

Chiltern District Welsh Society

Winter Newsletter 2019



Oswestry Trip 17th June 2019

After an 8am start our first port of call was at Presteigne to visit the Real Wine Company for a wine tasting and paella. We sampled up to 12 delicious wines, and some of us ordered a few.

After lunch and a brief stop in Montgomery, we drove to Oswestry's Premier Inn through stunning countryside, avoiding the floods which had been prevalent only a few days before.

Tuesday 18th June

Off to Llanfair Caerinion for a trip on the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway. The route crossed streams and small roads (with or without level crossing gates) and we admired the



countryside as we chugged along. It took about 45 mins to cover the 8.5 miles to Welshpool.

Next was Powis Castle, impressively built of local red sandstone, with wonderful views over the surrounding countryside. It was not only a castle but also a home. We entered smart drawing

rooms, elegant dining rooms and formal bedrooms, all decorated with paintings of family members from the 17th century to the present day. In a separate room there were some of the riches brought back by Clive of India including Indian weapons and fine jewel encrusted figurines.



The castle has beautiful gardens set within steep slopes and terraces.

On our return, and after a guided tour of Oswestry, the whole party met for an evening meal in the Wynnstay Hotel, making our own way home after discussions in the hotel bar.

Wednesday 19th June

This morning's venue was the Llangollen Canal,



where we all boarded a canal boat which took us across the famous Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, which is 1,000 feet long,

120 feet above the River Dee. We travelled on through the 1,380-foot Chirk tunnel, turning around just before the Chirk Aqueduct.

Our next stop was Chirk Castle, dating from the 13th century. The interior of the castle was varied in style and it was interesting to see the different tastes in different rooms.

Chirk has extensive gardens, with clipped yews, herbaceous borders, and views over the Ceiriog valley.

Thursday 20th June

Next was Brymbo - the site of an old iron works dating from about 1790. Volunteers showed us around the site and gave a history of the industry and showed us the original furnace, on the site of an even older coal mine.



Recently an ancient petrified forest was

discovered beneath the coal. This grew as gigantic ferns and mosses over 300 million years ago. As we walked over the site, one of the palaeontologists picked up a stone lying on the ground and inside was a fossil plant stem from 300 million years ago. We were the first people ever to see this fossil!

We then drove to Erddig Hall, built in the late 17th century. The hall is famous for its paintings, poems and stories of the servants who worked there. The gardens at Erddig are based on the original 18th century formal garden, containing a lake, and a canal in addition to rose gardens, fruit trees, walled gardens and herbaceous borders.

Friday 21st June

We said goodbye to those of us who had travelled by car and set off to Shrewsbury for a conducted walk around the town, looking at taverns and houses with connections to the Tudors, then a tour around St Mary's, Shrewsbury's oldest church, dating back to Norman times with its stained-glass windows. Our tour ended in the high street, where David III, Prince of Wales, was executed in 1283. After lunch we boarded the coach, where David Powell thanked Jonathan for the research and planning he had done to make the trip such a success. We arrived back home at around 4pm.

Summer Lunch – 7th July

The morning was rather grey and the trusty band of men erecting the gazebos, supervised by Alan Longshaw, survived the rain. Luckily the weather brightened to welcome the 48 people who turned up for lunch. The large Welsh flag, flying near the topiary, was very helpful in finding the correct location. The garden of our hosts, Alan and Diana Longshaw, was much admired and in particular the fish pond and water lilies. Some of the goldfish and carp were seen later when Alan fed them, but the general noise, chatter and



banter kept them in the depths for most of the time. The food, served by "To Dine For"

was excellent and many had seconds! It is interesting how many people are allergic to hazelnuts, is this a Welsh gene?



David Powell thanked our hosts and the caterers and made a presentation to Graham Beavan, thanking him

for his years of service as Society Treasurer. The enjoyable party broke up mid-afternoon and the volunteers dismantled the gazebos, tables and chairs to return them to the Longshaw's garage.

Kate Picton

Golf Day – 30th August 2019

Once again we were blessed with perfect golfing weather. I cannot recall having played



our golf day in any other conditions. The scores of the team competition were very close, and was won by Pam Britton, Colin Thomas and Robert Brett. Lady Winner – Irene Glyn Jones

The winner of the individual stapleford

score was Irene Glynn-Jones, who returned a fantastic score of 44. Irene played an excellent round of golf and her putting was outstanding.



The ladies' longest drive went to Pam Britton and the men's longest drive went to Ralph Broomby.

The ladies' nearest the pin was won by Jane Morris and the men's by Eryll Morris. Perhaps they have been practicing hard together!

Unfortunately, the numbers of golfers went down this year again, but we had full support from those members of the Society who came to the lunch.

Chris Thomas and Pam Britton were thanked for organising the golf day and the club staff for a very enjoyable meal.

Rob Britton

WWT Slimbridge 12th September 2019

Slimbridge, situated north of Bristol, close to the Severn estuary, is home to many different types of birdlife. It was founded in 1946, by Sir Peter Scott.



Our coach arrived at Slimbridge at 11:15, giving us time to meet the others of the party who had arrived by car, to have a coffee or have

an initial look around the reserve.

We split into two parties of twelve for the guided tour of the Scott's house. The volunteers told us about Peter Scott's earlier life, his wartime career and his past roles as a hunter and painter and Olympic sailing medallist, but he is best known for his passion for preserving wild life, founding the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust, and especially for creating the World Wildlife Fund.

