

Ruthin Town and Around

O Gwmpas y Dre



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

June 2014

A New Future for an Old Inn

Ruthin School redevelopes a town landmark building

Gareth Evans brings its history up to date

Ruthin School's new boarding accommodation has been taking shape over the winter and spring months as the empty Anchor building has been transformed into a new boarding facility for the School.



The Anchor has been a landmark in Ruthin since the present building was put up around 1770. Sited at an important location where five roads met, the Anchor prospered in the late eighteenth century as the turnpike roads to Wrexham and Mold were developed alongside. It became home to a large carrier business but by the twentieth century it was one of many local pubs in the town. In the 1980s and 90s it was briefly expanded into a hotel, but in the early twentieth century rapidly declined as the hotel group which owned it collapsed.

The Anchor stood as a deteriorating and depressing feature on a major site for a couple of years with no obvious demand for a large hotel building as the national economy crumbled. The building was clearly

in need of major investment and there were fears that the town was about to lose another landmark building.

News of its purchase by Ruthin School in 2013 was greeted with surprise by many. The school had appeared to be going through difficult times and the task of making a usable building out of the Anchor would need a lot of money. However throughout 2014, the school's ability to fund the restoration has been evident in the well managed programme of reconstruction that has transformed the Anchor and the appearance of Anchor Corner.

Recession hit many small private schools during 2008 and 2009 and many are still closing. Six years ago Ruthin School was in difficulties. A charity, it was dependent on fees for its income and needed more pupils to survive; it began a six year drive to increase pupil numbers. To find more pupils they had to make themselves more attractive

As a boarding school, Ruthin can take pupils from all over the world. Overseas parents look for quality education and access to the best universities so Ruthin School had to make fundamental changes and is now consistently in the top 50 lists of best private schools. Every upper sixth form pupil currently has an offer from a top ranking university, five from Cambridge.

A period of change to the school led to a loss of day pupils but consistent high quality achievements has attracted local pupils again. The school is now full, as far as boarders are concerned and already full for girl boarders next year. The Anchor development will allow the school to grow by 30 more boarders.

The Anchor has been bought and refurbished out of the profits made by the school. Purchased for £300,000, and the comprehensive refurbishment has cost another £1.1 million, it will provide 30 en-suite single bedrooms, a kitchen, a common room and an apartment for a housemaster in a thoroughly modernised building with new electricity, water, sanitation and central heating. It will be renamed Goodman in honour of Dr Gabriel Goodman, the Ruthin man, whose munificence established the Tudor grammar school.

Plans are underway to improve playing field provision, continue increasing day pupils, expand staff and improve the school's buildings. The man responsible for attracting new students and laying the foundation for its present success is Principal, Toby Belfield, a Cambridge man, who has taught mathematics and worked in industry; he came to Ruthin as bursar in 2008 and became principal in 2010. He spends each January and February abroad meeting parents and potential pupils

Toby Belfield said 'Goodman is our first big investment in Ruthin for many years; it will not be our last. We wish to continue to be attractive to the local community and the community is clearly responding favourably to what we are doing. We are at the start of a very exciting time for Ruthin School.'

The new Goodman will be visible evidence of Ruthin School's resurgence and its continuing contribution to the local community.

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A First for Ruthin

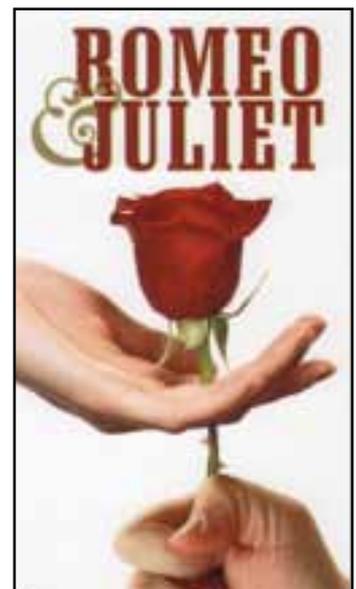
Robert Hughes looks forward to The Lord Chamberlain's Men bringing Romeo and Juliet to Nantclwyd y Dre

Founded in 2004 by Mark Puddle and named after Shakespeare's original troupe of travelling players, The Lord Chamberlain's Men has quickly established itself as the UK's premier open-air touring theatre company. Mark was brought up in North Wales at Bodnant in the Conwy valley where his family managed the world famous gardens for three generations. He trained at Bristol Old Vic and is now based in London where he has also developed other theatre related interests including West End Stage which is a theatre skills workshop for 8-21 year olds. The next workshop in North Wales is 28th July to 1st August, 2014.

