

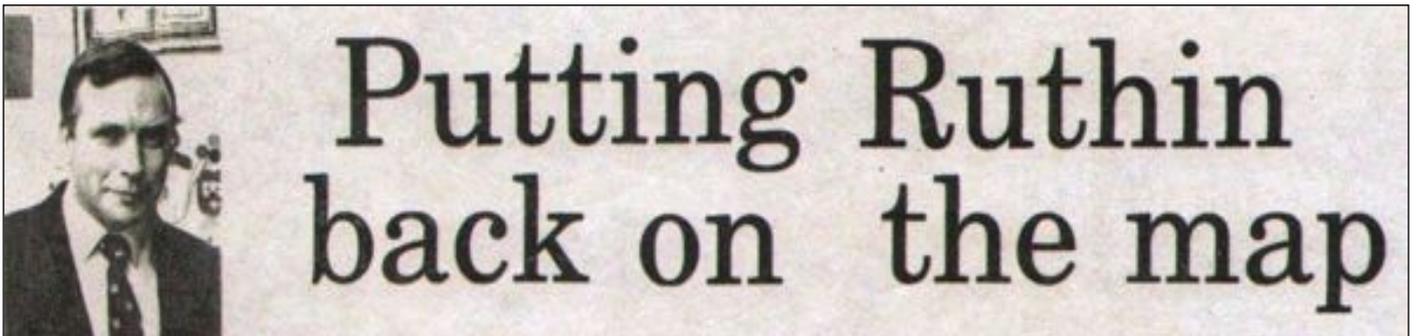
Ruthin Town and Around O Gwmpas y Dre



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

September 201 2013

Ruthin and District Civic Association is 25 years old !



On the 8th of April, 1988, 25 years ago, the above was the headline of the Denbighshire Freepress. From the meeting, reported below, the Ruthin and District Civic Association was born!

"An organisation aimed at promoting the care and preservation of the town has been formed after the public meeting in Ruthin last week. About 100 people attended the meeting called at Ruthin Town Hall by the deputy Mayor of the town, Mr Keith Kenyon-Thompson (pictured) who said the formation of an amenity Association, registered with the Civic Trust, would be of great benefit to Ruthin.

The Association will aim to promote civic pride, high standards of planning, to educate the public in geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area to preserve and improve features of historic and public interest, to co-operate with organisations of similar aims and to hold meetings, lectures and exhibitions.

At the meeting in the town centre, vandalism, litter and crime, planning and the future of the Town Hall and Nantclwyd House were cited as areas of interest for the association.

A volunteer group met at the Town Hall on Thursday night to discuss a constitution and a subscription structure for the association and another meeting will be held on Tuesday April 19th to elect officers and committee.

The meeting will be attended by Mr Adrian Jones of the consultants Austin Smith Lord, responsible for the town centre redevelopment study for Clwyd and Glyndwr Councils and the Welsh Development Agency, who will explain the scope of the study and answer questions.

Last week's meeting also produced donations amounting to £112 for the launch of the association"

Annual General Meeting

The AGM of the Ruthin and District Civic Association will be held at 7pm on Thursday 3rd October at Awelon, School Road, Ruthin. Following the presentation of the annual report and the election of officers, we are delighted to have Fiona Gale, Denbighshire's chief archaeologist offering to give a talk on the restoration of the Jubilee Tower on Moel Famau. This is an open meeting and all are most warmly welcome, although only members will be entitled to vote. It has been a somewhat difficult year for the Association with the loss of several members of the executive committee. Nevertheless, in collaboration with Denbighshire County Council they have organised a full programme for the Open Doors event that will take place on 28th and 29th September, arranged a prestigious presentation of the Quayle Award, are progressing towards the creation of the Hafina Clwyd Memorial at the library and have produced the regular quarterly publication of *Town and Around*. Please make every effort to attend this important meeting and support this worthwhile organisation.

Miles Anderson talks to two Ex-chairman

Keith Kenyon-Thompson, who had been a teacher at Ruthin School, chaired the association from its inception until 1994 when ill health forced him to step down and Heather Williams took over as chairman.

Heather, although recently arrived in Ruthin, was present at the original meeting. Her background was singularly appropriate for involvement with a civic association. Her degree was in Environmental Planning which involved research into how voluntary associations can be influential in planning matters. For eight years until 2002 Heather chaired the association and endeavoured to maintain the vigour and vitality that had been there at its original inception. There were regular meetings with invited speakers and annual outings to visit other civic societies in the neighbourhood.

Quite a number of important issues were of concern during this period. One was that with local government reorganisation and the likely change of planning personnel there could be a loss of local knowledge. Led by Vice Chairman Steve Blunt, the Association carried out a project on the Ruthin Conservation Area highlighting special areas and identifying important features.

The Association was also involved in making comments about the development plan when it allocated the significant housing development at Glasdir. It also campaigned actively, together with the History Society and Town Council, for Nantclwyd House not to be sold but acquired and made accessible to the people of Ruthin and the general public. These were some of the highlights that Heather identified from her period in office. However during this time she was employed fulltime and the amount of time that could be devoted to the Association was limited. It was difficult to maintain that original vitality over a period of twelve years, and attendances at the regular meetings and outings were difficult to maintain.

