

Chiltern District Welsh Society

Autumn Newsletter 2010.



The Society has continued to promote a number of activities during the last few months. Reports on these follow:

Chairman's Report.

It was with some trepidation that I took over as the Society's new Chairman. Hugh was a meticulous planner and organizer, and he finished off his tenure with another excellent AGM. He is a hard act to follow and on behalf of us all I thank him again for his leadership over the last two years.

As the reports in this newsletter show, the 2010 events turned out very well. The sun shone on both our Summer lunch and the Golf day, so the future of the Society seems in good hands!

The last event of the year will have been the Xmas drinks "do" on 5th December. We thank Bill & Sue Jones for hosting it.

The current Committee combines past experience and some fresh faces. The future programme will retain the familiar pattern but also include some additional variety. Not everyone can or wants to attend every event, but we will try to provide a range so that every member can enjoy something in it. Remember it's your Society and all ideas are welcome. As is any help you can offer. You may have some useful expertise or contacts, or can just help out with a particular event.

The Society is in good spirit with over a hundred members. Its future vitality depends on maintaining an active membership. There are surprising numbers of Welsh exiles living in our locality who still do not even know of the Society's existence. "The more the merrier" so keep an eye out and spread the word.

Gwyndaf John

A.G.M. 7th May Coleshill Village Hall.

49 members attended this annual event, the formal business of which was conducted first.

Hugh Griffith handed over the chairmanship to Gwyndaf John. Ann Evans proposed a vote of thanks to Hugh for his efforts on behalf of the Society during his term of office, and presented him with a token gift of South African vintage.

Ann Lawrence, who had been Membership Secretary for a number of years, retired from the Committee, her role was taken over by Ann Browne. Two members, Kay Day and Graham Beavan agreed to join.

Eileen Mitchell reported on the relative healthy state of the Society's finances.

On completion of the formal business a Welsh Fayre took place, for which the hall had been decked out with a gazebo. This concentrated on cheeses and wines produced and sourced in Wales, but also included the tasting of various items cooked by members from old Welsh recipes, like Welsh cakes and teisien lap.



This developed into a Ploughman's buffet, during which a brief quiz on some of the cheeses was conducted.

A different type of evening - enjoyed by all those present.

Maldwyn Pugh

Walking Holiday based on Aberdovey, 17-21st May.

With a certain amount of trepidation we set off for the Welsh Walking Holiday in West Wales.

John Breese and Anne Thomas had done an incredible amount of groundwork to ensure we were all catered for in every respect. We were lucky that the weather was kind, but the rest of the holiday's enjoyment was down to their meticulous preparations.



The Trefeddan Hotel was friendly, the food majestic, with a 4-course dinner menu from which it was almost impossible to choose. Each morning commenced with a hearty breakfast to set us on our way.

On the first day we made our way around Aberdyfi to the village centre, followed by a climb out of the village. This was made slightly more interesting as John had previously tackled the walk when the tide was out – with the tide in we had fun edging our way along a 6 inch ledge to avoid getting our feet wet. None of us did get wet feet, and we spent the rest of the walk congratulating ourselves. We were supposed to lunch at the Pub at about 12.30 followed by a short train journey to Machynlleth. However, our appreciation of the views of the Dyfi Estuary and Bae Ceredigion from high above Aberdovey meant that the pub lunch started at about 1.30pm. We all elected to spend a little more time in the village (and the pub), cutting out the afternoon walk. Instead we explored Machynlleth before catching the train back to Aberdovey.

Day 2 started with John cutting short the first walk as he feared he would not get us through the Precipice Walk in time for lunch – he had realised by now that shepherding 20 others up a mountain took slightly longer than he alone. The Precipice Walk turned

out to be fantastic, with views of Dolgellau, Cader Idris, the Mawddach river and Coedy-Brenin. The mountain was covered in blueberry bushes with tiny berries, so some of us nibbled as we walked (just in case we did not make lunch). John kept muttering about the difficulty element of this walk and whether anyone had a problem with heights but I think he was somewhat over-cautious. The Panorama Walk followed after crossing the toll bridge (with a scrabble for change), with the Mawddach Estuary as our reward.



Day 3 – Cader Idris for those who wanted to tackle it or Dysynni Valley or Abergynolwyn for those who did not.

For those going up Cader Idris, we started

in cloud, but, as we entered the final straight at the top, the sun came out, the clouds cleared and we sat at the top having lunch, marvelling at the scenery. It was an incredible sight. As we walked down the sun came with us and



the scenery unfolded before our eyes. It was glorious and well worth the effort.

The last dinner was great fun. There is nothing like climbing and dining to bring people together, the holiday would not have been the same without every one of them. John and Anne went to an incredible amount of trouble to ensure the comfort and enjoyment of everyone and nothing seemed too much trouble. Their charm and kindness, and that of the staff at the Trefeddan Hotel contributed very much to the enjoyment of the holiday.

Summer Lunch, Sunday 11th July.

Beth and Peter Sykes-Johnson hosted this year's lunch at their Gerrards Cross home, which was attended by 49 members.



