

Wearing of the Greens

Can't Mistake Welsh On Feast of St. David

MAR 1 1954

You can't mistake a man from Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyn-drobwyllantysilliogogoch if you should meet him today.

They're the only people in the world who can pronounce the name which means "the church of St. Mary near the hollow of white hazel by the swirling whirlpool by the church of St. Tysillio by the red cave."

But whether he's from "that place" or some other, every Welshman remembers the country of his fathers today, the feast of St. David, patron saint of Wales.

Should friends of yours come to work this morning with a bunch of vegetables pinned to their lapels, don't dare ask why. It's the "wearing of the greens" today for all true Welshmen, and the national emblem is a leek.

No doubt the edible symbol is used to strengthen the breath for a rendition of "Llanfairpwll... etc."

The Welshman who reeled off the name for The Gazette yesterday was Taliesin Jones, a member of the local St. David's Society. "Taliesin" means "having a shining brow", and when Mr. Jones removed his hat for us we saw the reason why.

"Young officers of Welsh regiments are still obliged to stand on the table and eat a leek at their first mess dinner," he said. "In hand to hand combat it could make all the difference."

Mr. Jones also told us that the Welsh language was banned by the government of England in 1535, and the ineffective law has never been repealed. Many people now living in Wales, however, speak nothing but the ancient tongue.

In Wales today, every town will hold a local Eisteddfod, or cultural competition, with contests in literature and music.

Many local Welshmen gathered last night at the YWCA's Dorchester street building for a Welsh-language service in honor of Dewi Sant (St. David), the sixth century missionary who carried Christianity throughout Wales.

Legend has it that as St. David preached one day to a huge gathering, the ground he stood upon raised itself into a mound so everyone could see him.

John Eilian Davies conducted last night's service. The lessons were read by Gwilyn E. Davies and John Williams.

The congregation of the Welsh Church of Montreal also paid honor to the late Rev. Dr. Howell Elvet Lewis, the great Welsh preacher-hymnologist and former Arch-Druid of the National Eisteddfod of Wales

Local Welshmen will hold there St. David's Day banquet on Friday at the Queen's Hotel.

It will be the time when, as Mr. Jones told us:

"The MacGregors and Campbell and Duffs have their days,

"And so do the Murphys and Doonans and Sheas;

"But when March first exhaled "Its raw breath on the vales.

"Up step the Hugheses and Joneses of Wales."

Anyone rash enough to ask for "Jones" at the banquet would immediately be surrounded by Dr Basil Jones, guest-of-honor, the first vice-president Jones of the Society, its treasurer and auditor Jones, two Jones members of the executive, several Jones past-presidents and more than 20 Jones members.

"Did you know," asked Mr. Jones, "that the Welsh Rugby team was the only one to defeat the New Zealand 'All Blacks' in 1953?"

"The fearsome Maori war-cry of the New Zealanders had terrorized all previous opponents. But this time the Welsh team responded with a rousing national hymn which took the spirit right out of the 'Blacks'. After the vocal contest, the game was just a matter of form.