Touring to over 90 venues throughout the UK and internationally over the summer months, The Lord Chamberlain's men brings its unique blend of Shakespearian entertainment to only the most beautiful and historic open air venues, where the audience can sit under the stars and enjoy a picnic while being enthralled by the excitement and drama of the action – packed production of the world's greatest love story in true Elizabethan fashion.

For 400 years the tragedy of Shakespeare's "star cross'd lovers" has gripped audiences with its perfect blend of excitement, heart-stopping thrills and the most famous balcony scene in theatre history. In this tale of feuding families, two young lovers – driven by youthful passion and blind love – enter a forbidden relationship. Faced with banishment and separation they hatch a drastic plan with terrible consequencescan true love conquer all?

With Elizabethan costume, music and dance this all-male cast production is sure to be the must-see open air hit of the summer. Settle back and be swept up in the romance, the drama and the tragedy that is Romeo and Juliet. The Friends of Nant Clwyd y Dre in conjunction with Denbighshire County Council are co-ordinating the evening with the company and anticipate welcoming a full house to the performance on Wednesday 23rd July at 7.30pm.



A new tourist attraction has opened on the foothills of Moel Famau.

Julie Masters recommends a visit



The Moel Famau Shepherds Hut is the latest addition to the Bwlch Pen Barras car park, a popular spot where visitors begin their ascent to the Jubilee Tower or the climb to the Hillforts on Moel Fenlli.

The Shepherds Hut is a purpose built homage to the once part time homes of shepherds during the 19th and 20th centuries. Once a place of comfort and safety for shepherds of a bygone age, the Moel Famau Hut hosts the same purpose of visitors to the area today, and fits in beautifully within the countryside setting.

Providing refreshments, from locally made cakes to Welsh crisps, the Shepherds Hut prides itself on having products locally made and Welsh items.

Once a place of comfort and safety for shepherds of a bygone age, the Moel Famau Hut hosts the same purpose of visitors to the area today, and fits in beautifully within the countryside setting.

Not only refreshments are provided by the hut, but also local manufacturers and artisans are using the Hut to showcase their products giving tourists more incentive to explore Ruthin and see what the town has to offer.

It was on Boxing Day 2013, the Hut first trialled its operation, and has been gaining strength ever since - It was officially opened by his Rt Hon David Jones MP Secretary of State for Wales, on the 17th of April 2014. The official launch saw a great turnout from the area, local Councillors and the public were entertained by RSPB, Mountain Rescue, SAR, AONB, The Weavers Guild, as well as the local businesses showcasing their products, and treated to a surprise "Flash Mob" choir singing "The Hills are Alive with the Sound of Music".

Working closely with the AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) The Shepherds Hut is also a hub for tourist information, helping visitors make the most of what the stunning landscape has to offer.

Ruthin is one of the most beautiful small towns in North Wales and the Shepherds Hut is hoping to help to promote it.

The Hut is in position every weekend (apart from when we have 100 mile an hour wind!) and during the school holidays. We have learned so much about the people who use the mountains, from the walkers, the bikers, the gliders, the Mountain Rescue Team (they train their rescue dogs on the range!) the Fell Runner (had such a good day at the Excalibur Marathon Day) the Wardens, the Birdwatchers....and the day trippers who invariably come back with fondest memories of their childhood and marvel at the enhancements to the spot.



