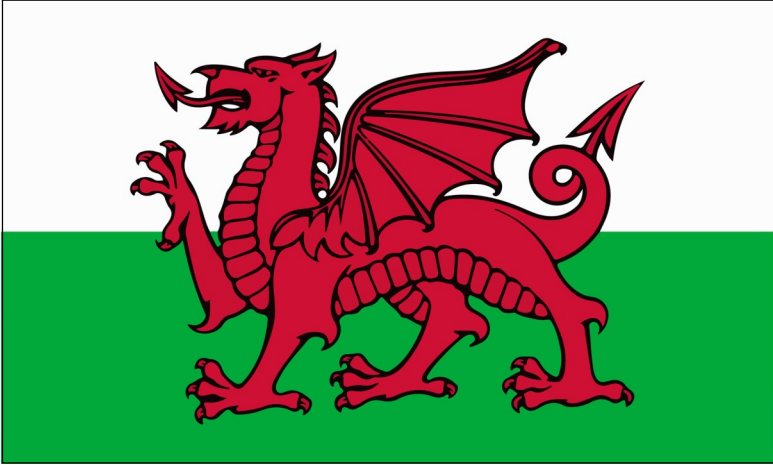


# Croeso! — Welcome!



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

February 2024 WelshWNE.org WelshWNE@gmail.com FaceBook: WSWNE

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

Welcome to our first printed newsletter of 2024!

We're looking forward to our annual St. David's Day celebration on March 2, a wonderful opportunity to gather with old and new friends in the spirit of hiraeth as we celebrate our patron saint and all things Welsh. The following day we will hold our annual St. David's Day Walk in Elizabeth Park in West Hartford. See page 3 of this newsletter for more details about these events.

Many of us gathered on Zoom in January to listen to Sarah Woodbury, author of more than 50 historical novels set in Wales. It was wonderful!

All of these programs are funded by your membership dollars (see page 15). Please go to [WelshWNE.org/membership](https://WelshWNE.org/membership) or use the insert in this newsletter to join or renew for the 2024 membership year which begins on March 1.

Is anyone traveling to Wales in 2024? I may be in the fall and, as usual, I am very excited about that prospect. "Going home" cures some of my hiraeth (a longing for a place usually never to be seen again, or even never having been there) which is always present in my life. Fortunately my family understands!

# Meet Our Member: Andy Crispell

1. Tell us about your present family and work life.

Shwmae. Andy Crispell dw'i.

Hello. My name is Andrew (Andy) Crispell.

I retired as a Special Education teacher several years ago after thirty-eight years and live in New York's Hudson Valley. This allows me to pursue my penchants for acting (at The CENTER in Rhinebeck) and choral singing (at Vassar College).



2. What are your origins in Wales?

My father's family emigrated from the Valleys, Merthyr Tydfil and Ponty-Prydd. His mother's family (Edwards and Phillips) moved to the Susquehanna Valley region of Pennsylvania in the 1880s, eventually settling in Plymouth, PA. My father used to tell us that his grandmother only spoke Welsh and looked like the quintessential witch, her nose and chin almost meeting. I've seen photos of her and see no resemblance to a witch. My mother's mother's last name was Thomas, so there is a Welsh connection on that side as well, although the Thomas family has been in America since at least the 1700s.

3. How have you nurtured your Welsh connections?

I have been trying to learn Welsh for years. My first attempt back in the 1970s was using cassette tapes that my father had purchased as he tried to learn Welsh as well. Nothing stuck. I'm now using Say Something in Welsh, and Duolingo, plus Siop Siarad opportunities through Cymdeithas Madog and WSWNE. I also purchased a harp several months ago after hearing Siwsann George singing Welsh folk songs and am learning to play, slowly, with hopes of one day (soon?) playing while singing. I still hope to visit Wales one day.

