

Chiltern District Welsh Society

Winter Newsletter 2025



2025 Summer Lunch

After some initial confusion about dates and venues, we did all manage to arrive at Ann Evans' home in Chesham Bois for our Summer Lunch on 6th July.



The advance party arrived at 9:30am to put up the gazebos in Ann Evans' lovely garden, and as there were only 4 of us and we were dealing with a new gazebo, it took a bit longer

than expected.

By 11:30 we had erected all three gazebos and had laid out the table and chairs leaving us one



hour to get home, shower, get changed and return. Thankfully we all made it in time.

As we arrived, Kay and Ann

greeted everyone and supplied us with name labels.

It was lovely to meet with old friends again. In



total there were 33 of us, and, after mingling and greeting everyone, we chose which of the four tables to sit at.

Once again Ann Tennant was our caterer and provided us with a choice of chicken or salmon salads (or a combination of the two), and a wide array of desserts.

We went up to the catering tent, table by table and sat down to our food.

The weather was quite variable, with bright sunshine, followed by light drizzle, then a rainstorm, then windy, then sunny again. Luckily the new gazebo stood up to the changeable weather and everyone stayed dry.



After the meal Kay Day thanked Ann



Tennant for the lovely food and Ann Evans for coming to the rescue at the last moment



with the offer to host the event.

We had plenty of help to pack everything away – the chairs and tables had to go back into Ann's garage, and the gazebos had to be taken down,



folded up and packed away. Luckily they had dried sufficiently to be rolled up.

Thanks once again to Ann, Ann and Kay for making the afternoon such a success.

An October Walk in Chalfont St Giles

We all met at Milton's Cottage at 10am on Friday 10th October. Most of us arrived early and, as the weather was good gathered in the garden.



This pretty cottage was built in the late 15th Century for workers on the local estate, The Vache.

We were hosted by Kelly, who showed us around the cottage and described its history and the life and works of John Milton. Kelly was remarkably knowledgeable, answering all sorts of questions as she showed us around the 3 or 4 rooms open.



The cottage may be very small, but there was so much to see and read.

Milton took refuge from the plague in London by escaping to this cottage in 1665, and, although he lived here for less than two years, wrote his most famous work Paradise Lost and began Paradise Regained, whilst living here with his third wife.

Milton was a staunch republican, who wrote books and pamphlets in support of regicide, the abolition of the monarchy and divorce, but was spared from retribution during the restoration of the monarchy.

The cottage contains many of his original works including first and second editions along with artifacts from his time.

We then walked down the hill to the parish church of Chalfont St Giles. Here we met our guide Tony Ferguson, who is not only an author and speaker, but also a member of the St Giles



watch, which helps to ensure that the church remains open to visitors.

The church itself dates back to around 1150, during the reign of Henry II, but has been remodelled several times over the following centuries. Parts of the original Norman church are clearly visible and on the wall is a list of the rectors through the years dating back to the early 13th century.



One of the most striking features of the church is a set of 14th century wall paintings depicting scenes from the bible. These were discovered and revealed by the Victorians, but

about 20 years ago suffered damage as a result of thieves taking lead from the roof.

Tony also pointed out ancient graffiti around the church dating back to the time of the civil war and a stained glass window with a small depiction of the devil, though he was a very small figure inside a red circle of hell!



Outside we were shown interesting features and graves, including a method used to protect the recently buried from 'the resurrection men' by placing long heavy stones

across the grave.

After a very interesting tour of the church, we continued our walk into the village, ending up at the pub, 'Merlin's Cave' for lunch.

Thanks to Gwyndaf for arranging this interesting and informative outing.

Golf Day



The Society's Golf Day on Friday September 12th dawned

dry and bright. 'Twas ever thus' - as they don't often say in the Valleys.

Four teams of three gathered to compete in a Texas Scramble. As usual there had been some last-minute changes. Colin Thomas recruited fellow Oaklands Park Golf Club member Jeff Rowlands, who hails from Penarth, to join us. Brian Evans joined not only to play but also to perform the role of a knight in shining armour. He drove the buggy which enabled Pam Britton to play the full 18 holes. Pam not only enjoyed the golf, she was also treated to a thrilling ride as Brian raced around the course searching for the ball after Ralph Broomby had hit some of his wilder shots!

Whilst the standard of golf may not have equalled that on display in the Ryder Cup, the competition result was much closer. The winning team of Pat Whitworth, Colin Thomas and Jeff Rowlands won by just one point. At the lunch, they were presented with well-deserved prizes of bottles of wine. The losing teams won no prizes but their consolation was an enjoyable morning out on the course in good company and fresh air.

After the morning's golf a rather late lunch was served. The twenty diners included two prospective new members, Dafydd Thomas and Glenys Parry-Jones, who were warmly welcomed. They must have enjoyed the company as both confirmed their membership.

During a conversation with Dafydd, he asked me where I came from in Wales and proceeded to inform me that he had a cousin living there. It turns out that his cousin has been a friend of mine since junior school, one whom I still meet up with regularly. It's a small world.

