The Welsh Society of Western New England

Cymdeithas Cymreig Lloegr Newydd Gorllewino

Website: WelshWNE.org / Email: WelshWNE@gmail.com / FaceBook: WSWNE

Annual St. David's Day Luncheon

Sat., March 5, 2022: 11:00AM - 3:00PM at the Nutmeg Restaurant, East Windsor, CT

Join us in-person to celebrate St. David's Day at 11AM for pre-lunch conversation and drinks from the cash bar, with hors d'oeuvres including cheese platter, fruit & vegetable cruditee. Finally gather with old friends and meet new ones. There will be time to shop at our tables: Welsh mugs, ties, music, cards, gifts and more. Have your photo taken with two of our Board members in Welsh national dress and find your Welsh roots on our map!

Current Covid protocol will be adhered to:

- 1. Every guest must be fully vaccinated. Please bring your vaccine cards with you.
- 2. Masks worn while not actively drinking or eating.
- 3. While dining, seats together for couples or families can be arranged if requested at the time you register
- 4. We recommend you take a COVID test before you leave home, if positive please stay home.

Lunch will be at 12:00 noon, following a video message from the First Minister of Wales. After a presentation on Y DDRAIG COCH (The Red



Dragon) , we will be entertained by WILD NOTES, pictured left, a local folk band who have learned some Welsh tunes.

First prize ticket in a drawing wins a bottle of Penderyn Welsh Whisky or if you prefer a \$40 gift certificate from UK Gourmet in Bethel, CT or a gift certificate for

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wed Feb. 16 - Beginners Welsh Conversation

Sat. Feb 5 to March 19 — 6 Nations Rugby

Every Tues. in Feb. - Welsh Conversation-on-Zoom

Sat. Feb 19 - Sat. March 5 -WalesWeek/New England 2022 begins Feb. 19

Mon. Feb 21 - Welsh Genealogy-on-Zoom

Wed March 2, 16, 30 -Beginners Welsh Conversation

Sat., March 5- Annual St. David's Day Luncheon

Every Tues. in March -Welsh Conversation-on-

700m

Thursdays, March 10, 17, 24 & 31 - Seminar Series -The Mabinogi registration required, see page 5.

Mon. March 14 & 28 -Welsh Genealogy-on-Zoom

Every Tues. in April -Welsh Conversation-on-Zoom

Mon. April 11 & 25 - Welsh Genealogy-on-Zoom

Wed April 13 & 27 -Beginners Welsh Conversation

Welsh Cake goodies from the Copper Kettle Bakery (copperkettlebakery.com) who make the best Welsh Cakes you can buy!

There will be a brief Annual Meeting (if you are interested in joining the Board, or volunteering in any way, please email us at WelshWNE@gmail.com) during which the Board for 2022-2023 will be elected.

We will end the program with the Welsh National Anthem.

Please return the RSVP form (page 16) by Monday, March 2. You may also RSVP via our website: WelshWNE.org/events



Directions: The Nutmeg, 297 S. Main St, East Windsor, CT

From Hartford, CT and points south:

- Drive on I-84 East, then take Exit 53 to merge to US44 East.
- After 1.04 miles, take left onto Main St., Route 5/44 East.
- After 7.47 miles you will arrive at The Nutmeg Restaurant on right.

From Springfield, MA and points north:

- Drive I-91 South. Exit 44 to East Windsor, CT on Route 5.
- •Drive 4.21 miles and the Nutmeg Restaurant will be on your left.

WSWNF FVFNTS

ST. DAVID'S DAY WALK

Tuesday, March 1st at 11:00AM

Walk with members of the Welsh Soc. of Western New England at 11:00AM at Elizabeth Park, 1561 Asylum Ave, West Hartford, CT.

Meet in the free parking lot at 11:00AM. Hoping to see the daffodils and tulips in the Greenhouse. Toilets available. Leased dogs allowed.Rain date: Thursday, March 3.