The Shepherds Hut aims to be an "out-of-the-ordinary" retailer, engaging with the community, providing employment and training for youngsters which are essential in the world of work; working as a Hub to stimulate mini weekend activities to engage visitors to make sure they keep coming back to the area.

200,000 tourists visit the Bwlch Pen Barras car park every year whether to take in the views from Jubilee Tower, climb Moel Fenlli or just wander the wilderness. The majority of these visitors wouldn't necessarily visit Ruthin or the surrounding villages. The Shepherds Hut encourages people to head into the valley and visit the town. We believe that community spirit is vital in rural business. Ruthin is one of the most beautiful small towns in North Wales and the Shepherds Hut is hoping to help to promote it.

Ruthin's international business that "Enhances the Environment"

Miles Anderson talks to Ivor Richards

It has been a busy year for Ivor Richards, that is, Ivor Gifford Richards OBE, Master of the Worshipful Company of Water Conservators. When we met he had just returned from a ceremonial voyage the previous day down the Thames on board the Queen's barge, *Gloriana*, travelling from Hampton Court to The Tower of London.

But Ivor's life hasn't always been one of pomp and ceremony. Coming from Abercynon in South Wales it was chance that destined him to become an environmental engineer as he would now probably describe himself. Having studied at University College, London with the aim of becoming a surveyor, work in that field was hard to come by. Finally he found work in the waterworks of Cardiff City for four years.

It was from there that he became involved in recovery work following the Aberfan disaster. This was a life changing event for him. Following a further eleven years working on public sector water undertakings it was in 1972 that he joined an engineering consultancy that was principally involved in the clearance and development of derelict land.

From here a move to North Wales found him involved in the clearance of slate tips and inevitably in Blaenau Ffestiniog. Here he also designed the railway station earning himself the nickname of "Ivor the Engine"!

Realising that engineering projects in the future would need to involve environmental concerns, the partnership recruited an ecologist and a landscape architect to the consultancy. In 1984 Richards, Moorhead and Laing was established, of which Ivor Richards is the only remaining partner. In Ruthin they first occupied small premises in Record Street before moving to the more spacious accommodation they now occupy in Well Street. Here they employ eleven employees and being shown round their work place it was amazing to see glimpses of the number of projects that they are currently working upon.

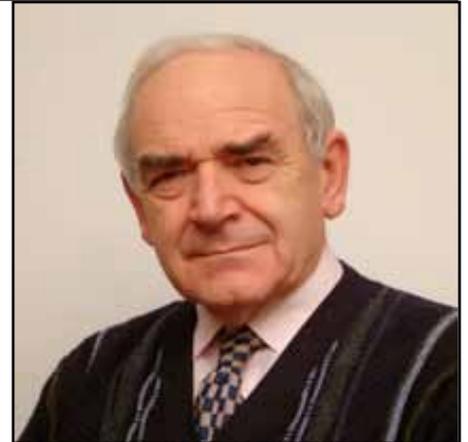
Several of their publications have received praise and in particular their ground breaking "Use of Vegetation in Civil Engineering".

In recent times with new environmental concerns – like solving the problem of Japanese Knotweed, for which they received an award in 1996 – and technological innovations, there have been many changes in their work. In the conservation of river courses, for example, they use the planting of willow to stabilise the banks.

If you ever have the chance to visit Ivor's premises you will be greeted on the stairs of images of skate-board parks – they designed the first of them in Warrington. And on the first floor is an extraordinary mural by local artist Alison Jones, commissioned by Marjorie, Ivor's wife. This illustrates many of the projects with which he has been involved. Sadly Marjorie died in 2012.

Ivor's current very busy life as Master of the Worshipful Water Conservators ends when the office passes to his successor in July. Thereafter he won't have to travel up to London on official business quite so frequently. I am sure that his colleagues will be glad to have him spending more time back in the office where his great experience is so invaluable.

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Ruthin welcomes visitors from twinned town, Briec

Vernon Hughes reports on the weekend

The essence of twinning is that people stay with people, in their homes, and not in hotels

The numbers in the various groups have varied and on one occasion we managed to house over 80 Briec people!



