

Town & Around O Gwmpas y Dre

Autumn 2025



NEWS, COMMENT & FEATURES FROM THE RUTHIN & DISTRICT CIVIC ASSOCIATION SINCE 2003

A sneak peek Open Doors in Ruthin

The Ruthin and District Civic Association has organised a free mini-Open Doors event. Normally, it co-ordinates a much larger event with a number of different properties open. With various UK funded projects originally planned to be carried out in Ruthin during the summer/autumn of 2025, (particularly in the St Peter's Square area), it was decided not to hold the usual event. However with the delayed schedule of works in the centre of Ruthin, the Civic Association has subsequently decided to open the doors of a couple of properties to see things which are usually hidden from public view.

The iconic Old Courthouse will be open on Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th September with various treasures on display, as well as interpretation panels about the building.

One of the objects which is now in the possession of the Town Council is the silver enamelled casket inscribed 'Mayor, Alderman and Burgess of Ruthin' presented to Sir William Jones in 1949, when he became one of the

last freeman of the Borough of Ruthin. He was considered to be one of the most



distinguished administrators in Welsh local government and played a significant role in the organisation of the 1939 Eisteddfod in Denbigh.

Also on display will be some lovely late 19th century paintings by the local artist Fred Walmsley, (son of the Governor of Ruthin Gaol) which includes the 'Old Myddleton Arms' given to the Council by Sir William Jones.

On Saturday 13th September there is an opportunity to see the Clock Tower, built to commemorate Joseph Peers and designed by renowned architect John Douglas. The Tower has recently been restored to its former glory and there is a unique opportunity to see inside the door of the tower. Short guided tours/talks will take place at the Clock Tower at 11am and 3.00pm. Copies of the book about the history and its restoration will be available for sale in the Old Courthouse.

Other properties, such as Rose Cottage and the Library will be open. To check any other properties see www.cadw.gov.wales/visit/whats-on/open-doors.

Speed & Heritage: Allies for Vibrant Communities

Two years after 20 mph, the Civic Association welcomes the results of county's speed review

Those of us who appreciate heritage and the quality of the built environment understand that preserving and enhancing these spaces is closely tied to how we use them. For residents, establishing appropriate speed limits is vital for protecting community health, improving safety, and fostering vibrant neighbourhoods and public spaces.

This summer, as directed by the Welsh Government, Denbighshire published its review of September 2023's blanket 20 mph zones.

We now know there will be no change. There was perhaps some surprise that the County Council didn't tackle 20 mph at the margins. Not for Denbighshire the more pragmatic view

on the trunk road A494 through Llanbedr or Gwyddelwern with their 30 mph buffers.

Not so, either, the apparent blanket 30 mph main road approach seemingly adopted in Wrexham. But much better 20 mph throughout than what's happened on some main roads where people live in Wrexham.

The civilising impact of 20 mph therefore continues... at least on paper.

There was general opprobrium unleashed in September 2023 when urban limits reduced to 20 mph. The one consistently positive message was that, of course, motorists accepted the appropriateness of 20 mph near schools. It sounded a little like a way of rationalising that 20 mph was most definitely inappropriate elsewhere.

Two years later, how have those statements about travelling 20 outside schools held up?

We have three schools on main roads. One is Ysgol Borthyn. Two are

opposite each other on Mold Road: Ysgol Brynhyfryd and Ruthin School. Ruthin School sees pupils walking towards town at any time and, for boarders, potentially seven days a week. As if to emphasise this, the footway was resurfaced this August.

During June and July 2025 (when the schools were in session), we undertook some simple surveys of traffic speeds at these locations. We don't pretend that the results were scientific (see 'How we Estimated Speeds', p6). But they do give an indication.

Traffic speeds on Rhos Street & Mold Road regularly exceeded 20 mph. We estimated that fewer than 10 per cent of motorists travel at 20 or less. That percentage improves if you allow a couple of miles per hour over the 20 limit: 29 per cent of traffic was recorded

Continued on p 6

Revitalising Ruthin: A Call to Action

Ruthin is currently facing a significant challenge concerning footfall, a situation that has persisted for quite some time. The impact of covid has been profound and, like many towns across the UK, we are still grappling with the aftermath. However, while there is no simple solution to this dilemma, it is imperative that we engage in thoughtful discussions to address it.

The Power of Collaboration

I firmly believe that by uniting our efforts, we can make substantial strides toward revitalising our town. Local councils, businesses and residents all play a crucial role in this endeavour. Together, we can create a vibrant community that attracts visitors and supports local enterprises. That is the power of collaboration.

Rethinking Our Marketing Strategy

In today’s digital age, traditional methods like leafleting are losing their effectiveness. While they still have a place, their impact is limited. What we truly need are two things. First, a dynamic, user-friendly website that

showcases everything Ruthin has to offer. Secondly, this should be complemented by an active presence on all relevant social media platforms, which are not only cost-effective but also essential for reaching a wider audience. This would include more You Tube these days and even Tik Tok content.

Marketing is vital, and we must elevate our game in this area. Each of us can contribute by sharing posts that promote local events and initiatives from our businesses. This collective effort can amplify our message and draw more visitors to our town.

I’m also excited to highlight some recent initiatives that are already making a difference. For instance, Ruthin Castle has again introduced a package for guests that includes free entry to Ruthin Gaol. This initiative has proven beneficial and, this season, it has expanded to include entry to Nantclwyd y Dre as an option. Such collaborations not only enhance the visitor experience but also support local businesses.

Additionally, Ruthin Castle is now offering its guests access to Ruthin/Pwllglas Golf Club. This is an excellent idea that I hope will foster mutual benefits for both the castle and the golf club, further enriching our community’s offerings.



A Call for Community Engagement

Working together in these innovative ways can truly make a difference. I urge everyone to consider how we can collectively enhance Ruthin’s appeal. Our town has so much to offer and it’s time we let the world know about it.

I would love to hear your thoughts on this matter. Please feel free to reach out and share your ideas. Together, we can create a brighter future for Ruthin, benefiting both residents and visitors alike.

Anne Roberts MBE
Chair of the Civic Association

■ Bro Rhuthun, below

From Grass Roots to Greatness: Ruthin’s Tourism Vision

Bro Rhuthun is long-standing though till recently dormant organisation aimed at promoting Ruthun. It wishes to develop into a grass roots initiative driven by local volunteers dedicated to establishing a sustainable tourism model that benefits residents, supports local businesses, and enhances the town’s appeal as a vibrant destination. Central to this initiative is the belief that tourism should be shaped by locals.

Ruthin boasts popular events like Open Doors, the Gŵyl Rhuthun Festival, and the Christmas Extravaganza, alongside attractions such as Nantclwyd y Dre, Craft Centre and The Gaol. However, challenges like low footfall, negative perceptions, and the expected public realm capital works threaten the local economy’s vitality. Bro Rhuthun places local residents at the heart of tourism development, identifying three visitor groups (local, day, and overnight) each contributing uniquely to the tourism environment.