WELSH CONVERSATION-ON-ZOOM

Intermediate Welsh Conversation: This is not a class but conversation. We use imaginative weekly topics/questions which enables us to gain confidence. **Where:** On-line every Tuesday at 5:30PM. THIS SESSION IS FULL but please join the waiting list. InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com

Beginner's Welsh Conversation: every other Wednesday at 5:30pm for 30-60 minutes. **NOTE: This is not a class**, though there will be a little homework. To join our ZOOM Welsh Conversation group, to be added to the emailed invitation, please email us at InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com.

RUGBY - 6 NATIONS CHAMPIONSHIP 2022

Rugby's greatest championship, between Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy and England will take place beginning on Sat., Feb 5th. In the US., live coverage is on PEACOCK PREMIUM at \$4.99 a month, cancel any time.

Times are Eastern Time

Remaining schedule:

Feb 12 (Sat) 9:15AM - Wales v. Scotland; Feb 26 (Sat) 11:45AM - England v. Wales; March 11 (Fri) 3:00PM - Wales v. France; March 19 (Sat) 10:15AM - Wales v. Italy

WELSH GENEALOGY-ON-ZOOM

Join the Welsh Genealogy group: email <u>InfoWelshWNE.com</u> to be added to Zoom invitation. Research Welsh roots together. Meets 11:00am - 12:30pm.

Monday, Feb 21; Monday, March 14 & 28; Monday, April 11 & 25

MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE!

A friendly reminder that because our fiscal year starts anew on March 1st it is that time of year to pay your annual membership dues. Dues levels are the same as in prior years and can be paid by credit card (no fees) via our website at http://www.welshwne.org/membership If you prefer to pay by check, please make check payable to WSWNE and send to our Treasurer - Mary Pallos 1542 Main Street, Glastonbury, CT 06033 and write "membership" in the memo. Thank you for your ongoing support as dues help pay for expenses such as newsletters, insurance, events, etc. If you have recently paid your dues, you are all set! Membership form on page 14.

THE MABINOGI - SEMINARS

Thursdays: March 10, 17, 24 and 31 at 7:00PM Eastern time

The Mabinogi: Legend and Landscape of Wales

Comprising four interwoven tales, or "branches," *The Mabinogi* is known worldwide as one of the most polished and important pieces of early Welsh literature and as a source of much of our knowledge of early Welsh and Celtic mythology. These tales of friendships and feuds, love and war, explore the nature of right and wrong, fidelity and betrayal, honor and shame, and the relationships between men and women.



On Thursdays, March 10, 17, 24 & 31 at 7pm Eastern time, John K. Bollard and Margaret Lloyd invite you to join a series of talks and discussion about the "Four Branches of The Mabinogi". John Bollard has translated *The Mabinogi* into English, and he has written and lectured widely about these tales for fifty years.

Margaret Lloyd, an

accomplished poet, wrote *Travelling on My Own Errands: Voices of Women* from *The Mabinogi*. Her poems respond to the tales through the personae

of the women characters, revealing their imagined thoughts and providing us with multiple ways to enter into a closer engagement with a classic of medieval literature that remains relevant today.

There will be one fee of \$40 covering all four sessions. Each session will approximately cover each Branch, some are longer than others, and session one will



include the introduction and context of the Mabinogi. During each session, Margaret Lloyd's poetry will be chosen to relate to that Branch.

Mr. Bollard and Ms. Lloyd highly recommend the reading of the first branch of the Mabinogi. as well as the poetry, before the first session, and so forth each week, to better understand and enjoy this seminar series.

Subscribers to the four-part series will receive a pdf file with the full text of the tales. For those who prefer a hard-bound copy of Dr. Bollard's *The Mabinogi: Legend and Landscape of Wales*, with the text, introduction, an essay on the tales, and 60 glorious photographs by Anthony Griffiths, and of Margaret Lloyd's *Travelling on My Own Errands: Voices of Women from The Mabinogi*, both are available at bookdepository.com, with free shipping.

To subscribe to the series: Go to WelshWNE.org/events/mabinogi and sign up using a credit card. Cost is \$40 for all four sessions and includes a PDF of the "Four Branches of The Mabinogi" and "Travelling on My Own Errands: Voices of Women from The Mabinogi."

