

# 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 2017

## **Too much politics? No never!**

**Miles Anderson welcomes all to the General Election Hustings  
Canolfan Awelon, School Road, 7.00pm Thursday, 1st June 2017**

In May we went to the polls to vote for our County Council representatives. And only a month later, on June 8th we are expected to turn out once again for the Westminster General Elections. This time it will be for the candidate who will represent our interests, not just here in Wales but in the wider and more powerful government for the whole of the United Kingdom. We need to reject voter fatigue and engage with the election of the best candidate to represent Ruthin and its environs.

Is this too much to ask of people going about their busy days, don't we have better things to do with our lives? After all voting is still an option in this country unlike elsewhere where it is a statutory obligation. I would argue, on the contrary, that by turning up at a polling station, entering that booth and expressing our choice of candidate, we are participating in our civic society, we are acting as true citizens and we are exercising our freedom.

Being empowered to express our views on how we are governed has long been an important aspect of Western cultural society. From over 2,600 years ago, the ideals of ancient Greece have been the foundation of our modern democratic society. Despite frequent historic periods of oppression and tyranny, democracy has been agreed to be the best way of governing a free state. And in the troubled times of 2017, following the divisive Brexit referendum, the continuing economic cutbacks and today's political divisions, exercising the citizen's vote is even more important than it ever has been..

On Thursday 1st June your Ruthin and District Civic Association is holding a Hustings to which all members of the public are cordially invited. This is an occasion when all the available candidates for the general election will present themselves before their electorate to submit to your questioning as to their policies, those of the party that they represent and how they will address the interests of their constituents.



Once again, we are honoured to have the experience of Councillor Robert Owen-Ellis to chair the evening. We had been hoping to be able to use Ruthin Town Hall, which has been standing empty for so many years; it would have been the ideal venue for such a public meeting, but unfortunately the only room available was too small – perhaps next time. Meanwhile Awelon will suit us very well, and, on this occasion, we will be for the first time, offering the service of simultaneous translation.

We recommend that you come, 7.00pm, Thursday 1st June, Canolfan Awelon, School Road, Ruthin and exercise your rights as citizens to question those candidates offering themselves to be your representative at the Westminster Government. And having heard all their various views and opinions to then go out and use your vote on the following Thursday, 8th June.

# Footpaths for Feet... and now Wheels

## Peter Daniels leaves the car behind as he goes round Ruthin

In the last four years, dog walkers, pedestrians and cyclists alike will have noticed some important changes to the network of footpaths that allow us to wander, stride or where permitted pedal around town. It's quite possible to gain a different perspective while walking, observing things you otherwise miss when driving. It's often said that footpaths make it easier to walk in town than in the countryside and the improving quality of our paths in Ruthin mean this is certainly so.

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All the improvements we see are funded from specific grants from the Welsh Government. Some are modest in scope, others more significant. In the latter category are changes over the last six months.

In October 2016, County Council engineers improved internal paths in Ysgol Brynhyfryd, taking the opportunity to segregate pedestrians from traffic at the site's entrance. In Spring 2017, they have now improved the popular permissive path behind the school at the rear of Ffordd Cunedda & Stryd y Brython to Llanrhydd. To allow dual use with cyclists, the path is now wider, at over 6ft, and properly surfaced. Fencing keeps dogs off the school field (that dogs had free range was a source of some annoyance). Much improved are the steps at the Llanrhydd end, with the addition of a ramp to assist bicyclists to wheel rather than carry their vehicle up the flight. The path connects with the improvements at the school and it forms a better walking and now cycling route from the south eastern residential areas of Bro Deg, Maes Cantaba and the Menllis.



By the time you read this, the same engineering team will have completed improvements to the path between the rear of Tesco and the allotments, giving it a new surface and removing the flight of steps, replacing that with an accessible ramp. Like that along the Brynhyfryd fields, it is dual use for walking & cycling.

