

# Croeso! — Welcome!



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

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

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

As I write this, I am preparing to travel to the North American Festival of Wales, held in Lincoln, Nebraska this year—a state I have never visited. I am looking forward to this wonderful event where I will represent our Society at meetings with other Welsh Societies, discussing what events have been successful and what we are planning. I will also meet with the Deputy Head of North America for the Welsh Government.

We are looking ahead to Fall with a return to Lost Acres Vineyard for an Owain Glyndwr Wine and Welsh Cheese tasting in September. With a nod to traditional cider in Wales, we are adding a vineyard-made cider to the tasting panel.

Be sure to save the date, December 2nd, for our traditional Christmas holiday luncheon set in the delightful Storrowton Tavern in Springfield, Massachusetts. This event is always filled with warmth and hiraeth.

Look inside for details about these upcoming events. You'll also find information about our programs via Zoom, a few Welsh recipes, and a variety of interesting articles. This is your newsletter, so please send suggestions for topics to include—including those you would like to write about—to our editor at [Diane.Jeffer@gmail.com](mailto:Diane.Jeffer@gmail.com).

## Visit our Website!

Be sure to visit the Welsh Society of Western New England often at [www.WelshWNE.org](http://www.WelshWNE.org). You'll find a full calendar of events, photos and videos from past events, profiles of members of our Board of Directors, previous newsletters, and a resources page with links to all things Welsh. Check it out today!

## Our Newest Members Croeso — Welcome

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**Dana Anderson**, Hoschton, Georgia

Your Welsh interests? Welsh learner, Welsh genealogy, family living in Wales.

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**Tegwyn Lantz**, Lancaster, Ohio

Your Welsh interests? Everything Welsh!

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**Yoav Orot**, Somerville, Massachusetts

Your Welsh interests? My interest is to meet people for the purpose of practicing my speech and listening skills, and learning Welsh culture and history.

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**Pam Petro**, Northampton, Massachusetts

Your Welsh interests? Everything! Language, literature, landscape, food, you name it.

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**Jonathan and Nicole Phelps**, Wausau, Wisconsin

Your Welsh interests? I am part Welsh and have always been crazy about Celtic culture and would love to learn a Celtic Language.

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## Ninnau: Your Source for Welsh News

To keep up with news from Wales and around North America, please subscribe to Ninnau: the North American Welsh newspaper.

6 issues per year at \$30 printed or \$20 digital. [www.Ninnau.com](http://www.Ninnau.com)

# Owain Glyndwr Wine and Welsh Cheese Tasting

Friday, September 15th, 2023, 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM

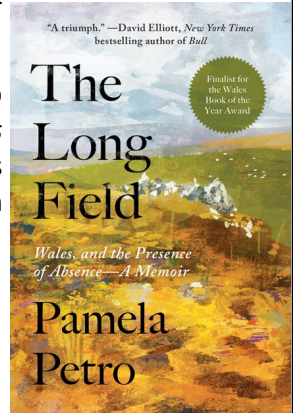


Our annual Owain Glyndwr celebration will take place at Lost Acres Vineyard, 80 Lost Acres Road, North Granby, CT, again this year.

We will share the story of Owain Glyndwr while we enjoy a variety of Welsh cheeses including Snowdonia's Black Bomber, Harlech, and Green Thunder, plus Collier's, Caerphilly and more, complimented by crackers, breads, chutneys, fruit, and, of course, a tasting of several of Lost

Acres' wines and of their very own cider for our Celtic palate.

As part of our celebration, author Pam Petro will present her book, *The Long Field - Wales and the Presence of Absence, a Memoir*. Copies of the book will be available for purchase (cash or check) at discount price of \$20.



## Event highlights:

- ◆ Owain Glyndwr presentation
- ◆ Author's presentation of *The Long Field*
- ◆ Tasting of 5-6 wines plus cider
- ◆ Welsh Cheeses with support from UK Gourmet in Bethel, CT
- ◆ Complimentary wine glass to take home
- ◆ Remaining whole Welsh cheeses will be available to purchase.

## RSVP Deadline September 12

Please send check payable to WSWNE (\$20 per person) to Annie Rodgers, WSWNE Treasurer, P.O. Box 463, Chicopee, MA 01021. Your cancelled check will serve as your receipt.