Alternatively, send a check ASAP to Mary Pallos, WSWNE Treasurer, 1542 Main Street, Glastonbury, CT 06033. Check made out to WSWNE, memo should say "Mabinogi sessions" and must include your email address so you may receive the PDF's.

Once we have received your registration, you will receive the Zoom link and the PDF's. Questions? Email InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com.

CROESO/Welcome to our new members:

- **Rebecca Gilbert** of Chilmark, MA is interested in Welsh history and has Welsh roots on both sides of her family, including from Llan Ffestiniog.
- **Roxanne Infante** of Colorado is joining our Welsh Genealogy group with interests in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.
- **Beth Holden** of Bloomfield, CT is a student at CCSU. Beth is interested in Welsh genealogy and language.
- **Kay Gavin** of Minnesota has Welsh immigrants from Pembrokeshire & Merionethshire into PA, WI, IH & SD and Kay hopes to further her Welsh genealogy.

WALES WEEK NEW ENGLAND 2022

Kicking off this month is **WALES WEEK NEW ENGLAND 2022**, from February 19 to March
5, with similar promotions taking place in
London, New York, Washington, New
Mexico, Los Angeles, Ottawa, Toronto,
Melbourne, Chicago, Bangkok, Pittsburg,
British Columbia, Kansas, Dubai, Newcastle
England, Iran (new), and Paris, among
others (see WalesWeek.world)

It's our chance to promote Wales and Welsh history and culture globally. Here in New England there are Welsh events (not all confirmed) being held as follows:



- Welsh Society of Western New England: Welsh Genealogy Workshop, a St. David's Day Walk, St. David's Day celebration in person, Welsh Conversation Groups and watching the 6 Nations Rugby games live.
- The Copper Kettle: promotion of delicious Welsh Cakes on their Instagram page #CopperKettleBakery. Web: CopperKettleBakery.com.
- Poultney Area St. David's Society: Welsh Church Services for Welsh Heritage Week.

A section of our own website has all events listed - WelshWNE.org/events

AROUND OUR WELSH AMERICAN WORLD

The North American Festival of Wales (NAFOW)

September 1 - 4, 2022: <u>NAFOW.com</u> for more details

Hotel: DoubleTree by Hilton Philadelphia -Center City, 237 South Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA

- Room rate: \$129.00 /night.
- Room rates available August 29, 2022 -September 5, 2022. September 5 but are subject to availability
- Parking for hotel guests \$25.00 /overnight.
- Go to visitphili.com for maps and ideas to explore the city.
- Book online or call 1-800-HILTONS using group name "North American Festival of Wales".



NAFOW 2019 - Beth and Susan

- The hotel does not have an airport shuttle, however there are shuttles located at the airport luggage claim area, as well as taxis available.
 - We will be carpooling, reserve your seat ASAP.

HIGHLIGHTS: 2022 NAFOW SEMINARS:

- Siân Lewis of the Urdu Gobaith Cymru
- Tony Curtis, Emiritus Professor of Poetry at the Univ. South Wales and a friend of WSWNE
- Menna Elfyn, award-winning poet on Cwsg/Sleep
- Dulais Rhys, professional musician Joseph Parry & his opera Blodwyn

Plus:

- · Tour of the Welsh Tract, the early Welsh Settlement in America
- Welsh Male Voice choir, based in London: Eschoir
- Friday Evening banguet with Welsh tenor, Dafydd Jones

MEET OUR MEMBERS

DAVID OWENS

Q. Tell us a bit about your present family life and/or work life.

I'm a composer, pianist, organist and conductor. I live in Holliston, Massachusetts. My wife's name is Nancy, and we have three adult children, who are living and thriving elsewhere. One of my



activities: I play for a chorus who traditionally practices on Tuesday evenings. The quarantine since 2020 has meant that I was able to join the Welsh conversation group during that time.

