



Gwanwyn / Spring 2018

CAMPAIGN FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL WALES
YMGYRCH DIOGELU CYMRU WLEDIG

CYMRU WLEDIG RURAL WALES

Celebrating | Dathlu



Years | Blynyddoedd

Wales is Wonderful
- Help us keep it that way

Mae Cymru'n Wych
- Helpwch ni i'w chadw felly





Contents Cynnwys

- 2** Introduction – CPRW's Chairperson
Cyflwyniad – Cadeirydd YDCW
Peter Alexander-Fitzgerald
- 3** Messages by / **Negeseuon gan**
– Jules Hudson, Sir Bryn Terfel,
Iolo Williams
- 4** Reflections – Elizabeth Colwyn
Foulkes MBE
Campaign to Protect Rural England
– Crispin Truman, CPRE
- 5** 90 Years Boxing Above our Weight
– a history by Penelope Williams
- 7** Counting down – 90 years of
successes by Vic Warren
- 8** Portmeirion: An appreciation of
the life work of Clough
Williams-Ellis, one of CPRW's
founding fathers by Rachel Hunt
- 11** Plas Brondanw – a treasure
reclaimed. By Dylan Williams
- 14** Plus ça change? Professor
Michael Woods analyses 90 years in
the Welsh countryside
- 16** Owen Sheers: a writer for rural
Wales – a poem and prose by one
of Wales's leading writers
- 18** Heriau newydd: Ffermio Cymru,
yr Amgylchedd, Brexit – ac YDCW
gan Nick Fenwick, UAC
New challenges: Welsh Farming and
the Environment, Brexit – and CPRW
by Nick Fenwick, FUW
- 20** Events and Village Awards

Editor / Golygydd: Vic Warren

Many thanks to all the contributors who have helped to create such a special edition of Rural Wales

Diolch yn fawr i'r holl gyfranwyr sydd wedi helpu i greu'r fath rifyn arbennig o Cymru Wledig

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A memorable year

Introduction by CPRW's Chairperson

Welcome to this special edition of our magazine 'Rural Wales'. I am honoured to preside as Chairperson at this auspicious time and during a period of change for CPRW, which we are optimistic will strengthen and sustain our charity.

In this fast-changing world, it is very unusual for an organisation, business or charity, to attain its 90th year, so CPRW's milestone is an achievement to be celebrated. However, looking at our longevity another way, it is disappointing that, years ago, CPRW's officers had not been able to announce that the charity had served its purpose, rural Wales was no longer under threat, Clough William Ellis's aims had been realised, and CPRW could retire, job done.

It is very clear that this is not the case; the workload of trustees and staff, and within

the branches, is increasing as more and more rural communities and residents find the future of their area is threatened by unwelcome and often inappropriate change, not only for their present, but also for our future generations.

CPRW is needed as much now as when Clough began his campaign; we must continue to make the case for rural Wales. There are hopeful signs, not least the Welsh Government's very welcome 'Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act', which, if it realises its objectives, will greatly support CPRW's aims. Our President's very thought-provoking message in this issue also counsels us to look to the future

So do participate in our celebrations - perhaps there will be additional branch events - and I hope 2018 proves to be a memorable year for you and for CPRW.

PETER ALEXANDER-FITZGERALD

Blwyddyn gofiadwy

Cyflwyniad gan Gadeirydd YDCW

Croeso i'r rhifyn arbennig hwn o'n cylchgrawn 'Cymru Wledig'. Mae'n fraint i mi fod yn Gadeirydd ar adeg bwysig fel hyn ac yn ystod cyfnod o newid i YDCW, a ninnau'n obeithiol y bydd yn cryfhau a chynnal ein helusen.

Yn y byd hwn sy'n newid mor gyflym, mae'n anarferol i fudiad, busnes neu elusen gyrraedd ei 90fed pen-blwydd, felly mae carreg filltir YDCW yn achos dathlu. Fodd bynnag, wrth edrych ar ein hirhoedledd mewn ffordd arall, siom yw hi nad oedd swyddogion YDCW, flynyddoedd yn ôl, wedi gallu cyhoeddi bod yr elusen wedi ateb y diben, nad oedd y Gymru wledig dan fgygthiad mwyach, fod amcanion Clough Williams Ellis wedi'u cyflawni ac y gallai YDCW roi'r gorau iddi a'r gwaith wedi'i wneud.

Yn amlwg, nid felly y mae; mae baich gwaith ymddiriedolwyr a staff, ac yn y

canghennau, ar gynydd wrth i fwy a mwy o gymunedau a thirgolion gwledig weld bod dyfodol eu bröydd yn cael eu bygwth gan newid annerbyniol ac, yn aml, anaddas – nid yn unig o ran eu presennol nhw ond o ran cenedlaethau'r dyfodol hefyd.

Mae cymaint o angen YDCW yn awr a phan ddechreuodd Clough ei ymgyrch; rhaid i ni barhau i ddadlau achos y Gymru wledig. Mae yna arwyddion gobeithiol, gan gynnwys Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru), datblygiad derbynol iawn Llywodraeth Cymru. O gyflawni'i hamcanion bydd hon yn gwneud llawer i gefnogi amcanion YDCW hefyd.

Mae neges ysgogol ein Llywydd yn y rhifyn hwn hefyd yn ein hannog i edrych tua'r dyfodol.

Felly, cymerwch ran y neid dathliadau – efallai y bydd rhagor o ddigwyddiadau yn y canghennau – ac rwy'n gobeithio y bydd 2018 yn flwyddyn gofiadwy i chi ac i YDCW

PETER ALEXANDER-FITZGERALD

Not yet a CPRW member?
If you share our aims to protect Welsh landscapes and countryside, and rural life and communities, please consider joining us. CPRW is the only national charity dedicated to working for rural Wales. Contact our Head Office or visit the website.

Views of contributors do not necessarily reflect the policy of CPRW. NID YW BARN CYFRANWYR O ANGENRHEIDRYDD YN ADLEWYRCHU POLISI YDCW

The greatest challenges lie ahead

Message from CPRW's President

In this celebratory year, we recognise the achievements of 90 years of CPRW. Since its foundation in 1928, successive generations have sought to champion its aims and ambitions with considerable success through decades of great change across the landscapes and rural communities of Wales.

Perhaps its lasting legacy is that the considered opinions and perspectives which CPRW members provide on a wide range of issues are still both recognised and valued by policy makers and the general public alike.

Yet as we head into the decade which will I hope conclude with a celebration of a century of CPRW, I suspect the greatest challenges are yet to come. The next ten years will have to redefine what this long standing institution is all about, what its aims should be and what it should realistically set out to achieve, meeting and reflecting the expectations of its members.

In some ways, its future role may challenge past preconceptions, whilst simultaneously building on the pedigree of the past. Whatever the outcome, it is the ability to evolve and adapt that will ensure its survival and which will, I hope, guarantee its future.

JULES HUDSON

Yr heriau mwyaf eto i ddod

Neges gan Lywydd YDCW

Yn y flwyddyn hon o ddatlu, rydym yn cydnabod llwyddiannau 90 mlynedd o YDCW. Ers ei ffurfio yn 1928, mae un genhedlaeth ar ôl y llall wedi sefyll tros ei hamcanion a'i dyheadau gyda chryn lwyddiant, a hynny trwy ddegawdau o newid mawr ar draws tirweddau a chymunedau gwledig Cymru.

Efallai mai'r etifeddiaeth barhaol yw fod barn a safbwyntiau meddylgar aelodau YDCW ar rychwant eang o bynciau yn cael eu cydnabod a'u gwerthfawrogi o hyd gan wneuthurwyr polisi a'r cyhoedd fel ei gilydd.

Eto, wrth i ni ddechrau ar ddegawd a fydd, rwy'n gobeithio, yn arwain at ddatlu canrif o YDCW, rwy'n amau bod y sialensiau mwyaf o'n blaenau o hyd. Bydd rhaid i'r deng mlynedd nesaf aiddiffinio beth yw ystyr y mudiad hirhoedlog hwn, bedd ddylai ei amcanion fod a'r hyn y dylai, yn realistig, ymdrechu i'w gyflawni, gan gwrdd â disgwyliadau aelodau a'u hadlewyrchu.

Mewn rhai ffyrdd, efallai y bydd ei rôl yn y dyfodol yn herio rhagdybiaethau'r gorffennol, gan adeiladu ar seiliau'r gorffennol yr un pryd. Beth bynnag a ddaw, y gallu i esblygu ac addasu a fydd yn sicrhau ei barhad ac, rwy'n gobeithio, yn gwarantu ei ddyfodol hefyd.

JULES HUDSON



MESSAGES FROM OUR SUPPORTERS NEGSEUON GAN EIN CEFNOGWYR

Sir Bryn Terfel, CPRW Patron

Congratulations to all at The Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales on reaching this great milestone – 90 years of safeguarding the quality and diversity of the Welsh landscapes and seascapes.

As a son of a farmer, the Welsh rural landscape played and continues to play an integral part in my family life. I grew up on the mountains of North Wales as did my children. I often perform W.S. Gwynn Williams' 'Little Welsh Home' on my travels around the world, and the text is particularly fitting here, 'I have dream't 'neath summer skies where the Summer never dies, But my heart is in the mountains of my home'.