On the 10th anniversary of the twinning Briec renamed one of their squares Place de Ruthin/ Plasenn Rhuthun and one metre high black poplar trees grown at Llysfasi were planted in the town and each village. On the 15th anniversary we named the Briec roundabout in Rhuthun.

The idea of twinning Rhuthun with a town in Brittany started with the establishing of a Twinning Sub-Committee by Rhuthun Town Council and a delegation from Briec de l'Odet visited Rhuthun in 1992. The area of the Association consists of the communities of Rhuthun, Efenechtyd, Llanfair and Llanynys and soon, hopefully, Llanbedr. The area of the Briec Association consists of the communities of Briec, Edern, Landrevarzec, Landudal and Langolen.

The essence of twinning is that people stay with people, in their homes, and not in hotels. Many personal friendships have developed over the past 21 years although some people prefer to widen their circle of friends by staying with different hosts.

As well as the annual group visits of citizens, many organisations have also made the journey from Rhuthun to Briec and vice versa. Côr Rhuthun have visited Briec twice, playing to packed audiences at the Briec Artemuse Concert Hall, St Peter's Church in Briec (yes they do have a church dedicated to the same saint as Rhuthun!), Quimper Cathedral and Pleyben Church. Other groups that have visited Briec include the local NFU, the Ruthin Majorettes and Ruthin Junior Football Team. In turn the Bagad Briec and Gwen ha Du Dancers from Langdrevarzec have taken part in several Ruthin Festivals. The numbers in the various groups have varied and on one occasion we managed to house over 80 Briec people!

This year from Tuesday 27 May to Saturday 31 May we entertained 26 of our Briec friends, with 4 of them visiting Rhuthun for the first time. The programme included visits to St Giles Church, Wrexham and the Bersham Ironworks Museum; Llanrhaeadr Church and Anvil Pottery where we had purchased 20-year anniversary gifts for our Breton friends; Denbigh town and castle and the Electric Mountain at Llanberis with social evenings at Cafe R and at Canolfan Awelon with Côr Rhuthun who provided a meal and entertainment, with our final meal at Cae Cymro, Clawddnewydd. I should also add that every evening meal usually includes some singing in Welsh, English and French and, occasionally, in Breton! During the visit the two twinning committees met to discuss the programme and the arrangements for next year's visit to Briec. On the 10th anniversary of the twinning Briec renamed one of their squares Place de Ruthin/Plasenn Rhuthun and one metre high black poplar trees grown at Llysfasi were planted in the town and each village. On the 15th anniversary we named the Briec roundabout in Rhuthun. Gifts have been exchanged over the years and some can be seen in Rhuthun Library.

The Ruthun Twinning Association is open to everyone. It is self-funded and we raise money to entertain our Briec friends by holding various social activities. When we visit Briec every other year all participants pay their fares but when we arrive we receive full board accommodation and a programme of events. For further information please visit our website at www.rhuthun-briec.moonfruit.com



“Workers of Ruthin Unite!”

Miles Anderson admires photographs of Ruthin’s workers, displayed for Labour Day

The shop at 21 Upper Clwyd Street has had a number of tenants in recent times but Rachel Lewington’s recent takeover of the premises, now designated as Ty Celf, is for the long term.

A local resident, Rachel originally trained as a scientist before taking a BA course in Fine Art at Central St Martins, College for Art and Design in London. As a painter and sculptor, Rachel intends Ty Celf to be a gallery for local artists, and school age ones too, to exhibit their works.

She will also be organising courses, seminars and training sessions, for all age groups, for those wishing to develop their artistic skills.

The “Ruthin Workers” project was a collaboration with photographer Hayden Peers, who lives lower down Clwyd Street. The idea was to create a photographic record of as many of the personalities who work in Ruthin’s shops and businesses. For local residents they are the faces that greet them daily when they go into town. These people make a visit to Ruthin a personal encounter with the town’s workers. Ruthin rightly prides itself on not having a high-street lined with anonymous multiple stores but with individually owned and run shops where those who serve you are well known local residents.