Q Speak about your origins in Wales or your introduction to Wales from the US

I was a product of the States; as a child I knew members of my father's family, who were from Rhondda Fawr. As a keyboardist who has worked with many singers, I have worked in the 'art music languages' – German, Italian, French, Spanish -- and English, of course. But it always nagged at me that I never took the trouble to learn the language I sometimes heard my grandfather speaking.

I have followed Welsh history, culture and events for many years. And finally, in 2018, I decided to absorb much more of the hiraeth, and take up the language. That was when I made contact with the WSWNE.

Q. What things do you wish to experience in Welsh life or culture either through study, by interacting with Welsh people or through travel to Wales?

In 2018, when I began my more in-depth study of Welsh language, Nancy and I decided on a two-part European trip in the summer. The first part: South Wales, finding the places where members of my family had lived, and visiting some cousins still living there.

The second part: visiting our son and his wife, who lived then in Krakow, Poland. Nancy's family is from Poland, and we made some similar 'heritage' visits there.

Of tremendous interest to me: Both the Polish people and the Welsh, have an ancient history of being subjugated but never beaten. I loved looking at this more deeply there. Also, the symbol of the city of Krakow is ... Krak the dragon!

Q. How you are involved in the Society?

WSWNE is in truth a marvelous group of friendly people bound together by an openness to the hiraeth o Gymru. I have enjoyed attending as many gatherings as I can – especially the conversation group. It's been a pleasure to contribute a little to the noson lawen gatherings as well.

(This interview's Welsh translation will appear in your emailed newsletter copy)

St. Illtyd's Church, the birthplace of Christianity in Wales

By Helen Coates, WSWNE member

As a child, I took comfort in two places: the beach and our church. Both were magical in their own way and depending on the weather, one of them was more joyful than the other. Today, I would like to introduce you to St. Illtyd's Church, the birthplace of Christianity in Wales in my

hometown.



St. Illtyd's Church is located in the historic village of Llantwit Major. The village itself is in the Vale of Glamorgan and situated on the Glamorgan coast approximately 15 miles from the Welsh capital Cardiff, the capital of Wales. The church is named after St. Illtud who himself was quite notable.

Illtud was the son of a Breton prince and

a cousin of King Arthur. While his parents intended for him to have a life of service in the church he chose a different path. He decided on a military career and took a wife and was often referred to as St. Illtud the Knight. His life took a dramatic turn after taking a hunting party through the lands of Saint Cadoc. The story goes that the hunting party sent a message to the abbot Cadoc, demanding the abbot feed them. The abbot was offended by their demand but offered them a meal anyway. It is said that before they could enjoy the meal, the ground opened up and swallowed the whole party. Illtud survived and begged the abbot for forgiveness. The abbot told Illtud to give up his selfish ways and go back to his religious upbringing. This proposed change was sealed with a visit from an angel in the night. The angel reaffirmed what the abbot had said and the course of Illtud's life was now determined. He left the military and his wife and moved on.

One mediaeval Welsh document names Illtud, in his knightly days, as one of the triumvirate (the others were named Cadoc and Peredur) to whom King Arthur gave custody of the Holy Grail. On this basis, some scholars have tried to identify Knight Illtud with Sir Galahad.

While there are differing opinions as to whether or not St. Illtud became a hermit or not, all research points to St. Illtud becoming a monk and founding a monastery in c. 500 AD which is in Llantwit Major (Llanilltud Fawr in Welsh), literally meaning "the great church of Illtud." The churchyard is thought to be Britain's earliest centre of Christian learning. Pupils from St. Illtud's travelled as far away as Brittany to preach the Gospel and establish new centres of worship. Rulers in the region regarded the church as their "Westminster Abbey,"and commemorated this by installing large stones, carved with Celtic patterns and Latin inscriptions. When I was a child, we used to take school trips to the church to make rubbings of the stone-faced effigy. The best rubbing was made into brass and used as a teaching tool in class. This practice no longer takes place due to the fragile nature of the stones.

The elongated church is a conglomeration of distinct buildings and is divided into two areas by a wall: the east chapel, a 13th century monastery church and the west chapel, a Norman parish church. The



grounds include a 13th century gatehouse, monks' pigeon-house, ruined walls in the garden and mounds near a vicarage.

