



Post Maes Pedr



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Autumn/Winter : Hydref/Gaeaf 2016

An African Adventure

At the September meeting Edith MacDonald shared with us her memories of her holiday in Mali. Edith's talk was illustrated with photographs she had taken on the trip which gave us an insight into the culture of the country.

Mali is a landlocked country in West Africa and is five times the size of the UK. In the late 19th Century the French took control of Mali and it remained in French control until 1960. French is the main language of the country although there are also over 30 other African languages spoken.

The highlights of Edith's travels in Mali were the visits to Timbuktu, Djenne and Mopti. Djenne is famous for its Mosque which is the largest mud structure in the world and in 1988 the area became a World Heritage site.

In Djenne there are the memorials to the first European explorers to reach Timbuktu. They were Daniel Houghton and Gordon Laing but both men were fatally wounded on their expeditions.

Edith showed us images of daily life in Mali such as children having their lessons outdoors, women fetching water from the well and doing the laundry on the riverbank.

Edith told us about the sacred sites of the Dogon culture. The Dogon culture is linked with Sirius (The Dog Star). The Dogon population is concentrated along a stretch of escarpment called the Cliffs of Bandiagara. The cliffs provide a setting for Dogon villages built on the sides of the escarpment. The Dogon are the only known group in Africa to continue the practice of making rock art. Dogon rock paintings are applied by finger in red, white, and black pigments. The images depict a range of human ancestral figures, masks, weapons, snakes, lizards, and other images that have cosmological and cultural significance to the Dogon.

Mali is one of the hottest countries in the world and droughts are frequent. However the country's economy centres on agriculture. Natural resources such as gold and salt also contribute to the economy. Edith gave us a very informative presentation about her African adventure. It sounded as though travel conditions were far from comfortable for much of the time. This was most definitely not a luxury holiday but a true expedition!

Harvest Supper

Our meeting in October was our traditional Harvest Supper. As expected there was an abundance of edible treats for us to feast on. However before we dined there was an important item on the evening's agenda ... the results of the photographic competition. Back in April Carl had invited members to submit photographs of Welsh Landscapes. Members were allowed to enter three photographs each and these had been displayed on the website throughout the competition.

Carl presented all the entries for all to see and invited the authors of the photographs to provide some background information about their entries. Then we had the results from the judges - no less than four professional photographers! Carl announced the top ten photographs before finally getting to the top three. In 3rd place was Hazel Williams with her photograph of Snowdonia. There was a tie for the first place which was shared by Adele Mallows and Sue Hobday. Adele's photograph was of Bracelet Bay, Swansea and Sue's was of Llansteffan Beach, near Carmarthen. The winners received their photograph framed.

Thanks to Carl for his excellent work with the website and for encouraging members of the society to contribute to it.



Then it was time to sample the culinary delights on offer – which needless to say were all extremely delicious.

WINE TASTING

Our November meeting was a wine-tasting session. Tony, Carwyn and Roger had each selected two of their favourite wines with the

labels hidden from view. There was a selection of Red and White to taste as well as a variety of non-alcoholic drinks which Tony had generously provided.

The tasting activity required members to identify the type of wine, the country of origin and to cost each one.

Natter, Nosh and Noggin

The December meeting was of course our Christmas get-together. However we were without our usual backing band this year as the Salvation Army Band were unable to attend. Tony and Morfydd had prepared a splendid programme of entertainment for us and Ellen provided the music for our carol singing on a keyboard.

We sang several traditional carols, there were Bible readings in Welsh by Sue and in English by Joy. Bethan read a Welsh poem and also an extract from Dylan Thomas's *A Child's Christmas in Wales*. Evan sang a solo Welsh Carol and a trio comprising Carwyn, Huw and Tom sang "We Three Kings".



Morfydd gave us an alternative version of 12 days of Christmas (or 12 grey mice!) Tony gave a talk on Matthew 2 v 6-12 and Huw read a prayer. Morfydd then brought the entertainment to a close with some jolly cracker jokes.

The food was in plentiful supply (as always) and of the usual high standard. We had a collection for Charity and raised £72.72p which was shared between the Salvation Army and Embrace (for the Middle East).

More photos can be viewed on the website.