

Ruthin Town & Around O Gwmpas y Dre

June 2021

Quarterly comment & features from the Ruthin & District Civic Association

DVSC Sets Out its Stall for Market Hall

The Civic Association cautiously welcomes the £40,000 project aimed to bring the market hall back into use and secure its medium term future.

Building operator Ruthin-based Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council wishes to convert it into a more modern, usable space again. In collaboration with the County Council, DVSC has been successful in attracting Welsh Government's Green Circular Economy capital funding towards a medium-term upgrade of the market hall, to make it safe and useable. Key among these must be compliance with accessibility and fire regulations and heating. Subject to permissions and how the virus situation unfolds, this could even take place as early as late summer this year.

The work involves providing a level insulated floor (but protecting the existing but uneven slate flooring underneath); creation of a draught lobby with accessible ramp and adjacent small store for demountable market stalls; an enclosure for the existing kitchenette; an improved fire exit route, with fire door that opens outwards (which are therefore compliant); and some improvements to lighting and electrical provision, possible audio visual equipment, and with some radiant space heating. Heating is a major issue: the building has always run cold and this limits its meaningful use to the summer months only. Quite how previous

generations of yore managed for long periods without we can only speculate.

We're told that these plans will give the building a five year operating window, during which time DVSC can test whether the market hall has a future. Like much else, it's up to us to use the building. If we don't, its future will definitely be in jeopardy. If we do, DVSC has aspirations to undertake a major capital project to restore the floor and market hall.

During the five years of the scheme, what does DVSC have in mind for the building?

We're told that it could allow markets and a pop-up 'social supermarket' to sell discounted 'surplus' food. It could offer a



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New Future for AONB?

It was largely ridiculed by those who didn't support the idea and as usual those who did tended to keep quiet—but is the conversion of the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB to full national park status really such a bad idea?

The Labour Party's manifesto commitments the new Welsh Government to upgrade the AONB to national park status. In 2011 and again in 2012, our constituency AS Conservative Darren Millar also supported the idea. Is there at least some political unanimity?

Speaking on a personal basis (and not as mayor, as he was at the time), Manorhaus' Gavin Harris said on S4C's Newyddion that he, too, was in support of the upgrade—provided that the benefits were spread evenly across the entire area. This, of course, includes Ruthin. Take a look at the pre-virus footfall in town and you'll appreciate that Ruthin needs more visitors.

But, there's the rub. It's believed that 70 per cent of those who frequent the AONB are day visitors from Merseyside.

Foel Fenlli



Few manage to vault Offa's Dyke and descend into the Vale itself. Persuading them to reach Ruthin has thus far proven to be difficult. They may have travelled 40 miles but the additional seven is like falling off the face of the earth. A report on the AONB suggests that, currently, only about three per cent of Moel Famau visitors spend money in Ruthin.

Could upgrading the AONB to a national park help in encouraging or converting day to staying visitors? It's said that AONBs attract day visitors and national parks attract holiday makers. So, it's certainly worth a try and we'd like

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We're looking for your views on T & A: see the back page



We're told that heritage signage screwed to the market hall's walls such as this unique highways town boundary welcome sign will remain and shall be safeguarded

hall that can host other events as necessary, during which demountable market stalls would be stored, leaving a vacant open hall space for events. This would make it more flexible and fit for purpose. There's also the prospect of a so-called 'shared community fridge' as part of a mutual aid food sharing project.

One issue is demand. We hope there is but we are not altogether convinced that there is sufficient call for either a market or for an events space the size of the market hall. Obviously, it's difficult to measure this during the current health emergency and so DVSC has had to take a leap of faith. There have been other false dawns, as well, such as the 1988 study that brought us Lo-cost (now the Co-op) but promised but could not deliver more use of the market hall. Markets, in particular, have struggled in Ruthin. The outdoor Ruthin produce market at the

DVSC in Ruthin

We're fortunate to have DVSC in Ruthin. Its role is to support third sector organisations and volunteers. RADCA is indeed one such organisation under DVSC's umbrella. Its offices on Well Street are currently seeing a refurbishment which we see as an encouraging sign.

In addition to this role, DVSC has received funding from the Welsh Government towards a foundation economy project to help support and grow opportunities for artisan makers and the development of social enterprise in Denbighshire. This, we are told, is part of DVSC's future business plan expansion, to make it more entrepreneurial and ensure it doesn't stand still. The Market Hall in Ruthin was a part of that project, as DVSC had been assigned the lease to it by DCC. Obviously, such plans were postponed or adjusted, owing to the public health emergency and the project became more digitally based

Gaol and Square managed from 2006 to 2011, latterly only on the Square, latterly a shadow of its initial triumphant self. Markets were relaunched on the Square again in 2014 and even for a period in Market Street car park. These were less frequent and, aside from the Christmas Market, none had any longevity.

Then, there's what looks like friendly rivalry from the people behind the

and has included online training & mentoring for new artisan makers, start-ups etc. DVSC had been liaising with DCC about the condition of the hall and its shortcomings in terms of not having a safe floor, disabled access etc.

In more recent times, there's no doubt that the market hall has been under-used. There was a weekly general market, on Thursdays that managed to cross into the 21st century. At opening times, the Friday WI Market, latterly Country Market, once attracting lengthy queues along Market Street. That operated from 1981/2 to 2014, whereafter it was squeezed out to the Presbyterian church hall, only to splutter to a close in February 2016. The extended indoor market held four or five times a week closed in June 2019, after some 15 years. There were all sorts of accusation levels at the time as to why. The market hall's now empty and unused. Coronavirus obviously has not helped.

Square's State of Distress.

In 2020, they launched Ruthin artisan markets. During the coronavirus lockdown interlude, two successful such events managed to take place at the Gaol, benefiting from an upswing in support for local traders. We hope such a self-help ethos continues. Certainly, the third artisan market will have taken place by the time this is printed.

More Encouraging News on Re-wilding

This spring, we were delighted to see more public land in Ruthin set aside for the creation of wildflower meadows.

In September 2020, we reported on the initiative, when we asked whether it could be extended. See v.gd/radca.

We're pleased to say that of the numerous 30 new sites for 2020 announced by Denbighshire County Council, eight are in Ruthin and district. These add to the seven already set aside. All Denbighshire sites, including those on roadsides, now contribute to a significant acreage of wildflower habitat.

The initiative is laudable simply for the aesthetics and natural beauty of wild flowers themselves, blossom that would otherwise be stunted and never have an

opportunity to thrive. During the health emergency, there's been a greater recognition of the importance of nature and wild spaces. We covered this aspect specifically in September.

But the resources have even more important functions. They help towards creating a 'seed-bank of local provenance' as a store of local variants that naturally grow here. They promote pollinators. And, wildlife rapidly moves in.

There is naturally some scepticism among those who fear that this is a cost-cutting measure to avoid mowing. The sites are actually all managed properly according to accepted standards with no cutting (costs or otherwise!) over spring and summer to allow wildflowers to flower and seed.

Indeed, recommendations regarding the 2020 sites are already under consideration. The County Council has purchased over £200,000-worth of machinery to cut and collect grass at the back end of the season.

