

The Welsh Society of Western New England

**Cymdeithas Cymreig Lloegr Newydd
Gorllewino**

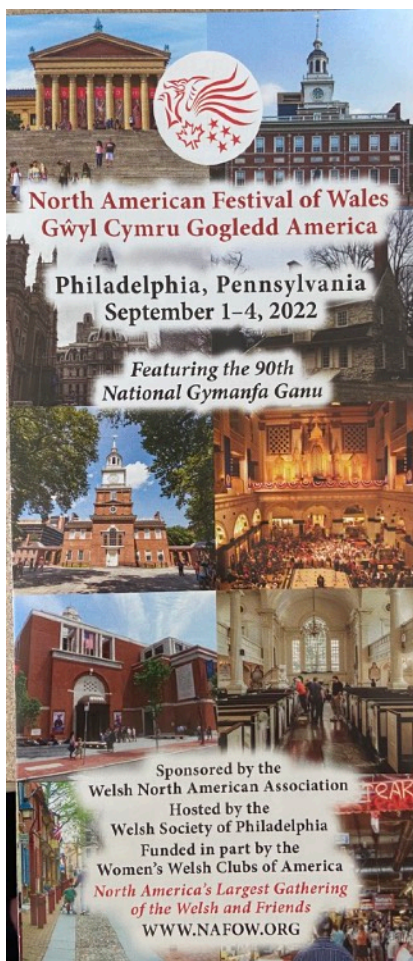
Website: WelshWNE.org Email: WelshWNE@gmail.com FaceBook: WSWNE

Twitter: [@WelshWestNewEng](https://twitter.com/WelshWestNewEng)

NEWS FROM OUR WELSH AMERICAN WORLD

North American Festival of Wales 2021 - Philadelphia, PA

September 1 - 4, 2022



Join us at NAFOW this year to experience hiraeth and enjoyment:

Music and singing;

Attend a seminar about Wales' history, language, coal industry, Heddwch Nain Mamgu, geography, politics, poetry, opera and literature ;

Enjoy banquets and presentations; sing with us at the bar on Saturday night; listen to a Welsh choir pull at your heart-strings.

We are car-pooling, so be in touch soon:

InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com

WEBSITE FOR HOTEL BOOKINGS AND MORE: <http://festivalofwales.org>

Future NAFOW locations;

NAFOW 2023 in Lincoln, Nebraska

NAFOW 2024 in Pittsburg, PA

NAFOW 2025 in Ottawa, Canada

UPCOMING EVENTS

Every Tues. in May, June, July & August - Welsh Conversation-on-Zoom

Mon. May 9 - Welsh Genealogy-on-Zoom

Wed., May 11 & 25 - Beginners Welsh Conversation

Wed June 8 & 22 - Beginners Welsh Conversation

Mon. June 13 - Welsh Genealogy-on-Zoom

July and August - No Beginners' Welsh conversation AND no Genealogy

Sept. 17 - **SAVE THE DATE** - possible Wine & Welsh Cheese tasting - Owain Glyndwr Day.

October 20, 2022 - **SAVE THE DATE** - Thursday, October 20 in Hartford, CT, an evening folk concert by CALAN, their only New England venue.

December 10, 2022 - **SAVE THE DATE** - Christmas Luncheon in West Springfield, MA

WELSH CONVERSATION -ON-ZOOM

Intermediate Welsh: If you are a Welsh learner or speaker looking for an opportunity to chat in Welsh in a casual, friendly setting, this is the place!. **NOTE: this is not a class.** We use imaginative weekly topics/questions which enable us to learn new vocabulary.

Where: On-line every Tuesday at 5:30PM

Beginner Welsh: every other Wednesday at 5:30pm for 60 minutes. **NOTE: This is not a class,** though there will be a little homework.

How: To be added to either of the above ZOOM Welsh Conversation groups, please email us at InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com.

Be sure to specify which session you would like to join.

GENEALOGY-ON-ZOOM

When: Twice a month: Mondays at 11:00AM - None in July and August

How: To be added to our ZOOM Welsh Genealogy group: email InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com

PLUS: **Coming this Fall:** We are excited to see you in person (**fully vaccinated persons only please**) where we learn how to research Welsh roots. Meets 11:00am - 5:00pm. Come for the whole day or part thereof. For info and to RSVP, email InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com. **We will also be on Zoom that day from 11am -1pm, drop in to "visit" and participate!**

OUR ST. DAVID'S DAY EVENT

It is a fair guess that most of the members arriving for the 2022 St. David's Day Luncheon, at the Nutmeg, East Windsor, CT might have entered the dining room wondering what to expect after the cancellation of those two on-line meetings forced upon us by the Pandemic. Meetings on Zoom had been a substitute, and had helped us through, but we had come now to anticipating how splendid it would be for us to come together again in flesh and greet each other once again.