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The work to Tesco's rear was only accomplished with the help of a collaborative project with Tesco itself and Huws Gray. The project has proven to be a more significant piece of work than it looks. It now connects the Northern Relief Road dual footpath and cycleway to Greenfield Road and the Gwerni (Wern Uchaf, Ganol, Isaf). It provides a quieter and potentially safer cycling route when you use it in conjunction with Greenfield Road and the earlier surfacing improvements along Wern Uchaf and the cut to Ruthin School to Mold Road and Ysgol Brynhyfryd.

The Tesco path's main purpose, though, is to assist those who live in the north east block of town to gain easier access to the new schools at Glasdir, via the Northern Relief Road dual use footway.

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It would be so nice to think that, as resources permit and to complete the picture, the footpath from the fire station and football club to Glasdir could have similar treatment. Perhaps in time.

We should thank those who have upgraded our urban landscape with these valuable additions that make such a difference.

# SAVING OUR BUILT HERITAGE

## Gareth Evans sets out suggestions for the forming of a trust

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*At Tewkesbury in the early 1960s proposals to demolish medieval buildings near the abbey led to local people forming a trust to acquire and redevelop the buildings*

*We must hope that all our buildings with uncertain futures can find good owners and uses and we have to give time for these owners to emerge and develop their projects*

Sometimes calamities come singly and sometimes in waves and it looks as if Ruthin and its neighbourhood is faced with a veritable flood of old and venerable buildings becoming vacant with ominous consequences for our built heritage and environment.

At present, the Old Gaol frontage building on Clwyd Street has been empty for a couple of years; the Old Court House on St Peter's Square will be closing shortly; next year, Ysgol Rhos Street and Ysgol Pen

Barras will become empty; Ysgol Llanfair will become empty as a new school is built and, as the shape of the new school programme develops, there may be consequences for Ysgol Rhewl and Ysgol Llanbedr as well as the possible future of Ysgol Borthyn. Not so long ago there was talk of the Ruthin library downsizing with implications for its excellent building and who knows which direction the national bank closure programme or public sector cuts will next take.

Many buildings are at risk, but it is too early to despair about their future; private developers may yet come forward who can identify new uses. Only one has so far closed with no buyer or use being found for it. Schools, especially the smaller ones, can efficiently be converted into residential, business or community

use and remain part of the historic fabric of our community. It is heartening to see some of our elected members floating the prospect of health uses for Ysgol Rhos Street and Ysgol Penbarras; let us hope these aspirations take root.

However, what can be done if the buildings find no use? Ruthin is not the first town to face such a challenge. At Tewkesbury in the early 1960s proposals to demolish medieval buildings near the abbey led to local people forming a trust to acquire and redevelop the buildings. After many difficulties, the trust has become a successful property owner protecting the area around the abbey. At Caernarfon, old buildings at risk in the town centre in the 1990s prompted the formation of Cwmni Tref Caernarfon, which eventually acquired and redeveloped 28 properties in the town. Such initiatives form when all other avenues have failed.

Establishing a building preservation trust is no small task. Getting the right people with the right backgrounds and building up capacity is just the start; developing projects and identifying resources will be an even greater task and take much time.

We must hope that all our buildings with uncertain futures can find good owners and uses and we have to give time for these owners to emerge and develop their projects. Only when lacking a purchaser and with no evident suitable use in prospect can a building preservation trust realistically intervene to save a building. Does the scale of the challenge justify the huge effort of establishing a trust in Ruthin and would there be sufficient support?

# A worthy winner for the 2016 Quayle Award

## Harold Jones reports on a visit to The Lord's Garden

The Lord's Garden at Nantclwyd y Dre has been carefully restored with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Denbighshire County Council, Ruthin Town Council, Friends of Nantclwyd y Dre and a vast army of enthusiastic volunteers. The project cost £220,000 and took three years to complete. It was officially opened in May 2016. The Grade II listed gardens, originally known as The Lord's Acre, pre-dated Nantclwyd y Dre.

The gardens are first mentioned in 1282 when it is said that they, along with Ruthin Castle, were awarded to Marcher Lord Reginald de Grey in recognition of his part in subduing an uprising by Llywelyn ap Gruffydd, the last native Prince of Wales.

