

# The Welsh Society of Western New England

Cymdeithas Cymreig Lloegr Newydd Gorllewino

Website: [WelshWNE.org](http://WelshWNE.org) / Email: [WelshWNE@gmail.com](mailto:WelshWNE@gmail.com) / FaceBook: [WSWNE](https://www.facebook.com/WSWNE)



**BLWYDDYN NEWYDD DDA 2021**

**Happy New Year 2021**

It sure has been a very long time (ten long months) since we saw each other.....some of us were at the St. David's Day luncheon on March 6th, 2020. While we will surely have a vaccine available very soon for all of us, the wait is still excruciating. As soon as the vaccine is widely available, we'll hopefully host a party for members and friends of the Welsh Society to celebrate being together again! In the meantime, The Welsh Society of Western New England wishes you all a very Happy New Year, please be safe and well... and we have a few things to look forward to on Zoom, including a free Penderyn Whisky Tasting! See you there!

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

Every Tues. in Jan. - Welsh  
Conversation -on-Zoom

Mon. Jan 11 & 18 - Welsh  
Genealogy-on-Zoom

Sat. Jan 30 - International Noson  
Lawen

Every Tues. in Feb. - Welsh  
Conversation-on-Zoom

Sat. Feb 7 - March 20 - 6 Nations  
Rugby

Mondays, Feb 8 & 22 - Welsh  
Genealogy-on-Zoom

Sat. Feb 14 - Sat. March 6 -  
WalesWeek/New England 2021

Sunday, Feb 14 - "WEST" a live play  
from Wales.

Sat, Feb 20 - Penderyn Whisky  
Tasting

Sat., March 6 - St. David's Day event

## PENDERYN WHISKY TASTING

On Saturday, February 20 at 5:00PM, we will host a FREE Penderyn Whisky Tasting, **for a max of 24 people. If you want to be included, please email us ASAP** at [InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com](mailto:InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com) to be included. Miniature bottles of Penderyn Whisky will be available to be picked up in Glastonbury, CT, or even delivered within central CT or Western MA, if you can't pick up. On a Zoom session, the Impex Penderyn importer rep will guide us through the whisky tasting. Should be fun, all from the comfort of your home and... no driving!



## WELSH GENEALOGY-ON-ZOOM

Usually we meet in person once a month, but in the meantime we meet on Zoom. To join our ZOOM Welsh Genealogy group:

email [InfoWelshWNE.com](mailto:InfoWelshWNE.com) to be added to the email invitation.

- Mon. Jan 11 & 18 - Welsh Genealogy-on-Zoom
- Monday, Feb 8 & 22 - Welsh Genealogy-on-Zoom

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## 2ND INTERNATIONAL NOSON LAWEN-ON-ZOOM

**Saturday, January 30th, 2:00PM - 4:00PM**

We had so much fun at our September Noson Lawen and had overwhelming demand to have a repeat! So, our 2nd Noson Lawen-on-Zoom will be held on January 30th, 2021, at 2pm-4pm. Noson Lawen was traditionally held in front parlors where friends and family would gather to play music, sing, and read poetry, fables and literature in Welsh (now in

English too). Now, we will gather once more on Zoom to be together to enjoy a Welsh music and literature afternoon.



**Simply enjoy the program or join in: read a poem in Welsh or English, read a part of the Mabinogion or favorite Welsh short story, sing a Welsh hymn or song, or play an instrument. We have invited friends from Wales to join us, including members of Côt Y Penrhyn, from Bethesda, Gwynedd. If you'd like to join the growing list of "performers" please email [InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com](mailto:InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com).**

**If you are not a member, you are also very welcome to join us for the Noson Lawen: MUST RSVP to [InfoWelsh@gmail.com](mailto:InfoWelsh@gmail.com) to be on the Zoom email invitation.**

## WELSH CONVERSATION-ON-ZOOM

**When:** Every Tuesday 6:30-7:30PM

**Where:** On Zoom

If you are a Welsh learner or speaker looking for an opportunity to chat in Welsh in a casual, friendly setting, we invite you to join us. The conversation will be based around questions we send out a few days before, covering a multitude of topics to encourage grammar and vocabulary. All levels from beginners to native speakers are welcome. To be added to the weekly Zoom invite email:

[InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com](mailto:InfoWelshWNE@gmail.com)

Gwrp sgwrs Cymraeg ac y Cymdeithas Cymreig Lloegr Newydd! Os ydych chi'n ddsygrwr neu siaradwr Cymraeg, rydym yn eich croesawu. Mae croeso i bob lefel, o ddechreuwr i siaradwr brodorol. Digwyddiad wythnosol yw hwn. ---yno!

