

# Chiltern District Welsh Society

## Winter Newsletter 2018



### Chairman's Report

It gives me great pleasure to write this introduction, after taking over from Kay Day as Chairman of the Society in May.

I must thank Kay for being such an excellent Chair over the last three years, and hope that I can follow in her footsteps.



I must also give my sincerest thanks to the other members of the committee for their hard work and enthusiasm in organising all our events and for handling our finance, bookings and communications in such a professional way.

This year both Anne Thomas and Jean Owen have stepped down from the committee. We are very grateful for their many years of hard work. We were lucky enough to have Colin Picton join the committee, but Graham Beavan, who has put in sterling work as our Treasurer for many years, will also be standing down in March.

This means that we are still short of at least one volunteer to join our friendly and fun team. So please contact one of the committee members if you can help – especially if you have any background in bookkeeping or finance.

We would also be delighted to hear of any suggestions for future events.

On the following pages you can read reports of our latest activities and our plans for next year.

*David Powell*

### Trip to Aberystwyth 18-22 June, 2018

An early start for the Society – 8 a.m. saw the Gerrards Cross Group welcomed by Mike, our driver from Mid Wales Coaches. Once all on board with pickups from Little Chalfont and Amersham the 20 + souls motored West. The first stop was Ludlow. What a brilliant medieval town. Everywhere the architecture was impressive. Our visits to various lunchtime hostelrys confirmed that most of the interiors of the buildings were somewhat 'higgledy piggledy' ..... a reflection of the 15th century.

By late afternoon we arrived at Aberystwyth-greeted by dismal weather and high winds. The group was joined by a further 6 free spirited members of the Society – so we were 26 having the opening Dinner at Medina- the nearest thing to an Istanbul Restaurant that most of us had seen. This was the first taste of friendly staff and very good cuisine; such events and venues were repeated on all subsequent evenings at other establishments.

In the morning our first port of call was the National Library of Wales. We were treated like royalty with an outstanding guide and an endearing helper ensuring stairs were negotiated and lifts made available. The National Library is far more than 'it says on the tin'; it is a wonderful archive of Welsh history, culture and indeed a repository of all



things Welsh. We all had an injection of joy and pride from the visit. The 200 staff

should be very proud of how they are looking after the legacy in their custodianship. We had the privilege to see the Kyffin Williams Art Exhibition. Though the paintings were somewhat melancholy, the mood and

atmosphere of the North Wales mountains is brilliantly captured.

The afternoon visit to The Cliff Railway and the Camera Obscura was abandoned as the railway was not working and the ONE repair engineer was indisposed- so plan B was introduced; a visit to Cae Hir, – a Welsh Garden with Dutch history. A 6-acre garden – the dream of Dutchman Wil Akkermans – now an elderly Welsh speaking gentleman. An afternoon for all of us to remember- some visitors even managed a scone (A WHOLE ONE) tea! We returned to Aberystwyth and enjoyed a walk around the Castle in glorious afternoon sunshine.

Wednesday morning soon arrived and we embarked on our boat trip from New Quay to look out for dolphins and seals. To say the trip was rough would be an understatement- the sounds of all sea birds were drowned by the screams from the amateur mariners. I do not recall if we saw any dolphins! We returned to terra firma and progressed to Llanerchaeron House; a John Nash villa – the Regency architect responsible for the Royal Pavilion at Brighton and Buckingham Palace. The walled garden and picturesque lake were a delight – on yet another cold dank Summer's day. On the way home Aberaeron shared its excellent afternoon teas – with the select few.

Next day the steam train to Devil's Bridge- with a carriage totally assigned to the Chiltern Welsh. The scenic panorama is breath-taking – Wales at its best! Anyone in doubt about the beauty of Mid Wales should book a trip on the Rheidol Steam train. At Devil's Bridge there is a choice of walk, – one of 210 steps the other nearer 680 steps. Hafod House, nearby offered refreshments – if you had enough time to wait, and wait .....We then visited Strata Florida Abbey, translated from Latin – simply "Vale of Flowers". Strata Florida, built around 1164, quickly became not only a site of huge religious significance, but also a natural home for Welsh culture. You only need to admire the majesty of the huge carved West door to appreciate how impressive the building must once have been. It is worth recording that Aberystwyth is a GEM awaiting to be found and enjoyed. See

the photo below – Aberystwyth Sea Front. The entrepreneurial cocktail bars, St Paul's Methodist Chapel – now an elegant bar, plus the BBQ restaurant, Pyscoty – boutique eatery, Ultracomida – outstanding



Tapas Bar, – were all a delight and contributed to a most social ending to every evening. We will return.

The journey home was a fitting end to the Mid Wales visit, – a comfort stop in the delightful Builth Wells and then experiencing the beauty of Chepstow – the Castle – built on cliffs above the River Wye and an appropriate reminder of the Castle grandeur of the Principality.

Well done Jonathan for again organising such a rewarding trip.

*Gwyn Owen*

### Summer Lunch 1st July 2018

The gazebos, tables and chairs arrived safely at the home of Peter and Pat Chapman in Gerrards Cross. In the morning, the team erected the gazebos with expertise and precision from many years of practice!



We have come to expect good weather at the summer

lunch and we were not disappointed. Blue skies and glorious sunshine greeted the 52 members who mingled in the garden before sitting down to lunch.



During lunch everyone enjoyed the food, the banter and the company.

Towards the end of the meal our chairman, David Powell, gave the thanks of the society to Ann Thomas



for her time as a member of the committee. Ann was not able to attend the AGM to receive her tribute and gift. It was a pleasure for members to applaud and give thanks to her.

The chairman thanked the caterers, 'Truly Scrumptious' for providing a delicious meal. He formally thanked Peter and Pat Chapman for hosting the event at their home.

