



Blueprint for a Green Future

It has been a busy year for the Llanfyllin Green Hub. Over 140 volunteers have taken part in the Ecological Survey, funded by Environment Wales, to spot, identify and record a surprisingly diverse range of flora and fauna, whilst the associated nature and wildlife events have diversified the activities on offer, brought new audiences to the site, increased media coverage and deepened our relationships with other local groups.

Our thanks go to Mark and Jenni Duffell of Arvensis Ecology and Andrew Cutts for their tireless enthusiasm and support, which has gone far beyond the survey that they were appointed to undertake. Their skills in reaching out and engaging people have brought this work to life for all those who participated and it has generated an interest and momentum in the community that we are now well placed to build upon.

The survey itself has demonstrated that, whilst there are no individual species of major importance on site, Y Dolydd is significantly richer botanically and ecologically than its neighbouring farmland. It's an important 'island' refuge surrounded by 'industrial' agriculture and the Trust therefore has an opportunity and a responsibility to protect and conserve it for the benefit of the wildlife that uses it and for the local community, now and in the future.



We are sad to report the death of our friend and founder of the Llanfyllin Green Hub, Andy Lee. Andy was the inspiration and original driving force behind the Green Hub and without his vision and passion it would not exist. We are deeply grateful to Andy for the difference he has made to our lives. Our love and thoughts go to his family and we will continue to honour him through the ongoing achievements of the Llanfyllin Green Hub.

The Trust is now developing a **site management plan**, based on the survey recommendations. This will be our rolling programme of routine activities that are undertaken each year to help manage and maintain the site.

We're also considering a range of projects for the 2016 **Green Hub programme of work**. These include courses in Hedge Laying, Forest and Wildlife Gardening, another Bioblitz in the summer with a range of family nature art events for the school holidays, improving the wildflower meadow, rejuvenating the memorial garden and developing a self-guided nature trail around the site. They'll be opportunities to get involved too with regular volunteer days where you can get hands on and have a go for yourself, learn new skills while you do and help us make a difference all at the same time. What's not to like?
(Continued on Page 2...)



Volunteers examining a field vole during the ecological survey

History Centre forges ahead

Work to create the Workhouse History Centre, made possible by the Heritage Lottery Fund, is progressing on schedule. The first task was to lift the old clay tiles, dig out and lay a new insulated concrete floor in what will be the reception and display area. Then the sagging lintels over the door and window were carefully rebuilt. The fireplace was repaired and a cast iron grate acquired to fit it. Next a new doorway, with a beautifully constructed arch, was opened up into the void behind the concrete block outer wall: this has been taken down and rebuilt with a brick inner skin and an outer facing of stone, like the rest of the building. All the materials have been salvaged from around the site. A window will be installed specially made to match those to the right, and the space created will become an office and study room. Defective quoins at the corner of the adjoining entrance range have been replaced: a tricky job which has ensured the integrity of the structure. The next step will be to start work on the roof. The work is being carried out by our architect Richard Payne, with the help of John Davies. (Continued on Page 3...)



Richard directs operations

Memorial Garden Consultation

Work for the 2016 programme has already begun with a consultation on the rejuvenation of our memorial garden. The Memorial Garden at Y Dolydd Llanfyllin Workhouse, designed by Tony Wainwright, was one of the first projects undertaken by the Trust when it took ownership of the building in 2004. The overgrown space was reclaimed and turned into a garden that could be enjoyed even before the building was safe to enter. Now the garden is suffering from wear and tear and is in need of rejuvenating. Our ambition is to create a sensory garden for the community that will be open and accessible to all.



We want this to be a garden where everyone can come to enjoy the space and time spent together and we're inviting you to help us achieve this by contributing your ideas to the design. We've written a consultation document that you can download on our website, or you can pick up a hard copy from our book room or the Llanfyllin library. It sets out our vision for the garden and describes what we want from the space. There's also a simple drawing that shows the main features we wish to retain. These are just our ideas. We know that many of you will have bigger and better ideas than this. So we now want other people in the community to add their suggestions to this vision. Your contribution will help us create a space that is truly owned and enjoyed by all.

You can contribute by letting your imagination run wild with the drawing as a template to add your ideas. Drop off your drawings at the Y Dolydd book room or Llanfyllin library with your name and contact details and we'll collect them from there, or email greenhub@the-workhouse.com or join us on the Llanfyllin Green Hub Facebook group. We'll gather all your suggestions and hope to have an exhibition in the New Year of all the entries we receive.

The Workhouse and gardens are open 7 days a week during daylight hours if you'd like to call in and have a look around. We'd love to see you.

Apple pressing



We had marvellous autumnal fun this October when we gathered to share, chop, scrutch, mash, mush and press apples in the amazing Normandy apple press imagined and built by Richie Stephenson and Stevie Winder here on site at y Dolydd. It was a truly beautiful community gathering much enjoyed by all who attended, including the evening entertainment provided by the incredibly talented Bushman's Handbag. As Stevie pointed out on the day the press, made from oak, will outlive us all and we hope that this is the beginning of a much loved and shared community tradition. Our warmest thanks to Richie, Stevie and Sue Dolman for making it happen and to all those who turned up, brought apples and helped make it such a successful weekend.

