



WSWNE

Cymdeithas Cymreig Lloegr Newydd Gorllewinol

Welsh Society of Western New England

UPCOMING EVENTS

6 Nations Rugby

See page 5

Genealogy Research Days:
March 19, April 23, and
May 28, 2016 (Saturdays):

Our Genealogy Group meets monthly to learn how to research Welsh roots. Meets 10:00am-5:00pm. Bring your Welsh family tree and a lunch dish to share. Info: email WelshWNE@gmail.com

Let's Make Welsh Cakes,
Sunday, April 10, 2016,
2:30PM:

Want to know how to make Welsh Cakes? We'll get together to make them from scratch, then enjoy them with tea. Arrive 2:30PM. members \$5, guests \$8 for the Welsh Cakes' ingredient cost. You will take home about 18 Welsh cakes. Email to RSVP: WelshWNE@gmail.com

Website: WelshWNE.org Email: WelshWNE@gmail.com

FaceBook: WSWNE

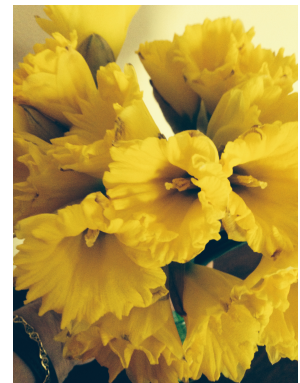
Annual St. David's Day Luncheon

Sat., March 5, 2016 at
11:00AM - 3:00PM

Nutmeg Restaurant,
East Windsor, CT

Join us at 11AM for pre-lunch conversation and drinks with a cash bar. Prior to lunch there will be time to shop at our tables: Welsh notecards, adult and children's

Welsh t-shirts, book bags, mugs and more. There will also be a Welsh "Tea Cup" auction.



Lunch will be served at 12:15pm, following a video message from the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones. The presentation this year is by member Leslie Spencer on "Wales, Land of Song – its history, including miners' stories and photos from the Big Pit in South Wales", together with Welsh singing, including the Welsh National Anthem.

LOOK OUT FOR OUR FLYER IN THE MAIL TO RSVP

St. David's Day Luncheon

Saturday, March 5, 2016, 11:00am to 3:00pm

at the Nutmeg Restaurant, 297 S Main St, East Windsor, CT 06088

(860) 627-7094: On route 5 in South Windsor, CT

- 11am - Social hour with cash bar & hors d'oeuvres
- Gather with old friends and meet new ones
- Have your photo taken with two of our WSWNE members in Welsh National Dress
- A Welsh "Tea Cup" raffle and shop for Welsh items at our tables

At 12 noon, a video message from the First Minister of Wales, Carwyn Jones.

Program by Leslie Spencer: "Wales - Land of Song: A look at the choral tradition from yesteryear to today." Beginning with a tribute to St. David, she will review events that have shaped the magnificent musical traditions of Wales, and will include photos of her own travels in Wales, including a visit to a mine and how singing relieved the stresses of the harsh conditions.

Meal price: Member \$29; Guests \$31; Children (under 16) \$16

Price includes hors d'oeuvres, lunch, tax and gratuity.

Prime Rib is priced at \$32 or guest \$34.

If we have your address, the flyer and RSVP will come in the mail.

Otherwise, you will receive the RSVP via email.

The flyer contains the menu choices, directions to the Nutmeg and the RSVP form.



*Beth & Ed Brown in National Dress and members
May & Tim Howes: St. David's Day, 2015*

Welsh Daffodils

As you walk along the valley floor
And along the valleys hills
You will see the blooming flowers
Of the great Welsh daffodils

They stand so tall on big long stalks
So proud to be called Welsh
The yellow petals so vibrant
Which are looking full of health

The trumpet opens fully
To take in the fresh Welsh air
Used to represent St David's Day
And to uplift all those in care

To go with them God made a
place
Full of green mountains and the
vales
And the daffodils proudly stand
today
As a symbol for our Wales

Written by David Boyce, 2007

DUES ARE DUE.....