# Welsh Conversation-on-Zoom is Expanding!

By Susan Davies Sit, WSWNE President

This fall, the Welsh Society of Western New England will be adding more sessions to our Conversation-on-Zoom programming, expanding the opportunity for Welsh learners to become more confident when speaking Welsh. No more “deer-in-the-headlights”! Our objective was, and always will be, to provide a safe space to speak Welsh together.

These sessions are not classes. You must be learning on your own (see [www.welshwne.org/learn-welsh](http://www.welshwne.org/learn-welsh) for sources).

Please write to [WelshWNE@gmail.com](mailto:WelshWNE@gmail.com) to let us know which level you'd like to join. Level 1 & 2 will be limited to 8 people and Level 3 to 12 people. Sessions start in September, join anytime. See next page for specific dates. Let's go!

## **LEVEL 1—Beginners' Welsh Conversation:**

- \* 30 minutes, twice a month on Wednesdays at 5 PM
- \* Must be learning Welsh in your own time
- \* Basic conversation for beginners
- \* Aim is to begin being comfortable speaking Welsh.
- \* Led by Christine McSorley

## **LEVEL 2—Intermediate Welsh Conversation:**

- \* 30-45 minutes, twice a month on Mondays at 5 PM
- \* At least 1-2 years of learning Welsh on your own
- \* Intermediate level conversation: alphabet, basic conversation using topics, reading out loud, pronunciation
- \* Aim is to become comfortable speaking Welsh
- \* Led by Christine McSorley

## **LEVEL 3—Intermediate Plus Conversation:**

- \* 60 minutes, every Tuesday at 5 PM
- \* More than 2 years of learning Welsh on your own
- \* Using a list of questions/topics; using maps, and paintings or drawings to talk about content
- \* Aim is to be comfortable speaking Welsh, often without reading from text, as well as listening comprehension
- \* Led by Susan Davies Sit

## **Zoom Events with WSWNE**

If this is your first time joining our Zoom events, please register online at [WelshWNE.org/events](http://WelshWNE.org/events) or request a Zoom link by writing to [InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com](mailto:InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com) and specifying which event(s) you wish to attend.

### **Welsh Conversation-on-Zoom**

*Please see previous page for complete details about Conversation-on-Zoom.*

#### **Level 1: Beginners Welsh Conversation**

Twice monthly on Mondays from 5 to 5:30 PM

September 11 & 25, October 9 & 23, November 6 & 20, December 18

#### **Level 2: Intermediate Welsh Conversation**

Twice monthly on Wednesdays from 5 to 5:45 PM

September 6 & 20, October 4 & 18, November 1 & 15, December 6 & 13

#### **Level 3: Intermediate Plus Conversation**

Every Tuesday from 5 to 6 PM beginning September 5

### **Genealogy-on-Zoom**

Mondays 11 AM to 12:30 PM

September 11 & 25, October 30, November 13 & 27, December 11

This group shares research tips, suggestions, and success stories. See page 14 for tips on getting started in genealogy.

Concurrent in-person meetings from 11 AM to 4:30 PM in Glastonbury, CT on September 11, October 30, and December 11. You must RSVP for in-person events at [WelshWNE.org/events](http://WelshWNE.org/events).



# Summer Fun!

By Matthew, WSWNE member

Shearing a sheep in Wales this summer was one of the best moments in my life because I know a lot of kids at my age (13) don't get this kind of opportunity. It was by sheer luck, and before attending the Ed Sheeran show back in New England, that I sheepishly sheared a sheep in Wales with Taid. It was an experience that I will never take for granted, and it has increased my appreciation for those in the farming industry.



Matthew helping shear his Taid's sheep in Bethesda, Gwynedd, Wales.



Matthew holding the wool he helped shear.

# Slate Valley Gymanfa Ganu

By Susan Davies Sit, WSWNE President

Several WSWNE members traveled to attend the Gymanfa Ganu and Te-bach, a traditional and non-denominational Welsh hymn-sing and afternoon tea, at the First Baptist Church in Fair Haven, Vermont, on August 6th. It was well attended and we sang Welsh hymns as well as we could in both English and Welsh. It was lead by Conductor Jay G. Williams, III with Organ Accompanist Vaughn Watson including the special audio selections provided to us by Meibion Goronwy Welsh Male Choir in Benllech, Anglesey, Wales. The hiraeth was strong! The chatter at the Te Bach was interesting and fun; DNA cousins connected, and Welsh was spoken between new friends.

