

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

December 2016

Christmas in Ruthin

Miles Anderson promises it will be a very festive occasion

Saturday 3rd December is to be the start of Christmas for the people of Ruthin. This is the day when the lights are switched on amid much festive celebration.

St Peter's Square will, as usual, be packed with people ready to enjoy all the entertainment.

This year we are particularly delighted to have all the relevant groups coming together to combine their resources and make this the best Ruthin Christmas ever. Ruthin Forward are joined by Ruthin Chamber of Trade, the Pantomime group and St Peter's Church – as they say "together we are more effective than on our own!"



The decorative trees on the square have had a seasonal trim and with new lights they will be looking at their splendid best.

Beneath their canopy, from 10:00 am market stalls will be set out with seasonal wares as well as the more traditional goods and produce.

A first this year will be a parade of decorated trucks passing through the square and around the town.

Then there will be a succession of pantomime entertainment, dancers, music from the Town Band, and performances given by the medieval players from Ruthin Castle. Young people will be represented with choirs from several schools, including Rhos Street and Borthyn, singing carols either on the square or in St Peter's if the weather is inclement.

And to crown the celebrations, Ruthin's trucks will come into their own later as one of them will bring Father Christmas onto the scene to add his touch of magic, before the town's festive tree is switched on to give a blaze of light over the festivities.

Ruthin Craft Centre & Christmas?

Ruth Bacon answers the question

A question for you...What link does the 2016 Christmas postage stamp issue have with Ruthin Craft Centre? The answer is artist and maker, Helen Musselwhite.

Helen's paper cut-outs (photographed by Jonathan Beer) form the charming set of festive stamps. Her connection with Ruthin is that she is one of the makers featured in one of two fun new exhibitions opening at the Craft Centre on December 3rd. Both exhibitions are designed to be light-hearted and will appeal to all ages.

A clowder of cats will have something for every cat lover. Many people will remember Reggies Roller Palace an exhibition featuring dogs; this is the cat equivalent! From jewellery to automata, ceramics and textiles, the work of over twenty makers including Helen will be on display. The second exhibition is called nonsense. Based on a quotation from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass, this is described as a quirky look

continued . . .

at the things artists make. It can be regarded as a follow up to Smile which encouraged its visitors to do just that.

The Centre's exhibitions are perhaps the most visible part of its work. Since its re-launch in the new building in 2008 there have been 115 in all, featuring either solo or group makers, coming not just from the UK but from world-wide locations such as the USA and Australia. Most work on display will be part of touring exhibitions but the Craft Centre was privileged to be the only venue in the UK to show the work of prestigious jeweller Fritz Maierhofer of Vienna. New exhibitions are already in the pipeline, such as an exciting follow up to the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths' memorable exhibition of 2010 which is being planned for early 2018. Called Dinner for Two this will involve a competition! More will be revealed later!



Most work on display will be part of touring exhibitions but the Craft Centre was privileged to be the only venue in the UK to show the work of prestigious jeweller Fritz Maierhofer of Vienna.

But the Craft Centre is far more than a gallery. Its projects and initiatives have brought in participants aged from 2 to 102! Education is an important part of its remit and all ages, abilities and pockets are catered for. A diverse programme of events for different audiences is ongoing. A two year initiative called What is Craft? is just entering its final phase, function - "most crafts have evolved from a utilitarian need to create a functional object" - and this will flow across and into all aspects of the Centre's work culminating in an exhibition celebrating the work of some fifty makers in February. Eight local primary schools have been involved in this project and their work can currently be viewed in Studio 2.

