



Photos by Annie Rodgers

Above:  
St. Teilo's Church,  
St. Fagan's National  
Museum of History,  
Cardiff

Right:  
Dr. Joseph Parry family  
grave, St. Augustine's  
churchyard, Penarth



# Croeso! — Welcome!



## The Welsh Society of Western New England *Cymdeithas Cymreig Lloegr Newydd Gorllewino*

February 2023 WelshWNE.org WelshWNE@gmail.com FaceBook: WSWNE

### A Message From Our President, Susan Davies Sit

We have been on a cultural feast of Welsh delights with the amazing presentations we've been lucky enough to host recently. *Journalist Gareth Jones, National Forest for Wales, and Welsh Food Stories* were three captivating Zoom presentations that had dozens of us tuned in on Zoom. We were enthralled by the insights and information shared during these events and left feeling inspired and educated.

Get ready to dive into the rich history of Wales with two more must-see Zoom presentations this month! First up, on February 16<sup>th</sup>, join myself and Ann Griffith, members of the Heddwch Nain-Mamgu research team, as we uncover *Hidden History*. Then, on February 26<sup>th</sup>, take a road trip with Welsh poet Adele Evershed and the book editors of *The A470 - Poetry Along the Road*.

As the 6 Nations Rugby Championship heats up and the weather starts to be less chilly, make sure to join us at a watch party or tune in from home. And don't miss out on our second annual March 1<sup>st</sup> walk and celebrating St. David's Day with a special luncheon on March 4<sup>th</sup> both during Wales Week New England.

Mark your calendars for these unmissable events!

## St. David

Diane Jeffer, WSWNE Member

St David was the greatest figure in the 6th century Welsh Age of Saints. Most of what we know about St David was written by the 11th-century scholar Rhygyfarch. He was born about the year 500, the grandson of Ceredig ap Cunedda, King of Ceredigion. According to legend, his mother, St Non, gave birth to him on a Pembrokeshire clifftop during a fierce storm. The spot is marked by the ruins of Non's Chapel, and a nearby holy well is said to have healing powers.

St David became a renowned preacher, founding monastic settlements and churches in Wales, Brittany, and southwest England. He established a strict religious community in what is now St Davids in Pembrokeshire, West Wales. St David and his monks followed a simple, austere life. They ploughed the fields by hand and refrained from eating meat or drinking beer. St David himself was reputed to have consumed only leeks and water, which is perhaps why the leek became a national symbol of Wales.

The most famous miracle associated with St David took place when he was preaching to a large crowd in Llanddewi Brefi. When people said they could not hear him, the ground on which he stood rose up to form a hill; a white dove, sent by God, settled on his shoulder. St David reputedly made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, from which he brought back a stone that now sits in an altar at St Davids Cathedral, built on the site of his original monastery.

St David died on 1 March in 589. He was buried at the site of St Davids Cathedral, where his shrine was a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the Middle Ages. His last words to his followers came from a sermon he gave on the previous Sunday: "Be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things that you have heard and seen me do." The phrase *Gwnewch y pethau bychain mewn bywyd* (Do the little things in life) is still a well-known maxim in Wales.

St David's Day has been celebrated since the year 1120. In 2000, the National Assembly for Wales voted to recognize St. David's Day as a public holiday. Traditional festivities include wearing daffodils and leeks, symbols of Wales and Saint David respectively, eating traditional Welsh food including cawl and Welsh rarebit, and wearing traditional Welsh dress. An increasing number of cities and towns across Wales including Cardiff, Swansea, and Aberystwyth put on parades.

Sources: [NationalToday.com/St-Davids-Day](http://NationalToday.com/St-Davids-Day)  
[VisitWales.com/info/History-Heritage-and-Traditions/St-David-Five-Facts](http://VisitWales.com/info/History-Heritage-and-Traditions/St-David-Five-Facts)

