



Y Dolydd says sorry

Last year was a good one for the Dolydd. At the AGM on 23 June our accountant, Graham Murphy, was able to report a modest surplus for 2012-13: the first time we had been definitively in the black. We'd started to repay capital as well as interest on our mortgage. Moreover the current year was promising well. And indeed, by late summer more capital had been repaid and the Trust's bank balance was healthy enough to cover payments over the lean winter months and, potentially, some improvements to the building. (See our website for the detailed Report and Accounts.)



This success came at a cost. Whilst the Trust gains its income from various sources, including rentals, two thirds of it comes from fund raising events. We owe our existence to the small group of Trustees and volunteers who work very hard to organise them. Some are run by the Trust, notably the Workhouse Party; others by individuals or groups (like Play-festival) who make a donation and enable us to raise more through the bar and kitchen. Ever since the old Workhouse Festival the most successful have generally been music events. They have helped to sustain our other activities and keep a roof over our tenants' heads.

This year, and especially towards the end of the season, we overreached ourselves and allowed too many music events. There was excessive noise from outdoor stages which caused annoyance, and a minority of visitors misbehaved. Associates of one group used offensive language over the public address. The patience of some of our neighbours snapped.

In September the Trustees issued an apology which was published in the County Times and on our website. We also undertook not to book any similar events for 2015 until these issues had been addressed. Since then a team has been established, responsible to the Trustees, to oversee events and make recommendations: these will include tighter limits on their size and frequency and on outdoor performances as well as measures to reduce noise, with better insulation, sound limitation devices and improved security. A meeting has been held with the Council's licensing officers and with Powys's Environmental Health team who have carried out measurements and are taking a keen interest. Any arrangements we make will have to satisfy their requirements. The Trustees also recognise the need to diversify and to become less dependent on outdoor music events.

Most of the complaints made were justified, and the Trust knows it cannot survive without the support of the community and of its neighbours. That this has not been lost was demonstrated by the heartening response of local people to the Open Doors event in September. Not all the criticisms are acceptable, and we reject the imputation that visitors to our events are disreputable outsiders who lower the tone of the area. Llanfyllin Workhouse should be inclusive, and an enterprise the size of ours needs to attract supporters from elsewhere as well as from the immediate locality. Of course the Trustees must ensure that they and everyone on the site behave acceptably.

Llanfyllin Town Council has proposed a public meeting at which we can listen to criticism and explain how we will respond to it. Sadly Wynne Morris will not be able to represent us as Chairman after pressures from some of our critics made it impossible for him to carry on. We are very grateful for Wynne's patient guidance since the Trust's inception in 2001. Our Vice-Chairman, Gordon Jones, is standing in.

Y Dolydd is part of the heritage of Llanfyllin and of the nation: the Trustees recognise their duty to act responsibly and to safeguard it for everyone.

Christmas at the Workhouse

Every space is already taken for the annual Christmas Market at Y Dolydd on the afternoon of Sunday 7 December, starting at 1.00 p.m. There will be the usual esoteric mix of craft products and food with the accent on hand made local items: ideal for those original presents. Also live Christmas music; mulled wine and mince pies; the book fair, a Christmas tree and decorations: Santa will be there around 3.00. The new seasonal CD featuring local story-tellers and musicians, from vocalists to handbell ringers, compiled for us by Beehouse Studio will be on sale with profits to the Trust. Not to be missed!

History in the Making

Following the rejection of our initial bid for a grant to create a Workhouse History Centre, catering for visitors and students, in a dilapidated wing near the entrance to the building we were invited to meet an officer of the Heritage Lottery Fund to discuss improvements to our application. Four members of the Dolydd History Group went to Mold for a very encouraging meeting: the committee had liked our application, but we were advised to include more digital outputs and additional community activities in the project and to ask for more money to fund them.

The bid is currently being rewritten. Group members have already attended a training course in digitising materials for posting on the People's Collection Wales website, and the new Oral History Group will have an input into the project. We're hoping for more educational involvement, and there are plans for live drama including a large scale production of 'Oliver!' in 2016. Success with grant applications is never guaranteed, but we believe we stand a good chance.

Meanwhile we're involved in another exciting scheme. The Powysland Club has gained substantial funding for a marquee and exhibition, Y Lle Hanes, at the National Eisteddfod which is being held at Meifod in August. It will showcase the work of local history societies and organisations in Powys with a series of displays which will remain viewable on line. We were one of the first groups to express an interest and will have a presence at the Eisteddfod: a digital tour of Y Dolydd is a possible option.



Captain Tom Astley, Master 1909-36, at the Dolydd with his son Ernest and dog Wolf.

More Drama at the Dolydd

Two years ago sixth formers from Llanfyllin High School staged two promenade productions at the Workhouse which were assessed as part of their A Level Drama exams. Excerpts were broadcast by ITV on 'Fishlock's Wales'. This year the high school's drama department has returned to the Dolydd, with three groups of students writing and staging their own short plays in different areas of the building. The performances will take place in the New Year and tickets will be available: watch the press for details.

