnesota, Iowa, and New Zealand. Marth was one of the co-founders of the Welsh Society of Western New England. Both Berwyn and Martha have been correspondents for Y Drych and Ninnau for many years. It was during this period that their collective interests and friendships built an international network of colleagues and associates who would eventually help them to accomplish even greater achievements in the future.

Together, Berwyn and Martha have become quite a team and have achieved a long list of accomplishments. They are active members of numerous Welsh societies in the United States. They both serve on the Board of Trustees of the Welsh National Gymanfa Ganu

Association and are members of the National Welsh-American Foundation. In addition, they are listed as Friends of the National Library of Wales and members of Undeb Cymru a’r Byd (Wales International). Through these important Welsh contacts and organization, Berwyn and Martha have helped to lead the effort to create the Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project and Cultural Center, one of North America’s most celebrated Welsh heritage sites.

The Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project and Cultural Center, which is located in Wymore, Nebraska, has evolved into a unique and inviting learning center under their leadership. They have provided visitors with artifacts, creative expressions of art and multi-model displays that immerse

learners in the Welsh-American experience. Their dedication has built local, national, and international partnerships that have enhanced all of the educational opportunities at the site. Because of the efforts of Berwyn Jones and Martha Davies, Welsh-Americans and those interested in studying the Welsh who came to North America have many new and exciting resources available to aid them in their research they are truly worthy of this prestigious honor and both deserve our deepest gratitude for their dedication to telling the many stories of our Welsh mothers and fathers.

Special thanks to AdaMae Lewis, Shirley Mckee and Arturo Roberts for these biographies

North America Wales Foundation 2020

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John K. “Jack” Evans (continued)

Griffith.

Subsequently, he remained actively involved and supportive of the foundation, providing scholarship support for young business students. He was recipient of Ninnau’s citation in 1987. In 1988 he was the recipient of the National Welsh-American Foundation’s highest honor, its Heritage Medallion. In a memorable evening in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, a celebration was held for Jack and his family, his wife Jean and children Treflyn, Sian, Tegan, Trevor, and Gareth. His words from that evening reflect his love of Wales and America:

My wife, Jean, and I believe in the aims and policies of National Welsh-American Foundation which provides a channel for ‘giving’ to both American and Welsh charities. We believe in sharing the blessings that God has so generously bestowed upon us. We believe in self-help and The Golden Rule.

The Golden Rule Foundation itself has benefited our Welsh-American activities in a joyful way in recent years. Jack’s daughter Sian Evans, an avid reader of Ninnau, suggested to us that the foundation would be amenable to some activity associated with the National Eisteddfod. NAWF decided to ask for support to bring the recipient of the Osborne Roberts Blue Riband, awarded to best vocalist under age 25 at the eisteddfod, to perform at the North American Festival of



Jack Evans and sister Nan c. 1912 between their mother Catherine and dog (name unknown)

Wales. Golden Rule provided the funding to bring our first recipient, Joshua Owen Mills, to Minneapolis in 2014. This was such a great success that this venture is now a much anticipated annual tradition. Jack would be gratified that the Golden Rule’s initiative has subsequently given great pleasure to our audiences at NAWF from hearing the music of Wales brought to us by a continuing stream of talented young vocalists.

Proactivity was a hallmark of Jack Evans’ life. His arrangements, previously made, brought him home to Wales after he passed away in 1991. Hywel Davies, among many others attending Jack’s funeral in Porthmadog, remembered the occasion as a joyful one. Milton Batiste’s famous New Orleans

jazz band led the procession with the horse-drawn carriage bearing Jack’s ashes, followed by hundreds of friends who had traveled from all over the world – all sporting colorful club sashes in the New Orleans tradition – and the Madog Male Voice Choir, of which Jack was president. It was a true merging of American and Welsh culture, enjoyed by all, the way Jack had wished to go out.

Jack’s vision and legacy remains with us and continues to inspire us as we pursue our activities to preserve the history and promote Welsh-American culture.

Acknowledgments: Sian Evans provided key parts of this article while Hywel Davies provided his recollection of the events leading to the establishment of the foundation.

NAWF Scholarship recipients keeping calm...

Hefina Phillips, head of our scholarships and grants committee, keeps in regular touch with our recipients throughout the year. Recently, though, she touched on a more specific reason with our 2019 winners.

"Just a quick email to check that you are keeping well and virus free in these turbulent times. We, on the Board of NAWF, are thinking anxiously about you all and are keeping our fingers crossed that you are keeping healthy. Just know that we are very proud of you and wish you all the best. Dymuniadau gorau, Hefina"

We have had several reassuring responses:

Kelsey Weber – Portland, Maine, at Cardiff Metropolitan University researching the history, myths, and folktales of Maine and Wales to find commonalities and illustrating these through pottery.

Hello! Thank you for checking in. I am still in Wales, but I've gotten out of Cardiff and am up in Aberystwyth at a friend's mum's. We have plenty of outside space here and it's much more comfortable than my student house in the city. I've attached some images of the work I've made in relation to the scholarship I received. Thank you again!

The piece is a porcelain sculpture of Blodeuwedd, a Welsh goddess who turns into an owl. I hope you and yours are well in these strange days. Cheers, Kelsey"

Rebecca Blok – Kalamazoo, Michigan, at Bangor University identifying the structure of the Four Branches of The Mabinogi and how it communicates the message of the work as a whole.

"Thank you so much for reaching out. My husband and I have decided to stay in Bangor until I finish my degree. We are waiting to find out how that will be possible, though, since the



Ceramic of "the Flower-goddess Blodeuwedd" (Robert Graves) after Gwydion changed her from flower-faced to owl-faced (Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi), lying on and arising from a flower by Kelsey Weber

university is closed (worst of all, including the library!). My professors are being very understanding and helpful, but this is, nonetheless, a very uncertain situation (as it is for us all). I hope you are all well, Rebecca"

Brooke Martin – Clarksville, Georgia, at Bangor University researching contemporary minority- and Welsh-language opera. A fluent Welsh speaker.