## Two Beautiful Welsh Churches

By WSWNE Member Annie Rodgers

### St Teilo's Church, St. Fagans

During our 2022 genealogy trip around Wales, our travels took us to St. Fagans National Museum of History in Cardiff. This recreated village hosts various structures taken from around Wales. In a small meadow at the far end of the village sits St. Teilo's Church, believed to have been built around 1200 AD. When the church was taken apart for moving to St. Fagans, workmen found evidence of paintings beneath the plaster on the walls. During its reconstruction, artists painstakingly restored the paintings to their original glory. I sat in silence and took in the beauty of the painted walls, and decorative designs. These paintings, like stained glass windows, were there to educate those who could not read the Bible. Practically every available space had been painted as if to pack in as much biblical teaching as possible. My favorite painting is the depiction of Noah's Ark. Here, Noah is helping a lion to board the nearly full ark. Shown above is a dove with an olive branch in its beak. I wondered to myself how many petitions, prayers, penance, and praises had these walls heard over the centuries. Perhaps it's a good thing that walls can't talk.

### St Augustine's Church, and Dr. Joseph Parry, Penarth

I took a day away from the group and travelled to Penarth to check off an item on my bucket list. Penarth looks like it rose out of the sea as a steep mountain. All the streets seem to go uphill forever. I met my Zoom sister, Aimee Jones, at one side of Cardiff Bay, and we set off to find St. Augustine's Church. Designed by architect William Butterfield and considered one of his best works, the interior is breathtaking with its polychromatic designed brick walls and floors. It's a true work of creativity. However lovely the interior of the church is, I was there to visit the churchyard. There on a high ridge overlooking Cardiff Bay, Dr. Joseph Parry and his family have been laid to rest. Theirs is a striking four-sided monument made of white marble. The lyre on top has three broken strings signifying the number of children who had predeceased the composer and his wife. His wife had inscribed on his side of the monument, "He's waiting and watching for me." She would have to wait fifteen years for that reunion. Parry was a composer who wrote the music to the popular song *Myfanwy*, as well as operas, oratorios, and scores of hymns. He taught at the University of Aberystwyth for many years and was also a church organist.

*See photos on back cover.*

## Obituary

**Bronwen (Hughes) Wrinn**, 79, of Wallingford, died unexpectedly at Midstate Medical Center on Sunday, January 15, 2023. She was the loving wife of the late Thomas F. Wrinn and a long time member of the Welsh Society of Western New England.

Bronwen is survived by her three children, Sharon Diggle Gentino, Glynne Diggle and his wife Alma, and Gail Diggle, three grandchildren, and her godson, Thomas M. Wrinn of Kansas.



She was born in England, June 28, 1943, a daughter of the late Glynne and Elizabeth (Macmillan) Hughes. In her early 20's she emigrated alone from England, following her husband by three months, with three very young children and \$20 in her pocket.

Bronwen was a devout parishioner of Most Holy Trinity Church in Wallingford where she was an active volunteer alongside her husband at the parish bazaar and raffle. She had been a longtime employee of Connecticut Bank and Trust. She was an extremely charitable person who dedicated countless time and efforts to many organizations that exemplified her values and beliefs.

Bronwen was an amazing, strong, loving, caring woman with a smile that lit up a room. Her kindness touched many. Her greatest love was of birds, especially hummingbirds, and sunshine. She loved the feel of the sun on her face and has an amazing bird sanctuary outside her sunroom. We all knew to come running when she called because there was a special bird, or a fox or a deer or.... she loved nature. Her flower gardens were a passionate undertaking.

She had a crazy adventuresome spirit. Whether gliding in a plane over the countryside of England, sailing a 44 foot yacht with a girlfriend alone around the British Virgin Islands and Greece, camping in Hawaii, hiking the state parks of Utah and Colorado, paragliding in the Rockies, scuba diving in Bonaire, kayaking with Gail, or 4-wheeling in Colorado her spirit would bubble forth from her in joyous laughter. Her sense of humor was captivating. Her escapades would leave us all in stitches. And still do.

[www.wallingfordfh.com/obituary/bronwen-wrinn](http://www.wallingfordfh.com/obituary/bronwen-wrinn)

## St. David's Day Luncheon

Annie Rodgers, WSWNE Vice President

Don't miss out on an unforgettable celebration of Welsh culture and history at our annual St David's Day luncheon on March 4, 2023 at the Nutmeg Restaurant, 297 South Main Street in East Windsor, CT.

