

CYFEILLION EGLWYS SANTES JULITTA FRIENDS OF ST JULITTA'S CHURCH

A local history and conservation group / Grŵp hanes a chadwraeth lleol

Llywyddau/Presidents: **Emma Disley & Kate Disley**

Rhif Elusen Cofrestredig/Registered Charity No. 1068756

Ysgrifennydd/Secretary: Vacant

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Annual Report 2018

To the Friends and supporters of St Julitta's Church

Again 2018 was an active and productive year for the Friends of St Julitta's. Many thanks to the committee, and my fellow officers, for all their support, and all the support that come our way from the membership, many of whom live many miles away from medieval church that means so much to ourselves and hopefully the village of Capel Curig.

I start this report by again expressing how indebted we are to Plas y Brenin for the support they generously give, many thanks to Jackie Bryson, Chief Executive and her staff for fantastic support. They have produced a new video about the centre, which is available entitled *Why Snowdonia*, showcasing Snowdonia, (www.pyb.uk) or phone 01690 720214. Public talks and lectures are listed on their web site, and in 2019 have published a list of talks relating to the Environment.

We are delighted to announce that one of our members, Kate Tiller, has been awarded an OBE for services to local History, in Her Majesties New Year's Honours List. Congratulations to Kate Tiller OBE.

All has progressed OK with the church building and churchyard in 2018 – except our drainage project – which we hope will move on in shortly. Will Pierce the builder has pulled out and we now seek another. We are also investigating the installation of mains electricity, but again service and minor problems are delaying progress. We hope for progress in June. We have purchased a new and better generator and improved the lighting provision in the church, and of course we now have a very posh new notice board outside, built by Ken and Edward, largely using recycled timber. Very many thanks to them.

I am sure that those involved will agree that the AGM weekend 2018 worked well. The Brenin is a great venue, we had a respectable attendance at the meeting, Ken Jones kindly came along and spoke about Hedd Wen, the Welsh poet who lost his life in the 1st World War in a relaxed and informative talk, greatly adding to the meeting. Note that the printed minutes of all our meetings are available if requested. In the afternoon the group had a visit to Hedd Wen's home and information centre, near Trawsfynydd. A delightful spot, with a sprinkling of snow on the fields adding atmosphere and showing them off, added to the fine landscape of the area. The visit was part of our Easter 2018 remembrance event 'Lest we Forget' celebrations.

His home a modest hill farm hunkered on the southern slopes of Cwm Prysor, Yr Ysgwrn has been an unlikely visitor destination since Hedd Wyn's death in 1917. However now pilgrims from far and wide have visited Yr Ysgwrn to view the iconic Black Chair and to meet Hedd Wyn's family. The site is now of international significance, acclaimed as the home of Ellis Humphrey Evans, better known by his bardic name, Hedd Wyn. A renowned Welsh poet, he was killed in action during the First World War. He was posthumously



awarded the 1917 National Eisteddfod Chair at Birkenhead for his poem, Yr Arwr ("The Hero"). An A4 five page account of Hedd Wen and his war service, produced for the visit is available from Harvey.

A visit to be recommended to all those not with us, look it up, www.yrysgwrn.com.

Generally, Easter 2018 went well too, we picked up about £80 in the donation box, met some interesting people and had lots of rain on Sunday and snow on Monday! A select group who gathered for dinner in the Bryn Twrch, on Saturday evening, finished the weekend off very nicely.

In June Richard Douglas Pennant again brought together a great evening - an evening celebrating the lives of Alice & Hilda Douglas Pennant. This year's Alice and Hilda's Birthday Party brought to the church a professional performance of poetry and live music very unique for Capel Curig. The entertainment included poetry from John Barnie, Richard Margraff -Turley and Richard Douglas Pennant, interspersed with songs and music provided by the Welsh blues trio Hollow Log, from their recently released CD, *Dirty Deal*. Hollow Log hail from Aberystwyth and Abergavenny. What a memorable evening, full of entertaining words and music! Again, as usual, everyone retired to a buffet at the Tyn y Coed, provided by Richard.

