

Open Saturday and Sunday afternoons



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Newsletter No. 7 October 2019

Letter from the Chairman

Welcome to the seventh edition of the Friends' Newsletter.

Most visitors to the Centre are local but we do have some who come from further afield. Recently, Gareth Edwards and his wife were being filmed for a BBC series about Welsh canals. They took a trip on a canoe from Coedgwilym and then came back to the Centre for tea and much appreciated Welsh cakes. The Waterways Recovery Group held another work camp on the Swansea Canal this summer at Trebanos and Ynysmeudwy and the Centre hosted a thank you party for their efforts. Other visitors have included walking groups from Neath and Swansea, the annual 43-2-C community cycle ride and a Heritage Walk through the village as part of Cadw's Open Doors initiative.

At the end of last year we mounted an exhibition on the work of the Mond in World War 1, commemorating the centenary of the end of the war. Rhian Evans, our youngest committee member and the curator of the exhibition, was invited to make a presentation at a Vale Lunch and Learn event.



05/7/19
Marek Edwards
Gareth Edwards
Enjoyed it all. lovely cup of tea...
a fabulous welcome + lovely coffee + cakes!!

Gareth Edwards and film crew on the Swansea Canal

Debra John also presented her monologue 'Make yourself Necessary'; both were very well received. In the course of the afternoon we were shown photographs of some of the Mond men who had perished and we now hope to make a film using Debra's recording as a soundtrack.

We look forward to another successful year helped yet again by our wonderful volunteers.

Susan Evans

Social Media - Facebook and our 1000 likes

Jean Round, our Facebook coordinator, tells how she hit her target:

The use of Facebook to spread the word has been essential to the Centre. Life can be all about setting targets, so, I decided, back in 2017, that my target would be to increase the number of 'Likes' our page would attain. This can be achieved by several actions. Inviting friends to 'Like' our page, when folks comment on a post

inviting them, and so on. The number gradually increased. I then posted a request to the Smethwick Heritage Centre, with whom we have links, this resulted in our number reaching over 600; that was in January 2018.

This year, I've posted requests frequently, with great response, and, earlier this year, we reached the magic 1,000!

New Tree on the Block!



Paulownia Tomentosa in the park today

We are very lucky to have had a new tree planted in Coed Gwilym Park close to the Centre. Many thanks to Swansea Council's Parks Department.

It is a 'Paulownia Tomentosa' but has common names e.g. Princess tree, Empress tree, and Foxglove-tree. A deciduous tree and native to central and western China. It is extremely fast-growing, putting on up to 3 feet of height each year; it will quickly mature into a 30- to 40-foot-tall shade tree with a canopy width of 30 to 40 feet. It is noted for its enormous soft leaves and copious quantities of purple foxglove-like and delicately scented flowers in April. We look forward to seeing the flowers!

This new Tree is not the only unusual tree in the Park. Do you recognise the tree in the picture below left?

Answer below.



Mystery tree - A Walnut



Paulownia Tomentosa flowers as we hope to see them in years to come.

Bats

NOTE: it is an offence to handle or disturb bats, Mark is licenced to handle them.



One August evening eighteen people came to the Heritage Centre to learn about bats. Mark Winder (former Planning Ecology Officer with Swansea Council) gave an illustrated talk about British bats and then we spent an hour 'listening' to them flying along the canal while feeding. The day before Mark had rescued a local bat and we had the added bonus of seeing a bat up close. It was a Common Pipistrelle which he later released; it had only needed some food and water.

Thanks are also due to Len Moran who provided the bat detectors which allowed everyone to 'hear' them.

West Window at St Mary's



The West Window, St Mary's Church, Clydach Photograph by Bob Grainger Photography



In November 2018 the world commemorated the centenary of the ending of World War 1. August 2019 saw the centenary of the dedication of the west window at St Mary's Church Clydach. A stained glass memorial to John Ynys Palfrey Jones of Clydach. The window was designed by the renowned Victorian artist Reginald Frampton, his stained glass windows are rare, only four are known to exist.

