



Bunkhouse ready to open



Following the award in November of a 50% regeneration grant by Powys CC, who imposed a very tight deadline, work on the new bunkhouse in the entrance block advanced dramatically before and after Christmas.

At the time of writing the former entrance hall and board room have been re-plastered where necessary and painted out; the staircase which was affected by rot has been rebuilt; new electrics and an integrated fire alarm are installed; temporary doors are about to be replaced and a small common room with basic catering facilities just awaits its furniture. The bunks have been moved into two of the rooms and the other rooms will soon be equipped. The spaces are light, flexible

and attractive: just the curtains remain to be hung.

The existing showers and toilets, which have external access, are also accessible from the bunkhouse. We gave our architect, Richard Payne, a difficult task in squeezing in disabled facilities which complied with all the regulations, but in the end he found a solution. The funding has allowed us to pay for work to be done, but volunteers have carried a substantial burden: especially Ian Jones who has overseen the process. Stuart Gane has been heavily involved.

Upstairs provision of the two family units has to await funding, but to avoid delay we submitted the proposed designs for building regulations approval and these have now been passed. Changes had to be made to our original plans to ensure that bedrooms are within 9 metres of an exit, and their relocation will mean subdividing the open areas we had intended as living space – a pity, but unavoidable. Meanwhile one of the smaller rooms downstairs is being furnished to accommodate a family group. Overall the facilities will compare favourably with others in the area: they should prove popular with a range of visitors, improve our offer and generate some very useful income.

The Green Hub gathers momentum

Following the launch of the Workhouse Green Hub last year it has developed an extensive spring workshop programme providing opportunities for local people to go green. Every pupil at Llanfyllin Primary school took part in the Green Shoots programme learning about 'growing your own' and where our food comes from. The Home Education network took advantage of the outdoor classrooms creating butterfly cafes, willow sculptures and building dens. Local families dropped into a taster workshop on 'Growing your own Veg.'

One of the main aims of the Green Hub is to develop the 6.5 acre site at the Workhouse. To start this process a week long garden design course was held, led by Steve Jones of Cwm Harry, to map the grounds, consult with local people and develop a plan. Some of the recommendations and ideas include: the creation of wildlife areas, a forest



school, a training area and base for green volunteers and a Green Hub shop. The Green Hub will be looking to develop these ideas further through securing additional funding and volunteer support.

Why not come to one of our **free taster courses**, organised in collaboration with WEA Cymru? On Saturday 7 June we are offering 'Attracting Wildlife to your Garden', 9.30 - 12.00 with tutor Deborah English. On 25 June there's 'An Introduction to Beekeeping' with Rob Broome. For further information about the Green Hub contact Andy Lee on 01691 870275, or alee0773@aol.com : to enrol on a course contact Cecilia Forsythe on 01686 610270 or ceciliaforsythe@weacymru.org.uk .

The Beehouse comes to the Workhouse

New tenants are bringing fresh life to the Dolydd. Before Christmas Phil and Jane Lane of the well-known Beehouse recording studios approached us about transferring their operations to the Workhouse. Events moved quickly, and the ground floor of the roadside wing, next to the car park, has been transformed into a state of the art facility, fully insulated and crammed with high-tech equipment (protected by a full security system). Besides the main studio with its impressive mixing and editing suite there's a drum room, a separate song writing and pre-production studio and an isolation booth for recording vocals and acoustic instruments. A further 'live room' is planned adjacent to the main control room.



As well as providing first class recording and video facilities for musicians and vocalists the Beehouse offers studio experience days, songwriting workshops, music production experiences, team building activities and more: its clientele has ranged from international artists to local hen parties. The Lanes' wide experience enables them to cater for many styles of music. The studio will attract many visitors to Y Dolydd and enhance its standing as a centre for musical and artistic creativity.

At the same time the well established local musician Tony Skeggs, known for his work in education as well as performance and production, has taken over two adjoining workshops in the women's courtyard and is converting them into his own recording studio. Tony is keen to develop performance skills and to work with up and coming talent.

The photo shows the new Beehouse Studio with Phil and Jane: Cally Rhodes is singing to Tony Skeggs on guitar while Charlie Skeggs drums next door.

History Centre setback



We learned on 28 April that our bid for £35,000 to renovate the wing at the entrance to the first courtyard and create a reception and History Centre with interpretive displays and a 20-minute film had been turned down. The Heritage Lottery Fund told us that it was a good application which impressed the panel, but had to be rejected for lack of funds. Their only other comment was that the community participation element of the project could have been stronger. There's a certain irony here in that the whole project for the Dolydd, from its inception, has been a community initiative: one of the biggest building conservation projects in Wales is being undertaken by a group of local volunteers. But it's true that the actual numbers involved are quite low, even if they're high in proportion to Llanfyllin's 1500 inhabitants and the sparse population of North Montgomeryshire. Powys is not one of HLF's priority areas which may have been a factor. But the competition varies from round to round, and other projects may just have made a better case.

