



Our heritage ~ making our mark

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Blue Plaques

The Society's Heritage fund was established "to make small grants towards the cost of maintaining, restoring or improving any part of our local scene". Recent grants have included help toward the William Salesbury memorial plaque in St Grwst Church, Llanrwst; assistance with restoration schemes at listed buildings of note and the restoration of a local public tennis court in a community project and, of course, the installation of public benches in local communities.



Your committee recently discussed the accumulation and current distribution of the Heritage fund and they were seeking to find other, novel applications. The now iconic blue plaques originating with English Heritage came into

this debate and were recognised as an ideal means by which the fund might brighten the valley with similar informative and attractive plaques. These plaques might be installed in any public place, or elsewhere, to commemorate a link between the location and a famous person or event; thus serving as an historical marker. We have adopted the proposal that we research the practicality of starting our own 'blue plaque' scheme in the valley and we have progressed so far as to commission the investigation of slate as a medium for designing a distinctive, coloured plaque of our own design.

Do you have any suggestions for buildings, persons, locations or events that you would like to see commemorated with our plaques? We are considering Edward Elgar's visits to Betws y Coed and we know that Charles Darwin travelled through North Wales on a 'geological holiday'. Where did Darwin stay? Are there other notables that we might recognise?

YOU CAN provide your own e-mail address simply by sending an e-mail to us at - info@conwysoc.org.uk
The Society gives a firm assurance that no e-mail address will leave the Society's records

On page six there are some useful dates for your diary— please try to check that events are still current.

Look out for our analysis of members' location in the Valley!

Evenings with C V C S

October 16th at Rowen

Helen Bradbury

Museum Development officer with our local Authority

Princes of Gwynedd

In October, Helen Bradley of Conwy County Council described the Tourist Project that is aimed to encourage visitors to North Wales by telling the history of the Princes and describing the places associated with them. The project is a joint effort by Conwy and Gwynedd Councils, Cadw, the Welsh Government and the Snowdonia National Park, and has European funding. The Princes ruled North Wales (and sometimes other parts of Wales) from about 500 to 1300 AD. They were responsible for building castles, churches and abbeys throughout North Wales. The project is presented in exhibitions at tourist information centres. In addition there is an excellent guidebook that can be downloaded at

www.snowdoniaheritage.info/princes.

The book has some impressive photographs and suggests some routes by which tourists might visit – on foot or by bicycle, car or train - the sites associated with the Princes.



November 5th at Glasdir

Keith Jones

Renewable Energy Officer National Trust

Hidden Hydros

Keith is National Trust's ultra-active renewable energy specialist and his blog at - <http://ntenvironmentalwork.net/tag/national-trust-blog/>

- is un-missable if you want to keep-up with alternative energy progress in North Wales. Keith enthuses about our Conwy Valley Award last year for the hydro system at Cae Crwn farm in the Crafnant Valley and his presentation this evening vividly illustrated just how active is the hydro scene right across North Wales. His wonderful slides showed us how National Trust are blazing the Snowdonia micro hydro trail with several of their very own schemes – each undertaken with the same verve and stringent standards that we have come to expect of the Trust. We were shown how each individual project occupied, in turn, resources in rainfall and catchment survey, location planning for both water collec-

tion, pipeline and power generation structures, ground clearance and construction, commissioning and ultimately the monitoring and maintenance of the plant. Keith was obviously, and justifiably very proud of NT's flagship project on Snowdon at Hafod y Llan with its impressive 640kw generator; sufficient, as Keith noted, to power every one of NT's sites in North Wales.

We can now claim that there is also a welcome humming in the hills as Wales begins to regain its long-held lead in pioneering hydro-electric power production from both large (electric mountain, Dolgarrog and the like) and small (Cae Crwn scale) installations. Keith showed us that National Trust really are leading the pack even though many of the sites truly are hidden away. Shall we ever rival Switzerland with its enviable 50% of its domestic electricity from hydro production?



Flying pipes for Hafod y Llan (First image — water intake)

Artists of the Conwy Valley

January 21st at Trefriw

Vicky Macdonald

Curator Royal
Cambrian Gallery

Artists of the Conwy Valley

Vicky Macdonald entertained us with an informative, bubbly evening filled with the history and times of the artists in our valley, particularly at Betws y Coed and as early as the late nineteenth century, flying with prominent names like David Cox, who spent his summers at Betws from 1844 until 1856, and Thomas Rowlandson. Vicky's association today goes right back from Kyffin's modern work at the Royal Cambrian



The gallery behind
Plas Mawr

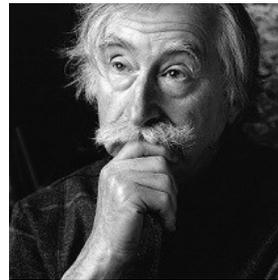
Gallery, where she is Curator (after having run her own gallery), to those early days of the strong artistic colony at Betws. Vicky's slides showed us

lots of magnificent examples from these earlier colonists together with those of artists like Clarence Whaite and George Henry Harrison, appearing later in that century. We heard about the colony's migration to Trefriw and Rowen and its eventual appearance at Conwy around the time Whaite was president of the Royal Cambrian Academy in 1882. Was the growing visitor influx, the product of Betws' new railway and station opened in 1868, an unacceptable disturbance for the tranquil colony?