We'll begin with a cocktail hour at 11AM followed by welcoming remarks and a special video from Wales featuring the First Minister at noon.



After lunch, we will be treated to a performance of the two winning poems at the 2022 North American festival of Wales (NAFOW). Welsh-born Adele Evershed now lives in Connecticut. She will share her work, *The Art of Embroidering a Road Through the Eye of Heaven*, taken from the book *The A470 - Poems for the Road*. Next, Robert Jones of Vermont will present his powerful winning poem in the Welsh language, *Clychau Aberddoe*. Don't miss this opportunity to experience the beauty of poetry and the rich cultural traditions of Wales.

Following the poetry readings, we will honor three amazing women warriors for peace with a riveting presentation by Jacqueline Burek, a professor at George Mason University, and actress Jessie Roberts. Members of Heddwch Nain-Mamgu USA, Jacqueline and Jessica will bring to life the diary of Annie Jane Hughes-Griffiths.

Discover the inspiring story of how Hughes-Griffiths, along with Elined Prys, and Mary Ellis, brought a petition for peace from 390,000 Welsh women to American women in 1924 and even met President Coolidge. Their presentation is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn, be entertained, and be moved by the powerful message of peace.

Menu and reservation details can be found on the insert in this issue or at [www.welshwne.org/events/st-davids-day-3-4-2023](http://www.welshwne.org/events/st-davids-day-3-4-2023).

## Winter Zoom Events with WSWNE

Write to [InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com](mailto:InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com) to request a Zoom link for any of these presentations; please specify which one(s) you are interested in.

### Genealogy-on-Zoom

**Mondays 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM**

This group shares research tips, suggestions, and success stories.

**February 13 & 20, March 13 & 27, April 10 & 24**

Concurrent in-person meeting from 10:30-4:30 on the following dates:

**February 20, March 17, April 10**

**February 20**—Phil Bufton, chair of the Powys Family History Society will join us to discuss how a Welsh Family History Society can help our research.



### Welsh Conversation-on-Zoom

**Every other Wednesday 5:30 PM (Beginner)**

**February 8 & 22, March 8 & 22, April 12 & 26**

This is not a class, though there will be a little homework.

**Every Tuesday 5:30 PM (Intermediate)**

Chat in Welsh in a casual, friendly setting. We use imaginative weekly topics/questions which enable us to learn new vocabulary. (This session is currently full, but please join the waiting list.)

*Continued from previous page*

The first song is the Gloucestershire Wassail, sung in English. The two plygains, sung in Welsh, were Daeth Nadolig (Christmas came) and Ar Gyfr Heddiw'r Bore - a.k.a. Faban Bach (a little baby).

The event concluded with attendees singing together the Welsh National Anthem (Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau). We also enjoyed a raffle, with the first prize being a basket filled with Welsh Christmas foods, including a delicious Christmas pudding, and gift cards from UK Gourmet.

Overall, it was a truly festive and memorable holiday celebration and a great opportunity for the Welsh Society community to come together and embrace the rich traditions of the season.

Some scenes from the festivities.  
All photos by member Wayne Korhonen.



Member Bob Bolgard, guest Laurie Utman and Board members Mark and Janet Taylor



Member Dafydd Owens enjoys speaking Welsh at our luncheons



Member Barbara English traveled from her home in Pennsylvania to join the festivities.



Cracker pulling - member Valerie Doyle and guest Thomas Anderson.

## Our Festive Holiday Luncheon

By Susan Davies Sit, WSWNE President

The Welsh Society of Western New England recently hosted a festive holiday luncheon at the historic Storrowton Tavern in East Springfield, Massachusetts. Storrowton Tavern is a well-known and beloved landmark in the Springfield area, with a rich history dating back to the 18th century. Originally built as a farmhouse in 1793, the tavern has undergone several renovations and expansions over the years. It has served as a tavern, inn, and restaurant, and it is now a popular venue for events and celebrations. The beautiful Christmas-decorated room, complete with Christmas crackers, set the stage for a festive gathering.

After a delicious lunch, guests were treated to a special performance by the Mari Lwyd, also known as the Gray Mare. This traditional Welsh figure appears during the holiday season in Wales, represented by a horse's skull adorned with ribbons and other decorations, and mounted on a pole which is carried by a performer. Often accompanied by a group of singers and musicians, the Mari Lwyd goes from house to house, singing and performing in exchange for food and drink.