The 2016 dues for the Welsh Society of Western New England are due by St. David's Day (March 1). Please see the last page of this newsletter for Membership form, dues amounts and mailing address or better still, bring them with you to the St. David's Day Luncheon.

National symbols of Wales

The Leek



According to legend, St David advised the Britons on the eve of a battle with the Saxons, to wear leeks in their caps so as to easily distinguish friend from foe. This helped to secure a great victory. Today Welsh people around the world wear leeks on St David's Day. It is also a surviving tradition that soldiers in the Welsh regiments eat a raw leek on St David's Day.

The Daffodil



The Welsh for leek (the original national emblem) is Cenhinen, while the Welsh for daffodil is Cenhinen Pedr. Over the years they became confused until the daffodil was adopted as a second emblem of Wales.

The Welsh Flag



Our national flag - The Red Dragon (or in Welsh Y Ddraig Goch) - was granted official status in 1959, but the dragon itself has been associated with Wales for centuries. Some say it's the oldest national flag still in use, and that it was used by King Arthur and other ancient Celtic leaders.

From the [wales.com](http://www.wales.com) website

AROUND OUR WELSH AMERICAN WORLD

NAFOW

Attend the **North American Festival of Wales (NAFOW) 2016** in Calgary, Canada.



Featuring the Colwyn Male Voice Choir with guest soloist Edith Pritchard.



Cymdeithas Madog is excited to announce that registration for 2016's Cwrs Cymraeg, Cwrs Dinas y Riced, in Huntsville, Alabama is now OPEN at www.madog.org!

We'll be bringing our next week-long Welsh language course to the University of Alabama in Huntsville, July 17-24, 2016. Visit www.madog.org for registration and scholarship information. The scholarship application deadline is April 1, 2016.

Want to learn some Welsh? Try the website SSiW...



ROOTS REDISCOVERED



Genealogy research. Begin your search: Journey to the past to discover your family. Email Susan Davies Sit at: RootsRediscovered@gmail.com



Ontario Welsh Festival Gŵyl Gymreig Ontario April 22-24, 2016 OTTAWA

Come and join us for a wonderful and friendly weekend celebrating Welsh music and culture, featuring a gala concert on April 23 by THE THREE WELSH TENORS and renowned CÔRDYDD choir from Cardiff



Festival headquarters: the stately Lord Elgin Hotel located in the heart of downtown Ottawa and just steps away from Parliament. Rates \$147 Canadian per night.

Call now to secure your room -1-800-267-4298; 613-235-3333

For further information, contact Alison Lawson 613-725-2704 or e-mail publicity@ontariowelshfestival.ca www.ontariowelshfestival.ca www.facebook.com/ontario.welsh.festival

<http://cymraeg.llyw.cymru>

This is a Welsh Government website designed to help with the learning of Welsh.

Members can place a small advert in our Newsletter for only \$5.00 (non-Members \$10).

Please email the Editor.

UPCOMING WSWNE EVENTS

The European nations of Wales, England, Scotland, Ireland, Italy and France play in an annual competition called the "6 Nations Cup" since it was formed in 2000 (previously as 4 teams in the Home Nations Cup from 1881).

A Grand Slam is when a nation beats the other 5 nations on their way to the title. In 2015, Ireland won the Cup. The four "Home Unions" of Wales, England, Ireland and Scotland also play for the "Triple Crown" which they win by beating the other three teams. How is the winner calculated? Each team plays the other five teams once and earns 2 points for a win and 1 point for a draw. The teams accumulate points, with the overall winner having the most points. If two or more teams finish the Championship with the same number points, the winner is decided on match-points difference (subtracting match-points 'against' from match-points 'for').

The 6 Nations Cup will be played this year from February 2nd to March 19th, 2016. Check the web site for more details: www.rbs6nations.com

The WALES games are as follows (please check their web site for confirmation):

Feb 7: 10:00am (EST) v. Ireland - watch with us!

Feb 13: 11:50am (EST) v. Scotland

Feb 26: 3:05pm (EST) v. France - watch with us!

March 12: 11:00am (EST) v. England - watch with us!