A peep into the dining area revealed a roomful of masked mankind. No, it was not a masked ball. It was just a forward-cast shadow from the Pandemic, a relic of its restrictions. It is another fair guess that there were smiles behind those masks. The eyes said so. It was such a pleasure to meet new members, and a fond reminder it was for us to acknowledge those missing faces of members newly passed away, memories to be cherished.



Members and friends enjoy the luncheon, including Beth & Ed Brown in National Dress

There was the good Ed Brown, and there was his good wife, Beth Roberts Brown in their Welsh costumes moving amongst us, bringing with them color and authenticity, and a linkage between past and present. There was the good Don Sit, tinkering mysteriously with the audio-visual bits and pieces. Indeed, as we looked around the room, we could see the hard preparatory work that had been done – the flags, the daffodils, and the display of Welsh items.

And it came to pass that we took our place at table, each table decorated beautifully with daffodils, supplied by board member Ms. Evan Williams. Susan Davies Sit, our intrepid president, took the podium and outlined the agenda, first

telling us of all the greetings our Society had received from Welsh Societies around the world.

Then we watched on a big screen, a St. David's Day greeting from the First Minister for Wales, Mark Drakeford, to exiled Welsh people everywhere. Feeling hiraeth, we raised our glasses to toast our own native land, "Iechyd da," we said (good health) and I silently added "BENDITH DUW at ein gwlad annwyl, Cymru.". (God's blessing on our beloved country, Wales).

Enter Annie Rodgers, board member, to lead the invocation. There are 1440 minutes in each day, be it known. Annie made five of these more valuable by offering a prayer before the meal, one that reminded us, in timely fashion that the earth is not flat and that there is a vertical dimension. Da iawn, Annie. Somewhere out in eternity, St. Illtyd leaned over to St. David and murmured, "Well done, Dewi"

President Sue promised a brief Annual meeting, and truly kept it brief. She noted that Susan Jenkins Meers had stepped down from the Vice President position, but thankfully will remain on the board. Her service has been invaluable. Current board members were re-elected by acclamation and the meeting was adjourned.



After lunch we were introduced to "Wild Notes", a group of three accomplished musicians, playing on harp, flute and accordion. They came with a repertoire of Welsh airs. It was a superb performance of melody, march and dance music. Thank you "Wild Notes."

Some lucky person won the bottle of Penderyn whiskey, not me. It should have been me. After all, I have memories from youth of walks with school friends from my home town Aberdare, in the Cynon Valley, to Penderyn in the foothills of the Brecon Beacons, a village about six miles away and, downhill, six miles back. Others won Welsh cakes and gift certificate from the Copper Kettle Bakery, via its owner/WSWNE member, Helen Coates, and further gift certificates from the U.K. Gourmet in Bethel, CT.

Was it all well done? Yes, it was. Will we be back next year? I will.

By Shirley Gilmartin, Member

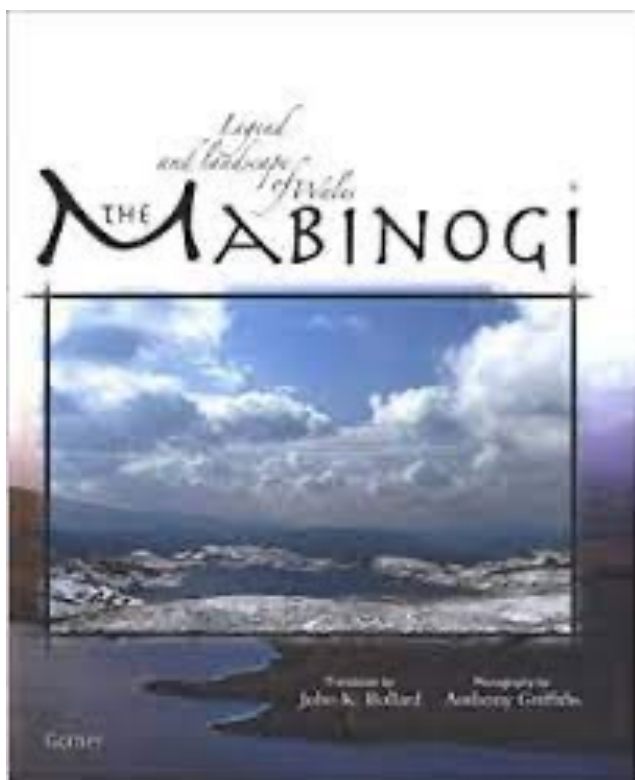
RECORDING OF OUR ST. DAVID'S DAY EVENT

Were you unable to attend our Mar. 5 St. David's Day Luncheon because it was not a ZOOM event?

