

# Chiltern District Welsh Society

## Spring Newsletter 2012



### Chairman's Report

Once again it is my great pleasure to report that the Society has had an enjoyable period of very well attended events. And of course the sun shone – even on our Summer Lunch in the midst of the wettest summer on record.

At the AGM the entire committee was happy to stay in office – which goes to show that it is a pleasure rather than a chore! We were joined by Jonathan Pegler as our new Vice Chairman. He will take the chair in May 2013.

A highlight of our programme was the presence of Roy Noble as our guest speaker at the St David's Day dinner. An exceptional entertainer and a lovely man too. Not only did he entertain us so well that evening after driving all the way up from the BBC studios in Cardiff, he even wrote and thanked us afterwards. Special thanks go to Hugh Griffith for his dogged determination to get us such a special guest speaker.

The cold wet weather stopped for just a few days while a party of 23 members went to Snowdonia in May. The glorious scenery was seen at its best in lovely sunshine and the train journeys were a highlight. The group descending Snowdon's PYG track managed to keep up with Mike Stythe without mishap, whilst Margaret Broomby and Chris Thomas in the group descending the supposedly easier Llanberis trail managed to get in some acrobatics practice en-route (but survived to tell the tale). Many thanks go to Mike for the idea of the trip and for his experienced advice, and excellent choice of hotel.

In June Bob Ford organised a superb trip to the International Eisteddfod at Llangollen (see report on page 4).

Looking forward the 2012 schedule includes the Golf Day – in glorious weather again? There are two exceptional trips in September to Buckingham Palace and to Oxford, followed in October by the biennial Festival of Male Voice choirs at the Royal Albert Hall.

Finally, Ann Tennant has been our regular caterer at events and her meals and service much appreciated. I am pleased to report that she received an MBE in the recent honours list. Our congratulations go to Ann.

Gwyndaf John

### Christmas Drinks 11<sup>th</sup> December 2011

The Christmas Drinks lunchtime event on was a great success. Our special thanks go to



Jonathan and Jayne Pegler, who hosted the event at their lovely home in Chalfont Heights. Jonathan proved an enthusiastic wine waiter and also provided the music to accompany our enthusiastic carol singing.



### Quiz Evening – 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

Our Quiz night on 27th January was very popular with 38 people braving the weather and competing to answer questions with a Welsh theme.



Modesty forbids me from mentioning which team won.

Gwyndaf John

### St. David's Day Dinner 2012

Our annual dinner was held on March 2 at Harewood Downs Golf Club. The evening began with a 'Welcome' drink and time to chat and meet new members.

Our chairman, Gwyndaf John, then led us into the dining room which had been beautifully and appropriately decorated with daffodils. After taking our seats the majority of us commiserated with the unfortunate minority who had been supporting England on the previous Saturday. Then Ann Evans our President led us in the Grace before we all settled down to enjoy a delicious dinner. There was a happy buzz in the room as everyone was having a good time.

Coffee was served and then Gwyndaf introduced our guest speaker—Mr Roy Noble. Roy is a well known personality being a very popular and award winning Radio and Television presenter for BBC Wales. The reason for his popularity soon became obvious. The humour poured seamlessly from a most relaxed and charismatic story teller. We were challenged to consider who we are. Do we have a direct lineage to the

Mabinogion of old or are we a patchwork quilt from chance encounters? I must admit that I've always believed mine to be pure North Pembrokeshire Welsh – but who knows? Roy opened up all sorts of possibilities!



His colourful journey through life encompassing so many experiences and told in such an easy humorous style made for a fantastic and long to be remembered after-dinner speech. Laughter rang around the room and the memory will keep us laughing for quite a while I suspect.

The evening ended with our beloved National Anthem and our equally beloved informal sing song thanks to Jonathan Pegler at the keyboard.

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our wonderful committee for making such an evening possible and thereby ensuring that we celebrate our Patron Saint in style.

Diolch yn fawr i bob un ohonoch.

Heulwen Longhurst.

### AGM 4th May

Mention the words Annual General Meeting or AGM to most people and the reaction is almost always a deep sigh and an "Oooh!"

Not so the Welsh Society AGM. Our Society Business is dealt with in minimal time. The Committee offered to continue in office and this was unopposed by the meeting. Copies of the Financial Statement were available on the tables and, as there were no questions, business was soon completed and we were able to get on with the rest of the evening.

And what an enjoyable evening it was. We were entertained for about half an hour by the

Take4 Barbershop Quartet whose wonderful harmonies and choice of songs delighted everyone. The quartet is led by Geraint Lewis who is a member of Slough Welsh Society and also a member of the London Welsh Male Voice Choir. His obvious pleasure in what he and his group do is infectious and his gentle sense of humour between songs added to the enjoyment of the music. Our thanks go to them for such a delight.

The supper, provided by Ann Tennant and her staff, who have catered for the Society on a number of occasions, once again lived up to expectations both in the quality and the quantity of the food.

Ann brought with her two young assistants on their first catering experience and they too were pleasant and efficient.

