

Chiltern District Welsh Society

Summer Newsletter 2024



Christmas Drinks

This year Ann Evans hosted the event at her house, The Tuft, in Chesham Bois. This was the original location for Christmas Drinks in the earlier years, until the Society became too large.

About 40 members attended as a few had called in sick at the last moment. We were lucky with the weather as it was quite clear and dry, without the snowdrifts that we have had in previous years!

As we entered, Ann and Kay Day greeted us with name badges – a great help if you can't quite remember someone's name.



Moving into the dining room we met Lloyd Jones at the drinks table, helping everyone to wines, beers and soft drinks.

As soon as everyone had arrived, Ann Tennant appeared from the kitchen, carrying canapes and soon various members

were acting as waiters and waitresses.

There was lots of food to go round and it was great to see old friends and to meet new ones.



One encounter had everyone smiling. Heather Roberts, a new member from Chorleywood arrived with her daughter Susan. Heather was originally from Pontypridd and it was pointed out that two of our longest standing members, Chris and Hazel Thomas were

also from Pontypridd.

Well, it was quite a re-union, as it turned out that Heather and Hazel were in the same class



at school – and even more interesting that Heather and Chris once went out together.

Although pressed neither Heather nor Chris would reveal what happened all those years ago

when they went for a walk to the top of the nearby mountain (hill?).

Janet John circulated handing out copies of the 2023 Winter Newsletter (and saving postage costs).



At about 3pm everyone was handed a song-sheet and we all gathered around the piano as Ann played many of our favourite carols.

We all said our goodbyes at around 3:30,

before it got dark, and made our way home again.



It was a very joyful occasion, and our thanks go to Ann for hosting the event again, Ann Tennant for the lovely canapes and to Kay for organising the event.

Quiz Night 2024

On 19th January 2024 we all gathered at Coleshill Village Hall at 7pm for our first engagement of the year.

30 of us formed into 5 teams to do battle in Colin Picton's Quiz Evening. Colin set us the first task of creating team names. These were:

Lloydia (from Gwyndaf and Janet John's adventure finding a rare lily on Snowdon)
Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwilllantys
iliogogogoch (thanks to Bill Jones)
Wyddfa (Snowdon)
Old Speckled Hen (the team's tiple of choice)
The Magnificent 7 (the team having a numerical advantage).



Colin's quiz had a definite Welsh theme with rounds on.....
Welsh Celebs, Welsh Geography and Welsh History.

There were 8 rounds of questions plus a picture round. However, the

questions were not as difficult as some that we have had in previous years and even the English players were able to answer most of the questions.

At 8pm the Fish and Chips were arrived from The Village Chippy at Three Households, which really does a fine job.

After our meal, the quiz continued, and in the end, Lloydia won by a comfortable margin.

The final scores were:

Lloydia	172
Llanfair pg	164
Wyddfa	130
Speckled Hen	123
The Magnificent 7	150

There were no prizes, just the honour and bragging rights for winning (I have to say that Mr John did look rather smug).



Gwyndaf thanked Colin for all the work that he had put in to devising and running the quiz and we cleared up and

went home just after 10pm.

Thanks again to Colin for all his hard work.

St David's Day Dinner 2024

St David's Day Black Tie Dinner – held on 1st March at Gerrards Cross Golf Club

All 50 guests were greeted with a glass of bubbly or soft drink – as appropriate.

The lounge provided an excellent space to catch up with old friends and indeed some guests from the principality – Whitland to be precise. I was delighted to meet with the brother of one of my classmates at Narberth Grammar



School. Our mutual acquaintances were numerous; a joyful start to the evening.



As usual Gerrards Cross Club did us proud with a very good 3 course meal; the leek and potato soup was so good I thought my mum must have had a hand in it. There were also many compliments directed at the sewin (sea trout) – main course as well as the suitable lamb dish. The staff looked after us well and added to the friendly ambience of the evening.

The after-dinner entertainment was provided by



a harpist – Lucy Hewitt. A local artiste who attended Dr Challoner's High School in Little Chalfont. In 2021 she was the Bucks Young Musician of the Year. She concluded her Harp pieces with the Welsh National Anthem – which was accompanied by all guests singing with gusto.

The evening concluded with “community singing” around the Electronic Keyboard – superbly played by John Breeze. Six hymns (3 in Welsh and 3 in English) ensured that we all departed with ‘a song in our heart’.



Well done to the Committee for a very successful evening and fluent compering from Gwyndaf John – with both amusing and informative potted history of St. David.

Da iawn.

Gwyn Owen

Theatre Trip – Nye

On Wednesday 20th March, we had a trip to The National Theatre to see a matinee performance of ‘Nye’ which tells the story of Aneurin Bevan, from his imagined death bed, under the influence of morphine, looking back over his life.