## RUGBY - 6 NATIONS CUP - 2021

Rugby's greatest championship, between Wales, Scotland, Ireland, France, Italy, and England, will take place over seven weekends in 2020, beginning on Saturday, Feb 7th. Want to see some of the games? In the U.S., television coverage has moved to the new Peacock Premium streaming service. Peacock Premium content can be watched on many different computers, tablets, smartphones, smart TVs and streaming devices, even game systems and cable TV boxes. Visit [peacocktv.com](http://peacocktv.com) for full details on whether your devices are supported and how to sign up. Times are ET (Eastern Time) but should be double checked:

Feb 7th (Sun) 10:00AM - **Wales v Ireland, in Cardiff**

Feb 13th (Sat) 11:45AM - **Scotland v. Wales, in Scotland**

Feb 27th (Sat) 11:45AM - **Wales v. England, in Cardiff**

March 13th (Sat) 9:15AM - **Italy v. Wales, in Rome**

March 20th (Sat) 4:00PM - **France v. Wales, in Paris**



## MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE!

There are no changes to our membership fees for 2021 - 2022.

Memberships are \$25-\$100 for all members living at the same address. The only difference in the membership levels is your generosity and support to WSWNE. Your fees are essential, as they are one of our sources of income to cover Society expenses for our newsletters and events. You may mail your check directly to our treasurer with the membership form (page 13) or (**NEW THIS YEAR**) pay by credit card (no fees) via our website:

<http://www.welshwne.org/membership>

## NEW THIS YEAR:

### Annual Meeting Notice by Email

To reduce costs we will be sending out the Annual Meeting notice by email, not regular mail. If you prefer a paper copy, please email [WelshWNE@gmail.com](mailto:WelshWNE@gmail.com) or call Susan at 860.987.7097 to let us know. The Annual Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 5th, 2021 during the St. David's Day celebration-on-Zoom.

## NEW THIS YEAR:

### Online Payment by Credit Card Option:

To pay membership dues by credit card you can go to our website's Membership Page in the "About" menu (at [welshwne.org/membership](http://welshwne.org/membership)). Submit the online membership form. Then click on your choice of membership level and you will be taken directly to a secure checkout page hosted by Square Inc. Here you can pay with your major credit card. There is no added cost to you for paying online. WSWNE is absorbing the service charge during this first year as we evaluate the cost. Note you can still pay by check with the online membership form or with the printed one at the end of this newsletter.

The online payment option will also be available for many of our future events. And it is an option on our new Donations Page (at [welshwne.org/donations](http://welshwne.org/donations)) that offers an additional way to support WSWNE in advancing the knowledge and appreciation of all things Welsh.

## WALES WEEK/ NEW ENGLAND 2021

WSWNE continues to support Wales Week/WORLDWIDE, a celebration of everything Welsh - yes, its actually 2+ weeks this year, as one week is just not long enough! This year's dates are February 14 - March 6, 2021.

Wales Week events will be held in 21 places (so far) including London, Berkshire, Newcastle, Essex, Yorkshire, Dublin, Ohio, Michigan, Manchester, New York, New England, Washington DC, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Paris, Melbourne, Dubai, Tokyo, Beijing, Hong Kong, Thailand, Toronto and more to be added.

In 2019, Wales Week/Paris held 4 events, ranging from social, cultural and business orientated activities. That week was promoted as Welsh Week/Paris. In New York there were some 7 events held, here in New England we held 10 events, Essex 4, Melbourne 7 . . . and so on.