Were you there, but would like to see and hear some of it again and perhaps share it with people you know.

In either case, just visit the home page of the [WSWNE website](http://WSWNE.org) (WelshWNE.org) where you will find a link to the video on our Past Events Page.

MABINOGI WEBINAR - A HUGE SUCCESS



“Why do we tell stories?” John K. Bollard asks us at the beginning of a four-week seminar on the Mabinogi. He suggests the best function is to teach something to an audience. As part of the audience during his presentations I was fascinated by the interpretation of the Four Branches. I have owned John’s beautiful book of translations with the landscape portraiture of Anthony Griffiths of Wales since 2007. I also

own “The Companion Tales”. They have been coffee table books for me to enjoy for many years, so it was with great interest that I registered for this Zoom course. I wanted to reach deeply into these ancient tales, to have help in fleshing out the ancient themes written in and around the

eleventh century. And of course, to hear spoken the language of Welsh names: Pwll, Manawydan and Bendigeidfan.

By the time these tales were being told the Romans had come and gone having built many fortifications, and the Normans had invaded Britain but there were still kings and princedoms in Wales. They traveled from court to court beyond their Cantrefs and often feuded with each other for land. The stories become lessons to live by; ways of welcoming the stranger, prudence in taking counsel, choosing wisely and unfortunately using women as pawns to control people and property. Magical things happen to heroes that often connect one part of the story with another and although these aren't religious tales, I believe there was a tension between the religion of Celtic Christianity that existed along with the religion brought to Britain by the Roman church. It seems violence was still an accepted form of resolution along with cunning and guile spanning generations of family relationships. In each branch we find a hero and watch as he encounters danger, shame and betrayal and oft times reacts with friendship, trust and fidelity.

Each week poet, Margaret Lloyd interspersed John's retelling of the branches with her charming verse which contained sensitive portraits of the feminine characters who appear in each branch: Rhiannon, Goewin and Branwen We heard about arranged marriages, betrayal and punishment, rape and abuse, pregnancy and kidnapping, grief and being far from home.

If the intended audience was the court of Welsh princes, I imagine it was a long and noisy performance and perhaps a warning to those who were thinking to go above their station. I was aware of the strong sense of time and place that these tales has left me with, a great appreciation of the material gleaned from John and Margaret on these marvelous journeys to far off places. Continued.....

P.S. I would like to recommend a book called, HILD written by Nicola Griffin. It has many of the elements used in the stories told in the Mabinogi. It is set during Seventh- Century Britain and traces the early life of Hilda of Whitby in fictional form, although it becomes evident reading the novel that much research has been done on the languages used at the time.

By Veronica Chapman, Member

NINNAU To keep up with news, both 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 at: NINNAU.com.**

CROESO / WELCOME to our new members!

- **Tegwyn Lantz** - from Ohio, his interests are
- **Lloyd Edwards** - born in Wales, now from Rhode Island has joined our Welsh Conversation group
- **Carolyn Davies English** - from PA, is interested in just about anything Welsh, she participates with her daughter Barbara in our genealogy sessions.
- **Mari Novotny Jones** - from Massachusetts, is interested in researching her Welsh grandparents and also understanding Welsh history, literature, and culture.
- **Ann Haslam** - from New Hampshire, is interested in hearing spoken Welsh and reading Welsh literature

MEET OUR MEMBERS

In this newsletter we are happy to introduce member Betty (Evans) Jones to our readers. Susan Davies Sit and I (Evan Williams) spoke with Betty on Zoom in January and we had a lovely chat. She has a charming self effacing humor and admitted to being a bit nervous about speaking of herself. Her history with Welsh Societies in our region goes back to

the 1990's. That involvement fell away but this past year Susan Sit contacted her through her daughter to see if our Welsh Conversation Group on Zoom would suit her. She has been attending and improving and is thrilled to hear and speak the language once again.

During Betty's very happy childhood in Wales she had the special gift of being bilingual. This was uncommon in Treorchy, South Wales, in the 1930's. At home, her parents spoke Welsh to each other and her sister spoke English. She is very happy and proud to be Welsh. When she had an opportunity to change her name on her citizenship papers for America she thought of her father's pet name for her; Betwys, as in the village of Betwys y Coed. Instead, she honored the name that had been chosen for her.

