

CYFEILLION EGLWYS SANTES JULITTA

FRIENDS OF ST JULITTA'S CHURCH

Rhif Elusen Cofrestredig/Registered Charity Number 1068756

ANNUAL REPORT 2007 & FRIENDS' NEWSLETTER 13 NEWSLETTER

Dear All,

I guess looking back on our past year one would call it a year of consolidation. Putting together the exhibition in the summer was a challenge and did not come under the heading of Consolidation – but generally the committee and the officers have been catching their breaths after a number of years of feverish activity.

We started the year off with a very nice A G M weekend, Plas Y Brenin again providing us with a wonderful venue for the meeting. Jan Hughes stood down as secretary after a number of years at the helm. She was sincerely thanked for all the her hard work and the marvellous contribution she had made to the Friends. But the Hughes are keeping the job in the family, with Rod, Jan's husband, kindly offering to fill the vacant position. The formal meeting was followed by Mr Eddy Naylor, a loyal Friends supporter, taking us through his countless generations of family research, where we rubbed shoulders with everybody and anybody who had featured in the history of Wales over the last 1000 years. A fascinating talk, which must have generated interest in family history amongst all the audience, many thanks again to Eddy.

In the afternoon we visited Llanrwst where we initially had a guided tour of the Almshouses, Imogen Crawford-Mowday arranged our visit and Mrs Pat Rowley filled us in with all the detail of the fascinating buildings, which are now the base for the Llanrwst Arms Houses Trust, a group similar to ourselves who have done wonders in converting them into a visitor centre and museum. We then visited the church and of course marvelled at the Gwydir Chapel. The Town Trail followed, during which we visited Llanrwst's very good second hand book shop. One way or another the trail seemed to finish at a café that was an antique shop, with a second hand book shop, that actually sold wonderful cream teas so this could not be passed by, after having been turned away from the Eagles Hotel for tea. An absolutely brilliant afternoon; no, we did not gate crash the ladies cleaning the brassware in the church (perhaps they thought we did!), the sun shone on us, and the cream teas went down really well! The evening found us in the Tyn y Coed Hotel having a lovely

meal, bringing to a close another social occasion that the Friends of St Julitta's thrive on. Many thanks to all that contributed to its success.

We of course did the right thing on the Sunday and had a workday in the church. This year has been the Year of the Churchyard. The committee have drawn up a grave yard maintenance policy (please ask for one if you wish). Churchyards of the quality of St Julitta's are a challenge that volunteers remember for years to come. We had in previous years played around the perimeter but not really ventured into the depths, some of which we won't visit for a year or two yet. But the strimmer was put into top gear, and the oil was changed in the lawn mower (in fact Roy had amazingly delved into the depths of the web to find a replacement engine and fitted it!), the reward of the finished product was worth all the hard work. We now have tamed the grass in the section all around the church but adjacent to it. Together with this a great deal of pruning and tidying up took place whilst Ken pressed on with rebuilding his stone walls.

Early on in the year we had been working hard to bring about the publication of the book on Evan Roberts titled *The Mountain Man* – another non consolidation job! Then authors Llyr Griffiths & Robin Gwyndaf had translated the original book from Welsh to English; the original book having been published in Welsh in 1987. The announcement that the CCW had awarded us a grant of £2000 + ensured the project would go ahead.

Evan Roberts was a remarkable self taught botanist; he was a man who dedicated himself to studying, interpretation and conserving the wealth of the natural world which surrounds us. By re publishing the book in English we felt we were telling a greater part of the populace about a really great man who was born, and lived all his life in Capel Curig. We had another great evening on May 20th when we launched the book. We hired the New Village Hall, broadcaster and National Trust executive member Dei Tomas, Nant Peris, chaired the launch said a few entertaining words. The hall, which was of course the old school that Evan attended, was packed with people and provided a ideal venue for the event. We are grateful to Mrs Wyn Roberts for providing a lovely buffet. Since publication the book has been selling well (have you bought a copy!?). We are grateful to Cedric Milner who wrote an excellent review of the book that was published in the Snowdonia Society's Journal. Please let me know if you can think of any outlets for the book. I am grateful to all that contributed so much to this project.