Initial efforts included community workshops in July that produced asset maps highlighting the town’s strengths, leading to four priority initiatives:

- Celebrating the Welsh language and cultural identity
- Updating trails,
- Developing a central Bro Rhuthun website,



- and
- Hosting regular events to draw people into the town centre.

Collaboration is key to Bro Rhuthun’s strategy, involving local businesses, public sectors, and local organisations. The group has received initial support from the National Lottery Community Fund and the Town Council, and is pursuing further funding. They seek practical support, including printing, website development, and a town-wide events calendar.

More challenging might be other ideas, such as relaunching a Ruthin Town Gift Card scheme to encourage local spending. This was twice tried in the recent past, in two guises and one in particular was considered a success.

Intangible Tourism: are we missing a trick?

Ruthin’s intangible tourism is richly vocal and linguistic: a town where song, speech and memory form a real attraction. Well Street even claims a tangible link to national culture: Isaac Clarke’s Ruthin press (rear Siop Nain) is credited as the earliest printings of Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau, giving the town a place in Wales’s national story.

A quieter, reflective draw nearby is the resting place of Emrys ap Iwan (Robert Ambrose Jones), the influential 19th-century Welsh literary critic, minister and advocate for the language.

The district’s soundscape is completed by a variety of Welsh-language choirs and singing groups. The local choral tradition remains strong.

Crucially, language use underpins the whole offer: around half the population use Welsh in everyday life, so encounters at cafés, festivals and shops are often bilingual and rooted in daily practice. A visit to the farmers’ market reinforces this.

Finally, Gŵyl Rhuthun crowns this intangible map: a week of music, community stages and cultural celebration that showcases the town’s living Welsh traditions and invites visitors to hear, speak and join in.

Ruthin Rejuvenation ‘Labour of Love’?

by Heather Williams

One of the Civic Association members spotted an article in a recent edition of North Wales Magazine. It was about Mike Hall, a Ruthin-raised business man, who said he wanted to put the picturesque Welsh market town back on the map. He says love and loyalty are behind his ambitious drive to breathe new life into the town.

Mike Hall grew up in the town and then qualified as a chartered accountant. In 2006, he formed the building company G Parry Home Improvements Ltd with a business partner before buying his partner out. He now owns this and a number of other companies and, along with other members of his family, Oliver Bell Ltd. Over the last ten years, he has used profits from his building company to buy and renovate a number of properties in the town, including bars, restaurants and residential properties, some of which are homes for local people to rent, while others are luxury Airbnbs. This has included a number of key sites around St Peter’s Square where his vans can often be spotted.

Hall says his vision is to make Ruthin a place where people will want to remain, settle or visit, with the ultimate goal to be part of the town’s regeneration, providing an attractive range of venues and facilities for residents and visitors to enjoy. He created a restaurant in the distinctive listed pink building No. 11 Ruthin in St Peter’s Square which, in early August, was revamped with a relaunch of a new seafood menu.

Last November, the latest re-creation of the restaurant at 1 Upper Clwyd Street was unveiled as Jacques Wine Bar, with

a wide selection of wines to accompany steak and frites to create a Parisian-style atmosphere in Ruthin. Café Grande, on the corner of St Peter’s Square, serves hot and cold drinks, and maybe an Italian restaurant will be created soon in the premises next door soon, for which plans were submitted to Denbighshire.

Mike Hall said ‘We want to make Ruthin great again. It’s as simple as that. We need to attract more people to come and spend their time in Ruthin and, when they do come, we need to provide things for them to do and places for them to go. I’m just trying to do my little bit’.

While Hall’s passion for revitalising Ruthin is commendable, it would appear to be challenging for a company to own and renovate a number of properties in the town, as well as doing work elsewhere. Regeneration of the town can be assisted by others being involved.

Interestingly enough, the Myddleton Arms/Seven Eyes (most recently known as the Myddleton Grill) was bought by G Parry Home Improvements Ltd and work was carried out to the building in 2023 but then worked halted. However, at the end of July it was sold to Stange & Co. This family company owns a number of pubs on the Wirral and in North Wales, such as the Cottage Loaf in Llandudno,



A new lease of life with Stange & Co?

and it is now refurbishing Brookhouse Mill in Denbigh. We can expect the Myd to reopen in about one year.

Dan McLennan, Managing Director of the Stange & Co said, ‘The building [Myddleton Arms] came onto our radar a few months ago and, with so much history and character, it felt like a natural fit for the Stange family. Ruthin is somewhere we’ve admired for years and we have always been on the lookout for a pub there. I’m always drawn to old pubs that are a little bit down on their luck but with some investment can be made the thriving heart of the community again and an asset to the local area’.

We’ll certainly drink to that – and hope the new offers of places to eat and drink will come to fruition to help regenerate the heart of Ruthin.

Ruthin’s Green Team: calling all new recruits

The future of Ruthin’s Friends of the Earth depends on garnering new members and on succession planning, according to its chairman, Dr Richard Barry.

Speaking at FOE’s AGM, he outlined the work of the group, from intervening regarding single use plastics to monitoring water quality, and responding to the Flintshire consultation on a revived A494/A550 Deeside red route.

Friends of the Earth Ruthin joined with the Civic Association and the Festival Association in successfully raising concerns about the way the Square public realm works were developing.

A lack of interest outside Ruthin regarding the Ruthin-led Denbighshire Environmental Alliance that called out Denbighshire’s climate change actions has resulted i the initiative ceasing.

The monthly Repair Café was nevertheless reported as a continued success, with a combined fix and advice rate of 84 per cent of the 395 items presented to them.

21st Century Ruthin

Drawing on his work for the Civic Association and his extensive diaries and notes, this autumn our Mayor Peter Daniels launches his second book, ‘21st Century Ruthin’.

100 per cent of the proceeds after production costs will go to the Mayor’s charities 2025/26.

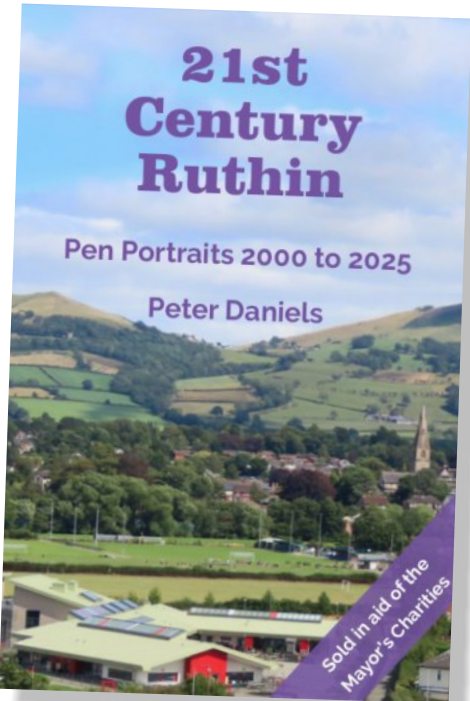
Within are a series of pen portraits on Ruthin 2000 to 2025, a period of unprecedented change. Topics include health, housing, education, shopping, travel, media, government... and more.