It seemed appropriate that to celebrate the traditional, international Labour Day, May 1st, Rachel should mount an exhibition of these superb photo-portraits taken by Hayden Peers. It is hoped to amalgamate them, each with a brief descriptive text, in a volume with a copy being deposited with Denbighshire’s Archives.

For further information please contact Rachel on 07938771772.



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Quayle Award 2013 Presentation

Contenders for the 2013 Quayle award were short on the ground and when Menna Jones and her sub-committee met to consider what was on offer, there was only one serious contender – The Feathers Inn. When they arrived to meet Grant Mann, one of the new owners, the others being Gareth Hughes and Sion Roberts, they were in for a pleasant surprise. Memories of earlier visits to the Feathers had left an impression of a rather dark, cavernous establishment that was mainly resorted

to by the male populous. Now, through structural alterations and modern lighting it is bright and welcoming to all. There are a variety of seating areas with some more suitable for family entertainment, others that can be used for private occasions and round the back a courtyard with canopy and television for alfresco entertainment. The alterations were judged to comply with the award's criteria that look for an imaginative and creative development of outstanding quality that using locally sourced materials is sympathetic to the area and enhances the environment of Ruthin. When the report was put to the committee they felt that the Feathers Inn was a worthy contender.

The award is to be presented on 17th July at an evening social occasion to which members of the Ruthin and District Civic Association are cordially welcomed. As numbers are limited we would ask them to let the secretary, Miles Anderson, know if they will be able to attend on 01824 707632 or by email, miles-and-jill@freeuk.com

The event start is timed for 7pm. This is one of our scheduled quarterly members' occasions and it promises to be a most enjoyable evening.



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Seen in passing...

Ruthin now has a champion to market and develop the town – Shelly Barratt. Her role as 'Coordinator', indicates someone who brings things, and people, together - always a good idea! Cadwyn Clwyd, Denbighshire and Ruthin Town Council have funded the appointment. Shelly is to be based at the Visitor Centre on St Peter's Square and so she should be easy to contact. Otherwise you can get hold of Shelly on 07888840898 or coordinator@visitruthin.com. A Ruthin girl, if she'll pardon the expression, by birth, Shelly has a background in marketing, community engagement and tourism. She says, "It's as near as I can get to my dream job". We wish her every success in her new role!



What an excellent idea of the Town Council to decide to make an award for the nominated Good Citizen of the Year. This started last year and the idea is to make a newspaper announcement inviting nominations and also requesting nominations for the Young Person of the Year. There have been several nominations and the award this year for the Citizen of the Year goes to the very deserving Vernon Hughes. The successful Young Person of the Year is Symon Dowell. Very many congratulations to both of them. As well as the honour they will receive a certificate and a cheque for £100 which they can donate to the charity of their choice.

It was some years ago that the notice board facing visitors approaching the town centre up Clwyd Street greeted them with a message to the effect that the "The Mayor and Corporation of Ruthin Welcomes You". That one disappeared when the Tom Pryce memorial was installed just below where it once stood. It now seems that the recognition of Ruthin's Corporation has received a further blow with the renaming of the Corporation Arms as "The Cock o' Rhudd Din". Notwithstanding the somewhat strange bilingualism of the new name that carries with it some differing interpretations, it would be a shame if the Corporation of Ruthin disappeared from people's memories. The Corporation Arms was historically the place where the Corporation used to meet and the old name was in recognition of those occasions – a pity to lose that connection.



In a town like Ruthin, friendly, cohesive and full of potential 'Good Citizens', volunteering should be a part of the essential make of the town. When we heard that the Visitor Centre on St Peter's Square was to reopen once again we circulated our members to help recruit volunteers, for if the centre is to function efficiently, it needs a steady stream of them to keep it going. And we did have some response – certainly it now seems to be open on a pretty regular basis. Many thanks also to DCC for a funding grant to the Chamber of Trade to help out with necessary expenses. Now it is the turn of Nantclwyd y Dre to appeal for helpers. The Friends of Nantclwyd y Dre who assist with the care of the house and gardens are looking for new members. They are a friendly group with an active crew of a couple of dozen who help with cleaning, gardening, guiding and project work. The work is varied and can include jet washing, staging events, painting, bartending, weeding and so on. The work is usually in short bursts of a couple of hours with a refreshment break and you get the satisfaction of caring for a house that has been in Ruthin for nearly 600 years. If you're interested why not give Gareth Evans a call on 01824704564 or Murray Bragg on 01824704206.