Betty now lives in Wilton, Connecticut, in the house she and her husband Thomas, now deceased, had settled into after emigration. It is in a very wooded area which makes her happy as it reminds her of Wales. When they first married, Thomas's engineering work had taken them to Chelmsford, England where their two children were born. In 1967 offers of work in the US brought them here. This was during the Korean War when our engineers were recruited to serve and companies looked to Great Britain to replace that talent. She admits that she didn't think they would be here very long. In addition to raising their family, she taught school at the elementary level for 12 years. She was very active in playing and teaching tennis and ran a Judo club with Thomas.

Adjusting to life in the US was difficult. She was missing Wales terribly, not meeting Welsh people and returning to Wales infrequently because it made her so sad to leave again. To keep some connection to the language and culture of Wales she sang Welsh songs to the children and enjoyed the poetry of Dylan Thomas. She became involved in the regional Welsh Society which at the time was based in New Haven, CT. She and Thomas attended several of the Gymanfa Ganu (this was the



precursor to the National Festival of Wales.) Her “very Welsh” husband loved the Baptist hymns which she sings to this day. She had an early start with choir singing as a child. Her choir did well and won recognition at the Urdd (Youth) National Eisteddfod.

Betty speaks of gratitude for Susan’s introduction to the Welsh language group and those involved. Meeting on Zoom weekly is a highlight for her. She expects to continue on with the challenge of regaining her Welsh fluency. Writing stories and reading Welsh poetry “may be possible” she says with humility. However far it goes, speaking and hearing the language gives her great joy.

Llongyfarchiadau (Congratulations) on your accomplishments Betty!

By Evan Williams, Board member

The Urdd National Eisteddfod (Welsh: Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Urdd Gobaith Cymru or Eisteddfod *Genedlaethol yr Urdd ...*)

is an annual Welsh-language youth festival of literature, music and performing arts. Arguably, it is [Europe's](#) largest youth festival, and it is usually held during the last week of May, coinciding with Wales’ schools’ half term holiday. (Wikipedia)

The Beginning (Urdu.cymru)

Urdd Gobaith Cymru was established by Sir Ifan ab Owen Edwards in 1922. His aim was to protect the Welsh language in a world where the English language dominated every aspect of life outside the home. In an issue of the magazine ‘Cymru’r Plant’ in 1922 Syr Ifan said, ‘These days, in many villages, and in most towns in Wales, children play and read in English. They forget that they are Welsh.’

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the future looked bleak for the Welsh language, even though there were over a million Welsh speakers in Wales. Two of the most prominent figures to challenge the crisis at this time were O.M. Edwards and his son, Sir Ifan ab Owen Edwards. O.M. Edwards, Wales’ first Chief Inspector for Education, contributed on a

regular basis to the monthly magazine "Cymru'r Plant", established by him in 1892. He tried twice to establish a youth movement for the young people and children of Wales. "Urdd y Delyn" was established in 1896, and 'Byddin Cymru' in 1911, but both attempts failed. O. M. Edwards died in 1920, but his life and ideas were an inspiration to his son to develop a new successful movement.



After the death of O.M.Edwards, his son Sir Ifan ab Owen Edwards became the editor for the magazine 'Cymru'r Plant' and in 1922, in that magazine, he appealed to the children of Wales to join a new movement which was called "Urdd Gobaith Cymru Fach". This was a new beginning in the

history of the Welsh language and culture. By the end of the year, names of 720 new members had appeared in the magazine and hundreds more were eagerly awaiting their turn. The first local Urdd branch was established in Treuddyn, Flintshire in 1922.

In the early days Sir Ifan and his wife took responsibility for all aspects of the organising and administration. All Urdd work took place at their home in Llanuwchllyn, near Bala. By the end of 1923, as a result of their enthusiasm, the number of members rose to 3,000, and by 1927 5,000 young people had become members of the Urdd. The number of Urdd branches also rose to 80 by 1927. In 1924 the first Urdd branch was established in Abercynon in South Wales. This proved how effective the Urdd was in non-Welsh speaking areas, as well as in areas where most Welsh speakers lived.

By the end of the 1920s therefore, the Urdd had grown to be an active, dynamic movement. It grew to be popular and confident, and the word "small" (bach) was deleted from its name. It was now called 'Urdd Gobaith Cymru'. By 1930, twenty "cylchoedd" (areas) had been created and a dozen more were in progress. These "cylchoedd" had their own unique flags and effective organisation.

