

DRAGON TALES

2025 Issue 3

*The Welsh Society of Central Ohio—Cymdeithas Gymreig Canolbarth Ohio
Promoting a Strong and Vibrant Welsh Community in Central Ohio*

WSCO's 77TH ANNUAL CYMANFA GANU

By Kyle Wright

WSCO's 77th annual Cymanfa Ganu will be held on the 19th of October 2025. Once again, we'll be in the chapel of the Central College Presbyterian Church in Westerville, Ohio.

The event begins at 2:30 pm. And our usual Te Bach (snacks and refreshments and socializing) will be held afterward in Ballard Hall.

A Cymanfa Ganu is a traditional gathering for hymn singing. This year's service will feature conductor Truman Littler, returning organist Jim Hildreth, and harpist Lainey

Semmelroth with the special music performances. Loaner hymn books will be provided.

Donations

Included with this issue is a donation form for inclusions in the program; these can be mailed to the WSCO mailbox before October 10th, for certain inclusion in the program.

We would also like to direct you to our website, where donations can be made with greater convenience from the home page at the Donate button. For a message in the program, you can simply simply leave a comment with your donation.

Conductor Truman Littler

Truman, originally from Oil City, Pennsylvania, is now in his fourth year as Choir Director at Elida Middle School where he teaches over 190 students in grades 6-8. In addition to teaching, he coaches Track & Field. He also is on the Marching Band Staff at Bath High School.

He holds a Bachelor of Music degree, summa cum laude, from Youngstown State University. Previously, he held the position of Assistant Conductor with the Stambaugh Chorus of Youngstown for

continued "CYMANFA" on 2

Annual Picnic at The Rusty Bucket



Photo Credit – Beth Ransopher. The 2025 Annual Picnic was held at the Lane Avenue location of The Rusty Bucket Restaurant and Tavern.

Fond Farewells

A Call for Remembrance

WSCO is trying to make sure that all members who have bid us farewell over the years are given their respects on the pages of Dragon Tales.

If you know of any members who have died, but have not been mentioned in the pages of Dragon Tales, please send a message to WSCO, and we'll do our best to include them in the next issue.

This is also an opportunity to remember those who have passed by donating for a memorial during the 77th Annual Cymanfa Ganu.

CYMANFA

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three seasons, including a notable performance at Carnegie Hall.

He is a member of the Lima Symphony Chorus, Lima Trinity Chancel Choir and the 4Praising Quartet. He is also involved with The Lima Encore Theatre. His professional affiliations include the Ohio Music Education Association, and the American Choral Directors Association. He previously directed the Gymanfa at Venedocia in 2024 and 2025, and also directed at Gomer in 2023 and 2025.

Harpist Lainey Semmelroth

Lainey is a Dayton area harpist who finds joy in sharing the gift of music with her community. She earned her Bachelor's of Music in Harp Performance from Cedarville University in 2020, and has since enjoyed performing as a featured member of the Dayton Area Harp Ensemble and as Principal Harpist for the Miami Valley Symphony Orchestra, as well as performing for weddings and events across Ohio

Organist Jim Hildreth

We welcome back organist James Hildreth, who is in his 25th year of playing for WSCO's Gymanfas. Jim has been organist for the Broad Street Presbyterian Church in

Columbus since 1987 and has been Organist of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra since 1988.

Jim teaches organ privately and at Ohio Wesleyan University. An active member of the American Guild of Organists, he has served as a judge and coordinator of local and regional AGO competitions, is on the Executive Committee of the Columbus Chapter, and has reviewed recordings for their journal, The American Organist. Jim and his wife, flutist Valorie Adams-Hildreth, perform together as Duo Celeste.



A photo of the chapel of the Central College Presbyterian Church, taken during the 75th Annual Cymanfa Ganu.

WSCO Board Meetings

Board meetings are usually held on the second Tuesday of each month, except for July, August and December, from 7pm to 9pm and usually take place by phone conference.

Meetings are open to all adult WSCO members. Anyone wishing to put an item on the agenda or speak before the Board should contact the President at least one week in advance of the meeting

Current WSCO Board Members

Ken Evans, Eve Goodwyn, Tegwyn Lantz, Mary Ellen Morgan, Bob Penry, Anne Powell Riley, Dan Rowbotham, Sally Schruppf, Laura Thomas, Dianne Williams, Homer Williams, Kyle Wright

WSCO Officers

Treasurer – Tegwyn Lantz

Recording Secretary – Laura Thomas

WSCO Needs Volunteers for the open Leadership positions!

WSCO Contact Information

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Facebook: Welsh Society of Central Ohio

Dragon Tales

The newsletter of the Welsh Society of Central Ohio is published three times a year, about 3-4 weeks before each of our annual events.

Editors – Kelsey Wright & Kyle Wright

Submissions

Submissions for Dragon Tales can be made to: newsletter@welshsocietyofcentralohio.org.

Please include your name, phone number, and email address; or leave a message at 614-500-7998 and include your name and phone number.

Submissions must be received by Board Meetings in January, June, and September to appear in the next issue.