A two year initiative called What is Craft? is just entering its final phase, function - "most crafts have evolved from a utilitarian need to create a functional object"

Other projects that have taken place include Lost in Art, a programme aimed at people with dementia and their carers living in the community. An exhibition of work done in all four participating Welsh counties will be on show from January. Chwarae Anniben/ Messy Play was for toddlers and Taste of Craft was for people aged 60 plus. Portfolio, a course for 14 – 18 year olds which started in Ruthin has now been extended across North Wales. Their Show and Tell exhibition can still be seen in Studio 5. As well as the above a good range of workshops and talks take place regularly. Prices vary for these although the talks are frequently free. A new project, Making Connections will be starting in January. Details about this and other forthcoming events can be found on www.ruthincraftcentre.org.uk and by downloading the excellent leaflet, What's on, Winter 2016.

An exhibition of work done in all four participating Welsh counties will be on show from January. Chwarae Anniben/ Messy Play was for toddlers and Taste of Craft was for people aged 60 plus.

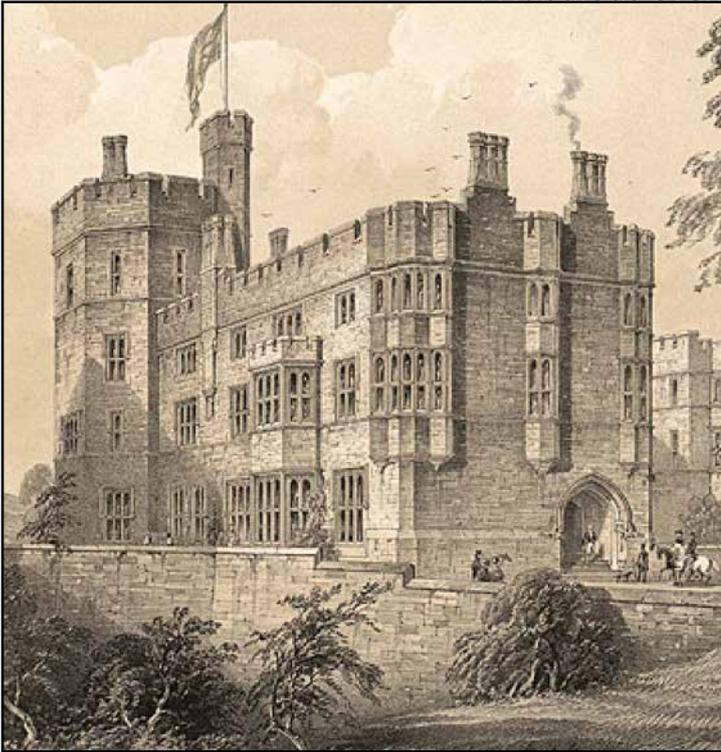
In the meantime Christmas is almost upon us. The website gives information about several Christmas events taking place; just type in Christmas 2016! The Retail Gallery offers a wide selection of possible Christmas gifts to suit different pockets. A delightful range of Advent calendars are available and 2017 diaries that are functional but also decorative!

Christmas shopping followed by a trip to Café R anyone?

An Evening of Magical Medieval Story Telling

Heather Williams enjoys an evening of myth and fable

A fabulous evening of historical myth and legend was held in Ruthin Castle in front of a roaring log fire on Sunday 13 November to support the newly formed Ruthin Castle Conservation Trust and also Help for Heroes



Ruth Moore-Williams, who captivated the audience with her story telling, told the well-known legend, (to some extent based on real events), about the argument between Owain Glyndŵr and Reginald de Grey which led to the town of Ruthin being attacked by Glyndŵr at the beginning of the 15th century.

Thanks to a suggestion from the audience Ruth also wove a yarn of the two men meeting up at the Ponderosa Cafe! Glyndŵr was made aware of danger by the harpist Iolo Goch who sang a warning in Welsh – which Reginald de Grey couldn't understand – allowing Glyndŵr to escape! Other tales included locals leading the way by lanterns in the misty Great Marsh

Ruth Moore-Williams, . . . told the well-known legend about the argument between Owain Glyndŵr and Reginald de Grey which led to the town of Ruthin being attacked by Glyndŵr at the beginning of the 15th century.

and the enemy then being abandoned to sink into the bog. Musical entertainment was also provided by Ruth – who played dainty tunes on the Welsh lap harp and harsher bag-pipe like sounds on the Hurdy-Gurdy.