Straford Wild-Rocheleau and Annie Rodgers sang forward and backward to welcome the Mari Lwyd into Annie's home for food and drink. Following our holiday luncheon, Straford and his wife Anne recreated the Welsh tradition of the Mari Lwyd going from door to door and singing three seasonal songs (including two plygains).



Annie Rodgers, Straford and Anne Wild-Rocheleau

## Online and In-Person Events Celebrating Wales Week New England February 18 through March 4, 2023

### Thursday, February 16 at 7 PM

Hidden History. Zoom presentation. Complete details on page 6.

### Monday, February 20 at 11 AM

Genealogy-on-Zoom. See page 4.

### Tuesday, February 21 at 5:30 PM

Welsh-Conversation-on-Zoom. Details on page 4.

### Wednesday, February 22 at 5:30 PM

Beginner Welsh Conversation-on-Zoom. See page 4.

### Saturday February 25 at 11:45 AM

Six Nations Rugby Championship Wales vs. England. See page 7 for details about our in-person watch parties for this and other matches.

### Saturday February 25 at 12:15

Poultney Area St. David's Society's annual "Gathering of the Clans" lunch and meeting at TAPS tavern, 158 Main Street, Poultney, VT. We will order off the menu and pay our own tabs.

### Sunday February 26 at 2 PM

A470 - Poetry for the Road. Zoom presentation. Details on page 6.

### Tuesday, February 28 at 5:30 PM

Welsh-Conversation-on-Zoom. Details on page 4.

### Wednesday, March 1—St. David's Day at 11 AM

Second Annual St. David's Day Walk. Meet in the parking lot at Elizabeth Park in West Hartford, CT. Dress warmly, and bring Y Ddraig Goch. Hot cider to follow! No need to RSVP.

### Saturday, March 4, 11 AM to 3 PM

Our annual St. David's Day Luncheon at the Nutmeg Restaurant in Norwich, Connecticut. See page 3 for complete details.

See [www.WelshWNW.org/wales-week-in-new-england](http://www.WelshWNW.org/wales-week-in-new-england) for additional details about these events.

## Winter Zoom Events

Please use the links below to register for these special events.

**February 16, 2023 at 7 PM**

**Hidden History** [www.welshwne.org/events/hidden-history-event](http://www.welshwne.org/events/hidden-history-event)



1924 Peace Petition delegation

One hundred years ago, over 390,000 Welsh women signed a peace petition. In 1924, a delegation brought the petition to American women and meeting President Coolidge was NOT the highlight of their trip. How did they gather those signatures and what's next in 2024? Join Ann Griffith and Susan Davies Sit, members of WSWNE and Heddwch Nain Mamgu, for a presentation about this fascinating bit of history.

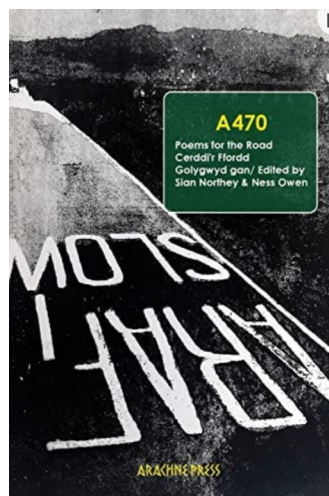
**Sunday, February 26, 2023 at 2 PM**

### Poetry-on-Zoom

*The A470: Poetry Along The Road in Wales*

[www.welshwne.org/events/a470-poems](http://www.welshwne.org/events/a470-poems)

The A470 is 186 miles from shore to shore through the backbone of Wales, linking north to south. Peaceful and picturesque or slow and never-ending: the road out of here, the road home, the beginnings of devolution? Glorious national parks, the road to the Royal Welsh Show and from seashore to slates, to forests and mountains. 51 original poems, translated into and out of Welsh, to create an entirely



Poetry-on-Zoom will feature a presentation with NAFOW Eisteddfod Poem in English Language Winner Adele Evershed, and Sian Northey & Ness Owen, editors and translators, and Cherry Potts, Director of Arachne Press Limited.