The 17th of our annual Summer Exhibitions 2018, ***Teithio Trwy Hanes - Travelling through History. Ffyrdd a Pontydd Sir Gaernarfon, the roads and bridges of Caernarfonshire***, came about without a lot of panic and was one of the best that we have produced. The research was thorough, Frances finding some lovely early pictures to illustrate the text. We financed it from our own funds, something a few years ago we could never have considered! The Roads and Bridges was an extremely interesting subject and part of it is on display in the church at present (Easter 2019). We had a wide level of help and contribution, I particularly thank the help given with the translations by Rory Frances and Ken Jones. From far and wide a lengthy list of people contributed, thank you to one and all. Ken Smith again analysed the visitors and produced a printed report.

August brought our annual visit of composer and classical guitarist Jonathan Richards. JONATHAN this year presented to the audience with some wonderful music from some world-famous composers. Thirty years ago, Jonathan produced his first record and during the evening he returned to the music that helped to establish his reputation. A treat for all who were there. He has produced ten CD 's for sale. Note his web site jonathanrichardsguitar.co.uk.

The November presentation evening saw me, with the support of Frances, take the stage in the village community centre. In 2017 I organised a small party to visit Tibet, with Frances and four other persons. I was so fascinated by the people, the country and the

political situation that I felt I had to share it. I think the Tibet presentation went down OK to the audience of seven (!) persons, not a very good turn out from the residents of Capel Curig! Hopefully the presentation brought through my feelings about the Chinese over their invasion of Tibet. The million or so Tibetans who died during the invasion would have thought it was all very bad news, and sixty years on there are an awful lot of people today who still feel the same way. Thanks to Shan Ashton for the use of the community centre,

Amazingly, on the Saturday evening following the presentation, the *Medieval Thank You* dinner took place in the church, again a momentous success. The Friends of



The two Octavian's, not attacking the children, but the birthday cake.

St Julitta's are I think based on a 'Team' relationship with its members and Friends. This event stretches the strength of the team a little beyond the norm that we operate, but this is the reward! In one form or another a five-course meal is served to about 24 guests. Saturday was dinner preparation and Saturday evening was the dinner served to a very near full house. The church looked very grand as added to the joviality was a Birthday Cake celebrating the two octogenarians present. A very pleasant social occasion, note the attached picture, with thanks to Peter.

Mynydd Llandegai Choir visit of seasonal singing at the end of November was chorally great again. May they continue to support us for many years, and many thanks to Pat for bringing it together.

Progress in the church yard has been up to normal standards – generally measured by how many days in is sunny when we are there. Our volunteer helper continues to progress maintenance at a level above anything we could expect. The churchyard path now circles the bottom area of the churchyard, making an enormous difference to access to that area. The bird feeders are maintained and the grass cutting container rebuilt. A grasscutter was found in Capel Curig who made an excellent job, for a small payment, but sadly he has left the village, so you open up the search for a someone new. I also have hopes that in the future we will be able to rebuild one or two of the damaged memorials – a further challenge! We also have purchased a coffee dispenser, for visitors to the church, so proper coffee is available if you take some proper coffee!

Our diary of events for 2019, is now published please pick up a copy and note the dates in your diary. It does follow the pattern of previous years, but when one arrives at a good system it's not to time to change! Note also the new format, many thanks to Kate Williams for the contemporary design. We hope to have a celebration with Silvia Disley to celebrate her 90th birthday but watch this space for details!

Easter 2019 will again see the church open to all, with stewards on duty – but we still need a couple of volunteers. Our last years exhibition will be on display, ***Teithio Trwy Hanes - Travelling through History. Ffyrdd a Pontydd Sir Gaernarfon, the roads and bridges of Caernarfonshire***, please come along if you missed it last year. We also hope to have a working party around on Easter Sunday – come along and enjoy the fun. There daffodils looked great at the weekend as did the mass of primroses, but shortly there will be loads of

daffodils that need dead heading so please visit us and join the working class of Capel Curig (see below) – who are going to be featured in our summer exhibition 2019!