## Save the Date

**Saturday, December 2nd**

**4:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

Our Annual Christmas luncheon will take place at Storowton Tavern, West Springfield, MA. We will have a full seasonal program following our meal. For complete details, visit [WelshWNE.org/events](http://WelshWNE.org/events).



## Welsh Cooking

By Diane Dunham Jeffer, WSWNE Newsletter Editor

### **Swper Mam—Mother's Supper**

Partially cook 1 lb. bacon. Put half in bottom of a shallow baking dish, overlapping edges slightly.

Cover with two chopped onions, then four ounces grated cheese.

Arrange remaining bacon on top.

Bake at 375° for 30 minutes or until bacon is crisp.

Cut with sharp knife to serve.

This quick supper dish is traditionally served with jacket potatoes or a Welsh omelette.

*Adapted from **A Taste of Wales** by Theodora FitzGibbon.*

### **Teisen Nionod—Onion Cake**

1½—2 lb. potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced

4 large onions, peeled and chopped

4 oz. butter; additional 1 oz. of melted butter

Preheat oven to 375°. Grease a 6-7" cake tin.

Place potatoes in a neat layer in bottom of tin. Add a layer of onion; dot with butter and season with salt and pepper. Continue in this way, finishing with a layer of potato. Brush with melted butter and cover with foil. Cook for one hour, removing foil after 45 minutes. Turn out on to a warm serving dish, cut into slices and serve with cheese and crusty bread.

*Adapted from **Favorite Welsh Teatime Recipes** published by J. Salmon Ltd.*

# My First Cwrs Cymraeg (Residential Welsh Course)

By Susan Davies Sit, WSWNE President

Cymdeithas Madog hosts a residential Welsh Language course somewhere in the US every year. Courses have also been held twice in Wales. I never had the courage to sign up before but I attended for the first time this past July when the course was held in Burlington, Vermont.

Was my Welsh good enough? Do I have to speak Welsh to people? Of course the answers were “YES!” It was a week of classroom learning, meeting new and old friends, an Eisteddfod, a Noson Lawen and most importantly, a week of speaking Welsh and being comfortable. I chose level 3 out of 6 because I wanted to review the past tenses. All levels have a description of curriculum and if you find yourself in the wrong one on the first day, you can change level, up or down.

The classroom learning was terrific, we followed a booklet and had any number of opportunities to repeat and understand. Robert Jones, of Vermont was our teacher, and there were five others: Antone Minard from Vancouver, Canada, Tim Doughty from Florida and three from Wales, Llinos Griffin (Penrhyndeudraeth), Helen Thomas (Hen Golwyn) and Owen Saer (Cardiff). Owen also led the choir (fortunately for me, choir participation was optional) and the general singing.

So what happened during this week? The camaraderie was amazing. We had comfortable dorm rooms (no, really), single or double. Shared bathrooms but they were great. All food, soft drinks, and hot drinks with meals were included. The cafeteria meals which catered for all diets were great. The price included all the classroom teaching, and every other activity. Classes were four times a day, with coffee and lunch breaks in between. After classes ended there was an hour with a choice of optional workshops on topics such as Englyn poetry, Welsh genealogy, the course newspaper, Clwb Darllen (reading), Welsh Witches, Intro to Cornish, and a Welsh game.



After dinner, we had more optional activities including a Quiz Night at a local pub, a Welsh language film, an Eisteddfod, and Tutor Question time. For ones who had energy remaining, a trip to the local pub was great fun.

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Another first timer was Jane Baker, a member of WSWNE and of our Beginners' Welsh conversation group. Jane was also in Level 3 and said her favorite part was, "Learning practical things such as prepositions, counting refresher, and help with enunciation" and that the "cwrs was excellent" and "the pace was good with a lot of material with excellent teachers." To practice past tenses, Jane and I text each other daily about something we did the day before. The other WSWNE member and Beginner's Welsh Conversation group participant who attended for the first time in Level 2 was Andy Crispell. He absolutely loved the week and even sang a song in Welsh for the Noson Lawen. He said "I had a wonderful, wonderful week of learning and met fantastic people who I hope will become friends. I am motivated to spend more time learning Welsh."

Sarah Stevenson from California was in level 6, the most advanced level, and she said, "The Cwrs is a wonderful opportunity to learn Welsh in person. It has connected me with other Welsh learners and with Welsh instructors, many who have become good friends. I learn more every year. I truly love the in-class language instruction."