The weather kind, the conversation flowed and the lunch, prepared superbly as usual by Ann Tennant, was enjoyed by all.



Gwyndaf gave the gathering a brief solo on a vuvuzela before detailing briefly the events planned for the rest of the year.

The Welsh general knowledge quiz proved a diverting challenge but met its main objective of ensuring that, for once, Jonathan Pegler's table did not get the top score. The afternoon passed very quickly, the garden enjoyed before it was time to let Beth & Peter have it back.

Gwyndaf thanked them for their hospitality and presented them with gifts as a mark of the Society's appreciation. He also thanked those that helped in putting up the gazebos, arranging the tables and chairs, and the ladies who made floral table decorations.

All too soon it was time to dismantle and stack away the equipment, and hope that next year's event will be as enjoyable.

Maldwyn Pugh

Golf Day, Oakland Park 17th September.



As usual our golf day at Oakland Park was fine and sunny. I can't recall it ever being otherwise: perhaps St David was a keen player.



Twenty-two golfers took part in a better-ball pairs competition and after a really enjoyable game the winners were Ann Lawrence and David Evans, with an outstanding score of 45 points.

Susan Mills and David Evans were nearest the pin winners, and Margaret Broomby and Colin Wills made the longest drives.

We were joined for lunch and presentation of prizes by another ten members.

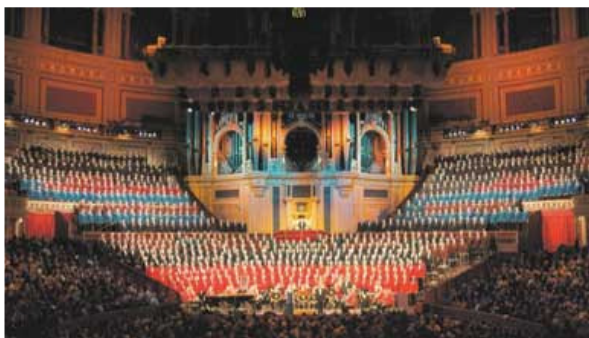


Thanks go to Pam and Rob Britton (and Chris Thomas – editor's note) for promoting another successful event.

We look forward to next year's return to Oakland Park on 2nd September.

Hazel & Chris Thomas.

London Welsh Festival of Male Choirs 23rd October.



A group of members and friends had a memorable evening at the twenty-second London Welsh Festival of Male Choirs in the Royal Albert Hall. The trip was a sell-out: the bus was full; and it seemed that the same applied to the hall. The choirs and soloists had an enthusiastic reception in a festive atmosphere.

The evening was presented by the London Welsh Male Voice Choir and the majority of the other ten choirs taking part were Welsh: Cambrian, Côr Meibion Caron, Côr Meibion De Cymru, Dowlais, Hereford Police, Huntingdon, Kenfig Hill and District, Sheffield, Côr Meibion Taf and Wycombe Orpheus.

The Cory Band from the Rhondda, which celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2009 and is in its fourth consecutive year as number one in the world brass band rankings, gave some impressive renderings of their own, as well as accompaniments to the more rousing choral items.

The individual "key contributors", as the programme called them, were all eminent in their fields: the conductor, Dr Alwyn Humphreys; baritone, David Kempster; soprano Elizabeth Donovan; accompanists, Annabel Thwaite on the piano and Robert Nicholls on the organ; the Cory Band's director of music, Dr. Robert Childs; and the compère, Frank Lincoln. An unexpected treat added to the programme was the appearance of Rhys Meirion (like a few other well known Welsh singers, a conversion from school teacher to internationally famous soloist) to join David Kempster for the splendid duet from *The Pearl Fishers*.

The programme was attractively structured with powerful operatic choruses to start and end the first half (the Soldiers' Chorus from *Faust* and the Pilgrims' Chorus from *Tannhäuser*), a medley from the Cory Band to start the second half and a modern Welsh piece (*Y Tangnefeddwyr*) to end it.

The non-Welsh choirs did well in tackling the Welsh language items and the programme included helpful translations for those of us unable to cope with the originals. The soloists provided entertaining variety and the compère harmonised everything with background information for each item and some amusing anecdotes.

Graham Lewis

Forthcoming events.

- ✓ A quiz evening with a Fish & Chip supper, at the Coleshill Village Hall on 28th January 2011.
- ✓ St. David's Day Dinner on 26th February 2011 at the Gerrards Cross Golf Club.
- ✓ A.G.M. at Coleshill Village Hall on 6th May 2011
- ✓ Our Annual Golf Day will be on 2nd September 2011 at Oaklands Park.

Other events being planned include

- ✓ Walking Holiday in Wales in May/June
- ✓ Ramble in the Chilterns during June
- ✓ Summer Lunch at the Broomby's in Chesham Bois in July.
- ✓ London Walk with a Welsh theme in early Autumn
- ✓ Tour & Dinner at the Houses of Parliament in the Autumn.

More details of these events will be advised as they become available.