

Chiltern District Welsh Society

Summer Newsletter 2025



2024 Christmas Drinks

Sunday 8th December saw us gather at Colin and Diane Thomas's house for our annual Christmas get together.



Colin and Diane's house was all ready for Christmas, with festive decorations in every direction and a large Welsh flag in the front window.

Diane and Colin greeted everyone as they started arriving from about 12:30 onwards, and people migrated first to the kitchen, where



drinks were being served.

In all, there were about 30 of us there, a little bit down on most years, but it gave us a good chance to chat to everyone and catch up on the news.

People drifted between the living room, where the canapes were served and the kitchen, where the drinks laid out on the table. year there was a supply of Prosecco, there had been comments that this overlooked last year.

Towards four o' clock, John Breese started playing a selection of Christmas carols, with everyone joining in.



were
This
good
as
was

We finished with the National Anthem, and everyone left by about 4:30.

Thanks once again to Colin and Diane for being such generous hosts.



Quiz Night

On Friday 17th January we held our Quiz Night.

We all arrived at Coleshill Village Hall around 7pm and it did not take long to arrange the tables and chairs in a semi-circle around the question master.



We eventually organised ourselves into four tables of five.

Colin Picton had created the quiz and was acting as question-master, assisted by his glamorous assistant Kate.

As is traditional, each team then had to think of a team name. These included the Red Dragons, the Floribundas, and the Annesiacs.

By the time this task had been completed, the fish and chips had arrived, so we all took a break to enjoy them, before the quizzing started.

As well as the 9 rounds of questions, there were also two table rounds to ponder. The first was a set of cryptic clues to Welsh towns or places. The second involved maps of Wales with twenty missing place names, plus a list of 25 places all starting with Llan..... It was quite amazing how difficult this was.

Kate came round with our question papers and Colin read out the questions. Colin made many of the questions multiple choice this year, which made it a bit easier.

There were several rounds on Wales and Geography.

After each round we passed our answer papers to the next table and the scores were declared.

When all the question sheets had been gathered in, there was one team clearly in the lead – the Floribundas were way out in front.

We all thanked Colin and Kate for their efforts in making it all so enjoyable and we ended the evening at about 9:30.

St David's Day Dinner 2025

We held our annual St David's Day Dinner on Saturday 1st March at Gerrards Cross Golf Course, as this has been so successful in the



past. This year was no different.

We gathered at 6:30 to be greeted with a glass of fizz or a soft drink, and this gave

us the chance to catch up with old friends and to talk of anything except rugby.



This year we were particularly pleased to be joined by Bob Ford (who was chairman when I first joined in 2010) and Jayne Pegler as well as Peter & Pat Chapman, who had



travelled from their home in Brecon to be with us.

There were over 60 of us in total and we all wandered over to look at the table plan to see which table Gwyndaf had assigned us .

As usual with Gerrards Cross Golf Club, the food was very good, with the most popular choices being Beetroot and Orange Gravadlax and Lamb Tagine followed by Merlot poached Pears with Blackcurrant Sorbet.



After the meal, Gwyndaf introduced our speaker for the evening, Sarah Green, the MP for Chesham and Amersham.

Sarah was born and grew up in Corwen,

Clwyd and speaks Welsh fluently.

She greeted us in Welsh, before talking about her early life going to school in Bala and then on to Aberystwyth University, where she was chair of the Welsh Young Liberals.

Sarah stood as the Liberal Democrat candidate in general elections in Wales, before the death of Dame Cheryl Gillan triggered the 2021 by-election in Chesham and Amersham.

She said that she was lucky to be able to stand for the by-election, as she had a job where she could put things on hold at comparatively short notice while she canvassed.

She then described going to parliament for the first time as being like being a new pupil at school, getting used to the atmosphere in the House.

At the last general election the borders of the Chesham and Amersham constituency changed to include Gerrards Cross, but Sarah won again and returned to Parliament.

This time there were lots of new MPs, and she could understand their sense of wonder and confusion over the first few days.

Sarah added that it is not in the Punch and Judy like exchanges seen on television, but in the work of the various committees, where politicians work together that matter.

Finally Sarah ended by saying that she felt proud to have worked on the Public Accounts Committee and to have worked on NHS finance questions.

Gwyndaf John thanked Sarah for her talk and Ann Evans presented her with a bouquet of flowers.



John Breese then took to the piano and played the National Anthem, followed by a number of old favourites and everyone joined in



using the song sheets provided.

The evening finished about 10:30pm, another successful St David's Day celebration.

Spring Walk 2025

This year Gwyndaf took us to Little Marlow for our spring walk.



We all met at The Queen's Head in Little Marlow at 10:00 for a 10:30 start.

There were about 18 of us in all. We ordered our lunches before setting off.

We were very lucky, in that it was a warm bright day (for late March) and the forecast was good.



We started off by heading off to the parish

church of St John the Baptist.