These organizing events serve varying purposes - be it simply for celebration around the time of St David's Day, or to use the time of heightened Welsh-ness to promote / support Welsh products, services, and international and local profile. So it's about noise - creating as much Welsh noise as possible. Here in New England, there may be events in Vermont, Massachusetts,

The logo for Wales Week in New England is a red rectangle containing the text "WALES WEEK / IN NEW ENGLAND" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The word "WEEK" is larger than "WALES" and "IN NEW ENGLAND". A white diagonal slash is positioned between "WEEK" and "IN".

**WALES  
WEEK /  
IN NEW ENGLAND**

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Rhode Island and Connecticut. Ultimately, the job of Wales Week/New England will be to shout about what we're doing and get our messages in front of as many people as possible.

**Our WSWNE contributions to Wales Week/New England 2021 are:**

- "WEST" a Welsh play, in English, (see below)
- Penderyn Whisky tasting via Zoom (complimentary)
- Welsh Conversation sessions via Zoom
- Welsh Genealogy workshops via Zoom (bi-monthly)
- Wales 6 Nations Rugby games on TV

So, if you are interested in running an event, or have some ideas that you'd like to discuss, please contact us at [WalesWeekNE@gmail.com](mailto:WalesWeekNE@gmail.com). We are also on Twitter [#WalesWeekNE](https://twitter.com/WalesWeekNE).

**WalesWeek/Worldwide 2021** was launched on Tuesday, Dec 8, 2020 in Wales, by organizers Dan Langford and Mike Jordan. They held an on line launch to which WSWNE were invited, and President, Susan Davies Sit was asked to say a few words about our experience of joining Wales Week at the beginning of international

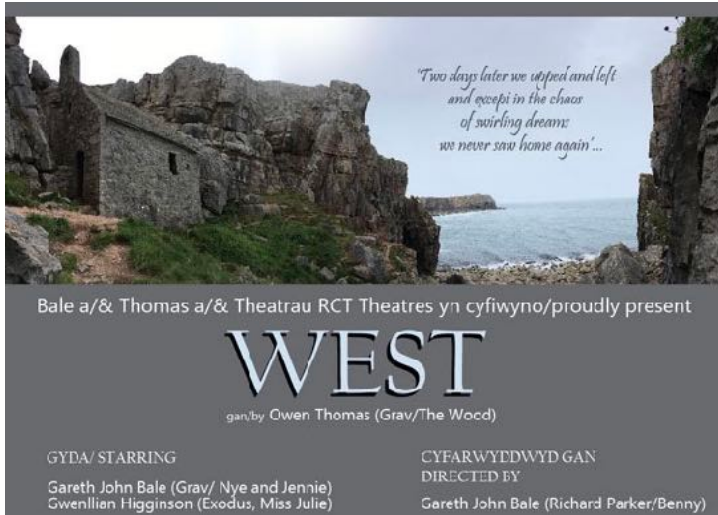
participation and to describe some of our events for 2021. Other speakers were Simon Hart, Secretary of State for Wales, Jonathan Davies



Clockwise, top right: Nellie Williams, Jonathan Davies, Lee Waters, Susan Davies Sit.

OBE Rugby legend and President of Velindre Cancer Center, Nellie Williams of WalesWeek Berkshire and Lee Waters, Wales' Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport. Innovation and resilience were the words of day from Simon Hart, as it was the first day that Welsh residents were being given the Covid-19 vaccine. He said that a Wrexham based company were the manufacturers of the Oxford vaccine. 150+ people were on the video call including Beijing, Pittsburg, New York, Kansas, Melbourne, Australia, Dublin, Berkshire and more.

# "WEST" - A play, live from Wales



.... will be streamed live from Wales on Sunday, February 14, 2021 at 2pm-3pm. Ticket information will be provided in January by email to all members. Please feel free to send the ticket information email on to family and friends.

'West' is the brand-new play from the award-winning writer

of 'Grav' and 'The Wood'. Starring Gareth John Bale and Gwenllian Higginson, the play explores the lives of two Welsh people who fall in love and decide to leave Wales in order to build a new life in the New World. It details the hardships and adventures they faced, focusing primarily on the theme of immigration. The play is written in a lyrical, poetic style and presented using minimal set and a physicalised performance style. It is directed by Gareth John Bale, the Welsh actor and director whose credits include 'Grav' and 'Nye and Jennie' and Gwenllian Higginson, best known to Welsh theatre audiences for 'Miss Julie', 'Exodus' and 'Merched Caerdydd'. 'West' was commissioned by the North American Festival of Wales and received its first public performance in the Ballroom of the Hilton Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Friday 30th August 2019. The first American performances received standing ovations from an enthusiastic American audience.

