

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 2015

Nantclwyd opens its Door Gareth Evans celebrates improved access



Nantclwyd y Dre opened its door this Easter having undergone a series of changes and improvements. Financial assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Rural Development Programme through Cadwyn Clwyd and the Friends of Nantclwyd will over the course of the year bring public access to the lord's garden, allow visitors to use a state of the art IT installation, reorder the ground floor to provide a Victorian Kitchen and a World War 2 dining room, and allow visitors to enter through the front door.

The front door will provide a much more welcoming entrance than the present side entrance. Too many visitors are not sure what they are entering when they approach the house from the side and turn back. The Friends of Nantclwyd approached Cadwyn Clwyd for help and the Friends dug deep into their own coffers to help provide a new reception area, a brand new shop and the Victorian kitchen and 1940s dining scene,

Said Friends secretary Murray Bragg, "We have enjoyed the closest co-operation and support from the staff of the County Council in this complicated work. We had always wanted to depict servants in the house as so many Ruthin people remember someone working there. The kitchen depicts the preparation of food and cleaning activity in 1901 when there were four servants living in the house and no doubt more coming in for the day."

Many older residents of Ruthin will have their memories stirred by the washing room and remember their parents or grandparents washing clothes with a clothes dolly and squeezing the water out with a mangle. A collection of bottles from Ellis's, Cambrian and the Hand recalls the days of the important Ruthin mineral water industry and of poor quality tap water. At the heart of the kitchen stands a magnificent open fire cooking range where boiling water was obtained and the food cooked. The labour intensive cooking methods of long ago can be seen without benefit of mixers, refrigerators and freezers.

"The idea for the 1940s dining room came from a visit to The Imperial War Museum with pupils from Ysgol Brynhyfryd as part of an interpretative project at the house" said Murray. "The room is set in November 1942, just after the battle of El Alamein and will try and explain rationing, separation and other aspects of war life". A frugal meal is about to be served for the Nantclwyd family and the dining room is in the splendid setting of the medieval hall where a 1940s children's corner has also been created.

Nantclwyd y Dre is home to an important maternity roost of lesser horse shoe bats. Visitors to the house have been able to observe the bats rearing their young via our in house live bat cam for a number of years;

however this winter it has been possible with funding from Chester Zoo to upgrade the camera system. The upgrades include an increase in cameras from 1 to 3, interpretation, education workshops and links with Bangor University. Live footage will be accessible via the Chester Zoo website. This will mean that visitors to the Chester Zoo website will be able to observe the bats remotely; raising awareness of Lesser Horseshoe bat conservation and in turn the profile of Nantclwyd y Dre by engaging this new audience. Dawn Thomas, Denbighshire Biodiversity Assistant "this is a new opportunity to enhance bat conservation which links the listed building conservation with bat conservation and wildlife."

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Easter 2015 saw the launch of our new interactive digital interpretation app. The Denbighshire Heritage Service along with the Friends of Nantclwyd y Dre worked with Cwmni Da Digital and Visit Wales to provide an attractive and engaging way for visitors to navigate and connect with the house and gardens. Funding for the project was provided through Visit Wales via the Digital Tourism Business Fund and generously matched by Cwmni Da digital. "We were really excited to use cutting-edge iBeacon technology to enhance the visitor experience at such a historic venue" Phil Stead Cwmni Da Digidol.



These are the first big changes to Nantclwyd y Dre since it was opened to the public. Wendy Jones said "the Council and the Friends of Nantclwyd have had a lot of help in putting these new developments in place and we are very grateful to everyone especially those who have given artefacts from their family collections. These make the interpretations so much more vivid and will help our visitors enjoy the house."

"We were really excited to use cutting-edge iBeacon technology to enhance the visitor experience at such a historic venue" - Phil Stead Cwmni Da Digidol.

Ruthin Flower Show

Les Starling welcomes the show back on a new location

The show takes place this year at The Llanfwrog Community Centre Mwrog Street on 22nd August 2015, and we are grateful to Bleddyn (runs the centre) who has worked very closely with us to ensure that our show is as good as ever. There will be a couple of changes, for instance we cannot put on the horse show this year but hope to work at bringing it back for next year. To respect the ground conditions we cannot have the large lorries that have proved so popular recently and we cannot allow dogs on the site except for service dogs that assist their owners with sight and hearing etc. We are hoping to have tractors and classic cars as usual. There will also be a wide range of activities to make the day a really interesting family day, some of these will be familiar and some will be new. There will be food and refreshments available.



