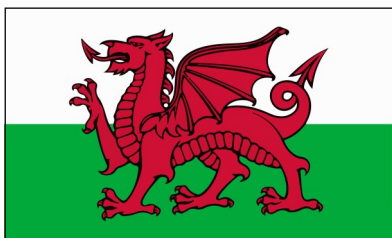


# Croeso! — Welcome!



**The Welsh Society of  
Western New England**

***Cymdeithas Cymreig  
Lloegr Newydd Gorllewino***

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

## **A Message From Our President**

**Susan Davies Sit**

*Rwy'n gobeithio bod pawb yn mwynhau eu haf, mae'n mynd heibio'n gyflym ac fel arfer yn orlawn o anturiaethau a gweithgareddau'r haf wrth i ni fwynhau'r tywydd cynhesach.*

I hope everyone is enjoying their summer; it goes by quickly and is usually jammed-packed with summer adventures and activities while we enjoy the warmer weather.

As usual, WSWNE is already planning activities for fall and winter. This will include a Zoom event to celebrate Owain Glyndwr Day on Sunday, September 15th at 1:30 PM—a sort of on-line pub event with lots of socializing time and maybe an in-person video from myself and Susan Meers as we say hello from Wales, where Owain Glyndwr fought to keep Wales for the Welsh, an on-going battle. But the main event is a presentation about Owain Glyndwr's uprising by a speaker, Gareth Jones, direct from Wales, via Zoom. It will be spectacular I'm sure. See page 3 for RSVP information.

December will feature our traditional very festive Christmas Holiday Luncheon, which just may be my favorite event of the year because of the lights, colors, decorations, crackers to pull, and festive friends. WSWNE hopes to see you there!

Hwyl!

Susan

## 2024 Heritage Medallion

The North America Wales Foundation is pleased to announce that the 2024 recipient of its Heritage Medallion is the Welsh Women's Peace Petition Partnership, which includes Heddwwch Nain/Mamgu US (Our Grandmother's Peace US). This is the Foundation's highest honor given to individuals or organizations distinguished by their contributions to North American Welsh life.

Heddwwch Nain/Mamgu began in Wales in 2018 in remembrance of the women of Wales who, after WWI, worked for peace and petitioned the United States to join the League of Nations. In 1924, a delegation of three Welsh women sailed to America with a Petition and an Appeal for peace bearing almost 400,000 signatures. The mission was publicized at a formal event at the Biltmore Hotel in New York City where they handed the Appeal and Petition to the women of America from the women of Wales. They also met President Calvin Coolidge who agreed to keep the Petition and Appeal at the Smithsonian Museum where it remained until being rediscovered in 2018.

With the help of the Partnership, the peace petition and its volumes of signatures were returned to Wales in 2023. The Partnership is now working to digitize the original petition, honor those who signed it, and encourage people today to continue to campaign for peace.

Mererid Hopwood chairs the Women's Peace Petition Partnership. WSWNE members Ann Griffith, Annie Rodgers, and Susan Davies Sit are members of Heddwwch Nain/Mamgu US.

Representatives of the Partnership from both sides of the Atlantic will be recognized at the North America Wales Heritage Award and Gala Banquet Friday, August 30, 2024, at the North American Festival of Wales in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The North American Wales Foundation is proud to honor those in 1923/1924 and 2023/2024 whose peace-building endeavors continue to strive for a world without war.

## Welsh History

There are over two hundred episodes of the Welsh History Podcast available for free at: <https://player.fm/series/2481095>.

## Owain Glyndwr Event

Our annual Owain Glyndwr Day Celebration will take place on Sunday, September 15, beginning at 1:30 PM. This year's event will be via Zoom at no cost to members and friends of WSWNE.



We'll start with some social time for introductions of new and old friends. Everyone is invited to have wine, cheese, and other tidbits at home while relaxing with us on Zoom. Susan Davies Sit and Susan Meers will join us from Wales and will begin our program with a few words about their travels.