We extend our thanks to Oaklands Park Golf Club. Their course was in excellent condition and the two course lunch and service was as good as ever.

Thanks also to Colin for taking on some of the organising this year, and to all who participated and helped make it another enjoyable event.

Gwyndaf John

The Welsh in Patagonia – an illustrated talk

We had a really good turn out on Friday 14th November, when almost 40 members turned up at Gerrards Cross Community Association to listen to Gareth Morgan give his talk on the Welsh in Patagonia with slides showing the development of the colony as well as from his more recent visits to the region.

Gareth's father was a clergyman in Argentina, for the Welsh Colony based around the Chubut Valley, and his elder sister was born there.



Gareth started by telling us about the group of about 160, who left Wales to preserve their language and culture and to set up the colony in 1865.

Their ship grounded off Puerto Madryn, about 800 miles south of Buenos Aires, and the colonists had to shelter in caves and abandoned huts near the sea.

They were helped by the local Indians and eventually founded several settlements and small towns over the years, moving westwards to find better farming land and establishing towns such as Rawson, Trelew, Gaiman and Dolavon.

Gareth's father sailed out as a minister in about 1935 and travelled across the whole region – up to 900 miles – initially on horseback, and later by car.

Gareth and his sister returned to the region in 2007 and 2015 and found many people who remembered their parents. They were warmly welcomed by the local population and toured across the Chubut Valley from Rawson on the Atlantic coast to Gualjaina in the Andes.

I was surprised to hear that the community had some problem with bandits in the early part of the 20th Century – one member was reportedly shot dead by a member of Butch Cassidy's gang during a robbery.

Gareth's talk finished before five and we set off on our way home.

The Garden Room at the GX Community Centre was a good venue to hold a talk and we may well return there for future events.

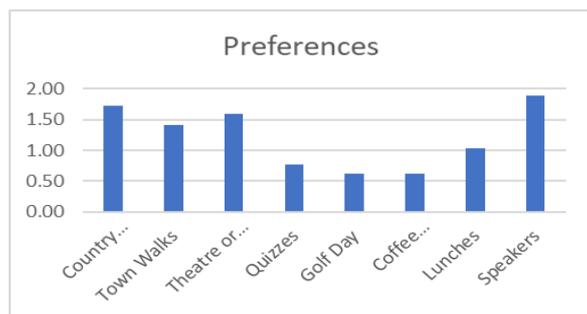
2025 Members Survey

Thank you to all those members who replied to our on-line survey this year.

I published an interim picture in late October, but we now have the final results.

Activities

These show good support for walks and theatre or concert trips, with the idea of coffee mornings or lunches less popular, but speakers proved the most popular, even more than in the interim results.

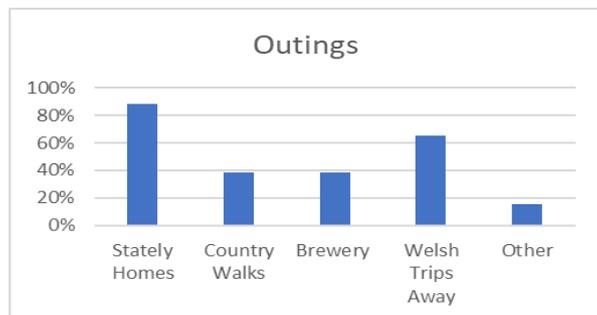


Outings

Trips to Stately Homes or gardens got the most votes, followed by Welsh Trips away.

We will have to try organising a Welsh holiday again.

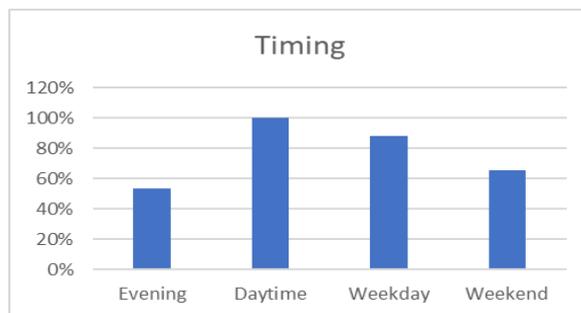
I also noted that a trip to a brewery was quite popular (was this down to the men?).



We asked for other suggestions and one that came up was a return visit to the Magic Circle.

Timing

The preference was for events to be held midweek and during the day. This is not too surprising at this time of year with dark evenings, but we do have to consider members who have daytime commitments (babysitting or even a job), so we will have to balance the timing of our activities so as not to exclude anyone.



Thanks again to everyone who took part.

2026 Provisional Programme

January Quiz - Cancelled

The survey showed that evening events in Winter were not so popular, so this year we will not be holding a quiz.

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

To be held at Gerrards Cross Golf Club with musical entertainment.

April (date tbc) Amersham Walk

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

Friday May 8th May – AGM

At Coleshill Village Hall

June (date tbc) - Country Walk

A walk through Hodgemoor Woods near Coleshill

Sunday 5th July Summer Lunch

Ernest Morris has once again generously offered to host at his home in Chesham Bois.

Friday 11th September – Golf Day

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

Sunday 6th December Christmas Drinks

Date and venue to be confirmed