The site usually runs golf, bowls and tennis and we are trying to arrange taster sessions so come and have a try. There will be a range of the usual competitions so please enter and help to make it your show. Look for the brochure in the shops around town. There will be stalls and the usual display from the camera club. We will be providing a free transport service from town to the show and back starting at midday and are planning the route to include the residential centres. All this is being arranged by a small dedicated hard working team – if you would like to offer some help please get in touch.

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Ruthin Festival is about to arrive!

Ifan Wyn celebrates a great programme for Ruthin Festival



It is that time of year again with Summer just around the corner that we in the Ruthin Festival Committee are proud to present to you the planned activities for the week 26th of June until the 5th of July (2015).

This will be the 20th Festival and we hope that there is something for everyone.

The events will be –

- **Friday 26th June** – Comedy Night with Justin Moorhouse, Sam Gore & Mike Wilkinson (open to change) at Theatr John Ambrose, Doors open 6.00, starts 8.00. Tickets 12.
- **Saturday 27th June** – Ruthin Carnival organised by Ruthin Forward – 12 noon at Ruthin School.
- **Music and Craft Workshops for Children** at Ruthin Craft Centre – 11.30-3.30
- **Concert with the Colin Jones Choir** at Theatr John Ambrose – 7.30. Tickets £10.
- **Sunday 28th June- Crafts and Music Performance** Ruthin Craft Centre – 2.30
- **Plug 'n' Play** – 4pm Boars Head
- **Atesh Quartet Concert** (with Ruthin Music Club), Ruthin Castle - 7.30. £10
- **Monday 29th June** - Best of the Urdd Concert, Theatr John Ambrose – 7pm, £5
- **Tuesday 30th June** – **Guitar workshop**, The Feathers – 8pm
- **Wednesday 1st July** - **Afternoon Concert**, Awelon, 1.30
- **Thursday 2nd July** – **A night of Musical Show and Discs**, The Feathers – 7.30
- **Friday 5th July** – **Reggae Night**, Llanfwrog Community Centre – 8.00, £3.50
- **Saturday 6th July** – **Top-of-Town** – 1.30-8.00, donations of £4 requested, plus many other entertainments. Tickets apply, from Elfair – child reductions available

Events where no charge is indicated are free. We would ask you kindly if you would spread the word about what's going on. Not only that but we would like to invite anyone who has an interest or any fresh ideas (maybe for next year's Festival) to join us on the committee. It is never too late and we would welcome you. If there are people out there with no interest in being on the committee but still want to help we are always looking for people especially on the Saturday "Top of Town" event. We would welcome anybody who would help with the setting up before the event, manning the barriers and helping with the collections during the day and help with clearing the square at the end of the night.



Opening new and old doors in September

Heather Williams has new properties open for 2015

In Wales throughout the month of September, numerous venues open their doors to the public, free of charge. This Open Doors programme is part of European Heritage Days, which takes place in 50 countries across Europe. With many sites normally firmly locked, it is a once-a-year opportunity to discover an area's hidden cultural heritage.

Open Doors has been arranged in Wales since 1994, and was originally funded by Cadw and co-ordinated by the Civic Trust for Wales. Open Doors Heritage Days in Denbighshire have been taking place for over a decade –initially starting in Ruthin and Denbigh. In 2014 Cadw took over the co-ordination from the Civic Trust for Wales, working with partners from various heritage organisations across Wales. Last year there were 343 entries with a programme of 1045 events throughout Wales. In Denbighshire there were 75 entries which was just over a fifth of the total programme for Wales. Not surprisingly Denbighshire was the highest performing area.



Open Doors is the largest volunteer event in the heritage sector of Wales. However, whilst volunteers play a most important part in Open Doors, some finance is required to co-ordinate the programme of events and also for marketing. This year as a result of a lack of funding being available at county level, there is no Denbighshire programme. Nevertheless the Ruthin and District Civic Association is co-ordinating and publicising events in its area, thanks to donations/grants made at a local level.

Two weekends are being held. The first weekend, 12 – 13 September, covers places in the outlying area of Ruthin. The other weekend, 26-27 September, is based in Ruthin, but also includes some churches in the outlying area.

