

THE BEAR RIVER HERITAGE AREA NEWSLETTER



Hardware Ranch in Hyrum, Utah

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A Welsh Christmas

by Emma George

For the past two years, visitors to Heritage Square in Samaria, Idaho, experienced Welsh Christmas traditions. These traditions in Wales usually include going from house to house and caroling; at Heritage Square, visitors were led to different historic cabins that featured a uniquely Welsh activity.



Visitors creating Calennigs

At one cabin, visitors were taught about and created a Calennig. A Calennig is an apple balanced on three sticks and decorated with cloves, nuts, and evergreen branches. Once decorated, the apple is taken from house to house, and, like trick or treating, gifts and songs are exchanged with neighbors. The apple symbolizes good luck for the coming New Year.

Upcoming Events

Handmade Christmas Market

December 12-13
At the Golden Spike Event
Center

Winter Steam Festival

December 28-30
At the Golden Spike National
Historic Park

Parade of Gingerbread Homes

December 6-31
In downtown Logan

Have a photo or event
to submit?

SEND IT TO EMMA
GEORGE AT
EMMAG@BRAG.UTAH.GOV

A Welsh Christmas Continued

A volunteer gifts handmade toffee and shares stories with visitors

Another tradition that was highlighted is the Mari Lwyd, an animal skull mounted on a pole held by someone covered in a white sheet. They go door to door and challenge residents to sing more carols than them. If the Mari Lwyd wins, they and their party go inside for drinks and food; if they lose, they must go to the next house. At Heritage Square, guests were confronted by a Mari Lwyd and had to sing a carol to get past it.

Once the Mari Lwyd is defeated, visitors continued on to watch a historic video about Welsh Christmas customs, eat homemade taffy, and listen to poems and folktales. Lastly, the tour concludes with hot chocolate around a firepit and singing carols. The event truly highlighted the importance of music to the Welsh people along with other customs.

Unfortunately, Welsh Christmas is not being held this year because Heritage Square is preparing to take center stage for the annual Malad Valley Welsh Festival. The festival is traditionally held in Malad during June, but in 2026, it will be held in Samaria during September. Visit welshfestival.com for more information.



Places to Visit: Fantasy at the Willard Bay



From December 1st to the 24th, you can experience the Fantasy at the Bay Lights Show held at Willard Bay State Park. This is a great way to support the park and experience amazing lights!

Reminders

Next Board Meeting will be in February 2026

If you would like to be on the planning committee for the Ukulele Festival, reach out to Emma

HAPPY
Holidays!