March 19: 9:30am (EST) v. Italy - watch with us!

Some of the WALES games can be watched at the home of Susan Davies Sit in Glastonbury, CT; please bring a \$5 donation fee to help cover streaming costs. Please email WelshWNE@gmail.com to RSVP. Bring a Welsh flag to wave and your voice to sing the National Anthem with 80,000 fans!

Let's make Welsh Cakes!

Want to learn how to make Welsh Cakes? They are easy, and scrumptious, especially hot from the griddle. No oven required!

When: Sunday, April 10, 2016

Time: 2:30PM - 4:30PM

Where: 22 Windwood Drive, Glastonbury, CT

Price: Members \$5, Guests \$8 for ingredient cost

RSVP: Please email WelshWNE@gmail.com

Chaplain Emeritus: The Rev. Arvel M. Steece

It is with great sadness that we learned of Arvel Steece's passing on Nov 28, 2015. Arvel, from Shelburne, MA had been our Chaplain for many, many years. His obit stated that he was a "promotor of Welsh Hymn Sings in VT, NH, & MA; the Welsh being dear to his heart. He was a lifelong advocate of civil rights, civil liberties, separation of church & state, and non-violence". Arvel will be missed by us all.



WSWNE NEWS is published by the Welsh Society of Western New England, Inc.

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WSWNE Newsletter

Susan Davies Sit, Editor
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MEMBER ARTICLE

NORTH WALES' ROTARIANS TRIBUTE TO INTREPID WELSH PRINCE

So said the headlines in a local paper in North Wales last September, 2015. If you don't know who Prince Madoc was, you may be a Christopher Columbus fan! Legend has it that Prince Madog ab Owain Gwynedd (Prince Madoc) sailed from Rhos-on-Sea on the North Wales coast in the year 1169 and discovered the New World long before Christopher Columbus' voyage in the 15th century.

Owain Gwynedd, king of Gwynedd in the 12th century had 19 children, many illegitimate, one of whom was Madoc, who was born in Dolwyddelan Castle between Betws-y-Coed and Blaenau Ffestiniog. After the death of Madoc's father, Madoc and his brothers fought over the right to rule the kingdom. Madoc and his brother Riryd set out for the New World in two small ships, named Gorn Gwynant and Pedr Sant, from what was Aber-Kerrik-Gwynan (now Rhos-on-Sea). The legend says that he arrived in what is now Mobile, Alabama in 1170. There used to be a plaque commemorating this event on the shore but it has since been removed. Another story tells that Madoc returned to Wales, told stories of the New World, took more ships on a second voyage, and never returned.

Of course, the Welsh had been setting sail for many decades, if not centuries, before this, so it's entirely possible that this voyage was in fact undertaken. Recently a ship yard was found in Monmouth, South Wales, perhaps dating to 1700 BCE. The Polynesians, Italians, Indians and Minoans, as a few examples, were already sailing around the World.

A 15th century poem tells of Prince Madoc's ten ships that made the journey. Queen Elizabeth 1st even used this legend to prove the British had claim to the New World, when it struggled over territory rights with Spain.

Madoc and his entourage travelled up what is now the Alabama River, where today remnants of several stone forts can be found, which the local Cherokee said were built by "white people". These forts have been dated to several hundred years before the arrival of Columbus. Early explorers found that the local tribes along the Missouri and Tennessee Rivers may have had a Welsh influence. One tribe called the Mandans seemed different to the other tribes, were said to be descended from "white people", had towns laid out in squares, claimed ancestry with Welsh people, and some used words similar to words in the Welsh language. For example "house" is

“ty” in Welsh and “ti” in Mandan, “there is not” in Welsh is “Nag oes” and in Mandan it’s “Megosh” and “Head” in Welsh is “pen” and in Mandan it’s “pan”. Instead of canoes they used small, round boats similar to Welsh coracles. The language similarities have many antagonists in the linguistic world, not all agree and it remains unproved.