This is a limited edition print run. When it’s gone, it’s gone (as they say).

If you would like to reserve a copy, please email the author using hiraethog@clwyd.org

■ £12. c. 40,000 words. Published by Llyfrau Hiraethog, 86pp, ISBN 978-1-9192067-0-7

■ All proceeds to the Mayor’s charities: the Denbighshire & Conwy Stroke Association; Vale of Clwyd MIND; and Transforming Lives for Good



Stop the Clocks!

Liz Williams clearly has time on her hands...

So said W. H. Auden in his famous 'Funeral Blues' poem. Over the summer, it looked like we had taken his instructions literally. The Marschallin in Strauss's comic opera Der Rosenkavalier also stopped all the clocks because she didn't like the idea of time passing and of growing old.

All this is OK in our cultural entertainments but in reality it's a different matter. Here in Ruthin, it seems our clock on the Peers Memorial has not been as important as the Elizabethan clock tower of Westminster. When Big Ben stopped at 9 a.m. on April 24th, 2024, it was functioning correctly again 70 minutes later the very same day, back to doing the important job of telling us the time.

And so to our beautiful Peers Memorial clock tower was restored to perfection on August 26th, 2025, much to the delight of all who pass that way. This clock stopped for several weeks... and the three faces of St Peter's Church clock have stopped working, too.

So, time really does stand still in Ruthin!

Time usually 'stands still' (or seems to) when a moment feels exceptionally significant, intense, or emotionally charged. Then, time seems to be irrelevant or goes unnoticed. I haven't observed such a phenomenon yet, but who knows what the future will bring.

Of course, this saying is figurative, and we have to get back to the practicalities of modern life: our imminent mini-Ruthin Open Doors weekend on September 13th and 14th is



not far away. As the first Open Doors item will be opening the inspection cover door to the north side of the Peers Memorial clock tower for all to see and admire the new internal workings of the clock, it's as well that the clock was finally repaired on August 26th... in the nick of time!

There is joy in the clever timepiece, judging by the people who stop to admire this monument. This will be evident at the Open Doors weekend.

Back to the clocks on the spire of St Peter's. These are believed to have been installed as a memorial to those lost in the Second World War. There's doubt as to who exactly is responsible for it. At one stage, successors to the Borough Council (the County Council) were maintaining the clock. But alas! no one seems to be able to tackle it and this will require a lot more consideration before they can be restored.

It surprises me how often in the digital world I look at the time on these clocks.. at least that on the Peers Memorial is now fixed.

Must go now. Tempus fugit & all that.

■ Times of viewing are Saturday, September 13th, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The tours are at 11:00 a.m. and 3 p.m. for all to enjoy

'Time' for the T51

There's no stopping the improved bus service T51 that links Ruthin to Wrexham and Rhyl. The Cabinet Secretary formally announced the changes at Wrexham's Eisteddfod last month. We can expect the restoration of an hourly service to Wrexham last seen in 2020 and a Sunday service, too. And, when built, brand new buses to full Traws Cymru® specifications.

Revisions start on September 28th.

But look at the front of the TFW T51 timetable leaflet. Featured are the very two clocks to which Liz Williams refers, left, including the stunning restoration to the Peers Memorial.

And, the photographer caught them while they were both working and showing the same time!

The photo on the timetable front, which will be available throughout the route and indeed throughout Wales, is credited to our own Town Council.



Park Your Worries: Ruthin's Happy Hour is Here

Orders published in the Free Press on September 3rd confirm Ruthin Town Council is set to launch an exciting initiative aimed at encouraging both residents and visitors to spend more time in the picturesque town.

Starting September 28th, 2025, the Town Council will sponsor a one-year pilot offering an hour's free parking in three car parks: Dog Lane, Park Road, and Crispin Yard.

This initiative comes at a crucial time, as it coincides with the festive season and, later, the anticipated disruptions to local businesses due to public realm works scheduled to begin in early 2026. The Town Council hopes that by providing free parking, they can mitigate

some of the challenges faced by businesses during this period and enhance the overall experience for those exploring Ruthin.

This pilot scheme reflects the Town Council's commitment to fostering a thriving town centre and supporting the economic recovery of the community.

One hours free parking will be available daily from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m, allowing one visit per car each day. However, motorists will still need to obtain a ticket or reserve their hour of free parking via the PayByPhone



app, entering their vehicle registration number to do so.

While this initiative is a welcome addition, it's important to note that other town centre car parks will remain chargeable during the same hours.

As the pilot progresses, the Town Council will review its effectiveness, hoping to see a positive impact on both the local economy and the community's engagement with the town.

Conditions apply.

■ 20 Years Ago, p7

Levelling Updates this September

In Town...

The St Peter's Square project is currently still in the design agreement stage, with construction now anticipated to start in April 2026 and conclude in the winter months of 2027. This start date will come as a surprise but we are assured that funding will continue to be available, in spite of the much later-than-first-anticipated commencement.

Plans are to begin work on adjoining streets first, so that the summer Gŵyl Rhuthun Festival Top Dre (Top of Town) event 2026 can take place. Work on the Square itself will commence directly after the festival as practical.

Previously, there had been a question mark over the festival. That is now secured for 2026.

Following some negotiations (including with the Civic Association), obstructive trees on the Square will be

planted elsewhere.

St Peter's Church is now expected to be complete in December 2025 and not in October, as previously believed.

Meanwhile, the front of the Gaol at 46 Clwyd Street is also a live project, with much of the construction works expected between September and December 2025. The project at Nantclwyd y Dre is also set to begin in September 2025 with an anticipated completion by March 2026. So, nicely in time for the summer season, then.

The Cae Ddôl project is subject to planning applications, with construction expected to start in April 2026 and end by July 2026.

... and Around

The controversial Moel Famau Visitor Hub was given planning permission. The start date for construction has not yet

been announced. Construction of the Bryneglwys community hub began in August 2024 and is nearing completion.

Work is expected to start at the Gwyddelwern community hub in December 2025 and completion is expected in September 2026.

At Loggerheads Country Park, following some now completed flood prevention work this year, Denbighshire expects to start some significant enhancements following an additional £11m from the UK government.

This work has proven to be controversial, following the announced closure of the Café Florence operator at Loggerheads. Plans nevertheless include refurbishing the café, lavatories, visitor centre and café; and upgrading external landscaping to promote sustainability, including solar panels. Work will likely complete in March 2026. Loggerheads will remain open.

Eisteddfod ar y Gorwel?

gan Peter Daniels

Y newyddion da yw mai Sir Ddinbych sydd yn debygol o fod yn gartref i'r Eisteddfod Genedlaethol yn 2029. Waeth ble cynhelir y brifwyl, bydd hon yn foment fawr i'r Sir. Er ei fod yn ddyddiau cynnar iawn, mae'r union safle ar gyfer Maes yr Eisteddfod o fewn y sir bellach yn fater o ddirlgelwch a dyfalu.