4. Please share how you are enjoying your involvement in the Welsh Society of Western New England.

Getting connected to WSWNE was serendipitous. I was doing background acting work for "The Gilded Age, Season 2" in Philadelphia when the Welsh North American Association was having their Festival in 2022. We were staying in the same hotel and I struck up a conversation with a host greeter. One thing led to another, I reached out to Susan Sit, and here we are. Through the Society I have been able to connect with Christine McSorley via Zoom for Welsh language practice, took part in a Zoom read of Dylan Thomas's Under Milk Wood, and took part in the wonderful Welsh language week at UVM in July through Cymdeithas Madog. Susan sends out the latest news via the *Croeso* newsletter with events, which are always welcomed. I feel very lucky to be part of this amazing group.

# St. David's Day Celebration

Join us on Saturday March 2 as we celebrate St. David's Day together at the Nutmeg Restaurant in South Windsor, Connecticut. A social hour with hors d'oeuvres will begin at 11 AM; lunch will be served at noon.

Pricing: Members \$39, Guests \$42, children's meal \$20

**Reservation deadline is Monday, February 26.**

*Please see the insert in this issue for menu and reservations.*

Following our meal, Michael Thurston will read and discuss the poetry of Gillian Clarke who was National Poet of Wales from 2008 to 2016. Michael is the Helen Means Professor of English Language & Literature at Smith College and author of several books and numerous essays about modern poetry and modernist writing. He currently serves as the provost and dean of faculty at Smith.

Next, Tempest Morgan will present *Here Be Dragons: An Exploration into Dinas Emrys*. Tempest is a historian who specializes in Medieval Britain. Dinas Emrys has been shrouded in myth and mystery for centuries. From dragons to King Arthur to buried treasure, there is a vast amount of ancient lore to explore and uncover. Hear the literary tales behind one of Wales' most important historical sites.

For complete details, visit [WelshWNE.org/events](http://WelshWNE.org/events).

## Annual St. David's Day Walk

Join us the following day for our third annual St. David's Day Walk. Meet at 1:30 PM on Sunday March 3 in the parking lot by the greenhouses at Elizabeth Park, West Hartford, Connecticut. After the walk, we'll share warm cider and visit the greenhouses which will be open for the annual daffodil and tulip show. Dress warmly and bring your Welsh flags. No need to RSVP, simply meet us there.



WSWNE Members at the 2023 St. David's Day Walk

# 2024 Guinness Six Nations Rugby Tournament

By Howard Davies, WSWNE Member

The Annual Six Nations Rugby Championship is here and this year's version will feature a lot of new faces. Some of the biggest names in Six Nations Rugby over the last decade will be missing for various reasons. France will be missing Antoine Dupont, their magical Scrum Half (#9) who has decided to play the 7-a-side version for his country at the Summer Olympics which will be held in France. Ireland will be without Johnny Sexton the Irish Fly Half (#10) who retired from International Rugby after the 2023 World Cup as did Wales's Fly Half Dan Biggar and Scotland's Full Back (#15) Stuart Hogg. England will also be missing their Captain and Fly Half Owen Farrell who made himself unavailable for the 2024 Six Nations to prioritize his mental wellbeing.

The Championship will kick off on Friday February 2<sup>nd</sup> with France v Ireland; both teams are favorites to win the Six Nations so the winner of this game could go on and potentially win the Championship. It's a shame that such an important game will be the first game played as this would have been a tremendous last weekend winner-take-all game.

Among the other teams, Wales, Scotland, England, and Italy, this will be the beginning of the next cycle of players looking ahead to the 2027 Rugby World Cup so there will be some of the old guard present but there will be quite a few younger and newer players looking to impress the various coaches and trying to start their international careers. The Welsh team picked will be very different and even younger than the one that recently played in the 2023 World Cup. Not only did Dan Biggar and Leigh Halfpenny retire, but Gareth Anscombe and Liam Williams have moved to play in Japan so they will not be available for selection. The team Captain, Jac Morgan, also will be missing as he was recently injured and had knee surgery. So expect a raft of new faces when Coach Warren Gatland names his squad in mid-January.