10 Welsh Women Who Changed The World

by [Historyan.co.uk](https://historyan.co.uk)

There is currently **no outdoor statue of a woman in the capital city of Cardiff**. But all that is going to change. A shortlist of five inspirational Welsh women from history was drawn up from an initial long list. Here is # 7 in the series of the initial ten:

#7. Megan Lloyd-George – Welsh Politician

Megan Lloyd George (1902-1966) was more than just the daughter of one of Britain's great Prime Ministers. She was a political hero in her own right.

Photo: <https://historyan.co.uk/welsh-women-from-history>"



Megan may have grown up in Downing Street but her mother gave birth to all her children in Wales to make sure that they were Welsh-born, and Welsh was always the language of the home. In 1929, Megan Lloyd George campaigned successfully (in Welsh, as she always did) constituency of Anglesey and joined her father and brother in the House of Commons, becoming Wales' first ever female MP. She also went on to become Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. In 2016 she was named one of the 50 greatest Welsh men and women of all time.

LLANDUDNO GOATSby Begw Arian

During the 2020 Covid 19 pandemic and resulting lock downs the goats of Llandudno have been providing worldwide entertainment, sparking off many newspaper articles and stories! They wandered down from their usual grazing spots on the headland of the Great Orme to explore the deserted streets of the normally bustling seaside town of Llandudno. The town became a playground for the goats, wandering further into town than ever before, climbing walls and roofs, eating in people's gardens. The goat population also grew rapidly because park wardens couldn't administer sterilisation injections due to pandemic restrictions.



(Photo: Peter Byrne)

Since the late 19th century a herd of Kashmiri goats have roamed the Great Orme headland that stands above the North Wales seaside town of Llandudno. The origins of the Kashmiri goat can be found in the mountains of India. The goats were imported into Europe for their cashmere during the 1800's. Arriving in Britain during the reign of George IV we see the beginnings of the Royal Windsor Herd. It was during the Victorian age when cashmere became rather fashionable. Queen Victoria was also gifted a pair of Kashmiri goats by the Shah of Persia in 1837 and the herd thrived.

The goats found themselves in Llandudno when the then Lord Mostyn acquired a pair from the Royal Herd and brought them to his Gloddaeth Estate on the outskirts of Llandudno, they were then released onto the Great Orme. They have thrived here of over 100 years. The goats are usually found grazing the headland around the Orme and normally only venture from the headland in bad weather.

Notes: Since 1884 the Kashmiri goats have been the mascot for the Royal Welch Fusiliers regiment. The goat is then given the honorary rank of Lance Corporal. You will find a statue of Shenkin IV, the present mascot of the Royal Welch Fusiliers outside Venue Cymru. There is also a bronze sculpture of a Kashmiri Goat at the summit the Great Orme and there are around 130 goats on the Great Orme

FUTURE EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT:

We are pleased to announce that the Welsh Folk Band **CALAN** is coming to the Unitarian Meeting House's Meeting House Presents, at 50 Bloomfield Ave., Hartford, CT on Thursday, October 20, 2022 for an evening concert. Welsh cakes will be served at intermission.

CALAN are a multi award-winning Welsh folk band comprising of five virtuoso musicians. They won international acclaim at the world-renowned Inter-Celtic Festival in Lorient, France, where they would eventually become the first Welsh ensemble to win the coveted International Band Trophy. In April 2019, they were voted Best Band at the inaugural Wales Folk Awards.

Calan are:

Bethan Rhiannon (accordion, vocals, clog dancing);

Patrick Rimes (fiddle, Welsh bagpipes);

Sam Humphreys (guitar);

and Shelley Musker-Turner (harp).

So let's get this in our calendars now! More details this summer in your newsletter, on WelshWNE.org/events and our FaceBook page (WSWNE). \$20 tickets available soon.



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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (2022-2023):

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Beth Roberts Brown (MA)

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Glyn Dowden (MA)

Evan Williams (CT)

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Honorary Member: Trey McCain (Wales)

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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.

___\$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: _____

N'letter Early Summer, 2022: For Treasurer's use only: Date received: _____



WSWNE member Matthew, aged 12, recently visited Wales for the first time with his family. Staying in Bethesda, North Wales, they loved the landscape, had beautiful blue sky weather, and met his Welsh family's sheep, sheepdog and new lambs. They visited Anglesey, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Caernarfon Castle, as well as going zip-lining!