At 2 PM, Gareth Jones of the Owain Glyndwr Society (Cymdeithas Owain Glyndŵr) will join us live from Wales. Gareth, who lives in Coety, South Wales, will speak on the topic "Owain Glyndwr and His Uprising." He is the Secretary of the Owain Glyndwr Society, and runs their Facebook page. Gareth will share photos, maps, etc. with his presentation and take questions afterwards.



Please go to [www.welshwne.org/events/owain-glyndwr-2024](http://www.welshwne.org/events/owain-glyndwr-2024) to register and receive the Zoom link for this free event.



Gareth Jones and the Owain Glyndwr statue in Corwen, Wales.

## Whisky From Wales

Adapted from an article in the New York Times, January 14, 2024

Few would claim that Wales is well known for whiskey—or whisky, as it is known in Wales and Scotland. Yet the country has played its part in distilling history. At Abergwyngregyn, in the shadow of the snow capped Eryri (Snowdonia) mountain range, Aber Falls single-malt whisky is produced in a distillery on the banks of the gushing river that flows from the waterfall to the Menai Strait. Made with exclusively Welsh grain and water from a picturesque nearby waterfall, the light, slightly fruity, single-malt whisky distilled by Aber Falls was the first in more than a century to be produced in North Wales.

When the distillery opened in 2017, its mission was to create “a Welsh brand, supporting Wales and collaborating with other Welsh businesses,” said Carole Jones, its general manager. But it still was not Welsh enough. Last year, Aber Falls whisky failed a test for certification as a protected Welsh product because the bottling was taking place not at the distillery, but 50 miles across the border, in England. The company had a choice: move the bottling back to Wales, or banish any mention of Welshness from the label — even the red dragon. That, said Ms. Jones, would have been a catastrophe for Aber Falls, so by September, bottling was back on Welsh soil, allowing the company to join a list with four other certified Welsh whisky makers.

Though for some, whisky is synonymous with Scotch, Wales enjoys an unusual place in liquor history because a Welshman, Evan Williams, is hailed as one of the first distillers of bourbon in the United States. Heaven Hill Brands, the producers of a bourbon named for him, says Mr. Williams was born in 1755, immigrated to North America in the late 1770s or early 1780s, and began distilling in 1783 in Louisville, Kentucky. He was probably raised in Dale, Pembrokeshire, where his family may have had a distillery.

The country he left behind never developed commercial production on the scale of Scotland or Ireland, mainly due to a temperance movement in Wales. It took a century, but the revival began in 2004, when Penderyn, the best-known modern day producer, was opened in South Wales. It expanded a decade later and has won critical acclaim.

According to Vic Cameron, a whisky lecturer at the University of the Highlands and Islands in Scotland, whisky can be produced wherever

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cereals grow. “If you ferment it and distill it, it’s whisky,” he said. “And the Welsh have everything that we have: They have decent water, they have malted barley, and they have yeast, so they can make good whisky.” Starting with a staff of only five, Aber Falls now employs 35 people, 29 of whom work at the distillery, with the remainder in Bangor, about 10 miles away, where bottling now takes place. Spirits were first produced here in 2018, but whisky must be matured in casks for at least three years, so it was not until 2021 that a single malt was released.

Last year, still adapting to its exit from the European Union, Britain introduced a system of “geographical indicators” intended to replace a pan-European system meant to protect products like Champagne and Cognac from imitations. Aber Falls supported the new rules requiring that Welsh water be used and that the whisky be distilled, matured, and bottled in Wales. But it fell foul of them when staff shortages made bottling in Bangor uneconomical and Aber Falls began turning to a site owned by its parent company in Chorley, England. With the coveted Welsh designation at stake, the company moved swiftly to resume bottling in Wales, aided by the closure of a local factory that freed up more workers.

Business is good, and last January, the company moved to 24-hour distilling. Around 6,000 bottles of whisky are produced each week in Bangor. Exports go to 40 countries, including China and Kazakhstan, with plans to add the United States next year.