Eight new sites: ■ Rhyd y Byll embankment verge, Rhewl; ■ Erw Goch, grassland with disused raised bed fronting Llanfair Road; ■ Cae Ddol: parkland

with mature trees and large pond, backing to rugby club; ■ Park Road: bunds along car park and main road and some grassland; ■ Station Walks; ■ Stryd y Brython: grassland with some mature trees; ■ Bro Deg: central part of central triangle on housing estate; ■ Bryn Rhyd: the more controversial one. Grassland area with semi-mature trees.

DIY Re-wilding

Allowing plants to grow in previously immaculate lawns may be anathema to most gardeners. But if you're thinking of helping pollinators by turning a patch of your own garden over to re-wilding, don't be tempted to buy packets of wildflower seeds.

Instead, why not harvest seeds from one of Denbighshire's public sites? That way, you'll ensure that you are helping to ensure the success of resident plants in their own habitat rather than non-native, imported variants.

When it comes to planting daffodil bulbs, ignore the mass of imported species in favour of *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*, the only *bona fide* iconic Welsh daff.



Rather than proliferating weeds, in early spring, dandelions are usually the only significant source of pollen, as seen here on the legs of this red-tailed bee

Coronavirus Chronicles Part 5

Wales enters the highest Alert Level Four from December 28th, 2020 and this continues till April 26th, 2021.

Sunday March 14th

Bell ringing recommences at St Peter's.

Monday March 15th

Hairdressers and barbers able to reopen.

Later years primary and Brynhyfryd secondary learners 11 & 13 return, with staggered options for other years. All pupils return to Brynhyfryd on & from March 22nd and again after Easter on April 12th.

Wednesday March 17th

Public lavatories reopen.

Monday March 22nd

Supermarkets able to sell non-essential items—but non-essential shops in town must wait.

Saturday March 27th

Stay local requirement removed within Wales. Self-contained holiday accommodation reopens but for Welsh residents only.

Tuesday March 30th

Ruthin lending library reopens for bookable 20-minute slots to browse books and for 45 minutes to use

computers. Order and collect facilities continues.

Wednesday March 31st

Avian flu restrictions on birds lifted.

Thursday April 1st

The Lord's Garden reopens free of charge.

Easter Day April 4th

Some chapel services restart.

Monday April 12th

Ruthin's non-essential shops and services reopen. Includes nail salons, etc. There is no rush or queues in Ruthin, though the town appears livelier and feels just that little bit different.

Unrestricted travel permitted, including to and from England. The X1 bus service Ruthin to Chester recommences and other weekday buses services operate near normal.

Friday April 16th

Ruthin Archive re-opens for personal searches. Open once a week only and spaces are limited. Booking required.

Wednesday April 28th

Craft Centre reopens (booking required)

Wednesdays to Saturdays.

Tuesday May 4th

Ruthin Leisure Centre reopens.

Two households can meet in a bubble, brought forward by one week.

Monday May 17th

Move to Level 2. Cafés and pubs allowed to open for customers to go indoors.

All holiday accommodation & visitor attractions may reopen.

Thursday May 20th

Nantclwyd y Dre fully reopens (on selected days). The Lord's Garden continues to offer free access on Mondays only.

Monday April 26th

Cafés and pubs allowed to reopen outdoors. Most pubs reopen, including the rear of the Feathers, seen here, and the new Tafarn y Ddraig but this is more difficult for cafés. Only that in the garden centre does so. Winter returns on April 27th



The Ruthin Allotment Projects

by Victoria Ward

In 2016, Vale of Clwyd MIND created the Allotment Project at St Asaph. Owing to its success, this was soon extended, and the Ruthin Allotment Project started in 2017. The project aims to support people with long- and medium-term mental health illnesses, by providing a safe and supported space in which to enjoy the outside environment, meet new people, develop friendships, reduce stigma & social isolation and to grow (and eat!) fresh organic vegetables.

Over winter we decide what we would like to grow, and get our seeds ready for the spring. We have a little greenhouse on site and we start everything off in there. Most of the time, our choices are the usual vegetables such as potatoes, many types of beans, courgettes and lettuces.

Sometimes, however, we try more unusual types, such as cucamelons or peanuts—and although we won't be growing these again (!), we're always happy to have a go!

The group meets every Friday, between 10am & 2pm on the allotment which is located behind the Vale Golf Driving Range at Llanfwrog Community

Centre (just off Mwrog Street). Our members are a diverse, friendly bunch and we're always happy to get new one or to chat to members of the community who wander past. In 2019 we developed a Ruthin community garden, also located at the Llanfwrog Community Centre, which was planted with 30 heritage fruit trees by local school children and members of the community. Thanks to funding from the National Lottery

Heritage Fund and the Tesco Bags of Help Scheme, we have now been able to add a pergola, a story circle for children's groups, a bird feeding station, a wheelchair accessible path and a wild harvest hedgerow and most recently a Wigloo (a living willow igloo!). We also hope to develop this going forward, running free herbal medicine

workshops, willow weaving workshops, a storytelling session for children and other courses and workshops which enable the community to engage and utilise the site. The Ruthin Community Garden has a new noticeboard at the entrance where we will post information regarding

courses & activities and information regarding the plants in the herbal beds. The garden is open to the public all the time and we encourage local people to come along and get involved, both in the planting and maintenance of the site.

We are not only fair-weather gardeners, but in the winter months we hibernate and turn our hands to craft activities (somewhat loosely related to the allotments), such as making felt vegetable keyrings, willow wreaths, recycled fabric rugs, painted ceramic bird feeders and any other craft activities I can think up. Again, all these sessions are free and all supplies are provided.

We are always happy to meet and welcome new members, be it someone who wants to pop down for half an hour and a chat or someone who wants to come for four hours to do gardening. Please do feel free to come along and meet us, either at the allotment or at the community garden. Or if you would prefer to meet up beforehand to discuss the group, please contact us at our office in Denbigh on 01745 812461.

We certainly look forward to seeing you.



Denbighshire: 25 Years Not Out (Part 1)

It is said that local government is Ruthin's main 'industry'. Peter Daniels reflects on a quarter of a century of 'New' Denbighshire 1996-2021 in Ruthin