*'This was a profoundly moving and evocative presentation which spoke to the global experience of emigrants everywhere. In Owen Thomas and Gareth John Bale we have witnessed the interplay of two huge Welsh born talents, ably supported by a fresh-faced newcomer to us - Gwenllian Higginson. We feel privileged to have had a part in helping them launch this latest production to a most appreciative audience and wish them much success in introducing it to venues in Wales and world-wide.'*

**(Y NINNAU)**

## WSWNE NEWS

### Annual Christmas Holiday Event-on-Zoom

The 2020 Holiday Celebration of the Welsh Society of Western New England rang in the holiday season with an amazing Zoom Christmas afternoon.

On December 5, 2020, over 60 members and friends of WSWNE gathered to greet our friends across the USA, Canada and Wales and share holiday cheer, Christmas joy and Welsh pride. Glyn Dowden, WSWNE Board Member, and our resident Dylan Thomas, led off by reading from "A Child's Christmas in Wales", followed by member Straford Wild singing, Gower Wassail. Andrea Wild (Straford's sister), Nancy Jarell and Jeff Lewis, all the way from Portland, Oregon, sang two Welsh hauntingly beautiful plygain hymns, traditionally sung at dawn in churches across Wales on Christmas morning, originating in Carmarthen in the 13th century. The two plygain were: Ar Gyfer Heddiw Bore and Daeth Nadolig. Board Member Shirley Gilmartin, originally from south Wales mesmerized us with a reading from Lanterns Across the Snow.

Annie Rodgers of Chicopee, MA, also a Board Member sang Suo Gan and Tua Bethlem Dref, beautifully rendered in Welsh. She was followed by some reminiscences of members of their favorite childhood Christmas gifts.



Andrea Wild and friends



Following a give-away of some holiday gifts, Phoebe Wild (Andrea's 12 year old daughter from Portland, Oregon), played Nos Galan (Deck the Halls) on the harp, followed by Andrea and son, Dylan, with Song Y Wassael, a Welsh Fairy Reel with wonderful Welsh clog steps by Andrea. Dylan attended





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Trac's Gwerin Gwallgo, a youth camp for traditional Welsh folk music in Bala, Wales in Feb 2020.



Our Christmas event came to a successful close with member, Jason Ellsworth singing The Peace Carol by John Denver, after which Annie Rodgers spread Hiraeth across the USA, Canada and Wales with the Welsh National Anthem, Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau. ....written by Susan Jenkins Meers, Vice President

Some of the 60 members and friends who joined in the festivities

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***The Welsh Society Newsletter is issued three to four times per year. The editor welcomes contributions from members in the form of photographs, articles, news items and letters. During the pandemic, when we are socially distanced from one another, it's especially important to keep in touch.***

## Wreck of the Royal Charter

On the night of 25-26 October, 1857 an exceptional storm, thought to be the worst in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, hit Anglesey and the rest of Britain.

The Royal Charter was a hybrid steam/sail ship with the reputation as one of the fastest of its time. She had left Melbourne 59 days previously, heading for Liverpool, with a crew of 112 and approx. 375 passengers, many of whom were miners returning home from the Australian gold fields. Gold, worth tens of millions of pounds in today's money, was kept in boxes in the ship's hold, and in money belts, sewn into the miners' clothing.

**J R Lucas Anglesey archives**



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The ship came within sight of Holyhead. The captain, Thomas Taylor, pressed on despite the strengthening winds; they lowered the sails and continued on, powered by the engine.

Rounding the north of Anglesey and heading east towards Liverpool, the easterly winds turned to 100mph gusts from the north (hurricane force 12). They were 3 miles off the coast of Anglesey, when the anchor chains snapped, and unable to steer the ship by rudder, the mast and rigging were cut down and dropped overboard. At one point she was driven on a sandbank 25 yards from the rocky shore.