For more information, see [www.aberfallsdistillery.com](http://www.aberfallsdistillery.com).



Photo Credit: Mary Turner for The New York Times

# Training Ships in the Menai Strait

Begw Arian, friend of WSWNE

**HMS Clio** was an industrial training ship which was moored in the Menai Strait at Bangor Pool, opposite the Garth Ferry. From 1877 to 1920 it was home to thousands of troublesome boys between the ages of 12 and 16. The Clio and other similar ships scattered around the coast of Britain, were a response to the scarcity of sailors for the navy, whilst offering guidance and education for homeless, destitute, and poor respectable boys who were considered to need firm control and discipline to save them from a life of crime.

The ship had room for about 260 boys, but by 1879 only 10 came from North West Wales and at least 70% came from Poor Law authorities in London, Liverpool, and Manchester. Many were forced against their will and none were allowed to leave the ship. On board, life was not pleasant, beatings and other severe punishments were handed out to those breaking the rules. Older boys would bully the younger boys. Some boys died young as a result of this bullying, illness, or on board accidents. But some boys did go on to have distinguished careers. Life on the HMS Clio was infamous at the time and left its legacy with locals. For years after the demise of the Clio, mothers would threaten to send their children to the ship to be punished.

Another training ship, the **HMS Conway** was used to ensure merchant navy officers were professionally trained. This ship had an excellent reputation and the training produced a special breed of men who had influence in all walks of life around the world. The ship was initially moored at Rock Ferry on the Mersey from 1859 but was relocated to the Menai Strait during WWII when the Liverpool docks were the target of air raids. Eventually moored near Plas Newydd.

In 1950 it was decided the ship needed a refit. As she was being moved to Birkenhead, she ran aground on flat rocks, caught fire, and burnt to water level. The ship's remains can be seen at very low tide. The school remained on shore until funding was withdrawn in 1974.



HMS Conway run aground

Find out more at [menaibridges.co.uk/history/local-area/hms-conwy/](http://menaibridges.co.uk/history/local-area/hms-conwy/)



# Welsh Cooking

## Cheesy Baked Leeks with Ham

3 leeks  
6 oz. sliced, cooked ham  
1 oz. butter  
1/4 cup flour  
2/3 cup dry white wine  
1 cup milk  
1 tbsp wholegrain mustard  
1 tsp chopped fresh thyme leaves, plus a little extra to serve  
3/4 cup grated cheddar  
4 oz. brie, sliced

Heat oven to 350°. Cut leeks into 3" lengths, then wrap each in a piece of ham, cutting to fit and using up all the offcuts. Arrange in the base of a 1.5 quart ovenproof dish.

Meanwhile, melt butter in a pan, stir in flour and cook over medium heat for 2-3 minutes. Gradually whisk in wine and milk. Bring to boil, then simmer for 3 minutes. Stir in mustard, thyme leaves, and cheddar until melted, then pour over the leeks. Top with the brie.

Bake 30 minutes until bubbly. Scatter with more thyme and serve with crusty bread.



Recipe and photo from **delicious**.

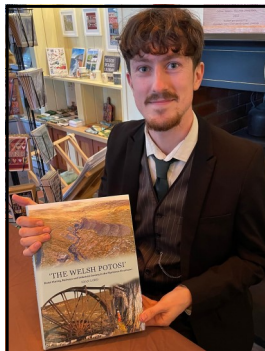
[www.deliciousmagazine.co.uk/recipes/cheesy-baked-leeks-with-ham](http://www.deliciousmagazine.co.uk/recipes/cheesy-baked-leeks-with-ham)

# Welsh Indiana Jones

By Diane Dunham Jeffer, WSWNE Member

Ioan Lord of Cwm Rheidol near Aberystwyth in mid-Wales, gave a fabulous presentation to the WSWNE genealogy group on May 14th.