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so he put her in charge of steering the boat. She was very comforting to the women on board. Three stewards were also put on board to help with the rowing.

They were at sea for about eight hours until they were picked up by the Carpathia. In a letter published in numerous newspapers at the time, Gladys Cherry praised Thomas for his heroic efforts and to clear his name from any blame.

As a thank you, the countess presented Thomas with a silver pocket watch and he gave her a plaque with the number eight taken from the lifeboat. Tom later married and settled at 84 Jacob Street, Liverpool. The pair kept in touch until the countess died in 1956.

There are a number of Titanic memorials but the Llanbadrig Community Council wanted the story of Thomas Jones to be commemorated in his home town. A memorial was commissioned in the shape of the bow of the Titanic made from local stone with an engraved plaque. This was unveiled on Saturday October 29<sup>th</sup> 2022 at 1:30pm after an exhibition and talk the night before.

A number of dignitaries attended the event such as local councillors, historians etc. and the City of Liverpool was represented by the mayor and his family. The grand-daughter of Thomas performed the actual unveiling. It is planned that a commemorative plaque will be sited at Thomas' birth place, No. 4, Sea view Terrace, Cemaes and that this will be unveiled by the grand-daughter of the Countess Rothes.



## Able Seaman Thomas William Jones

Stuart Haywood, The Stoke-on-Trent & District Welsh Society, England

My wife and I were very interested to read the article in the Winter newsletter about a visit to Cemaes on Anglesey by some WSWNE members. Our interest is because my wife's father was born in Llanbadrig, which is only a small distance from Cemaes. She moved with her family to Staffordshire, England in 1964 as part of her father's employment. Her father, wishing to retain his links with Cemaes, bought a second home in the village overlooking the bay. Following his death, my wife and her sister decided to retain the house.

We have researched my wife's Welsh ancestry and have traced it back three hundred years on Anglesey and prior to that in Denbighshire. With such ancestry, it is not surprising that my wife has a significant number of relatives living on Anglesey. Towards the end of August, we attended a relative's wedding in Llanbadrig and perhaps we passed the WSWNE members outside The Stag or the fish & chip shop!

Having given some background, let me describe an event that took place in October 2022 that has a link between Cemaes and North America.

Most know that the RMS Titanic sank on her maiden voyage to New York in the early hours of April 15<sup>th</sup> 1912 and that the White Star Line decided that only sixteen wooden lifeboats and four collapsibles would be carried. These could accommodate 1,178 people, only one-third of Titanic's total capacity. At the time, the Board of Trade's regulations required British vessels over 10,000 tons to only carry sixteen lifeboats with a capacity of 990 occupants.

Able Seaman Thomas William Jones, then in his thirties, was placed in charge of Lifeboat No. 8. He was born in Cemaes on November 15, 1877. At the age of 16, he joined the Royal Navy; later he moved to the Merchant Navy, and when he was in his late twenties, he joined the White Star Line.

Twenty-eight people went into Lifeboat 8. Because it could accommodate over sixty people, Tom wanted to go back to save more lives; he was out-voted but he wanted it to be put on record that he was willing to go back.

The Countess Rothes of Scotland was one of the women that boarded the lifeboat with her husband's cousin (Gladys Cherry) and her lady in waiting. Tom could see that the countess was used to ships and boats

## 2023 Guinness Six Nations Rugby Tournament

### *In-Person Watch Parties*

Since 2000, the six nations of England, France, Ireland, Italy, Scotland, and Wales compete in this annual event. Beginning in 1883 with England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales competing, this is the oldest international rugby tournament. The 2023 competition will take place over five weekends in February and March.

In the US, the games will be broadcast on the Peacock streaming service (peacocktv.com). **Watch parties** will be held in Glastonbury, Connecticut for the Welsh games. RSVP for location: InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com.

The Welsh team will play on the following Saturdays, EST.