On the afternoon of 12 September a new Open Doors property is Nantclwyd Hall grounds. Alterations to the gardens and grounds were made in the 1960s by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, the famous architect also responsible for stunning Portmeirion. Another claim to fame is that following a game at Nantclwyd Hall, Major Walter Wingfield devised the rules that led to the modern game of tennis. The nearby church at Llanelidan will be also be open the same weekend, with a concert on Saturday evening and a Medieval Fayre on the Sunday afternoon.

On 26 and 27 September new properties in Ruthin are open, including the Wynnstay, an old historic coaching inn – and Siop Nain, where the Welsh National Anthem was first printed. Ruthin Craft Centre is putting on a programme of activities with artists whom will be based in some of the churches. Street artists will also be walking around the town drawing attention to various historic buildings. Also there will be new churches to visit this year. A particular cluster of buildings of interest are those in Llanrhaeadr. The church, with its famous Jesse Window will be open, as well as St Dyfnog's Well and the King's Head, another old coaching inn. Further details of the full programme will be available in August.

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Quayle Award & 'Ruthin 2005-2015'

Peter Daniels presents "Looking at Images of Ruthin, 2005-2015" followed by Quayle Award presentation



All are welcome to attend this evening, commencing at 7pm, at the Llanfwrog Community Centre. And there is no charge, however as space is limited you will need to book a place by contacting the Association's Secretary, Miles Anderson on 01824 707632 or by email – miles-and-jill@freeuk.com

This evening is not a repetition of the excellent images from old postcards that Ian Lewney showed us at Awelon earlier in the year. What we will see on Friday, June 26th are high quality digital images showing us just how many changes, great and small, there have been to the urban landscape of Ruthin over the last ten year period.

The evening will conclude with the presentation of the 2014 Quayle Award to North Wales Housing Association for the excellent redevelopment of the, until recently, near derelict row of cottages on Mwrog Street. Please do remember to book your places for what promises to be a very pleasurable evening.

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Seen in passing...



- Well, well, well! We all know of Ruthin's history of being a centre for the production of mineral waters, thanks to Arnold Hughes recent article in Town and Around. However it would be good to have information on how many of the original wells that were in use around there town there are still remaining. One assumes that they have all been capped off, but where are they and could they still be productive? Please do let us know – contact details are, as usual, at the bottom of page 12.
- It goes without saying that to date there is no evidence of the Cuning Green being reopened. We were hopeful, as reported in our March edition, that matters were moving on – we await developments, more in hope than expectation!
- And on the subject of no change – the same is the situation at Glasdir. Once again, we await developments, also more in hope than expectation!
- Empty shops – some time ago we reported there being 20 empty shops in the whole of the town. The Market Hall may not be designated as a 'shop' but it is always busy and popular – especially on a Saturday morning when all the stalls are full of a huge variety of fascinating goods as well as cakes and other tempting foodstuffs. So now in town there are very few empty shops – something well worth celebrating!

Ruthin's New Mayor.

Ruth Bacon enjoys meeting Anne Roberts



"I'm a person who likes to get things done."

This is how Ruthin's new mayor, Anne Roberts describes herself and an hour in her company proves the accuracy of her statement!

Born in Ruthin, Anne has lived here all her life. She is a Welsh speaker and was educated at Ysgol Borthyn and later Ysgol Brynhyfryd. Married to George, who will be her consort over the next year, she has two sons and two grandsons all living in the Vale. But as well as raising a family, Anne has had a long, successful working life, and despite being officially retired she is still active and involved in many activities.

Her working life began at what was then Clwyd County Council where she worked briefly in the Treasurer's Department before moving to the Highways Department where she spent twelve years based in Ruthin.

Her career took a different turn in 1976 when she took up a position with North Wales Police where she remained until her retirement in 2010. For twenty five years she was a Station Officer on the enquiry desk at Ruthin, Wrexham and Mold Police Stations. For the last ten years of her career Anne was the branch secretary for UNISON, representing all civilian staff within the police force. She says she loves people and her union work and front desk experience were invaluable in providing her with opportunities to meet, and deal with, people from all walks of society.

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In 2010 shortly after retiring, Anne's significant contribution to the police was recognised by her being awarded the MBE for services to North Wales Police. Anne travelled to Buckingham Palace to receive the award and she says she was hoping it would be the queen who was the presiding "royal" that day ...and it was! She was presented with her award by Her Majesty at the ceremony.