Ioan specializes in the ore field of central Wales. He became interested in mines at a young age as he explored the area around Cwm Rheidol and saw the ruins of the ore industries. He is the author of several books on local mining, social, and industrial history and works for the Vale of Rheidol Railway in Aberystwyth. Ioan offers guided tours of local mines and curates the museum exhibitions at the Corris Railway Museum and



Ioan Lord  
thecambrianmountains.co.uk

Llywernog Silver-lead Mine. He is also affiliated with the Welsh Mines Preservation Trust and the Cambria Mines Trust.

Watch his presentation, *Tin and Lead Miners of Wales and Cornwall*, at [www.welshwne.org/news-past-events/tin-lead](http://www.welshwne.org/news-past-events/tin-lead).

Ioan's topic was especially interesting to our genealogy group because some of us have ancestors who were lead or tin miners near Aberystwyth. Ioan had great photos of the mines and miners and also talked about the immigration of miners from Cornwall into mid-Wales.

Susan Meers commented, "Coming from a long line of lead miners in Ceredigion, Wales, I was very impressed and informed by Ioan Lord's great presentation on mining in early Wales. He had great pictures (especially the underground water wheel) that helped me understand what life was like for my Roderick family in the mid-1800's and before. Ioan was not only knowledgeable but very personable."

I am also descended from the miners in the Roderick family (Susan Meers and I are third cousins, once removed) and was especially pleased to learn that Ioan was familiar with the village of Goginan where my ancestors lived and worked in the lead mines. His knowledge of the area added color to my family history.

For more information, see [www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-67088675](http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-67088675) and [www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/wales-real-life-indiana-jones-27994971](http://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/wales-real-life-indiana-jones-27994971)

For videos of Ioan's adventures, see [www.youtube.com/c/LostMines](http://www.youtube.com/c/LostMines).



## More Upcoming Events

### Save the Date for WSWNE's Annual Christmas Luncheon!

We will gather on Saturday December 7 from 11 AM to 3 PM at the lovely Storrowton Tavern in West Springfield, Massachusetts which is always beautifully decorated for Christmas with trees, garlands, candles, and our red outfits. We'll enjoy a repertoire of Welsh tunes by the local group *Wild Notes*, plus we'll pull Christmas Crackers, and shop at our little store of Welsh items.

### Zoom Activities with WSWNE

Sign up at [WelshWNE.org/events](https://WelshWNE.org/events) if you have not participated before.

### Welsh Conversation-on-Zoom

#### Level 1: Beginners Welsh Conversation

Twice monthly on Wednesdays from 5 to 5:30 PM

September 4 & 25, October 9 & 23, November 6 & 20, December 11

There is room for new members in this conversation.

#### Level 2: Intermediate Conversation

None scheduled at this time.

#### Level 3: Intermediate Plus Conversation

Tuesdays from 5:00 to 6:00 PM through December 17.

There is room for new members in this conversation.

### Genealogy-on-Zoom

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

Mondays 11 AM to 12:30 PM

September 16 & 30, October 7 & 21, November 4, December 16

See page 3 for details about our Owain Glyndwr event  
via Zoom on Sunday, September 15th.

## **NAFOW Opportunity**

By Heddwach Nain/Mamgu US

### **Researching Female Ancestors in the 1924 Peace Petition**

There will be an opportunity at NAFOW 2024 to delve into family history and explore the actions of your female ancestors in 1923 with The National Library of Wales and Heddwach Nain/Mam-gu US. Although not everyone finds their ancestor's signature, this a chance to look.

To make the most of your time at NAFOW and ensure a successful search for your ancestor in the 1924 Peace Petition, you'll want to gather some key information beforehand. Make a list of the female ancestors you're interested in researching; they must be over 18 years old in 1923. Bring any information about where your female ancestors lived in Wales in 1923; town and street names are especially helpful. With this information in hand, you'll be ready to make the most of the resources available at NAFOW's Marketplace with a genealogical researcher and others.

Take this opportunity to explore your family history and discover what your female ancestors thought about the prospect of a warless world back in 1924. It's a fascinating journey into the past that can provide valuable insights into your family's story.