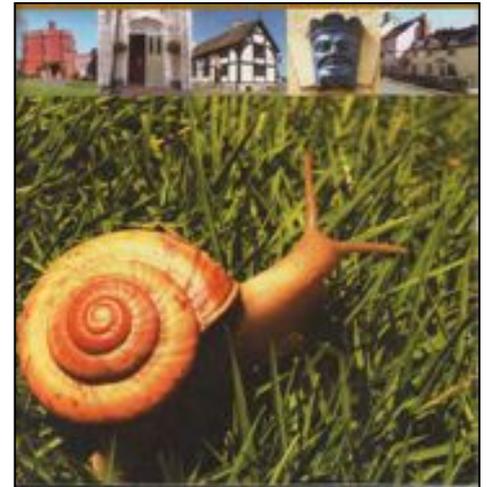
I next called on Bobby Feeley, another ex-chairman to gather further information on the Association's progress from 2002. There have been several chairmen, Derek Jones, Bobby Feeley, Hafina Clwyd, John Astles and, most recently Betty Downs, all of whom have worked hard and added to the Association's good work in "Putting Ruthin on the Map" to refer back to the Freepress article of 1988. Bobby herself arrived in Ruthin way back in 1976 after falling in love with the town on a brief visit. Her background is local government, industry and engineering and, once settled in Ruthin, she became much involved in voluntary organisations, including the Citizens Advice Bureau, and then becoming involved in local politics.

Before discussing the progress of the Association since 2002, Bobby wanted to record the considerable contribution made by several members who are sadly no longer with us, in particular Iorre Foulkes, Maureen Astles and Hafina Clwyd, all of whom were inspirational and effective members. Looking back, she said it is amazing that we have accomplished so much for the town. If you glance around there are now Civic Association plaques on many important buildings.

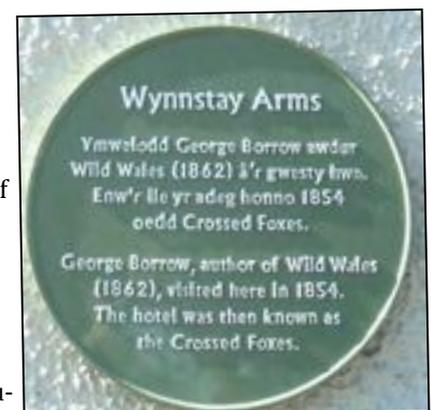
Open Doors is now an annual event. Denbighshire's involvement started here in Ruthin by the Association and Denbighshire's Open Doors is still the best organised and most comprehensive in Wales. *Town and Around* is now seen as a community newsletter, rather than just a Civic Association publication and is warmly welcomed wherever we deliver it. 'Slow Walks round Ruthin', now unfortunately out of print – it needs to be back in circulation as soon as possible – is a highly praised town guide, bilingual, in colour, full of anecdotes and directions and well illustrated.

We have regularly hosted Hustings for the Westminster and the Assembly elections, and most recently, together with the Local History Society restored the life and work of local artist Edward Pugh back in the public realm where it deserved to be. And by no means last, although this list needs to draw to a conclusion, it continues to fight for the continuing restoration of Cae Ddol, support for local shops and careful monitoring of planning applications.

As Bobby Feeley says there is much to celebrate in what the Association has achieved since its inception in 1988, and in 2013 there is still much to do.



"Looking back, it is amazing that we have accomplished so much for the town." As Bobby Feeley says, "there is much to celebrate in what the Association has achieved since its inception in 1988,..... and in 2013 there is still



The Ruthin Art Trail

Ruth Bacon reports on the latest developments



Between late September and November 2013 the new Ruthin Art Trail, designed by Fred Baier and Lucy Strachan will be installed. Following a route from Ruthin Craft Centre to St Peter's Square the main intention of the Ruthin Art Trail will be to encourage people to look, and through looking, discover things about the town.

It will be possible to discover 10 spy holes set into the town walls and spot 20 figures hidden amongst the facades and roofs. Whilst searching for these figures there is every chance that people will notice (or be reminded of) how beautiful the town is, and how the architecture from many centuries sits harmoniously together. The ambition of the Art Trail is that visitors will be rewarded by chance sightings of the acrobatic figures, and appreciate the allusions to myths, memories and historic moments captured in the spy hole tableaux.

"It will be possible to spot 20 figures hidden amongst the facades and roofs... Restoration of some of the avenue of trees on Market Street...Six benches specially designed for the trail...A new square is being created across from the Craft Centre"

The objects designed by Fred and Lucy have a common language created through the materials and the construction process, and all the metals in the Trail have been cut from two dimensions and bent into the third dimension.

The Trail will be enhanced by the restoration of some of the avenue of trees in Market Street. Trees will feature in other parts as well. Shelter and resting places will be available on 6 benches specially designed for the Trail thus making it possible to sit and rest along the route. Markers in the pavement will act as a guide.