Now she was no longer working for the police, Anne was able to become involved in local politics, something in which she had always been interested. She was elected onto Ruthin Town Council and has taken an active role since then. Going back to her opening statement about herself it could be added that she also likes to do things! She is a member of Ruthin and District Civic Association, a committee member of the local food bank, Ruthin Conservative Branch and Ruthin Hospital League of Friends.

Her dream would be for an organisation like the National Trust to take on Ruthin Gaol and Nantclwyd y Dre to give them the recognition they deserve.

She is involved with Ruthin Forward and is passionate about promoting tourism to Ruthin. She believes technology plays an important part in its future. The new Ruthin website and Ruthin logo with its modern design win her approval as does the new bat-cam link between Chester Zoo and Nantclwyd y Dre. Anne herself is a keen tourist. Having taken history as an A level subject she enjoys visiting historically important sites and is sad that some of the locations she has been to in the world are no longer safe to visit. She realises the importance of preserving our heritage here in Ruthin. Her dream would be for an organisation like the National Trust to take on Ruthin Gaol and Nantclwyd y Dre to give them the recognition they deserve. In the meantime she says that as long as her energy levels remain good, she will continue to serve Ruthin in whatever capacity she can.



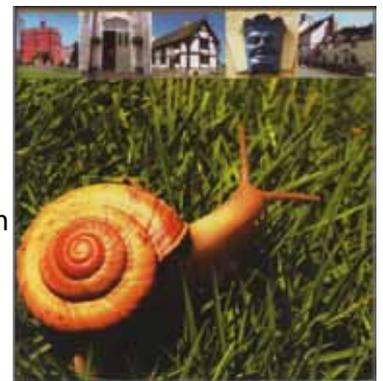
Seen in passing...

- More to celebrate! Again we applaud Ruthin Town Council for seeking nominations for the 'Ruthin Good Citizen of the Year Award'. This year it was presented to Mrs Polly Snape of Llanfair Road, Ruthin. She set up the Ruthin Panto Society in 2012 and she also runs the Ruthin Youth Theatre. She helps out at many events in Ruthin including the Ruthin Carnival. Congratulations to you Mrs Snape.

And similarly our congratulations go to the winner of the 'Ruthin Young Person of the Year Award'. This went to Sarah Jones-Wallace of Bro Deg, Ruthin. She led the St. Peter's Church Choir at the Mayor's Civic Service and also at the Remembrance Service last year on Wynnstay Road. She was an active and enthusiastic Cadet in the Ruthin St. John Ambulance until she left last year. She also gained her Grand Prior Award and also her First Aid qualifications.

Both received their awards and also a cheque for £100.00 in favour of their chosen local charities at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on Monday, 11 May 2015.

- Unoccupied site on Lonparcwr – Just past Morgans on the left of the link road there is a very prominent site on the industrial estate at Lonparcwr. Recently there was a banner there for GON, the granite work surface suppliers, but to date it remains unoccupied and has recently looked quite unsightly. Turner and Williams, who own the site, have just done a good job clearing and tidying it up, so let's hope that it soon finds a new occupant.
- Having lost the excellently sited Visitor Centre on the corner of Clwyd Street and St Peter's Square, it is good news that there is now comfortable and relaxing tourist information available in St Peter's Church itself. Can we have some better advertising and promotion for this facility on which our tourist trade so much relies?
- This spring has been particularly kind to Ruthin's many gardeners. The daffodils by the roadsides, especially those on the south side of the Wrexham Road, have been spectacular. The magnolias that are so often burnt brown from the late frosts, put on a blazing display this year. And the greening-up of the town's many trees as they come into new leaf, enhance so many of our thoroughfares. In our last edition, Heather Williams regretted that Ruthin's tree canopy did not fare as well as, for example, Llangollen's. We understand that some years ago Mwrog Street was a tree-lined 'boulevard'. How much improved the aspect of this road at the southern gateway to Ruthin town centre would be with new tree planting – as we have seen as part of the Art Trail in Market Street!
- Denbighshire has just announced with a great fanfare, that it has produced a series of Town trails together with a rather quirky promotion image. We still believe that our 'Slow Walks' publication will be hard to beat – and think that the snail image is a better promotion. We leave you to decide.



