

Ruthin Town and Around

O Gwmpas y Dre



Local news, comment and features, published quarterly by Ruthin and District Civic Association, Cymdeithas Ddinesig Rhuthun a'r Cylch

June 2013

ALL EYES ON CLOCAENOG FOREST

Derek Jones sets out the windfarm proposals and their consequences

Most of our readers will know by now that RWE Npower Renewables are hoping to create a new wind farm on Clocaenog Forest sometime in the next few years. They propose a farm of 32 turbines, whose height will not exceed 145 metres, and 2 further masts no higher than 100 metres. The firm calculate that the farm will generate between 64 and 96 megawatts each year, enough to supply 40,800 households who use an average amount of electricity.

To reach the site and to allow movement between the turbines once they are built, 2.6 kms of new roads will need to be built, supplementing 20km of existing forestry tracks. This is a substantial development; no wonder it has been designated a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project'.

By the time this edition of **Town and Around** is published, individuals and community groups, including perhaps the Ruthin and District Civic Association, may have registered their interest in the development, allowing them to set out in detail what they feel about the wind farm, and to speak at any public enquiry. RWE have set considerable store on obtaining the views of ordinary citizens of Clocaenog and district.

If readers have not registered an interest (registration had to be complete by 12th June), they may nevertheless want to think about some or all of the following points:

- Do the proposals include a proper survey of the archaeology and cultural history of the site?
- How much thought has been given to the impact of the works on the residents of Clocaenog Village especially while the wind farm is being constructed?
- How well screened will the farm be? Will you be able to see it, from, for example the summit of Moel Famau, or from Denbigh Castle?
- On the face of it, pine trees ought to protect the area from what some might consider intrusive turbines; but supposing there is an increased need for timber in the next 20 years, and Clocaenog needs to contribute its share?
- There are already a number of wind turbines in the area, if not actually within spitting distance of Clocaenog, at least near enough to it. Would this one be just 'one too many'?

Town and Around always welcomes its readers' views. Please let us know what you think and we promise to print a selection of letters – and, of course, to keep our eyes on the run up to a decision, and, if the project goes ahead, to keep you posted on whether the firm lives up to its promises!



(Image reproduced by permission of N Power Renewables)

Ruthin's New Visitor Centre

Heather Williams brings us up-to-date

Many locals and visitors to Ruthin will have noticed the new Ruthin Visitor Centre in St Peter's Square which recently opened in this prominent location. This initiative has been set up by the Ruthin Chamber of Trade, with financial support from Ruthin Town Council for a six month period.

The new Visitor Centre provides a service that the Tourist Information Point at the Craft Centre does not. Someone to talk to! It has volunteers who can help visitors to Ruthin by answering a wide range of questions and also give information/leaflets about what they can see in the area. Visitors so far have ranged from far and wide such as Australia, Germany, High Wycombe and the closer to home Chester as well as locals from nearby villages- who just love to spend time visiting this charming town.

Anyone can volunteer - you just need to have some knowledge of Ruthin and the surrounding area. What sort of questions will be asked? Probably those along the line of - Where can I buy an OS map? Have you got a map of the town? (it is in the Ruthin town guide). What supermarkets are there here? Where is the Gaol? Where is the Black and White House (Nantclwyd y Dre) and what are its opening hours? Incidentally did you know that Nantclwyd y Dre is opening on Mondays and Tuesdays during July and August and that you can also buy a season ticket for the Council-owned heritage attractions? And probably many more questions!

The Centre has also been well used by residents and businesses as a place where they can share information about what's going on in the area. So why not pop in and see what's in there. It's a great place to meet people.



The new Visitor Centre provides a service that the Tourist Information Point at the Craft Centre does not. Someone to talk to!

Ruthin Markets Live Again

Alexander Hughes is enthusiastic in promoting regular markets

The demise of the Ruthin Produce Markets was much regretted, but through the revitalised Ruthin Chamber of Trade, there are once again markets of St Peter's Square. Our town still has all the atmosphere of a market town. The farmers' market, now residing on the periphery of the town, continues to be busy and brings farmers and those connected with the farming community into Ruthin on a regular basis. And the Market Hall operates regularly throughout the week – the Country Market on Friday is very popular and on Saturday, in particular, the hall is abuzz with stall-holders and prospective purchasers spilling out onto Market Street and giving it its original character.