On Saturday morning 17th May, a most splendid, JCB digger was gleaming in the sunlight on St Peter's Square. Esmor Davies, from Buckley was calling in on Ruthin before setting out on 26th July to drive this monster from John o' Groats to Land's End to raise funds for the visually impaired across the UK. In April of this year he won Best Garden in show at Cardiff RHS and has lots of great events and concerts planned before setting out on his 6 week challenge. Although not a Ruthin man, obviously he knew that St Peter's Square was the venue to show off his JCB. For further information or to donate call 07813 559717.



A Journey of mystery, searching, frustration and eventual delight!

Jill and Miles Anderson explore the Ruthin Art Trail



It was the May Bank Holiday Saturday and having nothing better to do, I decided we really ought to spend the morning unravelling the mysteries of the Ruthin Art Trail.

Many of its artefacts are obvious enough to need no searching out – the benches, the trees with their distinctive guards, the sheltered seats with their backing of a newly planted beech hedge half way up Market Street, and the long celebrated, and recently restored, St Peter's gates.

I was, however, primarily mystified and intrigued to discover the location of the elusive figures that we were told would take our gaze up to Ruthin's elevated sights where we would discover new visual concepts of our town. They are 10" tall and made of red stainless steel. I had spotted a couple earlier and, with some prompting, discovered a couple more, but, according to the Art Trail guide, there were many more to find as well as the spy holes to search out and investigate.



Starting, as we are directed, from the Ruthin Craft Centre, we stood by the road crossing for some considerable time before our first little red man showed himself. He was standing gesticulating in the direction we should follow. So over the road and across the car park we went, and started up a much visually improved Market Street, all the while gazing around us for more figures. The first two spy holes up Market Street and the one on Wynnstay Road are a visual delight and illustrate their historic setting. By the time we reached Wynnstay Road, Jill being less able than I, we were grateful to take advantage of the recently re-opened Crown House Café for a morning coffee.



Continuing our progress past the Market Hall, always a busy place on a Saturday morning, we had to queue up at the next spy hole whilst a mother and her young daughter had a look. The little girl had been on a guided tour of all the exhibits and without her advice we would never have found so many of the rascally figures. Some are seen to be scrambling over rooftops, others hanging from the letters of buildings' names, whilst some conceal themselves intertwined in decorative wrought ironwork and still others stand erect on roof lines or crouch on ledges seemingly ready to spring down upon you.

By this time, we had collected quite a little gathering of figure spotters – "Can you see that one?"..."Oh, and there's a couple over there!" Fortunately the traffic was moving slowly as with eyes turned skywards we were tending to wander out into the middle of the road.



Occasionally on our journey we asked a shop-keeper if they knew the whereabouts of a figure or spy hole, usually with no success. And at the end of the morning we are still looking for four figures and one spy hole, I have to confess.



All the Ruthin tiny red men are very personable, some cheeky, some deliberately hiding whilst others look on disdainfully! And I would not dream of telling you where they all are or what visions you might see through the spy holes – that would spoil your potential pleasure in discovering it all for yourselves. If, like us, you have a spare morning, we recommend taking one of the route plans from the Craft Centre or the Visitor Centre on St Peter's Square and setting out for yourselves. You will see bits of Ruthin that you never saw before, as well as having lots of fun along the way

Visit to the Lord's Garden - Nantclwyd y Dre

Heather Williams reports on a most enjoyable evening

On May 1st members had an enjoyable visit to Nantclwyd y Dre to discover what's been happening at Nantclwyd y Dre with the Lord's Garden project. Wendy Williams, the Project Co-ordinator, provided an interesting illustrated presentation about the project and a tour of the garden afterwards.