‘Down Memory Lane’ part 1

Emrys Wynne remembers old times in Ruthin

As a child a visit to Ruthin from Pentre Celyn, before I was able to cycle there meant a four mile journey in various cars ranging from with the black Austin 7 (Reg. no KKB10) to the maroon coloured Ford Cortina, the registration number of which I cannot remember other than it ended with the letter E, making it a 1966/67 registered vehicle. There followed a Hillman Minx and an Austin Maxi but from 1966 onwards, I was able to cycle to town on my ‘dropped handle bars’ Falcon Olympic 10 Speed Racer and sometimes without my parent’s knowledge. I actually passed my driving test in the Austin Maxi in 1974 and consequently the town and places well beyond Ruthin became accessible to me as long as I had enough fuel in the petrol tank!

Petrol for the cars was initially pumped manually into the car with the attendant carefully watching the rotating hand as the pump measured the gallons. Clwyd Garage was in Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd, near the White Horse and the Church. After driving past Bryn Mair on the left, we would often see a cloud of steam being spewed out of the train from Corwen, as it puffed its way through Ffynogion fields towards Ruthin. This is when my older sister, brother and I would challenge my father to drive faster in order to get to Ruthin before the train got to there. We never did find out if he managed to ‘beat the train’ as our visit to the town never took us directly to the station, which was located where Bric roundabout and the Craft Centre is now. As the trains hardly had enough time to increase their speed after leaving Eyarth Sation (Llanfair), and as it was undoubtedly slowing down to stop at Ruthin, I like to think that my father may well have been the actual winner of these unofficial races.

By the time I was travelling to Ruthin on the school bus, from September 1968, things were changing on Wrexham Road. The first houses in Castle Park on the left hand side were standing and others were under construction. On the right, in a field opposite Castle Park Farm there was a sign near a newly widened access, where Cape Homes were advertising ‘Homes For Sale’ on the Castle Park Estate. My father was not very fond of this sign because he said that Cape could sell houses but the house purchasers would make them into homes after moving in. This estate became Erw Goch and the field on which the house in which I live with my wife was built on a field called Rhos Goch. This is why we have adopted this name for our house. Our house was built in 1970.

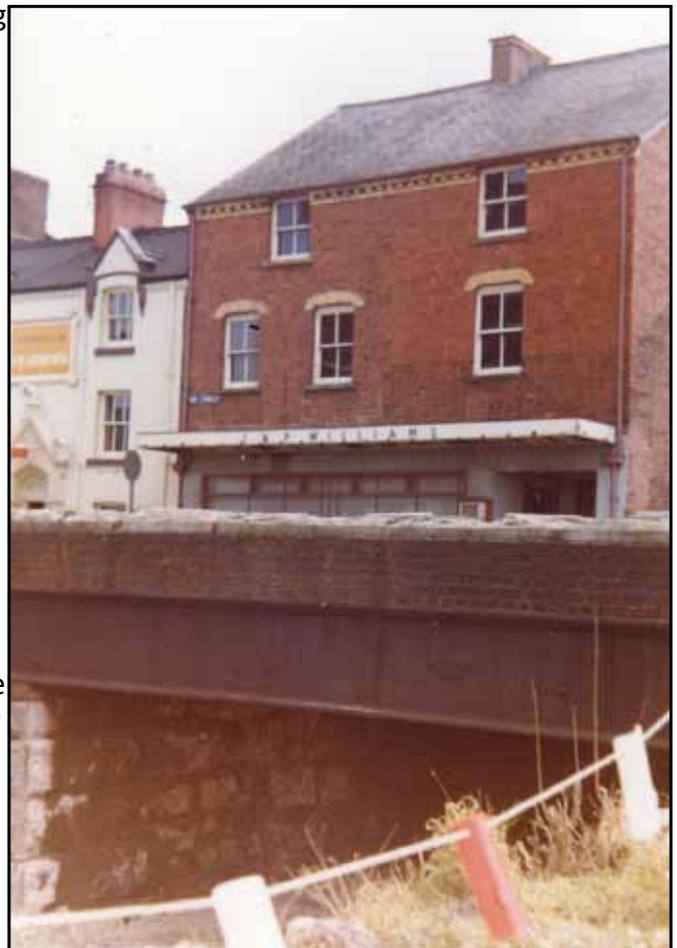
Now what has changed since the sixties and seventies? Let’s start from Erw Goch.

