



# Llanrwst and District Historical Society

Society Newsletter *Issue 8 June 2007*

## Recent Meetings

**February:** Mr John Ellis Jones started a new year of meetings for the Llanrwst and District Historical Society with a talk entitled 'Tales of the Llanrwst Grammar School'. He took us back to the time when the Church was responsible for education and infirmaries as well as the spiritual well being of the populace. The Church also owned most of the land. With the dissolution of the monasteries the land was divided amongst privileged and favoured families, such as the Wynnes of Gwydir. For many years there was no schooling available for the sons of the gentry. Sir John Wynne had a school built to teach the Classics such as Latin and Greek. This came after the opening of Ruthin and St Albans schools. All headmasters had to be 'of the church', teaching at the school and holding a curacy, possibly in Llanddaged or Capel Garmon, thus explaining why on the board listing the headmasters, which was on the wall of the old hall, all of them for many years had the title of Reverend. Mr Jones went through this list relating anecdotes about each one in turn up to the time that the school became a comprehensive school in the late sixties. His enthusiasm for his subject was surpassed only by his vast knowledge of the history of this old school so dear to the people of Llanrwst, making it a most enjoyable and illuminating evening. Following the talk, members asked many questions before spending time looking at all the old school photographs Mr Jones had brought with him.

**March:** We were pleased that Mr Larry Davies was able to join us following the rescheduling of his talk due to his unfortunate accident in the autumn. He took us on an historic train journey from Llandudno to Blaenau Ffestiniog. With the help of slides to illustrate his talk he told us how the first train came to the Conwy Valley in the nineteenth century and outlined the expansion of the service over one hundred and fifty years. At one time the railway company employed a large number of people and the stations were very busy places. Unfortunately this is not the case today but it was nice to see that some of the stations are looking as good as they ever did due to the hard work of small teams of local people.

**April:** Following the business of the Annual General Meeting, members were initially disappointed that due to illness Triawd Llanrwst was unable to give their concert. Norman Rogers Jones, a member of both Triawd Llanrwst and the Historical Society, stepped in to give a fascinating talk with slides of the history of Mount Snowdon. He began with some very interesting facts about the mountain itself, giving the origins of the names of the many cwms and passes and the social history regarding the hundreds of men who worked on the mountain in treacherous conditions to mine the copper, often living in barracks on the mountain itself. The slides showed us the scars of the old workings and the remains of old buildings which most of us had never seen, or at best had never noticed! The development of tourism from the earliest guides such as 'Will Boots' taking walkers up to the summit was fascinating, especially seeing the clothes the early visitors wore. Apparently ladies used to climb in their knickerbockers! The building of the railway was a magnificent feat and the subsequent hotels that were built at the summit were unbelievable. One slide showed a dining room with many tables set in complete splendour, a far cry from the building named by Prince Charles as 'The highest slum in Britain'!

**May:** The Welsh Drovers were the subject of Mr Idris Evans' talk. It was obvious that he had really immersed himself in the history of the drovers, especially the Anglesey drovers. He told us of the signs that show the route the drovers took on their way through north Wales in places such as Rhewl and how pine trees were planted along this route to help others to find their way. We were shown an example of an Anglesey Penny, the currency used by the drovers to prevent being attacked for the large sums of money they would carry. This penny was worthless to others. His enthusiasm and charisma really made it an unforgettable evening, one which we all wished could have lasted longer.

### Field Trip

**Sunday July 8<sup>th</sup>: Dolwyddelan Castle and church.** An afternoon visit to Dolwyddelan castle. A square stone keep, dating from the thirteenth century, remains of this castle built by Llywelyn ab Iorwerth ('the Great'). The site was remodelled by King Edward I. Admission: Adult - £2.50, Concession - £2.00, Family - £7.00 We will be leaving the Eagles Hotel Car Park at 2pm prompt Please note that this outing does involve walking. It is hoped that we will also be able to go into the church.

- **Names must be give to Kelvin by Thursday July 5<sup>th</sup> at the latest**

### Future Meetings

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| <b>September</b> | Chwareli Cwm Penmachno, The Quarries of Cwm Penmachno by Mr Vivian Parry Williams. The talk will be given in Welsh. Simultaneous translation will be provided |
| <b>October</b>   | My career as a Conservation Architect by Mr Robin Wolley  |
| <b>November</b>  | Childhood memories of Ysbyty Ifan and Llanrwst by Mr Orig Williams  |
| <b>December</b>  | Denbighshire and the Civil War by Mr Hywel Jones  |

### New committee member

Mrs Hayley Ward

- Please remember that your subscription for this coming year was due at the AGM. If you have not yet renewed your membership please do so by calling at Kelvin's shop or send a cheque for £5 to the Treasurer: Mrs Mary Marrow, Firs Cottage, Maenan, Llanrwst. LL26 0YR
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- **As our financial year will now run from September to August this year's subscription is valid until September 2008!**

### Llanrwst Website

It is hoped to launch the official Llanrwst website next month. It will be a bilingual site for tourists and local residents alike. The Society will have a listing and will be able to advertise meetings and publications. Pat Rowley provided all the historical material for the site and Glenda Jones translated it.

### Scotland Street Book

The Scotland Street book was launched at the Duck Race in Llanrwst and sold like hot cakes! This, our second volume in our Streets series, is much bigger than the first and sells for £6 a copy. (p+p £1.90) **It is for sale in Kelvin's shop.** Should any member wish to order a copy by post please make cheques payable to: **Llanrwst Historical Society** and send to Pat Williams, Tyngwern Isaf, Ffordd Bryn Saith, Llanrwst LL26 0BX

### Actions

- The Trustees of the Almshouses have been given our permission to upgrade the computer (owned by the Society) and improve its capability at their own expense.
- Letters have been sent to Cadw and Conwy Borough Council voicing our concerns regarding the future of the old Grammar School.
- Letters have been sent to Conwy Borough Council as regards the poor state and level of maintenance of listed buildings in the town. We have received notification of their receipt and have been informed that work will soon start on the old Central Cafe (Done's bookmakers)
- A letter has been sent to the Local Health Board regarding the poor state of the fabric of the Clinic in Watling Street.
- The cemetery of the old 'Capel Sentars' (Tabernacle) in Scotland Street is to be cleared and the information on the gravestones recorded.