The western part of the church was built by the Normans on the site of its Celtic predecessor. Though its original purpose is unknown, it was endowed as a chantry by Sir Hugh Raglan in around 1470-80. When Parliament abolished chantries during the reign of Edward VI, the Galilee chapel fell into disrepair.

In 2013 the chapel was restored and roofed to form an enclosed space for

display and conservation of the Celtic stones. Because the chapel was in ruins for nearly 400 years of its life, the architectural team responsible for its renovation felt that this "ruined" state formed a significant portion of its life, and should not be ignored in the proposed renovations. The renovations were designed to retain the character of a ruin in the finished building, by retaining all existing walls and architectural details, and constructing new features in such a way that they touched the existing structure "very lightly." Furthermore, all new work was designed to be totally reversible, and no historic fabric was damaged in the process of developing the project. The redesign also made the site wheelchair accessible, with a permanent wooden ramp covering the steps to the entrance, and a disabled toilet located within the chapel.

The new roof is supported by a central timber frame, and a second mezzanine floor was constructed housing offices. The mezzanine floor does not completely fill the space, but stops short of the west gable to a loft display space for the Celtic stones. On the lower floor, a space was constructed to display the Celtic stones and modern bathrooms were installed, and the former sacristy building was fitted with a tea making station. The upper floor of the sacristy serves as an archive and research space.

The display space for the stones is fitted with simple, striking materials – the floor is polished limestone, and the walls are a simple lime washed white, providing a minimalist background to contrast with the rugged grey Celtic stones.

The Sampson Pillar (second from the right) has a curious legendary story attached to it, in that while it made its home in the churchyard, a giant's grave was dug next to the stone. The "giant" was a 7 ft, 7in youth known as "Will the Giant." The stone fell into the grave, nearly killing some mourners, and when it was deemed too heavy to remove, it was buried in the grave with the giant. The stone was rediscovered by Iolo Morganwg in 1789, when it was excavated and removed from the grave.



The eastern part of the church was built in the 13th century for the workers of the local monastic grange. The east chapel includes mediaeval wall paintings, which include the Royal Standard of King James c. 1604, St. Christopher c. 1400 and those of Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary.

There are many churches holding the name St. Illtyd scattered mostly throughout South Wales but the one in Llantwit Major is the most significant, being the first. *If I close my eyes, I can still picture my mother sitting in the front pew simply taking it all in.* Please put this magical place on your visit list next time you are in Wales, I promise it is worth the trip and when you have concluded your visit, you can walk 150 yards to the Old Swan (a nearby 12th century pub).

Sources: Wikiwand, Wikipedia , Wikimedia, Ortho Christian ,History Points & The Life of St. Illtud

WELSH RAINFORESTS

Temperate rainforest, also known as Atlantic or Celtic is a very rare special habitat: lush conditions are perfect for scarce plants, lichens and fungi, as well as a number of unusual animals. They are unique habitats of ancient oaks, birch, pine, ash and hazel. Some of the oldest woodland in Britain are found here, some date back 10,000 years to the last ice age, for example Maentwrog above the Vale of Ffestiniog.



The climatic conditions required to form rainforests

occur over less than 1% of the planet, found in areas subject to the influences of the sea, high rainfall and humidity and a low annual variation in temperature. Rainforest locations cover four areas in North and West Wales, Snowdonia, Cwm Einion, Cwm Doethie-Mynydd Mallaen and the Elan Valley.

These wet, wild forests, criss-crossed with streams and gullies, have been the setting for folk tales and legends over hundreds of years, including The Mabinigion.

Now invasive species, pollution, acid rain, overgrazing of livestock, encroaching developments pose multiple threats to these unique habitats. These have put stress on precious flora and fauna.