Little Marlow was once the site of a Benedictine convent attached to Bisham Abbey. It is thought that the church, parts of which date back to Norman times, was constructed from materials from the convent.

As we left the church, we passed the manor house gates and we learned that Mel B ('Scary Spice') had once lived there.

We continued past the slightly whiffy Little Marlow Water Treatment works (quite infamous for its spills into the Thames), and then on to the lake that forms Spade Oak Nature Reserve.

Like so many of the lakes in the region this used to be an old gravel quarry, but it is now home to all sorts of waterfowl.

We were able to spot swans, great crested grebes, tufted ducks, and various geese (greylag, bean, or was it pink footed?).

We continued around the lake and branched off to cross the single track train line between Bourne End and Marlow and then followed the Thames round towards Bourne End.



As we went, Gwyndaf pointed out features of the flood plain, including the alder trees that grew along the river. Alders love moist or boggy ground, and Gwyndaf showed us the unusual female

catkins, which look just like very small pine cones. It is the only deciduous tree which produces a cone.

We then recrossed the railway along the road to the Spade Oak Hotel and continued around the lake, and back past the church. We were very happy to see the pub as we rounded the corner!

One or two others from the Society, who hadn't taken part in the walk, joined us for lunch. Fish and Chips seemed to be the most popular choice, but all the food was very good.

David Powell led the thanks to Gwyndaf for arranging the walk, and we all made our way home, benefitting from the fresh air, but feeling a little tired.

2025 AGM – 25th Anniversary



We had a great turnout for our AGM on Friday 9th May. There must have been 55 people attending.

People started arriving at 6pm, greeting old friends as well as welcoming new members. It was good to see some of the long-time members again too, like Verlie Heal, Bob Ford and Hugh Griffith.

Colin and Diane Thomas greeted people as they came in with a glass of fizz or juice.

Chairman Gwyndaf John opened proceedings by welcoming everyone and saying that as this



The Founder members

was a special occasion, marking the 25th anniversary of the Society, the celebration would be free and we would look back over the first 25 years since the Society's creation. As he

spoke, there was a slide show on the screen behind him showing photographs of our events over the 25 years – approximately 1,000 photographs!

In his Chairman's Report, Gwyndaf described many of our activities over the past 12 months, including our walk around Windsor, where we had been recorded on YouTube watching as the Welsh Guards marched past.

Membership was reported to be 115 including new members Teifion and Barbara Jones, Russell and Veronica Fowler and Huw Meredith (Eirwen's son).

Lloyd Jones then gave his treasurer's report, indicating that the Society's finances were in good shape, even after financing the evening's food and drink!



Gwyndaf then reported that two new committee members have been seconded – Mike Owen as Minutes Secretary and Colin Thomas, who will initially assist with the Golf Day.

All the committee members were willing to stand again, and were duly unanimously re-elected.

Sue Jones then proposed a vote of thanks to past and present committee members.



The formal part of the meeting then ended and we replenished our glasses while Ann Tennant provided us with an excellent evening meal with a choice of chicken or salmon.

The slide show of photographs continued during and after the meal

as Gwyndaf opened the review of 25 years of the society's history.

Ann Evans described how she came up with the idea and the first meeting in 2000 – a barbeque hosted by Gwyn and Jean Owen.

Gwyndaf then read out short reports from Ralph Broomby and Gwyn Owen, who were amongst our first chairmen (neither of whom could attend as they were on holiday in the Mediterranean).

Bob Ford then spoke about his time as chairman, and the 2004 trip to visit the Norwegian Welsh Society.

David Powell recounted his time in the society, featuring an eventful trip to the Magic Circle, and his chairmanship during Covid, when we all had to learn how to use



Zoom and we had the Archbishop of Canterbury addressing us on the small screen.

Finally, Gwyndaf thanked all the people who had helped make the society such a success, including those who had lent us their living rooms and gardens for Christmas drinks and summer lunches and our caterers (especially Ann Tennant), as well as the organisers who had arranged outings, golf days and trips and all our committee members (giving special thanks to the greatly missed and fondly remembered Jonathan Pegler and Maldwyn Pugh).



After a successful and enjoyable evening we turned off the projector, cleared the tables and chairs, and went home by 10pm.

2025/6 Provisional Programme

Friday 12th September – Golf Day.

At Oaklands Park Golf Club, Chalfont St Giles. If you don't play come and join us for lunch! Details to be confirmed.

October (date tbc) Autumn Walk

A conducted tour around Amersham Old Town, to include a visit to the museum.

Sunday 7th December – Christmas Drinks

Date and venue to be confirmed.

Friday 23rd January Quiz or Social Evening

To be confirmed - Coleshill Village Hall

Friday 27th February 2026 – St David's Day Dinner

To be held at Gerrards Cross Golf Club.

Friday April 17th – Spring Walk

Details to follow

Friday May 15th May – AGM

At Coleshill Village Hall

Sunday 5th July Summer Lunch

Ernest Morris has once again generously offered to host.