Now St Peter's Square is once again the venue for the decorative stalls with their bright striped awnings as we now have a regular programme of planned markets through the year. This is what St Peter's Square should always have been – a bustle of people and stall holders selling their wares and giving the centre of the town the throb of life.

Alexander Hughes is the coordinator, and planned markets for this year are to be on Saturdays, August 31st, September 21st and then to bring the year to a conclusion, there will be the bumper Christmas Market on 30th November. This is planned to coincide with the Lantern Parade and the switching-on of the Christmas Lights. There will be live entertainment at all the markets and continuing the now established tradition for the Christmas Market, there will be a Hog-Roast. Stall holders will be principally local traders and these markets are wonderful opportunities for Ruthin's residents to forsake Tescos and pour into the town centre and support its markets. For further information call Alexander on 01824 704643 or on alexanderhughes@outlook.com



This is what St Peter's Square should always have been – a bustle of people and stall holders selling their wares and giving the centre of the town the throb of life

Siop Pwllglas

Miles Anderson reports on our latest Community Shop



In and around Ruthin, we have been blessed with community enterprises for a number of years. Volunteering, working together and local communities expressing themselves in communal projects has been part of our culture, particularly in rural areas of Wales, since earliest times.

Recently this has expressed itself in the creation and sustaining of the community shop at Clwyddnewydd and the rescuing and turning round of the village pub, The Raven, at Llanarmon-yn-Ial as a community operation. The latest, highly regarded, community enterprise is the newly opened Siop Pwllglas Community Shop. The doors first opened to villagers and locals on the 20th March and the official launch, with all 'pomp and ceremony' was on May 17th. That day the market stalls of Ruthin with their bright, striped awnings, stood on the shop's forecourt. They brought market stall holders to the village store as part of the afternoon's festivities. And Pwllglas's oldest and youngest resident joined to cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony.

But to get to that opening day, a whole lot of ground work had to be laid out. It all started when the Village Hall Committee called an open meeting to sound out residents as to whether they would like to have a community shop, and gauge the level of supporters and volunteers who would be prepared to work at it. Next there was a feasibility study to be completed before the main funders, which included Denbighshire County Council, Cadwyn Clwyd, the Plunkett Foundation and Village SOS, were brought on board.

As well as all the usual range of 'corner-shop' goods that are available in the shop - they are regularly restocked by twice weekly deliveries - there are shelves of local produce, fruit and vegetables, cakes and new-laid eggs

Speaking to Sharon Newell, one of the earliest active supporters, she told me how the whole project has brought so many members of the community together, and the support was obvious from the numbers of locals calling in for a chat as well as doing some shopping whilst I was there.

The available, spare location was an unused space under the Pwllglas Village Hall stage. This it was decided could be utilised and the existing ample car parking on site was a bonus. Other helpful factors were that almost all villagers live on the same side of the busy A road that runs through the village. And that same road that will certainly bring in passing trade to supplement the locals use of the shop.

A 'Unique Selling Point' as it was explained to me is the identification of the shop with the Eyarth Butterfly reserve up on the facing escarpment, and they have created a beautiful butterfly mosaic in the front paving, as well as stocking up on leaflets highlighting this very special nature reserve. Casual visitors will be encouraged to take the footpath up to Eyarth Rocks, whose rare limestone pavement forms the habitat for many rare species of plants and butterflies, before returning to complete their shopping. And then they can have a great cup of coffee, or tea, from the impressive new machine and continue on their way.

As well as all the usual range of 'corner-shop' goods that are available in the shop - they are regularly restocked by twice weekly deliveries - there are shelves of local produce, fruit and vegetables, cakes and new-laid eggs.

As I was leaving, after an earlier visit, the man putting up shelves at the back came through to take his lunch break. He was a sprightly 80 year old volunteer! This is a project that has the backing and active support of the whole community – and it is no surprise that it is a close contender for an award. Do call at the Pwllglas community Shop; you will get a very warm welcome and be surprised what is available there and, I am assured, their prices are very competitive – and many even lower – than Tesco's!