Thank-you for your hard work and dedication over the years. Because of your hard work, generations to come will be able to enjoy the beautiful landscapes of Wales.



Syr Bryn Terfel, Noddwr YDCW

Llongyfarchiadau i bawb yn Ymgyrch Diogelu Cymru Wledig ar gyrraedd y garreg filltir anferth hon – 90 mlynedd o ddiogelu ansawdd ac amrywiaeth tirweddau a morweddau Cymru.

A finnu'n fab ffarm, roedd tirwedd wledig Cymru yn rhan hanfodol o'm bywyd teuluol, ac mae'n dal i fod. Mi ges fy magu, fel fy mhlant, ym mynyddoedd Gogledd Cymru. Yn aml, ar fy nheithiau o amgylch y bydd, byddaf yn perfformio 'Little Welsh Home', W. S. Gwynn Williams ac mae'r geiriau'n arbennig o addas yma, yn sôn am fod o dan awyr hafaidd lle mae'n haf o hyd ond lle mae hiraeth yn y galon am fynyddoedd fy nghartref.

Diolch i chi am eich gwaith caled a'ch ymroddiad tros y blynyddoedd. Oherwydd eich gwaith caled chi, bydd cenedlaethau a ddaw yn gallu mwynhau tirweddau prydferth Cymru.



Iolo Williams, naturalist and television and radio presenter

Heartiest congratulations to CPRW for fighting for the Welsh countryside for 90 years. Rest assured that you have made a difference over the past nine decades and that rural Wales would be a poorer place without you. Here's to the next 90 years. Happy birthday!

Iolo Williams, naturiaethwr a chyflwynydd teledu a radio

Llongyfarchiadau gwrwesog i YDCW am ymladd ar ran cefn gwlad Cymru am 90 mlynedd. Gallwch fod yn fodlon eich bod wedi gwneud gwahaniaeth yn ystod y naw degawd diwethaf ac y byddai'r Gymru wledig yn dlotach heboch chi. Ymlaen at y 90 nesaf. Pen-blwydd hapus!

REFLECTIONS

Elizabeth Colwyn Foulkes MBE,
CPRW Vice President

My introduction to CPRW came in the high summer of 1950 soon after my marriage. The occasion was an AGM – either of CPRW or more likely the Caernarvonshire Branch which then covered the county of Meirioneth and the Friends of Snowdonia. It was a glittering gathering held at the Bulkeley Arms Hotel in Beaumaris. Looking back, I can only liken it to a Royal Garden Party for the sheer scope of talent, enthusiasm and excitement when people are sharing some powerful emotions and celebrating special successes.

The great and the good were assembled together - the artists, poets, politicians and academics of North Wales sharing their enthusiasm for their landscape and cultural heritage. I can still visualise the room and remember the faces including Huw Weldon, Ben Bowen Thomas, Cledwyn Hughes, Sir Emrys Evans, Professor Brinley Williams, Patrick Abercrombie, Clough and Amabel Williams-Ellis, Cicely Williams-Ellis, Lord Boston and of course my parents in law, Sidney and Daisy Colwyn Foulkes. We had all survived the war and were determined that life would be better, and now we were able to celebrate the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act and the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, both milestones fought for by CPRW and CPRE since the 1920s. I had been a civil servant in the Ministry

of Town and Country Planning in London and was anticipating my new career as a public servant with Denbighshire County Planning Department – a very hum drum life by comparison. CPRW remains the only environmental organisation that puts landscape and rural life as its priority. The need for CPRW is as imperative now as it was 90 years ago when we came into existence. There are new threats to our National Parks and designated landscapes. Our branches are objecting to planning applications for unprecedented developments on an industrial scale, such as solar and wind farms and intensive poultry units. CPRW's hard fought campaigns have benefited Wales and CPRW must keep up its sustained defence of what we all hold dear for future generations to enjoy.

CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND – A MESSAGE TO CPRW

Crispin Truman, chief executive, CPRE

We're delighted to see our younger sibling make 90 years, and join them in celebrating a history of success and collaboration to prepare us all for the opportunities and challenges of our second century. It encourages us all to look to the principles on which we were founded, and how they apply in the 21st century.

Our surroundings, rural or urban, are critically important; they define us, creating a sense of identity in a shared history. Place brings us together and reminds us that people have always, and will always live, work and play in the same landscapes. The countryside is worth protecting not least because of this connection with the past.

The past is especially entwined in the Welsh landscape through language but also through art; R.S Thomas went so far as to say 'There is no present in Wales, / And no future; / There is only the past'. Perhaps he was a little too pessimistic – when our founders called to protect the countryside they did so to make it as living and as vibrant as any town. They wanted to do this while maintaining the sense that the past it contains, and the opportunities it affords for our health and wellbeing, are precious.

Initially, Wales was considered a subsidiary of CPRE. However, an independent body was expected to be more likely to 'enlist the active support of the Welsh people in general' and better able to 'deal with certain problems peculiar to Wales'. CPRW has, as a result, always been similar but different, independent when necessary and collaborative when needed. It has also had the challenge and opportunities of a devolved parliament and a second language.

CPRW's inaugural meeting was held in London in May 1928 with an audience of 'representative Welshmen'. It is easy to see in the surnames of some of CPRE's early endorsers the strong Welsh influence of the movement's early years – Williams-Ellis, Griffin, Trevelyan and Treowen. Many of them would become as firmly entwined in keeping CPRW afloat as they were with the English sibling.

It is perhaps telling that those initial meetings dealt with problems not dissimilar to emails we receive today: there was a 'dilapidated beauty spot' (albeit the summit of Snowdon), roadside advertisements which were 'the subject of severe criticism', and proposals for electricity schemes which contained 'The fact you can enjoy large swathes of the country uninterrupted by 'wires and masts' which in 1928 were seen as tending 'to impair the natural beauties of the

districts they traverse', is due to the continuing campaigns of the two organisations. This didn't just mean saying no to power stations, it meant calling for more efficient energy use so development wasn't necessary in the first place. Neither CPRE nor CPRW should ever forget we are organisations founded to find positive solutions, to be proactive and lead conversations on how and why we should enhance, protect and promote the countryside.

One of these positive ideas is something for which the country is universally proud, with 90% of the public saying they are important - National Parks. Next year marks the 70th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act which followed concerted campaigning by CPRW and CPRE. In early 1935, CPRE reported that 'recent developments must be of great interest to Members of the CPRE'. This development involved Clough Williams-Ellis, chairman of CPRW for almost a quarter of a century and architect of Portmeirion, who had purchased the Hafod Llwyfog estate above Llyn Gwynant and donated 300 acres to the National Trust as a nucleus for what he hopes will be the first British National Park'.

More than 80 years later, the land remains at the heart of Snowdonia National Park. Williams-Ellis's ambition was slow to become reality – Snowdonia became the first Welsh and fourth British National Park in 1951 – but CPRW was instrumental in getting us there. Following swiftly came the creation of the Standing Committee on National Parks – now the Campaign for National Parks – bringing 'all Open Air organisations' to the campaign. War got in the way of policy, but ultimately we achieved something worth waiting for: Welsh National Parks and AONBs now cover 24% of the country, protecting the environment and conserving and enhancing natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.

This is just a flavour of the ambition, positivity and collaboration of CPRE and CPRW over the past 90 years, and covers many areas where we continue to work together. New challenges continue to arise, and we now work together on issues from roads at Stonehenge to a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, as well as 'pylons' and landscape protection. It is the success of campaigns such as these which mean the countryside is just as valuable today as it has always been. It is for us now to ensure as many people as possible have the opportunity to enjoy the countryside so that all landscapes, remain as he intended: 'a present from Caernarvonshire to the rest of Wales, and to the rest of the world'.

90 Years Boxing Above our Weight

A history of CPRW by Penelope Williams



Since its inception in 1928 CPRW has boxed above its weight and achieved some remarkable successes, despite the constant worry of tight budgets and uncertain income.

Being a relatively small membership organisation we have often worked with other groups and organisations both taking the lead and supporting others. It is thanks to dedicated, hard-working staff and members that so much has been achieved to protect our landscapes from insensitive developments.

THE BEGINNING

It was thanks to two other organisations that CPRW was founded: the Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion who accepted all the initial expenses and CPRE, who not only lent us office space until Lady (Eirene) White raised funds to buy our office building, Ty Gwyn, in Welshpool, but also gave us quarter of a £10,000 donation which had been given to them. They are both still affiliated members.

EARLY SUCCESSES

A very early success was getting Dolwyddelan Castle scheduled as an ancient monument.

Then in the 1930s, CPRW supported the idea for National Parks to be created in Pembrokeshire and Snowdonia. It was also proposed that the islands of Skomer, Skokholm and Ramsey be made bird sanctuaries.

Probably the greatest influence in the early years was that of Chairman Clough Williams-Ellis and Professor Patrick Abercrombie who, when war threatened, discussed with the Defence Ministry, sites for military training bases, factories and airfields. CPRW recognised that with the threat of war these sites were essential, but wished to influence the design and minimise the landscape damage.