The Lord's Garden appears to have been an orchard and kitchen garden to the castle for some 350 years. In the 1640s, during the Civil War, it became part of the Nantclwyd y Dre estate with greater emphasis on meadowland and ornamental gardens.

The newly rejuvenated garden has features from three distinct periods and these are clearly illustrated on a site map and on leaflets available at the house.

From medieval times there is an enamelled mead with low growing wild flowers, an orchard that would have supplied apples to the castle kitchen and for making cider, and a number of beehives from which honey and beeswax was obtained.

Seventeenth century features include areas of hedging, a nuttery containing native hazels and other species, and vegetable beds. Tomatoes and potatoes would have been introduced during this period.

In the nineteenth century specimen trees of lime and beech were planted. This demonstrated that the owners of Nantclwyd y Dre had wealth and standing in Ruthin society. The glasshouse is also from this period affording the opportunity to grow and cultivate exotic plants. This century also saw the introduction of herbaceous borders where colourful flowers were grown for decorating the house and filling it with fragrance.

Over a hundred volunteers helped to restore the garden to its present form and a considerable number are now very active in maintaining the area. It is a large space with numerous paths and many plants that need constant attention and all need to be weeded by hand. Amongst these volunteers is a group of students from Ysgol Tir Morfa in Rhyl. Students from the school have been involved from the outset of the project and they carry out a range of tasks in the garden including grass cutting, composting and weeding. It forms part of the school's generic work skills course and some of the students have moved on to Llysfasi and Northop colleges.

It is good to see that visitors can pay to visit the garden only if they wish and the current charge is £2.00 for adults and £1.00 for children. This will hopefully encourage people to pay a number of visits at various times during the year.

The Lord's Garden is a calm oasis just a short distance from the centre of Ruthin. It is a lovely place to relax and to enjoy plants, flowers, birds and bees. The walls of the original castle are clearly visible from the garden which adds to the sense of history.

The restored garden complements perfectly Nantclwyd y Dre and is a great new asset and attraction in Ruthin. It is a worthy winner of the 2016 Quayle Award.

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# Home and Away

## The White Heat Of Craft And Technology

### DEREK JONES celebrates Ruthin Craft Centre's latest venture - linking craft and technology, locally and internationally

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Forge, one of two current shows, results from a long collaboration between the Centre and Hereford College of Art. It is curated by Delyth Done, leader of the Artist Blacksmith BA Degree at Hereford. It explicitly contradicts the common idea that blacksmiths mainly 'do horseshoes'.

On the contrary, as Professor Heiner Zimmermann, shows, in the book which accompanies the exhibition, blacksmiths' work goes well beyond its common sentimental image; the very word 'forging' suggests an art which is capable of many different forms, both useful and creative.

'Useful' blacksmithing, such as cutlery, is represented in Forge, but all the works on show here demonstrate that passion and imagination are just as alive and well in this area of modern arts and crafts as any other; the 'white heat' of my title refers to these qualities, as well as to the process of forging metal.

Those who have examined the detail of the gates at St Peter's church in Ruthin will readily understand what I mean; this ironwork by the Davies Brothers of Bersham- along with its parallels in Chirk, Eaton Hall (Chester), Hawkstone Park (Shropshire), Leaswood, Oswestry and Wrexham- have been described by the great Nikolaus Pevsner, in his Surrey volume of *The Buildings of England*, as 'miraculous'. Philip Hughes was clearly right, when he opened the exhibition, to stress that this part of the world was of central importance in the 18th century history of technology.

It is not possible to forget, in this context, Ironbridge, a World Heritage Site, which was forged to cross the River Severn at Broseley. John (Iron-Mad) Wilkinson invented hydraulic-powered blowing machine for use at the site. On the other hand, Joseph Needham (1900-

1995), in his seven-volume *Science and Civilisation in China*, suggests that the machine closely parallels one invented by Weng Zhen in 1313!