As for the Championship itself, I think that France will pip Ireland and win the Six Nations, but I don't believe they will win the Grand Slam (win all five games). I think that England will be third and that Wales and Scotland will battle for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> with Italy again eating with the proverbial wooden spoon. (The team that ends up last is given a wooden spoon.)

## 2024 Guinness Six Nations Schedule

This tournament of passionate sporting rivalries includes one of rugby's biggest competitions, England vs. Wales. Beginning in 1883 with England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales competing, this is the oldest international rugby tournament. Since 2000, the six nations of England, Scotland, France, Ireland, Italy, and Wales compete in this annual event. The 2024 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](https://www.peacocktv.com)). Watch parties will be announced on our website and via email.

The Welsh team will play on the following dates, EST:

- Saturday, February 3, 11:45 AM—Wales hosts Scotland
- Saturday, February 10, 11:45 AM—England hosts Wales
- Saturday, February 24, 9:15 AM—Ireland hosts Wales
- Sunday, March 10, 11:00 AM—Wales hosts France
- Saturday, March 16, 10:15 AM—Wales hosts Italy

Learn more about the tournament at [www.sixnationsrugby.com](https://www.sixnationsrugby.com) and check out the documentary *Six Nations: Full Contact* on Netflix.



Photo from [eticketing.co](https://www.eticketing.co)

# Welsh Cooking

## Leek Pie

Pastry for bottom crust  
2 $\frac{2}{3}$  cups cleaned chopped leeks  
8 oz. chopped bacon  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup half and half  
3 eggs  
Salt and pepper  
Pinch of nutmeg

Preheat oven to 350°.

Line pie dish with pastry. Mix and pour all the ingredients into the dish and bake for 40 minutes.

*From **A Little Welsh Cookbook** by E. Smith Twiddy*

## Hen Fisedi Sinsir Cymreig (Old Welsh Gingerbread)

12 oz. flour  
1 tsp cream of tartar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp baking soda  
4 oz. butter  
6 oz. demerara sugar  
2 oz. chopped candied peel  
6 fl. oz. black treacle  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  pint milk

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a 7x11 baking dish and line the bottom with parchment.

Combine flour, cream of tartar, and baking soda in bowl. Rub in butter until mixture resembles breadcrumbs, then stir in sugar and peel. Warm treacle in saucepan. Add milk to treacle and combine well, then stir in dry ingredients. Beat together well and turn into baking dish.

Bake for 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  hours, covering the top with foil if it is browning too quickly. Cool in the pan for ten minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack. Cut into squares to serve.

*From **Favorite Welsh Teatime Recipes** published by J. Salmon Ltd.*



## Welsh Castles

A few facts about some castles in Wales, adapted from *The History of Wales* on Facebook. [www.facebook.com/TheHistoryOfWales](http://www.facebook.com/TheHistoryOfWales).

- Wales has more castles per square mile than any other country.
- Caerphilly Castle is the largest castle in Wales and the second largest in Europe.
- Chepstow Castle is Britain's oldest surviving castle made of stone. Its construction began in 1067.
- Beaumaris Castle on Anglesey is considered the finest example of a concentric castle in Europe. It was named a World Heritage Site in 1986.
- The ruined Flint Castle is the only British castle with two fortified inner towers. It is famous for having the thickest walls (23 feet) of any castle.
- Powis Castle possesses Britain's oldest true formal baroque garden and is the most visited National Trust property in Wales.
- The castles and town walls of Caernarfon and Conwy, and the castles of Harlech and Beaumaris were granted World Heritage Status in 1986. They were chosen because they are considered to be among the “finest examples of late 13th-century and early 14th-century military architecture in Europe.”
- Ruthin Castle was the first castle attacked by Owain Glyndwr during his uprising against the rule of Henry IV of England in 1400.