A major success for the Pembrokeshire branch was to highlight the damage to the spectacular cliffs of the Castlemartin coast and the loss of good agricultural land should the Government proceed with its plans to buy the Stackpole estate for military purposes.

Around this time, Professor Abercrombie was appointed consultant to the Air Ministry but made it clear that he would always keep the interests of CPRE and CPRW to the fore, being on the national executive councils of both organisations.

The challenges continued after the war. In the North-west, bombing ranges were proposed at Llanddwyn Island and Newborough Warren on Anglesey but were forcefully opposed by the Anglesey and Caernarfonshire branches and were never built.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

From the beginning CPRW has supported rural communities. An early example was the support given to a community project in the Swansea Valley: Brynmawr and Clydach Vally Industries Ltd, sponsored by the Quakers, which supported small businesses and restored old houses which it colour-washed.

Since early days CPRW has supported the idea of colour-washing buildings. It was instrumental in the very popular colour-washing of the houses of Aberaeron. More importantly, it has campaigned to

save village amenities, like schools, post offices and bus services in order to protect communities.

CPRW has also run best kept village awards to encourage best practice. These have recently been revived, firstly by the Montgomeryshire branch and now others, but with an emphasis on community cohesion rather than hanging baskets and lack of litter.

Now the big concern is new housing - numbers in relation to the size of the existing community, its positioning and its design.

THE TOURISM DILEMMA

Since the war, with increasing leisure time and disposable income, there has been another dilemma - tourism.

Tourism brings jobs and income and is a major contributor to the wealth of Wales. It has also brought considerable controversy particularly around the infrastructure needed to accommodate the visitors, from holiday camps in the immediate aftermath of the war to later caravan parks and second homes.

CPRW has been involved in commenting, objecting and encouraging best practice since the 1950s. Caravans, particularly static ones, and second homes are still an ever present concern. The latter can be damaging to communities, as in popular resorts there are fewer permanent residents as house prices rise and there are fewer amenities necessary for the permanent community to survive.

ROADS FOR THE FUTURE

With increasing numbers of visitors comes increasing traffic and roads have been a particular area of interest to CPRW since 1939 when JDK Lloyd and Alwyn Lloyd were involved in plans for the north Wales coast road through Conwy.

A new bridge eventually materialised in the late 1950s but the planned road along the quay and a tunnel under Bodlondeb Park did not. By the late 1970s the bridge and the road through the town were no longer adequate and another bridge was proposed.

It was Lady White's suggestion of a tunnel and Cecily Williams-Ellis's persistence that led to the building of the tunnel under the Conwy estuary. Many other road schemes have been influenced by CPRW and we hope this will be true of the current M4 expansion scheme through the Gwent Levels SSSI. The day may be saved by a crane who has chosen to nest there! It is not just humans we support!

INDUSTRY AND POWER

In the late 1940s Cecily Williams-Ellis successfully opposed a number of

quarrying schemes in Caernarfonshire particularly Yr Eifl and Eglwyseg Rocks, but times change and in 2015 the branch gave a Rural Wales Award to Penrhyn Quarry at Bethesda, particularly for its work on minimising and mitigating landscape damage.

Power has been a major source of concern, from a badly sited pole in Tregaron in the 1930s, which the local authority agreed to have moved, to today's major concerns of wind turbines, solar farms and nuclear power stations and their attendant power lines.

After the war, Cecily Williams-Ellis led the opposition to eight proposed hydro-electric schemes for North Wales in collaboration with the North-Wales Hydro-Electric Protection Committee. Their work led to landscape destruction being minimised and those that were built were made as visually acceptable as possible by another prominent CPRW member and renowned architect, Sydney Colwyn-Foulkes.

In the early 1990s, Pembrokeshire branch, under the chairmanship of Geoffrey Sinclair, was heavily involved in the opposition to a proposal at Pembrokeshire Power Station to replace crude oil with the much more polluting, health threatening Orimulsion.

After considerable resistance National Power agreed to install a desulphurisation plant. The power station was eventually closed down.

Although CPRW opposed nuclear power when it was first proposed at Trawsfynydd, it was largely on the basis of aesthetics and the inevitable power lines. However, we recognised the need for power and the need to move away from fossil fuels. If the alternative was landscape scarring renewables, it was decided, with the guidance of Geoffrey Sinclair, then we would accept nuclear.

There have been concerns over wind turbines since the 1950s when a trial one was proposed on Mynydd Anelog. It was refused when CPRW and others objected. Recently we have fought and stopped many, ever larger, wind turbines being erected.

We remain sensitive to the need for struggling farmers to diversify to make a living, so we do not object to many smaller ones which supply the needs of the farm. Thanks to former director, Peter Ogden, and others, notably in the Brecon and Radnorshire branch, we have fought plans to erect wind farms and other renewable energy schemes on unspoiled hills and

successfully challenged the plan to put power lines through the beautiful Meifod valley in Montgomeryshire.

Recently, we have supported a number of small, community hydro-electric schemes which can benefit communities, by giving them both cheap electricity and a return on their investment.

Power lines continue to be an issue. Cecily Williams-Ellis managed to have the electricity cables put under the Glaslyn Estuary and, more recently, Caernarfonshire branch have supported Anglesey Against Pylons and persuaded the CEBG to put the new lines from Wylfa B under the Menai Strait, although we failed to persuade them to put the new cable under the sea from Wylfa to Mostyn.

WORKING WITH FARMERS

Farming is of course the biggest influence on our landscape. Our farmers have lived through some very difficult and challenging times and, with the worries of Brexit, continue to do so.

We are very sympathetic, but equally we look to prevent the often ill-thought through rushes to introduce new projects that appear to be the latest profitable ventures; the latest being an abundance of intensive poultry farms in some counties, particularly Powys,

which are having a devastating effect on biodiversity and the landscape.

We must find better ways to work with farmers, for us to understand their concerns fully, and highlight ours to them. Ultimately they are the chief custodians of the countryside and we may become increasingly dependent on them for our food, especially as many of us try to 'eat local'.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

In recent years the recently retired director, Peter Ogden, worked tirelessly with government to keep landscape to the fore, and branches, with Peter's help worked hard to influence the local LDPs in that regard.

Meanwhile chairman, Jean Rosenfeld, worked equally tirelessly to revive dormant branches, amalgamate smaller ones and reconcile those that felt distanced from the centre of the organisation.

Thanks to them we are in a stronger position, under our new chairman, Peter Alexander-Fitzgerald, and with the dedicated hard work, particularly of Vic Warren and Carys Mathews, to continue to reorganise and modernise so that we can look forward to a bright future.



Counting down

- 90 years of successes

During the whole of its 90 years, CPRW has fought and supported others in opposing hundreds of inappropriate local development proposals. Some battles have been won, some lost – but many unsuccessful objections have led to changes, and less harmful development. Today, local development proposals and Welsh Government national policy is monitored and addressed as much as possible.



2015

Mid-Wales Wind Farms Inquiry - Energy minister Andrea Leadsom refused planning permission for four major upland wind farms. CPRW led the objection groups - we were necessary for instructing barristers and our Appeal raised substantial funds. CPRW is essential for protecting the Welsh countryside!

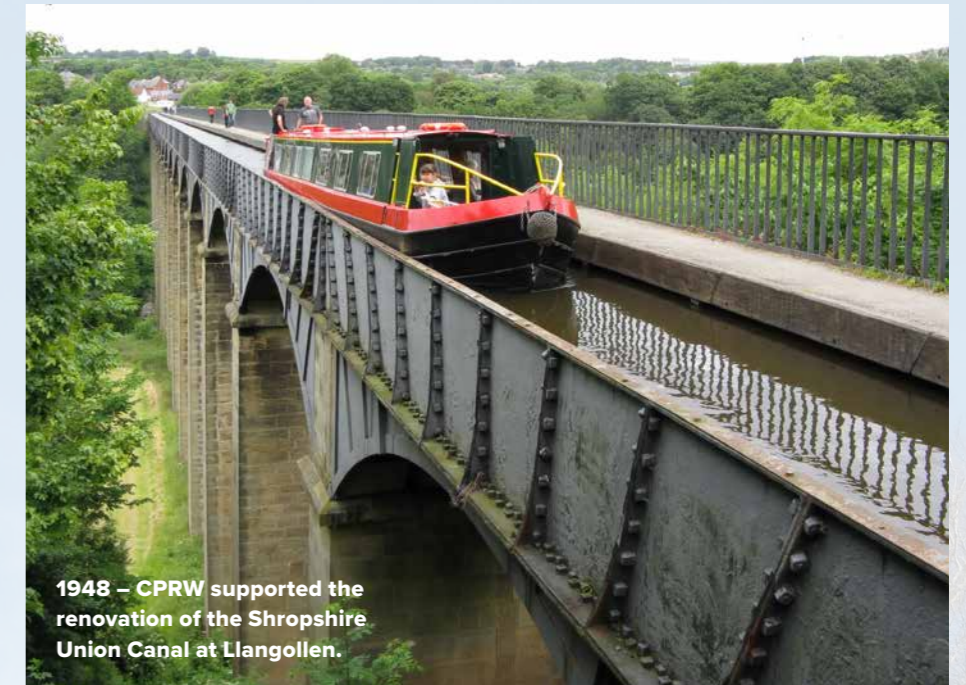
2009

Windfarm on Coity Mountain / Mynydd St James. (Blaenau Gwent) refused planning permission. CPRW branch and member Geoff Sinclair assisted local objectors. CPRW strongly supports renewable energy generation, but in the right place, not despoiling the natural landscape and remote uplands



2004

Monmouth - New Monnow river bridge opens – CPRW Monmouthshire (John Edwards) was influential in moving it



1948 – CPRW supported the renovation of the Shropshire Union Canal at Llangollen.

further away from the iconic medieval gated bridge. This was a major success, saving the setting of the historic and unique bridge.