RUTHIN IN THE ROUND

Derek Jones takes an 'All Round View'

In London, they have St Paul's Cathedral, the Millennium Dome, and the Reading Room of the British Museum, to name but three. In Liverpool they have the (Roman Catholic) Metropolitan Cathedral (known affectionately as 'The Mersey Funnel'), 195 feet (59.4 metres) in diameter, providing for a congregation of 2000. And in Ruthin, more modestly, but nonetheless just as distinctive in its setting, we have the Llanfwrog Community Centre, Mwrog Street

Ruthin has no other 'domed' buildings, but we do have a couple which could be described as 'oval'. One of them, Capel Tabernacl, Well Street, is described in the Civic Association's publication, *Slow Walks Round Ruthin*, as 'a cathedral among chapels'. Some might think that the other, Plas Meddyg dispensary, considered purely as architecture, was not in the same league; but they would refrain from that kind of comment because the dispensary provides a fine, efficient service.

Though I have not been inside, I am sure that Llanfwrog Community Centre also provides 'a fine efficient service'. Opened in 2007, its officers see it as 'the heart of Ruthin,' with an emphasis on sport, but its two-storey building is also capable of housing conferences, parties, classes and concerts. Last October, they featured 'The Rocking Rev and the Plastic Pink Showcase', with the Rev'd Philip Chew, vicar of five churches around Llanarmon-yn-Ial, 'taking it away'. Whatever next!

But, back to the architecture. There is something particularly satisfying about round buildings, although it is quite difficult to pin down why they appeal to us so much. So far as Ruthin and the Vale of Clwyd are concerned, they have been here a very long time, at least since the Ice Age. Moel Arthur has been described in *The Archaeology of Clwyd* (Clwyd County Council 1991) as 'a conical hill crowned by a roughly circular hillfort'; Moel Fenlli hillfort includes a domed summit; and the Iron Age enclosures at Pont Petryal, Clawddnewydd are, again, 'roughly circular'. Roundness is in our (prehistoric) blood.

The Jubilee Tower on Moel Famau, erected in 1810 to commemorate the jubilee of George III, and currently being refurbished, is hardly prehistoric. Nor is it exactly circular; it was designed to resemble an Egyptian obelisk. But could it be that the architect of Llanfwrog Community Centre was unconsciously influenced by this famous local landmark, which was originally to have been built on three levels; the Tower is, after all, visible from the Community Centre, built, as we noted earlier, on two levels.

For some people of course it is mainly 'the inside that counts'. There is something particularly warm and inviting about round buildings. So far as performances are concerned they encourage audience involvement and participation (thus 'theatre in the round' and Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral) – perhaps that is what attracted 'the rocking Rev'!

As for us with *Town and AROUND*, we are of course biased!



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Window on Wales – a Celebration of Edward Pugh and Cambria Depicta

Ruthin Craft Centre – Gallery 3

27th July to 22nd September 2013

Philip Hughes warmly welcomes Ruthin's 18th/19th C artist



It is strange how his home town has forgotten Edward Pugh. This will change this summer when Ruthin will celebrate his work and the publication of Professor John Barrell's monumental biography **Edward Pugh of Ruthin: A Native Artist** (University of Wales Press) on the bicentennial of his death.

Edward Pugh lived from 1763-1813. He was born in Ruthin and was a Welsh-speaker who moved to London where he became a Royal Academician and established himself as a successful portraitist and landscape artist. He never lost his links with North Wales visiting Chester and Ruthin on a regular basis. He produced superb engraved images of landscapes, Denbighshire in particular and, more widely, of North Wales. He also wrote what is probably the best account of a tour in Wales ever written, **Cambria Depicta**, a book viewed by many as far superior to George Borrow's *Wild Wales*.

Edward Pugh of Ruthin: A Native Artist is the first book to consider Pugh's work in detail. It shows how his landscapes and descriptions reveal a wealth of local knowledge and how they dramatize issues that were of great importance to Wales at the turn of the nineteenth century: the effects of the enclosure of common land; the effects of the war with France on industry and the condition of the poor; the need to develop and modernise the Welsh economy; the power of the great landowners. They can tell us about life in North Wales with an insight unparalleled in all the other pictures and tours we have of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century North Wales which were made by English artists and writers.