A oes cyfle i Ruthun a'r fro fod yn gartref i'r Eisteddfod? Rhaid bod achos cryf. Cynhaliodd y dref yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol ddiwethaf yn ôl yn 1973 (a cyn hynny yn 1868) – felly gellir dweud ei fod yn hen bryd i'r Eisteddfod ddychwelyd i Ruthun.

Mae Dinbych, ar y llaw arall, wedi cynnal yr Eisteddfod bedair gwaith (gan gynnwys y ddwywaith diwethaf i'r Eisteddfod ddod i'r sir yn 2001 a 2013) a'r Wyddgrug (nid yn Sir Ddinbych wrth gwrs!) bedwar gwaith hefyd. Mae ardal arfordirol sir Ddinbych wedi cael yr anrhydedd bum gwaith, gan gynnwys Rhyl yn 1985. Mae ardal Wrecsam, lleoliad y brifwyl yn 2025, wedi bod yn gartref i'r Eisteddfod saith gwaith. Ni ellir amau y buddion economaidd a diwylliannol y mae'r Eisteddfod yn roi i'r dref letyol.

O ran yr ymgyrch leol i godi arian ar gyfer yr Eisteddfod pam mae hi wedi ymweld a Sir Ddinbych, gofynnir bob amser i Rhuthun gyfrannu'n sylweddol tuag y Gronfa ac mae'r dref o hyd wedi bod yn barod iawn i wneud hynny. Ond eto ar gyfer Eisteddfod Dinbych yn 2013, bu'n rhaid i Ruthun godi tair gwaith targed codi arian Prestatyn, ond eto mae gan Prestatyn dros dair

gwaith poblogaeth Rhuthun.

Felly, mae gennym y parodrwydd, mae gennym y tir amaethyddol yn yr ardal, ac rydym wedi bod yn aros yn amyneddgar ers 1973 am i'r Eisteddfod ddychwelyd i Ruthun. Yr hyn sydd ei angen rwan yw archwilio a all cais fod yn ymarferol.

Lluniau: rhai busnesau lleol o Ruthun ar y Maes yn Wrecsam, ym mis Awst eleni: Ceffi, Becws Islyn; a stondin ar y cyd efo Bethan M Hughes



Memories of Canolfan Awelon: The Centre That Brought People Together

Following the well-received article on Awelon and Llys Awelon in the Spring issue, Cyril Jones continues, this time concentrating on the Awelon Day Centre

Awelon was opened in March 1970 by historic Denbighshire County Council as a centre for disabled people. The reminiscences of Mr Ken Pimlett give a detailed view of all the activities which were held between 1980 and 1995. He was appointed to manage the centre as a social worker in the mornings and to organise a series of events each afternoon from Monday to Friday. He was provided with two ambulances to carry people there.

The Monday club organised by Mrs Blodwen Davies assisted the elderly with mobility problems. Tuesday was to assist patients with their mental health



Inside a packed Canolfan Awelon Centre for the May 2017 Westminster hustings

after the closure of Denbigh Mental Hospital (as it was called).

On Wednesday, the Ruthin Women's Institute held a club for senior citizens. On Thursday, the Red Cross organised various activities. Meanwhile, on Friday, some former patients of Denbigh Hospital held their weekly club meeting.

Nancy Ketteringham worked at the centre as the manager and instructor in embroidery, painting and weaving. As a result, the centre was full each afternoon and the ambulances brought people there from the outlying areas.

Also on alternate winter Saturdays, the Denbighshire Historical Society held lectures. The Ruthin Welsh Society held their monthly meetings. Fund raising events were held by organisations, such as the Friends of Ruthin Hospital, and included strawberry afternoon teas.

After 1995, the Denbighshire Welfare Committee ended the employment of Ken Pimlett at the centre and, from there on, he worked full time in the community.

The Awelon Centre 1995 to 2020

The centre was closed from 1995 to 1997. Then a number of individuals developed plans to take over the centre from the County Council. After a series of public meetings, they secured a 99-year lease from the new Denbighshire. They established a registered charity and formed a limited company, administered by a management committee

representing various organisations. The committee met each month and records are kept at the archive office in Ruthin, with formal minutes from December 2000 to until March 2020.

The committee was made up of representatives of the various organisations and activities held at the centre.

The committee employed Mrs Vera Jones to arrange bookings and to clean the premises. The charge for bookings was £30 for morning and afternoon sessions.

The long list of activities is a tribute to the hard work of the committee over the subsequent 25 years. These included:

- Drawing twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- The nursery group twice each week.
- Tai chi
- Merched y Wawr meetings
- Darby and Joan
- Dancing classes
- Indoor bowling
- Services such as NHS blood donation
- Local and general elections and by-elections
- MPs and Senedd assistance meetings
- The Society of Friends meetings
- Meetings to fold and pack Y Bedol
- Coleg Llysfasi also organised a computer room with instruction classes.

The wide ranging and popular activities continued until early in 2020 when the site was required for the second stage of the Llys Awelon flats. This involved the closure and demolition of the former retirement home, Awelon, and the Awelon Centre.

The hopes of the committee that an alternative place could be found were disappointed and the Awelon Centre closed. It can only be hoped that some of the facilities lost may be replaced with access to the present Llys Awelon buildings.

20 mph

From p1

at approximately 22 or 23 miles per hour (a speed of about 10 per cent over the limit) or less.

However, about a third of traffic travelled at between 27 to 40 miles per hour. As many motorists went over 40 as travelled at 20. The highest speed seen was just under 50 mph. People who live on Mold Road have said that there are some travelling in their opinion above 50.

Traffic speeds on Borthyn were lower. This was thanks to the appreciably more urban 'feel' to the area than on Mold Road. There were junctions, a zebra crossing and parked cars causing heavy vehicles and those

following to slow because of constraints.

Nevertheless, at or near school times, a third were driving at between mid-20s to 30 mph. But over a third were estimated at 20 or less.

Traffic speeds could easily be mitigated at this location by the construction of a suitable speed table deflection.

Our conclusion was simple: that motorists do not perceive the safety benefit of 20 outside schools, even though they would say they do.

What of speeds more generally in Ruthin, on main roads, distributor roads and residential roads away from schools? Again, this was not scientific. A longer-term study, however, suggests that 20 per cent of traffic keeps to 20 mph and 80 percent or four-fifths do not.

How did we estimate speeds?

We don't have access to radars, traffic counter boxes or carriageway air tubes. We cannot therefore monitor speeds accurately.

The best we can do, therefore, is measure as precisely as possible over as long a distance as possible and using a stopwatch record the time a vehicle passes between two landmarks. This gives us an indication of traffic speeds.

Counts near schools took place at the shoulders of peak periods. Counts elsewhere were over a variety of times and days.

Seen in Passing...



Over the summer, The Old Courthouse has housed three successful exhibitions, one art, one photographic, and the most surprising, poems-plus-artwork associated with the squirrels of Clocaenog Forest. As regards the last, we did, however, find the signage at the entrance amusing. The wording 'Red Squirrel Poetry Exhibition' kinda implied the red rodents themselves had written the compositions. Perhaps they were pondering their own existential crisis in verse. Not that the red squirrel project is struggling.