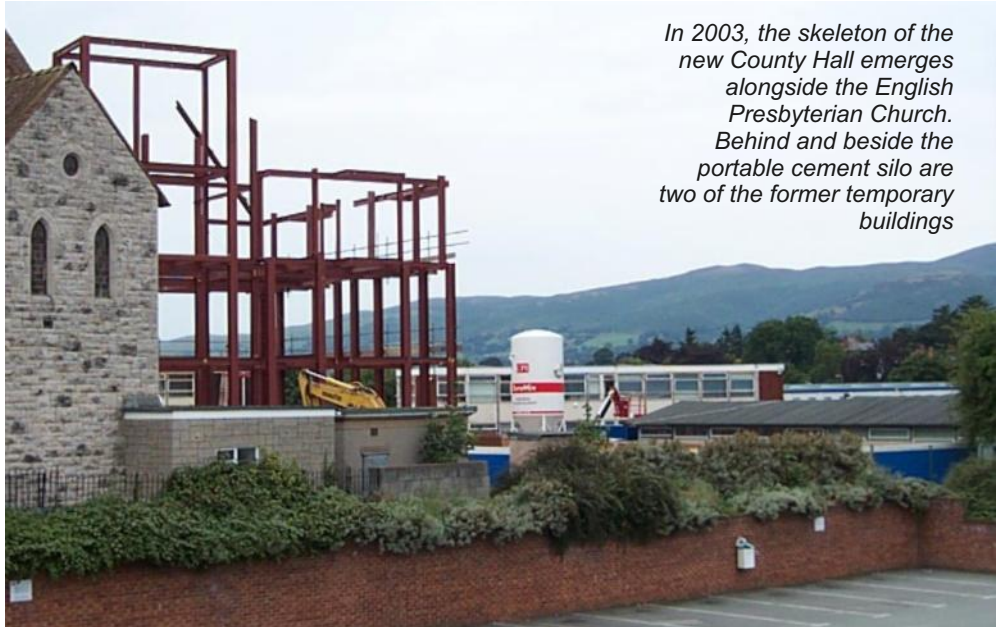
It was 25 years ago this year that many older residents felt that Ruthin had been rightfully restored to its county town status. For it was in April 1996 that Ruthin headquartered the new Denbighshire County Council single-tier authority.

This was different to life in 1974. Back then, the merger of Historic Denbighshire with Flintshire to form Clwyd was greeted in town with some dismay. For decades, Ruthin had been Historic Denbighshire's county town. Henceforward, new Clwyd's chosen headquarters would be in Mold. As the Clwyd years unfolded, rightly or wrongly, there was one view that the Vale of Clwyd had become sidelined. The fact that in 1974 Ruthin became home to the merged Glyndŵr District Council was little consolation.

The 1974 formation of Clwyd seemed so permanent. It's sobering to reflect that New Denbighshire has thus far survived three years longer. Yet, talk of reorganisations and collaborations have coloured Denbighshire's life. There was the 2004 'Making the Connections' report, the 2006 Beecham report and the 2014 Williams report. At that time, Denbighshire and Conwy expressed an interest in merging. In 2015, there was a local government reform Bill. In 2016 there followed 'Strengthening Local Government'. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act, 2021 now safeguards Denbighshire but will see mandatory collaboration across the region, taking increasingly key decisions in such areas as education and planning.

It's popularly believed that Ruthin was chosen as Denbighshire's headquarters because of a shrewd £440,000 Glyndŵr District investment in and extension of the Town Hall. It was said to be the only building comfortably able to house all councillors together. Across the road, the Council Offices (as the headquarters were then called), were described by the then council chairman as 'woefully inadequate' and Denbighshire's second chief executive, Ian Miller, commented that during rainfall his was not the only office to leak. 'Temporary' hutments adorned the space between the 1908/09 main building and Station Road.

Plans for a new building emerged in 1998 and in 2002 the Welsh Government approved a public finance initiative scheme. Construction commenced in 2003 and County Hall opened in May 2004. A month from the 2006 (yes, 2006) official opening, the Civic Association



In 2003, the skeleton of the new County Hall emerges alongside the English Presbyterian Church. Behind and beside the portable cement silo are two of the former temporary buildings

having previously criticised Denbighshire for not allowing interested locals to tour the building did, in fact, have a private viewing but, in truth, those present may have been disappointed. Spacious, clean, modern, warm and, above all, dry inside, its modesty belied its status as the powerhouse for decision making affecting all our lives.

And, over the years, we have seen some significant decisions emerging from Ruthin. Among the more memorable were the financial recovery from the Rhuddlan debt; the first Welsh council to introduce decriminalised on-street car parking enforcement; the response to a number of fluvial & coastal floods; the long-term work to secure what it could of the North Wales Hospital site; step-by-step reform of domestic waste collection; the Clwydian Range's Heather & Hillforts project; the new Craft Centre; a strong Rhyl regeneration strategy; the recent re-emergence of council housing; and the far-sighted declaration of a climate emergency & associated biodiversity.

There is probably little doubt that the most contentious area was in education, with some fairly difficult early and middle years. There emerged a strong education recovery plan under the Leader since 2007, Llanelidan's Cllr Hugh Evans, and his former Chief Executive Dr Mohammed Mehmet. This proved to be a spring-board for further successes,

including significant capital investment in its school building stock.

Denbighshire is now regarded by the Welsh Government as one of the best performing councils in Wales.

The impact of the 2020/21 health emergency has of course taken its toll. County Hall is now home to a skeleton staff, as office-based employees support government directives to work from home.

As we again take tentative steps out of lockdown, the role and importance of County Hall may change and with it the centrality to our town of local government.

But, then again, over the last 100 years, Ruthin has seen it all and has proven to be remarkably resilient.

- Part 2 in the September edition of Town and Around
- 25 years ago: page 11
- Three suggestions for County Hall, opposite



County Hall—Open Doors?

DEREK JONES
suggests some new ventures for a now well-established annual event, and a few other innovations

County Hall was fifteen years old on 31st March. I was there, by invitation, at the opening ceremony. I even wore a tie for the occasion! I arrived at the appointed time and was immediately approached by an official who told me that I would be the fourth speaker—after Cllr John Smith, then chair of Denbighshire County Council, Cllr Rhiannon Hughes, the then leader, and Ian Miller the former chief executive. Nobody had told me in advance!

I was, to coin a phrase, speechless! But there it was in the official programme: 'Mr Derek Jones, chair, Ruthin Civic Association'. It was quite an honour for the Civic Association to be singled out to play a part on such a notable occasion. It meant, I think, that our message of care for, and interest in, the town and its surrounding villages was getting across and that it was being heard in high places. On the other hand, perhaps not everyone in County Hall was listening. It emerged that it was a county officer who had forgotten to tell me that I would be on the stage!

What might I have said? I guess that I would have wanted to stress that the word 'civic' was not one that belonged only to the Association and its counterparts in the rest of the county; that we shared, with the councillors and officers, a passion for democracy; that, above all, democracy was about people—statutory and voluntary—working together for the common good. All very pious, the sort of thing that often gets said on such occasions!

What might I say now about County Hall and what goes on inside it? I would be inclined to quote the words of the Richard Rogers Partnership who designed the Senedd building, the national home of democracy in Wales: 'The building was not to be seen as an insular and closed edifice. Rather it would be a transparent envelope, looking outwards to Cardiff Bay and beyond, making visible the inner workings of the Assembly and encouraging public participation in the democratic process'.

How does the Denbighshire County Hall fare if that is the criterion for its

The 2004 County Hall seen from a less usual angle. Alterations at the rear will soon provide a dedicated Coroner's Court and space for Y Bont, which will transfer from Canol y Dre



performance? Without doubt this is a progressive authority, well known throughout local government circles in Wales for its care for citizens, their housing, their needs, their environment. But how many of us know how they generate their good ideas? How far is County Hall a 'transparent envelope'?

Councillors might say, with some justice, that much of their work takes place out of County Hall, meeting with, and listening to people, in the places where they live and work. Most councillors and officers work very hard on a person-to-person basis. What I'm asking for now is to match that with a policy for public participation in their decision-making, better communication and conversation

there. We are not voting fodder but potential partners.