1995

Usk River Barrage (Newport) – CPRW was a leading objector and the proposal was refused. Saving the natural environment.

1984

Extensive saltmarshes and wildlife area at Pembry saved from development by CPRW Pembrokeshire branch.



1976

New major road crossing of River Conwy by tunnel rather than bridge – the beauty of the estuary and views of castle were retained, thanks to Conwy branch led by Lady White.

1963

Main transmission line Wylfa / Trawsfynydd / Connah's Quay undergrounded, thanks to CPRW.

1934

At Llanrwst CPRW supported opposition to replacing a bridge attributed to Inigo Jones. It is still there

1931

CPRW started campaigning for recognition of two special areas of Wales, which eventually became two of our National Parks.

1930

Llantilio Crossenny – The first recorded campaign. Woodland and local amenity land saved for the village by a CPRW intervention. (The new owner then joined CPRW!).

These examples were selected from the 'History of CPRW 1928 – 2003' (Michael Brace) and added to by Vic Warren



Photo: Jeff Buck

Portmeirion:

A passion for landscape and buildings

Rachel Hunt, Curator and Collections Manager, Portmeirion

One of the founding fathers of CPRW was the world-famous architect, Clough Williams-Ellis (1883-1978). His vision was captured in two important creations – Portmeirion Village and the gardens and rebuilt mansion at Brondanw. His grandson, Robin Llywelyn (Managing director of Portmeirion Ltd and Vice-President of the CPRW), celebrates his work.

‘Clough is best known for Portmeirion (1925-1976) built on his own private peninsula on the coast of Snowdonia where he built to show that the development of a naturally beautiful site need not lead to its defilement and that architectural good manners could be good business. His lifelong concern was with Architecture, Landscape Design, the Protection of Rural Wales and Conservation generally. At Portmeirion he gave his ideas physical and practical expression.’¹



It is important to emphasise Clough’s history as a passionate campaigner – and activist – for the environment, long before it became commonplace. He was deeply concerned by the ugliness of bad architecture, poor planning, industrialisation and so on.

More concerned about his principles than his popularity, Clough didn’t hold back when criticising the English for their landscape complacency: ‘The generously endowed English seem to have been given a special immunity against visual beauty that only the most violent attacks can break through, and it is in the hope of piercing the thick and often calloused skins of my countrymen, and injecting a little doubt and discomfort, that I have deliberately envenomed my small dart.’²

The Welsh were similarly chastised: ‘Perhaps the Welsh have so romanticized their mountains in legend and song that they no longer regard them with the bodily eye, and scarcely notice when they are

dishonoured by mining spoil-heaps, advertisements or gaunt lugubrious chapels...’³

Whether people agreed with him or not, as a founder member of the CPRE and the CPRW, Clough Williams-Ellis was always prepared to follow through his words with actions. His passion for architecture, and for landscape, were inseparable. His actions were a response to his feeling for place. It is through this lens that Portmeirion needs to be viewed.

IN THE BEGINNING

As a child, Clough had a strong interest in landscape and buildings, and, as an adult, had the self-belief, determination and drive to make his dream of building an entire village to his own design, a reality – Portmeirion.

Initially Clough had imagined his village on an island, but practicality eventually eclipsed romance and, in 1925, Clough paid about £3000 for land owned by his uncle – a rambling and overgrown Victorian estate called Aber Iâ (‘glacial estuary’). Clough re-named it, and Portmeirion Ltd was established in 1926 as a money-making enterprise. The Victorian manor house became the Hotel, and, as income was generated, so buildings were added.

Clough wanted to prove that new buildings could (if done well) enhance the landscape in which they are set. He wanted his architectural creations to be enjoyed and liked by the visiting public, to encourage them to care about the built environment – he spoke of a ‘light opera’ approach to architecture.

As a visual place, Portmeirion is difficult to describe. Even Clough struggled: ‘I have perhaps a special difficulty- a ‘blockage’ – in trying to explain Portmeirion...having so said what I felt impelled to say in solid visible form, I feel that that is that – and that words are really superfluous, at any rate from me.’⁴

Despite Clough’s self-effacing statement, he was a gifted orator and I have selected a number of his quotes relevant to Portmeirion, which, after all, has been much written about by many people, to which I am able to add very little (I have just proved my point by saying exactly what he said, but just not as well).

PREPARING THE SITE

Bearing in mind that when Clough acquired ‘Aber Iâ’ it was densely wooded and overgrown, the question of ‘where to start’, with a view to building a village, was probably a difficult one to face for someone who felt as warmly towards trees as Clough did: ‘I am never altogether happy out of the sight of trees, unless,

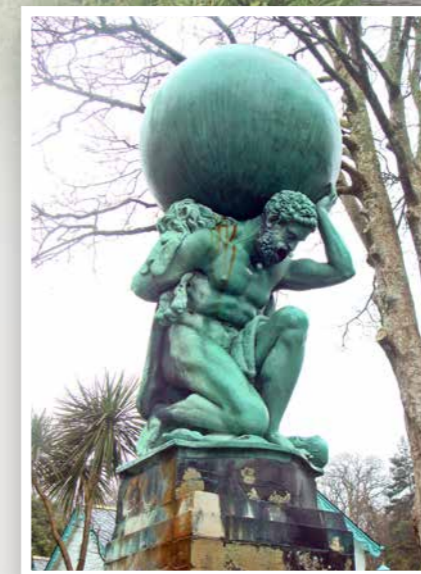


Photo: Jeff Buck

earliest developments.

Between these clusters of buildings were Italianate landscaped gardens. This was the *Belle Epoque* for Portmeirion, when writers, poets, dilettantes and socialites were all eager to stay in this strange and beautiful little world.

The contribution of Jim Wyllie in establishing Portmeirion as a successful resort should not go unnoticed. He was Clough’s resident manager, from the start until the mid-1950s. An excellent host, Wyllie (and his pet parrot, Agatha) knew how to make Portmeirion’s eccentrics feel at home. Wyllie was also a keen artist, and some of his paintings adorn the cottages and hotel rooms in the Village.

Clough ‘...wanted to prove, as I firmly believe to be the case, that architectural good manners are also ultimately, good business,’⁷ and by the mid-1930s, Portmeirion was proving to be an excellent business model. He later described it as ‘Propaganda for seemliness’; a succinct way of pointing out that to do things in a cheap or tacky or slapdash or thoughtless way is a false economy.

Portmeirion received acclaim from critics such as Christopher Hussey, who wrote for *Country Life*: ‘A pastiche conglomeration such as the acropolis at Portmeirion might easily have been an architectural horror. Set down in words, the idea of dumping a bright Italian village on the Welsh coast is scarcely promising...every part bears the authentic touch of the artist.’⁸

This was written in 1930. Clough’s approach to, and treatment of, Portmeirion took a different course in 1936, when Emral Hall, in Flintshire, was due to be demolished, and its salvageable components sold through auction. Clough was mortified by thought of the impending destruction of such a significant building. He lobbied the National Trust, and the

indeed, out of sight of land.’⁵

So: ‘After uprooting and burning the obvious rubbish, I proceeded with the utmost caution, and tree-by-tree, only felling those quite obviously in the way of any reasonably coherent layout and sparing even the most dubious ones, until I felt dead sure that they would not be wanted. And so it has continued to this day; no good tree is ever molested without very good reason – it carries on unless and until its pruning, pleaching, lopping or felling is clearly called for by some new building or other work, or through its growing too large or becoming dangerous. Trees, therefore, still closely enfold the place, as I hope they always will, for of course planting goes on as and wherever renewal seems necessary...’⁶

EARLY PORTMEIRION (1920S AND 30S)

After Clough had made use of the existing buildings from Aber Iâ – now the Hotel, Mermaid, the Ship Shop and White Horses – he set about building small clusters of cottages. The Citadel (with its distinctive bell tower), Battery Square, and the Village Green, were amongst the

V&A, to save it, but to no avail. As a last resort he attended the auction in person.