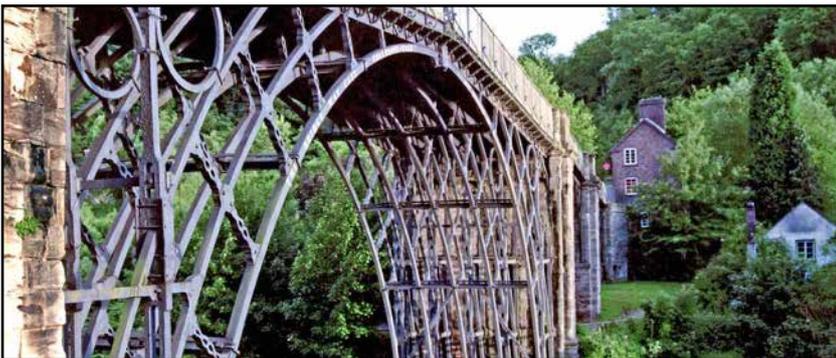
This neatly brings us back to the fact that this is an international exhibition. China is not represented here, but the range of countries involved is impressive: Chile, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland, Russia, USA, and, last but not least, Wales. There could hardly be a more

vivid demonstration that genuine craft knows no national boundaries. Congratulations to the Craft Centre for its initiatives in the forging of international relationships.

It is said that iron was first forged in the Caucasus in the 11th century BCE, beginning what is known by archaeologists as the Iron Age. Bersham and Ironbridge mark a significant period in the uses of iron. Forge sits well in this distinguished company.

Forge, the exhibition booklet, is available at the Craft Centre for £10.

People with long political memories will recognise that I have stolen my title from Harold Wilson's speech at the Labour Party Conference on 1st October 1963, when he referred to the 'white heat of the technological revolution'. It still reads well after more than fifty years!



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# A Year in the Life of a Ruthin Farmer

## John Tudor tells Miles Anderson all about it

It was a bright sunny day when I called on John Tudor at Plas Newydd Farm, Llanfair D.C., so I opened the discussion with the usual comment about the weather. "What a lovely day it is," I said only to get the reply, "We could do with a month's rain." One might think, 'Typical farmers, always full of grumbles!' – but that's not how John Tudor comes across. He's a young man, mid-forties which these days is still young and, like the weather that morning, he has a sunny disposition.

We were in the lovely old, 1830, stone farmhouse where he lives with his partner and two young children both recently having moved on to Brynhyfryd from Ysgol Llanfair.

So I tried a different opening gambit asking how he found life these days? "Some days I wake up and life is hell," he responded, "And then on others it is good." And after a moment's reflection, he concluded, "I wouldn't change it for all the world."

Plas Newydd Farm is part of the Jones Mortimer land and is leased from the Glan Conwy Trust. It was his father, Maurice, took over the farm from when it was leased to the Kellets. The Tudors have been there since 1966. It is principally an arable farm with 635 acres. Of this there are 400 acres down to wheat and barley, 100 acres at St Asaph for potatoes and the rest grassland.

Our discussion was seated round the big table in the centre of a typical farm kitchen. In days gone by eight to 10 men would have sat for their dinner here but it's a sign of the times that today it is covered with files, boxes of documents and there is a laptop taking central position.

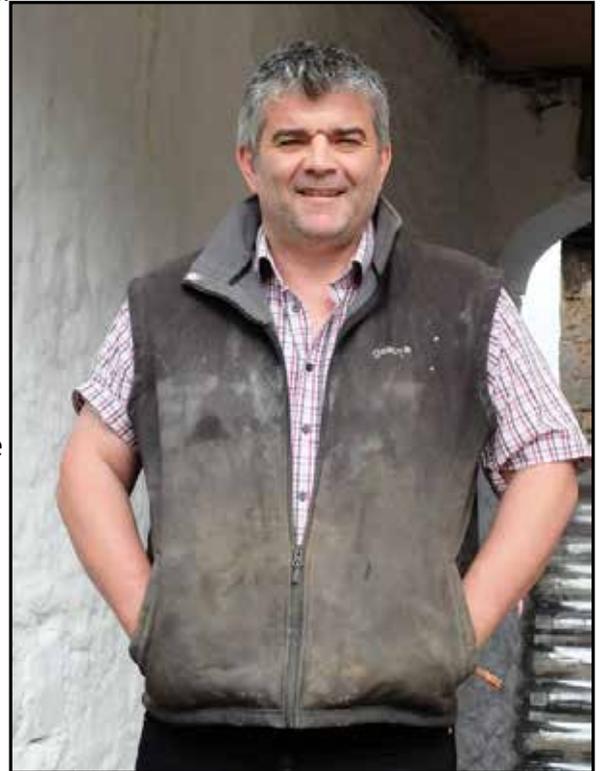
Although John has two brothers, they both have other careers, but they live locally and are in daily touch. He employs three to four men at the peak of harvest time and a couple for most of the year from February onwards.