**THERE'S NO REASON TO
TAILGATE ME WHEN I'M
DOING 50 IN A 30**

We featured traffic speeds on page 1. We saw the words above on the rear of a vehicle in Wynnstay Road. Of course, they made us smile. But we also wondered why attitudes to speed are so poor. Inconsistent enforcement must be one reason. But mainly we suspect drivers perceive speeding as a minor infraction. Speeding's become normalised. And it's 20 mph around these parts by the way!



We also mention bee-friendly meadows and verges. This August, it appeared that the County Council was mowing meadowland rather early, as seen here on the roundabout at the entrance to the Glasdir housing estate. This in spite of late flowering plants still in bloom for an abundance of pollinators. But it seems that some sites were deliberately cut earlier than usual to support their establishment where they need

additional help.



Over the summer, the play ship in Cae Ddôl was removed as part of some improvements. The Centre, Llanfwrog, expressed an interest in the central climbing section.



Take a stroll along the cul de sac off Lôn Parcwr beyond the waste site and towards the water works and you will see this modest collection of veteran buses parked in a lock up adjacent to the former GHA Coaches site. Given the attempts at various times to promote Ruthin as a wedding venue, we wondered if these might complement our chapels, churches and secular venues in town by offering transport.



This summer, there have been some interesting developments at Nantclwyd y Dre. First, the rear of the building was painted up, seen here.



20 Years Ago

The County Council approved permission for Tesco to build in Ruthin.

During this period, there were many conversations about the impact on the town centre, especially regarding the free parking Tesco would inevitably offer. This was versus charging in car parks in town.

Conversations proliferated. Traders were alarmed at the impact free parking at Tesco would have. They feared people would patronise Tesco and that no one would venture into town, where parking charges would be off-putting. Where was the incentive?

As a result, pressure began to mount to try to persuade the County Council to offer at least some free parking in town centre car parks. Businesses also pointed to free parking at Broughton and much cheaper parking at Mold.

Meanwhile, the Federation of Small Businesses produced some grim statistics concerning Abergelle's new Tesco (which opened its doors in 2003). Not only did post-Tesco traffic management cause significant congestion, apparently businesses there said that trade was more than 40 per cent down, 10 businesses were now up for sale, and there were seven empty shops. 'The new store [in Ruthin] would cause decay in the town centre and impact on the quality of life for residents', the FSB concluded.

On the other hand, the delightfully-named Tesco spokesman Keith Nutter said, 'A Tesco would attract people back to Ruthin to shop'.

More importantly, however, Nantclwyd y Dre has joined historichouses.org. That's a collection of over 1,450 properties open to members of Historic Houses. For them Nantclwyd is free. We trust this will drive footfall to Nantclwyd y Dre. After all, rightly or wrongly, everything these days is measured as such.



The town is getting more colourful, for good or ill. The Wayfarer wool shop celebrated its 60 years of trading with a mute heritage sage. But John Jones butchers took a more vibrant stance.

Civic Association Annual Report 2024/25

Between September 2024 and July 2025, the Ruthin & District Civic Association again focused on strengthening its role in heritage and local development issues. Membership of the Association grew steadily, reaching 96 by early 2025, and the organisation maintained a healthy financial position, with balances generally around £7,000.

Some changes to the committee were agreed, with Heather Williams confirmed as Secretary (albeit temporarily) and Peter Daniels becoming Vice-chair (again temporarily). Rob Price stepped back owing to work pressures, while we welcomed back Liz Williams to the committee.

Heritage projects remained central to the Association's work. In recognition of the town's Peers Memorial working group and the work of our Secretary, Heather Williams and her booklet, we nominated the project for a Civic Trust Conservation Award.

The annual Quayle Award was discussed at length, with potential nominees including Llanbenwch Café, Coleg Llysfas's Innovation Hub, and the Clock Tower itself.

The Association also raised concerns about the neglected condition of several town properties, including Sir John Trevor House, empty shops on Clwyd Street, and inappropriate signage in the conservation area. Sadly, this doesn't seem to be a high priority for the County Council staff, owing to a considerable backlog.

A major theme of the year, of course, was the UK Government's Levelling Up programme. St Peter's Church closed in January 2025 to allow refurbishment works to begin, while projects at Nantclwyd y Dre, 46

Clwyd Street (the old Gaol), and Cae Ddol moved forward at different stages. The Civic Association has been party to communications and discussions about the finish of the Square.

In fact, we voiced our concerns quite forcefully on the subject of trees on the Square; and regarding the balance between cars parking & moving and pedestrians & the streetscape. We concluded that compromise was a key ingredient. The Civic Association continued to press for community involvement in shaping these developments.

The Association also delivered and planned events to engage members and the public. The 2024 AGM included a Christmas social and talk on the potential National Park, while in July 2025 we organised a well-publicised and attended 'Discover Ruthin's Hidden Heritage' presentation at Nantclwyd y Dre as part of the Ruthin Festival. Open Doors 2024 had been delivered successfully and under budget, with some new premises taking part.

That for 2025 is a different matter, of course. Open Doors takes much planning. We start in the preceding February. At that time, there was the real prospect of the Levelling Up work starting that very September, just as Open Doors would be in full swing. We cancelled, only to learn later that Levelling Up was postponed till April 2026 (potentially blighting Open Doors 2026! But we'd rather have the public realm works completed). In a short time, we have been able to offer at least something on September 13th and 14th and my thanks go to those involved, particularly Heather Williams.

The Town and Around journal

continued to be the most tangible part of the Civic Association's work, with its usual diverse mix of interesting & relevant articles and news items. This is now generally accepted by those who read it as an important part of the local community, with much praise from members and non-members alike. May I warmly thank the contributors and in particular editor Peter Daniels who has the task of stitching together the articles and photos.

The full archive of issues since 2004 was digitised during the year ready to be made available online in due course. Members and others responded positively to recent editions.

It's become a tradition for me to count the number of words published in Town & Around each year and 2024/25 it was 41,000.

Overall, this period saw Civic Association consolidate its finances and membership while remaining active in safeguarding as best it can Ruthin's built heritage, contributing to major development discussions, and providing cultural and historical resources for the community.

I thank the 2024/25 Committee for their help, support and contributions during the year. At the close of the Civic Association year, they were Anne Roberts (Chair), Peter Daniels (Vice-chair), Robert Williams (Hon. Treasurer), Heather Williams (Secretary), Steve Beach, Kay Culhane, Kathy Daniels, Menna Jones and Liz Williams.

Last but certainly not least, may I also thank our members for their continued and valued support.

Anne Roberts MBE
Chair of the Civic Association 2024/25

Membership & Subscription Information for 2025/26

Subscriptions to the Association for the year 2024 to 2025 fall due on September 1st.