Gareth Glyn –Roberts provided entertainment by reciting eclectic poetry – which he had composed. Although not really medieval in nature, the poems showed the bard at work in the present century. Poems included one about wrapping up presents (recited in a rap-type manner) and some cleverly crafted poems which were real tongue twisters - which he managed to recite at top speed!

Gareth Glyn –Roberts provided entertainment by reciting eclectic poetry – which he had composed

The evening was a most pleasant introduction to a series of events which the Conservation Trust hope to put on in 2017 - which Visit Wales is promoting as the 'Year of the Legend'

In order to keep in touch with future events, support and join the Ruthin Castle Conservation Trust - website www.ruthincastleconservationtrust.org. The Trust is also selling some items which could be handy little Christmas presents – honey, mead and tea –towels.

Seen in Passing...

- The arrival of a rather eye catching 'Deluxe Bathrooms' in Well Street suggests that, when one takes into account how many other home interior shops there are on Ruthin high street our town is becoming a hub for such emporia. At first it seemed that this latest shop had replaced Vale Carpets, but this had, just as magic carpets do, taken flight down the Road to the corner site that still displays a relic of its earlier existence as Lewis Electrics. Other domestic interiors of note include Clwyd Street's Aga and upholstery shop, and of course back in Well Street Ruthin Décor, to mention just a few.

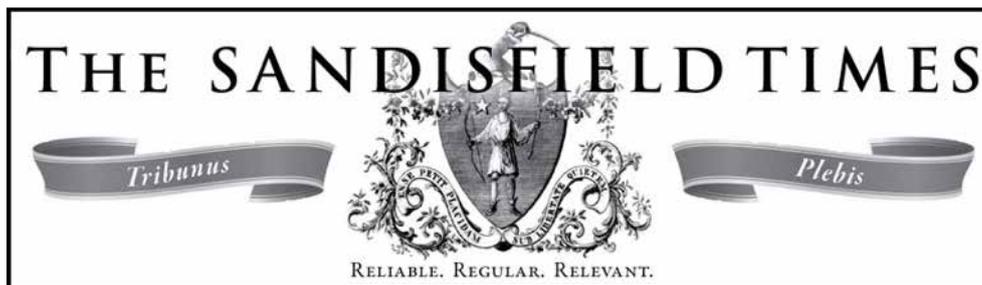
A COMMUNITY TALKING TO ITSELF

DEREK JONES explores the potential of Town and Around

I feel sure that there must be readers of Town and Around, who, like me, like me, admire the work of the scholarly writer and traveller Simon Winchester. The range of his books is vast, taking in, on the one hand, countries as different as China and the United States, and, on the other, the making of The Oxford English Dictionary.

Born in London, he became a US citizen in 2011, and now lives in the small town of Sandisfield, Massachusetts, and writes for the volunteer run Sandisfield Times, published eleven times a year since 2009. It is astonishing enough that one whose interests and achievements are so manifestly global should be find time to write regularly for so local a publication; it is utterly remarkable that the population

Born in London, he became a US citizen in 2011, and now lives in the small town of Sandisfield, Massachusetts, and writes for the volunteer run Sandisfield Times



of Sandisfield, in 2010, was only 915! By no means all US citizens live in big cities!

It was another American citizen, the playwright Arthur Miller, who described a good newspaper as 'a nation talking to itself'. The Sandisfield Times and Town and Around are, in parallel, potentially, communities talking to themselves.

Simon Winchester writes of his local paper in his *The Man who United the States*, published, 2013: 'The forum that the pages now offer is now abuzz with news, argument and conversation. The annual town meeting, which most New England villages govern themselves, had been a sorry affair, attended by almost no one, is now, for the first time, crowded with voters, loud with debates'.