London Marathon 2019, our two competitors have raised £1000 so far, but further donations are needed! We sincerely thank them for their support. Donations to the Friends of St Julitta's can be made via Just Giving, a system that presents the Gift Aid tax subscription to us direct; A £20 donation has 20% added to it. I have circulated details on how to access this – please get in touch if you have any problems. Perhaps the money will be used to take us further into the 21st Century, with the installation of mains Electricity and all the advantages that this will bring to us and the building.

Our Heritage Footpath around Capel Curig nature trail progresses. At last we are going ahead and having it commercially printed. We had hopes that it could have been launched at this AGM, but time and resource did not allow this – but with a little luck and cooperation we may have it for Easter. I am sure that everyone will be pleased with the finished production, it has been at the design stage since the year 2000!

We are at the beginning of the road that will lead to another exhibition in the summer of 2019. The western parts of the parish of Capel Curig, the Glyderau and the Carneddau, came progressively into the ownership of the Penrhyn estate between the 14th and the 19th centuries. The exhibition based will base its research on the people of Capel Curig how worked for and lived in property related to the Penrhyn Estate. With the title 'People and Places of the Penrhyn estate - Capel Curig 1780 -1930'. Many of these people are buried in the churchyard and are ancestors of some of our membership. If your family tree does overlap with our project, please get in touch. It is hoped that this will lead up the publication of a booklet based on our research and perhaps a website. Bangor University's Institute for the Study of Welsh Estates' 'Prospect Penrhyn' has recently explored the lives and experiences of those generations of people who lived and worked in the Nant Ffrancon / Capel Curig and similar rural villages during the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, we hope to draw from some of this information.

It is nice to report that Frances, our treasurer, is now a lecturer in Local History in Oxford University; I am not sure if this matches her position as treasurer of our organisation, but the appointment board must have taken that into account when she submitted her application! Congratulations.

Sadly I have to report two deaths within our members and Supporter. Bob Ransome, a long-time friend of mine, was an early member and supporter of the Friends, who lived in Ombersley, Worcestershire. Being keen on walking and mountaineering he knew Snowdonia from an early age, one of his early jobs was working a summer season in the Pen y Gwryd Hotel. It was Bob, on an early work day, who initially opened up the Copse by the church, with a footpath and later, for one of our Thank You medieval dinners, cooked the dinner! I also remember him well when he joined a trip that I organised to Morocco, where we climbed Mount Toubcal, and a year or so later in Nepal where the weather was rather unkind and we failed to achieve our aims. Some of his family and friends will on Wednesday 17th April take part in a short walk from his home village in remembrance of him. A kind, gentle man, his family and we will very much miss him so much.

Roger Orgill was for many years an instructor and later the deputy director at Plas y Brenin, from its earliest days, the National Mountain Training Centre in Capel Curig.

I had known him for many years, the first meeting was on a mountaineering course that I attended in 1962 as a student, Roger was an instructor and also entertained the group on his guitar in the evening. When I moved to Snowdonia in 1972, we remade our friendship as both sat on the Snowdonia National Park Societies management committee. He was a tremendously experienced mountaineer and knew and worked with John Disley in the late 1950s. We met again when the Friends brought together an exhibition celebrating the life of John Disley in 2014. When invited, he readily came along and officially opened the exhibition and then delivered the evening talk about the life of John and the history of the centre. A great loss to his family and all that knew him.

With the passing of 2018, it could be said that we have passed our 20th anniversary on initially taking over the semi derelict building, with our 21st ahead. We are so lucky in the way we have attracted volunteers and supporters. An example of this is our present presidents. They find time, despite being fantastically busy, both with family and professional lives, to give us continual support, it is much appreciated by myself and the Executive committee. Richard Douglas Pennant too, who fronts the Alice and Hilda Evening in June, has been extremely generous in supporting us financially over the last 12 months.

Finally Ken Smith does a fantastic job overseeing the Church building and keeping everything in order. He has spent hours sanding down the front door of the church, a labour of love, producing a much-improved finish to the rather out of place red hard wood (Meranti?) door. The next visit he was rebuilding the dry-stone wall at the back of the churchyard. THANKS KEN!

And thank you one and all,

Best wishes

Harvey