

Chiltern District Welsh Society

Autumn Newsletter 2011



Chairman's Report

The Society will round off another enjoyable year at the annual Christmas Drinks event hosted this year on December 9th by Jayne & Jonathan Pegler.

It has been a busy year for the Committee and special thanks go to David Powell for the new web-site at www.chilternwelsh.org. This will contain a diary of events as well as news and notices. Do take a look and, if you can, keep checking it for details.

We've been joined by some new Committee members, but are also lucky that Maldwyn, Hugh and Eileen have continued to help with their experience.

We are asking all members to simplify our administration by signing up to pay the annual subscriptions by Standing Order. In return we'll hold those subs at the same very reasonable level of £10 a head for the foreseeable future. The Society's financial year starts on April 1st so you will be sent a Standing Order mandate form in good time before next year's subscription is due.

A varied programme is already in place for 2012. Special events to note include a walking break in Snowdonia with "the train taking the strain", a Welsh themed tour of Oxford including lunch at Jesus College, a tour of Buckingham Palace, and a few days away in Llangollen for the International Eisteddfod.

The year will start with the ever popular Quiz Evening with Fish & Chip supper to be held at Coleshill Village hall in late January.

Our St David's Day Dinner will be held on Friday March 2nd at Harewood Downs Golf Club. We will welcome Roy Noble as guest speaker. Probably the best known voice in

Wales, Roy presents a daily show on Radio Wales, and is a very popular entertainer. He will be departing the BBC studio in Cardiff on the Friday afternoon to drive up to our Dinner, so this year the dinner is scheduled to start at 8pm.



Our next AGM May will be entertained by Take4, a Barbershop Quartet whose members also sing with the London Welsh Male Voice Choir. One of them is Geraint Lewis from the Slough Welsh Society. He was a guest at our last St David's Day dinner. Those who attended that event will remember his wonderful "top tenor" voice.

The Snowdonia trip in late May will stay at the Seiont Manor, a country house hotel just outside Caernarfon. Mike Stythe's brilliant idea has been to use the train for the more strenuous parts of a walking holiday. So our group will use the train to ascend Snowdon and then descend on foot (or by train again!). We will also travel on the scenic Welsh Highland Railway before walking through the beautiful Aberglaslyn Pass along the valley of the Glaslyn river to Beddgelert where we will catch the return train to Caernarfon.

The Llangollen International Eisteddfod is held in early July. Bob Ford is organising a trip and rooms have been reserved for 3 nights from 4th July. The Wednesday evening concert features Alison Balsom, soprano Leslie Garrett and Nicola Benedetti performing with The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. On the Thursday evening Alfie Boe launches the all-Singing, All Dancing show choirs competition.

In September we will have two special events. Both of these will have restricted numbers so be sure to make your booking early!

In early September a trip to Buckingham Palace will feature the special exhibition for 2012 of the Queen's diamonds, a tour of the State Rooms and a visit to the gardens.

Later in the month, we have organised a Welsh themed day in Oxford starting with lunch at Jesus College, followed by a guided tour of some City highlights.

Apart from the formal programme of events, many of the Welsh speakers in the society have met informally in local hostelrys to give us the opportunity to chat in the ancient tongue. For those with an interest in learning to speak the language Ann Evans continues to run her classes.

Gwyndaf John

Summer Lunch

This year's annual Summer Lunch held on Sunday 3rd July was kindly hosted by Margaret & Ralph Broomby in their lovely garden in Chesham Bois.



As we have come to expect, the weather was perfect and the venue could not have been more attractive. The organising committee had made an excellent job of setting up the gazebos and decorated tables, and we thank them for their hard work.



We were treated to a demonstration of Ralph's latest invention – a machine for recycling plastic waste. After an exciting, scientific pre-ambles we could barely wait to view the process. Following much flashing and rumbling from the machine, Ann Evans was entrusted with the opening of the door to reveal the recycled product in the form of numerous golf balls – all very impressive!



A delicious lunch was then served by Ann Tennant, and thanks to Gwyndaf for preparing a challenging quiz on identifying Welsh rivers and towns. Congratulations to Jayne and Jonathan Pegler's team members who were the winners.

At the end of a very pleasant afternoon, the Society's Chairman presented Ralph & Margaret with wine and flowers as an appreciation of their warm hospitality.

Verlie Heale

Annual Golf Day

Twenty ardent golfers were blessed with glorious summer weather for the annual golf day which was held at Oakland Park Golf Club on Friday 2nd September.