Here, of course we are presented with a very different US politics than the sorry one we have all had to get used to in the recent Presidential campaign, not least in the fact that the Sandisfield Times volunteers include people whose ethnic origins include Italian, Greek, Scots, Irish, Japanese, Dutch, and Chinese. I wonder how they will react to the election of Donald Trump and his declared hostility to Mexican and other potential immigrants.

North East Wales is probably not (I am tempted to add yet!) as ethnically varied as New England; but it does contain people who are keenly interested in their community, and the population of Ruthin is much bigger than that of Sandisfield. Might Town and Around aspire to a similar kind of interest and reader participation as this small town across the ocean to which Simon Winchester has introduced us? I very much hope so.

The Sandisfield Times and Town and Around are, in parallel, potentially, communities talking to themselves.

'The forum that the pages now offer is now abuzz with news, argument and conversation.'

Might Town and Around aspire to a similar kind of interest and reader participation as this small town across the ocean?

Editor's note: *We would welcome letters from readers on topics raised and any other relevant subjects. It would be good to have a 'Readers Correspondence' page in future editions.*

Castle Bell and the story of the Bell of the 'Ruthin Castle'

Miles Anderson unfolds its history



having noted the suggestion that it had a possible connection, so I was told, with a ship's bell from a WW1 minesweeper, this needed some investigation.

high to the right of the entrance stands a ship's bell embossed with the name 'Ruthin Castle'.

The shop Castle Bell has been part of Ruthin's urban culture for so long that, for many of us, the possible significance of the name has passed us by.

But having noted the suggestion that it had a possible connection, so I was told, with a ship's bell from a WW1 minesweeper, this needed some investigation.

The newsagent and general store's owner, Graham Hardinges, soon put me right. Having taken ownership of the premise after his move to Ruthin in 2009, he too had been intrigued by the name and soon established the fact that the shop was part of the buildings that had been sold as part of the big Ruthin Castle Estate sale. Included in this property had reputedly been a pub called 'The Bell', and the name Castle Bell, it seems, derives from the name of the pub and the former ownership of the buildings.

However any keen observer will have noted that up high to the right of the entrance stands a ship's bell embossed with the name 'Ruthin Castle'. For this artefact we have to thank Graham and his research. In a recent conversation with him, he first put me right that the boat, the 'Ruthin Castle' had not originally been a minesweeper but one of a series of trawlers named after Welsh Castles commissioned in 1916 by Castle Steam Trawlers Ltd of Swansea. HMT Ruthin Castle was completed in 1916 and was commandeered by the Admiralty to be used as a minesweeper – Admiralty number 3317.

HMT Ruthin Castle unfortunately was only active for a relatively short time in sweeping for mines in order to keep the eastern coastal regions of Great Britain open to shipping. As a major fishing port at this time, Scarborough was a prime target for the minelaying activities of the German U boats.



Sadly the Ruthin Castle struck a mine and was sunk on 20th April, 1917 just off the north of the port with the loss of nine lives.

The wreck lay undiscovered until it was located by the Scarborough Sub-Aqua Club. They had investigated its possible location in 2003 following complaints from local fishermen that they were getting their nets snagged on what they thought was a reef. The bell was located nearby in 20 meters of water. After negotiations Castle Bell were able to acquire the bell, telling the Sub-Aqua Club of Castle Bell buildings, the shop and its proximity to Ruthin Castle. A fascinating story, and thanks to Graham the ship's bell, although it had no original connections with the town of Ruthin, has found a home in a popular shop in Clwyd Street.

Rhos Street School and Ysgol Penbarras are on the move!

Miles Anderson highlights concerns over the site's future

With the first turf cut at Glasdir in preparation for the move of Rhos Street and Penbarras Schools, it is time to reflect on the history of these excellent educational establishments. But before we move on to Arnold Hughes interesting history, we need to record the Civic Association's concerns for the original buildings and any proposed redevelopment of this most prominent site. The situation is that, whereas the building is not listed, the open field at the rear of the site is protected. There have been rumours and counter rumours about possible redevelopment of the old school building and the site including the buildings of Ysgol Penbarras and the open field beyond.