In 1799, a Governor of Tennessee's report stated that six skeletons had been found encased in brass armor, bearing a Welsh coat of arms. George Catlin, a painter lived among various tribes for eight years and said he uncovered



Mandan Bull Boats and Lodges: George Catlin

evidence that Madoc's descendants lived among the Mandans for generations, noting that their languages were very similar. Unfortunately, the entire tribe was wiped out by smallpox in 1837, and no DNA evidence has been found today that can be tested.

The Rotary Club of Rhos-on-Sea entered a boat race in 2009 with a look-a-like, somewhat smaller, longship named the Prince Madoc. Since then it has had several trips out and on August 31, 2015 it sailed from Rhos Harbor to Porth Erias, Colwyn Bay. They were attempting to not only raise awareness of Prince Madoc's legendary endeavor but also to raise money for the Rotarians. On this windy, cool day, the Rotarians took a long time to reach Porth Eirias and my mother, for one, had to leave the promenade's event due to the cold wind. Rhos-On-Sea is attempting to raise money for a Prince Madoc visitors' center to attract tourists.



The Rotarians boat The Price Madoc

by Susan Davies Sit

With thanks to historic-uk.com, The North Wales Weekly News and Mrs. E.J.Davies

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MORE FROM OUR WELSH AMERICAN WORLD

Cymdeithas Madog Presents

Cwrs Dinas Y Roced - The Rocket City Course

July 17-24, 2016

**University of Alabama in Huntsville,
Huntsville, AL**

Dysgu Cymraeg Yn Ninas Y Rocedi

Come Learn Welsh In The Rocket City

Cwrs Cymraeg (which simply means "Welsh Course") emphasizes the spoken language, with classroom instruction at various levels ranging from absolute beginners to quite advanced. The teaching staff of experienced Welsh-speaking instructors is brought from Wales and North America. There are approximately 5 hours of language class each day, supplemented by further language and culture-related activities in the afternoon. Evening events such as singing, folk dancing, Welsh-language films, and a Noson Lawen (talent night) provide additional opportunities to relax while enjoying a Welsh-language atmosphere.

Website: madog.org

Welsh Heritage Week

Annual week of immersion in Welsh language and culture. 2016 Welsh Heritage Week dates and location to be announced. Week-long course on everything Welsh, including: language lessons, folk dancing, clogging, hymn singing, harp lessons, Welsh literature, and so much more. Sponsored by the Welsh Harp & Heritage Society of North America, Inc. Info: welshheritageweek.org or contact Beth Landmesser, hwyl@ptd.net

Fredericksburg Welsh Festival



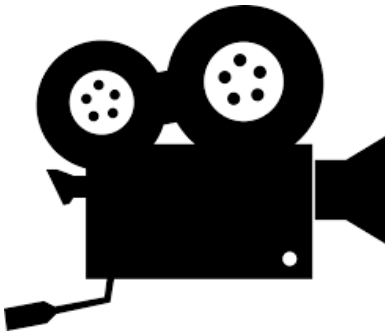
**The 27th Annual
Fredericksburg Welsh Festival
Sat. Sept. 17th 2016
900 Block Charles St.
Fredericksburg Virginia
11am-5pm**

Some of our members may be attending this event, so please get in touch if you are interested, WelshWNE@gmail.com.

The Welsh Festival is presented by the Welsh Society of Fredericksburg and the James Monroe Museum. Held in mid-September, this popular street festival honors the Welsh heritage of James Monroe (through his mother Elizabeth Jones). It features live Welsh music, arts & crafts, food, dancing, and activities for children including children's games, chalk street drawings, bubbles and the always popular face painting. Live music & entertainment will be held on the main

stage on Charles Street. You will also be able to participate in "Garden" activities such as storytelling, Welsh language lessons, music & more.

