



Cymdeithas Treftadaeth Dyffryn Conwy Conwy Valley Civic Society

CYLCHLYTHYR/NEWSLETTER

CHWEFROR/FEBRUARY 2007

EDITORIAL

A couple of years ago I bought a white ceanothus -simply because I happened to walk past it in a garden centre and the scent was breathtaking. I planted it near the house where I would get the benefit of the scent when it began blooming in March. That plan hasn't worked out. It began blooming—though somewhat half heartedly—in November and has continued ever since. But the buds are small and there is **no** scent. That may be an effect of global warming. At least it has had the effect of making me re-double my recycling efforts and I was pleased to find recently a bin for soft plastic. The only trouble is, I don't know how soft is soft? Surely it doesn't mean just plastic bags, magazine wrappers and supermarket packaging. What about semi-soft like yoghurt pots and milk cartons? I will find out but I can't help feeling that re-cycling will have to be made very much simpler before everyone can be persuaded to do their bit.

Anne Ffowcs Williams

CHRISTMAS CHEER

AT the Christmas Lunch some people who had ordered turkey took one look at the roast beef and decided to change their minds. But it's quite all right. No one need own up! Those of us who had ordered beef but ended up with turkey are not complaining. The turkey was delicious; beautifully moist and tender. The Lodge in Tal-y-Bont, under new management after a few difficult years, provided a warm, friendly atmosphere for the usual happy occasion. It was sad not to be celebrating Win Rohleder's birthday but it was a great pleasure to be able to welcome and congratulate John and Olwen Lloyd Morris on their Golden Wedding Anniversary. No one seemed to miss a speaker—we all just talked even more amongst ourselves—and few people noticed James Greenhalgh slip away at one point to check on a calving cow. He and Isoline are a great team and our thanks to both of them for organising a splendid start to Christmas.

JANUARY MEETING - CONWY'S VOLUNTARY SECTOR

ON 16th January in Maenan Abbey David Crompton introduced our speaker, David Taylor, Chairman of the Conwy Voluntary Services Council. The CVSC (room for confusion there!) is both a registered charity and a business with a Board of Trustees. There are offices in Colwyn Bay and Llanrwst, ten support staff and a database providing details of nearly 700 different voluntary organisations. Apart from holding all this information about volunteer groups the Council can also provide help and advice. The staff can provide information about funding and what grants are available—grants from the EU seem to have been very generous in the past—how to set up a new voluntary group and what special skills or training a volunteer may need,

for example to start a Play Group and stock it with toys and books. Typical grants are from £500 to £2,000. At the other end of the scale there is also up to £500,000 available for people in rural areas, for example a farmer who suffers an accident. They are also able to provide links between voluntary groups and statutory bodies, particularly in the fields of Health and Social Care where about 80 different groups cover all aspects of the problems. In addition the Council operates a Volunteer Bureau which enables 3,000 people to use their skills, talents or experience in many ways; manning charity shops, in administration, chauffeuring and befriending.

I was personally amazed by the extent of the services available but by the end of the talk my over-riding reaction was “How come I didn’t know about all this?” I could think of several instances in the past year where people in my village could have benefited from a helping hand in a crisis. Perhaps this is something we should investigate further—both as givers and takers.

AFFW

FEBRUARY MEETING—SPANISH PILGRIMAGE

NOT the lecture that was advertised. In March 2006 our speaker, PeterThompson, was unable to come and talk about Vernacular Buildings. This year he was also unable to come through ill health at the very last moment. To Isoline’s heartfelt relief Mike Gaiches stepped in to the breach and presented a fascinating slide lecture on his most recent Long Walk in Spain. And I mean long. 750 miles in 50 days, with days off here and there to talk to people and sight see, the people he met and some of the details of architecture which provided some of his most stunning slides. The route took Mike from Cadiz to Corunna passing through Santiago de Compostella. Although he walks for neither health nor religious reasons, so they are not Pilgrimages in the accepted sense, Mike told us that the solitude, the beautiful scenery and the peace all help to add a spiritual dimension to these treks. Isoline’s gratitude to Mike was unbounded. It is always devastating when a Speaker lets you down at the last moment and for it to happen twice in four months (November in Trefriw) can seem like a disaster. Not only do we thank Mike for saving the situation but much more for giving us such an interesting and visually beautiful evening.

DOLGARROG TIP

IT’S still there but David Crompton has had confirmation, from the Waste Strategy Manager, that the compost deposited there is being monitored. Also, I was happy to learn, leech control is within limits.

ROBIN ROBBINS

SADLY Robin Robbins has decided to resign both from the Committee on which he has served for many years and from the Society, since his health now makes it difficult for him to get to meetings, particularly in winter from what Dilys has described as his ‘remote fastness’ in Dolwyddelan.

Hywel Evans writes:

Some years before finding ourselves serving on the Society’s committee Robin and I had been colleagues at Ysgol Aberconwy. He joined the staff there initially on a part-time temporary contract but made such an impact that he soon became an integral part of the school community. He proved an extraordinarily versatile teacher and tackled a wide range of subjects with expertise and an infectious enthusiasm, which conveyed itself to students of all ranges of ability. It is these qualities too, which he has brought to the Society these past dozen years and made particularly manifest in the many outings which he has led. Many of these remain vividly

in the mind: Rhiwddolion, Ty Mawr, Wybrnant, Capel Garmon, the valley south from Dolwyddelan where we regarded with awe his eponymous route on the Lavaredo wall and perhaps best of all, the descent from the top of the Crimea via a quarry shaft, past Nhadog to the welcome he and Judy extended to us at Garnedd.

In her letter to Robin on behalf of the Society Dilys commented “Your contributions to our deliberations were always valuable and to the point and we shall miss your cheerful common sense.”

We do hope, Robin that you and Judy will occasionally be able to attend one or other of our summer meetings.

CIVIC TRUST FOR WALES AWARDS

IN 2004 two of our 2003 award winners received recognition from the Civic Trust for Wales, and our committee felt we should enter two of our 2005 winning projects for the Trust’s 2006 Awards, namely Y Felin, the National Trust’s restoration of the old Mill and associated buildings in Ysbyty Ifan, now occupied by Cwlwm, the consortium of Welsh farmers’ wives offering a one stop wedding service, and also Teras Glan Pwll in Penmachno, the row of cottages which have been lovingly restored by Eirion and Lily Davies, and which are now let to local people.

I heard in mid-February this year that both have been given Awards (I should have been very disappointed if they hadn’t, because they are both so good), to be presented on 21st March in Swansea at the National Waterfront Museum. This unfortunately clashes with our meeting at Pensychnant, and our Chairman is in Oxford that week, but I hope to be able to go: if any other members wish to go, please get in touch with me as soon as possible.

Dilys Glynnne

FUTURE MEETINGS

MARCH Meeting — Wednesday, 21st March

The Story of Pensychnant

Speaker: Julian Thompson Warden of the Pensychnant Conservation Centre The meeting will be held in the Centre at 7.30 pm

For those unfamiliar with the area the Centre is on the road from Conwy towards the Sychnant Pass, There are big stone gate posts on the right hand side of the road shortly before you reach the head of the pass.

APRIL Meeting — Wednesday, 18th April

“Counting Heads - Llandudno as a Village.”

Speaker: Geraint Griffiths, well-known WEA lecturer and local historian.
Rowen Memorial Hall at 7.30 pm