... it is time to reflect on the history of these excellent educational establishments.

The Late Victorian building that has housed Rhos Street School and its junior pupils for well over a century is one of the first buildings to greet visitors to Ruthin as they come over the mountains of the Clwydian Range – and what a splendid example of our Victorian architectural legacy it is!

... any further alterations must preserve the splendid facade of the building

Once the schools have moved off site certainly it will be good to have the protective metal netting at the front removed but any further alterations must preserve the splendid facade of the building. It was local architect, and member of the Association, Robin Wolley who, at a debate on what should be the concerns and objectives of a Civic Association should be, argued that buildings conceived to be of public use should not be redeveloped, wherever possible, as domestic homes. That is certainly the case here.

With the move of the schools to the new Glasdir site possibly being completed as early as the September 2017, continuity in such a situation is most important, and the schools' reputations and their excellent staff – and at least for the time being their names - will aim for a seamless transition. Both schools have a high quality educational ethos (Rhos Street is one of only four schools in Denbighshire awarded Green Status for all-round excellence).and we are sure that on the new site, with the very welcome improved facilities that this will entail, they will continue to bring the very best of education to the primary school children of Ruthin.

Rhos Street is one of only four schools in Denbighshire awarded Green Status for all-round excellence

Rhos Street Primary School

A brief history by Arnold Hughes

The rise of non-conformism in Ruthin and Wales, more generally in the early nineteenth century, led to pressure for non-Anglican primary schools, known as 'British' schools, to provide non-denominational education. Rhos Street School was such a school. Founded in 1840, it initially used the Anglican Chapel of Ease in Rhos Street before acquiring its

Founded in 1840, it initially used the Anglican Chapel of Ease in Rhos Street before acquiring its own building nearby, five years later

In 1984, popular demand for a separate Welsh language primary school, led to the creation of Ysgol Pen Barras, sharing the same site.



own building nearby, five years later, described as 'an iron building of neat appearance'. Ironically, this was funded principally by an Anglican, George Johnson of Llanrhudd Hall.

The present stone building, designed by Richard Cash (as was the similar but rival Borthyn 'National' Anglican primary school), was erected in the fashionable Elizabethan revival style in 1848. Restricted to boys initially, girls were admitted in 1847, and children from the nearby Ruthin Workhouse two years later. From an initial intake of 193, pupil numbers it swelled to 289 by 1895, an unusually large number given the population of Ruthin at that time. Again, for its time, the school had a very wide curriculum. In the 1930s the school became a local authority Mixed Council School, with 132 pupils. Numbers had increased to 169 by 2013, by which time it had been re-designated a County Primary School.

In 1984, popular demand for a separate Welsh language primary school, led to the creation of Ysgol Pen Barras, sharing the same site. Its initial intake of 58 pupils had risen to 248 by 2011, putting enormous pressure on space and resources and growing demand for new premises for both schools. They leave for their new location with well-established reputations.

Seen in Passing...

- The Craft Centre courtyard continues to receive attention with new careful planting to one of its beds with the addition of fashionable lighting as part of its refurbishment
- It had recently been reported that there was a national dearth of scaffolding. This is probably on account of so much of it being in Ruthin surrounding Cavendish Iken and, Mococo and elsewhere. This top end of Market Street and round the corner is all shrouded in these edifices with their yellow foam protection.
- Following our recent mention of 20mph restrictions, we understand that similar speed controls are soon to be in place on the Mold Road. If this means that drivers have more opportunities to appreciate the beauty of their surroundings it must be a good thing, not to mention the increased safety that will ensue.
- The summer of 2016 was dry, warm and very pleasant and as a result we have been enjoying the most stunning autumn colours around the town. The ash trees on the Bric roundabout, or to give it its formal name, 'Old Station Yard Roundabout', are all a delicate primrose yellow whilst the beech trees lining the Wrexham Road by Castle Park are burnished copper – a lovely sight!
- Good to notice that Brynhyfryd is advertising that it has the best A Level results in Denbighshire. Congratulations on a magnificent achievement.