A new square is being created across from the Craft Centre entrance with an information panel, and two other information panels will be located in Market Street car park and St Peter's square.

Fred and Lucy were selected after an open competition, a requirement of Arts Council of Wales and Cadwyn Clwyd funding. Since their appointment in October 2011 there has been an extensive consultation process, which has included an open meeting in January 2012, advertised in Clwyd Connection, and visits to Borthyn School. An open day was held on 16th June 2012 at Nantclwyd y dre (again advertised in Clwyd Connection together with a poster campaign) to look at the initial proposals.

Following this consultation the proposals have been adapted. There has also been direct consultation by Fred Baier and Lucy Strachan with all the residents of Market Street. The

technical details of the adapted proposals have been agreed with Denbighshire County Council and were displayed at Ruthin Library for a week between 18th and 23rd February, together with an advertisement in the Denbighshire Free Press. During this week the residents of Market Street were given an opportunity to discuss the proposals with the consultants MN Arts Associates.

The Trail is a partnership between Cadwyn Clwyd, Denbighshire County Council, Ruthin Town Council, with the major part of the funding coming from Arts Council of Wales and Cadwyn Clwyd. A number of Ruthin businesses, including Patchwork Traditional Food Company, Richards Moorehead and Laing Ltd, Manorhaus, Montecito, Trefor Jones Ltd and Bathing Beauty are sponsors.



Seen in passing...

- For years Mwrog Street has been blighted by a derelict, boarded up and abandoned terrace of properties. What a pleasure it is to be able to see a substantial and high quality restoration is taking place. By October there will be recreated on this site two family homes, two flats with parking and alongside two new bungalows. This is a most welcome development.



- Meanwhile another prominent site currently occupied by the boarded up erstwhile Anchor Hotel becomes daily more depressing. Fly posting adds to the impression of dereliction! Let us hope the suggested acquisition of this corner property by Ruthin School takes place, and swiftly. This is a key gateway to the town and should present a cared for and welcoming façade –currently sadly lacking!



- Open Doors is this year being joined by the Picturehouse as one of several new participants. Once a cinema, then a high-class restaurant and now an antiques centre, it is a welcome addition to the event. Perhaps visitors to it might be able to unfurl the mystery of a very tall flagpole that has recently been uncovered there. It has been suggested that it flew over the building when it welcomed Ruthin's residents to their cinema shows.

- It is always sad to see the closure of local shops and businesses. Recently there have been two such losses that will be much missed Lynch's on Clwyd Street and Lewis Electrics on Lonparcwr.

Both long established local retailers. Peter and Jane Lewis have served Ruthin residents for over 40 years and the Lynch family, as well as providing a much admired high-street business, carried out an excellent restoration of the building premises for which the Quayle Award was made to them in 1988. Ruthin will be the worse

for the loss of both these business. It's a sign of the times, but, nevertheless, we find that Ruthin's residents, and those of the villages around, do all like to 'go into town' regularly, and not just to Tesco's – hence all those cafes that are well patronised on a daily basis!

- There is still time to visit the excellently mounted exhibition in Ruthin Library celebrating the art of Edward Pugh, Ruthin's long neglected artist. Much of his local work was reproduced as engravings and aquatints, but he also was a noted miniaturist and depicted scenes of London social life. He is most famous for now reprinted book, *Cambria Depicta*, an illustrated tour of North Wales. The exhibition ends on 20th September – don't miss it!



Ruthin's 1953 Coronation Celebrations

Our Royal Reporter, Colin Edwards, remembers the day

On 2nd June 2013 HM the Queen celebrated the 60th anniversary of her coronation in Westminster Abbey.

Sixty years ago I was a twelve year old schoolboy in my first year at Brynhyfryd School. My parents, sister and I lived in Mwrog Street and my father bought a 14" television set for the historic occasion. My sister and I were very excited as not many people in Ruthin, as in many other provincial towns, owned a television 60 years ago.

I clearly remember our living room filled with neighbours, friends and relations watching the coverage and my mum making cups of tea and sandwiches for our guests! The weather in London was wet and it was the same in Ruthin, so our street party had to be transferred to the church, but we children had a great time tucking into the sandwiches, jelly, cakes and lemonade provided by the mothers.

The following weekend a fancy-dress parade was held in the town and judging took place in the town hall. I went as "What's my line?" which was a popular television programme in 1953, with a cardboard box on my head to represent the television set! My sister Jan, with cousins and friends went on a float dressed as an English rose, a Scottish thistle, an Irish shamrock and a Welsh leek, with John Bull and Britannia in the centre and the float won first prize!

During the week of the coronation the mayor of Ruthin, Alderman Robert Beech, visited all the schools distributing commemoration mugs to the pupils – mine still has pride of place in my royal collection. About a week later the children from the schools filled the Picture House on Well Street to see the colour film of the Coronation, "The Queen is Crowned".

My interest in the Royal Family and the Monarchy was stimulated by the coronation and later this year a book containing my photographs of the Royals with text and anecdotes will be published with copies available from Janet's Bookshop in Upper Clwyd Street. I composed and sent a poem to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Queen's coronation to her majesty and was pleased to receive an acknowledgement expressing her grateful thanks for my continuing loyalty.