Castle Park farm is no longer a working farm. In the past, traffic, which was a fraction of what it is now, was likely to get delayed by cattle or sheep being herded by the farmer from one of the marts, where the Co-Op and Market Street Car Park are now. Before reaching the hump-backed railway bridge, Heals bakery was where the Kebab House is now, just after the sweetshop, where now you can purchase a Chinese take away. Beyond The Feathers, was J & P Williams, Grocers. As a child, I can remember Maldwyn leaning over the high dark wood counter with a free lollipop as a gesture of thanks to my mother for her custom. Nearby, was The Anchor where Ruthin School now has its newly refurbished student accommodation block, Goodman. (to be continued)

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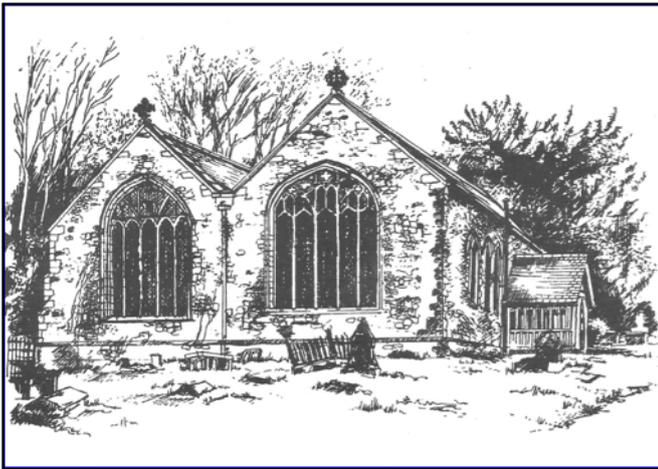
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Llanrhaeadr and St Dyfnog's Church

Miles Anderson finds much to delight him there



The village of Llanrhaeadr is doubly blessed! Firstly it is bypassed by the busy A525, and remains a centre of what is today a rare commodity – peace and tranquillity. Its second blessing is the church of St Dyfnog's that lies at the heart of the old village – it is a gem!

St Dyfnog's could be accused of hiding its light under a bushel as it sits back from the road nestling in a sylvan glade at the foot of the hills. Like so many churches in the Vale of Clwyd it is double naved, each of similar size and capable of holding a very considerable congregation that in the past could have included many pilgrims.

The church tower, probably the oldest extant portion of the building, dating from the thirteenth Century, is, though supported by massively structured walls, described as 'solid and squat'. It still contains two well-functioning bells.

The origins of the church however are much older. The earliest Christian development on this site dates from the 6th century, the era of St Dyfnog. He almost certainly chose the location because of the spring there that was believed to have healing powers.

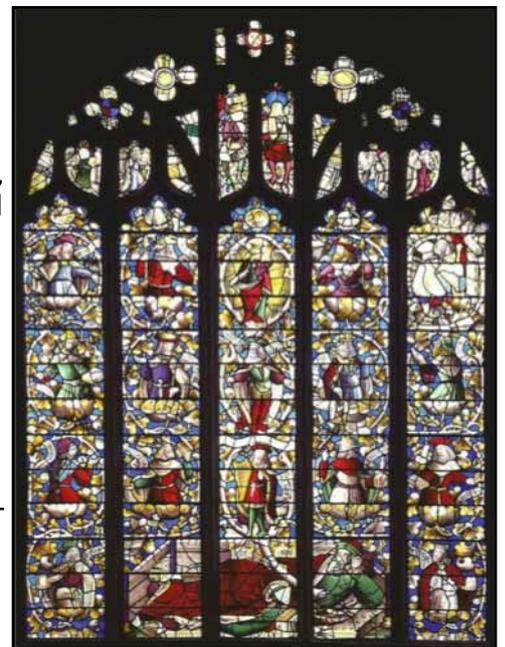
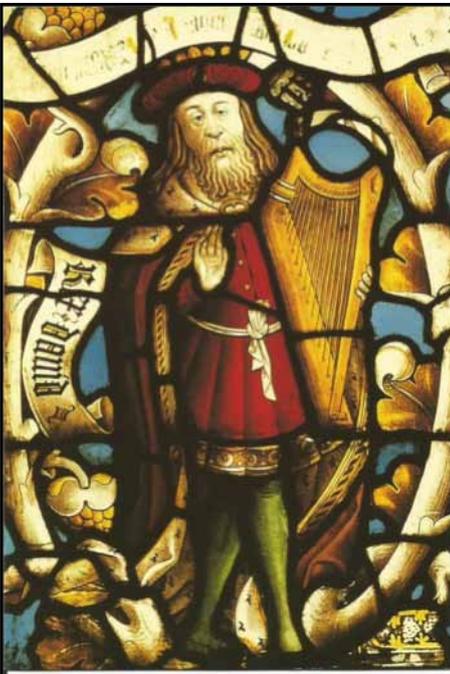
There is a strong tradition in Wales of Holy Wells, and although that at Holywell, in nearby Flintshire is nowadays much better known and more generously endowed, it is today as much a tourist attraction as a religious pilgrimage site. St Dyfnog's waters were at one time a major attraction for pilgrims from far and wide.