February 4, 9:15 AM—Wales hosts Ireland

February 11, 11:45 AM—Scotland hosts Wales

February 25, 11:45 AM—Wales hosts England

March 11, 9:15 AM—Italy hosts Wales

March 25, 9:45 AM—France hosts Wales



## Meet Our Newsletter Editor, Diane Jeffer

I live on a mountaintop in northwest New Jersey with my husband, Gil. We have two sons: Greg lives in Ohio with his wife, Augusta, and David is a student at Brigham Young University where he participates in a Welsh choir and has taken four semesters of Welsh language. Gil and I spend nearly half of each year at our summer home in the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania and enjoy road trips around the US in the spring and fall.



My great grandparents emigrated from Goginan, Cardiganshire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. William Morris Evans as a child in 1870, and Elizabeth Ellen Roderick as an adult in 1890. They met in Sugar Notch near Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania although their families had known one another in Wales.

I have been a member of The Welsh Society of the Southern Tier (WSST) in my home state of New York for over forty years and continue to participate in the Society's events and serve as treasurer. Gil and I have traveled to Wales several times and maintain friendships with members of two choirs that were hosted by WSST. My family makes Welsh Tea Cakes on St. David's Day each year, a tradition that began when I was a child and we mailed some to my Welsh grandfather each year. Later, my boys mailed Tea Cakes to their grandmother and now I'm waiting for some grandchildren so they can start sending them to me.

I became involved with the Welsh Society of Western New England a few years ago when I saw an advertisement for the Genealogy-on-Zoom group. Imagine my surprise when I found that Susan Meers was also a member of this group! Her grandmother, Elizabeth Jane Roderick, was a first cousin of my great grandmother and we had corresponded for many years but never met one another. We finally met in person last fall when my husband and I were traveling around New England on a leaf-peeping and family history tour.

I am not able to attend most events that WSWNE hosts since I don't live in New England, but I thoroughly enjoy Genealogy-on-Zoom as well as other Zoom events hosted by the Society. Serving as your newsletter editor is a great way for me to stay connected even though I am not able to meet most of you in person.

## Carneddau Ponies

By Begu Arian

The Carneddau Mountains in Snowdonia are amongst the most hostile and inhospitable places in the UK. During the winter, they are often shrouded in deep sea fog. Some of the peaks soar to more than 3,000 feet above sea level. Rain fall is heavy, wind is high, and temperatures, especially during the winter months, are bitterly low.

A small population of about 300 semi-feral Carneddau ponies have access to more than 13,500 acres of common between Conwy, Capel Curig, Bethesda, and Llanfairfechan. At the height of the mining industry, they were used to pull carts down the mines. These days, they are left free to roam the hillsides as they please. They meander freely amongst the remains of long lost farming settlements and Roman forts, sharing the land with thousands of sheep. A group of farmers from Bethesda and Llanfairfechan who are supported by Natural Resources Wales, maintain the herd, grazing to benefit of wildlife on the mountains from chough to dung beetles.

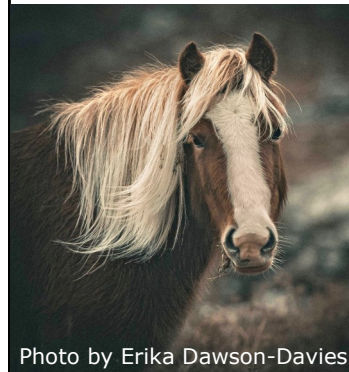


Photo by Erika Dawson-Davies

These native Welsh mountain ponies, which are no longer domesticated, add to the raw beauty of this awe-inspiring landscape. They have a shared ancestry with the Welsh Section A Mountain Pony and have been recognised as a unique and rare breed. They date back to the Bronze Age and carry genes specifically related to hardiness and waterproofing. A study of their DNA shows they have bred in isolation for several hundred years.

King Henry VIII ordered their destruction in 1509, deeming any horse or pony not fit to carry soldiers should be destroyed. Fortunately, the harsh terrain and unforgiving elements of the Carneddau deterred his henchmen. In 2013, a winter snow-storm wiped out 100 ponies, but the population recovered in a few years.

Seven local families retain the rights of guardianship of the ponies. They round them up once a year for health checks and to allow some ponies to be sold to keep the herd in balance. The turbulent political landscape has brought a new challenge. Proposed agricultural funding cuts by the Welsh Government could bring an end to the centuries of protection that hill farmers have provided the ponies.