Edward Pugh's **Cambria Depicta** gives us his very personal Window on Wales at the beginning of the 19th Century. Two hundred years on we are updating this with an exhibition of the work of 21st Century contemporary artists. Taking Pugh's **Cambria Depicta** as a starting point, Ruthin Craft Centre has asked six contemporary applied artists to create an exhibition of contemporary work inspired by Pugh - a contemporary Window on Wales

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Textile artist and painter Eleri Mills (the Arts Council of Wales' Creative Wales Ambassador) along with Becky Adams, Lowri Davies, Julia Griffiths-Jones, Christine Mills and Luned Rhys-Parri will produce pieces in textile, ceramic, wirework, papiermaché and book art. And as a centerpiece to the exhibition, copies of the **Edward Pugh of Ruthin: A Native Artist** and **Cambria Depicta** especially hand bound by Ruthin's acclaimed designer-bookbinder, Simeon Jones, will be on display. Simeon Jones will be in residence at the Craft Centre during the weekend of 20/21/22 September. There will be an illustrated talk by T. Gwyn on John Barrell. John Barrell will be available for a book signing (date & time tbc – probably Sunday 22nd September).

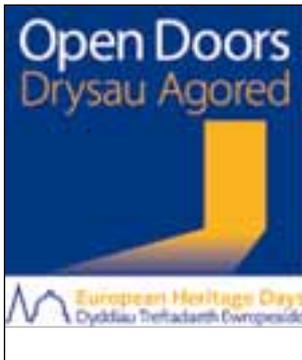
In parallel with this exhibition, there will be an exhibition of original prints by Edward Pugh on display in Ruthin Library where there will be a lecture by John Barrell on Saturday, 27th July.

Details of how to obtain copies of **Edward Pugh of Ruthin: A Native Artist** and **Cambria Depicta** are available from Spread Eagle Books and Elfair in Ruthin.

We should be proud of Edward Pugh. A native of Ruthin, he was an acknowledged influence on 20th century masters such as John Piper and his masterpiece, **Cambria Depicta**, offers us a unique picture of north Wales two hundred years ago.

seen in passing

- Recently arrived in Ruthin are the monthly auction rooms. They are situated on the left at the lower end of Rhos Street. This new venture joins the Picturehouse Antique Centre in helping to establish Ruthin as a hub for bric-a-brac, antiques and collectables that could bring a number of people into town. Their auctions are monthly with viewing on Fridays followed by a Saturday sale. Full details are available on their web site, www.ruthinauctionhouse.co.uk or on 01824 704392.
- The Anchor corner, just lower down the road is still blighted by the boarded up hotel that is now becoming a site for disfiguring fly posting. However the latest news that Ruthin School are to take the premises over for use as boys' boarding accommodation is most welcome. It will be sad to lose this valuable visitor accommodation, but, on the other hand it will be good to have the property cared for and not just turned into flats. And, other recent developments of flats have not been exactly overwhelmed with prospective purchasers!
- And other licensed premises are now advertised for sale. The historic Corporation Arms on Castle Street, prominent in the cultural centre of town is looking for a buyer. Ruthin has always been a town well served with hostleries from its earliest days when almost every house in Clwyd Street was a pub. As a historic market town this is part of its heritage. Park Place, first built in expectation of the arrival of the railway in Ruthin, is similarly 'embellished' with a 'For Sale' sign.
- Perhaps it is a sign of the times - reference the above pubs and hotels for sale - that the prominent premises in Well Street, until recently occupied most decorously by Amber Bridal, are to be taken over by Williams Estate Agents! On the subject of open / closed properties, a quick walk round town centre we noted 98 shop premises of which 9 were vacant – almost 10%. This is down on the apocryphal report last year that there was only one closed. However compared with similar small market towns recording one in 8 or worse one in 5 closed, Ruthin is not doing too badly, and it certainly looks 'Open for Business'!
- Residents both urban and rural have commented favourably on the work carried out by DCC in keeping our roads open during and after the recent heavy snow falls. There will be those who were unimpressed by their efforts – you can't please everyone, but we are pleased to pass on these complimentary remarks.