Martin Sheen was wonderful as Nye, appearing in all the scenes dressed in his hospital pyjamas and seemingly bewildered as each scene unfolded before him in random order, as a schoolboy with a stutter, his fights with

Winston Churchill, his open marriage relationship with Jennie Lee and the death of his father (a Welsh miner).



Finally he remembers his creation of the National Health Service only finally winning over the doctor’s opposition by promising a lot more money.

Spring Walk 2024

This year Gwyndaf and Janet John took us to The Lee for our Spring Walk.

There were about 26 walkers, including 5 of our newest members. We met at 10:00 at the Cock and Rabbit Inn and placed our orders for lunch.

Janet had secured the help of a local guide and old friend – Trish Swain to help us as she was able to grant us access to the old church. Trish breeds hearing dogs, and brought a spaniel called Tammy along with her.



The new church was built in 1867, for the growing population of the village. Unusually for a Victorian church, it was built in the ‘Arts and Crafts’ style and was very light and airy inside.



Trish then took us to a much smaller building behind the new church. This dated back to about 1220, built by the Cistercian monks at Missenden Abbey.

Inside there were traces of the medieval

wall paintings showing the weighing of souls and another depicting St Christopher.

The stained glass windows are also of interest. At the very top is one of the original windows dating back to the 13th century, showing the crucifixion, and the figures of St Mary and St John. Below that, the main window depicts three puritans including John Hampden and Oliver Cromwell.

We then walked through the woods, which were carpeted with wild garlic and their aroma filled the air. Some of our walkers took the opportunity to gather leaves as they can make



a very good pesto. Where there was more light in the woods, there were banks of beautiful bluebells.

As the village is quite high up, there are no streams so the village used to rely on a pond for its water. In 1897 (Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee) a well was dug to provide clean water. This was quite a task, as it is 365 feet deep and the workers had to rely on candles for their light and a blacksmith’s bellows to provide ventilation. This well was still in use until the 1950’s.

In front of the new manor house that Liberty had built stood a most incongruous figurehead of the 'Lord Howe', one of the last wooden sailing battleships, purchased as salvage by Liberty for the timbers.

Running late, we made a hasty retreat back to the Cock and Rabbit in time for lunch where the food was very good.

Rob Britton proposed a vote of thanks to Gwyndaf, Janet and Trish (and Tammy) for a lovely walk.

2024 AGM

On 10th May we held our 24th AGM at Coleshill Village Hall with an excellent turnout of 38 members.

Chairman Gwyndaf John opened proceedings and, after welcoming everyone, moved on to the formal part of the evening, with apologies for absence, approval of last year's minutes and running through the events held during 2023/4.

Membership stands at 113 plus 4 honorary members and the Society had a surplus of £475 for the year, with a bank balance of £4419.96. We are keeping membership at £10 p.a., and the Committee tries to make each event break even.

Gwyndaf announced that our Minutes Secretary, Colin Picton, is standing down to spend more time with his grandchildren, and thanked Colin for his years as secretary and as our previous chairman.

Our committee is now understaffed and we really need at least one more volunteer to help with the minutes. The duties are not very arduous, involving about 6 meetings per year.

The existing committee was then unanimously voted in for another year's term.

There was broad support for the suggestion that we investigate the possibility of another trip to Wales using a commercial company to arrange it.

At 7:00 the formal part of the evening ended and Ann Tennant served everyone supper. It is always a wonder that Ann can do so much on her own.

Our speaker was Lloyd Jones, who had been persuaded to talk to us about his time in the police force, more particularly, in Special Branch.

Lloyd started his career in Gwent Constabulary, moving to Panda cars and then to CID.

The Chief Constable of Gwent created a Special Branch within Gwent. It was quite a coincidence that the Chief Constable's daughter is one of our newest members – Gail Baldwin!

Lloyd volunteered for this embryo Special Branch and, after 6 or 7 years, he moved from Gwent to the Metropolitan Police Special Branch, a far larger organisation.

Lloyd described his training, surveillance methods, armoury, the tasks involved with protecting VIPs (and the perks), and the record keeping and research in the days before computers.

We all found Lloyd's talk fascinating and Gwyndaf led a vote of thanks for such an interesting and informative talk.

Jonathan Pegler

The Society lost a much-loved mainstay of our Society in May, when Jonathan passed away at his home in Chalfont St Peter.

He was an active committee member for many years, serving as Chairman and later as Treasurer as well as organising many events. Notably he planned and led unique and greatly enjoyable trips to Wales. His Quiz Evenings were legendary. He will be greatly missed, both as a person and for his contributions to our Society.

A Celebration for the Life and Gifts of Jonathan Dahl Pegler was held on 24th June at St Mary' Church in Old Amersham.

2024 Provisional Programme

Friday 16th August (tbc) – Golf Day.

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

Friday 13th September Autumn Walk

A guided walk around Windsor and/or Eton.

Sunday 8th December – Christmas Drinks

Colin & Diane Thomas have kindly volunteered to host this event once more at their home in Gerrards Cross