We are again pleased to announce that, despite rising costs, they will remain at the same level of £10 for individuals and £15 for joint/family membership.

This means that they will have remained at the same level for the previous 12 years.

In order to mitigate the new bank charges imposed on us by the HSBC, if you are able to pay your subscription either by standing order or direct bank

transfer then that would be helpful. However, we do understand that not all members would wish to do this and therefore we are still more than happy to receive subscriptions by cheque.

The membership application form can be found opposite. This is for use by both existing members who do not yet pay by standing order and for any prospective new members who would like to join the Civic Association.

Please return to the Honorary Treasurer, RADCA, Lenton House, Mold Road, Ruthin, LL15 1SL.

For any queries please email the Treasurer at: ruthincivic@btinternet or Ruthin 704998.

Regarding our **data protection policy**, may we draw members' attention to the notice on our website. There is no change to it.

Notice of AGM 2025

The Civic Association 2025 Annual General Meeting will be held on **October 15th at 2.30 p.m.** at The Old Courthouse, Ruthin. We shall send the minutes of the 2024 AGM as usual by email.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held December 12th, 2024
3. Matters Arising
4. Chair's Annual Report (above)
5. Treasurer's Report & Accounts
6. Election of Officers & Committee 2025/26
7. Any Other Business
8. Guest Speaker: Fiona Gale

Cymdeithas Ddinesig Rhuthun a'r Cylch (CDdRAC)

Tanysgriafiad Aelodaeth Blynnyddol (1af Medi i 31ain Awst) - Unigolyn: £10 Dau/Teulu: £15

(1) Teitl:..... Enw.....Cyfenw:.....

(2) Tieitl:.....EnwCyfenw:.....

Cyfeiriad:..... Cód Post:.....

Ffôn:.....Ebost:.....

Rwyf/Rydym yn dymuno ymuno â CDRAC – Ticiwch/dileu’r canlynol yn ôl yr angen:

Rwyf/Rydym wedi gwneud trosglwyddiad banc o £10/£15 ar gyfer y flwyddyn bresennol.....

Rwyf/Rydym wedi sefydlu archeb sefydlog flynyddol o £10/£15 ar gyfer y blynnyddoedd i ddod yn ddaladwy ar Medi 1af bob blwyddyn.....

I: Ruthin & District Civic Association – A/c HSBC, Rhuthun

Cód Didoli: 40-39-16 A/c: 81137514 – Defnyddiwch eich cód post fel cyfeirnod.

NEU: Rwyf/Rydym yn amgau siec (neu arian parod) am £10/£15 yn daladwy I Cymdeithas Ddinesig Rhuthun A’r Cylch – anfoner i:

R H Williams, Trysorydd, CDRAC, Lenton House, Mold Road, Rhuthun LL15 1SL

Cymorth Rhodd/Giftaid eich taliad (dewisol)

Rwyf/Rydym yn talu treth y DU ac yn dymuno i’r taliad ac unrhyw daliad a wneir yn y blyn ddoedd I ddod neu a wnaed yn y 4 blynedd diwethaf fod yn Gymorth Rhodd. Rwyf/Rydym yn deall os byddaf/byddwn yn talu llai o Dreth Incwm a/neu Dreth Enillion Cyfalaf na swm y Cymorth Rhodd a hawliwyd yn y flwyddyn honno, mai fy nghyfrifoldeb I/ni yw talu unrhyw wahaniaeth.

Elusen Gofrestredig 702203

Ruthin & District Civic Association (RADCA)

Annual Membership Subscription (1st September to 31st August) – Individual: £10 Joint/Family: £15

(1) Title:..... Name:.....Surname:.....

(2) Title:..... Name:.....Surname:.....

Address:.....Post Code:.....

Telephone:.....Email:.....

I/We wish to join RADCA - Please tick/delete the following as appropriate:

I/We have made a bank transfer of £10/£15 for the present year.....

I/We have set up an annual standing order of £10/£15 for future years payable on 1st September each year.....

To: Ruthin & District Civic Association – A/c HSBC, Ruthin

Sort Code: 40-39-16 A/c: 81137514 – Please use your postcode as reference.

OR: I/We enclose cheque (or cash) for £10/£15 payable to Ruthin & District Civic Association - send to:

R H Williams, Treasurer RADCA, Lenton House, Mold Road, Ruthin LL15 1SL

Giftaid your payment (optional)

I/We pay UK tax and wish payment and any payment made in future years or which have been made in the past 4 years to be Giftaided. I/we understand that if I/we pay less Income and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Giftaid claimed in that year it is my/our responsibility to pay any difference.

Registered Charity No. 702203

Time to Discover John Douglas's Buildings in Wales

by Heather Williams

During his lifetime, John Douglas designed more than 500 buildings in Wales, Cheshire and other parts of mainly north-west England, with well over 70 of these in North Wales. Examples of his work found in North Wales include notable buildings in the west, such as St Deiniol's Church in Criccieth (1884-7), St John the Divine Church in Barmouth (1889-95), and the half-timbered Glan Gwna Hall in Caernarfon (1893) built for the wealthy slate quarry owner J.E. Greaves. However, generally Douglas's more significant works are further east.

Douglas attracted commissions from wealthy patrons from an early stage in his career. His most important patrons were the large landowners, particularly the wealthy Grosvenor family of Eaton Hall near Chester. Hugh Grosvenor, the first Duke of Westminster became his principal patron. Thus Douglas designed many buildings on the Eaton estate, such as distinctive brick cottages and churches. This patronage probably helped Douglas to get work from other wealthy landowners in the area.

The Grosvenor family owned an extensive estate and mineral rights in the Halkyn area of Flintshire. The Duke of Westminster commissioned Douglas to design the church of St Mary the Virgin at Halkyn, built in 1878, when the old church on a different site was demolished. The design is a Gothic Revival style with its mixture of Early English and Decorated architecture. The four-bay nave church is not large but it was costly with ashlar (cut and dressed stone) both externally and internally. Inside the high quality woodwork designed by Douglas can be seen, in particular in the choir stalls which include

sunflower motifs. Edward Hubbard, an architectural historian, considered the church to be one of the best Victorian churches in Clwyd and it influenced the subsequent development of other Late Victorian Gothic churches which Douglas designed.

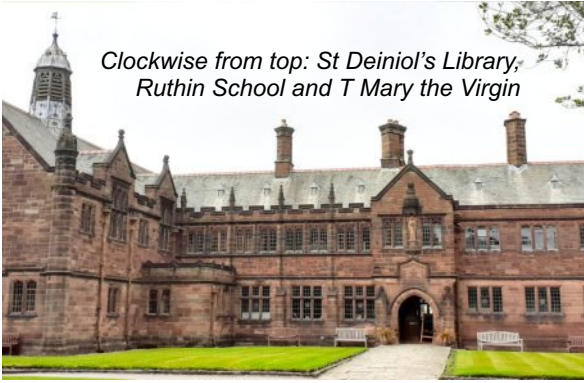
The Diamond Jubilee Memorial Clock (1899) in Eastgate Street, Chester, which was built to celebrate Queen Victoria's sixty years on the throne, is one of Douglas's best known

works. However, this was not the only clock which John Douglas designed to commemorate a person. He was responsible for two other clock towers in Wales, one the Peers Memorial Clock Tower (1883) in Ruthin and the other the Rayner Memorial Clock Tower (1902) in Llangefni, Anglesey.