WELL-RED DRAGONS



MOVIE - DARK HORSE

Dark Horse tells the larger than life true story of how a barmaid in a former mining village in South Wales bred a racehorse, Dream Alliance, on her allotment that went on to become a champion. Jan had successfully bred dogs and birds and believed she could do the same with a different animal – though she knew nothing about racing and had never been on a horse. Convincing a handful of locals to part with £10 a week for her scheme, she found a thoroughbred mare with a terrible racing record for £300, a stallion past his best, put them together and – against all the odds – bred a winner. www.ffilmcymruwales.com

David Llewelyn Williams of the Vancouver Welsh Society wrote: "I had the good fortune to attend the Vancouver International Film Festival and viewed the film set in Wales entitled Dark Horse. If you ever have the chance, go to see it! It is based on a true story of a Welsh village syndicate that bought and bred a winning top ranked horse, which, for example, won the Welsh Grand National and many others. But the commitment of the villagers to the horse after it was injured is a statement of Welsh integrity. It won again! A memorable film for anyone of Welsh descent."

BOOK: Midwest Welsh history knowledge expanded by another vital translation By Mary Morris Mergenthal



The Welsh-American community in the Midwest owes a great debt to the translation ability and energy of Martha A. Davies of Lincoln, Neb. Earlier she translated Hanes Cymry America by R.D. Thomas [History of the Welsh in America] and The History of the Welsh Church in Jackson, Ohio; with Travels, Fishing and Farewells by Evan O. Roberts. Now she offers her skill to Minnesota/Iowa Welsh history.

The original copies of the new book, Hanes Cymry Minnesota [History of the Welsh in Minnesota], did include some portions in English. But Martha's special gift has been to translate those original portions never before available to English-only speakers. Her work shows that these stories are completely new material.

The original book's title was Hanes Cymry Minnesota, Foreston and Lime Springs, Iowa, as told by the Old Settlers (1895). In this English version, one can read over 60 vignettes by "The Old Settlers," tales of the named northern Iowa settlements and more, plus ten or more southern Minnesota Welsh settlements. A good number of Welsh leaders in the Twin Cities are listed, including praise for the Welsh Church in Minneapolis and its Willing Workers group and the many Welsh people in positions of esteem in those cities. There are even reports of some Welsh immigrants in Duluth.

This book elucidates the migration patterns across the country. Very few, if any, settlers came directly from Wales. Most moved westward from Wisconsin or Jackson County, Ohio. An earlier book, Early History of the Welsh in Proscairon District of Wisconsin [a translation by Martha A. Davies of Hanes Boreul Ardal Proscairon, Wisconsin, 1894, by Daniel Williams], was referenced in this new book by several of the "Old Settlers" in Lake Crystal, Minn., or in Lime Springs, Iowa.

There are stories of misery due to the extreme cold, the difficulty getting supplies, grasshoppers, drought, drafty cabins, and more. Perhaps it is surprising, then, to read of the

importance of getting chapels built, and before that, establishing a Sunday School and naming deacons. Those Sunday Schools were no modern-day establishment of classes for children apart from

elders. Those Schools were for everyone at once, usually held in homes...and often lasting the entire Sabbath day, it seems!

Those chapels burned to the ground more than once, one in Iowa burned before it was to be used for the first time! Why? "We'll know at the Day of Judgement."

Amidst the difficulties, those Welsh settlers also continued to hold literary accomplishment in high regard, just as their forebears had in Wales. Though the first Eisteddfod [Welsh singing and poetry competition] in 1871 in one area was completely routed by fleas (!!), the spirit for such efforts wasn't dimmed in the least.

The book includes many high-resolution photos of settlers. Given the original publishing date, most are men, but some women were included, plus even the Indian Little Crow. Of course, no book about southern Minnesota at that time could fail to remark on the presence of the Indians.

For the most part, in this volume it seems the settlers had calm relationships with Indians who came by their homes. [This was written long before the term Native Americans or First People were "invented" so we use the terms of the original book.] There are a number of references to the largest mass murder in U.S. history, the hanging of 38 Indians in 1862 in Mankato, but, thankfully, no description of that vindictive event.

Researchers will find this indexed volume a treasure trove. People with personal roots in southern Minnesota or northern Iowa, or with Welsh roots anywhere, will find much of interest.

History of the Welsh in Minnesota, Foreston and Lime Springs, Iowa.

Translated from the Welsh by Martha A. Davies.