So I'm left thinking, "why on earth hadn't I been to Cwrs Cymraeg before?" Join us next year to have the best week ever!

See [SpeakWelsh.org](http://SpeakWelsh.org) for updates.



Level 3 students including Susan Davies Sit, second from left, and Jane Baker, far right. Photo by Cwrs Cymraeg.

# Patagonia

By Begw Arian, Friend of WSWNE

In early 19<sup>th</sup> century Wales, Welsh speakers, many of them non-conformist Christians, felt they were being persecuted because of their language and culture. An 1847 Parliamentary report on Welsh education made matters worse by making disparaging comments about the Welsh language. Pouring scorn on Welsh speakers, and advocating punishments like Welsh Not (a piece of wood given to children who spoke Welsh in school, often hung around their necks), it prompted waves of migration from Wales to America.

A non-conformist minister from Bala who had moved to Ohio, Michael D. Jones, knew how hard it was for the Welsh language to thrive in its motherland and recognized that the Welsh immigrants in America were quickly assimilating. The idea of creating a remote utopia away from the influence of the English language became his obsession.

Caernarfon born publisher/printer Lewis Jones felt the same way and in 1862 travelled to Patagonia's Chubut Valley, accompanied by Welsh Liberal politician Sir Love Parry-Jones. They were offered land by an Argentinian minister, despite the region already being occupied by the Tuhuelche and Mapuche indigenous tribes.

Later that year, a pamphlet selling Patagonia's virtues was written and distributed around Wales by Hugh Hughes; promises of a land much like Wales were somewhat overstated. Despite this, 153 people boarded the tea-clipper *Mimosa* and on 28 May 1865, and left from Liverpool to set up a new Welsh settlement. Eight weeks later the *Mimosa* arrived in what is now known as Puerto Madryn, Patagonia.

It was not the idyll they had been promised. It was midwinter, and the Chubut Valley, a barren and inhospitable windswept pampas, was dry after a prolonged drought. They built rudimentary earthen houses which were promptly swept away in a flash flood which also destroyed their early crops of potatoes and maize. Fresh water and wood for building materials were difficult to find in the early years of the settlement. Still, many more settlers continued to arrive and spread out across the region. They eventually transformed the inhospitable scrub-filled semi-desert into one of the most fertile and productive areas in Argentina, and even expanded into the foothills of the Andes.

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*Children from nearby farms travelled to school on horseback. The schools operated solely through the medium of Welsh until they came under the control of the Argentine government, after which lessons were taught in Spanish.*

*Photo, circa 1909, © The National Library of Wales 2023.*

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This productive, fertile land attracted other nationalities to settle in Chubut, and the colony's Welsh identity began to erode. Although Welsh remained the language of the home and chapel, use of the Welsh language had begun to decrease and there was relatively little contact between Wales and the Chubut Valley for many years after the start of the first World War.

BBC World Service broadcast radio shows in Patagonian Welsh in 1945 and 1946. Later, many Welsh people visited the region to celebrate the colony's centenary in 1965. Since then, Welsh tourists have continued to make the trip to Patagonia.

In 2004, the Welsh speakers of Argentina asked the Welsh government to provide them with Welsh TV programs to encourage the survival and growth of Welsh in Patagonia. In 2015, the local government of Trelew announced free intensive Welsh language classes for the city's inhabitants under the name Cwrs Blasu (Savouring the Language). There is now a teacher and student exchange between Wales and Patagonia organised by the Wales-Argentina Association. The links between Wales and Patagonia continue to flourish.

# Wales & the Rugby World Cup

By Howard Davies, WSWNE Member

The 2023 Rugby World Cup begins on September 8<sup>th</sup> with France against New Zealand as the opening match, and ends on October 28<sup>th</sup>, the day of the final which will be played at the Stade de France near Paris.

The games in the Pool stages as well as the knock out rounds will be played in nine stadiums in nine cities: Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Nantes, Nice, Paris, Saint-Etienne and Toulouse. There are four Pools of five teams. Each team in each Pool will play the other four teams in the Pool once with the top two teams in each Pool advancing to the quarter final knockout stage.

This year's tournament seems a little more wide open than previous ones with no obvious favorite to win the Cup. The usual suspects, New Zealand, South Africa (who won the last World Cup in 2019), Australia, and France will be strong contenders but there will be a surprise or two for sure as the teams are more evenly matched than in previous tournaments.