Looking back at the Eisteddfod

Rhona Bramhall relives a wonderful week



EISTEDDFOD ! A word I have known since early childhood in Birkenhead - but that was the Llangollen International event, colourful, exciting ,musical; but without car or TV, almost unattainable for us, and rarely visited. I had stood on the fringes of this enchanting world, until moving to Rhuthun in retirement and discovering that there are TWO eisteddfodau, and that the second was even bigger and more intriguing than the first - **The National!**

This year we have so enjoyed being a part of this communal occasion when the whole of Wales comes together in a huge jamboree of the first order, full of colour, vitality and music.

So much to do and see and hear. So much beauty and laughter and happiness, and everywhere stalls offering a gratuitous “paned a sgwrs”

There was first, for me, the National Eisteddfod at Mold, then Bala, and after that Wrexham but the crowning touch, so far, has been the wonderful week near Denbigh, when the big pink pavilion basked in the sun on the vivid green fields of the Clwyd meadows, against the back-drop of the Clwydian Hills.

So much to do and see and hear. So much beauty and laughter and happiness, and everywhere stalls offering a gratuitous “paned a sgwrs” (cuppa and chat) on topics as diverse as Christianity, Politics, Wild–Life, Mountaineering , History, Education, Art - and on and on.



And so many exhibitions of the first quality to muse over, each representing such hard work and preparation, from all the four corners of Wales. For example there was the moving and challenging focus on the demise of the old Denbigh mental hospital that graphically depicted both the loss to severed families and the sad bewilderment of the people lifted from the distant parts of Britain to be isolated so far from home.

The highlights for me were, probably, the time spent in Maes D (the learners’ area) listening to Dafydd Ewan singing his poignant protest songs (still powerfully strong), and teasing us about the vagaries of the Welsh language whilst a little boy sat in a wheelchair and joined in with gusto and in fluent Welsh. And when we heard a discussion between Bethan Gwanas, Mike Parker and Simon Thirsk, all well known authors, on the experiences of learning and teaching the Welsh language and ending with the good advice to stop navel gazing ABOUT the language, get on USING it and talk about all the other topics of a full life!

“The Eisteddfod was altogether a rewarding and enriching week”

And then there was listening to a discussion about broadcasting between some familiar faces from S4C and BBC 2, sitting in the Dance Pavilion and watching the first stages of learning to clog-dance , catching sight of a Welsh celebrity comedian, Dewi

Pws, and getting a spontaneous hug and a “Well done” for trying to use the language. And we shouldn’t forget the Taith Lenyddol (Literary Trip) around the Vale of Clwyd, with a very knowledgeable local literary figure, who showed us “the parts that others don’t reach”. And, of course, we popped in, whenever possible, to the great pink pavilion to hear competitors in the Cerdd Dant - this a special type of singing to the harp, unique to Wales - that was hauntingly beautiful.



The Eisteddfod was altogether a rewarding and enriching week. It was strangely nourishing and good for the soul, as well as the mind and body – and all that walking!

And, no, it’s not cheap, but would we really want it to be second rate? Console yourself with the fact that you have been contributing to this wonderful community and unifying event that is so valuable in this world, weary of wars, divisions, tragedies and conflicts.

The National Eisteddfod celebrates life, beauty and culture and music. It celebrates Wales!

Bound for Rediscovery

Ruthin Bookbinder, Simeon Jones, undertakes to rebind *Cambria Depicta*

Sometimes familiar places are like old friends, in as much as they can surprise you with details of their past. Although not Ruthin born, I have lived here, on and off, since 1st March 1979. I walk its familiar streets every day and take an interest in its history, so thought I knew its most interesting stories.

A thread of my history is interwoven with Ruthin Craft Centre, which was built within a leisurely five minute walk of where I live. The first time I made that walk as a fifteen year old, I wandered into the workshop of a craftsman who has become one of my dearest lifelong friends, a lasting artistic and personal influence.

Some of you might know Paul Delrue, and if you do, I'm sure you'll agree that he is one of life's unique personalities. His greatest gift to me has been teaching me his craft without wanting payment for passing on some of his magic. I have been striving under his patient tutelage to become a skilled bookbinder for eight years, having realised, after being quite seriously ill that I needed a proper creative outlet.

My design bindings have won awards and been exhibited widely both in the UK and the USA and one of my earliest bindings for the Society of Designer Bookbinders annual competition was bought by The British Library.

In May of this year I was commissioned by Philip Hughes, director of the new Ruthin Craft Centre, to bind an original copy of 'Cambria Depicta' for an exhibition to celebrate the bicentenary of Edward Pugh and to bind two copies of the new biography, 'Edward Pugh of Ruthin 1763-1813 by professor John Barrell.

I like to read at least some of the books I bind and this was a rare treat. Here was a man who lived on the street on which I work, who painted and wrote with eloquence and feeling about the landscape I love.

To source a first edition of 'Cambria Depicta', I searched 'Abe Books' and was delighted to find a book which met the criteria of being complete and sound, but in need of TLC. Coincidentally, the seller lived in Cadole, a very short walk from one of the scenes depicted in the book!