Caerphilly Castle, photo by Diane Jeffer, 2019

# Celebrating the Season

By Margaret Korhonen, WSWNE Board Member

Members and friends of the Welsh Society of Western New England celebrated the start of the Christmas season with a luncheon at the Storowton Tavern in West Springfield, Massachusetts on the first Saturday in December. With the restaurant cozily decorated for the holidays and Welsh trimmings added around the room, guests enjoyed drinks and appetizers while chatting with old and new friends before the meal. Always a good way to reignite friendships and catch up on the happenings in people's lives, everyone enjoyed the social hour and relaxing into the holiday spirit.

Before our meal, we all raised a toast of Penderyn Whisky (donated by the family of Bronwyn Wrinn) to deceased WSWNE members Mary Ewart and Jason Ellsworth. While savoring the main meal, guests stood and read limericks with Welsh themes. These included three winning limericks from this year's Eisteddfod competition at the North American Festival of Wales in Lincoln, Nebraska. Other limericks were written by members of our society. Clever these people were, with many a laugh or smile given to the poets themselves.

Afterwards, we popped Christmas crackers and were delighted with the surprises inside: crowns to wear, trinkets to enjoy, and jokes to share with those around the table.



The festivities were enjoyed by guests of all ages.



Evan Williams in her festive hat from Wales.

One happy guest went home with a gift basket of treats including a Christmas pudding, British jam and relish, and a bracelet made by member Susan Meers to honor her son Jason. Two other guests received gift certificates to the UK Gourmet in Bethel, Connecticut.

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During the social hour and again after lunch, we were entertained by *Stringwynde*, featuring flutist Melanie Chirignan and harpist Darhon Rees-Rohrbacher who is of Welsh heritage and a member of WSWNE. The duo played a selection of Welsh music to the enjoyment of all, featuring pieces from collections of Welsh tunes gathered by Edward Jones (1752-1824) and Nicholas Bennett (1823–1899). With pieces ranging from smooth melodies to lively tunes, everyone felt the essence of Wales. The final piece *Stringwynde* played was the Welsh National Anthem with all there joining in to sing along.



*Stringwynde*

All in all, our annual Christmas Luncheon at the Storrowton Tavern was a wonderful way to welcome the Christmas season.

Please visit our website to view a video of this event:

[www.welshwne.org/news-past-events/2023-christmas-event](http://www.welshwne.org/news-past-events/2023-christmas-event)

*All photos by Wayne Korhonen.*



A group of friends enjoying their time together at the luncheon.

# Charles Darwin in Wales

By Begw Arian, Friend of WSWNE



In 1831, Charles Darwin had just graduated from Cambridge when he was invited to accompany Professor Adam Sedgewick on a geological tour of North Wales. This provided an opportunity for Darwin to learn the basic skills of geological field research, including identifying rocks and measuring stratigraphic layers.

As part of their tour, they spent a week in Cwm Idwal, a glacial valley, now part of Snowdonia National Park, where Darwin noticed that the scattered rocks and boulders held tiny fossils of oceanic plant life and sea creatures. He also studied volcanic rocks found between Capel Curig and Barmouth.

After this field trip, Darwin received an offer from Captain Fitzroy of the HMS Beagle to serve as naturalist on board the ship. The lesser known field trip to North Wales influenced his geological observations on this five-year expedition, enabling him to comprehend two fundamental principles needed for his theory of evolution: the age of the Earth itself and the slow but perpetual geologic changes over time.

When Darwin returned to Snowdonia ten years later, he realized that the landscape had been carved by gigantic glaciers. These rivers of ice had left behind a valley where evidence is carved into every rock.

Cwm Idwal is the epitome of a glaciated valley and draws thousands every year to study its fascinating geology. In 1954, Cwm Idwal was designated as a National Nature Reserve, the first in Wales.

Adapted from an article at Forbes.com.

Photo from *Daily Post*, a local paper in Wales.



# Zoom Activities with WSWNE

## Welsh Conversation-on-Zoom

*There is space in all three levels; if you would like to participate, please go to [WelshWNE.org/events](http://WelshWNE.org/events) to sign up.*

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

Twice monthly on Wednesdays from 5 to 5:30 PM

February 7 & 21, March 13 & 27

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

Twice monthly on Mondays from 5 to 5:45 PM

February 5 & 26, March 4 & 18

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

Tuesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 PM.