We were advised to consult one of HLF's officers with a view to re-submitting the bid, and have arranged to do so. We're also receiving advice from PAVO – the Powys Association of Voluntary Associations - who have often helped us in the past. But we'd also welcome suggestions from our readers and members about ways of demonstrating that the community really is behind us. Meanwhile we're very grateful to those who wrote letters of support on our behalf.

Tackling the Octagon

As reported in the last issue, there's an urgent need to confront the biggest task facing us: repairing the roof of the central Octagon or Master's House. The extra storey and the complex profile of the roof make this a difficult and expensive task, involving extensive scaffolding, but with the rain coming in it's an urgent one.

Ian Jones has done a great deal of work over the last few months to obtain quotations and has arrived at a sum of £38,000 for the roof, associated joinery, rainwater goods and pointing the gable ends. Whilst less than some of us had expected it's a lot to raise and doesn't include any internal work. The ground floor is occupied by our café-bar area, and we've been continuing to identify viable uses for the upper floors: vital if we're to persuade funders to support us. If we plan to create public spaces, whether for education, arts or commerce, disability and equal rights legislation will almost certainly require the installation of a lift: desirable in any case, but an additional expense.

An exciting aspect of the project is the opportunity it offers to restore the classical cupola, seen on the right, which originally graced the building and was replaced by the present, beehive-like structure in the 1960's. There's even a chance that the original bell might be recovered and re-hung.



The Trust is preparing to launch a major appeal. We're hoping to attract a few new people who might join an appeal committee. Please let us know if you'd like to help!

AGM

The Trust's Annual General Meeting will be held at Y Dolydd at 7.00 on Monday 23 June: see the back page for the formal notice. Our annual report and accounts will be presented, and will also be available on our website. The meeting is open to the public and anyone can come along to find out what's been happening and ask questions, though only paid-up members of the Trust are qualified to vote or serve as Trustees. New members are always extremely welcome and the subscription is just a pound a month: forms are available from Y Dolydd or on www.llanfyllinworkhouse.org.

Coming Events (See www.llanfyllinworkhouse.org for further details)

- 13 – 15 June Steampunk weekend. (Steampunk is allegedly: 'modern technology powered by steam and set in the 1800's', with music to match.)
- 21 - 22 June Mid-Summer Gig with the Workhouse Project
- 11 – 13 July WORKHOUSE PARTY - our biggest fund-raiser of the year. A happy weekend, aimed at people who want to relax and have a good time with friends and good music. For details search on Workhouse Party 2014.
- 25 – 27 July Kippertronix Festival
- 8 – 10 August Playfestival 2014 - details on <http://play-festival.co.uk/>
- 22 - 24 August Drummers
- 29 - 31 August Audio-Farm
- 5 – 7 September 'Dirty Weekend'
- 13 – 14 September Open Doors - the annual heritage weekend, now coordinated across Wales by Cadw, with displays, guided tours, art and live music.
- 20 September Food and Craft Fair - an improved version of last year's successful event, organised by Richard Dix.
- 27 September Workhouse Project gig
- And: 7 and 21 June, 5 and 19 July, 2 and 16 August, 13 and 27 September: Car Boot Sale and Book Fair. Information on car boots from Lois Bosworth on 07753 940845: offers of saleable books to John Hainsworth on 01691 860549.

And in Oriel Y Dolydd...

- 27 – 29 June Screamin Chicken artists: a varied exhibition by the Oswestry collective. Opens 27 June, then on view over the weekend 11.00 - 4.00.
- 18 July - 3 August Tony Meadows: Sculpture based on the human form. Exhibition opening with bar on 18 July from 7.00: then open every Saturday and Sunday 11.00 - 4.00.
- 12 - 14 September Aylwyn Lloyd, Llangynog - Landscapes of Wales and the Tanat Valley (many for sale). Open Friday to Sunday 11.00 - 5.00.

Wanted – a mower

Y Dolydd is surrounded by large areas of grass – not just in the courtyards but in the garden areas to the back and at the side. People passing by appreciate the well-kept grounds which are a vast improvement on what went before. But we only have one domestic-sized motor mower which takes many hours to do the job and, like those who walk behind it, it's feeling the strain.

Perhaps someone reading this will feel inspired to make a donation so that we can buy something more substantial. A ride-on would be ideal, though not essential. We live in hope...