"Diolch am dy ebost! Gobeithio fod ti'n iawn. Dw i'n aros ym Mangor er mwyn fy mam. Mae hi'n immunocompromised, ond mae hi'n iach a diogol yn Georgia. Mae'r tywydd yng Nghymru yn gwyb ar hyn o bryd, a mae hi'n neis i fynd am dro yn y ffriddoedd i weld yr ŵyn! Cofion gorau, Brooke"

Thank you for your email. Hope you're well. I am staying in Bangor for my mother's sake. She is immunocompromised but is well and safe in Georgia. The weather in Wales is gorgeous at the moment and it's lovely to go walking in the fields to see the lambs. Best wishes, Brooke

Andrew Edwards – Zeeland, Michigan, continues in Welsh literature at Bangor University in Welsh.

Diolch o galon am y neges, Hefina! Ydw, dwi'n llwyddo i'w osgoi hyd yn hyn... wedi gorf-fen dau draethawd gweddol hir! Am ryddhad! O hyn mlaen fydda i'n rhoi lot o amser i ddarllen amryw lyfr! Be' fuest ti'n neud efo dy amser? Wel, dwi'n meddwl amdanoch chi hefyd, a gobeithio byddi di a phawb arall yn iach hefyd. Cofion cynnes, Andrew

Thanks so much for your message, Hefina. Yes, I am succeeding in avoiding it [the virus] up to now... Have finished two fairly long essays! What a relief! From now on I will be giving a lot of time to reading various books. What have you been doing with your time? Well, I am thinking about you all, too, and hoping that you and everyone else will remain healthy too. Warm regards, Andrew

Translations by Hefina Phillips

Gwneud Pethau Bychain Doing the Little Things



"The team of shepherds" Rebecca Fox Blok and Michael Blok, left, and Andrew Edwards, center, with friends

*from Hiraeth for Heaven
www.rebeccadfox.wordpress.com
Rebecca Fox (Blok), 2 March 2020*

St. David, the patron saint of Wales, has a famous saying: gwnewch y pethau bychain (do the little things). To celebrate his saint's day (March 1), Michael and I headed down with a group of friends to the Gŵyl y Pethau Bychain, a Welsh-language folk music festival in Saint David's honor. It was housed in the lovely town of Machynlleth in Powys (mid-Wales). At least, it would have been lovely if Storm Jorge (our fourth in the month of February) hadn't hit. As it was, we spent much of the weekend avoiding the wind, rain, and hail as best we could, cozied up next to the fire in cafes and pubs, listening intently to the Welsh language in its native habitat: song.

We loved getting to hear so much beautiful music, but the best part of the weekend were the smaller moments outside of the concerts: the late-night session when our new friend Bethan silenced a raucous pub with her gentle, sonorous soprano rendition of a beloved Welsh children's song. Joining in with Aberystwyth's little St. David's Day parade. Herding our host's sheep down green hills. Our

friend Meinir's laughing eyes as she grabbed my hand and led the line of dancers through a playful variation on the basic step of a set during the twmpath. Our badly-hushed chatter as we drank whisky at two in the morning, cozied up between a sheep dog and the fire in a several-hundred-year-old cottage. Mushrooms and scrambled eggs on thick-cut toast. The warmth of each new joke shared, each song sung. It was these pethau bychain that I will remember and carry with me.

On our walk home from the bus stop, Michael and I admitted that we had both contemplated not going to the music festival. It seemed like too much trouble to plan how we would traverse the 70 miles of mountain roads between Bangor and Machynlleth. We would be crashing in the homes of strangers. I had plenty of research to keep me busy. The weather was bad. But, we were both very grateful that we had taken our little leap of faith. We are continuously overwhelmed by the generosity of everyone we meet. Whether they know it or not, their small and simple actions—their kindness and hospitality—their pethau bychain—are what are making this year of our lives such a blessing.



2020 North America Wales Foundation 2020

Now accepting applications!



The Exchange Scholarship program provides an opportunity for North Americans to apply for awards of up to \$5,000 to study in Wales.

Scope: Facilitation of cultural exchange between North America and Wales.

Welsh ethnic connections: Not essential but a connection with Wales is an asset.

Eligibility: Those aspiring to bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees or equivalent at recognized academic institutions in Wales.

Application must be supported by the host institution.

Award: up to \$5,000

The Grants Program provides

INDIVIDUAL/ ORGANIZATION APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Approved grants of up to \$1,000 to be issued to a recognized Welsh or North American organization and/or individual.

Scope: Facilitation of cultural exchange between North America and Wales

Award: up to \$1,000

The Lloyd Family Travel Scholarship program provides an opportunity to apply for an **award** of up to **\$1,500** to cover travel-related expenses to Wales for studies related to Welsh-American history and culture.

Scope: Facilitation of cultural exchange between North America and Wales.

Welsh ethnic connections: Not essential but a connection with Wales is an asset.

Eligibility: Those aspiring to bachelor, master and doctoral degrees or equivalent at recognized academic institutions in Wales. Application must be supported by the host institution.

Financial need must be documented.

Award: up to \$1,500

Awarded Summer 2020 based on competition and sufficient merit.

Deadline for application: June 15th 2020

Application forms are available from the NAWF website at www.nawf.wales or NAWF Office, 24 Essex Road, Scotch Plains NJ 07076. For more information: email nwafcymru@gmail.com or call 908-889-4942