Strong swimmer Guse Rigger got to the shore; local Moelfre people used a bosun's chair and a human chain to save around 40 souls. A huge wave broke the ship in half, drowning the remaining 490 people (the ship's manifest was lost in the wreck).

Later, salvage operations recovered most of the gold from the seabed, some has been washed up round the coast for many years, and today, scuba divers still find some gold. ....By Begw Arian

## **NOS GALAN (New Years Eve)**

by Ben Johnson ([historic-uk.com](http://historic-uk.com))

Many countries have a custom for letting in the New Year that involves the letting out of the Old Year and the welcoming in of the New Year, often with gifts for good luck for the coming year. The Scots have the custom of First Footing where at 12 midnight, armed with a bottle of whisky and/or gifts, people visit their neighbours going from house to house, toasting in the New Year, often not returning home until daybreak.

In England in many places it still is the custom that a dark haired man should let in the New Year for good luck. The man leaves the house by the back door just before midnight on New Years Eve, walks around and on the stroke of midnight, knocks on the front door. The householder opens the door, and receives from the man the following gifts: salt for seasoning, silver for wealth, coal for warmth, a match for kindling and bread for sustenance.

In Wales the custom of letting in the New Year was slightly different in that if the first visitor in the New Year was a woman and the male householder opened the door, that was considered bad luck. If the first man to cross the threshold in the New Year was a red haired man, that was also bad luck.

Some other Welsh customs associated with the New Year were: "all existing debts were to be paid"; never lend anything to anyone on New Years Day else you would

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have bad luck; and the behaviour of an individual on this day was an indication of how they would behave all year!

A pre-Christian custom associated with the end of the Christmas season, formerly carried out in all parts of Wales but now almost disappeared, is that



of the Mari Lwyd (Grey Mare). It can however still be seen at Llangynwyd near Maesteg every New Years Day.

A horse's skull with false ears and eyes attached, along with reins and bells, covered with a white sheet and colourfully decorated with ribbons, is carried around on a pole. The Mari Lwyd is carried from door to door and is accompanied by a party of people. At each door, poems are recited in Welsh. Those inside the house reply also in verse refusing to let the Mari Lwyd in until this battle of verse and insults (or *pwnco*) is won.

The Mari Lwyd parties gained a bad reputation for drunkenness and vandalism as they roamed the villages. This was unacceptable behaviour especially with the rise of the Chapel and Methodism in Wales, and so the custom was changed.

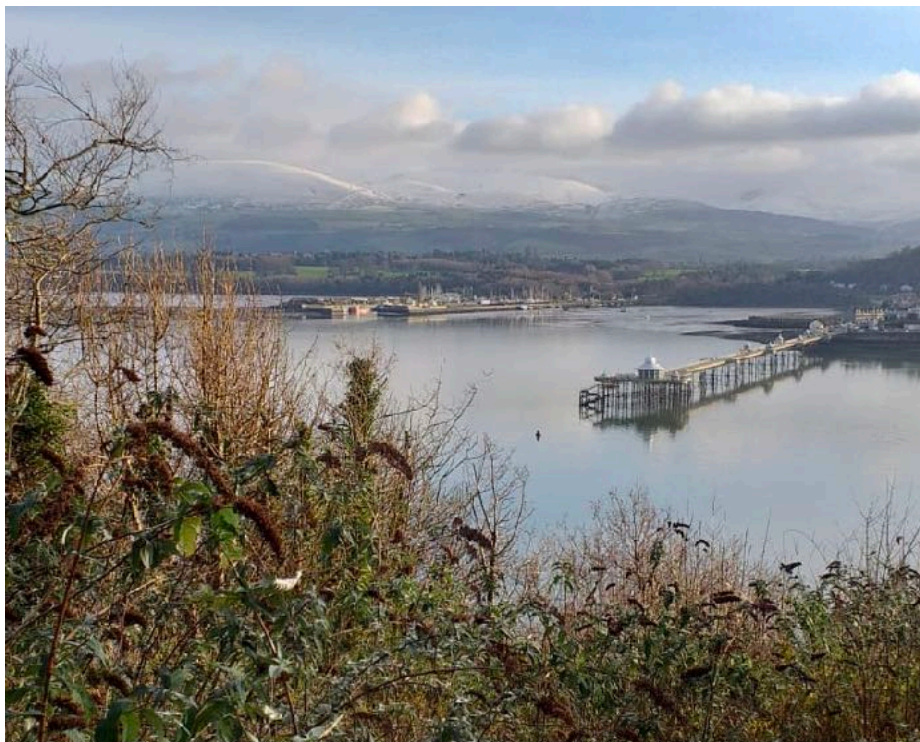
Christmas carols were sung at the doors and the battle of insults and verse disappeared. By the 1960's the custom of the Mari had almost died out.