Memorial Windows at the English Presbyterian Church

David Castledine reveals an interesting history

During Open Doors weekend this year, we welcomed over 40 people to English Presbyterian Church, Ruthin.

A noted feature of the church is the number of memorial windows. Martin Crampin's *Stained Glass from Welsh churches* (2014) includes two examples and states that the windows juxtapose figures and Biblical texts ... and although delineated with a bold clarity of line characteristic of more modern stained glass in Welsh churches, are rare in Nonconformist places of worship.

A set of windows, 1959-61, were designed by Williams & Watson, Glass and Glazing of Liverpool.

In 1958 the church received an unexpected legacy from Maria Jones of Liverpool; in addition to modernisation of the interior of the church it was decided to design the East window in memory of a previous minister, Revd Herbert Lewis Morris

The East window was dedicated in 1959. The centre panel of the window depicts Christ as the Light of the World and the two side panels contain the motifs of the Presbyterian Church and the World Council of Churches (Ecumenical Movement).

Further memorial windows followed, with themes requested by relatives of church members. On the north side is a window (1959) in memory of William and Elinor Roberts of Dolafon, Prior Street. It depicts the story of Martha and Mary from Luke's Gospel.

The adjacent window is in memory of Revd Ivor Platt (minister 1957-62). It depicts the Good Shepherd and gives thanks for his pastoral work.

The Clwydian hills can be seen through the windows on the south side of the church and gave inspiration to people.

Two windows were dedicated in 1961; one in memory of Edith Evans JP, Sunday School teacher, organist and elder. It depicts the church, the monogram WVS (Women's Voluntary Service) and the motto of Denbighshire County Council, 'Duw a Digon'.

The other is in memory of John and Clara Roberts of Castle Street. It includes a verse from Psalm 121: I will lift up Mine Eyes Unto The Hills.

The windows dated 1959-61 were dedicated by Revd Ivor Platt who said that they added beauty to the sanctuary of the church and proclaimed a message from the Bible.

A 1986 window is in memory of Pearl Mary Shingles, wife of Ray Shingles, author of the centenary history of the church in the same year.

There are two contrasting recent adjacent windows, one depicts King David and bright colours of the rainbow, the other has pastel colours of the landscape and the words, 'Be Still and Know That I am God'.



*A noted feature of the church is the number of memorial windows. Martin Crampin's *Stained Glass from Welsh churches* (2014) includes two examples and states that the windows juxtapose figures and Biblical texts*

North East Wales Heritage Forum

Heather Williams reports



This new Forum has been established as a voluntary initiative to celebrate, conserve and promote the rich heritage of the region. It aims to pull together existing local and regional history and heritage societies, groups and organizations to foster collaborative working for regional heritage projects and the sharing of experiences, best practice and resources. In addition to supporting the plethora of history societies and acting as a strong lobbying group to ensure that local heritage remains high on the political agenda, the Forum hopes to inspire a broader interest in the diverse heritage of the area

and provide innovative opportunities for community – and in particular, youth – engagement.

FORUM OBJECTIVES:

- To bring together those interested in North East Wales' heritage, to share experiences and pool resources
- To develop some regional heritage projects
- To support the numerous local heritage groups, providing expertise, sharing good practice, training, providing volunteers for events, providing a central website etc.
- To encourage a wider cross section of people to take an interest in local heritage and give them an opportunity to get actively involved, particularly younger people
- To act as a strong lobbying group to ensure that heritage remains high on the political agenda and to help support our valued local archives, library service, museums and other heritage facilities
- To access funding for regional heritage projects and to have the knowledge to be able to assist individual groups with grant applications
- To demonstrate the impact of heritage to our community and economy
- To continue the creation of resources, maintain and enhance existing resources

'The History of North East Wales in 100 Objects'

The Forum has successfully secured an HLF grant to work with communities across Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham to celebrate the rich heritage of the North East Wales borderlands. The project aims to discover, celebrate and share the rich 'hidden' histories of the various communities through an exciting programme of exhibitions, digital and printed outputs and learning and engagement activities.