Half term craftiness

We had an overwhelming turn out for our free half term craft day on October 26th. For a few hours the gardens rang to the sound of children busily exploring and collecting wild treasure to make their autumn dream catchers. It was a wonderful sight to behold and brought much welcome life to the building. We will endeavour to repeat these activities during the school holidays so keep an eye out for the adverts.

Hedge planting

Thanks to everyone who joined us on November 7th to help plant our new hedge. We were given 420 hedgerow trees (hazel, blackthorn, crab apple, dog rose and elder) by the Woodland Trust as part of their First World War Centenary woods initiative and with your help we've created a new hedgerow habitat in our wildflower meadow. The trees all produce free food so as well as new space for wildlife in time they'll provide more foraging opportunities.

Upcoming events

We'll be having nature arty fun during our Christmas Market on 6 December, so pop in to pick up crafty and unique Christmas gifts and join in the fun while you shop. Or join us on 23rd January 2016 for our **forest gardening course** with Emma Maxwell from Newtown's Cultivate and keep an eye out for dates for more **hedge laying** opportunities to be confirmed soon and **volunteer gardening days** in the Spring. You can also keep up to date with everything that's happening by emailing greenhub@the-workhouse.com to join our mailing list, joining us on the Llanfyllin Green Hub Facebook group or check out our calendar of events and posts on our website at www.the-workhouse.com





History Group members receiving training from John Marjoram

History Centre *(Continued)*

Following two training sessions with heritage consultant John Marjoram volunteers have begun to create the interpretive displays for the reception area. One aim will be to explain the origin and purpose of the New Poor Law, and to point out parallels between 1834 and 2015. All the familiar issues of benefit costs and alleged dependency arise, and society was faced with the same arguments and dilemmas as today. The harsh realities of workhouse life will be presented, but also pioneering developments in education and medical care. The plan is to adopt a 'layered' approach, with the basic story highlighted on the walls and more detail available in folders below under the heading: 'Find out More'. We can't afford high-tech digital displays, but Tony Wainwright's design input will help to ensure visual appeal. As always we're short of original artefacts and photographs: we'd be glad to hear from anyone who can provide some more.

The highlight of the Centre will be the film 'Ghosts of the Workhouse', to be shown on demand in the viewing room in Welsh and English language versions. William Jones,

first Master of the Workhouse and later Clerk to the Guardians of the Llanfyllin Union, will show visitors around the building and introduce them to some of the men, women and children whose lives it touched. All the actors come from the local area. The first stage was the recording of aerial views and approaches by local drone operators FlytheEye, which produced some beautiful shots in perfect weather. Rehearsals have taken place under the skilled direction of Grace Goulding, who has to travel from Liverpool where she was recently appointed to a lectureship at LIPA. Filming has now begun and the Director of Photography is Phil Lane of our own Beehouse Studio. John Hainsworth is producing and making the tea. The process will be well advanced by the time we go to press and editing will take place in December and January.

The target date for opening is Easter next year, but the formal opening will take place on Saturday 14 May. Trevor Fishlock, journalist and historian who has made around 150 films for television on Welsh history and countryside including one on Y Dolydd for 'Fishlock's Wales', will perform the opening ceremony and introduce the premiere of 'Ghosts of the Workhouse'. The opening will be part of a Victorian weekend, to include a craft fair, music, drama and a talk by Trevor on the Davies sisters of Llandinam and Gregynog: his book on their remarkable life, 'A Gift of Sunlight', was published last year. Make a note of the date!

The new facility will be open daily and manned by volunteers at weekends: we're looking for people who might be prepared to volunteer for a half day's duty once a month.

JOHN HAINSWORTH



Tom Morris plays William Jones

Don't miss the Christmas Market!

Demand from craftspeople and stallholders has reached a record level for this year's Christmas Market, to be held on Sunday 6 December from 12 noon to 6 p.m. Entry is free. There will be wooden and hand-made toys and Christmas decorations, jewellery, handknits, candles, creams and potions, a book sale, leatherwork from our resident craftswoman, local food, music and much more. Some of our artisan tenants will be opening their workshops. The boys' courtyard will be enlivened by a Christmas tree, to be raffled, and an array of stalls. Seasonal refreshments will be served in a festive atmosphere. A Welsh trio will sing at 2.00 and Father Christmas will be there around 3.00 with a free gift for every child. The nicest possible way to do your Christmas shopping!

Keeping the Noise down.

As reported in the last issue, following complaints about some events in 2014 the Trust appointed consultants Acoustic & Noise Ltd of Newport to carry out tests and produce a noise management plan. After some delay the tests were conducted in September, and the report has been received. We had already taken steps to cut the number of days with outdoor music and reduce the volume. This year there were no complaints about noise from the Workhouse Party or from other events out of doors, and the report relates particularly to indoor events:

We had anticipated a requirement to install further costly sound insulation. In the event the report advises against this: instead it recommends acquiring a more efficient sound system which will enable output to be precisely regulated. This in itself will be expensive and we're looking at ways of raising the money, perhaps through a mix of crowd funding and one or two special events. The report will go to the County Council to keep them informed of our plans.