I have three initial suggestions for breaking down the barriers. It appears as if more officers and councillors will, for some part of every week, be working from home. Already, there are a good many more spaces in the car park. Might it be possible to redesign it to allow the development of a small 'green' park, where citizens could sit and get to know the building close up? The green round the Guildhall in Wrexham might serve as a model; people sit on the grass there in summer, eat their sandwiches and talk. There's a balcony at the back of the Guildhall for public pronouncements accompanying the occasional celebration.



Spring 2021 at the Wrexham Guildhall. Coronavirus put paid to the usual gatherings

My second suggestion is for the Ruthin and District Civic Association itself. How about working with officers and councillors to open up the interior of the building during the Open Doors festival? In particular, might they be allowed to see the council chamber itself – how many ordinary citizens even know it's there? How many have been present when the full council is meeting? Of course, this would be a matter not just for Ruthin, but for other civic societies in the county such as Denbigh and Llangollen—well worth, I should say, some fruitful collaboration between them, but Ruthin would have to invite them to join in.

between council decision makers and their electorate.

The design of County Hall does not, I fear, help us. Passing by, along Station Road, we are greeted at least pre-virus by a very full and dominant car park which prevents us taking a close look at the building, and you get no sense of the hive of activity which is going on inside. We may enter the building in Market Street, but that's as far as we can go for most purposes. County Hall is not a fortress, but it does sometimes leave you with a feeling that you have no business

Finally, might there be a small space in County Hall for small exhibitions, complementing the excellent offerings of the Craft Centre? That's a very long shot, I know, but there's an established tradition in Europe for town halls to include opportunities to see pictures not available elsewhere, and it would have the added advantage of extending the chance to get inside the County Hall & perhaps even to feel affection for it.

RADCA Vice-chair Elected Mayor of Ruthin

On May 10th, our very own Heather Williams was elected mayor of Ruthin for the town council year 2021/22. For eight years, Heather was Chair of the Civic Association and she has been the Vice-chair for several more. Shortly after the mayor making, we asked Heather about her time at the council and about the forthcoming year.

T & A: What made you decide to put yourself forward as a Town Councillor?

HW: I have always been involved in community groups and in volunteering, ever since I moved to Ruthin in 1988. Soon after I moved here I joined the Ruthin and District Civic Association. While Chair I was involved in the campaign to get Nantclwyd y Dre open as a heritage attraction as, at the time, there were no historic buildings open in the town in the 1990s.

In the early 2000s, the Civic Association started the Heritage Days Open Doors in Ruthin which has become one of the best programmes on offer in the whole of Wales. I was also a CAB volunteer in the 1990s and found it very rewarding to provide support and information for local residents.

In my paid work I have had various jobs that have involved community development through a wide range of activities, from community arts, training to make community/village halls sustainable and various community heritage projects.

After I gave up full time work, I thought I might be a useful member on the Town Council, as I originally started off my adult life as a town planning

officer. I also thought my experience in the public and voluntary sectors, and more recently as a tourism operator would be useful, and in 2015 I joined the town council.

T & A: What are your aspirations for your year in office as Mayor?

HW: At the beginning of the calendar year, flooding yet again affected Ruthin.

While there are some proposals to address the problem, it is recognised that tree planting can help reduce flooding by up to 20 per cent. Trees also help to absorb harmful carbon from the atmosphere and help clean the air we breathe. I propose to begin the planting of trees by creating appropriate partnerships and involve a range of people living in the Ruthin community.

I am very keen to continue to develop the work which has already started at The Old Courthouse, as a community hub which is of benefit to residents and visitors

alike. I really want to encourage its use as a meeting place, both formally and informally. What is different about The Old Courthouse is that it is a beautifully refurbished historic building that everyone can access free of charge to discover more about the building itself and our historic town. We want to build a team of volunteers who will be able to welcome people who come into the

building and I want to play a part in that team.

I hope to give updates while Mayor of Ruthin by providing communications on the Council's website.

T & A: What are your chosen charities and why?

HW: I am conscious that for various reasons this last year has been a particularly difficult one for quite a number of residents in Ruthin. Lives have been affected by the consequences of coronavirus and also by the flooding at the beginning of the year.

The difficulties that some people have faced over the past year have influenced the three charities which I have chosen to support. These are

The Vale of Clwyd Food Bank (which supplies food parcels and other essentials to those in need in the area, and has a base in Ruthin; The Vale of Clwyd MIND (which supports people who have mental health problems, and has practical projects such as community gardening, craft and walking groups in Ruthin; and The Vale of Clwyd Cancer Research UK (which helps to research ways in which early signs of all types of cancer can be detected and research ways in which people can survive cancer, and has a local group in Ruthin).

During the last year the pandemic has increased the need for their services and funding their work has been difficult. Any one of us could find a need for their services, whatever age we are.

We offer our warmest wishes to Heather for her mayoral year. And, in another cause for celebration, RADCA committee member Menna Jones was elected as her deputy.

Peers Memorial & Clock Update

A conservation architect has now been appointed to design the restoration of Peers Memorial & town clock.

Elinor Gray Williams was appointed mid-May by the voluntary committee to design a programme of restorative works for the structure.

Elinor has a wealth of experience and expertise in historical buildings including architect services on projects involving Portmeirion, Caernarfon Town Walls, Bangor Diocese. She tutors final year students at the Centre for Alternative Technology in Machynlleth for the RIBA-accredited MA in Sustainable Architecture.

She currently is working on projects including buildings on Bardsey Island for the Island Trust and St Cybi's Church in Holyhead.

Most importantly, Elinor is the conservation architect who is putting together a conservation management plan for the Ruthin Castle Trust.

She also leads a team that have other notable buildings in their portfolio including yr Ysgwrn at Trawsfynydd, the

Welsh Highland Railway terminus at Caernarfon, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Beaumaris Castle to name only a few.

Part One of the Peers Memorial project has been funded by the Clocaenog Windfarm Fund, Denbighshire County Council and Ruthin Town Council.

The restoration committee is a group of local volunteers led by Chair Fiona Gale. Said Fiona, 'We are delighted to have appointed Elinor for this role, whose wealth of knowledge and expertise will be invaluable in designing a programme of restorative works to the town's treasured Clock'.

The clock was built in 1883 as a memorial for Joseph Peers who was Clerk of the Peace in Denbighshire for 50 years. It was designed by the prominent architect John Douglas and is a Grade II Listed Structure.

A community consultation event about the restoration is scheduled to take place in September 2021 at Yr Hen Lys. Details will be in the next edition of Town and Around.

Meanwhile, the background to the project and to Joseph Peers himself is available in the September 2021 edition at v.gd/radca.

Urgent Highways Appeals

Denbighshire's Conservation Project Supervisor is trying to compile a list of historic items on the highway. When completed, he will contact Cadw for their consideration as to whether any on the list should be protected.

There is a handful of last remaining items and these could so easily disappear. If they do, their value and character will be lost. These seemingly trivial items are often taken for granted but add flavour and richness to the highway.

