

Chiltern District Welsh Society

Summer Newsletter 2018



Xmas Drinks

We woke up on Sunday 10th December to find a thick layer of snow had fallen overnight and it was still snowing. The roads had not been salted and the snow was not disappearing.

Luckily, we only live a few minutes away from Colin and Di Thomas's house in Gerrards Cross, so we were able to make it, but many were not so lucky. We had expected about 60, but only 20 people managed the journey, mostly from Gerrards Cross and Beaconsfield, including new members Kate and Colin Picton.

The caterers, 'To Dine For' made it through the snow. The food was excellent and very plentiful. We had not only the canapés we had ordered but about half of the canapés for Stephanie's following event (for 100 people) which was cancelled; she said that the canapés for the later event wouldn't keep, and she insisted they had to be eaten.

I think the waitresses took some, as did Stephanie, but she pressed most of the rest on us and did a mixed doggy-bag for each guest. There was quite a bit left for Colin and Di's supper - they earned it!



Jonathan Pegler had brought a good supply of carol sheets, distributed them around the room and played the piano while everyone joined in the singing.

Everyone left in good time before dark, trudging through the snow.

It was a different sort of event, but very sociable, and a nice-sized gathering for the new members to meet people, but it was a shame that so many were not able to enjoy the afternoon.

26th January Wine & Cheese Night

As a change from our usual January Quiz Evening, this year we had a Cheese & Wine (& Beer) event. Almost 40 CDWS members assembled at 7pm in Coleshill Village Hall.



Jonathan Pegler had scoured the country for Welsh Cheeses, and even a Welsh wine. He started by teasing us with the question of which was best with cheese – red, white or beer, then explained that it all depended on the type of cheese, but

beer usually worked (think Ploughman's lunch).

Jonathan had done his research and was able to describe in some detail each of the various beverages and cheeses we were about to try.

Cheeses came to each table two at a time and everyone could choose what should go with each. The seven cheeses varied from Brie-like, through Caerphilly to strong tangy cheddars (most people's favourite). Among these were a smoked goat's cheese which divided opinion between those who loved it, and some who thought it inedible.

There were four wines, two whites (including Glyndwr from the Vale of Glamorgan) and two full bodied reds from France and Italy.

The four Welsh beers were also very popular – ranging from light Reverend James and Madog's Ale to a dark, liquorish and tar tasting Cwrwgl.

We all had notes with the names and sources of each cheese and wine, with details of the suppliers, and Jonathan asked us to guess which were the most and least expensive of each cheese, wine and beer. Jonathan and Graham Beavan also had several additional bottles of wine and beer which people could buy at cost. They did a roaring trade.

We finished the evening around 9:30 or so and everyone thought that this was nice to have a change. Thanks to Jonathan for his painstaking research and entertaining talk.

13th April St David's Dinner

After the snow reduced the number of attendees for our Christmas get-together, we had to postpone our St David's Day Dinner as



snow again threatened to prevent people attending, so we bravely chose Friday 13th April instead.

The Committee debated what to call our delayed event: CDWS Spring Dinner 2018, the Spring Dinner, the Postponed St David's Day Dinner? In the end we stayed with the St David's Dinner.

While some of our members couldn't make the new date, fortunately both our singer, Meilir Jones and Iain Ledingham (acting as accompanist) were able to attend. Others who couldn't make the 1st March managed to make the new date. In the end we had a headcount of 70 – not bad.

Arriving at 6:30, it was a pleasure to see Harewood Downs in the daylight, as it was still light and we were able to admire the fine views over the Misbourne Valley.

The staff were very attentive and we were greeted with a glass of Prosecco or a non-alcoholic alternative while we assembled and met old friends and welcomed new members.

When we found our places at the tables, Gwyndaf John said grace in Welsh, but before he did so he explained the origin of the poem and the rules of the poetic style in which it was written (somewhat similar to a Japanese Haiku), giving it its unique style.

Our menu choices were cleverly printed out for each table, so that that would be no arguments about who had selected which dish - thanks to Graham Beavan.

The food was very good with main course choices of lamb shank, gammon or hake. Everyone was pleased with the quality and service.

After dinner, Kay introduced our entertainment for the evening, Meilir Jones (Baritone), accompanied by Iain Ledingham.

Meilir was originally from Llangefni on the Isle of Anglesey and is one of the first recipients of an award from the Bryn Terfel Foundation. He is currently engaged in postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Iain Ledingham is a Professor at The Royal Academy and also founded the Amersham Festival of music.

Meilir sang a variety of baritone works ranging from opera, to welsh folksongs and even a Shakespearean sonnet. These were all enthusiastically received by the members, who all called for an encore.



As the evening came to a close, Barrie Reece stepped up to the piano and played a series of welsh favourites with many of the society joining in.

At the end of the evening, we all thought that it was another successful

St David's Day – even if it had been delayed by six weeks!

11th May AGM

On 11th May 2018 we held our Annual General Meeting at Coleshill Village Hall.

People started arriving at 7pm, and by 7:30 there were 44



members present as Kay Day called the room to order.