- This year Open Doors will be celebrated over the weekend of September 28th / 29th. Watch out for details as early booking for walks and tours is recommended.
- With a relatively high proportion of elderly residents in our catchment area, once again we have favourable comments from disabled drivers on the provision of designated parking bays and dropped pavements so greatly needed by wheelchair users.
- Recycling bins seem to be with us long term and, by comparison with other areas, ours service is highly regarded, but the protracted periods when they stand outside homes is unsightly – especially the garishly coloured orange ones, and the blue ones are not much less unsightly! Since collection of the orange ones is early in the morning they tend to be put out the afternoon before; and then for the other bins, collection is much later in the day. The result is that they all tend to stand there for a full 24 hours. Could both collections be at a similar time and then they could be put out, and returned in a short time?
- It is noticed that County Council are having a blitz on the perennial dog fouling problem. We would hardly be a community newsletter if we didn't have an occasional mention of Dog Fouling. But having mentioned it, enough said!



Looking up – Ruthin’s High Lights

Miles Anderson takes a stroll round, camera in hand



It is sad, but unsurprising, that Ruthin’s streets are not paved with gold – despite the recent liberal application of a superfluity of yellow lines!

But if we look up above eye level there are many rewarding sights to behold. Towns that, like Ruthin, have grown and developed over the centuries have a certain quirkiness to them that is particularly reflected in the juxtaposition of their roofs.

In attempting to capture some of this, I walked, armed with camera, down the Cunning Green to a vantage point just under the castle walls. An office worker was sitting on a bench there enjoying her lunch break, and we agreed that the view of all the roof tops was a wonderful representation of Ruthin’s singularity.

Closer inspection of many of our buildings reveals more than just a jumble rooflines to admire. There are detailed features, some well known such as the ‘Seven Eyes’ and the golden cherub on the newly restored gates of St Peter’s, but there are others less easily noticed. There is another cherub, this time in stone on a house in Castle Street, tall twisted brick chimneys above HSBC, and a series of upper storey windows well worth more than a glance at the top of Well Street. Up above the doors to the now more than semi-closed town Hall is a carved roundel commemorating the farming richness of the Vale of Clwyd.

There are also less glowing vistas that nevertheless give pleasure. Take a look down Prior Street when next calling in the Post Office and enjoy all the different building heights and styles that are there revealed. This is just a brief, idiosyncratic selection – there are many more. Ruthin’s ‘High Lights’ are certainly worth looking up to!



Ruthin Town Team

Ian Lewney charts the team's progress



There have been some exciting developments which will help Ruthin and the local people who live in the area. A number of the groups who work to promote Ruthin, arrange events and develop and promote the local culture, have agreed to form one umbrella group to coordinate all these activities.

On the 27th February 2013, a constitution was signed to form the Ruthin Town Team which included groups such as Ruthin Chamber of Trade, Bro Rhuthun, Cytun, Clwydian Range Tourist Group, Friends of Cae Ddol, The Rotary Club, Town & County Councillors and Ruthin Forward.

The purpose of the Town Team is for representatives of the individual groups to work in partnership together, in the best interests of Ruthin, and to work with the local authority and Town Council in influencing and helping to deliver elements of the Town Plan. The idea for the Town Team came out various initiatives such as Mary Portas' Review into high streets and towns and local authority action plans.

One of the first projects for the Town Team was to develop a new town website and this has been commissioned to Notcon, who are based locally and have vast experience in delivering the highest quality websites. The work on the site started on 20th May and should take several weeks to complete. The funding for the website has been given kindly by Denbighshire County Council.

There are a number of future projects planned and the Town Team is currently developing an action plan to promote and enhance Ruthin through events and activities. These projects will form part of the Town Plan which has been developed by Denbighshire. It is envisaged that the Town Team, through its constitution, will apply to various bodies to attract funding and make successful bids to stage events and activities.

Elwyn Edwards has kindly agreed to chair the Ruthin Town Team and Ian Lewney to act as Treasurer in the interim period, until the Annual General Meeting which is scheduled to take place in October 2013, when a new management committee will be elected.

Should you wish to see minutes of the Ruthin Town Team's meetings, they will be available shortly on the newly formed Facebook page for the Town Team - <https://www.facebook.com/Rhuthun>. This Facebook page has been set up to highlight events, activities and businesses that operate in the area and show that Ruthin is a fabulous place to live and visit. The page also has a fantastic selection of old photographs which show Ruthin in the bygone era. It would wonderful if you had some old photographs of Ruthin that you could share? Contact Ian Lewney for more details.