The window depicts a Communion Service in the Trenches of France during the First World War. At the time of the installation it was believed it was amongst the very first to depict soldiers in khaki. The side lights of the window depict classical warriors representing Justice and Truth. The coats of arms in the window tell the story of the life of the young soldier, the son of Dr and Mrs Jones of 'Penybank', Clydach in whose memory the window was given.

At the top there is the cross of St George, below this the Red Dragon and below this the Prince of Wales' Three Feathers, all pointing to military service. On the left hand side there is the coat of arms of the diocese of Llandaff and below this the coat of arms of Cambridge

University. On the right hand side there is the coat of arms of Blundell's Public School, Tiverton and below this the arms of Gonville & Caius College Cambridge. The young John Ynys Palfrey Jones was a pupil at the Cathedral School Llandaff before continuing his education at Blundell's. Whilst at Blundell's he sat an entrance examination for Cambridge University. The war intervened and he never took up his studies there though he did visit for military training. He entered the Welsh Regiment and, as the window shows, was killed in action whilst leading his men into battle at Morval, France in 1918; he was twenty years old. The window tells the story of his life and the hopes that the war took from him.

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Paying Subscriptions



Each year we have to pay for insurance and licences to allow us to run the centre. These basic running costs are met by subscription and the sale of goods at the Heritage Centre.

Membership runs from 1st October to 30th September and the membership fee is £5.00 per year.

We have set up a facility to pay subscriptions annually using PayPal. This is much easier for both you and us. To pay using PayPal go to the website www.clydachheritagecentre.com and Click on the Support Us tab.

If you pay tax on any income you receive then please consider stating 'Yes' in the GiftAid box. GiftAid increases the value of subscriptions and donations by 25%. So for every £1 that you give GiftAided the Heritage Centre will actually receive £1.25 and at no cost to yourself.

I would like to become a Friend of Clydach Heritage Centre.

I enclose my subscription for the year

*Name:

*Address:

.....

.....

*Post Code:

*Tel:

*Email:

Age (if under 18):

Membership Fee: £5/year

I would like to make a donation of £.....
making a total of £.....

giftaid it

If you pay income tax or capital gains tax we can claim 25p for every pound you give to us - at no extra cost to you.

If you are happy for us to claim Gift Aid on your contribution from 6th April this year please tick here.

Signed:

Date:/...../.....

* The Friends will only use the information provided on this form for the purposes of contacting you about FCHC business.

GIs on Mynydd y Gwair



June 2019 marked the 75th anniversary of the D-Day Landings and the Battle of Normandy. There is a connection between Clydach and D-Day, kept alive in recordings made by the Friends of Clydach Heritage Centre of local residents' memories. In the 1940s, American GIs were stationed at Mynydd-y-Gwair - a mountain just outside of the village. Here, troops from the US 2nd Infantry Division trained in preparation for D-Day. Accounts tell us they faced crawling through mud and under barbed wire, all the while being bombarded by live ammunition from machine guns. These men later landed at Omaha Beach in Normandy and faced the same ordeal, this time at the hands of the Germans.

Hubert Jones was a young boy who lived in Craigeffnparc at the time. He would often travel up to the mountain after school to see the American troops. Hubert described the conditions as 'terrible', after seeing the soldiers camping in tents in the middle of winter, with rain and wind from the Atlantic Ocean drifting up and over the site. Other locals also visited the Americans, some became well-acquainted with them, with numerous stories of the troops sharing sweets with children and meals with families or travelling down to the village to attend dances.

Sharing these stories helps us to build a picture of what life was like during the Second World War and shows that not even the smallest communities were left untouched by it, in one way or another. You can hear Hubert, Roy, Islwyn and Betty's stories at peoplescollection.wales. Search for Memories of Clydach.



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