The Scott's house borders a man-made lake, where Berwick Swans and many kinds of other waterfowl were only a few yards from the windows. I looked down, and there was a snipe only four or five feet away.



We were shown the Scott's kitchen, looking very much of the 1950's, with its range and an old-fashioned Belling 2 ring cooker.

We saw the dining room with its one long table, but were told that the Scotts usually ate on the small formica table in the bay window, where they could watch the birds. We were also shown the study, where Lady Phillipa Scott had most of her effects and paintings.

Perhaps the most interesting room was familiar to any of us who had seen Peter Scott's tv



programmes, with its wide panoramic view across the lake, and the extraordinary window which

was built out in front of the house and extends about 8 feet in each direction.

The tour took about 1 hour, and, as we were heading back to the main visitor centre, the guides asked us what we thought – as we were the first visitors to the house since its renovation! We have Peter Day (as chairman of the WWT) to thank for that privilege.

After the tour, some of us went off to hear a talk about the re-introduction of the European Crane into the country (a couple of them could be

seen skulking about in the bushes) and then on to watch the otters being fed.



Other members of the party were more adventurous and walked across the flat site to a hide, where knowledgeable WWT volunteers

pointed out interesting sights such as cranes godwits, curlew, knot, dunlin, linnet, an array of ducks and a fantastic fly past by a skein of geese at eye height and only metres away. The coach left Slimbridge at 3:30pm and we had a swift and pleasant journey back. Jonathan Pegler thanked Peter Day for arranging such a successful trip.

Skittles Evening 25th October

What a weekend of competitive sport it was. Out in Japan the Rugby World Cup semi-finals saw Wales narrowly lose a very close encounter with eventual champions, South Africa. But perhaps the most keenly contested sporting event was held nearer to home on the Friday evening. It was, of course, our very own CDWS Skittles Evening.

Rob Britton was the organiser and took charge of the evening in his best courtroom manner. Thirty-seven people had booked for the evening, including a handful of welcome guests. Somehow Rob managed the trick of organising everyone into six teams of six.

Each team played one after the other for three rounds. In every round each player had three skittle balls to knock down the nine pins. If the player was skilled or lucky enough to knock down all nine pins using less than three balls the pins were reset so they could score more points.

We had the Oaklands Park Golf clubhouse to ourselves, with three staff to serve drinks and food. The skittle alley was laid on the floor of the lounge, leaving plenty of room for us to sit and socialise when not "skittling". Pam Britton recorded the scores, which were projected onto a large tv screen.

A key role fell to Pamela Jones. Near to one end of the alley was a red line. The skittle ball had to be rolled over this rather than be thrown. Pamie's job was to wave a flag to signify any

foul throw that she spotted. She took to this job with gusto and nothing escaped her eagle eye.

Graham Beavan had the misfortune to captain the first team to play. We all learned from his team's mistakes in the first round, as they kept Pamela Jones busy with foul throws. Clearly not everyone had listened to Rob's instructions.

A variety of techniques were tried by the players. Maldwyn started as though he intended to send the pins flying. Alan Longshaw took this a step further and almost turned them into matchwood. On the other hand, Monica Owen sent her shots gently down the alley and still managed to knock the pins over. Several players made the remarkable discovery that the ball was just small enough to fit between the pins. As a result, some turns scored nothing, even when the ball was rolled almost straight down the middle. I'll mention no names for those who suffered this misfortune.

Half way through the rounds, play stopped and we enjoyed an excellent hot meal from the buffet. Good sized salmon steaks were accompanied by new potatoes and mixed vegetables and a tasty sauce. Then we helped ourselves to coffee and mints.

At the end of the evening prizes were awarded to the top scoring lady and top scoring gentleman, and to the members of the top scoring team.

Despite being probably the smallest person playing, and needing both hands to lift the ball, Pat Chapman showed off her previously undiscovered talent for skittles by winning the lady's prize with the best individual score of the evening. Alan Longshaw took the men's prize with only one point less than Pat.

The winning team was captained by Gwyndaf, and included Anthea Beavan, Lloyd Jones, Peter Johnson, Jane Morris and Pam Britton. They won by a mere two points and the result was in doubt until the very end of the contest.

Thanks were given to the Oaklands Park staff for the tasty meal and their good service and also to Rob, for organising such an enjoyable event and adjudicating so capably when competitive feelings were running high and a riot could so easily have been triggered. The two Pam's were also thanked, for keeping the score and ensuring fair play.

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

2019 Programme

Friday 24th January - Quiz Night

7pm for 7:30 at Coleshill Village Hall with Fish & Chip supper.

29th February - St David's Day Dinner

6:30 for 7pm at Harewood Downs Golf Club.
Entertainment by harpist, Glain Dafydd

16th April – Oxford Trip

A return visit to Jesus Collage with lunch and a conducted tour of Christ Church Cathedral.

15th May AGM 20th Anniversary

7pm for 7:30 at Coleshill Village Hall - a look back over the society's 20 years with songs.
Ann Tennant will provide canapes.

Wales Trip 8th – 12th June

This year Jonathan's Tours will focus on South Wales, including a tour of the Millennium Centre.

5th July Summer Lunch

Kindly hosted by Ernest Morris, in Amersham.

4th September Golf Day

Annual Golf Day at Oakland Park Golf Club, Chalfont St.Giles. Non-golfers welcome to join us for lunch.

October - London Walk with Welsh Theme

Details tbc

December Xmas Drinks (6th/ 13th?)

Venue tbc