The approach to the spring takes you past ancient yews in the church yard and a row of very pretty alms-houses. You cross a little foot bridge over the stream and arrive under the trees at what is still an adequate bathing pool fed by crystal clear waters.

In the tradition of leaving the best till last, we now come to the famous Jesse Window. For the very few who might not know the origins of this form of church stained glass windows, the design represents the descent of Jesus Christ from Jesse, the father of King David. Quoting from Isaiah chapter 2, verses 1 and 2 "And there will come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse and a flower will rise up out of his root". This very early, beautiful window is dated 1533. We are lucky still to have it. During the destruction of church decorations by the parliamentarians during the English Civil war, it was taken out, hidden in the great oak chest and buried safely nearby.

There is so much to enjoy at St Dyfnog's, as well as in Llanrhaeadr village, this introduction can only serve as an appetiser. We are very fortunate that Llanrhaeadr are participating in this year's Open Doors celebration in September – a chance for further exploration of its many pleasures!

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Ruthin CAB - fit for the future

Bobby Feeley talks to Judith Bennett about the CAB's future

I met with Manager of Ruthin CAB, Judith Bennet, this month to find out what the future may hold for the Ruthin CAB.

Judith began working for Ruthin CAB 24 years ago in 1991. She started as an administrative secretary, and decided to train as an advisor and soon became Deputy Manager. In 2001 she became joint Manager with Eira Ellis, then in 2004, Judith took over as Manager.

Within Denbighshire CAB service there are Bureaux in Rhyl, Denbigh and Ruthin, with outreach services in Prestatyn, Llangollen and Corwen. The Ruthin Bureau covers Corwen and Llangollen. Judith was proud to point out that in 2014 that Denbighshire CAB won the Award of 'Debt Team of the Year' awarded by The National Institute of Money Advice. This accolade was for offering a holistic debt advice service, effectively utilising IT, including face to face Skype interviews.

Judith also talked about her views as Ruthin Manager on how the future may look:

'Of course the service is changing rapidly, technology has transformed the way advice is delivered, but don't forget lots of people do not even use a computer, so yes we embrace any new technology, but we do not lose sight of those who are not connected. Some of the work involves assisting people to complete forms or find personal information on line. Training to become an adviser takes approximately 9 months in-depth training. In addition volunteers regularly attend courses to keep up to date with current legislation. There is a real time independent Audit every month so that funders can be assured of the quality of advice given.

The Bureau relies on 20 volunteers and is funded by a combination of Welsh Government, DCC and Community Councils. Advocacy is provided on many and varied wide-ranging subjects: debt, benefits, employment, housing, energy, consumer issues, relationships and health. All the latest information is fed into a complex computer system, upgraded and updated almost daily with all the current legislation.

Ruthin Bureau works as a team alongside various partners, Councils and Voluntary Organisations, and as Council budgets decrease, more and more is expected of this excellent organisation. Here in Ruthin they are fully equipped and excited about future developments.

Ruthin, as with other Bureaux, is intrinsically linked with the Denbighshire CAB structure, which is currently preparing to expand their 'Award Winning' Welfare Rights Financial Team to replace the DCC service. This handover is in the final stages and hoping to be fully up and running within the next few months.

As my visit with Jude came to a close, I was left in no doubt that the future of Ruthin CAB Bureau is secure, fit and ready to meet the challenges of the 21st Century, but they will never forget that important personal touch.