The minutes for the previous AGM were agreed and Kay reviewed the past year, starting with the passing of Mike Stythe, an enthusiastic supporter of CDWS and who had organised memorable trips to Snowdonia. Kay remembered how Mike's army background meant that he always planned for the unexpected, including carrying a foldable stretcher in his rucksack in case of mishaps on the walk!

As two of the past year's events had been beset by snow, the Christmas and the St David's Day Dinner, Kay hoped that there would be no snow forecast for the summer lunch on 1st July!

Kay reviewed the past year's events and thanked Ernest Morris for hosting the Summer Lunch, Colin & Di Thomas for hosting the Christmas drinks and Pam Britton & Chris Thomas for arranging the golf day.

There were 7 new members this year meaning that we now have approximately 120 members.

Graham Beavan gave his financial report, showing that the society's finances were in good form with an underlying balance of about £2,800. Graham also announced that he is planning to move house and would soon be stepping down from the committee.

We then came to the election of the committee. Ann Thomas and Jean Owen are both retiring from the committee, and Kay and Jonathan Pegler are stepping down from positions as Chairman and vice Chairman after many years of service but would still be standing as committee members.

Colin Picton has been seconded to the committee as Minutes Secretary and was now proposed and elected.

David Powell was proposed as the new chairman, with Rob Britton as vice chairman, and these were both elected unopposed.

Ann Evans thanked Kay for her years of service as Chairman, Vice Chairman and Minutes Secretary and present her with a bouquet of flowers.

Ann Tennant then served a choice of chicken or beef stew with a choice of desserts.

David Powell thanked Ann Tenant for once again providing such a good meal, and then ran through the list of coming events: Spring Walk, Aberystwyth trip, Summer Lunch, Windsor Races, Golf Day, Bristol coach trip, Musical evening and Christmas Drinks.

David then introduced the evening's entertainment – Tony and Margaret Curtis with Jayne Pegler reciting light hearted and amusing works by among others Carol Ann Duffy, Idris Davies and (of course) Dylan Thomas.

The evening ended around 9:30 with Jonathan Pegler leading the singing of the National Anthem.

May Spring Walk

Our Spring Walk & Pub Lunch took place on a gloriously sunny day. How could it have been otherwise!



The members gathered outside the Swan in Ley Hill. This attractive

old pub faces the open land of Ley Hill Common and was originally three cottages dating from the 16th Century.

Sam, the bubbly landlady, unlocked the pub and came out to meet us - so some much-needed relief was had before we set off!

Thirteen members went off on the walk with another five joining us later for the lunch.

Passing the little village Memorial Hall, the footpath led to Tyler's Hill. This woodland is full of large deep holes from which clay was excavated for the local brick and tile making industry. We wound our way past and through these dips and on through open fields with distant views across the Chess valley, then followed a long, wide, but fortunately shady, path along a typical Chilterns "bottom". Finally, we strolled up through open parkland and woods to reach the far end of the Common.

Ley Hill Common is the home of a golf course, and here Ralph Broomby was delighted to re-make his acquaintance with a par three hole of particular difficulty with the green located in a valley well below the tees. After admiring this tricky golf hole, we strolled back across the springy turf of the common to the pub.

During the walk we learnt how to distinguish the scented native bluebell from the oft-planted Spanish species, smelt and tasted the leaves of Garlic Mustard, and discovered the extraordinary reproductive strategy of the Cuckoo Pint (also known as Lords & Ladies).



Inside the Swan still has the wooden beams, inglenook fireplace and the old original stove. Fortunately, padded cushioning has been fitted to the

old beams, though I still managed to bump my head on one beam. After a rest with drinks in the cool garden we went in for our meal. Tables had been thoughtfully arranged in a U shape for us.

Very conveniently the landlady had taken main course orders previously and had set up a tab for the various couples and singles present. The meals were excellent and quite a few found the desserts irresistible. The Swan delivered good food and excellent service.

All in all, it was a relaxed day out. We learned about bricks and how they are laid as well as some natural history. And we enjoyed the

good weather in some lovely Chiltern countryside.

Gwyndaf John

MEMBERSHIP

New members are always welcome.

Please contact our Membership Secretary,

Ann Lawrence on:

01494 727207 or

tisael2@gmail.com

Our Website has even more pictures and descriptions:

www.chilternwelsh.org

2018 Programme

1st July Summer Lunch

This year the Summer Lunch will be kindly hosted by Pat & Peter Chapman in Gerrards Cross.

6th August Windsor Races

A coach trip to watch an evening at Windsor Races, assured to be an entertaining evening - especially if you know nothing about horse racing!

31st August Golf Day

At Oaklands Park Golf Club, Chalfont St Giles. Non-players are very welcome to join for lunch.

20th September Bristol Trip

Details to be confirmed, but likely to include some (or all) of: SS Great Britain, boat trip, St Mary Redcliffe, walk seeing Welsh Back and Old Vic, coach to Clifton Suspension Bridge, village and downs.

11th November Musical Evening

King's Church, Amersham, organised by the London Welsh Society.

9th December Christmas Drinks

Sue & Bill Jones have kindly offered to host the event at their home in Gerrards Cross.