## **Heddwach Nain**

By Susan Davies Sit, WSWNE President

The team of Heddwach Nain/Mam-Gu USA has been busy in 2024. This spring we had scanned 1,000 pages of letters and photos from Elined Prys' family which had been stored for 100 years in Elined's summer cottage in Massachusetts. Elined Prys was one of the three delegates who brought over the Peace Petition in 1924. She was a prolific letter writer, especially home to her family in Wales.

Seven of these letters and cards were written on board the ship to America in 1924, and during the time she was in the US as a delegate. We have scanned these letters and transcribed them. They have added to the history we have been uncovering. In this 100 anniversary year, the family will be donating these letters to the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. Elined's granddaughter Michele and Susan Davies Sit will hand-deliver the letters to the National Library in September.

What an honor it has been for the team to help facilitate this and be involved in the process.

# ***Tir - The Landscape of Wales***

By Susan Davies Sit, WSWNE President

We were excited to have Carwyn Graves back with the Welsh Society of Western New England for a zoom presentation about his latest book, *Tir—The Landscape of Wales*. His presentation about his previous book, *Food Stories of Wales*, was well received last year and Carwyn again delivered a wonderfully informative presentation. He explained that, in *Tir*, he broke down the landscape of Wales into topics such as *Rhos*, *Cloddiau*, *Cae*, *Mynydd*, and *Perllan*.

*Rhos* is a more desolate landscape, a haven for wildlife. With more building and more people, it is being lost. One example is that the curlews have gone from some areas. Carwyn's great-grandfather lived on this type of land and his small abandoned house is still there.

*Cloddiau* are the hedges along most of the smaller roads and between fields in Wales. Under the hedgerows you can find rocks buried deep along with the hedge/tree roots. According to testing, which measured the length of time the stones had not seen daylight, they have been there for 3,000 to 5,000 years.



Pretty amazing! I for one, am going to look for these stones in the fall when I am in Wales.

*Perllan* are the orchards of Wales of which 97% have been lost.

*Cae* are the fields of Wales with wheat, sheep, cows, and goats within. There are fifteen words for field in Welsh, including *cae*, *maes*, *grofft*, and *parc* which Carwyn explores in the book.

A mountain is simply a mountain in English, but in Welsh, *mynydd* is more than that. The various names describe how the mountain is used for grazing, if it is rugged, or a mountain with fields, etc.

Carwyn was asked, "How can we support the landscape of Wales when we visit?" His answer was to support the use of the land, take care of it, and shop locally, buying local produce such as milk, cheese, and meat. We can do that!

Watch this presentation at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGyAJ5Kb9ss](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGyAJ5Kb9ss).

Carwyn's books can be ordered from Amazon.

# Betws-y-Coed

By Betws y Coed & District Tourist Association

Betws-y-Coed ('prayer-house in the woods') is set within the beautiful Gwydir Forest in the Conwy valley in North Wales. It is a very popular visitor destination and is known as the "Gateway to Snowdonia." Snowdonia National Park (Eryri) is the 4th largest park in the United Kingdom and contains all Welsh mountains over 3,000 feet.

Betws-y-Coed stands in a valley near the point where three rivers meet. The location is where a Celtic Christian community founded a monastery in the late 6th century. A village developed around the site over subsequent centuries.



There is a village green (Cae Llan) and numerous Victorian buildings with a full range of hotels, B&B's, the village pub, outdoor clothing shops, and some excellent restaurants. From a recent census, close to one-half of the village's 500 residents speak Welsh. There are two churches in Betws-y-Coed: St. Michael dates from

the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and St. Mary's was built in the 1860s. In the summer months, a male voice choir performs Sunday evenings at St. Mary's.

In 1815, Waterloo Bridge, built by the renowned Thomas Telford, opened to carry the Irish Mail across the River Conwy and through the village. The establishment of the route brought an economic boost to the area as the village became a major mail coach stop.