Having the original book in my hands, to restore 200 years of use and then doing the creative design work for the binding, gave me time to appreciate Edward Pugh's creation.

I love old books, the best are what the Germans term 'gesamtkunstwerk', a complete work of art. From the feel and quality of the paper and the skill and craftsmanship of the typesetting and printing to the beauty and artistry of the aquatint prints, the whole book was an aesthetic delight. It was made in a time when the industrialisation of the crafts had only just begun, and this was made entirely by skilled craftsmen, from the paper to the original binding.

Reading his descriptions of the Vale of Clwyd, especially of the Ruthin area, has been a real delight. In the 2000 miles he walked to make the 71 illustrations for the book he loved the views around his home town the most. Sadly, the one view he describes in the most effusive terms that I would like to see, is now lost; that from the top of the tower of Saint Peter's church.

The whole experience of getting to know the man and his work has been an education and a pleasure.

A facsimile of the book is now available, published by Cambridge University Press and is well worth reading. If you would like to see my bindings, they will be on display in Gallery 3 of Ruthin Craft Centre until September 22nd.



"Paul Delrue...I have been striving under his patient tutelage to become a skilled bookbinder for eight years"

"From the feel and quality of the paper and the skill and craftsmanship of the typesetting and printing to the beauty and artistry of the aquatint prints, the whole book was an aesthetic delight"

Ruthin Opens its Doors on September 28th and 29th

Shelly Barratt, DCC Organiser of the weekend, is very enthusiastic



This September, members of the public are given a wonderful opportunity to explore some of Denbighshire's finest historic buildings and monuments for free by joining the Open Doors Heritage Weekends organised by the Civic Societies of Denbigh, Ruthin and Coordinated by Denbighshire County Council.

There are homes to the great and good, such as Nantclwyd y Dre and then those more humble homesteads, as Rose Cottage. You will be welcomed to some of the most significant buildings in Wales past. The culture and heritage of Ruthin town is staggering and anyone can come and see them all for free in September. It promises to be a wonderful day out for anyone, no matter what their age.

The Open Doors Event lets you visit the many of our listed houses, castle and the gaol for free. Many of

"The feeling of walking on the same floors where noblemen once lived, and seeing the bedrooms where kings and queens slept is quite enthralling," said Liz Wil-

the twenty odd buildings taking part are not normally available to the public as they are private residences who promise to share their secrets and reveal glimpses of lives very different to our own. There will be tour guides, storytellers, archaeologists and local historians on hand to bring the buildings' pasts to life and share their passion for the buildings with everyone taking part.

"The feeling of walking on the same floors where noblemen once lived, and seeing the bedrooms where kings and queens slept is quite enthralling," said Liz Williams from the Ruthin and District Association.

Some of the most-ordinary buildings contain the most-extraordinary works of art, artefacts and astounding pieces of architecture. The

culture and history on our own doorstep means you don't have to go to France or Italy to see beautiful buildings. Come and see what's on offer in September and there's a real chance you'll find something you love that you never knew existed.

There are newcomers as well as old favourites in the programme, such as Plas Coch (the Conservative Club), The Picture House Antiques and Porth y Dwr, and nearby churches at Llanelidan, Efenechtyd and Derwen. There are also chances to follow your family history in Old Parish Records, to be guided round our educational establishments, and design a memorial in a Craft Centre workshop.

A full-list of buildings involved in Open Doors can be found at Ruthin and Denbigh libraries. It is also advisable to book in advance as many tours and events are expected to sell-out.



Ruthin's Refurbished Leisure Centre is Here

Bobby Feeley welcomes its' on time delivery

It has been nearly 4 years since Denbighshire Council commissioned consultants, 'Just Solutions' to undertake a complete survey of the sport and leisure facilities on offer in Ruthin. This was undertaken to ascertain what was already established and what was needed so that, hopefully, the Council could enhance and improve them. At times the 'wheels turn slowly' in Local Government but sometimes the results are really worth waiting for. The new improved and expanded £1.4m leisure complex, about to launch at Ysgol Brynhyfryd, is a case in point, a fantastic facility, not just for the school but for Ruthin and surrounding areas.



Over the last few years the economic climate has been difficult and funding for this project had to be imaginative and cost effective. Thanks to determination of officers and councillors a way was found to undertake this very worthwhile and necessary project. Along with development partners, Alliance Leisure Services Ltd. It has been possible to set about refurbishment and regeneration of the leisure complex at Brynhyfryd. Local Authorities are going through difficult times and It took until March 2013 for the actual construction programme to begin, and despite adverse weather conditions initially, which caused a small delay, the target date for completion will be more or less on time.

"To have any hope of being built this project had to be imaginative and cost effective"

The improvements include an extension to the existing facility to accommodate a new reception area, changing rooms, swimming pool viewing area and fitness suite added to which there is a full sizes all weather pitch and car parking.