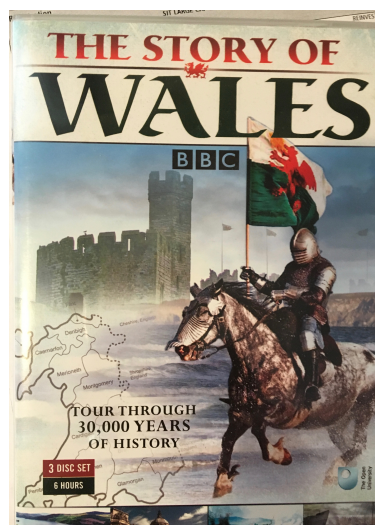
ISBN: 978-0-9795076-4-9.

Great Plains Welsh Heritage Project (Box 254, 307 S. 7th St., Wymore, NE 68466) is a registered publisher. Its four books of Welsh-American history, translated from the Welsh language, are available for purchase on www.welshheritageproject.org.

Please include a check for \$29.95 payable to GPWHP. Shipping is free

**CROESO! WELCOME TO
NEW MEMBERS:**

- Maureen & Thomas Griffith Reilly, of Farmington, CT
- Sarah Bedell of Simsbury, CT
- Jennifer Lugas from Milford, CT
- and welcome back to Gwladys Evans Mahoney from Westfield, MA

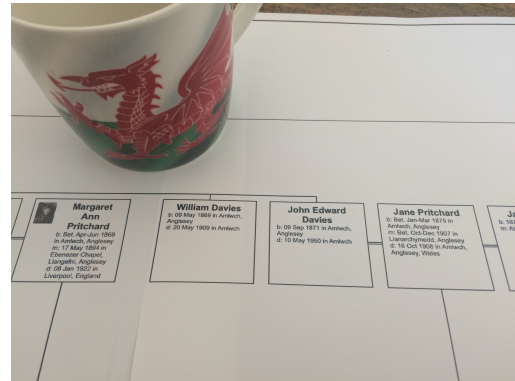


Available on loan from WSWNE: The Story of Wales, you pay only the mailing cost. This "epic 6-part (3 DVD's) series examines issues of power, war and industry.... a tale that has been 30,000 years in the making." Email WelshWNE@gmail.com to have this mailed to you.

WELSH ROOTS

A quarterly corner where you can perhaps discover a new website or information for researching your Welsh roots.

Our WSWNE Genealogy Group meets in Glastonbury, CT once a month, usually on a Saturday. We meet at 10am and force ourselves to stop about 5pm, following a very productive day of research and learning. We also have a delicious pot-luck lunch. We learn about ways to discover our hidden ancestors on web sites such as FindMyPast.com and Ancestry.com. We enjoy finding out more about where they lived, their occupations, the geography of their home area and why and how they came to the USA.



The internet gives us access to research being done around the world, and when it focuses on Wales, old communities get a breath of life and our eyes are opened to the past:

New genealogy tool: Project gives a glimpse of life in 1840s Wales

Communities in the Hiraethog area of Denbighshire are busily researching the history of their villages as part of the Cynefin project. The pan Wales Cynefin project is digitising the tithe maps of Wales, which depict Wales as it was in the 1840s just as the railways were spreading across the country and when towns such as Penmaenmawr didn't exist. The tithe maps which have been digitised to date can be viewed on the cynefin.wales website, where you the public can take part in transcribing the documents.

Samantha Jones, Cynefin's Project Officer said; "The project provides an opportunity for local communities to learn more about where they live at the time the tithe maps were created by using their local archives. Archives are a wonderful resource of original material that helps us to understand more about what it was like to live in places like Llansannan in the mid-1800s."

People from the villages of Bro Hiraethog are looking at the lives and homes of the higher classes and the common people. Through using websites such as Find my past and Ancestry which can be freely accessed at local archives and libraries, they have been able to find out who lived at certain houses throughout the decades from 1841 to 1911.

As part of the project they have also studied original documents found in the local archives. One such document is Speculum Gregis written by R H Jackson who was once the curate of Llansannan. The book is a snap shot of the village in 1850 and contains information such as all the vicars of the parish and the numbers of people attending the church. It also has a colourful map of the village centre along with the names of the people living in the houses, their ages and occupations.