Eubule Thelwall, who owned the house during the late 17th century, purchased and developed the garden. During the early part of the 18th century the current layout with a formal path network was laid out. Wendy showed an 18th century sketch, (see right) which clearly illustrates the walls of the garden, inside which was an orchard. An interesting feature that can be seen on the sketch is the postern gate (the secondary gate) which gave access to the Cunning Green.



Wendy talked about a feasibility study which had been carried out (with initial funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund). An archaeological dig, led by Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust, was done in the early spring of 2013. Also as part of the study the local firm, RML, drew up designs for the garden restoration which were based on historical features that were previously in the garden. The project has now been successful in getting funding for the development of the restoration of the garden and it will be open to the public next summer. The project will involve training volunteers in gardening skills and also have students designing planting plans and leaflets.

The tour was lovely – with marvellous wild garlic in flower and wonderful views over to Ruthin Castle. On the tour the postern gate could clearly be seen, now that some of the vegetation has been cleared. Some trees which had no intrinsic value have been felled but new orchard trees are to be planted – maybe even the Denbigh Plum. We look forward to the opening of the garden next year

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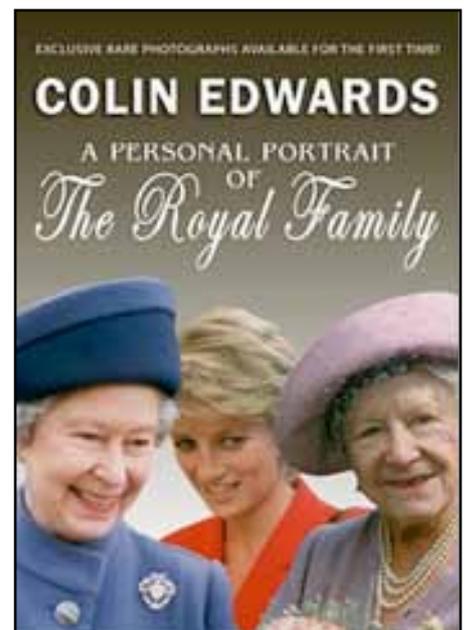
Colin Edwards' "A Personal Portrait of the Royal Family"

Ruthin author's new book is well received



Quoting from reviews – "The recently published *The Royal Family: A Personal Portrait*' features Mr Edwards' personal accounts of meeting members of the Royal family, complete with his own photographs.

As a self-confessed Royalist, Colin first became interested in the Royal family when he watched Her Majesty the Queen's coronation in 1953. Around 20 people crowded round the 14 inch television set at his childhood home in North Wales to witness the historic moment and, at just 12 years old, Colin was mesmerised by the spectacle of the Royal service".... "Colin made scrapbooks about the Royal Family and bought books on Royalty with his pocket money. He took his first photograph of the Queen in 1977, at the Silver Jubilee. Since then, spanning over a 30 year period, he has amassed a large collection of personal Royal photographs. Colin has collated his vast collection of photographs of the Royal Family to create a new book. Featuring never before seen images of Her Majesty the Queen, the Queen Mother and Diana, Princess of Wales at public events, he also provides emotive, personal accounts of his meetings with the Royals. A retired local government officer and royalist-at-heart, Colin has dedicated much of his spare time to photographing members of the Royal Family at public events. Travelling across the country, Colin has collected a number of unusual, intimate shots for his new book. He became so well-known that Diana, Princess of Wales personally greeted him upon recognition. Colin has exhibited his photographs to raise money for various charities and continues to attend royal public events". Copies are available from Janet's bookshop on upper Clwyd Street.



Seen in passing...