This is his description of the experience: 'Everything was labelled and catalogues in separate item lots – the doors, the windows, the floor boards, the panelling, the stone work, the plaster-work. So far as the ballroom section was concerned, the last names, the ceiling, came up first, and there being next to no bidding for so awkward and speculative a lot, it was knocked down to a derisory thirteen pounds. But then of course I had to buy all the rest of the room at any cost; the old leaded glass in its mullioned windows, its fire grate, its oak cornices and architraves – the lot. And committed that far, it was prudent to buy a great deal more of the old house wherewith to contrive an apt new building in which to embed my reconstructed ballroom.'

The ceiling Clough described is seventeenth century, depicting scenes from the life and labours of Herakles. Clough had the vision to see the possible in the impossible and it was the bold architectural act of re-siting this ceiling that changed the public perception of Portmeirion, as Clough reflected: 'I suppose that from this building dates my reputation for having established a sort of 'Home for Fallen Buildings', as I am often sent, and always gratefully follow up, news of impending demolitions of architectural interest....'⁹

THE WAR

Development at Portmeirion ceased in 1939; it did not recommence until 1954. But the village remained busy and active. A prep school from southeast England moved into Castell Deudraeth. Various military schemes were adopted, and dropped, in relation to the estuary, the hotel, and the Town Hall, as the site was considered to be a potential risk area for German invasion.

Clough observed: "PORTMEIRION. A new name for a new place and a new idea, which, first recorded on the German's admirable maps for their intended invasion, is still absent from some of our own."¹⁰

Clough had fought in the First World War and, driven by a strong sense of duty, immediately signed up for the Second. He was 56 at the time, and was rejected for this reason. His son, Christopher, enlisted, and tragically lost his life at Montecasino in 1941.

A decade on, and still having to endure architectural inertia imposed by building restrictions, a fire devastated Plas Brondanw, destroying Clough's beloved



home and killing his dog, Pennant. It is hard to imagine the effect on Clough, but when he returned to the architectural development of Portmeirion, his buildings were different in character.

LATER PORTMEIRION (1960S-70S)

Clough's early buildings at Portmeirion had been carefully landscaped. They were Italianate in style, clustered, carefully sited. The later (post-war) buildings tended to fill in the gaps. His wife, Amabel, joked about the 'early curly' and the 'late straight'.

The tennis court was replaced with an Italianate Piazza, surfaced in tarmac (recently replaced with slate, an aesthetic success). The areas surrounding Battery Square were developed. More follies appeared, and a Dome, to address the 'dome deficiency'.

Lewis Mumford wrote in 'The New Yorker', in 1962: 'I suspect that, from a purely aesthetic standpoint, Portmeirion was at its best some moment before the Second World War... By now it has sacrificed a little of its formal coherence to its function as an architectural museum...'

IN CONCLUSION

Clough died in 1978 and Portmeirion has not stood still. Portmeirion Village, as an entity, is aptly summarised by Richard Haslam: 'The whole eludes strict architectural analysis for the simple reason that it is not architecturally strict.'¹¹

I'll conclude with another observation from Clough Williams-Ellis: 'Much of the building at Portmeirion is not directly remunerative in any way. No living accommodation is afforded by the many loggias and belvederes or by the Campanile itself, which merely holds the clock and its chime of bells and gives views of Snowdon and the open sea from within its crowning lantern. The same applies of course to its six miles of cliff and woodland paths, its gardens and terraces and flights of steps, to its pools and fountains, its architectural bridges and miniature harbourworks and lighthouse. Yet they are essential and integral parts of the whole scheme, and it is because of them and the natural amenities that they have sought to emphasise and set off, however inadequately, that the place is so well esteemed and therefore prosperous.'¹²

May this always be the case.

Sources of the quotations

Endnotes

- 1 Robin Llywelyn, *Portmeirion* (1990s), p.4
- 2 Clough Williams-Ellis: *England and the Octopus* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1928), foreword.
- 3 Clough Williams-Ellis: *Portmeirion, the place and its meaning* (1963), p.39
- 4 Clough Williams-Ellis: *Portmeirion, the place and its meaning* (1963), p.11
- 5 Clough Williams-Ellis: *Architect Errant* (1971), p.13
- 6 Clough Williams-Ellis: *Portmeirion, the place and its meaning* (1963), p.27
- 7 Clough Williams-Ellis: *Portmeirion, the place and its meaning* (1963), p.37
- 8 Clough Williams-Ellis, quoting from Christopher Hussey's article on *Portmeirion in Country Life* (1930), in: *Portmeirion, the place and its meaning* (1963), p.9
- 9 Clough Williams-Ellis: *Portmeirion, the place and its meaning* (1963), p.34
- 10 Clough Williams-Ellis: *Portmeirion Still further illustrated and explained*, twelfth edition (1962), p.3
- 11 Richard Haslam et al, *The Buildings of Wales, 'Gwynedd'*, (Yale: 2009) p. 687
- 12 Clough Williams-Ellis: *Portmeirion still further illustrated and explained*, second edition (1932), p.15



Photo: Jeff Buck

Plas Brondanw – a treasure reclaimed

Dylan Williams, Curator, Oriol Brondanw

When Clough Williams-Ellis was bequeathed Plas Brondanw in 1908 it ignited a love affair that was to last the rest of his life. Of course the heavily ivied Plas wasn't a surprise to him in any way for he had been a regular visitor to the Williams ancestral home for most of his life.

It is more likely than not that he had always seen it as the tenement house it had become since his grandfather, John Williams-Ellis decided to up-sticks and move to Glasfryn, Chwilog, the Ellis seat, where the shooting and fishing was better and the landscape, for perhaps the not so romantic, was easier to digest.

As young nobles, Clough and his brothers had picnicked on the trunk of an enormous ash tree on Plas Brondanw's lawn. It is exasperating to confess that we cannot be certain where the tree stood, however it was a full nine yards in girth and had taken three men three days to cut down. One cannot but speculate if any of that wood remains in fittings somewhere

on the estate.

By the early 1900s the branches of the ash tree had spread unconstrained, whipping the house in winds and providing a home to hundreds of crows, which may be the reason why in not-so-very-past-times neighbours used to refer to the Plas as "Plas y brain" [the crow's manor].

One of those living in the tenemented Plas was Bob Owen (1885-1962), later Bob Owen, Croesor, an antiquarian and bibliophile, quarry clerk and lecturer amongst other things. It was in Plas Brondanw's "parlwr" [the drawing room?] and it's "twll dan y grisiau" [understairs cupboard] between 1888 and 1898 that Bob learned to read.

It was in the Plas as well that the Calvinistic Methodists between 1885 and 1904 held their Sunday School. It may be worth noting that the Williams-Ellises – but the Ellises of Glasfryn in particular – were of the Anglican persuasion, and professionally so.

Clough's father, John Clough Williams-

Ellis, apart from being quite a brilliant mathematician and a tutor at Sidney Sussex College Cambridge, was also a man of the cloth. He became Rector of Gayton, Northamptonshire, in 1876 and it was there that Clough, the fourth son, was born in 1883. During his twenty years as a tutor John Clough Williams-Ellis had invested his earnings in his Glasfryn estate and it was to Glasfryn, not Brondanw, that he took a literary retirement in 1888 with the young Clough and his brothers in tow.

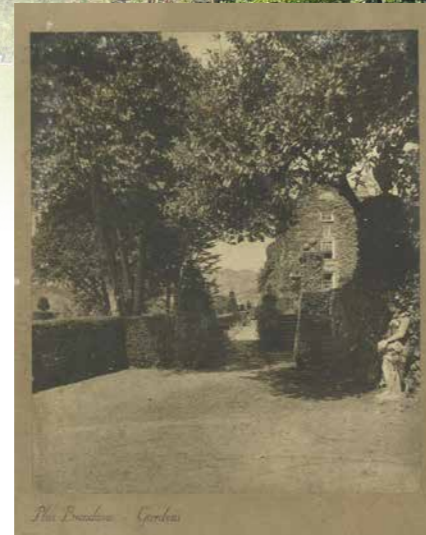
By the time of John Clough Williams-Ellis passing in 1913, however, Clough had become the second son, after Rupert. Rupert was given Glasfryn, and Plas Brondanw, came to Clough. How different Plas Brondanw would have been if it were not for a death in infancy and a soldier's falling in the Boer War. Would we now be talking about the protected gem that is Plas Brondanw? Not in the same way, surely.

It was by an arranged marriage that Plas Brondanw came down to Clough at all. In Napoleonic times the Brondanw estate and house could well have gone to the Joneses of Ynysfor, another branch of the family, were it not for matchmaking by Catherine Williams.

Surprisingly, Catherine Williams of Plas Brondanw and her two brothers were without issue so something had to be done to ensure a seemingly legacy. Catherine looked about her and saw that her reverend cousin Thomas Ellis of Glasfryn, was unmarried, as was her great niece Jane Bulgin of Bath.

The thirty year age difference and the likelihood that it was Thomas Ellis who had baptised Jane didn't seem to be a hindrance as long as a deal was struck. And the deal to Jane was: take Thomas Ellis as your husband, take Williams as part of your surname and you get Plas Brondanw. They married in 1807 and their son John, Clough's grandfather, was the first to bear the Williams-Ellis surname.