Postscript

In the issue for Spring 2013 our Archivist, Martin Davies, working from the correspondence of the Llanfyllin Poor Law Union in The National Archives, described how the Rector of Llangadfan enlisted the support of the Poor Law Commissioners in London so that Llanfyllin's Board of Guardians could help Rees Davies (63), his wife, Gwin (43), and their ten children to emigrate to America. The family arrived in New York aboard the *SS Atlantic* on 1 June 1844. Martin's article was also published in Hanes Maldwyn, the printed and on-line Bulletin of Local and Family History Societies in Montgomeryshire. Martin now writes as follows:

Following the article, we were contacted by three descendants of Rees Davies, who have supplied further information about the family and their fate.

The difference in age between Rees and Gwin is explained by the fact that Rees had been married before and with his first wife, Susannah, had six children: Jane, Mary, Margaret, Thomas, William and Susannah. Of these, at least three ended up in America. Margaret married John D Lewis in 1835 at Llangadfan and emigrated on *SS Orpheus* in 1841. John was a carpenter and they lived in Green Lake County, Wisconsin. Margaret died at the age of 88 in Hennepin County, Minnesota. Of the remaining siblings, Thomas, William and Susannah were baptised in Bethel Calvinistic Methodistic Chapel, Llanwddyn. Susannah died in infancy, Thomas died in 1873 in Ohio, aged 59, and William died in 1885 in Wisconsin, aged 69.

Our thanks go to Geraint Griffiths of Carmarthen, for much of the above information. Geraint is descended from Mary Ellen Lewis, daughter of Margaret and John.

Georgina Jacobs from Wirral also contacted us. Georgina is descended from Jane, daughter of Rees and Susanah. She tells us that Susannah was known as 'Susie Jones Pantglas' and was a close friend and companion of Ann Griffiths, the Welsh hymn writer and poet.

Of his second family, both Rees (Jun) and his wife Jane, and Ann and her husband Evan Owens, subsequently lived in Utica, Oneida County, New York. By 1855, Welsh immigrants and their children accounted for ten percent of the population of Oneida County and in time, more people of Welsh heritage would reside per capita in Oneida County than in any other county in the United States. The county, and particularly Utica, became the centre of the Welsh book publishing industry in America. As many as twelve firms operated locally at one time or another in the nineteenth century and much of the output of these ethnic presses consisted of collections of sermons and other books that catered to the religious life of the Welsh.

Kathryn Williams tells us that Mary, another daughter of Rees and Gwin, married Reverend E J Hughes who started several Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Churches for the slate and coal miners in Pennsylvania. Mary's sister, Sina, became a teacher and died, unmarried, in 1910 in Manhattan. Kathryn, of Silver Spring, Maryland, is descended from Rev E J Hughes.

Our correspondents were delighted to have the information on their ancestor, and we were glad to know what became of him after he and his family reached New York. Without the help of their friends and neighbours at Llangadfan and, presumably, the Llanfyllin Guardians, they might well have ended up in the Workhouse – and there would have been no descendants in America.

Martin and other members of the Dolydd History Group, David Burton, Sandra Harvey and John Hainsworth, have almost finished cataloguing the first ten volumes of the Llanfyllin Guardian's minutes and the results will soon be accessible on the new Powys Archives website. They will be a useful resource for historians. The Group will exhibit at a History Fair at Welshpool on 28 June.



**Glanllyn
Llanfyllin
SY22 5LY**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Llanfyllin Dolydd Building Preservation Trust will be held on Monday 23 June 2014 at 7.00 p.m. at Y Dolydd, Llanfyllin, to conduct the following business:

1. To approve the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting
2. To receive the Accounts of the Trust for the last financial year
3. To receive the Report of the Trustees on the activities of the Trust
4. To accept the retirement of any Trustees who wish to retire, or are retiring by rotation *
5. To elect persons to fill vacancies arising **
6. To appoint auditors

Following formal business an account of recent developments will be given and there will be the opportunity for members, tenants and supporters to discuss the policy of the Trust.

(signed) T.W. MORRIS
Chairman

2 June 2014

* Roger Bowles has retired as a Trustee. Wynne Morris, John Hainsworth, Mavis Nicholson and Debra Hicks retire by rotation, and may offer themselves for re-election. Paul Gane and Charlotte Watkin retire as co-opted Trustees and may offer themselves for re-election.

** There are currently 15 Trustees: the Articles of Association allow for a maximum of 20. Candidates are advised to consult: 'The Essential Trustee: What you need to know' on the Charity Commission's website: www.charity-commission.gov.uk. A copy of the Trust's constitution is available on request from John Hainsworth: john@rhiwarth.fsnet.co.uk.

Nominations should be received by the Chairman at the above address at least seven days before the date of the meeting.