In 1868, the Betws-y-Coed railway station opened when the Conwy Valley line was completed. The railway was built to serve the slate and timber industries in Blaenau Ffestiniog, still today the world's slate mining capital. The line is largely single track, very rare in



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the UK, and includes the longest (over two miles) single-track railway tunnel in the UK. Conwy Valley Railway Museum, with its miniature railway, lies next to the railway station.

North Wales is increasingly known for the plethora of outdoor and adventure pursuits available and the village is a centre for outdoor activities. Natural Resources Wales maintains many walking trails from the village, from a 30-minute riverside walk to hill walks of 5+ hours including the nearby Llyn Elsi reservoir which is used by anglers. If there's a little more adrenaline in your system, Zip World in nearby Bethesda is the UK's longest and fastest zip line at 100 mph.



Snowdon (Yr Wydffa) lies 20 minutes to the north and all the main climbing trails are accessible by Sherpa buses. On a clear day from the summit you can see as far as Ireland and the Lake District!

The area has an interesting arts history. In fact it was the world's first artist's colony. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, artists were drawn to the area to capture the majestic mountain settings. The village has many nods to its artistic heritage including several contemporary galleries featuring Welsh artists.

The UK heritage organization, the National Trust, maintains some spectacular properties in the area. Perhaps the most impressive is Bodnant Gardens, a 20-minute drive from the village. Family seat of the 4<sup>th</sup> Baron Aberconway, it boasts over eighty acres of developed gardens with an Italianate feel and a wide range of formal gardens, woodlands, and mountain views. People travel from around the world to view the Laburnum Arch in full glory late-May to mid-June.

See [www.visitbetwsycoed.co.uk](http://www.visitbetwsycoed.co.uk) for more about Betws-y-Coed.

For more about North Wales, see [www.gonorthwales.co.uk](http://www.gonorthwales.co.uk).

Photos from VisitBetws-y-Coed.co.uk

# Wandering Our Website

## This issue's highlights: *Search Button & Resources Menu*

By Ed Brown, WSWNE Webmaster

The **Search Button** appears at the end of the top level menu on every page of our website so it is always readily available. Clicking it opens a search page to type what you are looking for; then hit *return* to see search results appear below. The search is site-wide. Clicking a result opens the full page where your search term appears, even old *Event* pages that are no longer part of the current website! But it does *not* search *Newsletters* (in the *Past Events-News* menu). For that you must open a newsletter first; then use your device's own means of searching within the text there.

Try the site-wide *Search* button next time you have something you are looking for but have no clue where it might be found on the website.



### *The Resources Menu*

The top level *Resources* menu is located just before the site-wide *Search* button. There is a variety of topics of potential interest to choose from.

*Welsh Organizations* provides links to other Welsh societies in the Northeastern U.S. and beyond.

*Learn Welsh* provides information on WSWNE Welsh Conversation groups, a video presentation with an overview of online Welsh language learning resources, followed by links to several of these resources.

*Welsh Genealogy* comments on WSWNE Welsh Genealogy Workshops, then provides links to useful online resources.

*Welsh Culture And History*, *Travel Wales*, *Welsh Products And Arts*, and *Welsh Government And News From Wales* each contains links to a sampling of websites you may find of interest.

*Anthem - Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau* has all you need to begin, or brush up on, singing the Welsh National Anthem: a video and lyrics in both Welsh and English.



# 2024-2025 Board of Directors

## Executive Committee:

President: Susan Davies Sit (CT) [WelshWNE@gmail.com](mailto:WelshWNE@gmail.com)

Vice President: Annie Rodgers (MA)

Secretary: Mark Taylor (CT) [marktaylorfromwales@gmail.com](mailto:marktaylorfromwales@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Annie Rodgers (MA)

## 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 9)? Read our newsletter or visited our website (see page 14)? 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 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 and Christmas celebrations.

We hope you'll join us!



## **Carneddau Pony**

Photo by Howard Davies, Bethesda, Wales, June 2024