## Genealogy-on-Zoom

Mondays 11 AM to 12:30 PM; February 12 & 26, March 11 & 25

This group shares research tips and suggestions and success stories. Visit [WelshWNE.org/events](http://WelshWNE.org/events) to request the Zoom link if you have not participated before.

Concurrent in-person meetings in Glastonbury, CT from 11 AM to 4:30 PM on February 12 and March 11. You must RSVP for in-person events at [WelshWNE.org/events](http://WelshWNE.org/events). Photo by Susan Davies Sit.

## **Wandering Our Website**

**This issue's highlight: The WSWNE Newsletters Page**

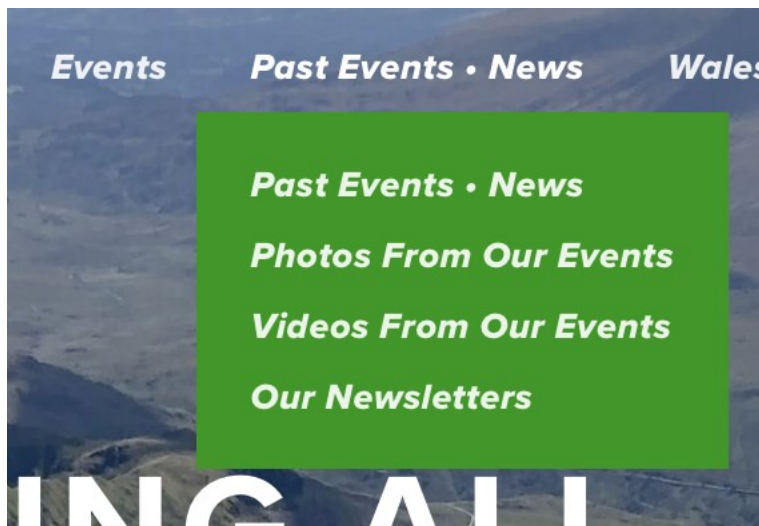
By Ed Brown, WSWNE Webmaster

As a WSWNE member, you receive periodic mailings of our newsletter, *Croeso*. Some editions arrive only as email attachments in your inbox, while others are real, honest to goodness printed-on-paper copies that the US Postal Service delivers to your home (followed by an email with a PDF version for your added convenience).

And of course you keep them all, electronic and paper, well organized by date in case you want to read again that article about where you vacationed in Wales, or that recipe for bara brith, or perhaps the story behind the Mari Lwyd, or find that photo of you watching a Wales rugby match with other members in a pub.

No? You do not keep all those newsletters in a well-organized library?

Well then, just go to our website ([www.WelshWNE.org](http://www.WelshWNE.org)) and pull down the "Past Events - News" menu at the top of any page and choose "Our Newsletters." This opens a page with links to past WSWNE newsletters,



all the way back to the 2015-Winter issue. Each link opens with a click to let you browse through a PDF copy to find what you want, or use your computer's find command to search for it within.

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## Past Events & News

PAST EVENTS - NEWS

PHOTOS FROM OUR EVENTS

VIDEOS FROM OUR EVENTS

OUR NEWSLETTERS

## OUR NEWSLETTERS

You can read (and download) a copy of our past newsletters below.

2023-November

2023-August

2023-Summer-email

2023-Spring-email

2023-February

2023-January-email

2022-November-Winter

2022-Late-Summer-Fall

2022-Summer-early-email

2022-Winter-Spring

2022-January-email

2021-Winter

Enjoy this always-available WSWNE newsletter library any time you need it, no upkeep required on your part.

And be sure to visit the Welsh Society of Western New England often at [www.WelshWNE.org](http://www.WelshWNE.org). In addition to the newsletter library, you'll find a full calendar of events, photos and videos from past events, profiles of members of our Board of Directors, and a resources page with links to all things Welsh.

We'll highlight another feature of our website in the next issue of *Croeso*.