After supper it was back to the Barbershop Quartet for a further enjoyable half hour which ended the evening with a comic song "My wife is on a diet." It was great fun and left everyone with a smile on their faces at the end of an excellent evening. Good company, good food, and good music.

Our thanks go to the Committee for the organisation of it all.

Margaret Payne

### Visit to Snowdonia 20th.-23rd. April.

"The day we went up Snowdon & returned by the Llanberis path"

Another sunny & hot morning in north Wales, & the intrepid walkers all wait in anticipation at Llanberis Station. None of the glitz of St. Pancreas or Waterloo, but quaintness personified. With justifiable Welsh pride we all await the pre-journey video – "good to get out of the sun"! What an engineering feat to think that all of this was put in place over 100 years ago - 1896 to be exact – the grand opening. With all tickets duly dispensed we are allowed onto the platform – where a small engine & carriage glides slowly backwards to squeeze us in. The weather just perfect – we could see for ever! The engine climbed the 3,650 feet to the summit whilst we were entertained by



brilliant commentary from the driver. A journey to be long remembered. A photo opportunity around every bend. Fifty minutes & we are at the summit.

Here the party divided into 3 groups; some waited for the return trip by train; another party prepared for the Pen Y Gwryd (PYG) track - 11 kilometres with descent of 2,370 feet; whilst a 3rd group departed on the Llanberis path - 14.5 kilometres with descent



of 3,200 feet. Despite a few mishaps (3), the Llanberis path/walk was brilliant. The silence in the mountains "had to be heard to be believed"!- all this, occasionally interrupted by the screams from a fallen climber or walker. Everyone arrived back with a real sense of pride & achievement. Even for the seasoned walkers – the Llanberis path was 'tough' but rewarding, especially as we had views of the trains creeping cunningly along carefully & classhically constructed cog cortege - ah!, the alliteration – one gets carried away !

A day to catalogue. Well done to our organisers.

Gwyn Owen

### Summer Lunch 10<sup>th</sup> June

About 50 of us were exceptionally lucky with the weather. It had been raining all week, but the rain held off for our annual garden party, held this year courtesy of Tony & Irene Glyn-Jones in their beautiful garden.

While we were tucking in to a delicious meal prepared and served by Ann Tennant, Mr Jonathan Pegler had devised a teasingly difficult cryptic quiz - Gwyndaf's team won (again).



John and Thelma Lusher organised an enjoyable 'heads or tails' auction for a bottle of Penderyn Welsh whisky, raising £100 for the Tenovus Cancer charity.

The fine weather lasted until about 4 o'clock, by which time a fine team of volunteers had packed everything away before the rain started.

### Llangollen International Eisteddfod

We arrived in good time at the Bryn Howel hotel with luggage and much needed macs, umbrellas hats etc. Later, on site and after seeing usual numerous stalls and stages, we took our seats for the evening performance of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee concert. Top artists: Alison Balsom (solo trumpeter) was fantastic, Nicola Benedetti (violinist) magnificent and Lesley Garrett excellent with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, all first class. About 9.30pm the heavens opened, heavy storms in competition with the music! Flood and mud were everywhere, but thankfully we returned to the hotel safely.

On Thursday 5th July we toured the shops, then back on site in the Royal Pavilion we

saw fantastic dancers in beautiful costumes from different countries. At one o'clock everyone held hands for a minute's silence, the Llangollen message of peace, a new idea and most moving. Solo artists and choirs followed, two outstanding ones were from Singapore and South Africa. Weatherwise the sun shone, and it was too hot to sit in! That evening seventeen members from the Chiltern Welsh Society assembled in the marquee for Alfie Boe to a packed, enthusiastic audience house.

On Friday, some of us visited Plas Newydd House. It rained again but it was a delight to see the home of the Ladies of Llangollen. All the rooms were beautifully oak panelled and it had wonderful, manicured gardens.

That evening, we all met up in the hotel for a truly, lovely meal, good in both quality and quantity. Thank you, Bob, for a good choice of hotel.

With purchases of a 2013 Snowdonia National Park calendar, Welsh honey and Penderyn whisky we set off for home with lots of memories. I'm looking forward to the next time.

Eilwen Turner.

### Forthcoming events

#### **Golf day at Oakland Park - 31st August**

The annual follow up to the Open! Non-players are welcome at the after-golf lunch.

#### **Visit to the State rooms and Gardens at Buckingham Palace on the 4<sup>th</sup> September.**

A tour of the State Rooms will start at 12.45pm, last approximately two and a half hours. The Garden Tour will follow at 3.15pm and the visit should finish at 4pm.

#### **Visit to Oxford and Lunch at Jesus College on the 20th September.**

#### **Festival of Male Voice Choirs at the Royal Albert Hall on the 13<sup>th</sup> October.**

We have 50 Front Circle tickets and have booked a coach. Tickets are now available.

#### **Christmas Drinks 9<sup>th</sup> December**

This will be at the same venue as last year, courtesy of Jonathan & Jayne Pegler.