The meetings are generally held every two weeks on a Tuesday evening at 6.30pm, with Ruthin Castle being the venue. Anyone is welcome to attend the meetings and contribute. For further details regarding the Town Team or if you wish to attend any of the meetings, please contact Ian Lewney on 07429 002792 or by email – ianlewney@snmcompany.co.uk

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This Facebook page has been set up to highlight events, activities and businesses that operate in the area and show that Ruthin is a fabulous place to live and visit

Ruthin's New Mayor

Ruth Bacon talks to Rosie Hughes



She would like to see Ruthin become what she describes as a "destination" town – a place where people come to shop, to eat, to enjoy the architecture and tourist venues and to participate in the opportunities for walking and cycling in the surrounding countryside.

It was a determination to "stand up and be counted" that first led Ruthin's new mayor, Rosie Hughes Moseley to seek a place on Ruthin Town Council. Challenged by friends to take action rather than remain passive about issues that concerned her, spurred her on. Following being nominated for office in 2010, she was elected and has been a serving member on the Town Council ever since.

In her mid-thirties, Rosie is active, personable and enthusiastic, certainly qualities needed to make things happen. She describes herself as a jack of all trades with a plethora of interests and involvement within the community including Ruthin Twinning, Ruthin Business Watch, the Chamber of Trade, Ruthin Festival, Cae Ddol and, particularly, Ruthin Medieval market.

Having lived all her life in the Vale of Clwyd and being a Welsh speaker gives her an insight into many aspects of local life, both rural and town. She and her husband Rich have run The Boar's Head pub on Clwyd Street since 2003. She has also worked full-time in Finline for eight years. An art, fashion and design foundation course that she took in Wrexham, after leaving school, was helpful for a job involving knowledge of art materials. Rosie admits her dream is to take an art degree at John Moore's University in Liverpool sometime in the future.

Rosie is passionate about history, particularly the medieval period – indeed her wedding gown was of a medieval design. She is keen to preserve the integrity of the historical buildings in Ruthin but is realistic in that she believes the future of Ruthin depends on some degree of change. She would like to see Ruthin become what she describes as a "destination" town – a place where people come to shop, to eat, to enjoy the architecture and tourist venues and to participate in the opportunities for walking and cycling in the surrounding countryside. She is delighted at the number of boutique and specialist shops opening in the town. Advertising, with its potential for attracting new business and its knock on effect of bringing more visitors into the town, is key to the town's future prosperity, in Rosie's opinion. She believes modern day technology is crucial to Ruthin's success in the future. Social media is how most younger people communicate nowadays, and Facebook, Twitter and smart phones linked to QR codes are the fastest growing way in which information is passed around. An item concerning Ruthin going "viral" on the internet could generate a huge interest in the town and attract visitors who might not previously have ever considered coming here.

Current local issues occupy Rosie also, such as the proposed 20 mile an hour speed limit by the town's schools. She is an advocate for this change. She is disappointed that the Minor Injuries Unit was closed in Ruthin Hospital and would like to see it reinstated at some point in the future.

Rosie's inauguration takes place at the end of May. She is looking forward to her year as mayor and hopes that her period of office will see her achieve some of her present day ambitions for Ruthin. Her ability to mix past, present and future and her enthusiasm and energy should benefit Ruthin Town Council over the next year.

Seen in Passing . . .



- In Llanfair D.C. bus shelters have been in the news. The well used shelter outside Ysgol Llanfair is built of concrete blocks and the Community Council is looking for someone to care for it since its design tends to attract litter and graffiti. Whereas lower down the hill, at Eyarth, the little used bus stop there has been furnished with a very up-market, wooden 'summer house' to shelter its few users from the elements.
- A warm welcome to the new organist at St Peter's. Music has always been highly regarded by Ruthin's residents. We hope that Mr. Charles Spanner will find the move from Dover, in the furthest South East of England, to North Wales will be a congenial career change for him!

CLOCAENOG'S MISSING TOWNSHIP

Eddie and Audrey Naisby fear that the proposed wind-farms may damage this fragile heritage

The Parish of Clocaenog is first mentioned in 1254 in the records of Llanynys Church in the Vale of Clwyd when, according to Welsh law, David and Gronw, his brother, inherited equal shares of land from their father, the abbot, when he died. At that time Llanynys was the mother church of North Wales with a community of monks and was richly endowed. The 2 brothers were left parcels of good fertile land at Llanynys as well as 'messuages' with hill land for grazing. David was given the chaplaincy of the Church of Saint Foddyd in Clocaenog and sent "to cure the souls of the parishioners". [messuage = a house, out-buildings and land]. His brother, Gronw, was given the parish of Cyffylliog.