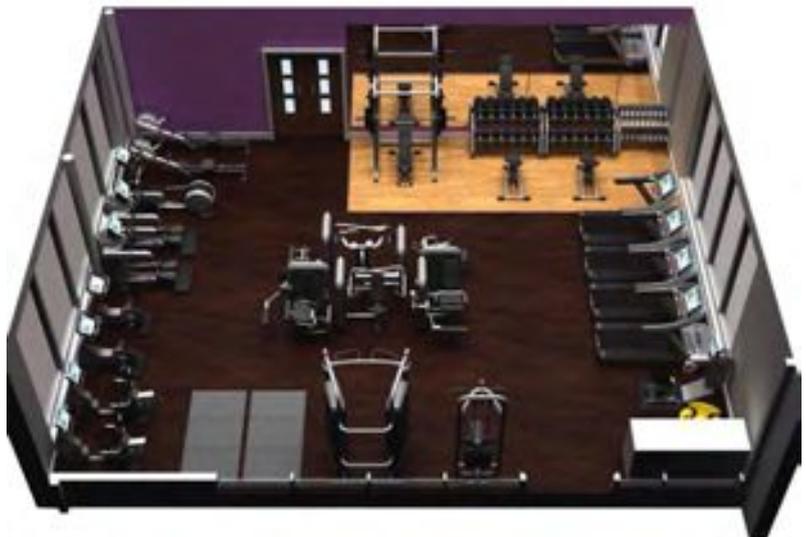
'Soft Surfaces', the main contractors for the all weather pitch, have now completed and moved off site. There are just a few snagging issues and further works on landscaping around the pitch, but bookings are already being taken with a view to a full programme of delivery from September. The pitch will be used by a host of clubs and sports groups as well as Brynhyfryd. Likewise, ISG, the main contractors for the leisure centre extension and the car park works, have made good progress and are on schedule to complete September in time for the full public opening on 23rd September.

"I am absolutely delighted that the joint community leisure complex at Brynhyfryd is finally one to be proud of!"

The extension will accommodate a modern 25 station Technogym with 'Wellness' technology that allows customers to monitor performance, develop exercise programmes and guide them through their workout. What a big difference to the small, unattractive cramped inferior gym of old.

Customers, new and old, can take out a membership package that works out at less than £1 per day. Membership includes access to anyone of Denbighshire's 7 leisure centres for unlimited use of the fitness suite, public swimming sessions and access to over 80 group exercise classes.

I am absolutely delighted that the joint community leisure complex at Brynhyfryd is finally one to be proud of. Well done to all concerned for delivering such an excellent project at such a difficult economic time. (for information please contact the team on 0800 3800012).



The dramatic collapse of Ruthin Castle

Northern Wall

Kirsty Henderson, conservation Specialist, reports on the latest developments

The collapse of a section of the northern perimeter wall at Ruthin castle happened suddenly and without warning on 17th May 2013. About 10 metres of this substantial limestone wall collapsed onto the footpath linking Castle Street to Cuning Green. The emergency services used thermal imaging cameras and search and rescue dogs to search the rubble. Fortunately no-one was injured. Officers from Denbighshire County Council closed Cuning Green to ensure the wall did not continue to present a risk to the public.



The section that collapsed was a retaining wall. It is unusually high - over 2 metres - with ground levels at substantially different heights to either side. There are possibly a number of factors as to why the wall fell down. Tree roots, unusual weather conditions, lack of maintenance and ivy cover may or may not have played a part. It would be unwise to speculate whilst legal and insurance claims are pending. There may never be a clear reason behind why it happened. The retaining wall has now been made safe,

although a recent inspection of the wall by the Council's Structural Engineer has identified a bulge in another section of the retaining wall above a bench which is causing concern. There is some instability to the wall around the old mill pond near to the public car park; these are fenced off to prevent injury to the public in-case of a further collapse. Otherwise the remainder of the walls, which generally are not retaining walls so they have a much lower risk of collapse, are in a reasonable condition. Some areas would benefit from some minor maintenance, particularly removal of vegetation to prevent more significant long term damage.

The footpath has an initial closure of 6 months under a Traffic Regulation Order served by the Council. Under this Order there is a potential closure option of a further 12 months. This is to ensure that there is no risk or danger of a second collapse and there is a suitable timescale for repair.

How great is the impact of this collapse on the heritage significance of the wall and castle?

The northern wall is a Grade II listed castellated limestone wall of picturesque gothic character. It was probably built in the 1820's by Frederick West, who had married into the Myddleton family of Chirk. Sir Richard Myddleton acquired the medieval castle ruins in 1677 after the Civil War. The northern wall follows the line of the medieval castle moat, approximately 50-100m outside the curtain wall of the castle. Its north side is formed by the late medieval walls of the former kitchen garden to Ruthin Castle (the Lord's Garden). It has group value with Ruthin Castle Hotel, its gateway and lodge, and the boundary walls to the Lord's Garden.

