

Chiltern District Welsh Society

Summer Newsletter 2022



Christmas Drinks 12th December 2021

No-one was absolutely sure whether our 2021 drinks party could happen, due to rising numbers of Covid.

In the end, after some careful thought, the day went ahead. It was decided that we would take sensible precautions and also have no singing this year.

Ralph and Margaret Broomby were there to welcome us through the door, as people started arriving. The Broomby's have hosted so many events in the past and we are very grateful to them.

In each room there was a welcoming fire, fuelled by mulberry logs from a tree that used to grow in their back garden, a victim of honey fungus.

Numbers were down when compared with previous years with just under 30 people attending, but this gave us lots of room in which to meet and catch up with friends.

It was good to see many old friends again. We hadn't seen Maldwyn Pugh for a while and it was nice to hear about how he is enjoying living in his new flat. Graham and Anthea Beavan came from Wokingham to catch up and tell us how their new house is going and it was good to see Graham Lewis and Anne Pierce Jones again.

Canapes were provided by 'To Dine For' who circulated with plates of interesting and tasty treats.

There were many examples of Ralph's handiwork around the house.

Many of us looked out the window to admire Ralph's new Summer House – he explained that not only had he designed it himself, but he had also built it during the summer lockdown.

The occasion wound down by late afternoon, with people leaving to get home before it got dark. Thanks to Ralph and Margaret for their hospitality, 'To Dine For' for the food, and to Kay Day for organizing the event.

Quiz Night 2022

Our 2022 Quiz Night was held on 21st January, and, as with last year, it was a virtual event, which unfortunately meant no fish and chips.

Jonathan Pegler had devised the quiz and hosted it over Zoom all the way from Porthcawl.



Five teams of 5 or 6 battled it out to try to answer Jonathan's fiendish questions, each team named after a Welsh colour. I noticed that the members of last year's winning team were split up to give other teams a chance!

Every team had a virtual 'breakout room' so that they could discuss the answers without being overheard by the other teams.

There were 6 rounds of questions with different themes such as identifying obscure European languages (is there a Galician language?), Science, Opening lines, and Geography – 70 questions in all.

From the start it was clear that Team Glas (comprised of Lloyd and Pamela Jones, Liz Seely and Rob Brett and Ruth Huckle) was the team to watch, winning each of the early rounds, and, as the evening progressed their lead increased.

At the end of the evening Jonathan revealed the scores – Team Glas were the runaway winners, but the other teams had all done creditably, with an average score of about 68%, so it was not Jonathan's toughest quiz.

We congratulated the winning team (no prizes this year) and thanked Jonathan for his hard work in preparing, hosting, scoring as well as acting as chief technician in running the Zoom meeting and breakout rooms.

CDWS Saint David's Day Dinner 2022

It was so lovely to see everyone in the flesh again! All those Zoom meetings that we've had since St David's Day 2020 were a good way to stay in touch, but not like the real thing, and what a turnout! There were 79 of us in total and it was lovely to see new members and guests as well as old friends.



This year our St David's Day Dinner returned to Gerrards Cross Golf Club. The club house has had a real face lift since we were last

there and it looks very smart. The bar and the dining room were festooned with Welsh flags. People started arriving at 6:30 and were greeted with a drink, giving people time to circulate around the bar, meet old friends and catch up.

Soon, we were ushered into the dining room, where the tables were decorated with lovely floral displays of daffodils created by the



ladies of the committee. Colin Picton, welcomed us to the evening and Gwyndaf John said grace.

Then the food started to arrive. For starters we had made the choice between tomato and garlic soup, smoked salmon mousse or asparagus with poached egg.



Main course was a choice of seabass, lamb shank, or a traditional Welsh cawl.

Dessert choices were

spiced oranges, orange sorbet, chocolate torte or Welsh Cheeses.

After coffee, Colin introduced our guest singer, Angharad Rowlands, a Welsh Mezzo Soprano, accompanied by Iain Ledingham.

Angharad is at the Royal Academy of Music. A native Welsh speaker, Angharad grew up singing in the Welsh folk tradition, competing regularly in the National Eisteddfod of Wales. She made her debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 2019, and this year



Angharad will join Royal Academy Opera. Iain Ledingham is a familiar figure to

many of us, a professor at the Royal Academy of Music, and founder of the Amersham Festival of Music. We are very grateful to Iain as the source of so many of the very talented musicians who have performed for us over the years.

Angharad spoke quite softly, but that all changed when she started singing and she could really produce some power to her voice.

Angharad's repertoire included traditional songs arranged by Benjamin Britten, works by Mozart, Bizet and Handel. The music then turned to a Welsh theme finishing with Calon Lân, with everyone joining in.

Jonathan Pegler then took to the keyboard and played the National Anthem, led by Angharad.



Colin thanked our performers and Ann Evans presented Angharad with a bouquet, while Iain received a bottle of wine from Jonathan.

Due to Covid restrictions, we didn't finish with our

traditional singing, but turned to our friends to say goodbye. Hopefully we shall have another opportunity for singing in the near future!

Thanks to all those involved in the planning and execution of our St David's Day Dinner!

A Spring Walk with Flowers 28th April

What an enjoyable and interesting day. The last time most of us saw each other we were in our St David's Day fineries, now we were in our walking gear!

It was clear from the beginning that Gwyndaf and Janet had put a lot of effort into making a



success of the day from Janet taking

everyone's order for the sandwiches for lunch, to Gwyndaf explaining the background to the Red Lion pub at Coleshill where we met.