Outcomes will include:

- Touring exhibition entitled 'The History of North East Wales in 100 Objects', accompanied by digital and printed materials
- Programme of educational and community engagement activities
- Regional heritage website, including links to local groups

In addition to supporting the plethora of history societies and acting as a strong lobbying group to ensure that local heritage remains high on the political agenda

The project aims to discover, celebrate and share the rich 'hidden' histories of the various communities

- Digital heritage training for members and volunteers from local schools and colleges.

Membership is available to both societies and individuals. At the last Committee meeting it was decided that RADCA would join the Forum in order to participate in this project.

For more information contact Heather Williams

Email htnw@btinternet.com Phone 01824 704998 or 07979 677811

NEWHF Email newales.heritageforum@outlook.com

There is also Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/newhf>)

Woodlands Hall - a short history

The present building was constructed about 1870, although there has been a building on the site for many hundreds of years. The deeds show that there was once a traditional Welsh long cottage here. The current mock Tudor mansion was constructed for a Miss Jane Bremner.

Many of the wooden carvings that you now see in the hall were brought back from overseas. It is believed that they were given to Miss Bremner by the captains of ocean going liners in thanks for the services that she provided as a singer. A private chapel was installed on the first floor and the remains of the stained glass windows are still there.

After she died in 1939, the contents of the hall were auctioned off in a three day sale, included were many paintings by old masters and furniture of high quality. The hall stood empty for many years following her death and during the war it was requisitioned for use as a school and possibly as a hospital. After that period the estate was broken up and the land sold off in parcels.

It was in the 1950s that a Mr Poole purchased what was left of the estate and began a Country Club in the hall and a caravan park with less than twenty units set out amongst the trees between the hall and the entrance to the park. It was then sold to Mr Lloyd of Lloyds Caravans who acquired shooting rights over the nine acres of the adjoining park. It was then sold again and passed through the hands of various owners until eventually in 1982 it was purchased by Bob and Graham Davies. The hall was subsequently leased out to tenants. In 1987 it was closed for eight months whilst major renovations were carried out. Central heating, double glazing were installed and a conservatory restaurant was add. This allowed the provision of an exclusive a la carte restaurant named "Bremners" after the original owner. A complete overhaul was carried out of all rooms creating six en-suite bedrooms. And some six years ago a Leisure Suite was built to enhance these facilities.

In 1978 there was a seventy eight year old gardener still working part time maintaining the grounds, a Mr Ted Hession, who as a young man had, from the time of his marriage, been the first occupant of the hall's coach house.

There are to this day rumours of a ghostly apparition haunting Woodlands Hall

This history was kindly supplied by Lyons Holiday Parks, a local family company who are the current owners of Woodlands Hall.



The deeds show that there was once a traditional Welsh long cottage here.

In 1939, the contents of the hall were auctioned off in a three day sale, included were many paintings by old masters and furniture of high quality.

In 1987 it was closed for eight months whilst major renovations were carried out. Central heating, double glazing were installed and a conservatory restaurant was add. This allowed the provision of an exclusive a la carte restaurant named "Bremners" after the original owner.

Ruthin's University of the Third Age!

Rose Hislop brings us up to date!



The U3A is a Charity for people no longer in full time work or looking for work. We launched in March 2015 and since then have gone from strength to strength. We now have 228 members and 36 different interest groups. Members share the skills and expertise they have acquired over many years with other members, all on a voluntary basis. These interest groups include away days, whist, belly dancing, walking, bird watching, sugarcraft and geology. Our newest interest groups are singing, poetry for pleasure, introduction to philosophy, strollers and Indoor Sports and recreation.