We learned that since 1896 the Victorian gallery at Plas Mawr, RCA's headquarters, had been held on a long lease and that in 1900 Lady Mostyn opened the Mostyn Art Gallery and fired up the Gwynedd Ladies Art Society. The Gallery was demolished in 1995 when the new gallery at the Capel Seion site (partly funded by Project Conwy) was opened.



Down Nant Ffranc ~ David Woodford



Sir Kyffin Williams

Vicky was making it clear to us all that we have been privileged over the last two centuries to have had some wonderful artists in our midst; from Turner's inspirational David Cox and Joshua Hague (joint founder of the Academy) right through to Augustus John with his fascination for Arenig Fawr, Peter Prendergast, Kyffin Williams and David Woodford.



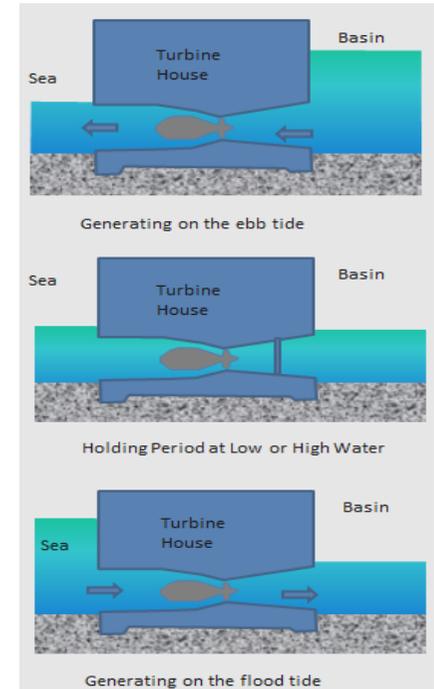
A North Wales Tidal Lagoon ?

Toward the end of October we were invited to meet a senior member of the development team from the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon project to hear of their developments in South Wales and to discuss the prospect of a tidal lagoon on our own coast. This concept of generating electricity from natural tidal movement from within and without an artificial lagoon is well established and mirrored somewhat, at least in its principal of operation, with the widely publicised and controversial proposals to build a Severn estuary barrage. In North Wales any valid project would, in scale, require a water mass contained within a lagoon the likes of which would reach from the Little Orme to Kinmel Bay. This sounds



An artist's impression of the walkway / cycleway along the lagoon wall

daunting and intrusive but we were shown how, in reality, a coastline might acquire a valuable community and commercial asset with marine agriculture potential, water sports, leisure and healthy living facilities and incorporating sea defence against storm and erosion; all of which just happens to generate vast amounts of totally "green" electricity four times a day from the incoming and outgoing tides. With an eight hundred and fifty million pound budget the scale of this project is not easy to convey, the enterprise has an excellent website at - www.tidallagoonswanseabay.com where the whole project is amply described.



We were represented at a later meeting, in February, along with representatives of, among others, the local authority, Welsh universities, local industry, commerce, power generation and distribution companies. That august body seemed to wholly endorse a similar project in North Wales and this prospect will obviously depend very much upon the success of that now going through planning approval in the Swansea Bay.



Boating facilities

Societies hold hands

“One thing leads to another”

How true an everyday occurrence this can prove to be and I'm sure we've all experienced the phenomenon. Early in January a lady in Deganwy sent an e-mail to our website suggesting that we promote the placing of a decorative dingy, planted as a flower bed, at a location that appeared to describe the bridge-end access-way to the quay in Conwy. When she had confirmed this as her intended location we appropriately forwarded her e-mail to the Conwy Civic Society together with a comment that National Trust has also confused the two societies within their own website – this was in the archives of Keith's blog mentioned in our report of his talk on hydro-electric projects, where he mistakenly ascribed our Conwy Valley Awards programme to the Conwy Civic Society.