The farm year starts here in September when he will buy around 1,000 five-year ewes. October sees them sowing 350 acres with the winter crops, and this continues through November. By December, they are scanning the ewes to check on the lambs they should be carrying, and it is also the month for spraying.

Here we broke off to discuss how much less spraying there is done now. John uses the traditional crop rotation and they try to adhere to an environment ethic in all their practices. He is in regular contact with the RSPB and there are Owl boxes in the old barn.

Back to the calendar and in December they also buy in around 2,000 stock-lambs. January is a quiet month devoted to feeding and husbandry. By February, they are into lambing. This is John's favourite work, so much to do but so rewarding! Now is also when they start selling the stock-lambs and he says that they are so lucky to have two of the best livestock markets here on their doorstep in Ruthin and St Asaph. Lamb sales continue in March; and now is the time to get the 100 acres of potatoes planted. There is a lot of stock work in April, but

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for John May is his favourite month. Now there is time to take stock and repair fences and walls. In June, they are selling the spring lambs and the ewes will go too. By July, we are into harvest and he declares that August is just 'carnage'!

A busy year but 'all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy', as they say. And although John no longer plays for Llanfair Football team, he is still involved, but what he loves best, is coaching the youngsters at rugby. It is a very full life, but I can see why he wouldn't change any of it.

## **Open Doors Heritage Event Weekends**

### **Liz Williams looks forward to an exciting programme of new and original sites to visit, events to enjoy and old favourites to revisit**

It will be the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd of September when Ruthin Town celebrates Open Doors this year. In the past Ruthin has been allocated the last weekend in September for this event. That has resulted in rather pushing this occasion to the end of the tourist season. This year, with the date being brought forward to the beginning of the month, we should be in a much preferable position to take advantage of the tourist season.

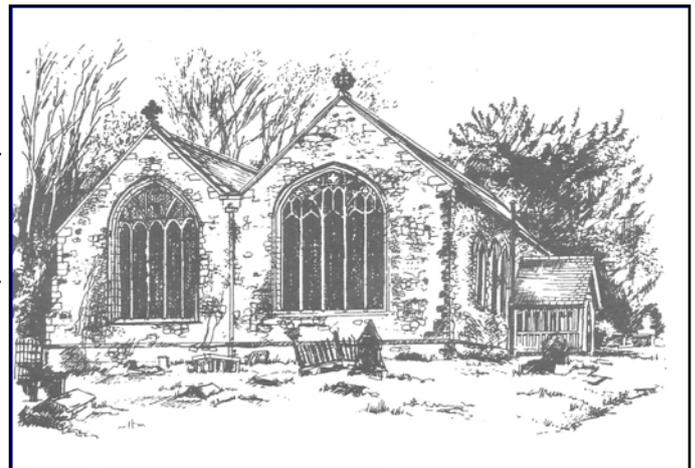
And then there will be a second opportunity to 'Open those Doors and see what is behind them' during the following weekend in the villages around Ruthin - two bites of the cherry!

It seems that there is an endless supply of willing owners of properties and sites willing to welcome members of the public to enjoy their private domains. Every year the Ruthin and District Civic Association finds something new to offer.