# Croeso! — Welcome!



# North American Festival of Wales

By Susan Davies Sit, WSWNE President

Did you miss the exciting announcement? The North American Festival of Wales (NAFOW) will be held in our area in 2026! The festival is held in a different location each year over the Labor Day Weekend. In 2026, that location will be the Hilton Hotel in Springfield, Massachusetts and WSWNE will be the local hosts.

The local committee is already busy gathering information about local musicians and artists with Welsh roots and potential seminar presenters who might want to participate in the festival. We're also contacting local businesses with Welsh roots who may want to sponsor NAFOW and brainstorming potential field trips within an hour and a half of Springfield where festival participants can learn about Welsh influences on local history.



Photo by Jonathan  
Scott Hartley

Some interesting facts: Welsh born Miles Morgan, ancestor of WSWNE member Warren Morgan and hero of King Philip's War of 1675, is honored with a statue in Springfield's Court Square. Another WSWNE member, James Bodurtha, is descended from Reice Bodurtha. Born in 1621 in Wales, Reice was granted a house lot, wet meadow, and woodland by the Plantation of Agawam (Springfield Colony) in 1645. The house lot extended from "Ye streete fence to Ye great river." Sadly, Reice and one of his sons drowned in "Ye great river" – the Connecticut River – but other sons carried on the Bodurtha name.

If you have any great ideas for this planning stage, please email us at [WelshWNE@gmail.com](mailto:WelshWNE@gmail.com). Every suggestion is important and we welcome your input.

In the meantime, keep these future NAFOW venues in mind: 2024 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and 2025 Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Diolch yn fawr!



North American  
Festival  
of Wales

the Welsh North American Association



# 2023-2024 Board of Directors

## Executive Committee:

President: Susan Davies Sit (CT) [WelshWNE@gmail.com](mailto:WelshWNE@gmail.com)  
Vice President: Annie Rodgers (MA) [reikianne53@charter.net](mailto:reikianne53@charter.net)  
Treasurer: Annie Rodgers (MA) [reikianne53@charter.net](mailto:reikianne53@charter.net)  
Secretary: Mark Taylor (CT) [marktaylorfromwales@gmail.com](mailto:marktaylorfromwales@gmail.com)

## Members at Large:

Beth Roberts Brown (MA)      Ed Brown (MA), Webmaster  
Magdalen Dowden (MA), Newsletter Printing & Mailing  
Glyn Dowden (MA)      Diane Jeffer (NJ), Newsletter Editor  
Susan Jenkins Meers (CT)      Margaret Korhonen (CT)  
Evan Williams (CT)

Past President, Dr. Tom Bernard (MA)  
Founder, John Dixon (MA)  
Honorary Founding Member, Shirley Keifer (CT)  
Honorary Member, Trey McCain (Wales)



## WSWNE Membership

Do you take advantage of all the benefits of your membership in the Welsh Society of Western New England?