Recording Memories

Llanfyllin Workhouse History Group is extending its research into Oral History and is looking for volunteers interested in joining them. We want to place on record the experiences of anyone who has memories to share or a story to tell about the old Workhouse or Y Dolydd, whether it's someone who lived, worked or visited there, or who has been connected to the building in any capacity. Given enough support it may be possible to extend activities to cover other aspects of Llanfyllin life and people. Oral history is first-hand evidence about the past; it not only captures people's experiences and memories but can provide vital information about buildings, organisations and events.

Some personal stories have been shared already with the History Group; they have provided valuable insights into the building's past, and members are keen to hear from others willing to tell their stories. We believe that recording people's stories is a practical and enjoyable way of preserving a wide range of experiences and memories of our communities, so they can inform future generations.

The first Oral History meeting was held at Y Dolydd on Thursday 16th October to share ideas and discuss plans, which include contributing to the educational work of the History Centre in the building, but plans are still at an early stage. Are you interested in being involved in this project as a volunteer? This would involve, after some initial training, meeting people who want to talk about their memories, recording and partially transcribing them for sharing as part of the ongoing historical research about Y Dolydd and its place in the local community.

If you have stories about Y Dolydd in any of its various incarnations you would be willing to share, or would like to be involved in the project in any way, please call Sandra Harvey on 07714715209 or email her at sandraaharvey@btinternet.com

Young carers at the Bunkhouse

In November a local charity, Powys Carers Service, brought along a group of 15 Young Adult Carers to spend a focused weekend exploring Life Skills and Personal Development. The group of young people came from all over Powys as part of a national programme called 'Take Action & Support' which was funded via Carers Trust. Each of the YACs were empowered to gain a better understanding of themselves and encouraged to think about their own plans for the future. The group used Y Dolydd as a base to tour the local area and invited in Dave Proctor of Bethania Outdoor Education to run an archery session. The residential, using our bunkhouse and catering facilities, allowed space and time for reflection and nurture in what their leader called 'the wonderful Workhouse'.

The biggest Open Mic ever?



Geoff Dodd



Jemma Griffiths

During this year Phil and Jane Lane have promoted a series of intimate Open Mic events (with all income going to Y Dolydd) which have given local singers and musicians the opportunity to display and develop their skills. Then in October came a much bigger event: a Sponsored Open Mic involving 50-plus musicians, singers, poets and artists performing in a continuous cycle for a 48 hour period, with a small but dedicated crew continuing overnight. The performance was ticketed for non-musicians at a cost of £5 for the whole weekend.

The event was a fundraiser but also intended to demonstrate musicians' appreciation of the Workhouse building and to promote its use for the development as a centre for all the arts. In total £700 was raised, and it was felt more could have been generated with a more specific campaign. The response from performers was heartening and the standard impressively high: many brought their own supporters, often from some distance. Among the locals a number of trustees participated too. The new woodburner in the Gallery was lit for the first time and contributed to the friendly atmosphere.

A great deal of publicity was attached to the event and it raised awareness of Y Dolydd both as a historic building and as a venue. There were interviews on Radio Wales and Radio Cymru, and extensive articles in the Shropshire Star and the County Times.



Dawn McGuire

The event was organised by the Beehouse Recording Studio who also provided a PA and facilities for musicians. The Events Team in the form of Debbie and Ian supported the weekend, providing the bar and refreshments. Dale Thomas Maczak was commended for the mature way he ran the kitchen, and other young people also gave much of their time to keep things running smoothly.

Among the artists performing were: Jonathan Day, Jenni Lane, Cathy Beech, Kerri Collins, Paul Henshaw, Sally Crosby, Nic Evans, Mave McMahon, Billy Clark, Sam Gomm, Jane Lane, Michael Cape, John Ramm, Neil McKeown, Tony Skeggs, Tom Matthews and Jonny Welburn, Dawn McGuire, Jemma Griffiths, Sonya Smith, Simon Harmony Perry, Richard Darlow, Geoff Dodd, Kuzaliwa, Shadow Recruit, Jed Is Dead, DJ Mantra, Henry Lane, DJ Leia Organa, Toxic Housewife, Khandra Sound, Mike Paoloni, Mellt, Tony Meadows, Lois Bosworth, John Hainsworth and Henry's Machine. Some were recorded for a special CD which will be on sale at the Christmas Market. Our thanks to all of them.



Jenny and Henry Lane

New Look at Open Doors



Lois Bosworth welcomes families to Open Doors



Aylwyn Lloyd takes a break to listen to Jenny Lane in the cafe-bar

This year Cadw took over the coordination of the Open Doors heritage open days from Civic Trust Wales. Our own offering had a new look too. There was more to see and do thanks to the efforts of many of our tenants, and people could visit the open studios of artists Dale Marshall and Bob Guy as well as the attractive workshops of Casa Georgette and J.H. Leather. The impressive Beehive Studios were open too and visitors were able to watch a recording session in progress and even take part. Richard Dix had organised a craft fair, with the Venue filled with the stalls of local craftspeople who seemed pleased with the sales they had made.