There is a remarkable *capriccio* of Plas Brondanw from about 1913 depicting a possible architectural development for Clough's inherited home. It is a castellated, elaborate high-Edwardian fantasy, a most improbable proposition for its location both practically and, doubtless, financially. The image may have been conceived and drawn by a colleague or it may have been a way Clough exorcised a fantasy; whatever the motive, the subtle and sensitive way Clough developed Plas Brondanw from thereon could not have been more different to that *belle époque* mockery. As an artist he knew instinctively that in Plas



Brondanw he had the raw material with which he could work – and that for the rest of his life.

MOVING IN

Although his house was occupied by tenants he was, before long, able to move into the Brewhouse, a room on the ground floor in the west facing 1660 wing. It has a well and next to it a large, although not a great, fireplace; but most of all the room has a profound feeling of age and well being.

Clough recalls the joy of cooking bacon on the fire and of turning the space into a homely flat. He was also very much aware that he was the latest in a four hundred year family line to be responsible for the Plas. Indeed the house has never been sold nor been out of the family's possession.

Little by little, as tenants moved out of Plas Brondanw, Clough was deciding on his life's course and set to improving the house, to reclaiming and designing the faded gardens, and practice his chosen trade.

His first major addition to the garden was the Orangery, originally called the Belvedere, built by 1914. This exercise taken step by step, whilst adhering to a scale plan he had outlined very early on, was a glorious amalgam of his passion, obsession and vocation.

There is a much quoted extract from his autobiography, *Architect Errant*: '... it was for Brondanw's sake that I worked and stunted, for its sake that I chiefly hoped to prosper. A cheque of ten pounds would come in and I would order yew hedging to that extent, a cheque for twenty and I would pave a further piece of terrace.' The result of a lifetime of idiosyncratic flair and serious consideration is what we enjoy today.

It may have been the roots of that great ash tree that disturbed the foundations, or it may have been the weight of four and a half centuries, but by the 1920s the Plas was obviously leaning and bowing downhill. Members of the family remember a steel girder extending from the house

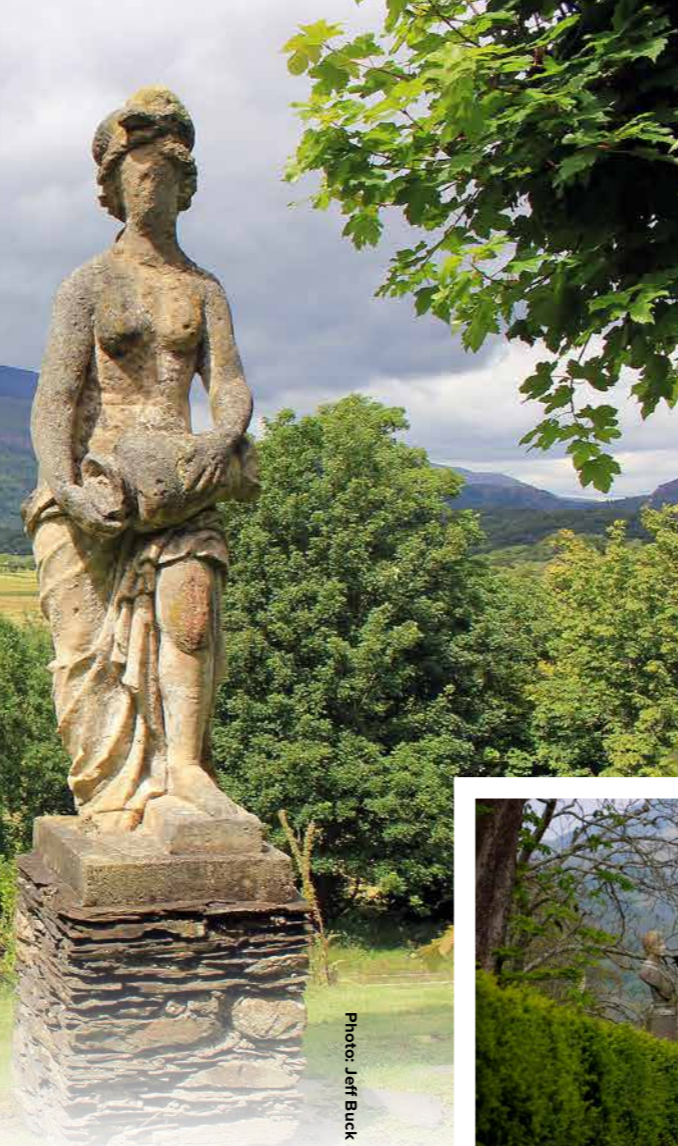


Photo: Jeff Buck



Photo: Jeff Buck



Photo: Jeff Buck

into the breast of the hill behind it, in the hope of constraining more slippage. Clough considered the problem, reflected on the rather featureless seventeenth century *façade* his forebear William Williams had built, and decided that the answer to this trouble was a buttress. So up it went in 1937 and looked as if it had always been there. Planning regulations? That would be for ten years later.

DEVASTATION

His intimacy with the house was cruelly challenged in December 1951 when a fire gutted the 1660 wing. In all probability the fire started in the Library; it is thought that coals were blown down the chimney and set alight scattered papers. The fire then devoured the centuries old wooden panels and floors.

The devastation was enormous, the loss unspeakable. Only the stone walls survived, and it is possible that they only remained standing because of the recently built buttress. Gone were diaries, estate archives, letters, personal

papers, furniture and family heirlooms. Clough's architectural drawings, however, were not at the Plas and so are still available to us.

The two storey south facing Elizabethan part of the house built by his antecedent John ap Hywel in the 1560s, was damaged but not destroyed. Its heavy oak beams and impressively shallow *voussoir* arch above the 'simnai fawr' [inglenook/great chimney] remain, even if the present late 1970s–early 1980s fireplace beneath it is less than arresting.

Somehow, one feels that the rebuilding of the Plas in 1952 was done apace. Clough took advantage of the situation to make changes to smaller rooms. Windows were enlarged here and there but, most profoundly perhaps, concrete floors and a slate staircase were introduced. This may have been a feature to prevent another fire but possibly they were needed to shore up the unsteady Plas walls. Period fire surrounds, arches and other eye-catching decorative pieces were sourced, in the most Cloughable way, so that the house

still retained its special character and ambience.

It is essentially within that framework that Oriel Brondanw, a gallery set up in late 2016 by Susan Williams-Ellis' children, Clough's grandchildren, has to work. And it is superb. The quality of light and space in the house is outstanding for complementing art and one cannot but feel that this adorning of the present is a positive organic step in the long history of this exceptional house.

PLUS ÇA CHANGE?

90 YEARS IN THE WELSH COUNTRYSIDE



by **Professor Michael Woods,**
Professor of Human Geography
at Aberystwyth University

In the ninety years since the foundation of the CPRW in 1928, rural Wales has changed substantially, yet it is far from fanciful to draw parallels between the challenges that concerned the organization in its early days and those facing the Welsh countryside today, or to see continuities in the underlying vulnerability of rural Wales to policies and projects formulated outside the region.

The establishment of the CPRW followed that of its elder sister, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, two years earlier, which had been largely motivated by the spectre of urban encroachment – a topic that CPRW's second chairman, Clough Williams-Ellis wrote about passionately in his influential book, *England and the Octopus*. Unsurprisingly, issues of ribbon development and unregulated advertising also preoccupied early CPRW members. However, for much of rural Wales the problem was a different form of urbanization – not the unchecked expansion of suburbs into the countryside, but the desertion of the land by rural people.

Between 1871 and 1961, rural Mid Wales lost a quarter of its population. One consequence was the creation of what some perceived to be a vast empty space, increasingly bereft of people with only occasional 'unsustainable' farms and villages. An empty space that could be repurposed with new uses in the national interest.

During the mid twentieth century large swathes of rural Wales were hence appropriated for reservoirs, power stations, military training and afforestation. Over time, political opposition to such projects swelled, both from the CPRW and from others, including the nascent Welsh language movement, but not until damage to the landscape had been done.

Policies shifted to trying to revitalise the economic viability

of rural Wales. Depopulation reflected the extreme poverty of the region: in the early 1960s at least a quarter of houses were without a piped water supply and more than 3,000 farms had no electricity. The solution, as proposed by the Beacham Committee in 1964, was modernization, and modernization meant industry and infrastructure.

Through the 1960s proposals abounded: for a new town of 70,000 people at Caersws, for a Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth motorway, for a Mid Wales Airport, for a coastal toll road with barrages across the Dyfi and Mawddach estuaries, and other schemes. Few of these ideas came to fruition, for a variety of financial and political reasons, but perhaps also because it soon became apparent that the population of rural Wales was growing again, not despite the lack of modern infrastructure, but because of it.

First came the 'back-to-the-land' pioneers in the 1970s, often urban drop-outs who bought smallholdings and renovated abandoned cottages in search of a slower, more natural way of life. Then, by the 1980s, changes in the housing market



and patterns of work enabled many more people to move to the country, either in retirement, or as home-workers, or as employees in one of the small-scale hi-tech or service sector businesses that had been attracted by the Development Board for Rural Wales with campaign slogans such as 'Peace Dividend'.