The wall therefore is very significant to the setting of the castle and Lords Garden. It is a key part of the historic park and garden, and a very important part of the conservation area character that makes Ruthin so unique. Whilst it was imperative that the wall was made safe and the rubble removed, its repair and reinstatement is necessary. The next step is to record how the wall was likely to have been constructed. It is important to identify a repair and restoration plan with a conservation structural engineer, and to reinstate the wall using a stonemason with experience in historic building repair. The Council will work closely

with the owner and other professionals to provide assistance with regard to how the wall is to be reinstated and to what timescale. After all, the walls enclose Ruthin Castle's history. They hold the memories of Royal secrets and are an architectural statement of a picturesque ideal.

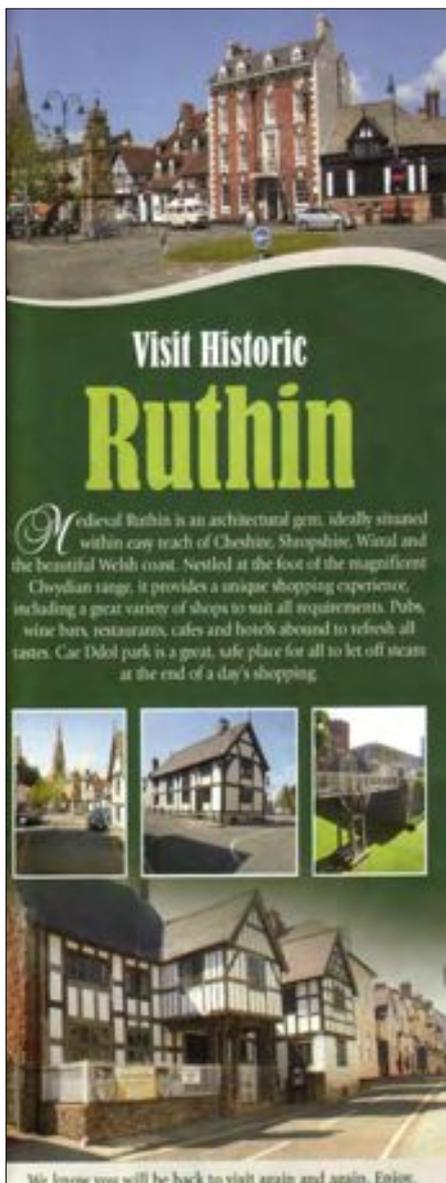


"The northern wall is a Grade II listed castellated limestone wall of picturesque gothic character. ...The northern wall follows the line of the medieval castle moat, approximately 50-100m outside the curtain wall of the castle. Its north side is formed by the late medieval walls of the former."

Seen in passing...

- The large site next to Tescos, that has been looking sadly vacant for a long time, is now a hive of activity and builders merchants, Huws Gray, based on Anglesey, have just opened a new branch there. Speaking to Tim Williams, in the their office, he promised that there will be five full-time jobs plus part-time vacancies to be filled as the business develops. Official trading started on Sept1st – we wish them every success.

- Others investing in Ruthin are Jinette Hindmarsh and Victor Newton recently arrived landlords of the Wine Vaults on Castle Street. Together with the brewery, they have financed a complete refurbishment of this prominent pub. Locals built a decking area to the rear, and it was an amusing tale that, to keep customers happy, the darts and pool facility were transferred to the car park! But that only lasted a week once the licensing authorities became aware of the change. Work is almost complete and the pool and darts are now back in their original home.



- One can't help noticing that on a number of occasions in August the recently opened, volunteer manned Visitor Centre on the square was closed. There was so much enthusiasm and good-will at its opening and, one would have thought, with so many retired people in the Ruthin area, it would be no trouble finding willing volunteers. Apparently now the Eisteddfod is over, it is functioning as usual – it would appear that their volunteers were giving preference to the needs of the Eisteddfod for that short period. But probably more volunteers would still be welcome!

- Recently appeared on the information racks of town is an attractive, bi-lingual, "Visit Historic Ruthin" information leaflet with a map on the inside of all the places and shops that might be of interest to visitors to the town. The reverse side carries advertising for shops, cafes, accommodation and things to see and do whilst staying in town. Congratulations to the Chamber of Commerce, who, with the support of Ruthin Town Council, as well as organising the Visitor Information centre, have produced this excellent publication.

- Kay Culhane asks "How well do you know the outskirts of Ruthin?" She is offering a walk of approximately 2½ miles followed by lunch at Café R – or just come for the lunch – on Wednesday 9th October. Meet at the Craft Centre car park 10.15 for 10.30 start lunch at 12.45pm. For details and/or to book lunch call Kay on 011824 703098.

"Ystafell Hafina"

On Saturday, at 1.30pm, October 26th, there will be a celebration of the dedication of the meeting room at Ruthin Library to the memory of Hafina Clwyd. Members of the Civic Association are cordially invited to attend the reception to be held in Ystafell Hafina when invited friends and relations of Hafina will meet with us, and there will be stories to be told of Hafina's interesting and extraordinary life. As space is limited this reception is only open to invited friends and relations and members of the Association and we would ask them to kindly advise us of their intention to attend as space is very limited. Please reply to Miles Anderson on miles-and-jill@freeuk.com or on 01824 707632 .