The Ruthin Bureau hours are: 9.30 - 1 p.m. - Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, in The Old Fire Station, Market Street - People can drop in, make appointments or arrange a home visit if essential. There is an all Wales 24 hour line: 03444772020



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Ruthin's University of the Third Age goes from Strength to Strength

Miles Anderson records a phenomenal success

This is a nationwide network of groups who get together to share knowledge, skills and interests. It also welcomes those hoping to start from scratch on a subject of their interest.

"I first started planning this in October last year. However it wasn't until the initial meeting in February that I realised what a need there was for leisure and social activities for those of us who are no longer working. I'm delighted that there has been such a brilliant response."

People might ask 'What is the University of the Third Age', or as it is more usually known, 'U3A'? The answer is simple and quite unchallenging to those of us for whom advanced education establishments are a daunting prospect. This is a nationwide network of groups who get together to share knowledge, skills and interests. It also welcomes those hoping to start from scratch on a subject of their interest. It is not a 'university' in the conventional sense. There are no exams and no homework. Hurrah, you might say!

The overall idea is for members to share knowledge, skills and interests in a non-scholastic atmosphere although, for most participants, they do take the opportunity to study the subject chosen with a certain degree of application.

U3A usually tends to attract those over 55 who have some free time on their hands, but there is no age limit.

So how does it work, you might ask, is it just a free-for-all? The usual structure is organised around each group selecting a leader who has a particular interest in the subject. Provided the numbers of participants are not too large, groups will usually meet up in the house of one of the members, thus avoiding room hire charges. For larger gatherings, a pound per head is most likely to cover room hire – so not a prohibitive cost.

The whole atmosphere of U3A is friendly and welcoming.

On looking back at the great response Rose Hislop had to the initial launch, she said, "I first started planning this in October last year. However it wasn't until the initial meeting in February that I realised what a need there was for leisure and social activities for those of us who are no longer working. I'm delighted that there has been such a brilliant response."

We have to thank Rose Hislop for taking the initiative in bringing U3A to the Ruthin area. Her initiative and diligence have created a resource that was previously sadly lacking in the Ruthin area.

Interest groups include Art for All, Scrabble, Sugar Craft, Geology, Backyard Chickens, Forensic Psychology, 20th C. Classical Music,

Gardening, Recorders, Science, iPads for Beginners, Welsh Conversation, French Culture and Language, Whist, and Theatre Going, Crown Green Bowls and Knockabout Tennis.. To date there are 170 signed up members of whom quite a few have opted for more than one group. For further details contact Rose on rosehislop@gmail.com

Initial subscription is £15 and thereafter £15 annually – and you can indulge in a free taster session before making the financial commitment!



Shakespeare at Nantclwyd y Dre

Twelfth Night in the Garden on July 5th

Once again the Lord Chamberlain's Men Theatre Company will bring one of their excellent productions to Ruthin. This year it is Twelfth Night. As Mark Puddle, their Creative Producer says, "Twelfth Night is the play that our audiences have been begging us to return to. It has always been one of Shakespeare's funniest and I can't think of anything more perfect for a summer's evening than a classical retelling of this great comedy set against the background of some of the nation's most beautiful attractions."



This comedy tells a story starting with a pair of twins being washed up on the coast of magical Illyria, and from that moment on, as you can imagine with Shakespeare's comedies, chaos reigns in this convoluted tale of tangled love stories and mistaken identity.

Don't miss what promises to be a lovely summer's evening of delight. Tickets at £14.50 for adults, £7.50 children and there are also family offers available from 01492 872000. Book early to avoid disappointment.

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Ruthin and District Civic Association

The Association's main aims are to promote 'Civic Pride' in the town of Ruthin and its surrounding villages. We aim to promote high standards in any relevant planning processes and in encouraging architectural excellence.

We always seek to work with our local authorities and organisations in pursuit of the preservation and improvement of the town's rich history and culture. In this respect we hold quarterly members meetings as well as monthly committee meetings.

Membership of the association is £10 for individuals and £15 for joint membership. This is payable annually in September.

If you would be interested in becoming a member of the association or join the committee, please contact our treasurer Robert Williams, Lenton House, Mold Road, Ruthin, LL15 1SL, 01824 704998 or ruthincivic@btinternet.com Further information, and back numbers of Town and Around can be found on www.ruthincivic.org

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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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