<http://cynefin.archiveswales.org.uk/en/project-gives-a-glimpse-of-life-in-1840s-wales/>

Putting "meat on the bones of our ancestors" is one of genealogy's joys and makes our ancestors real to us. Try it out, join us monthly, see what you can find! Email Beth for more details - edbethui@comcast.net. By Susan Davies Sit

WELSH PIN BOARD

Calling all members:

We'd all love to hear from you...please submit your story to be included in the newsletter: a personal story, Welsh article, travelogue, Welsh roots, history... anything you think would be of interest to the group. Email it to: WelshWNE@gmail.com

Ever wanted to discover your Welsh roots? What did they do for work? Where did they live? Join us for Welsh family history research every month. See page 1 for upcoming dates.

Included with this newsletter is a WSWNE membership form. If you're not already part of this amazing, fun-filled, busy Welsh Society.... please join us!

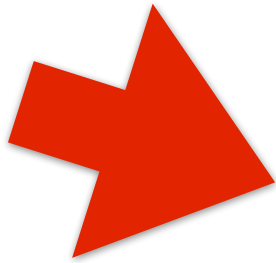
Thank you to **Mark & Janet Taylor** and to **Magdalen and Glyn Dowden** for bringing goodies back from Wales last fall to donate to our raffle at our luncheons! Diolch pawb!

Our liability insurance is over \$500 per year. This is one item your membership dues help to cover. Please consider joining the Welsh Society of Western New England to ensure it survives and, in fact flourishes, to bring you more events, speakers and entertainment.

Diolch yn fawr!

WELSH NAMES!

Do you have friends named **Roderick, Jones, Williams, Davis/Davies, Thomas, Roberts, Evans, Bevan, Owen, Pritchard, Edwards, Griffiths, Hughes, Lloyd, Jenkins, Parry, Price, Howells, Powell, Pugh, Vaughn!** They have Welsh roots! Invite them to one of our events and let them experience our Welsh society.



WHAT HAS WSWNE BEEN UP TO?

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY LUNCHEON, December 2015

A delightful afternoon was had by all as the Welsh Society of Western New England gathered at the Yankee Pedlar Restaurant in Holyoke, MA on December 5th for their annual Christmas luncheon. Welsh born Rev. Hugh James, now rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Norwich, Connecticut, gave a fascinating talk and slide presentation entitled "Perlau Llanfihangel-ar-Arth", or "Pearls of Llanfihangel-ar-Arth", located in West Wales, where he had been a Vicar at St. Michael's Church for 12 years, starting in 1992. He shared stories, both personal and historic, in tracing the history of his former Welsh parish which started in 1660 with Vicar Owen Jones.

Intertwining political and religious history, beginning with the departure of the Mayflower in 1620, Civil War from 1642 to 1651, restoration of the Church of England in 1660, the creation of the Book of Common Prayer in 1662, the Methodist revival with John Wesley in the 1700's and other significant events, he showed what created the Church of Wales today. Slides of particular historic interest were of two ancient stones that had been dug up in the churchyard: the Latin inscribed Ulcanus stone, possibly dating back to the 4th century, and a Celtic altar stone with six crosses possibly dating back to the 6th century, both stones now in St. Michael's vestry. He also spoke of those doing genealogical research, relating how difficult it can be to find an ancestor without more details than just a name. He related a story of a family seeking their roots only to find ten graves with the same



Top: Susan Jenkins Meers, Beth Roberts Brown, Hugh James, Susan Davies Sit and Leslie Spencer.

Left: Jason Ellsworth and mother Susan Jenkins Meers.

Right: Rev. Hugh James, speaker.

Photos by Leslie Spencer

name in the churchyard. An individual of particular note in recent times highlighted by Rev. James was a former school teacher, Miss L. V. Jones, a member of his church who had taught generations of students, shaping their lives, and was in a sense, a living source of who's who in this region of Wales.