The Civic Association is ready to help. If you know of any heritage highways features, kindly email the Secretary (cymru@clwyd.org) with details, condition and location.

Items might include older road signs, cast iron finger posts and enamel street name plates. It may also include old telegraph poles with glass insulators, if any still exist.

Personal Memories of Ruthin Castle

The article in December 2020's Town and Around inspired Colin Edwards to pen some of his memories of Ruthin Castle

During the last 100 years, member of my family, including myself, have had connections with the Castle. In 1915, my maternal grandfather,

Sgt William Peake, lost his life in tragic circumstances at Ypres in Belgium during the First World War. He was the second Ruthin man who was killed. Soon after my grandmother received the devastating news, the Castle's Mrs Patsy Cornwallis-West visited her to offer her condolences. My mother, Nora, was only five years old at the time. While on Square for the 1919 peace celebrations, Mrs Cornwallis-West spoke to my grandmother and mother. Mrs West said, 'I suppose this means nothing to you, Mrs Peake.' My grandmother's reply was 'No, it doesn't, Mrs West. I lost my husband and my little girl lost her Daddy in that awful war'.

Many years later, Mum worked in the



office at the castle, which had been a sanatorium for wealthy patients since 1923. The Duff House Sanatorium, later Ruthin Castle Clinic Ltd, built up a good reputation which attracted wealthy people of its day.

She often recalled how sad the staff were when the sanatorium closed on 31 December 1962, owing to financial problems.

In 1963, the Castle was converted into the hotel that is still popular today. My sister's wedding reception was held there in 1968.

When the castle was a sanatorium, my paternal aunt and my mother's cousin

both worked there. My aunt was a radiographer and my cousin was an assistant nurse. A patient who was there in the 1950s was the famous actor Lawrence Olivier. He kindly autographed a picture of himself for me.

I, too, worked at the castle in the mid-1950s, when I was 15 years of age. During the summer holidays, I was an assistant in the laboratory.

Ruthin Castle has certainly had a very interesting and fascinating history. I for one am very proud of it.

Volunteering

There's still optimism regarding a trial phase in the opening this summer of the Old Courthouse. Pending such a decision, the site is urgently looking for volunteers.

There are a number of different voluntary roles on offer:

- To welcome visitors to Yr Hen Lys, answering questions they may have and sharing knowledge and experiences of Ruthin and to show what Ruthin has to offer residents and visitors alike. Volunteers will be supported in participation of the Denbighshire Tourism Ambassador Awards.
- To be part of a working group in exhibiting local artists' work. To arrange preview events and offer support with the logistics.
- To be part of a working group providing temporary exhibition displays, focussing on different aspects of Ruthin's heritage.
- To support the Ruthin Town Council in maintaining high standard of renovations.
- To join the committee as a representative of the public, with the the Town Council to support and scrutinise the work of the site manager.

If you are interested in one or more of these roles, please email the Old Courthouse Manager
kate.harcus@theoldcourthouse.wales

Crane & Memorial

Are we on the verge of seeing some progress on the Craft Centre railway crane?

Just before press date, we were aware of a meeting to discuss what is the last tangible reminder of the railway in Ruthin.

When we last reported on the crane—in June 2019—the structure became something of a talking point. Things have since quietened down although, whenever possible, the Civic Association has ensured the crane remains on the agenda.

The talks will now depend upon whether or not landowner Denbighshire Leisure Ltd is able to assist in any way by taking on the transfer of the asset. Readers of the June and September 2019 Town and Aroun will recall the legal issues regarding ownership that have resulted in slow progress to date. See v.gd/radca for archived T & As.

War Memorial

Following the work undertaken during the centenary of the Great War, there is also a small project considering how best to conserve the Wynnstay Road war memorial. At the least, the structure will need some basic masonry work to wall and plinth, to ensure its longevity.

in colour at www.ruthincivic.org

A Street Named Desire

Bryn Goodman is a street like no other. Admittedly now hemmed in on either flank by housing estates, it still retains its uniqueness. This is thanks to individual dwellings, mostly set back in large plots with mature trees and hedges creating a distinctive environment.

Yet, parts of the street are showing signs of over-development, as some of these large individual plots are parcelled up. A small number of houses have already filled former gardens and there's currently two new dwellings behind Pennant. Permission was granted for a house to the rear of The Nooke (aka The Nook). Some years ago, perhaps as far back as in Glyndŵr's days, such back development was frowned upon and not permitted.

There's permission for a house behind The Nooke. An application to the bungalow and construct four flats at the front of the property was refused on appeal but the applicants have resubmitted. We're inclined to agree with the Town Council when it opposed the flats on grounds of over-development and being out of character with neighbouring properties.

Whether by coincidence or not, there are a record four properties for sale here. It was seven years prior that a dwelling sold. Today, Hunter's Lodge (or is that Hunters' Lodge? The owners have left off the apostrophe) is a well proportioned dwelling on for £775,000 and sold subject to contract. Across the road is



a substantial bungalow at £450,000 that is also STC. At the foot, Coetmor was sold but is again available.

Next to The Nooke is Coppins, also at £775,000. This includes a swimming pool amid attractive rear gardens. It last changed hands in 1999, for £40,000. That was before the current owners doubled the size of the house by adding an indifferent but capacious extension. It's a measure of the standing of Jumbo Hill that once sold Coppins will see a return on investment some eight times higher than houses on ordinary streets in town.



Beth ddigwyddodd i Ffermdy Hendre'r Ywydd Uchaf yn 1956?



Gan Harold Jones

Pan oeddwn yn edrych am gwestiynau ar gyfer ein cwis ym mis Ebrill mi gefais fy nhemptio i ofyn y cwestiwn uchod gan ei fod yn berthnasol i'n hardal ni. Mae hefyd genyf gysylltiad personol a'r adeilad er fod hynny beth amser yn ol. Wedi meddwl tipyn mi benderfynais fod y cwestiwn efallai yn rhy anodd er mae'n bosibl y byddai nifer ohonoch yn gwybod yr ateb heb unrhyw drafferth.

Yr ateb yw fod ffermdy Hendre'r Ywydd Uchaf wedi cael ei dynnu i lawr a'i symud o'i safle ger Llangynhafal a'i ail adeiladu yn Amgueddfa Werin Sain Ffagan lle yr agorwyd yr adeilad i'r cyhoedd yn 1962. Mae'r adeilad wedi ei restru fel Gradd II ac yn esiampl o dy neuadd ffram nenfforch o'r canol oesoedd a adeiladwyd yn 1508. Mae'r waliau wedi eu gwneud o blethwaith a chlai a ffram bren wedi ei phlethu a'i llenwi gan gymysgedd o fwd, gwellt a thail gwartheg.

Adeiladwyd y ffermdy ar gyfer pobl ac anifeiliaid. Mae'r cynllun wedi ei rannu yn bump rhan – dau i fuchod a cheffyllau, un fel gweithdy, un fel neuadd agored ac ystafell wely ar

bwys. Pan oeddwn yn fyfyrwr pensaerniaeth yng Nghaerdydd yn y chwedegau bum yn ffodus i gael swydd rhan amser yn y gwyliau fel gofalwr amgueddfa yn Sain Ffagan ychydig y tu allan i Gaerdydd.