In Ruthin, most likely owing to his connection with William Cornwallis-West, Douglas was responsible for designing two houses at the bottom of Bryn Goodman (1886) and the relocated Ruthin School (1889-1892) on Mold Road. Interestingly, Douglas used a very similar design for a competition he won in 1888 for the Friars School, Bangor that was opened in 1900, both the schools being constructed in the Elizabethan style.

Another building of particular note is St Deiniol's Library in Hawarden, Flintshire, also known as the Gladstone Library (Britain's only prime ministerial library). The library was commissioned after the death of William Gladstone in 1898 to accommodate his significant collection of over 30,000 books. The Gladstone

Clockwise from top: St Deiniol's Library, Ruthin School and T Mary the Virgin



National Memorial Committee, chaired by the Duke of Westminster, was set up to administer the building of the library. As Chairman, he probably influenced the choice of Douglas as architect.

As well as the library, a further accommodation wing was added for students and visitors using the facilities. The firm Douglas and Minshall was appointed to design the building, built from 1899 to 1906. The plan is roughly H-shape in format, in a mixture of Elizabethan and Jacobean style, using red sandstone and green slate. The main Library in a five-bay hall with an open timber roof and finely carved woodwork provides a stunning setting to study.

It was Douglas's only commission for a major public building and was a suitable pinnacle of his professional career towards the end of his life. The building is listed Grade I for the national importance of its historical associations with W E Gladstone.

Douglas received relatively little national or international recognition during his lifetime. However, his contribution and influence was recognised later as a truly vernacular architect ahead of his time.



Local Artists Showcase in September

This September, the rich creative spirit of the Vale of Clwyd will be on full display as a group of local artists invites the public to experience their work in a vibrant two-day exhibition. On Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th September 2025, at Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd Village Hall, LL15 1UP, from 11 a.m. to 5 pm, the Vale of Clwyd Artists, a close-knit group of friends, will be sharing their artistic journeys with the community.

Hailing from the Denbigh and Ruthin area, these talented women, Patricia Lyne, Angela Wright-Davies, Carys

Dawson, Carol Wynne, and Karen Parkinson, are united by their love of art and a deep connection to the stunning local landscape that inspires their creativity. Visitors can expect to see a diverse range of work, from the rich textures of oils and the vibrancy of acrylics, to delicate abstract watercolours and intricate printmaking.

What makes this exhibition truly special is that it's not just about viewing the art, it's about experiencing it. Throughout the weekend, the artists will be demonstrating their techniques,

offering insights into their creative processes and inviting conversation about their work.

Whether you're an art enthusiast, a curious passer-by, or simply looking for an inspiring way to spend the weekend, this exhibition promises something for everyone. The doors are open, the welcome is warm and everybody is invited to come and celebrate the rich artistic talent rooted in the Vale of Clwyd.

Mark your calendars and don't miss this celebration of colour, creativity, and community spirit.

Green Fingers at Green Gates Support Ruthin Rewilding

We're all familiar with the successful wildlife projects on roadside verges and community green spaces in and around Ruthin. Where do the seeds come from? Peter Daniels visited the project's kernel

The County Council's premises at Green Gates near St Asaph is four years old and provides native plants and trees to assist in bee-friendly rewilding, a project dating back to 2019. But more than that, it's a 70-acre parcel of previously unproductive farmland now becoming a nature reserve. The long-term goal is to create a self-sustaining mix of wetland, meadow, scrub and woodland that boosts local biodiversity, preserves local tree genetics, and provides a secure home for species of conservation concern already present on the site.

The land has had a difficult recent history. For roughly 40 years, it sat largely unused after being included in the Local Development Plan as an extension to the nearby St Asaph Business Park. No development occurred and the fields remained unproductive. Plans for other uses have been proposed in the past (including a permanent travellers' site, a controversial proposal that was later dropped) and the patchwork of previous proposals has left the site with legacy problems.

Physical and legal constraints strongly shape what can be done here. High-voltage overhead cables cross the site from upland windfarms and gas pipelines run beneath it, which significantly limit intensive agricultural or built development. The land is seasonally very wet and a borehole reportedly encounters saline water (which influence which plants thrive). Access difficulties and the presence of protected species, notably the great crested newt, further restrict development. A third of the site would be retained for a newt habitat and thus protected from construction.

And the site has also required substantial clearance after partial use as

an informal dump (asbestos sheets, fridges, an old shipping container). The clean-up was extensive: some 19 wagonloads were removed.

In addition to the newts, there are four species of falcon. Those species, and the hydrology of the site, are and will be central to planning and management decisions.

The original aim at Green Gates was to help stock the county's wildflower meadows and roadside verges. That seed-raising and plug-production work is largely complete: many of the planted sites in Ruthin as elsewhere are now established and will increasingly self-seed. The project nevertheless continues to maintain a 'wildflower tunnel' nursery to produce more plug plants for verges and local meadow restoration.

Those at the site continue to grow some rarer species for reintroduction. One example is the Bithynian vetch (*Vicia bithynica*). The one native verge site near Trefnant tends to be cut for highway safety and visibility.

The field scabious has become locally scarce. The reserve is acting as a refuge for such species.

At Green Gates itself, planting will be introduced around the planned ponds to increase aquatic plant and invertebrate diversity.

Meanwhile, Green Gates is now concentrating as much on trees. All have been grown from seed collected in North East Wales (virtually all from Denbighshire, with one source seven miles from the county). This is an example of using local provenance (seed and stock sourced from local origins, so the trees are already adapted to the regional climate and soil conditions). The team's aim is to preserve and use local genetics wherever possible, to increase resilience and long-term survival.

Pots and planting systems are designed to avoid root-binding (which can stunt growth for years), and young trees are caged or otherwise protected



from rodents. After severe rat losses two years ago, the new measures have resulted in higher survival and faster early growth. When planted, these trees will contribute to biodiversity sooner.

All cutting and seed locations are recorded. This traceability allows a rapid response if a pathogen appears: the source of any infected stock can be traced and managed.

Rare and noteworthy stock now grown at Green Gates includes around 2,000 crab apples and a programme for the black poplar (a much rarer native tree; Green Gates is second only to Kew in protecting the species), plus field maple (the only native maple in Britain).