The parish of Clocaenog was much more extensive than now and reached from the Afon Alwen at Llanfychangel, along the border with Betws G G parish to the Afon Clwyd at Llanerchgron below the present village of Pwllglas; (the barn at Llanerchgron was used for the meetings of the Court Manorial in Norman times) the boundary then adjoined Llanfwrog parish and that of Cyffylliog. This ancient parish of Clocaenog comprised six townships; these merely consisted of a group of dwellings. There was Clocaenog Uchaf, Clocaenog Isaf, Maestyddyn, Bryngwrgi (near Lanfychangel) and Maen-ar-ei-gilydd. All except the last one are recognisable on modern maps, even if only one house is still inhabited. Nobody could tell me where Maenn-ar-ei-gilydd was sited. Even the National Library at Aberystwyth was unable to help.



The 15th C wall painting of St Christopher in Llanynys Church)

Then here in the Ruthin archives I came across the name in a marriage settlement in 1718 between Thomas Puleston of Flint, Sir Roger Mostyn and Mary Thelwell of Nantclwyd, spinster, including 'the messuages called Maen-ar-ei-gilydd, Tyn-y-Kelyn, Llanerchgron in Clocaenog'. Maen-ar-ei-gilydd must have had some value.

In a Topographical Dictionary of Wales 1833 and 1849 by Samuel Lewis, it states that the parish of Clocaenog was "situated in a mountainous district, and the village is almost surrounded by unproductive and widely extended heaths. In the vicinity are some excellent quarries of stone, among which is that peculiar kind used for hones". These 'whetstones' were essential for sharpening the ubiquitous scythes and sickles used in agriculture and could be traded.

On the OS maps of Clocaenog Forest just below the highest point of Craig Bronbannog, to the south-east is written Pile of stones. Maen-ar-ei-gilydd can be translated as 'stones on each other'. At this moment in time it is still possible to find several old quarries which have been worked along a seam of hard black gritunusual in this area. Below them are marked homesteads and still inhabited are Cefn Bannog, Lodge Uchaf and Lodge Isaf and finally Brynhyfryd. Could this have been the miners' village known as Maen-ar-ei-gilydd?

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Just Another Day

Bobby Feeley takes it one day at a time as a County Councillor



The Citizen Panel is made up of people with various disabilities and carers in North Wales who feed their views in to Welsh Government on the new Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Bill, soon to come into existence.

The lady who came up with the idea had cared for her mother with slowly worsening dementia for 15 years and gave a moving account of why she devised the scheme, now being rolled out across the U.K. with almost 100% take up by NHS Boards.

My task this month is to give a flavour of life as a County Councillor, this is quite difficult as every day is different but I have tried to pick a varied and interesting day from my May Diary. I was re-elected to represent the Ward of Ruthin in May 2012 and was made a member of the new Cabinet as Lead for Social Care, Adult and Children's services, with responsibility for NHS matters. I was thrilled to be trusted to do this job but naturally my workload has escalated, in addition to all the statutory meetings usually in Ruthin, I now travel to Rhyl and Prestatyn on a regular basis to the Social Services Offices. I also represent Denbighshire on the North Wales Regional Board, alternating between Conwy and Wrexham, and am one of two NW members on the National Social Services Partnership Forum, which meets in Cardiff monthly. The day I have chosen to write about is Wednesday 15th May when I had three very varied meetings to attend.

My first meeting took place at Conwy Business Centre in Llandudno Junction at 10 a.m. it was the North Wales Citizen Panel for Social Services run by 'Participation Cymru.' The Citizen Panel is made up of people with various disabilities and carers in North Wales who feed their views in to Welsh Government on the new Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Bill, soon to come into existence. There was a presentation from Lesley Lawe from the Welsh Government Health Department, she outlined how important it is that Health meets the needs of its citizens into the future, with economic difficulties and a burgeoning population of older people. She emphasised the importance of Social Services and NHS work closely together to secure the Bill's success. Following the presentation there was a lively and open debate on the content of the Bill and how important and helpful the Group has been in representing people's views. The Bill is meant to meet the challenge of an uncertain future with increasing budgetary pressures and demographic change. The focus will be on assessment of need, early intervention and prevention to enable people to lead dignified and fulfilling, independent lives, ensuring sustainable Social Services into the future.

