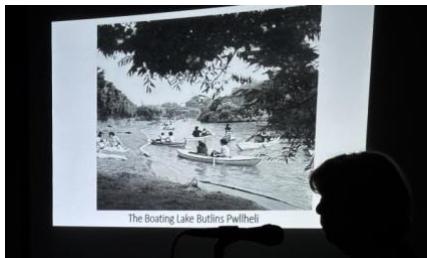


If you weren't there, this is what you missed! Roger Wright reports on the last few meetings

September 2025

At our September meeting, Rosemary Chaloner gave us a lively presentation called Hi-de-Hi! Being a Butlin Redcoat. First, she described how Butlin's holiday camps started. Billy Butlin (later Sir) used to do the rounds of funfairs running various stalls and identified a need for something more exciting. This led to the first three camps being set up in the mid 1930s in Skegness, Clacton and Filey. Rosemary then told us that Redcoats worked in three areas: general duties (similar to those of a tour rep in a holiday resort); the Kids' Club, and the costume character team. They also staged and judged competitions (remember the knobbly knees competition?!), were part of the live entertainment team and were expected to lead the ballroom dancing. The camp at Barry Island ran from 1966 to 1986: the site is now a residential complex.



October 2025

In October, Matt Morgan, an intensive care unit doctor and author, gave us a talk entitled Nye: the Medicine Behind the Play. He explained how, in collaboration with playwright Tim Price, he was recruited as medical advisor for Nye, the play about Aneurin Bevan and the birth of the NHS. He reflected on this experience – guiding actors through the realism of hospital life, helping shape scripts and props (some based on Llandough Hospital), and watching Bevan's compassion and conviction come alive on stage – and revealed the deep parallels between medicine and theatre. Both rely on teamwork, empathy, precision and storytelling.

November 2025

Kate Wise, a structural engineer running the company Static Dynamic, offered a personal perspective on understanding, diagnosing and conserving old buildings – from medieval stonework and lime mortars to timber frames and vaulted masonry. Kate explained that historic buildings are living records of how our communities have evolved, but they also present unique challenges when it comes to repair, adaptation and long-term care. She drew on her experience with projects such as Bishops' Palace, Llandaff, Cardiff City Hall and other listed structures across Wales and the West of England. She explored how engineers work within the fabric of historic buildings to ensure safety while preserving their character and authenticity. She discussed the principles of conservation – minimal intervention, reversibility, and compatibility – and how these can be balanced with modern needs for comfort, energy efficiency, and sustainability.

December 2025

The December meeting continued the format adopted over previous years. By charging a small extra entry fee, we were able to provide drink and light refreshments for the 28 people who attended. Lyn Owen's quiz was based on a number of subjects, for example:

Which symbol shares the number 3 on a QWERTY keyboard? (the £ sign)

What was the ship on which Charles Darwin sailed, on a journey which inspired The Origin of Species? (HMS Beagle.)

When giving us the answers, Lyn also gave us additional interesting information on the subjects. Well done Lyn – same again please next Christmas!