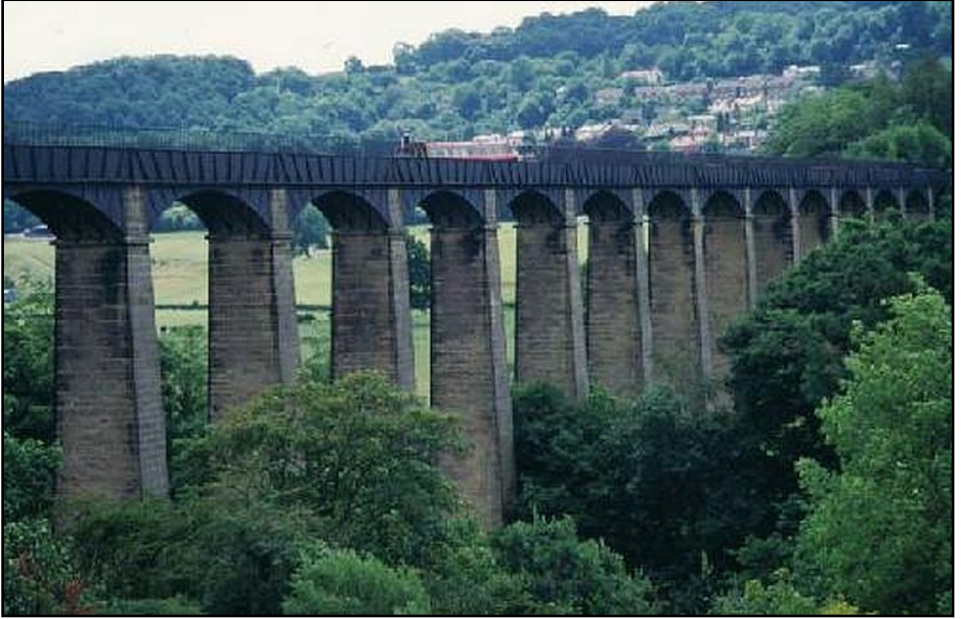
Have you attended any of our in-person events? Participated in a special Zoom presentation? Joined our Conversation- or Genealogy-on-Zoom programs (see page 11)? Read our newsletter or visited our website (see page 12)? Taken advantage of an outside event announced in one of our email updates?

If you said yes to any of these—or if you would like to in the future—please use the form on the insert in this issue of *Croeso* or go to [WelshWNE.org/membership](http://WelshWNE.org/membership) to become a member or renew your current membership in WSWNE.

As a member, you will not only receive invitations to our events, you will also receive a copy of *Croeso* via postal mail and discounted pricing for our annual events such as the St. David's Day celebration (see page 3).

We hope you'll join us!

## Pontycysllte Aqueduct on the Llangollen Canal.



Photos by Diane Jeffer

# St. David's Day Luncheon RSVP

## Saturday March 2, 2024 at 11 AM

Nutmeg Restaurant, East Windsor, CT; directions on reverse.

**RSVP by Monday, February 26, 2024**

### Our St. David's Day Menu

Hors D'oeuvres: Fresh Fruit, Veggies, Cheeses, Crackers, and Dips

Mushroom and Leek Puff Pastry

Fresh Baby Greens Salad    Bread and Rolls

Chocolate Mousse    Coffee or Tea

Choice of Entrée:

Grilled Salmon with Seasonal Vegetables and Potato

Chicken Française Seasonal Vegetables and Potato

Vegetarian Option: Eggplant Parmesan

Prime Rib with Seasonal Vegetables and Potato (\$6 extra)

Chicken Fingers and Fries (age 12 and under)

Please mail the form below with a check payable to WSWNE to:

Annie Rogers, WSWNE Treasurer, P.O. Box 463, Chicopee, MA 01021.

Must be received by Monday, February 26, 2024. Payments to WSWNE are not tax deductible; your cancelled check will serve as your receipt.

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Names of Attendees:

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Phone or email in case there are questions about your order:

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Grilled Salmon	# ___ Members @\$39	# ___ Guests@\$42
Chicken Française	# ___ Members @\$39	# ___ Guests@\$42
Eggplant Parmesan	# ___ Members @\$39	# ___ Guests@\$42
Prime Rib	# ___ Members @\$45	# ___ Guests@\$48
Chicken Fingers	# ___ Child (12 and under) @\$20	

Total amount due \$\_\_\_\_\_

All household members living at member address are considered members.  
Use membership form on reverse to join or renew and pay member price.



**297 South Main Street, East Windsor, Connecticut**

From Hartford, CT and points south:

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

From Springfield, MA and points north:

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

**WSWNE Membership**

Please mail the form below with a check payable to WSWNE to:  
Annie Rogers, WSWNE Treasurer, P.O. Box 463, Chicopee, MA 01021.  
Payments to WSWNE are not tax deductible; your cancelled check will  
serve as your receipt.

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**Membership Form**

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

If mailing payment, please make check payable to WSWNE and mail with this  
form to Annie Rodgers, WSWNE Treasurer, P.O. Box 463, Chicopee, MA 01021.

\_\_\_\_ \$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: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_