We were transported in time to Wales, the beloved home and ancestral home to many at this festive Christmas luncheon. Much sought after Welsh raffle baskets enlivened the afternoon, as well as many items from Wales which were for sale, including books old and new, such as the recently published Ginger Biscuits, A Memoir: Out of Wales and into the World, by Glyn Dowden, member of WSWNE.

The Welsh Society of Western New England is always seeking new members to enrich our meetings with tales of old and present day news. Contact the Society's president, Susan Davies Sit at WelshWNE@gmail.com.

By Leslie Spencer, WSWNE member

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A WELSH CELEBRATION OF THE WINTER SOLSTICE - CHRISTMAS REVELS, BOSTON, December 2015

WSWNE members drove to Boston in December to see the Christmas Revels, many of us for the first time. What a treat it was! The Revels at Christmastime are held at the Sanders Theatre at Harvard University, Boston. As Paddy Swanson the Artistic Director said "Its a wonder that it has taken so long to get to Wales. After all, our Musical Director is an Emlyn and I grew up a few miles away from the border of this magical country..... Our good friend Susan Cooper, (note: who had a grandmother from West Wales) author of the much-loved Revels poem "The Shortest Day"...used to to play as a child around the sea towns of North Wales... Susan helped us write a script that conjures a Wales of humor, warmth, and harmony, all set against a background of ghostly horses, shape-changers and dragons." George Elyn said, "I went back to Wales. I plunged into the deep, deep pool of Welsh Music." Can you just imagine what this particular Revels was like for us? Some from Wales with tears of "hiraeth" in our eyes; for the fans of Welsh myth and legend watching the red dragon defeat the English white dragon and hearing the legend of the birth of Taliesin; and for singers, singing along with Ar Hyd Y Nos, Cwm Rhondda, Men of Harlech, Sospan Fach and more? There were also Morris Dancers and a Mummer's play. It truly was magical and we are so happy to have made the effort to go to Boston.

Member Magdalen Dowden said: What fun the interactive Christmas Revels were!

The stage was set in scenes mimicking the village in Dylan's play "Under Milk Wood". The performances by singers, actors and dancers, both adults and children, conjured a strong feeling of hiraeth for our little group; lots of tears from those of us far away from home. The cast was coached in Welsh language and Welsh accent, even the children, and they were practically faultless. The Mari Lwyd, a white skeletal horse of South Walian tradition, was spectacular. A wonderful evening with good friends from the Welsh Society.



Snow falling at the final curtain at the Christmas Revels, Boston with

Photo by Susan Davies Sit

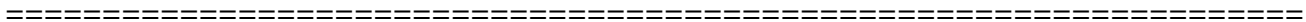
Blwyddyn Newydd Dda

What an amazing holiday event...the range & variety of performances, theater play, story telling, song & dance and more! Oh yes...we sang along a few times too! A wonderfully good time for all. The pub afterward added another dimension to a fun night! Don W. Sit, WSWNE member

by Susan Sit, WSWNE



Sword Dance "Papa Stour" named for one of the Shetland Isles, Scotland. Photo by Susan Davies Sit



WELSH SOCIETY OF WESTERN NEW ENGLAND

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

WSWNE is organized by many volunteers, but we incur expenses by hosting events, publishing the quarterly newsletter, presentations, publicity and insurance. Please consider joining WSWNE to support our work.



Membership levels reflect only your level of support.

All levels receive the printed newsletter 3-4 times per year and discounts at our events. Memberships are "per household" (family at same mailing address) and are valid March 1-Feb 28. Pro-rated memberships are possible, please contact the Treasurer at: rbolgard@sbcglobal.net

If you wish to support WSWNE with a membership, please forward your dues to Robert Bolgard, WSWNE Treasurer, 221 Trumbull Street, Apt 1707, Hartford, CT 06103 as follows:

___\$10 (Student), ___\$25 (Miner's Lantern), ___\$50 (Daffodil), ___\$100 (Red Dragon)
(Membership value only reflects your level of support;
benefits are the same for each level)

Name(s) _____

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What topics or activities are of interest to you?

Please tell us about your Welsh connections or Welsh roots? _____