Agorwyd Sain Ffagan i'r cyhoedd ar y cyntaf o Orffennaf 1948.

Hwn oedd yr amgueddfa awyr

agored cyntaf ym Mhrydain. Dr Iorwerth Peate oedd y gwr y tu ol i'r fenter ac fe'i ysbrydolwyd gan yr amgueddfeydd awyr agored yn Llychlyn. Rhoddwyd y safle ar gyfer yr amgueddfa gan Iarll Plymouth. Cafodd Dr Peate ei anog i ddatblygu Amgueddfa Werin i Gymru gan Syr Cyril Fox a oedd yn archeolegwyr ac yn gyfarwyddwr Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Cymru rhwng 1926 a 1948. Cliriwyd llawer o'r coed ym mharc Sain Ffagan i wneud lle i'r nifer o adeiladau hynafol a godwyd yno ac a symudwyd o safleoedd ar draws Cymru.

Yn y chwedegau roedd nifer o ffermdai ar y safle, melin wlan, bwthyn chwarelwr, capel, tanerdy, ysgubor a tholldy. Mae'r safle o 18 acer yn cynnwys Castell Sain Ffagan – adeilad Gradd I sydd yn esiampl o faenordy Elisabethaidd. Mae wedi ei ddodrefni i ymddengys fel cartref teulu tua dechrau'r ugeinfed ganrif.

Fel gofalwyr yn yr amgueddfa nid oedd disgwyl i ni wybod pob peth am yr adeiladau a'r celfi. Yn hytrach rhaid oedd i ni sicrhau nad oedd dim yn cael eu dwyn neu eu difrodi. Yr oedd llawer o'r gofalwyr yn gyn lowyr wedi ymddeol o byllau glo y Rhondda ac

'roedd nifer o gymeriadau yn eu plith. Mi ddysgais dipyn am fywyd y tu allan i gampws y coleg wrth wrando ar y straeon digri yn ystafell fwyta'r staff!

Treuliais llawer awr hapus yn eistedd ac yn gwarchod yr hen ffermdai wrth ddisgwyl i ymwelwyr ddod heibio. Roedd Hendre'r Ywydd Uchaf yn un o'm ffefrynnau er fy mod yn ddiolchgar na fyddai'r tan agored yn y neuadd yn cael ei gynnu. Nid oes simne ac mi fyddai'r mwg yn dianc drwy'r to gwellt a'r ffenestri pren agored.

Erbyn hyn mae Sain Ffagan wedi datblygu yn aruthrol ac mae yna yn agos i hanner cant o adeiladau yno sydd wedi dod o bob rhan o Gymru. Mae hefyd nifer o erddi yn amgychu'r castell gan gynnwys gardd Eidalaid, gardd teim, pyllau pysgod a gardd rhosynnau prydferth. Mae yna hefyd orielau ar hanes Cymru yn ogystal a gweithdy man creu.

Ymysg yr adeiladau a symudwyd y mae dau arall a ddaeth yn wreiddiol o'r rhan yma o'r wlad. Mae Talwrn gwreiddiol gyda tho gwellt a ddaeth o fuarth yr Hawk and Buckle yn Ninbych. Roedd pawb o bob dosbarth cymdeithasol yng Nghymru yn mwynhau gwyllo ymladd ceiliogod am ganrifoedd. Gwaharddwyd ymladd ceiliogod yn 1849.

Daw'r Felin Eithin yn wreiddiol o Deheufryn, Dolwen. Roedd y rhan fwyaf o ffermwyr Cymru yn defnyddio ceffylau i weithio are eu ffermydd ac roedd angen rhoi bwyd o gyflwr da i'r anifeiliaid. Roedd eithin yn cael ei dyfu yn arbennig ar raddfa fawr ac roedd yn rhaid ei falu mewn melinau fel Melin Eithin.

Mi gewch mwy o hanes Sain Ffagan Amgueddfa Werin Cymru ar www.amgueddfa.cymru.

AONB, from page 1



The AONB has a new traffic management plan

to think this would be beneficial. It would raise the area's profile and potentially widen its catchment. We might find that rather than by-passing the area via the A55, more might actually come and, dare we say, stay. Staying means finding accommodation locally and injecting cash. Upping the profile might also result in Llangollen visitors being more willing to seep north.

Further, it might safeguard funding, create 'green' jobs and support the County Council's already strong environmental credentials.

On the other hand, land owners are cautious or worse. They fear increased visitor numbers on country lanes and more red tape. If you believe Guardian columnist George Mobiot, national parks are basically deserts. This he said in his book 'Feral: Rewilding the Land, Sea and Human Life' (Penguin, 2014). Not that Mobiot is pro-farmer, either. Land owners resisted the 2011 extension of the AONB into the Dee Valley, something now considered a success.

Do we and farmers really have anything to fear?

The difference between an AONB and a national park is a fine one. In terms of the landscape, both are actually of equal importance and status when it comes to planning decisions on the landscape. The main difference, however, is that an AONB exists to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. National parks, in addition, promote

understanding and enjoyment of the area's special qualities. To do so, they have their own independent authorities with full planning powers and these, some argue, are democratically unaccountable.

On the other hand, a national park may protect budgets and increase staff. And, with some imagination, the current area of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley could actually extend farther south, to Berwyn and even as far as Lake Vernwy. *KD*



Local Victorian Post Boxes

by D Gwynne Morris

One of my interests is the study of postal history. When in 1840 the uniform Penny Postage was introduced, there was a rapid increase in the number of letters being posted.

This resulted in Anthony Trollope, the novelist, then employed as a surveyor's clerk by the General Post Office, being charged with investigating ways of improving the collection of mail.

The use on the continent of collection boxes was already in evidence. Upon Trollope's recommendation, it was decided to adopt such a system in Britain and to erect 'iron posts suited to the purpose at the corners of streets or in

permanently built walls fit for the purpose'.

The oldest surviving post boxes in the Ruthin area are iron faced wall boxes stamped with the crown and monarchical cipher 'VR' for Victoria Regina. There are five 'VR' wall boxes in all. They were built all of the same kind by W T Allen & Co of London and made and erected from 1881 up to about 1901 and they are still in their original positions today.

The only town example is on Mwrog Street, in the wall of a house opposite the entrance to Lôn Fawr.

Three are on the south side of Ruthin, the nearest being in the brick-cum-stone wall at Efail Newydd on the B5429 at its junction towards St Meugan; the other two are at Pentrecoch and way out at Graigadwywynt. Though in the Denbigh postal area, there's also a VR wall box by Llanynys church.

Can you find them all?

Originally painted red, then sage but, given the date of Ruthin's, these will probably all have been the ubiquitous red adopted in 1874, from the start.

With 'No junk mail' sticker on the house door, the Victorian wall box at Mwrog Street, at Lôn Fawr



Llanynys



Pentrecoch



Graigadwywynt

Ruthin and the National Film Archive

by Peter Daniels

For me, the most fascinating aspect of the March talk to the History Society on the subject of the National Library film archive was some of the trivia. Like the briefest of glimpses of the red Austin Monetgo taxi popular in and around town in the early 1990s.