This ancient custom is being revived in many areas, as in Llangynwyd near Maesteg. It is also being revived by students at the University of Wales through the streets of Aberystwyth, although with not too much emphasis on the old tradition of drunkenness and vandalism we trust!

The most popular New Year's custom was one that was carried out in all parts of Wales: the Calennig (small gift). On January 1st from dawn until noon, groups of young boys would visit all the houses in the village carrying evergreen twigs and a cup of cold water drawn from the local well. The boys would then use the twigs to splash people with water. In return, they would receive the Calennig, usually in the form of copper coins. The custom, in various forms, survived in some areas well after World War II, at least in the form of the chanting of a small verse or two in exchange for small coins.

## *CROESO/Welcome to our new members:*

- **Vikki Schell**, of Florida who has joined our Genealogy-on-Zoom group to do further research on her Welsh family from South Wales.
- **Sandy Jones Stanicek**, of Illinois, has joined WSWNE to be apart of our Welsh genealogy workshop group. Imagine our surprise to find out during our first meeting, that Sandy connects via DNA with two WSWNE members!
- **Jan Jones Batty** from Cedarburg, Wisconsin who has joined the Genealogy-on-Zoom workshops to work on her Welsh roots
- **Margaret and Mary Ewart**, from upstate NY, have joined because they enjoy our Welsh Conversation group. Mary's grandfather preached in Welsh in PA and NE... and, by the way, Mary turns 100 on January, 5, 2021!
- **Diane Ptak**, from Albany, NY, is very interested in her Welsh roots and has also joined the Welsh Genealogy group.



Snow capped mountains in Snowdonia with Bangor pier, taken from Anglesey

(M. Evans, Dec 2020)

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS (2020-2021):**

**President:** Susan Davies Sit (CT) (860) 987-7097 WelshWNE@gmail.com

**Vice President:** Susan Jenkins Meers (CT) (860) 334-5119 SJMeers43@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Mary Jones Pallos (CT) (860) 781-2302 Mary.Pallos@Singulus.com

**Secretary:** Mark Taylor (CT) (860) 303-1625 marktaylorfromwales@gmail.com

**BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE (2020-2021):**

**Webmaster:** Ed Brown (MA) (413) 454-9477 edbethui@gmail.com

Beth Roberts Brown (MA) (413) 454-9476 supernain4@gmail.com

Shirley Gilmartin (CT) (860) 887-1794 dsgilm@comcast.net

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Glyn Dowden (MA) (508) 888-1583 glyndowden@sbcglobal.net

Evan Williams (CT) (860) 205-5012 evanwilliams.ms@gmail.com

Annie Rodgers (MA) (413) 281-4986 reikianne53@charter.net

Chaplain: Vacant

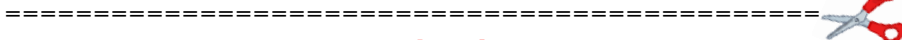
Past President: Dr. Tom Bernard (MA)

Founder: John Dixon (MA)

Email list; Newsletter Production: Mark Spencer (MA)

Honorary Founding Member: Shirley Keifer (CT)

Honorary member: Trey McCain (Wales)



**WSWNE Membership Form**

**PLEASE MAIL to Mary Pallos, WSWNE Treasurer, 1542 Main Street, Glastonbury, CT 06033 (check made out to WSWNE. Levels reflect only your level of support. All members receive discounts at our events, plus a printed newsletter, 3-4 times /year. Membership year begins March 1st, one per family at same address:**

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

Email N’letter January, ’21: For Treasurer’s use only: Date received: \_\_\_\_\_