The booklet of this year's offerings will be available from the Ruthin Library as well as on the website [www.opendoorsdenbighshire.org.uk](http://www.opendoorsdenbighshire.org.uk) Prospective 'Open Doorers' are advised to book early as so often the most popular sites are over-subscribed.

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This year's new offerings include a talk about Ruthin's old Alehouses to be given by ex-mayor Geraint Woolford and Heather Williams will be giving a town tour which will inform and delight us all. Also for the first weekend Denbighshire Archives will



*Heather Williams will be giving a town tour which will inform and delight us all*

be hosting an art deco/vintage day and on Sunday 3rd September the Craft Centre has a Ceramics and Valuation Day; these are complementary events. There will be a as well a once only chance to see inside of the Royal Oak, Clwyd Street; this too will be on Saturday 3rd and Sunday 4th. On the following weekend there will be a Rhug Trailer Ride around the organic farm, Saturday 9th September.

All that is as well as the many beautiful; historic homes and buildings that will be open to the public as usual.

## Seen in passing...



- How disappointing to see that the Cuning Green is closed once again. We hope that its closure is not going to be for such a prolonged period as on the last occasion when it was formally closed on 27th May 2013. How long will access to this pleasant path be denied to Ruthin residents and visitors alike?

- Bringing visitors new to Ruthin into the town centre, we always

choose to arrive by the Corwen Road, past the stately avenue of trees on one side and the castle walls on the other. This leads on to the elegant houses and buildings on Castle Street. All goes so well on this attractive approach to town until we arrive outside the bookmakers where the pavement is littered with cigarette ends. A further complaint we have received is that as one nears the beautiful gates of St Peter's the blue doorways to the right that once were stylish in their design, are now shabby with peeling paint and bare woodwork. The pathway from Ruthin Castle to St Peter's Church is the foundation route of the town – all its history derives from these two sources of medieval power. Keeping this walk looking well cared for is most important for Ruthin's prestige.



- The 13th June this year will see the end of the Nat West Bank's occupation of the Old Court House. At prese, its future is uncertain, but if anyone wants to have a look at its wonderful interior they should call in before that date.
- Bar Llaeth has become so successful with its excellent home-made bread that the baking side of the business is moving to larger premises on Lon Parcwr and new owners are taking over the shop and cafe. They promise that they will still offer the same excellent service.
- Other shop movement - we were sorry to see that Natures Treasures, opposite the Old Anchor site, had closed, but then relieved to hear that they have moved to take over Duke Stores on Mwrog Street. Nevertheless, it does mean that there is another empty shop..



# The Clwydian Range Tourism Group

## Jeff Morgan, Chairman, reports on our local tourism organisation

This group comprises small, rural businesses located in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and is dedicated to sustainable development. Members are largely self-catering and B&B businesses, pubs and restaurants and an increasing number of 'activity' businesses.

The Group is independent and run by and for its members. The group originated in 2001 with the aim to increase sustainable tourism within and close to the AONB. The Group has two open meetings each year for its members where guest speakers are brought in or workshops are organised to provide support for businesses regarding IT, social media etc. These meetings provide excellent networking opportunities and many members have established mutually beneficial working arrangements.

At our last meeting, which was held at the Ponderosa, we were given a very informative talk by Ken Skates, the Assembly Minister responsible for economy and infrastructure, who outlined forthcoming developments for tourism in Wales. In addition to these meetings, the Group organises visits to businesses in the area to increase awareness of the vast array of opportunities to be found locally.

More recently the Group has been successful in securing £40k from Visit Wales which will be used to promote a 'Legends and Myths' based mobile events throughout the area themed on the Visit Wales Year of Legends (2017) and Year of the Sea (2018). We have also secured £6k from Cadwyn to develop a feasibility study called 'Stay, Eat, Do' that is looking at ways of integrating accommodation, food and activity for visitors with the aim of extending the duration of stays and maximising tourist spend in the area.