Hiraethog

The talk used archive TV footage about Ruthin. The point of one 1970s clip through the medium of Welsh was to highlight the problems associated with the withdrawal of rural phone boxes. Back then, one of the interviewees defended the box at deserted Hiraethog near Cyffylliog, making the point that there were 100s of workers in Clocaenog Forest (at that time) and what would happen if one of them ever had an accident: though in the middle of nowhere, such a kiosk was a lifeline. Of course, not only has mobile phone technology negated the requirement for such an insurance policy, there are now far fewer foresters, anyway.

Also accompanying the clip was this



Clawddnewydd

shot of Clawddnewydd. To the right of the shiny red kiosk was a 30 mph repeater which tells us that, at the time, there were no street lights through the village. 30 mph speed limit repeaters are placed only where there are no street lighting columns.

At one stage, grand prix driver Tom Price lived at Hiraethog. Did he ever use his local telephone kiosk, I wonder? There was a 1976 clip of him in a Ferrari-engined Lancia Stratos valued at £35,000 (£250,000 today) flying through Clocaenog Forest. Price was more used to the grand prix circuit than rallying and he readily admitted that grand prix 'seemed a bit easier than this lot'.

The presenter felt that this once ubiquitous TV reporter to camera on Castle Street, right, in a natty tan and mustard anorak, was 'not the most interesting video'. I disagree.

It was on the occasion of John Lennon's death on December 8th, 1980.

It seems the reported appeared in Ruthin too late to witness first hand the press mob gathered at the Manor House, owned by Lennon's former wife Cynthia. The reporter referred to Cynthia & Julian ('who played drums and guitar locally').

For me, though, the most fascinating part of the clip was the green primary route advance direction sign over the reporter's left shoulder at Plas yn Dre. Green reminds us that the A494 Dolgellau to South of Birkenhead trunk road once passed along Castle Street itself and then descended Well Street, rather than Lôn Fawr, Mwrog Street & Park Road as now. Park Road itself was classified as an extension of the Cerrig to Ruthin B5105 though, by this time, through traffic was signed via Park Road.

There were some general clips about the history of Ruthin. In one, the presenter actually said of the Myddlelton Arms that the building was 'the most bewindowed house in all of Wales'. A nice if archaic literary turn of phrase.



Memories of Borthyn School over the Last Century

By former pupil Dilwyn Jones of 'Book of You'

As one who has worked part-time for Book of You for some two and a half years now, and jointly with Yr Hen Lys and with a grant from the National Heritage Lottery, I had the great pleasure from late January to early March of leading eleven Zoom sessions in which around eighteen people in all contributed memories of Borthyn School – part of 'Stori Rhuthun'.

Book of You is a community interest company which has existed now for around a decade, preparing digital memory books via a particular App. Originally, this was originally for people living with dementia but things have developed and, now, we also prepare community digital memory books.

I have worked on two other community books previously, on Rhos on Sea and Llanrwst, and these can be viewed on the Book of You website. The Borthyn book will soon be available for similar public viewing and, though the sessions were fewer in number than for either Rhos on Sea or Llanrwst, I am absolutely certain that this is our best yet.

As I write, we are also nearing the end of another community book in the 'Stori Rhuthun' series, being a book on memories of the various shops in the town over the years. We will then follow with a third, about the castle.

Level', the theme from the original series of 'Van Der Valk' which was lovely music and popular in my day—because it was music from a series about 'bad people'.

Another popular memory was of the small milk bottles provided for pupils in the mornings after the bottles, which were often frozen solid in wintertime, had been de-frosted in front of the classroom radiator, a process which often turned the milk sour. There were also far from fond memories of cod liver oil and orange juice also provided for years.

Use of the Drill Hall, over the road from the school, was interesting, together with use of the canteen too for many years for sports activities. Health and safety were clearly not major considerations in those days!

Over the years, and to this day, the repeated description of Borthyn was as a 'happy school'. Generally, teachers were recalled with fondness, admiration and gratitude. Many names could be quoted, e.g. the headmaster J Llewelyn Roberts, who died in post in 1960 aged just 54. Several recalled going to visit his grave on the evening of his funeral day and many pupils, boys and

section at Borthyn, there was a Welsh stream (standards 1 and 2 Welsh together and standards 3 and 4W likewise). Of course, this stream was lost soon after a Welsh medium primary school opened in Ruthin.

However, Borthyn was renovated considerably around 1990. Indeed, when I visited in 2017, for the first time since 1973, I did not recognise the place inside!

The qualities of Borthyn remain the same, and as strong as ever and a local hero who has not perhaps received due recognition is Jan Edwards, the school crossing lady, someone whose kindness to the pupils is the stuff of legend.

I must finish now, or you will not read the book! Remember to keep an eye on Yr

Hen Lys and Book of You websites.



Stori Rhuthun: Memories of Retail

A handful of Civic Association members have contributed to the 'Stori Rhuthun' book regarding former shops, during an evening session, writes Peter Daniels. The shops thread was never to determine an accurate history of town retail but to prompt memories of past activities.

Although the Square has always been the heart of Ruthin, Peter Daniels recalled the former 'business' and vibrancy of lower Well Street, with all its comings and goings at Slater's petrol forecourt, the TSB, Butland's/Lewis Electrics, an estate agent, newsagent and several grocers. Less busy was Warren's 'Happy Shopper'.

This part of Well Street nevertheless seemed to generate a micro-economy all of its own, with constant activity.

Peter also recalls protracted negotiations in 1993 to part-exchange a car at Slater's for one of their Citroëns, undertaken completely through the medium of Welsh.

Came the appointed day to make the swap and he discovered waiting for him at the rear was not the expected D-segment red Citroën Xantia—but a silver Ford Fiesta. Something had been lost in translation...



We had a great group gathering memories of Borthyn School, including former teachers Gruff Hughes, Ann Jones and Bronwen Lebbon and Neil Roberts, former headmaster, and Delyth Edwards, former deputy. Several former pupils participated too including Julia Buckley-Jones and Carys Morgan.

One subject that arose regularly in discussions was 'Dobbin', the old rocking-horse. On their birthdays, infant pupils would get to ride it and also would get to sit on the 'Golden Chair' and would get to select the record to be played in that day's assembly. The 'selection' would generally be from a very short list of mainly classical records in the school and I well remember John Rhydwyn Jones as the then headmaster and my mother as his deputy banning 'Eye

girls, were in floods of tears. Otherwise, many remembered Elsie Hitchin, a teacher who evidently sneezed with such force that the entire building shook to its foundations and some children were genuinely frightened!

We heard of visits to Pentrellyncmyr, Tŷ Gwyn and Glan Llyn and I was surprised to note of regular trips, sadly after my time as a pupil, as far as France!

There was certainly a School Eisteddfod in the 1950s and again more recently but, for some reason, there were no internal eisteddfodau in my time. However, the annual carol service was a very important and memorable event and it was interesting to hear of the melodica and melodeon, words I had not heard for decades!

When I was a pupil in the junior

Seen in Passing...