The Trust's policy is to reduce its dependence on music events and to diversify the range of music. However, they remain our most successful fund raisers and enable us to pay the mortgage. Moreover, they have an important role in catering for many younger inhabitants of Llanfyllin and its hinterland, helping to keep them in the area, providing enjoyment and sometimes an opportunity to perform. As long as they're well conducted, with proper age limits and security, they afford a safe environment for recreation. Some of them might appeal less to other members of our community – though the age range of local people attending is remarkably wide. We need to strike the right balance. Meanwhile we welcome offers of help with organising activities that cater for different sectors and interests.

Looking ahead

This year we arranged three weekend music events : our own Workhouse Party, Kippertronix and the (Steampunk) Phoenix Alternative Festival. All of them went well with the Party, our big fundraiser, netting around £12,000.

For 2016 we're planning the same three events. We think this is manageable and sustainable for our neighbours and for ourselves: the Party alone demands a huge investment of voluntary effort. We're also planning more regular, smaller-scale indoor events over a single evening: perhaps one a month. Some of these are likely to be organised by Mark Burnett's Workhouse Project, whose events have made important contributions to our funds over the years - please note that the Project is quite distinct from the Trust and its views may not always reflect our own! We'd like to book more private parties and are looking at the possibility of becoming a licensed wedding venue. There will be the Victorian Weekend in May, some kind of family event in August, Open Doors in September as well as the High School's production of 'Oliver!'. This year our funding bid for an Urban Arts Festival failed, but Dale Marshall may decide to try again. The History Centre and active marketing of the Bunkhouse will bring more visitors to the Workhouse and to the town. 2016 will be a busy year.

Keep calm and canter on!

One example of diversification into quieter activities has been the horse shows at Y Dolydd this summer. Organised by the Cain Valley Horse and Pony Club and often arranged at quite short notice, they've attracted enough entries to operate two rings. Riders of all ages have taken part. Whilst retaining the vital element of competition the programme has aimed at the widest possible appeal with a mix of traditional and novelty classes in a relaxed family environment.

This year four shows were held on a trial basis. Next year the Club plans a programme of monthly shows from April to October, with a presentation and social evening in November. We need to ensure that our ground doesn't suffer and the occasional event might have to be cancelled in bad weather, but this year all went well and we're looking forward to the new season.



Oral History Update

On Friday September 4th a group of nine people gathered at the Dolydd for an Oral History Training Day, led by Dr Fiona Cosson from Manchester Metropolitan University, who guided us through a wide range of exercises and shared many resources with us. Dr Cosson reminded us that oral history was the earliest kind of history which was displaced by written accounts, but in its current form, it is a field of activity (and study) which offers distinctive ways of engaging with the past, particularly in its capacity to tell us about the meaning that events and situations have for people.

However, the main focus of the day was on practical matters of preparing for interviews, considering issues such as obtaining informed consent and actually making audio recordings. We also listened to some notable excerpts of interviews, including the first known recording of the human voice in 1860. We all agreed that by the end of the day we had learned a great deal about the practice of oral history, had absorbed masses of useful advice, and that the questions we were asked to discuss were very valuable in helping us to clarify our priorities for the project.



Fiona Cosson delivers oral history training in the Gallery

The training was funded by our Heritage Lottery Award as part of the community development work for the new History Centre. The same funding has been used to buy our essential recording equipment: two digital audio recorders and accessories. With the Training Day behind us, and having updated our essential documentation, the group is now engaged in contacting people who have expressed a willingness to share their stories and record them for our History archive. Typically, members visit, by arrangement, local people with stories to share and record them informally in their homes. Some people may prefer to meet elsewhere, at their convenience. The essential idea is to capture stories about the Dolydd before they are lost. We are interested in all periods of the building's history, including the various activities and enterprises that have occurred there in recent times. That can be memories about anyone who worked, lived or visited there, as well as information about the various uses to which the rooms and gardens have been put.

Occasionally, we meet people who have personal stories to share but think they are too small to be of interest. On the contrary, even five-minute accounts of a memory of visiting someone when it was

a Care Home, for example, will be a valued item in our collection. If anyone does have something to share, but wishes it to be anonymous, that will be of course be respected. Interviews can be in either Welsh or English, as preferred.

We plan to make some of the voices and stories we capture ready for sharing with visitors to our History Centre next year. Such personal accounts bring the past to life in a very direct and meaningful way and we welcome as wide a variety of memories as possible.

If you have any memories or stories to share, or have ideas or suggestions about the project, we would love to hear from you. In the first instance, speak to a member of the History Group or contact me at sandraaharvey@btinternet.com or 01691 662050.

SANDRA HARVEY



The Pilgrim Trust