Nick Birch and Maureen Young certainly have no regrets about the decision to move Ruthin Decor from rather cramped premises on Lonparcwr to Slater's old site on Well Street. The additional space and attractive shop frontage has served their business well over the last two and a half years. Asked to what they attributed their recent award of 'Décor Retailer of the Year 2014', Maureen emphasised how the move had allowed them to incorporate wallpaper and lighting with the paint side of the business, and, of course, as she said, "Customer Service". In these days of difficult trading conditions, Ruthin Decor is going from strength to strength. Many congratulations!



Ruthin has a new Mayor! Stephen Beech, here shown with Anne Roberts, Ruthin's deputy Mayor, takes on the mantle – literally as well as metaphorically – from Rosie Hughes Moseley. Stephen says that he aims to work with the new Ruthin Coordinator to promote Ruthin and to get the message out further afield than the town's boundaries. He intends to promote the town and its businesses and beautiful buildings and landmarks. As well as those aspirations he wants to have Nantclwyd y Dre and Ruthin Old Gaol, the town's tourist hotspots, to be open more, more accessible to the town's visitors and also he would like to work closely with our schools and colleges. Stephen is to be praised for highlighting improvements he would like to see in his term of office. It is a good list and we wish him every success in his year as Ruthin's mayor!

By the time this edition of Town and Around is on the streets, so to speak, the boggy path alongside Railway Terrace will be a high quality pedestrian highway. It would appear to have been a mammoth task, but will be much appreciated as a great improvement to our town's walkers.



At Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd's pub, the White Horse, the lights have been dim for a long time. Now they have finally gone out all together. Another closed pub! This one in particular has had a very chequered history for some years. It's an important building at the heart of the conservation area of a very pretty village. Can it have a future? This might be the time to call a meeting of village residents and community representatives to consider the White Horse's best way forward. But Llanfair continues with a community spirit. The annual Llanfair Village Sports was held on Saturday 31st of May and, as always it was a full day of events with crowds of participants as well as spectators. Through the summer they will be having an open gardens and scarecrow day on Saturday 22nd June, followed by a picnic and musical evening on Saturday July 19th - for details call Dian on 01824 707506. So all is not lost!



STOP PRESS: As we are about to go to print, suddenly bright, floral baskets are going up outside the White Horse and there is promise of a reopening with a warm welcome and good food from the landlady of the Plough at Llandegla. Fingers crossed for a bright future for this village pub!

The Dublin Declaration

Bobby Feeley welcomes Denbighshire's commitment to an Age Friendly Community

As lead Member for Social Care and Denbighshire's Older Peoples Champion, I am delighted that Denbighshire has recently signed the Dublin Declaration. This is a pledge to take work forward based on World Health Organisation principles, to make communities more age friendly. It was so named because it was promoted during Ireland's E.U. Presidency. By signing this pledge, Denbighshire shows that they are committed to promote among our residents a general awareness of the needs and rights of older people and, more importantly, recognises and highlights the positive, social, economic and cultural contribution that older people make to society.

Demographic change affects us all, and life expectancy is increasing on a Global and National basis and here in Wales it is more pronounced than elsewhere with 37% of our population over 50 and 25% over 60. By 2030 this could mean over a million older people in Wales, far outnumbering children under 16.

From my point of view, living longer is very welcome but obviously we need to think about the impact of demographic change and what living well into our 80s 90s and 100s is likely to mean for service delivery. Of one thing I'm sure, we all need to promote a more positive attitude, a 'can do' approach, rather than 'can't do'.

Signing this Declaration, along with most other Welsh Councils, is a positive step towards Denbighshire's commitment to an 'Age Friendly Community.' I hope signing this Declaration will be just the start of changing attitudes towards the ageing process.

In addition the Welsh Government has just passed The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act which will transform the way care and support is delivered to vulnerable people across Wales. We will see Councils in partnership with voluntary organisations, communities and individuals working together to care and support those in need. Older people form the backbone of our society and many voluntary organisations rely on their wealth of knowledge and experience. Society must fundamentally change the way it thinks about older people, ageing and recognise they are an important asset.

Signing this Declaration shows we have taken a step in the right direction it is up to us all to make sure that we continue to drive these important principals forward so that we can all enjoy and embrace our older years.



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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.

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