I CAN SPEAK ENGLISH, LORD, AS WELL AS YOU

Shakespeare and the Welsh Language in Henry IV, Part 1

By Kyle Wright

Shakespeare's England was not particularly kind to the Welsh. A few decades earlier under King Henry VIII, the Laws in Wales Acts of 1535 and 1542 were designed to incorporate Wales under the English crown, finalizing the annexation of Wales from centuries prior.

Shakespeare himself sought and won Tudor patronage, so it would not be any surprise to see a good deal of propaganda in support of the policies of the Tudor crown. And it is true that most Welsh characters in Shakespeare's plays are played for comic relief. Not to mention that there are no lines of Welsh rendered in any of his plays—Latin and French both make appearances, but the language of a neighboring people never makes an appearance.

But as with all things related to the Bard, there is much more nuance.

Henry IV, Part 1 is one of Shakespeare's few plays to have characters capable of speaking Welsh, and the only to give these characters serious roles.

The play takes place during the rebellion of Owain Glyndŵr. While the newly rebellious Henry Percy (Hotspur) and Edmund Mortimer meet with the rebel leader to create a plan to divide the realms amongst themselves after they defeat Henry IV at the upcoming Battle of Shrewsbury, Glendower and Hotspur argue over the Welsh prince's magical powers. After hearing several insults the Welshman brags:

*Give me leave
To tell you once again that at my birth
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes,
The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
Were strangely clamorous to the frightened fields.
These signs have marked me extraordinary,
And all the courses of my life do show
I am not in the roll of common men.
Where is he living, clipped in with the sea
That chides the banks of England, Scotland, Wales,
Which calls me pupil or hath read to me?*

The boast is framed in terms of rural Welsh life—open sky, fields, and goats running through the mountains—and yet the claims of greatness are international and messianic—he's smarter and wiser and more talented.

It feels like the setup for a joke at this country-king's delusions of grandeur, and indeed Hotspur counters saying: "I think there's no man speaks better Welsh."

But, Glendower promptly reminds the upstart of his

military prowess against the English king's superior forces:

*Three time hath Henry Bolingbroke made head
Against my power; thrice from the banks of Wye
And sandy-bottomed Severn have I sent him
Bootless home and weather-beaten back.*

The conversation progresses as Mortimer and the other Englishmen chide Hotspur and defend Glendower's honor. At times even hinting at being afraid of his anger.

Later, as the planning snags on the amount of land given to the Welsh, Hotspur again insults Glendower's language: "Let me not understand you, then; speak it in Welsh." But without hesitation, Glendower retorts:

*I can speak English, lord, as well as you,
For I was trained up in the English court,
Where being but young I framed to the harp
Many an English ditty lovely well
And gave the tongue a helpful ornament—
A virtue that was never seen in you.*

Hotspur is shamed again by the rebel leader, who establishes himself as equally witty in his non-native tongue. The Tripartite Indenture is agreed upon by all parties with the Welsh retaining the land, but cracks begin to show in the alliance in spite of Glendower's daughter being betrothed to Edmund Mortimer.

As the leaders retire, Glendower translates for his daughter, whose only dialogue is rendered in the stage direction "the Lady speaks in Welsh." A Welsh woman falls madly in love with a man whose home country intends to conquer her land and kill her father, a man she cannot even speak to or understand. And Shakespeare never gives us an insight into her head after delving deeply into her father's confidence and motivations.

What is there to take from this dense scene about Shakespeare's view on the Welsh? Perhaps the most telling hint comes near the end of the play. Having driven his allies away, Hotspur arrogantly fights Henry IV at Shrewsbury without the aid of Glendower. He dies in the battle, and the rebellion begins to falter.

Without the brilliant Glendower to aid him, the English turn-coat dies. And an Englishman's failings put the first nail in the coffin of Welsh independence.

Even if he never rendered their words in their native tongue and didn't give them a true voice to declare their thoughts, it's clear that the Bard held at least a grudging respect for the Welsh.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Basic WSCO Membership Information

Membership Benefits include:

- Subscription to WSCO's newsletter Dragon Tales
- A vote at the Annual Meeting (except children under 16)
- Advance notice of WSCO Events
- Membership roster
- Great new friends!

WSCO General members are also welcome to silently observe WSCO Board Meetings.

Note - to present an item for discussion at a Board meeting, arrangements must be made in advance.

Annual Memberships (membership period Jan 1-Dec 31)

\$25 for an Individual or Family Unit (parental unit and dependent children), due by January 1st of each year.

Annual memberships begin the day they are received by WSCO (if received between January 1st and September 20th), or those received September 21st through December 31st will be applied to the next membership year and will begin on January 1st of that next year.

Please note - memberships not current as of January 31st may not be included in the annual member roster, and membership must be current to vote during the Annual Meeting.

Lifetime Memberships (begin on date received)

\$175 for an Individual or a Family Unit or three annual installments of \$75 each.

Or, \$30 one time for each individual over 80 years old.

Membership Application

Current WSCO Membership Application and other information is available on the Membership page on WSCO's website, and questions can be emailed to info@WelshSocietyOfCentralOhio.org, or call (614)500-7998.

Welcome to New Members

WSCO sends a big Croeso! (Welcome!) to all our new members!

Members can find the WSCO Constitution on the website at:

www.WelshSocietyOfCentralOhio.org.

Members without access to Internet can request to have a copy mailed by leaving a message at WSCO's Information Line: (614) 500-7998