Ten couples competed in a better ball competition with nearest the pin and longest drive for both the ladies and the men as an extra challenge. The course was in excellent condition and the sun shone throughout, resulting in some impressive scores and a close run contest.

The winners with 42 Stableford points were Rowena Gimson and Chris Thomas closely followed by Jean Owen and Colin Wills with 41 points. Rowena also won the ladies nearest the pin and Sue James had the longest drive.

The pond in front of the men's nearest the pin hole obviously proved too much of a challenge and consequently no one managed to land on the green to claim the prize. The longest drive was won by Gwyndaf John who did at least manage to stay on the fairway.



The golf was followed by an enjoyable lunch in the clubhouse. Other members joined the players for an excellent meal and the prize giving by Chris Thomas. Based on the success of the day and the popularity of the course, especially with the ladies, a motion was passed to return again next year.

Hearty thanks go to Pam, Rob and Chris for organising a most enjoyable event.

Colin Thomas

Theatre Evening

Most of a party of 27 members and guests gathered in the bar at the Palace Theatre on Friday 14th October ready to see one of the premiere performances of Family Business, a new play by the playwright Julian Mitchell

After relaxing over drinks and conversation 25 of us strolled in to take our seats. The missing pair, rather less relaxed, rushed in to complete our group just as the lights dimmed and the curtain was about to go up. They were fortunate not to have missed any of an entertaining play.

"A converted barn on the Welsh Borders" was the setting, and the backcloth to the stage was an impressive view over the Welsh hills.



The play, directed by Matthew Lloyd, moved briskly with twists and revealing turns to the story. The wheelchair bound William is a widower recovering from intensive care with the aid of his carer, Solomon. He had founded and built up the large company in which family business his adult children are also employed. He has invited the four of them to his home in the country for the weekend.

Despite most of the six characters on stage being members of the same family, their

well-drawn characters are very different. Witty and topical comments in the script had us laughing out loud, despite the tension of the drama unfolding on stage.

The consensus at the end of the play was that it had been very enjoyable evening's entertainment. We won't reveal too much about the plot as this production at a local theatre is warmly recommended to those who missed the Society's group visit.

Gwyndaf John

Miscellany

Welsh exiles enjoy getting together, and there is quite a network of international and local societies.

Society member Ralph Broomby is an active participant in the Montgomeryshire Society, which organises meetings in London as well as back in the old county.

Ann Lawrence reports that The London Glamorgan Society, has been revived. She and Peter enjoyed an evening at the House of Lords when the Rt Hon the Lord John Morris of Aberavon gave an address followed by a reception. The Society's next meeting is on Wednesday 15th February. Contact Ann (or any Committee member for Ann's contact details) if you would like further details.

The London Welsh Centre at Grays Inn Road hosts a great deal of activity and is surprisingly easy to get to at the weekend or in the evening. A popular new introduction has been to show the Welsh Rugby team's matches on a big screen in the concert hall. This must have considerably increased the bar takings during the Rugby World Cup!

Some of our Society members attended the Young Welsh Singer of the Year final at the Centre recently. December highlights are Christmas related concerts and festivities with some of the excellent choirs based at the Centre, and a Xmas Charity Pool tournament.

Our own Chiltern District Welsh Society is open to anybody with a Welsh connection or just with an interest in joining in with us. Keep an eye out for friends or neighbours who could be interested in becoming members.

Forthcoming events for 2012

See www.chilternwelsh.org for details.

- **Quiz Evening,**
January 27th
at Coleshill Village Hall
- **St David's Day Dinner**
Friday March 2nd
at Harewood Downs Golf Club
- **A.G.M.**
May 4th
at Coleshill Village Hall
- **Snowdonia break**
May 20th-22nd
with trips on the Snowdon and Welsh Highland Railways and scenic walks
- **Summer Lunch**
June 24th
Venue/date to be confirmed
- **Llangollen International Eisteddfod**
July 4th – 7th.
- **Society Golf Day**
August 31st
at Oaklands Park Golf Club
- **Buckingham Palace**
September 4th
Tour of State Rooms and & garden
- **Welsh themed guided tour of Oxford**
with lunch at Jesus College
September 20th
- **Festival of Male Voice Choirs**
October 13th
at the Royal Albert Hall.
- **Christmas Drinks 2012**
to be hosted by Tony and Irene Glyn-Jones in Amersham