Getting involved in Ruthin and District Civic Association

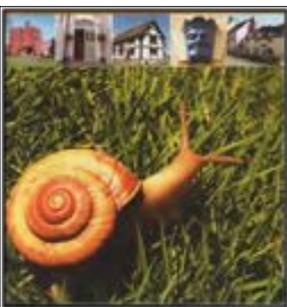
Robert Williams, our treasurer makes an appeal

Things the Association does:-

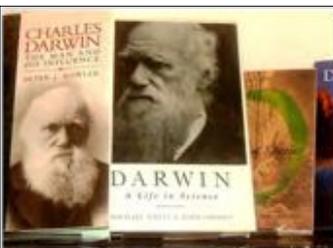
Hustings



Publications:



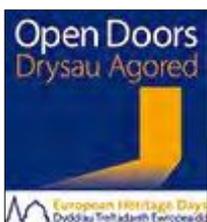
Lectures—Darwin lecture



Presentations



Events



HOW ABOUT COMING ON THE COMMITTEE?

This edition of Town and Around celebrates twenty five years of the Association and in order to maintain its success it is vital that the Executive Committee continues to attract new people with fresh ideas to engage with the wider membership. The Association's constitution provides for a Committee of nine comprising Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary together with five ordinary members. At present the Committee is down to only five members and it would nice to think that we could get this up to strength for the forthcoming year by electing another four members at the Annual General Meeting on 3 October. The role is not particularly onerous involving meetings at approximately monthly intervals to discuss any ongoing issues, feed in any ideas for member events/meetings and give a hand from time to time with arrangements for any events. Do not be afraid that meetings are surrounded by formality - they are not - the more the merrier! Also If you are interested but unable to attend the AGM that is not a problem. If you would like any further information or an informal chat please feel free to speak to the Treasurer, Robert Williams Tel 704998 or any other Committee Member viz Menna Jones, Kay Culhane, Liz Williams or Heather Williams. Alternatively you can email ruthincivic@btinternet.com for further details on what's involved.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions to the Association are due from 1 September for the year to 31 August 2014. Once again the Committee have decided to retain these at £8 per person (£12 for joint membership) and this rate has now been held for EIGHT years. Obviously with increased costs it becomes more difficult to maintain this level and it is proposed to put a proposal to the AGM in October to consider a modest increase for the year 2014-15. What we would wish to introduce immediately for the forthcoming year however is to request members to 'Gift Aid' their subscriptions. Whilst this would not necessarily be appropriate for everyone it is felt that the Gift Aid system is now sufficiently well known and accepted that hopefully members will be comfortable with doing this and it could result in a small increase in our income. We will include a Gift Aid declaration on our forms to be sent out in the near future. Several members have enquired whether we could introduce a direct debit system. We have investigated this possibility with our bank but unfortunately for a small charity it would seem that it is not permissible unless we engage a professional agency with the required large banking guarantees. We would have to pay fees for this service and in view of the low level of our subscriptions it would not be cost effective.

Sir Hugh Myddleton

Miles Anderson assesses his historic achievement



“The ‘New River’, as it was called, took water from the river Ware in Hertfordshire to New River Head in London, a distance of 38 miles. Here the development was officially opened on 29th September 1613. “

“He was the sixth son of Richard Myddleton, was governor of Denbigh Castle and MP for the borough. He travelled to London where he became royal jeweler to King James 1st.“

I wonder if in London there will be great celebrations on the 29th September, 2013? Perhaps not, but there should be. Here in Ruthin, at least, we can record the significance of the date when exactly 400 years ago – 29th September 1613 – the great engineering construction of Sir Hugh Myddleton brought clean water to London.

The ‘New River’, as it was called, took water from the river Ware in Hertfordshire to New River Head in London, a distance of 38 miles. Here the development was officially opened on 29th September 1613. The investment was not a great financial success.

Sir Hugh Myddleton (or Middleton), (1560-10th December 1631) and 1st Baronet, was during his lifetime, a cloth maker, entrepreneur, mine owner, goldsmith, banker and self taught engineer. He was the sixth son of Richard Myddleton, was governor of Denbigh Castle and MP for the borough. He travelled to London where he became royal jeweler to King James 1st.

Here in Ruthin the Myddleton family owned the Castle Hotel, or the White Lion as it was known, and its associated buildings. It is believed that the design of what is now ‘The Middleton on the Square’, but more generally called ‘The Seven Eyes of Ruthin’, is thought to have been influenced by the Dutch style encountered on the European travels of Sir Richard Clough and Sir Hugh Myddleton, both 16th century merchants associated with the house. Sir Richard Clough was manager for Queen Elizabeth 1’s merchant royal based in Antwerp and is suggested as the founder of the London Stock exchange.

Hugh Myddleton certainly belongs to that group of men from the Vale of Clwyd of the period known as the ‘Renaissance Men of North Wales’. They also included Gabriel Goodman and Sir John Trevor – all sons of Ruthin.



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.

Should you be interested in subscribing to the association or becoming a member, please contact our treasurer, Robert Williams on 01824 704998 or on heatherandrob@btinternet.com

We welcome letters and contributions.

Please send them to the Editor, Miles Anderson at Silver Birches, Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, LL15 2SD or miles-and-jill@freeuk.com

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