

Open Saturday and Sunday afternoons



www.ClydachHeritageCentre.com

Newsletter No. 5 October 2017

Letter from the Chairman

The Centre has had another busy and successful year with over 2000 visitors. As well as the more usual local visitors we have welcomed people from as far away as London, Scotland and New York. During August the Centre was open on Tuesdays to coincide with canoe hire activities by Swansea Canal Society. These proved to be very successful with many positive comments about the facilities on offer. In September a village heritage walk was organised as part of Cadw's Open Doors initiative. Even the local walkers found something

new in the course of the walk. Do you know where this carved figure is to be found?*

Over the course of the year the Centre has received donations of historic and wildlife photographs and also a selection of copies of Nickel News, the

newsletter of the Mond, from the 1960s and 1970s. These are really interesting covering the beginning of the computer age. Grants are a very important way of improving the facilities on offer at the Centre. Thanks go to Councillor Gordon Walker, The Ethel and Gwynne Morgan Trust, Clydach Community Council and the VALE Community Fund.

Susan Evans

* the nature reserve at Cae Pantydugoed

Budding Historians

The Centre hosted a group of budding historians this summer. Brownies from the 3rd Clydach unit paid a visit as part of their summer programme and their Finding Your Way award badge. The girls aged between seven and 10 made their way from their base on Vardre Road using the canal path whilst spotting the local flora and fauna. For some of them it was their first visit to the Centre and they enjoyed exploring the resources including the Brick Chimney and Timeline inside the building and later, the Dram outside. Those Brownies who go to Clydach Primary were able to show their fellow members of the pack the different resources available at the Centre.

The girls were also treated to a taste of Living History project and heard tales of two of the people who lived in the area during the Second World War. They especially enjoyed hearing about the Queen's visit to the Mond as a young girl in the 1940s. "We enjoy bringing the Brownies to the Centre. All the volunteers are very welcoming and patient with our girls. They answer all their questions and it is interesting to watch their reaction to the stories and history of the village where they live. I think it is important to forge links with local groups and for the Brownies to understand the heritage of their village," said Karren Roberts, one of the Brownie Leaders.



Friends on the Canal

The Swansea Canal is a fantastic resource alongside the Centre and a walk along it can be brightened if we see any of our little friends. They may not be The Wind in The Willows' Ratty, Toad and Mole but apparently an otter has been seen between the river and the canal.



Robin © Barry Mitchell

At night different creatures appear and at around dusk on a damp June evening fourteen people gathered outside the Heritage Centre peering at glowing screens and listening to funny squeaks. They were 'hearing' the bats which live along the canal. Mark Winder, Swansea Council's ecologist had made a presentation on bats and their habits before we ventured out with our detectors. We 'heard' pipistrelles and daubenton's. Known as the 'water bat', Daubenton's bats fish insects from the water's surface with their large feet or tail.. Pipistrelles are the commonest British bats, weighing around 5 grams (the same as a 20p piece). A single pipistrelle can eat 3,000 tiny insects in just one night!

A big thank you to Barry Mitchell who took the bird photographs and gave us these images.



Kingfisher © Barry Mitchell



Heron with eel, near Trebanos Lock © Barry Mitchell



Daubenton's bat feeding on the water

A volunteer says:

'It's a pity the Centre can't open longer at weekends or even during the school holidays' I commented to my fellow volunteer as we closed up after a particularly busy, sunny Saturday afternoon. 'We just don't have enough volunteers' was the reply.

So here I am sitting in the Centre on a quiet day trying to persuade you, my friend, to join our small band of helpers.

- Did you know that in July 1843 the Rhydypandy tollgate was destroyed during the Rebecca Riots?
- Did you know that Ludwig Mond set up his nickel refinery in Clydach because of the plentiful supply of soft water?
- Did you know the ore is mined in Canada? I didn't know these little gems of local information until I started helping at the Centre. I spend three hours on either a Saturday or Sunday afternoon about once every four or five weeks. Each time I pick up another little snippet or I meet some interesting people! There's the lady who comes in with her dog – a beautiful German Shepherd. She is writing an illustrated history of Craig Cefn Parc and she brings it in to show us how she is progressing. It is a work of art, informative and lovingly



Carl Nicholas, leader of the Open Doors Heritage Walk



Talking to a visitor about one of the Centre's DVDs

researched. It's to be a present for one of her sons – I really envy him this unique and precious gift.

There are the young families who call in to the Centre. The children do some colouring before their ice cream; their parents get drawn into the displays remembering school days or work colleagues – 'Ooh, that's Jack Somebody, can't remember his name, used to live by the Vardre'. Like most places the Centre can be very busy or very quiet – on cold, rainy days we only see the dog walkers . But when the sun shines we can barely keep up, cycle maps, making tea or coffee, selling homemade Welsh cakes or duck food (the ducks are experts at knowing when a sale has taken place!), chatting to visitors about the area and the exhibition.

I'm no expert on the area but I've learned so much each afternoon I have spent at the Centre. I learn from the displays, the books but most of all I learn from the people, other volunteers and the visitors themselves. Everyone has a story to tell.

So please, if you can give up a few hours on a weekend do get in touch with Sue Evans. You won't be sorry and she will be delighted to hear from you.

Mary Hunter

Paying Subscriptions



Each year we have to pay for insurance and licences to allow us the 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

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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:/....../.....

Get to know us better



Visit our Facebook page @clydachheritagecentre to keep up to date with our news, events, view photos and more. Like us, post your review or comment.

You can also follow us on Twitter at @ClydachHtgCtr to receive our tweets and occasional retweets from other followers. Follow us and we will follow you back.

You can also stay in touch via the website, www.clydachheritagecentre.com where you can keep up to date with our news, events and more.

Social media power

In June someone stole one of the miner's picks from the dram display at the end of the Centre, it was the most interesting one too. It was early 20th century and would have been of the type used when British miners hewed the greatest amount of coal in one year, 1913.

Unfortunately our CCTV did not record the culprit but we posted information on our own and the Clydach Memories Facebook pages. We had a lot of supportive messages as a result of this including one which directed us to an eBay listing of a pick for sale in Swansea. We ended up buying this pick, it was of the correct vintage and is slightly more interesting than the stolen one in that it has a hole in the shaft which the collier would have used to lock his tools together at the end of his shift.

If it hadn't been for Facebook and eBay we would probably still be looking for a replacement.



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