Our route took us south along Coleshill Common and the pond across the Chiltern Way and white chalk paths of cereal fields, past Luckings Farm, down to Great Beard's Wood and Owlsears Wood before looping back past Ongar Hill Farm and the old Windmill on the right.

In those couple of miles and hours Gwyndaf highlighted approximately 30 flowering species of plants (flowers and trees) with captivating explanations.

We saw plants only found in or near ponds, in ancient woodlands, in shaded areas, in sunny areas, on chalk soil, or in cultivated meadows. One plant, Coralroot, is confined to this area of the UK – a very special find. The plants and flowers found in this area is dependent on various factors including the soil and environment. The soil layer on the



Chilterns is rather thin hence the chalk loving plants that we found.

The route and time were chosen for the best locations for us to see specific flowers. Those in flower included trees and sedges. Sedges are grass-like plants, and as we learned "sedges have edges". They have stems with triangular cross-

sections. Gwyndaf explained the pollinating method highlighting the male and female parts of the sedge plants.



We learned that some species have male and female plants. One of these is Dog's Mercury which we saw in abundance in the wood.

We saw edible and poisonous plants, plants used in medicine, sweet smelling plants and ones that were unpleasant. We learned a little of the derivation of some of the rather fanciful names. In short – lots to entertain. Our wild flower education was extensive!

The welcome victuals and drinks back at the Red Lion rounded off a very enjoyable easy sunny walk in the Chilterns. There was no end to the chatting!

Very much looking forward to next year's –
Diolch o galon Janet a Gwyndaf!!!

Bill Jones

2022 AGM 20th May at Coleshill

People started arriving at our 22nd AGM from about 7pm, 31 of us in all.

Colin Picton started the meeting at 7:30 with apologies for absence including committee members Ann Evans, Ann Lawrence and Kay



Day. Colin sent best wishes for a speedy recovery on behalf of the Society to Ann who is in hospital.

The minutes of the 21st AGM were accepted and Colin gave his chairman's report, saying how good it was to greet everyone in person rather than via a computer screen as on the previous 2 years. He then introduced a slide show of photographs of events over the entire history of the Society, which continued to roll over the whole evening. It was a little disconcerting to see ourselves age by 22 years over the course of one night! Colin reviewed the events of the past year, starting with the Summer Lunch, which in 2021 occurred twice. The first occasion was held in July at Peter and Beth Sykes-Johnston's home in Gerrards Cross, but, due to Covid restrictions, the numbers were limited. A

second lunch was held in September at Ernest Morris's house in Amersham so that more people could attend. Colin thanked the hosts in letting their home be used for these occasions.

At the end of August, Gwyndaf John and Rob Britton organized the annual golf day at Oaklands Park, won this year by Pam Britton.

In December Ralph and Margaret Broomby hosted our Christmas Drinks event at their home in Chesham Bois.

January saw a return of Jonathan Pegler's Quiz Evening. Unfortunately, this had to be another Zoom based event, without food, but it was still up to his usual standard of fun and difficulty.

This was Jonathan's last quiz as he is stepping down from the committee to concentrate on his musical pursuits. Colin thanked Jonathan for the preparation and hard work he has put into his quizzes and trips over the years.

March saw a return to normal with our excellent St David's Day Dinner being held at Gerrards Cross Golf Club.

In April Gwyndaf and Janet John led a spring walk exploring the wild flowers around Coleshill. As they are such experts, we learnt a lot and finished the trip with lunch at The Red Lion.

The next event will be the Summer Lunch, returning to the kind hospitality of Diane and Colin Thomas in Gerrards Cross.

Membership stands at 110, a slight drop over last year.

Jonathan Pegler presented the Financial Report for the last time. For the year ending 31st March 2022, assets were approximately £3,000. He concluded that the Society is financially sound. Colin appealed for a person to fill the role as our new treasurer, the work is not onerous and no financial qualification is necessary. In the meantime, David Powell will stand in pro temp.

Election of Officers

Ann Evans is Life President and as such is not elected. Election of the other officials was as follows:

Position	Name
Chairman	Colin Picton
Vice Chairman	Barrie Reece
Minutes Secretary	Merle Davies
Treasurer	Vacancy
Membership Sec.	Ann Lawrence
Secretary	Gwyndaf John
Committee Members	Kay Day David Powell Ruth Huckle

Colin presented a bottle of wine to Jonathan, while Sue Jones proposed a vote of thanks. Colin said that Jonathan has contributed an awful lot to the Society, not only as Treasurer, but compiling and hosting quizzes, the organization of trips to Wales and other places, and in his role as past Chairman.

As Colin brought the formal part of the evening to a close, Ann Tennant appeared through the serving hatch to announce that the evening's supper was ready.

As usual, Ann's food was delicious and generous.



Throughout the meal we were entertained by the continuing backdrop of photographs of events through the years.

The evening concluded with Barrie Reece

taking to the piano to play some well-known Welsh songs and to lead the singing.

Well done to those who helped organize the event, especially to Kay and Ann who could not attend in person.

Some sad news – both Kerry Birbeck and Anne Pierce Jones have passed away recently. Our thoughts go to their family and friends.

2022 Provisional Programme

All dates are provisional, depending on any future social restrictions.

Sunday 3rd July – Summer Lunch

Hosted by Diane and Colin Thomas in Gerrards Cross.

19th August – Annual Golf Day

Oakland's Park - The Society's Annual Golf Day, non-players welcome for lunch.

September/October Event

Either a London walk or Theatre Trip.

Sunday 4th December - Christmas Drinks

At Alan & Diane Longshaw's home in Gerrards Cross.

Friday 20th or 27th January - Quiz Night

At Coleshill Hall – details to follow.