As for Wales, they are in Pool C with Australia, Fiji, Georgia, and Portugal. Wales's first game will be on Sunday September 10<sup>th</sup> against Fiji, then against Portugal on Saturday September 16<sup>th</sup>, against Australia on Sunday September 24<sup>th</sup>, and finally against Georgia on Saturday October 7<sup>th</sup>. If Wales ends being in one of the two top spots in the Pool, they will advance to the quarter final games that begin on October 14<sup>th</sup>.

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What are Wales's chances? Well they are going through a bit of a transformation with some of the old guard, including the icon and irreplaceable former Captain Alun Wyn Jones, Ken Owens, Justin Tipuric, and Rhys Webb all retiring from International Rugby. This means opportunities for newer and younger players but it's hard to replace all the experience that will be lost with the retired players.



One thing for sure is that Wales will be one of the fittest teams in the tournament. Head Coach Warren Gatland arranged for the initial squad of 48 players to travel, prepare, and have specialist grueling training camps in the Swiss Alps as well as in Turkey for the month of July. Some of the players have stated that they have never been fitter; hopefully that will benefit them during the intense games ahead.

The initial 48 players will play in three warm-up matches before Coach Gatland and his coaching staff will have to choose a new captain as well as cut the squad down to the final 33 players who will represent Wales at the Tournament.

Wales will be an underdog—but Wales seems to thrive under the low expectations from others. And as we know, we might be a small nation but once that passion, courage, and heart takes over, and the Red Dragon starts burning in your chest during the Anthem, Wales is capable of anything.

Good Luck to the Boys and Cymru am Byth.



# Getting Started in Genealogy

By Diane Dunham Jeffer, WSWNE Newsletter Editor

You only need time to start climbing your family tree. Most of us know the names and basic information for at least three or four generations of our family so start with what you already know. Use pedigree charts and family group sheets to keep track of details; these forms can be downloaded for free from sites such as the [National Archives](#), [Family History Products](#), or [Ancestry](#).

Once you've exhausted your own knowledge, talk to family members, beginning with the oldest. You may be surprised to find that someone has already been researching your family's history or that your grandmother has a stash of documents in a dresser drawer.

If you want to go further, online membership sites such as [Ancestry](#), [FindMyPast](#), or [MyHeritage](#) can help you continue your journey from home. These sites provide access to documentation such as vital (birth, marriage, death, burial), immigration, and census records to verify the details you've pieced together and provide clues to earlier generations.

For research in Wales, the [Association of Family History Societies of Wales](#) is a great resource and the [Family History Directory](#) provides links to many Welsh genealogy sites. The National Library of Wales has a [family history section](#) with links to many helpful resources.

Once you catch the genealogy bug, it's hard to stop; there are so many interesting details and stories to uncover! Online resources are great, but there are many repositories that can be visited in person, both in the US and in Wales. Family history libraries have staff who can help you use their resources.

Once you have uncovered details about your Welsh ancestors, you may be inspired to take a trip to Wales and discover even more. There are several companies that provide personalized family history tours or you can set off on your own and discover the places your ancestors lived. Be sure to include historic sites on your itinerary. Explore how your Welsh ancestors lived, worked, and played, and gain insight into the heritage and culture of Wales at [museums](#) such as [St. Fagan's National Museum of History](#) in Cardiff.

For more about tracing your Welsh roots, including genealogy travel in Wales, see [www.visitwales.com/info/history-heritage-and-traditions/family-ancestry-and-genealogy-tours-wales](http://www.visitwales.com/info/history-heritage-and-traditions/family-ancestry-and-genealogy-tours-wales). Also see page 5 of this newsletter for details about joining WSWNE's Genealogy-on-Zoom.

# WSWNE Membership Form

Membership year begins March 1st, one per family at same address.

Please make check payable to WSWNE and mail with this form to:  
Annie Rodgers, WSWNE Treasurer, P.O. Box 463, Chicopee, MA 01021.

Your cancelled check will serve as your receipt.

\$100 (Red Dragon)  \$50 (Daffodil)  \$25 (Miner's Lantern)  \$10 (Student)

Today's date: \_\_\_\_\_  New Member  Renewal

Names (list household members): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email address (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Your Welsh Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## 2023-2024 Board of Directors

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Conwy Town Walls, photo by Diane Jeffer, 2019