This development presented a paradox when it came to the protection of the rural landscape. On the one hand, the incomers had invested financially and emotionally in the Welsh countryside and could become vociferous defenders of their 'rural idyll' against perceived threats. Yet, on the other hand, in-migrant fuelled demand for new housing, expanding popular villages and introducing suburban encroachment into some parts of rural Wales for the first time.

NEW CHALLENGES

With a more diverse population, it has also become more difficult to ascertain the collective interest or opinion of local communities in rural Wales. Campaigns such as that against the flooding of the Tryweryn valley to create a reservoir to supply Liverpool in the 1960s might be represented as a struggle of Welsh rural people against external authorities; however, repeatedly, some local people in rural communities have been supportive of job-creating projects such as quarries and power stations and suspicious of conservation initiatives.

Thus, whilst CPRW's championing of national parks helped to protect thousands of acres of cherished countryside in the Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia, the momentum came to an abrupt halt in 1973 when proposals for a Cambrian Mountains National Park were blocked by the opposition of local farmers. Once again, there were unintended consequences as the failure left an unprotected zone of uplands in Mid Wales that later became prime sites for windfarm developments.

Indeed, the construction of windfarms, and more recently solar farms, could be regarded as a return to the imposition of infrastructure projects on the perceived 'empty space' of rural Wales for the wider common good, this time captured in the rhetoric of the 'global challenges' of climate change and energy security.

Furthermore, just as the schemes for power stations and military camps that exercised early CPRW members were enabled by the retreat of agriculture under fierce competition in an increasingly commercialized market place, so the challenges for the Welsh rural landscape today are tied to the fortunes of Welsh farming in a globalized market.

Hill sheep and beef farmers, in particular, have endured a precarious financial position for over two decades, with a significant minority relying on subsidy payments from the Common Agricultural Policy as their main source of income. Britain's withdrawal from the European Union could therefore prove critical.

Whilst Brexit itself might not lead to an end for subsidies, a subsequent trade deal with Australia or New Zealand could insist on the dismantling of subsidies as a 'non-tariff barrier to trade' and almost certainly would mean more competition from cheaper imports. As the Farmers' Union of Wales has warned, the impact for Welsh farms, and the farmed landscape, could be devastating.

More optimistic voices see an opportunity for agricultural policy to promote the environmental contribution of farming, building on the work of schemes such as Tir Gofal. This could include more emphasis on so-called 'payments for ecosystem services', in which farmers are rewarded for the value of their land to environmental systems, rather than for food production.

In cases where this means recognizing or restoring the role of traditional rural landscapes to processes such as flood alleviation or carbon sequestration – as in the current Pontbren and Pumlumon projects – the approach could help to maintain



the appearance of the Welsh countryside even as the farming economy declines. However, 'payments for ecosystem services' could also mean changes in land use that would be more contentious, for example afforestation or planting biofuel crops, or the radical vision of re-wilding advocated by the writer George Monbiot, which would take the Welsh uplands back to a condition before the introduction of sheep farming.

Rural Wales today, therefore, stands on the threshold of potentially momentous change, just as it did when the CPRW was formed in 1928. Now, as then, its future is entwined with wider social, economic and political changes, and involves multiple players outside rural Wales. Now, as then, there are no easy answers, but rather balances that need to be struck, between the economy and the environment, between global and local priorities, and between different interpretations of the Welsh rural landscape. These are the challenges that CPRW faces as it moves towards its centenary.

Professor Michael Woods

Professor Woods is Co-Director of the WISERD Centre for Welsh Politics and Society Research Centre at Aberystwyth University, and of the Wales Institute for Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD), as well as Editor of the Journal of Rural Studies.

Website: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/iges/staff-profiles/listing/profile/zzp>

Owen Sheers: a writer for rural Wales

Owen Sheers is recognised as a leading Welsh writer, poet and dramatist (as well as TV presenter, journalist and professor). The winner of many awards for poetry and drama, his work is studied in English syllabuses and his first novel, **Resistance**, (set in the Black Mountains) has been translated into 10 languages and adapted into a film.

Much of his writing displays his passion for the Welsh countryside

and culture, so we are very pleased that we can feature his work in this special issue of 'Rural Wales'. Owen also has a strong connection with CP2W, through his family.

The poem is taken from his second collection 'Skirrid Hill'; the following article was recently commissioned by **The Guardian** as part of a series on locations that have most influenced a writer's work.



'It's a more ancient world than London's'

The author on living in a land of divisions and borders, small-town myths and generous skies

The Welsh word *cynefin* is often translated as "habitat" in English, but in usage it goes deeper than that: an individual's homeland, their topographical idiolect, the place where they belong. My favourite definition is "a landscape which, as you step into it, feels like arriving at your hearth".

For me that hearth-place is the countryside within a 10-mile radius of the old Welsh longhouse outside Abergavenny my parents bought as newly weds. When I was three they moved the family to London. Six years later we returned to the longhouse where I lived for the rest of my childhood and teenage years.

Despite those formative years in London, the life and culture I associated with that longhouse always remained "home". Wales, which we returned to nearly every weekend, offered me an access to otherness, to belonging within what felt like a more ancient, visceral world than the streets of Blackheath or Richmond.

As I grew older it was the internal borders of the area – social, linguistic and topographical – that became increasingly informative, its latticework of division and meeting between Welsh and English, the housing estate and the rural, the tended

field and the wild plateau, the industrialised valleys and the low-lying market communities. My comprehensive school was what my mother called a "proper comprehensive", meaning that pretty much everyone went there. It was situated beneath a beautiful hill, but also one of the poorest housing estates in the country. Both filled my classroom windows – the graceful dome of the Deri's deciduous woodland rising above the grey pebbledash two-up, two-downs of Underhill Crescent.

Adolescence was a time of border crossings, moving between natural beauty and petty violence

Playing rugby, meanwhile, meant making frequent bus journeys into the south Wales valleys to witness yet another strikingly different way of living: poor in wealth, rich in community. And then, at the end of the school day, I'd get off the bus and return across the fields to that low house again, beyond the town, beyond the village, its own defiant, isolated statement of location and already, for me, deeply clothed in association and memory.

When I think of those adolescent years I remember them as a time of border crossings, of moving easily between extremes of natural beauty and petty violence, destructive young men and elemental hills, the claustrophobia of

small-town life and the freedom of hilltop midsummer skies. And I remember, too, those crossings provoking my early attempts at trying to render in language what I saw and heard around me – the epiphanies of the natural world and stories from the unreported lives of people I had yet to find represented in my reading.

These attempts became my first poems – character sketches, moments from the secret myths of small-town big men, farmers, friends. That endeavour – to deploy the writer's voice as a conduit for the voices of others – has since become a consistent vein in my work. The early Welsh bards called themselves "carpenters of song", and that has always felt like the truest description of my writing, whether in poetry, prose or drama; an attempt to create a shape in words through dovetailing my voice with the experience of others. It was in Gwent's landscape of borders I began sharpening the tools for such work and where I first discovered a pressure to speak and a purpose as to why I should put the blade to the wood.

The Green Hollow by Owen Sheers was published this April by Faber and Faber. We are grateful to Owen for allowing us to reproduce these.

FARTHER

I don't know if the day after Boxing Day has a name but it was then we climbed the Skirrid again, choosing the long way round, through the wood, simplified by snow, along the dry stone wall, its puzzle solved by moss, and out of the trees into that cleft of earth split they say by a father's grief at the loss of his son to man.

We stopped there at an altar of rock and rested, watching the dog shrink over the hill before continuing ourselves, finding the slope steeper than expected.

A blade of wind from the east and the broken stone giving under our feet with the sound of a crowd sighing.

Half way up and I turned to look at you, your bent head the colour of the rocks, your breath reaching me, short and sharp and solitary, and again I felt the tipping in the scales of us, the intersection of our ages.

The dog returns having caught nothing but his own tongue and you are with me again, so together we climbed to the top and shared the shock of a country unrolled before us, the hedged fields breaking on the edge of Wales.

Pulling a camera from my pocket I placed it on the trig point and leant my cheek against the stone to find you in its frame, before joining you and waiting for the shutter's blink that would tell me I had caught this:

the sky rubbed raw over the mountains, us standing on the edge of the world, together against the view and me reaching for some kind of purchase or at least a shallow handhold in the thought that with every step apart, I'm another step closer to you.



Skirrid Hill

Ar y Mynydd Du (Llun: Golwg)



Ffermio yng Nghymru a'r Amgylchedd, BREXIT – ac YDCW



Nick Fenwick, Cyfarwyddwr Polisi Amaethyddol, Undeb Amaethwyr Cymru

Wrth i'r Ymgyrch dros Ddiogelu Cymru Wledig ddathlu ei phen-blwydd yn 90 oed, mae ffermio yng Nghymru yn wynebu ei chyfnod mwyaf o ansicrwydd ers cenedlaethau.

Mae'r ddihangfa ddi-oed o afael Polisi Amaethyddol Cyffredin yr Undeb Ewropeaidd yn cael ei hystyried yn gyfle i wleidyddion, sefydliadau anlywodraethol, elusennau ac eraill i wthio eu hagendâu amrywiol eu hunain; byddai nifer ohonynt yn newid gwedd Cymru wledig am byth.