The Group has its own website [visitclwydianrange.co.uk](http://visitclwydianrange.co.uk), is very proactive and we always welcome new members – either visit our website or contact our membership secretary, Vanessa on 01352 78190 or email [vrwarrington@gmail.com](mailto:vrwarrington@gmail.com)



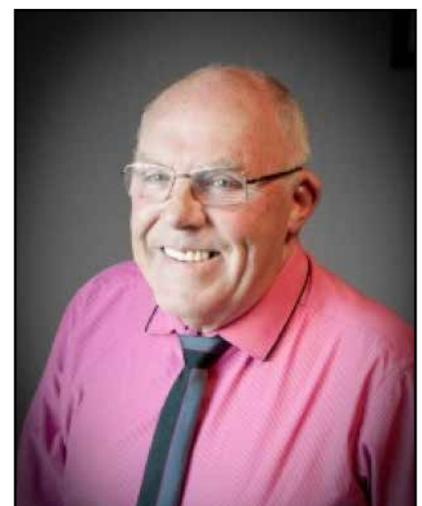
*The group originated in 2001 with the aim to increase sustainable tourism within and close to the AONB.*

## Welcome to our next Mayor

James Andrew Bryan or Jim Bryan has this to say about himself, "I am 71 years of age and I was born in Manchester, brought up in Leeds and spent 40 years as a salesman in the door industry. Then I got the bug for Ruthin, the first place I've known as home; I lived everywhere else!

Through the Town Council I became involved with the Festival Association where I have been Chair for the last three years. Next year is the 25th anniversary of the twinning with Briec and I would dearly love to arrange for the people of Briec to visit for next year's festival. Ruthin's first festival originated with the first twinning visit.

I am extremely pleased and privileged to be sworn in as Mayor of Ruthin and am really looking forward to the coming year. I have chosen as my charity for the year, The Voluntary Youth Organizations.



## Seen in passing...

- The lovely cherry trees planted with their stylish guards as part of the Art Trail are coming into their own this year, the blossom has been lovely, but we can't help noticing that one has died and been removed on Market Street. Its guards now act as a stylish refuse bin! It needs to be replaced. And whilst that is being done, perhaps they could remove the dead tree stump higher up, although this would mean that the Market Hall cheese vendors would need a new site for their sale board.
- We have a plea for help organising the Top of the Town event as the culmination of the Ruthin Festival on July 1st. If you might be able to help for a couple of hours redirecting traffic in that area please contact Rob on [robprice88@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:robprice88@hotmail.co.uk)
- As we are anxious for the continued use of our iconic buildings in town such as the Old Court House, the threatened Griffin Pub in Llanbedr also needs to find someone to care for it. We had heard talks of a community take over, which would be ideal, but whatever, this is a historic building in a most prominent site and needs to have an assured future.



- Until recently you could probably not even see Tomen y Rhodwydd, even in passing – and if you could you might have risked an accident at the top of the Nant y Garth Pass, if you stopped to look! Now, however, this wonderful 12th century motte and bailey castle has been revealed in all its glory, by the simple expedient to cut hedge on the much safer road from Pentrecelyn and Graigfechan – above the Pass. There is now also a gate and a field path from this road to allow you to view the

grass covered mound, built by Owain Gwynedd in 1149. This is not the place for a detailed description, but perhaps one Ruthin's historians might like to write about its shape and history for a later edition of Town and Around.

- While we are on the subject of road directions, have readers noticed how many of the signs are covered with the grime of ages. To clean them up might not be a great priority for the authorities in these straightened times, but soap and water would not cost much.
- Meanwhile the new boards at the entrance to the Craft Centre are surely a great improvement – much more colourful and welcoming than the old mauve boards, and, we hope, drawing passers-by in for a meal and drink at Café R as well as seeing the latest exhibitions. It is certainly noticeable that the Car Park is much fuller than it used to be



# Ruthin Beekeeping

## Ruth Bacon welcomes the bees return to the Lord's Garden

*It is pleasing to see that Nantclwyd y Dre has been given a Hidden Gem award by Visit Wales*

Last August I visited the recently re-opened Lord's Garden at Nantclwyd y Dre and wrote about it for this newsletter. Last weekend I visited again. The garden is looking lovely and more established the herbaceous perennials and the range of flowering shrubs have filled out. Emma Bunbury, manager of Nantclwyd y Dre and Ruthin Gaol was in the garden and said that there had been a wonderful display of poppies earlier in the season. Events in the garden later in the year include two courses, Introduction to Horticulture and Plants with Purpose which are offered as part of the North-East Festival of Gardens.