I grabbed a quick coffee and a sausage roll and set off to Ysbyty Glan Clwyd at 2 o'clock for the North Wales Launch of the Butterfly Project a scheme to 'Reach out to People with Dementia' This is for better care of patients with dementia, also to help carers and staff. It is denoted by a 'blue butterfly' at the head of the bed, and on the wrist and there are 5 main principles:

- REMIND why they are there - approach with friendly smile
- EXPLAIN what is going to happen - remove fear
- ARRANGE personal things - make sure water nearby in a familiar cup
- CHECK wellbeing, - cleanliness and hydration
- HISTORY verify records - check medication taken correctly

There will be a carers sheet with all necessary personal details headed 'This is Me.' The idea is to avoid inappropriate care for dementia sufferers, to assist their treatment and aid a speedy recovery. The lady who came up with the idea had cared for her mother with slowly worsening dementia for 15 years and gave a moving account of why she devised the scheme, now being rolled out across the U.K. with almost 100% take up by NHS Boards. Although the scheme is aimed at hospitals and care homes I think it would be a good idea for homecare also; I have reported back to Adult Services and they agree.

My final destination for the day was Prestatyn 4 p.m., where I had a meeting with two officers from Denbighshire's Corporate Improvement Team and Head of Adult Services to discuss our performance in Adult Services against the indicators, all highly technical, but in a nut shell we measure our performance with Red, Amber and Green, if it's in the Green, that means we're on target and doing well Red not meeting targets and need to up our game. Fortunately mostly we are on track and doing well but we picked out one or two areas that could be improved and these will be re-examined on a regular basis until satisfactory. It's complicated but well explained by the Corporate Officers and I left for home content that yet another subject had been learned and digested.

Final, last destination, supermarket to grab something for supper, home approximately 6.45 p.m. to answer a couple of dozen emails and prepare for the following days activities, and of course, cook supper!

The Quayle Award 2012

Miles Anderson reports on an unsurprising but well deserved recipient of this prestigious award



On a cold and blustery Friday 24th May the presentation of the annual Quayle Award for the development in Ruthin, and its surrounding area, that has, in the opinion of the committee of the Ruthin and District Civic Association, made the greatest contribution to its built environment in the year 2012, was made for the restoration of the Castle Hotel. Factors that always have to be taken into account in assessing contenders for this award are that the project should be sympathetic to the area and improve its quality and character it should enrich and enhance the life of Ruthin, and have used appropriate materials. The project should also have imaginatively and creatively produced something of outstanding quality.

Last year it was the development of the car park area of Bwlch Penbaras that was honoured – right out on the periphery of our catchment area, so to speak. This year its recipient was as close as it is possible to be to the town's centre. There were other nominations – The Middleton on the Square and the restoration of the old, and long derelict butchers' shop on Well Street – but without doubt, the restoration of the Castle Hotel on St Peter's Square by JS Wetherspoon was a very worthy contender and the committee had no problem in accepting the advice of the sub-committee who carried out the inspections.

As they said in their report, "The building had recently fallen into an alarming state of disrepair and is now, following Wetherspoon's restoration, once again at the centre of the economic and social life of the town. It serves all the strata of the society of Ruthin and its surrounding area, and Wetherspoon's improvements have helped bring a renew vitality to St Peter's Square and enhanced the economic viability of the surrounding businesses."

"The building had recently fallen into an alarming state of disrepair and is now, following Wetherspoon's restoration, once again at the centre of the economic and social life of the town.

The award was unveiled by the Secretary for State, David Jones, MP at a gathering of Wetherspoon's directors, representatives of the firm of architects, who oversaw the project, members of the Ruthin and District Civic Association and local officials, including Ruthin's new Mayor, Rosie Hughes.

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Ruthin Town and Around is published quarterly by Ruthin and District Civic Association. The views expressed by the individual writers are not necessarily those of the association.

If you, or a friend, is interested in becoming a member of the Association and helping with their valuable work, please contact our treasurer for more information. He is Robert Williams, at Lenton House, Mold Road, Ruthin LL15 1SL, or at heatherandrob@btinternet.com, or 01824 704998

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