There were activities for children including a quiz and plenty of live music as well as the book fair, guided tours and refreshments and the usual displays: we're looking forward to updating these when the History Centre becomes a reality. And Aylwyn Lloyd's appealing exhibition of Welsh landscapes in Oriel y Dolydd against the background of John Browne's gentle harp music struck just the right note.

There were more helpers to meet and greet the visitors and extra publicity produced a good turnout, with upwards of 100 adults and 20 children on both days: even with free admission the weekend raised around £600. We're grateful to everyone concerned.

A new face at the Dolydd



J.H. Leather is a new business started by Jo Heard, who has just moved into the Workhouse. Jo specialises in bespoke handmade leather work. Her range includes dog collars and leads, belts, key rings, camera and mobile phone cases, cartridge bags and belts, browbands and more: many ideal for presents. All items are handmade in the Dolydd workshop using the best quality fittings and leather. Customers can choose from a range of designs, leather colours and fitting options.

Jo has won many awards for her work, competing regularly in the National Saddlery Competition held in London. This year she won 1st place and got a premium award for excellent craftsmanship in the Master and Apprentice class. Jo also received a City and Guilds Medal For Excellence as well as the Worshipful Company of Saddlers Award. The latter saw Jo go to a ceremony at Buckingham Palace to receive her award from HRH The Princess Royal.

The Big Event

The biggest event of the year at the Dolydd is the Workhouse Party. The successor to the old Workhouse Festival (though catering for hundreds rather than thousands), it attracts many young and not so young people from Mid-Wales and beyond and is organised as a fund-raiser entirely by our own volunteers. Some of their smiling faces can be seen in the photograph.

Held this year from 11 to 13 July the Party (like Playfestival which followed in August) has always been a family-friendly event, organised in a way that respects the environment. It offers an opportunity to bands from Wales and the border counties to perform and showcase their talent. This year they included Pobl y Bryn, a band hailing from Wrexham, Nercwys, Llanfyllin & Cardigan; Tacsí, a bilingual 7-piece band from Anglesey; the Misty Blue Trio from Welshpool; Thin Vision from Bishop's Castle; Shifty Chicken Shed from Oswestry; Fight the Bear, the Nuclear Weasels and Needle Poppets from Shropshire, as well as one 'golden oldie': Tom Hingley, glory days lead singer with Inspiral Carpets. Workshops catered for all ages.



The Workhouse Party was a sell-out and, after costs, contributed £13,031 to the Trust's funds. But just as important for the locality, it contributed over £16,000 to the local economy by the way of expenditure locally to stage the event - and that doesn't include money spent by visitors in the town. This year waste was recycled more promptly and efficiently due to our new contract with Cae Post, whilst the good weather ensured minimum damage to the field and courtyards. We haven't always been so lucky!

Gallery news



Oriel Y Dolydd staged three major exhibitions during the summer. The first, by the Screamin Chicken Collective from Oswestry, was a varied mix of two and three-dimensional work: the second featured the striking sculptures of Tony Meadows, based on the human form. To coincide with Open Doors the gallery staged a retrospective of the landscapes, in oils and water colour of Aylwyn Lloyd, Llangynog. Now in his eighties Aylwyn has spent a lifetime painting the Welsh countryside: his pictures of the Tanat Valley and Snowdonia sold well and brought a generous donation to the Trust. It was good to see old friends at the opening on the Friday evening, when Delyth Davies, farmer and postmistress from Penybontfawr, played traditional Welsh music on the harp. Bob Guy is making his plans for 2015 and already has two potential exhibitors in mind.

Keeping down the grass

Our appeal in the last issue for a lawn mower was answered by our Member Nicky Jevon, who kindly donated a machine which has been very useful in the courtyards. At the same time we bit the bullet and bought a second hand ride-on mower for the larger areas of grass. We're now looking for a robust strimmer for the rougher areas as our (very small) maintenance crew currently have to use their own or resort to a sickle. Again, offers of help would be most welcome.

More from the Green Hub

So much is happening at the Dolydd Green Hub that its co-ordinator, Andy Lee, has produced a special Newsletter to accompany this one. You should find it attached. Like our own it will be viewable, and archived, on our website. It was good to see so many keen people on the beekeeping course. We're especially proud to be able to host the forest school, which will benefit many local children.

Why don't you...?

Questions put to us often start like this. Why don't we put on more cultural events, let people know what we're doing, fill in the holes in the drive? Of course we welcome any suggestions and ideas. But often the answer is: we would if we could find the time.

With more helpers we could do more of the things we'd like to do, and ought to do. But our area is thinly populated, and so many local people already work hard for good causes. Ours is a big project for a small community. Any support is very welcome, including joining as a Member, or encouraging others to join. Forms are available on our website, and at the Dolydd.