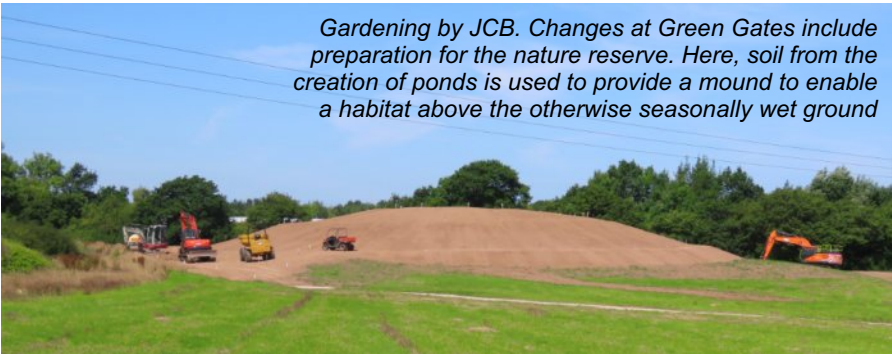
Then there is the improbably named wild service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*), a rowan-like species denuded over the years for timber. This is native but now relatively uncommon and often associated with ancient woodlands and heavy clay soils. The tree's rarity and historical associations make it a valuable species to propagate.

Habitats and infrastructure for the reserve include native aquatic vegetation managed to make the ponds suitable for amphibians, invertebrates and aquatic plants. While the project focuses on rare or conservation-priority species, enough common species are also being raised to establish new woodlands and hedgerows to increase landscape connectivity.

Finally, Green Gates is contemplating the reintroduction of beavers. These, apparently, are natural ecosystem engineers. Their dams and ponds increase wetland areas, slow water flow, trap silt and boost habitat complexity. They create a diversity of still-water habitats and increase aquatic invertebrates and plant food resources.

However, beaver activity can also cause flooding and damage to infrastructure if not carefully sited and managed.

- Green Gates is not open to the public
- More information on beavers and Green Gates in general at bionetwales.co.uk



Gardening by JCB. Changes at Green Gates include preparation for the nature reserve. Here, soil from the creation of ponds is used to provide a mound to enable a habitat above the otherwise seasonally wet ground

Ruthin's Industries Then and Now: The Leather Industry

by Liz Williams

There has been an extensive leather industry in and around Ruthin since the early days of farming. By the 17th century, it was situated largely around Llanfwrog and towards town, on the Arfon and where that flows into the Clwyd.

There is evidence of tanneries there in Stuart times, when the industry developed and became better organised. Most of the industry was owned and largely run by the middle classes and gentry. These considerably wealthy families would often own the whole process from farming to market to slaughter-house to tannery, and they employed the labourers. After the beasts were sold at market (usually on or near the Square in those days) then they would be taken to the slaughter-house (situated on land behind what is now the Castle Hotel including Market Street car park). The carcasses would then be butchered. (The largest area for this activity was from Exmewe Hall down Clwyd Street and between Clwyd and Upper Clwyd Streets.) The skins would then be carted to tanneries. A list of trades of that time indicate that there were four or five tanneries. Also in trade lists of businesses providing the town's wealth, it appears that tanners contributed large sums of money to Ruthin Corporation, with nearly half the total sums levied being paid by tanners, corvisers (leather workers) and often boot-, shoe- and saddle-makers and glove-makers. This is equal to our taxes and business rates today. So at that time the industry employed hundreds of workers and many would be labours.

The work of soaking the skins in large, clay-lined pits was extremely heavy, dirty work. Clay was used so that the earth walls would hold the water and noxious liquids, usually a mixture of cow urine, quick lime and salt. The skins would remain soaking in the liquid for several weeks, on a bed of oak, beech or willow bark. Because these contain high concentrations of tannins that bind to the protein in the hides, this made the skins resistant to decay and

helped make the leather supple. After this, the hair and loose flesh and fat would be scaped off and the hair and lime concoction sold to businesses for plastering.

In those days, leather was needed for clothing, boots, shoes, gloves, sheaths for knives, furniture seats, pouches, horse bridles and saddles.

Where the slaughter of cattle and sheep was concerned, a petition from leather workers in the borough of Ruthin was sent to Parliament in 1797 (below, right).

The Petition was concerned with what today might be called animal rights. Whether this was effective we do not know but it was signed by four tanners, five curriers, 12 shoemakers and three saddlers: quite a substantial lobby.

Tallow chandlers had premises in Clwyd Street. They made candles from animal fat. Candles would be a very useful product in those times and were quite expensive.

And so to 2025. I have found only four working leather-smiths in Ruthin. Today's product range of local leather workers had changed completely. At **Hideway** (Clwyd Street), a business that will celebrate its 40th year in 2026, you will find computer cases, electronic lead tidies, purses, luggage straps, belts and super-smart hand and shoulder bags. Owner Fran Smyth also made the replica Scotch caps in leather for Ruthin Gaol. There were originally used as a punishment for prisoners.

St Crispin is the patron saint of leather workers, shoe makers and cobblers, so it is no surprise that an accomplished bookbinder called **Delrue**

Bookbinders operated his business from Crispin Yard. The business has since grown and is run by Adam Jurkojc.

Simeon Jones is another bookbinder and hand-craft leather worker. He works with traditional techniques and also modern, innovative designs. He was commissioned to

bind two special copies of 'Edward Pugh: a Native Artist' and these beautiful volumes have been on display at Ruthin Craft Centre.

Phil Woods of **Woods'** **Bookbinders** has been binding books, family Bibles and antiquarian books for over 30 years. These are treated with the utmost care.

Long may our leather artisans continue to thrive in our town where these special skills are appreciated and help secure valuable treasures of the future.



Fran Smyth



Adam Jurkojc



Cymdeithas Ddinesig Rhuthun a'r Cylch
Ruthin and District Civic Association

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

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

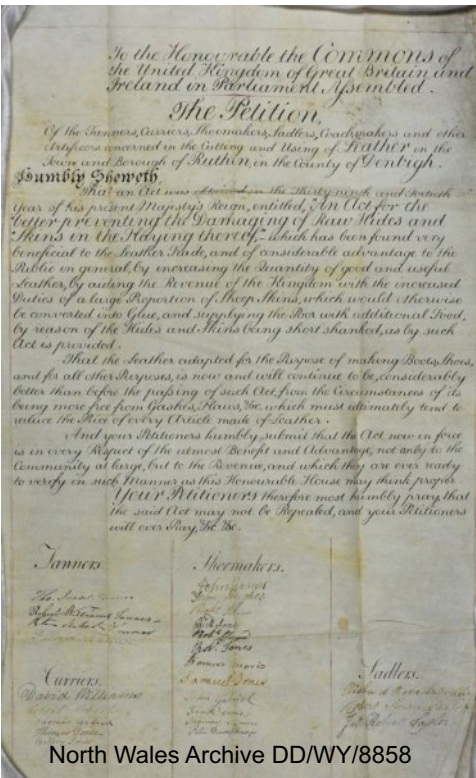
Please send them to the Editor at cymru@clwyd.org or Coedlan, 25 Stryd y Brython, Ruthin, LL15 1JA

The deadline for the next edition is November 15th, 2025

Thanks are due to this quarter's contributors: Peter Daniels, Cyril Jones, Karen Parkinson, Anne Roberts, Heather Williams and Liz Williams; and with the help of Rob Price

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

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