The garden will be open as one of the Ruthin Town Gardens on 23rd July. Details are on the Nantclwyd website. It is pleasing to see that Nantclwyd y Dre has been given a Hidden Gem award by Visit Wales.

One of the things I mentioned last year was the bee enclosure which was empty and awaiting "tenants". Now there are two hives and the bees have taken up residence!



The hives are looked after by a member of the South Clwyd Beekeepers' Association. Covering an area from Rhyl to Wrexham, the association currently has around 140 members. It has an apiary and pollination garden opposite Llysfasi College. This garden, which is being developed, has an important role in bee conservation as well as education. The Association is working on a project in conjunction with Bangor University to arrest the decline of, and encourage the re-establishment of our native honeybee, *Apis Mellifera*. Otherwise known as the European Dark Honeybee, or more commonly as the Black Bee, it is close to extinction in its pure form partly due to about 150 years of bee imports and from changing the ability of the bee to adapt to our environmental conditions. Widespread use of pesticides and a parasitic mite which was discovered in Devon in 1992 and which has now spread across England and Wales, have also played a part in the bee's decline. Part of the project involves local beekeepers in Denbighshire putting hives onto an isolated spot and providing suitable drones to enable queens to be produced which have little or no cross-breeding thus helping to preserve their integrity.

*The Association is working on a project in conjunction with Bangor University to arrest the decline of, and encourage the re-establishment of our native honeybee, *Apis Mellifera**

I asked Jenny Whitham, chairperson of the association what can Ruthin residents do to help? She recommended the simplest way is by planting bee friendly flowers and shrubs in our gardens. Begonias might be colourful but are difficult for a bee to access nectar! The internet has many websites advising on suitable plants. A hive itself takes up very little space. Courses in bee keeping are held at the apiary, with some sessions at Patchwork in Ruthin, to encourage more people to keep their own hives, or indeed to persuade a neighbour to site a hive in their garden which a trained keeper can manage. And the reward for doing so is your own honey! More about the work of the association can be found on their website.

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It is good that some public areas in Ruthin have been planted with specific plants to attract bees, for example, the Station Road footpath along the old railway line site, the car park beds at Ruthin Craft Centre and, as mentioned earlier, Nantclwyd y Dre's garden. The pollination of our food crops is vital and whatever can be done to help preserve and increase the numbers of our native honeybees is crucial.

# 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.

## Committee members

Chair – Liz Williams

Vice Chair – Heather Williams

Treasurer – Robert Williams

Secretary – Peter Daniels

Members

Kay Culhane

Menna Jones

Anne Roberts

Harold Jones

## Events and Diary Dates for the coming months

- Kathy Daniels Thursday 1st June is the date for the **Westminster General Election Hustings**. This will be held at 7.00pm, Awelon, School Road. Please refer to our front cover page for details.
- You are also invited to join Denbighshire County Council's **Strategic Planning & Housing** Manager, Angela Loftus, on Monday June 5th when she will consider the Future of Housing in Ruthin: what we may need and where and what type of housing it might be. Following a question and answer session Angela will consider community planning and "place plans": what they are and how people can contribute to them. The meeting starts at 7.00pm at The Centre, Llanfwrog.
- **The Quayle Award** will take place at 12noon, Monday 3rd July in the Lord's Garden, Nantclwyd y Dre.
- This year's **Open Doors** for Ruthin Town will be 2nd and 3rd September and for the Ruthin District it will be the 9th and 10th September. Please see our article on page 7 for more details.



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](mailto:ruthincivic@btinternet.com) Further information, and back numbers of Town and Around can be found on [www.ruthincivic.org](http://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](mailto:miles-and-jill@freeuk.com)

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