During the trunk road agency's February to April resurfacing of Mwrog Street and Park Road, motorists were faced with this sign. Was it to warn us that sheep were coming off the hills during lockdown, Llandudno goat style? Or a request that motorists frustrated by delays to slam into the vehicle in front?

Cheese manufacturing began on the Llandyrnog site 100 years ago, in 1921. Arla closed and mothballed Llandyrnog creamery in May 2018, with the loss of 97 well-paid jobs. In May 2020, it looked for a buyer. None



was found. From February 24th, 2021, there began the dismantling of the giant silos on the site.

Seen this spring at Pont Howkin (top right) is an example of NRW's new flood prevention measures, aimed at stopping debris causing problems downstream.

The extension to Ruthin Hospital continues and the relocated Mount Street surgery is expected to open in or from September. Meanwhile, the hutments refurbished c.2005, latterly part of the schools and once part of



the County Council portfolio were demolished in April to facilitate the widening of the hospital access road.



Some loathed them, others welcomed their safety. The planters formerly in Market and Well Streets have found a home in Llangollen.



25 Years Ago

by Bobby Feeley

It's 25 years since the county and district councils in Wales became unitary authorities. I remember it well because, from 1986, I was a councillor for Ruthin on Glyndŵr District Council. I can recall the excitement as we prepared to join with Rhuddlan County Borough Council to form the new Denbighshire County Council, replacing the former Clwyd County Council.

We had a 'shadow' year (1995/96) to make sure everything would be in good order, ready to merge into the much bigger council on April 1st, 1996, with more responsibility.

Whereas the districts dealt with housing, leisure, environmental health, bin collection, and local planning, the new county would provide the majority of 'big-budget' public services like education, highways, transport, social care etc. It was supposed to be more efficient and cheaper to have 22 unitary authorities across Wales than the previous 37 districts and eight counties.

It was quite a complicated transfer of power and generated a lot of controversy at the time. As an enthusiastic young(ish) councillor, I

was eager at the prospect of a new challenge and threw myself into discussions to make sure the Glyndŵr area, and particularly Ruthin, got treated well. It was a busy and exciting year, as we prepared to begin a new chapter in local authorities across Wales.

The new Denbighshire County Council was formed, elections held across the 47 wards and in April 1996 the first meeting was held in the new council chamber in the Town Hall, Ruthin. I was one of three Liberal Democrats and, although we formed an effective group, nowadays I remain the only Liberal Democrat on Denbighshire. In those days, the rest were made up of Independents, Labour and Plaid Cymru. There were no Conservatives in 1996.

The business was run through a committee structure, not the cabinet system we have today and the first chairman was Councillor Rhys Webb from Corwen, an influential and formidable character in his day. Subsequently, leaders were elected

and Ruthin & district has had its fair share of appointees, in 18 of the 21 years of cabinet.

During the first year, there was a rude awakening when it was discovered that our partner district authority, Rhuddlan, had a substantial legacy of debt amounting to around £7 million, which meant the fledgling new Denbighshire struggled from the outset. It took some years for Denbighshire to deal with this financial crisis and move on. Subsequently, new measures were brought in by Wales Audit to ensure such a situation would never occur again.

On a positive note, Denbighshire eventually flourished to become one of the best performing councils in Wales.

If you look carefully at the 1996 photo you will see three of the original county councillors, Denbigh's Gwyneth Kensler, Clawddnewydd's Eryl Williams and myself. We are blessed with staying in power!



Ruthin & District Civic Association

Your Views on Town and Around

It's been a while since we've asked readers for their views on Town and Around. Could you spend a few minutes answering our survey? The Committee will then consider your responses carefully. The easiest way to do so is to use this link directly to the online survey:

v.gd/townandaround

and follow the link to the eSurveyspro.com survey

If you're not online, if you prefer to reply off-line or if you missed the online deadline, please email or write to the Secretary (address opposite). Here are the questions:

- How do you rate the quality of the articles in Town & Around? 1 = poor to 5 = excellent
- Over the last few years, how do you think T & A has developed?
- How impartial do you think Town & Around is?
- Do you think that Town and Around should be more controversial in its approach?
- How often do you go online to look at the current or archived copies of T & As?
- With modern technology and social media provided by other people, do we still need to provide a Town & Around at all?
- How frequent should T & A be?
- Could T & A be replaced by some sort of blog?
- Is the proportion of pictures to word connect correct?
- What improvements, if any, would you like to see regarding the newsletter's design?
- Specifically, what do you think about the font size (i.e. size of the letters)?
- Does T & A cover the sort of items that

interest you? ■ If not, what would you prefer to see? ■ What sort of articles/subject have you particularly enjoyed? ■ Are there any you don't? ■ Do you have any other comments to make at all about T & A?

Big Ruthin Quiz

On April 8th, a number of RADCA members enjoyed a quiz on Ruthin & district, curated by Peter Daniels with questions set by Kathy Daniels, Peter Daniels, Harold Jones, Anne Roberts and Heather Williams. Here's just a selection. How well can you do? On the night, out of a possible 70 points, the highest score was 35.



- Who was the Princess of Pless?
- Which river rises near Graianrhyd?
- How many hillforts are there on the Clwydian Range?
- What is the link between the 1974 Backman Turner Overdrive hit single 'You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet' and Ruthin?
- Who wrote and recorded 'Where We Are', an album



Town & Around is published quarterly by the Ruthin & District Civic Association. It is available from Ruthin Library (when fully open) and on townandaround.org.uk. It is delivered free to Association members

We welcome articles, contributions, suggestions and letters, in Welsh or English

Please send them to the Secretary at cymru@clwyd.org or Coedlan, 25 Stryd y Brython, Ruthin, LL15 1JA

The deadline for the next edition is August 15th, 2021

Thanks are due to this quarter's contributors: Kathy Daniels, Peter Daniels, Bobby Feeley, Fiona Gale, Dilwyn Jones, Derek Jones, Harold Jones, Gwynne Morris, Victoria Ward and with the help of Liam Blazey, Ali Carter, Gavin Harris, Dorinda Kostravenglis and Rob Price

Views expressed by contributors are their own and neither necessarily reflect those of the Association nor those of their employer

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Ruthin & District Civic Association

- on the Well Street Records label?
- Were in town is this tractor, above?
 - When did Denbighshire introduce the X2 wheelie bin system in Ruthin?
 - Where is this best kept village, left, and what is its connection with Ruthin?

Join Ruthin & District Civic Association and help support our work and the production & distribution of Town & Around

Annual subscription rates are £10 (individual) or £15 (joint/family). If you are not sure if you are a paid up member, please check with the Treasurer.

The Association tries to help protect & enhance the outstanding market town of Ruthin and the areas nearby. Our main aims are to promote "civic pride" in the town and surrounding villages. We also aim to promote high standards in planning and encourage architectural excellence. We organise the annual Open Doors heritage weekends and the Quayle Awards.

(1) Name _____

(2) Name _____

Address _____

Telephone: _____ Email _____

I/We enclose a cheque for £10 or £15 (delete as appropriate) payable to Ruthin & District Civic Association. Please forward to Robert Williams, Hon. Treasurer, Lenton House, Mold Road, Ruthin LL15 1SL (tel 704998 / ruthincivic@btinternet.com)