Another glorious summer lunch and all are looking forward to the future events of the Chiltern District Welsh Society.

*Bob Ford*

### **Windsor Races Monday 6th August**



Our coach arrived at the Royal Windsor Racecourse in time for the first race at 5:30, with plenty of time to buy programmes and acquaint ourselves with the layout of the course.

For many of us, this was the first time that we had attended a race meeting. Rob Britton had arranged that our tickets covered entry to all areas, so we wandered through the paddock lawn and got our bearings.

It was a glorious summer's evening, and many of our party took shelter from the sun on chairs beneath a large marquee on the paddock lawn, where they could watch one of several big screens showing all the action.

We studied the race cards, giving details of all the horses, riders, past form, owners, trainers, heritage, and weights. We checked the odds given by the bookies, then chose our horse based on its name or the rider's colours.



Many of our party were able to pick a winner in one of the seven races that were run that evening, however, some had to be content with keeping the bookies in business.

It was possible to get very close to the horses as they walked round the parade ring, seeing

them gallop past at the winning post, and then seeing the winners steaming and sweating and being attended to in the winners' enclosure.

The last race finished at around 8:45, leaving enough time for either a last ice-cream or a slow saunter back to the coach.

Rob made sure that there were no stragglers and that everyone was on board and we set off back, arriving home before 10pm.

Thanks to Rob Britton for arranging such good weather and organising the trip.

### **Golf Day 2018**

Once again, we had a glorious golf day at Oakland Park Golf Club on 31 August 2018. The day was well supported with 34 sitting down for lunch. It was agreed without dissent that the golf day will again take place at Oakland Park on 30 August 2019.



It was good to have so many non-playing members coming for lunch.

As lunch was not until 2.30 it gave members the opportunity before lunch to catch up with old friends and meet new ones from the Society.

The day is primarily for fellowship and fun, and, although the golf and scoring are always important, it is the enjoyment of the day that is paramount. Our president, Anne Evans, presented the prizes. 6 teams of 3 competed.

The winning team was Margaret Broomby, Colin Thomas and Eryl Morris.

Highest stableford score was awarded to Margaret Broomby

Longest lady's drive – Jane Morris

Longest men's drive – Rob Britton

Nearest the pin – ladies – Sue Mills

Shame on the men, no-one landed on the green from the tee on the designated hole!!

Members thanked Pam Britton and Chris Thomas for organising the day.

*Robert Britton*

## Trip to Bristol 20th September 2018

The coach picked us up from Gerrards Cross at 7:45 – an early start! After collecting the rest of the party from Amersham, 20 of us set off for Bristol and Jonathan Pegler gave us an overview of Bristol's history and our itinerary as we travelled along the motorway.



Our first stop was at the Cumberland Basin to see 'Brunel's Other Bridge'. Now disused, it was a swing bridge across the Avon, predating the famous Clifton Bridge.

We then walked to Underfall Yard, once the centre of the sluice system which removed silt from the docks. It is now a small museum with exhibits showing how water pressure was used in the docks and locks and to power cranes and other machinery. The party spent a happy half hour or so examining exhibits and playing with the models.

We then all trooped off to board our sight-seeing boat for a tour of Bristol harbour. This was fascinating. Our guide took us right through the city from the Cumberland Basin to Temple Meads Station with many detours going through crowded shopping streets, quiet residential areas and some areas where the harbour had not yet been re-developed.



We crowded into the front of the boat to get the best view of sights such as Brunel's SS Great Britain, old dockside warehouses, breweries and churches, whilst hearing about Bristol's trading past.

The boat dropped us off at Welsh Back, where Welsh goods were once traded, and the party ambled up to St Nicholas Market, where we dispersed to grab a bite to eat at one of the restaurants or street food stalls, with some walking to St Mary Redcliffe church with its soaring gothic columns.



At 2pm we re-convened to visit some of the sights of central Bristol including the Corn Exchange, with its two minute hands showing both GMT and local time.

Later, we boarded the bus and travelled to Clifton, to walk over the suspension bridge and wander around the village.

The journey home began with a ride around Clifton Down, a large open space with great panoramas over the Avon and the port at Avonmouth. We continued along the M5, with views of both Severn Bridges, while Jonathan completed his story of Bristol.

We arrived back at about 7pm, and all gave thanks to Jonathan for putting in so much effort and planning for our trip, making it so informative and enjoyable.

## MEMBERSHIP

New members are always welcome.  
Please contact our Membership Secretary,

Ann Lawrence on:

01494 727207 or  
[tisael2@gmail.com](mailto:tisael2@gmail.com)

Our Website has even more pictures and descriptions: [www.chilternwelsh.org](http://www.chilternwelsh.org)

## 2019 Provisional Programme

### 25<sup>th</sup> January Quiz Night

Coleshill Village Hall with Fish & Chips.

### 1<sup>st</sup> March St David's Day Dinner

At Harewood Downs Golf Club. Speaker TBC

### Mid-April Spring Walk

A walk in the Chilterns and a pub lunch

### 17<sup>th</sup> May AGM

At Colehill Village Hall - followed by an amusing talk by ex-judge Tudor Owen.

### 17<sup>th</sup> June Welsh Trip

Based on Oswestry, including Shrewsbury, Powis Castle, Light Railway and canal trips.

### 7<sup>th</sup> July – Summer Lunch

At Alan & Di Longshaw's in Gerrards Cross

### 30<sup>th</sup> August – Annual Golf Day

At Oaklands Park Golf Club, non-golfers are very welcome to join us for lunch

### September/October Trip

Possible trip to Bath.

### 8<sup>th</sup> December Christmas Drinks

At Colin & Di Thomas's in Gerrards Cross.