Members share the skills and expertise they have acquired over many years with other members, all on a voluntary basis

We have had a variety of speakers covering many different topics from travel to environmental issues and including talks on early humans, female prisoners in Ruthin, conservation work in Canada, Iceland and the First World War.

We put in a successful Lottery bid for £2,203. This enabled us to purchase our own equipment including a multi-media projector, colour printer, laptop, bingo machine and First Aid training for 6 people. Another bid for £200 from the Welsh Churches has enabled us to pay for postage to mail outs to those people not on email and also a good supply of stationery.

We have also recently had £1,000 to assist in the purchase of hearing equipment for those of our members who have some hearing difficulties. This was kindly given to us by the Naylor Leyland Trust.

Last year we had a lovely Christmas party with food and wine at no cost to our members. Special events have included a Body Shop party, First Aid certificated training for 5 members, a Whist Drive and a strawberry and cream event with a musical medley. This year our Christmas Party is on



U3A members enjoying themselves at the Christmas Party

December 20th and will again be free for our members. In January 2017 we will have the opportunity to undertake Dementia Friends Awareness Training.

We have also made contributions to the Ruthin First Responders of nearly £300, donations of prizes and participation from our members helped in raising £795 for Nightingale House Hospice with bingo, a whist drive raised £174 for Cancer Research and a raffle at the strawberry event raised £79 for Bowel Cancer UK.

It costs just £15 a year to join. New members are always welcomed. For more information please visit our website u3asites.org.uk/Ruthin or contact the Chairperson, Rose Hislop on rose@hislop.co.uk or by phone on 01824 705331

Annual General Meeting Report

Heather Williams reports

The Ruthin and District Civic Association (RADCA) held its Annual General Meeting on Thursday October 20th at Canolfan Awelon, School Road, Ruthin.



'Meeting of 'Discovering Old Welsh Houses group'

The Chairman, Liz Williams, reported on the various events that had taken place over the year, including the well-attended presentations of old photographs of Ruthin and the Hustings in April. The Quayle Awards were presented to two agricultural organisations this year - Genus and the Ruthin Farmers Auction companies. They were both commended on excellent new extensions to their premises that helped to enhance the facilities they offered to the public, and members had the opportunity to tour both premises when they were presented with their the plaques. Another successful Open Doors had taken place in September over two weekends with new properties open, such as the Old Station at Eyrarth and Tŷ Brith.

Following the AGM, Margaret Dunn of the Discovering Old Welsh Houses Group gave a most interesting illustrated presentation about Discovering Old Welsh Houses in North East Wales. Photographs were shown of houses which had already been researched, which included two properties owned by members of the Association who live in the Ruthin and District area. The Group was now looking for more pre-1700 buildings in this area to research both their history and to carry out ring-tree dating. Margaret also commended the Association on its involvement in the Open Doors in Denbighshire, which is recognised as being one the best in the country. For more information contact by email ruthincivic@btinternet.com or phone 01824 704998.

Ruthin and District Civic Association

At the October Annual General Meeting, the existing committee members were all re-elected to serve once again. They are;

Liz Williams - Chair Heather Williams - Vice Chair Robert Williams - Hon Treasurer

Peter Daniels - Hon Secretary Kay Culhane, Menna Jones, Harold Jones, Kathy Daniels

Amongst ideas for members events during the coming year are - Llanrhaeadr Springs, including something from the Williams family, afternoon tea at the Drovers (linked to agriculture or the history of droving), future housing needs and council policy, an agricultural talk at the Strand Café (at the Mart), flooding/ environmental issues, the North East Wales Heritage Forum, road transport history in the Vale & North East and Hustings for council elections – we would be pleased to have feedback on members preferences.

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.

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

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.

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

Contributors: Miles Anderson, Ruth Bacon, Derek Jones and Heather Williams.

Guest contributor: David Castledine.

Design by Dave Hislop