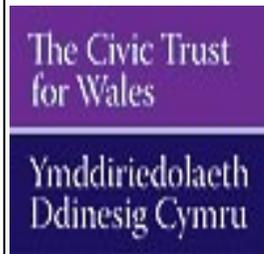
This unplanned contact with our neighbouring, urban Civic Society eventually led to an informal meeting with their members where we discussed the possibility of a collegiate or connected functioning between our two Societies. The consensus of opinion was that we should invite members of the Conwy Society to attend our functions for a period and then to review this relationship with the possibility of building further ties. Your Committee is to discuss this proposal at its April meeting and any input from our members will be welcome.

Civic Trust Forum

“A wing of the Civic Trust”

We are, with representatives of other North Wales Civic Societies, recently invited to attend a meeting locally with the director of the Civic Trust in Wales. We gather that this is to be an exploratory venture to discuss the future of Civic Societies and their relationship with the Civic Trust for Wales, based in Cardiff. I've no doubt that I shall be reporting on this at a later date but in the meantime I can report from our contact with the Trust following two meetings we attend-

ed at Caernarfon and Penrhyn Castle early in 2012. I've checked back and I am surprised to see that I haven't already reported those meetings here. The first, in Caernarfon, focussed on the Open Doors project, part of European Heritage Days scheme organised by the Civic Trust for Wales on behalf of the Welsh Government. The afternoon meeting, at Penrhyn Caste, held the promise of local meetings or a regional conference where at least some of separateness and barriers to a stronger alliance with the Trust might be discussed and then eventually overcome. I have always regarded our Society as “... a wing of the Civic Trust in Wales” and I believe that we shall all greatly benefit when we are able to more strongly feel such an alliance and to enjoy its demonstration through firm links and more robustly-stated and shared aims and objects. When this has happened we should gain more of what I would term “credibility” and “teeth”. I also believe that with such a strengthened alliance the Trust itself, in turn, would strengthen its central position and, importantly, its claims for support in funding and facility.



Registered charity 509030

Conwy Valley Civic Society
Cymdeithas Treftadaeth
Dyffryn Conwy

conwy-valley-civic-soc.org



Founded in 1969 the Society is affiliated to the Civic Trust for Wales. Its aim is to encourage the preservation and improvement of all that is best in village, countryside and town throughout the area

- President** James Greenhalgh
Vice-Presidents Michael Gaches, Olwen Morris, Michael Young
Chairman Nick Bevan
Vice-Chairman Isoline Greenhalgh
Secretary Anne Sherlock
Treasurer & Membership Secretary Rob Kenwell
Programme Buddug Cole
Planning Officer Minutes Secretary Ann Peacock
National Park Special Interests Alison Cousins
Web Site Mike Taraniuk

Editor : Idris Hughes

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Diary Dates ~ Where are our members ?

Dates for your diary 2014

Llanrwst Local Produce Market Second Friday of each month at Glasdir, 9.30am to 1.30pm.

Conwy Farmers' Market last Wednesday of each month, 9am to 1pm at Conwy RSPB.

Conwy Seed Fair Wednesday 26th March

Rowen Car Boot Sale Saturdays at 1pm on Rowen Playing Field: 26th April / 31st May / 21st June / 19th July / 30th August / 27th September

Rowen Village Gardens Open Day Sunday 18th May
Garden open at Gilfach, Rowen National Gardens Scheme: 4th May / 15th June / 24th August

Rowen Fun Day, Tal y Fan Fell Race Sat 12th July

Conwy Honey Fair Saturday 13th September P.M.C.

| Location | Members (households) | Corporate |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| CONWY VALLEY | | |
| LLANGERNYH | 1 | 1 |
| BETHWS Y COED | 3 | 2 |
| PENMACHNO | 2 | 2 |
| CAPEL CURIG | 1 | 1 |
| DOLWYDDELAN | 4 | 3 |
| LLANRWST | 10 | 8 |
| MAENAN | 5 | 4 |
| EGLWYSBACH | 4 | 3 |
| TREFRIW | 8 | 5 |
| GLAN CONWY | 11 | 7 |
| LLAEHWEDD | 2 | 1 |
| HENRYD/LLANGELLYNNIN | 3 | 3 |
| TYNYGROES | 18 | 11 |
| RO WEN | 11 | 8 |
| LLANBEDR Y CENNIN | 3 | 2 |
| TALYBONT | 2 | 1 |
| OTHER | | |
| CONWY | 5 | 3 |
| DEGANWY | | 2 |
| LLANDUDNNO | 1 | 1 |
| COLWYN BAY | 2 | 2 |
| RHOS ON SEA | 2 | 1 |
| DHWYGFYLCHI | 1 | 1 |
| ANGLESEY | 1 | 1 |
| ENGLAND | 10 | 9 |
| ULSTER | 2 | 1 |