A £7 million project that covers the four areas in West Wales is now working to attempt to rid the areas of invasive species, eg rhododendron, with management interventions to help the recovery of plantations, and the introduction of sustainable grazing to some woodland

.....by Begw Arian

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (2021-2022):

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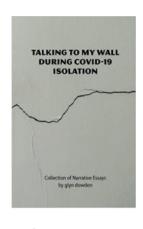
WSWNE Membership Form for mailed-in checks:

PLEASE MAIL to Mary Pallos, WSWNE Treasurer, 1542 Main Street,
Glastonbury, CT 06033. Check made out to WSWNE. Membership year begins
March 1st, one per family at same address. Check website to pay by credit
card on-line. Membership covers March 1 to February 28, each year.
\$100 (Red Dragon),\$50 (Daffodil),\$25 (Miner's Lantern),\$10 (Student)
Today's date: NEW MEMBER: RENEWAL:
Names (list household members):
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N'letter Winter/Spring 2022: For Treasurer's use only: Date received:

WELL-READ DRAGONS

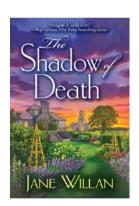
New Book by member Glyn Dowden

When facing a pandemic and destabilization, this is that special moment. The moment when you make your voice heard using a good dose of fatalistic cynicism, along with irrational optimism. That is, when you mull over questions that spring to the surface, such as: why do some strangers scare me while others don't, why does the cat sometimes behave as if she can see things I cannot see, why are some people attracted to each other for life, do people die of a



broken heart, what replaces religion, why do we keep exploring and gathering, why are we unsatisfied, does the wall capture my words,? Will isolation have side benefits like only changing your socks once a week, or do you rediscover bingo, stamp collecting, and so many other exciting unknowns?

The Shadow of Death by Jane Willan



The Hartford Courant reports: First Church West Hartford, which has had 20 senior pastors since it was founded in 1713, has appointed its first female senior pastor. The Rev. Jane Willan will assume her duties on Feb. 8. Before moving to New England, she was a pastor in two congregations in Iowa. Before beginning her pastoral career, she taught religion, including for a time at Ethel Walker School in Simsbury. Willan also writes murder mysteries.,

Book Overview by Goodreads/ Thrift Books

Perfect for fans of G. M. Malliet and M. C. Beaton, The Shadow of Death is divine entertainment from a talented debut writer. A charming and clever traditional mystery debut set at a bucolic Welsh convent, The Shadow of Death introduces Sister Agatha, a mystery-loving nun who finds herself in the midst of a real-life murder case. The sisters of Gwenafwy Abbey have cherished their contemplative life--days spent in prayer, and making their award-winning organic cheese, Heavenly Gouda. Life seems perfect. That is, until the Abbey's sexton is found dead under an avalanche of gouda. Despite the reservations of the local constable, Sister Agatha is convinced it is murder and the game is afoot.

RSVP: St David's Day at the Nutmeg Restaurant, East Windsor, CT

Or RSVP on-line @ WelshWNE.org/events & pay by credit card (no fees)

Lunch Menu

Mushroom and Leek Puff Pastry

Choice of Entree:

Salmon in a Basil Jacqueline Sauce OR

Chicken with a Mushroom Ragout OR

Vegetarian Eggplant Parmesan OR

New York Strip Steak (add \$3) OR

Children's meal: Chicken Fingers & Fries

Apple Strudel followed by Coffee or Tea

All above served with vegetable and potato

Members: \$35; Guests: \$42; Children under age 10: \$20.00 (if NY Steak add \$3). **Includes hors d'oeuvres, lunch, tax and tip.**

All Names:______

Contact phone#:_____

Menu Choices: # _____ SALMON

_____ CHICKEN

_____ NEW YORK STRIP STEAK (+\$3)

_____ VEGETARIAN

_____ CHILDREN'S MEAL (age 10 & under)

_____ MEMBERS @ \$35 (or NY Steak @ \$38) = \$ _____

____ GUESTS @ \$42 (or NY Steak @ \$45) = \$ _____

____ CHILD (10 or under) @ \$20.00 = \$ _____

TICKET QUESTIONS? InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com

DEADLINE Monday, March 2, 2022. Check payable to WSWNE to: Mary Pallos, 1542 Main Street, Glastonbury, CT 06033

TOTAL \$