We have not made much impression on further renovation of the church, but this year grave yard has had a lot of attention. . The Get Stuck in Weekend was an extremely successful event, a very

well supported affair. Like I have said keeping the grass and other vegetation under control is challenging, and it could be said that we don't always win the battle. The Snowdonia Society again helped us by donating a skip which was well filled at the end of the weekend. The community council have tidied up the parking area next to the church, which they own. We finished off creating the footpath that passes behind the east end of the church, making access easier for all. We have put in place some bird boxes and entered the church into the National Park sponsored Wild Life community Garden competition; we did not win, but it added to our knowledge of wild life gardening! We have had our species list translated into Welsh by Mrs Pat Denne. Very many thanks to all those that contributed - to those that sent in donations to cover the cost of materials used and to those that worked away at all the very physical jobs on the day.

It would be good to expand disabled access but I guess we are now as near as we will ever be to producing an ideal situation, within the church yard the constraints to do this are too great. The church yard trail is moving on, and we now have a dead line finish date for this of July. Mike Cousins & Eileen Evans have tucked the project under their wings.

Yes we have steered clear of Phase four of the restoration - Evans Book has interfered. As I reported last year progress on disabled toilet has been stationary, but it is not forgotten. But Ken continues to form dry stone walls out of the stone that lays about the site, but he is up against it too – it is extremely difficult to build stone walls if there is no stone available. Just another problem to solve! We have many plans still in the in-tray, and although the way forward seems intimidating and problematic, its this part of the project that makes things interesting. As I sit at home surrounded by reams of material that will hopefully be our Exhibition 2007, opening another file does not seem a good idea.

Last year we brought together “**Eryri to The Himalayas, a Mountaineering Story**”. Mountaineering has been a big part of Capel Curig for over 200 years, and in the exhibition we illustrated how the Himalayas are linked with many Welsh and Capel Curig connections. We had tremendous support from both the Mountaineers involved and from the research and investigation done by our members all of whom we sincerely thank. Visitors would have been surprised to note how many climbers had done great things on Everest, and other great mountains. Sir Charles Evans, the deputy Leader of the 1953 expedition, a welsh man and a resident of Capel would have beaten Edmund Hillary to the top of Everest, if he had been a little luckier with the oxygen equipment supplied. He went on to lead the expedition that claimed the first ascent of Kangchenjunga; one of the climbers to reach the summit was Joe

Brown, another resident of Eryri. Eileen Jackson made a wonderful job of opening it and I would like to mention Tony Astill, whose knowledge and photographs of the Everest Expeditions in the 1930's were invaluable. The stewards who volunteer their time so generously also need special mention, we all hope that the help will continue in the future.

Having mentioned the 2007 exhibition I must tell you more. **“Dyffryn Mymbyr – a portrait of a Valley”** is to examine the valley from Plas y Brenin to the Pen y Gwryd Hotel, a part of Snowdonia that has writers have generally slept through to eagerly describe the wonders of Snowdon - except for the evocative depiction of the Dyffryn Mymbyr farm in Thomas Firbank's 1930s classic book 'I Bought a Mountain', very little is generally known about the valley itself. But Dyffryn Mymbyr has been and is famous for the view along the valley towards the Snowdon Horseshoe, being represented in many drawings, paintings and photographs over the last two hundred and fifty years. We will expand on this in many areas; research the early residents, and their lives, together with the geology, ecology and prehistory.

Our events diary, put together by Jan, had its ups and downs. The Guitar evening went down really well. Of course the village Carol evening was a lovely evening well attended and organised by Peter Smith and his team. We again repeated jointly with the Snowdonia Society the Painters Challenge. The day gives the opportunity for the amateur painter/artist to work with a professional Artist available to help and advice.

We are all in the committee really pleased at the way the tea towels have sold – leading to a repeat order early in 2007..

I trust that you feel that things have gone well in the last twelve months and thank all members for their support. I have again been lax in circulating information, and will try harder in 2007 to keep you all informed of progress. But please feel that this is YOUR group, we are relaxed, friendly, in it for the fun, and would so much like to see more of you, and by adopting hands on position you will learn all that is happening! I do look forward to the AGM and chatting about our project please come along if you can find some time!

Finally sincere thanks to the officers and the committee for their loyalty and outstanding contributions.

Very best wishes

Harvey 10 04 07

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Yn gweithio i achub Eglwys Ieiaf Eryri
Working to Save Snowdonia's Smallest Church