Y rhai sydd wrth galon y mater, ond sy'n aml yn angof ymhlith y trafodaethau academaidd dros fargeinion masnach, rheolau Sefydliad Masnach y Byd a phopeth arall ar ôl Brexit, yw'r tua 16,000 o deuluoedd ffermio yng Nghymru a'r miloedd ar filoedd yn fwy sy'n gweithio mewn diwydiannau cysylltiedig sy'n gonglfaen i economi, diwylliant a thirwedd wledig Cymru.

Mewn oes pan fydd pobl yn symud o un lle i'r llall cymaint, a'n syniadau am hanes gwledig yn debyg o fod wedi'u cael o raglenni teledu ac erthyglau papur newydd y Sul yn hytrach na bod yn wybodaeth sydd wedi'i throsglwyddo trwy'r cenedlaethau, mae'n hawdd anghofio bod y rhan fwyaf o deuluoedd amaethyddol Cymru wedi bod yn gweithio ar yr un tir – neu dir cyfagos – nid am 90 o flynyddoedd ond, yn fwy tebygol, ers 900 o flynyddoedd.

I'r teuluoedd hynny, mae'r newidiadau sydd wedi'u gweld yn ystod y ganrif ddiwethaf wedi bod yn anferth, a gellir dadlau bod peirianeiddio, polisiau llywodraethau olynol a phwysau economaidd yn newid y diwydiant fwy nag yn y ganrif flaenorol.

GWLADYCHIAETH FODERN? – HERIO'R MYTH

Er gwaethaf y math o safbwyntiau sy'n cael eu cynnal gan yr hen gysylltiadau rhwng Cymru, ei mynyddoedd a'i defaid, mae'r newidiadau sydd wedi digwydd ers blwyddyn sefydlu YDCW yn wahanol iawn i'r syniadau poblogaidd cyfredol o flynyddoedd gwyllt Cymru lle mae defaid yn rhemp.

Cwyna ffermwyr yn eu 80au a'u 90au bod llawer o'r porfeydd mynyddig y buant hwy a'u cyndeidiau yn eu bugeilio bellach wedi'u gorchuddio â thyfiant a heb fywyd gwyllt oherwydd y cwmp yn nifer y da byw. Ac o Fôn i Fynwy maen nhw'n cofio'n annwyl am gyfeillgarwch, gwaith caled, peryglon a llwch cynaefau'r gorffennol a oedd unwaith yn rhan annatod o'r calendr amaethyddol a chymdeithasol.

Ym 1928, roedd tua 355,000 erw yn cael eu defnyddio yng Nghymru i gynhyrchu cynydau – tua hanner yr hyn ydoedd yn yr 1870au. Erbyn 2016, roedd y ffigur wedi

disgyn tua 40%, i 220,000 erw, gyda gostyngiadau helaeth mewn cynhyrchu ceirch a llafur cymysg yn cyfrif am gyfran helaeth o'r gwmp.

Roedd y newid hwn, wedi'i yrru gan ffactorau economaidd, yn sylweddol o fewn ardaloedd mynyddig ac iseldir fel ei gilydd, ac roedd yn rhan o set gymhleth o newidiadau a arweiniodd at gynnydd sawl gwaith yn niferoedd y da byw mewn plwyfi isel yn benodol.

Eto i gyd, mae'r cysylltiad rhwng defaid a mynyddoedd, ym marn y cyhoedd, wedi gosod y cynnydd yn gadarn yn ucheldiroedd gwyllt Cymru. Mae syniadau o'r fath, gyda'r ddafad yn brif ddihiryn, yn fanna o'r nefoedd i'r rheiny sy'n ystyried yn brif mynyddoedd Cymru yn ddalen wag berffaith er mwyn 'ail-greu' y dirwedd ucheldir ôl oes yr iâ a gliriwyd gan ffermwyr cyntaf Cymru ryw bum mil o flynyddoedd yn ôl.

O ystyried tarddiad syniadau o'r fath, mae'r teuluoedd hynny sydd wedi ffermio tir o'r fath ers mil o flynyddoedd yn iawn i amau bod y dadleuon sy'n ffafrio dewis troi Cymru'n 'ddalen wag' berffaith ar gyfer arbrawf o'r fath – yn hytrach nag ardaloedd eraill sydd wedi'u heffeithio i'r un graddau gan fodau dynol, megis Swydd Rydychen neu Hyde Park – yn ddim ond llen cyfleus i guddio ffurf fodern ar wladychiaeth.

Ac, i lawer, mae'r difrod amgylcheddol sydd wedi'i achosi i ystodau helaeth o'n hucheldiroedd gan bolisiau da eu bwriad y Comisiwn Coedwigaeth – ac y gellir dadlau a oedd yn fwy dilys yn economaidd – y Comisiwn Coedwigaeth yn ystod yr 20fed Ganrif yn parhau yn atgof byw.

PARHAU I WEITHIO'R TIRLUN

Mae'r ffaith fod amaethwyr yr ucheldir ar fin colli'r sicrwydd a geir trwy'r Polisi Amaethyddol Cyffredin wedi tyngu sylw.

Ar un pen i'r sbectrwm, mae llu o gyrff yn gweld cyfle i orfodi agendâu o fath 'gwyllt' ar ardaloedd mawr, naill ai trwy ddylanwadu ar lunwyr polisi neu trwy gaffaeliad uniongyrchol, wedi'i hwyluso gan galedi ariannol, ecwiti negyddol a chwymp ym mhrisiau tir.

Yn y cyfamser, mae'r un colledion a ragwelir yn codi gobeithion rhai sydd â budd



Welsh farming and Brexit

Nick Fenwick, Director of Agricultural Policy, Farmers Union of Wales, argues that about 16,000 Welsh farming families are others in related industries are the cornerstone of Wales' rural economy, culture and landscape and should be supported post-Brexit.

Ensuring that our landscape remains a working landscape is central to a well-founded, thoroughly investigated post-Brexit agricultural policy in Wales.

Idealistic, superficially well-meaning policies could change the face of rural Wales forever by taking no account of the true economic, social and environmental structure of rural Wales.

The rural Wales to which CPRW has devoted 90 years will be left a shell of what it once was, and little more than a museum for English tourists.

THREATS

- Bodies with 'wilding' type agendas.
- Commercial forestry which could bury entire farms in softwoods.
- The economic impact of post-Brexit 'payments for delivering public goods' on smaller farms, with little or no mountain pasture.

Such policies would have a further devastating impact on species which rely on open mountains and moorland being grazed by livestock.

A BETTER ANSWER

With a well-founded, thoroughly investigated policy, we have the opportunity to ensure that the interests of food production, wildlife, landscape, forestry, culture and all the other public benefits that our communities provide continue to complement each other.

“Heb y teuluoedd ffermio a'r bobl hynny, y busnesau a'r diwydiannau sy'n dibynnu arnynt, bydd y Gymru wledig y mae YDCW wedi ymroi am 90 o flynyddoedd iddi yn cael ei gadael yn gragen o'r hyn ydoedd, ac yn fawr ddim mwy nag amgueddfa i dwristiaid o Loegr.”

mewn coedwigaeth fasnachol o lewyrch a allai gladdu ffermydd cyfan mewn pren meddal, fel a ddigwyddodd yng Nghymru yn ystod cyfnodau o'r ganrif ddiwethaf.

Yn naturiol, byddai polisiau o'r fath yn cael effaith niweidiol bellach ar y rhywogaethau hynny sy'n dibynnu bod mynyddoedd agored a rhostiroedd yn cael eu pori gan dda byw ond, o dan rai senarios polisi, byddai'r rheiny sy'n ffermio tir o'r fath ar hyn o bryd yn cael eu gadael gyda rhyw fath o incwm o leiaf.

Mae'n bosib fod mwy o risg i'r teuluoedd sydd yn y mwyaf, yn yr ucheldiroedd a'r iseldiroedd - rhai, y mae eu ffermydd yn gyffredinol yn llai ac yn cynnwys caeau yn bennaf, heb unrhyw borfa fynyddig, neu ychydig iawn ohono; bydd yn rhaid i'r polisiau 'talu am gyflenwi nwyddau cyhoeddus' ôl Brexit a gynigir gan llywodraethau ar y naill ochr i'r llall i Glawdd



CPRW@90

EVENTS SO FAR

● **JUNE 23** WORKSHOP AND AGM, PLAS DOLERW, NEWTOWN
11am – Workshop by Nick Venti and discussion – CPRW FUTURE followed by buffet lunch
2pm – CPRW Annual General Meeting

● **JULY 1ST TO 22ND** (CLOSED MONDAY & TUESDAY)
– PLAS BRONDANW, LLANFROTHEN

An exhibition of CPRW material since 1928 will be held in Oriel Brondanw, in this famous house which was the home of CPRW's founder, Clough Williams Ellis. It will also feature current information about CPRW. Please come along to this most wonderful house. We are most grateful to the Susan Williams-Ellis Foundation for making the exhibition possible.

● **JULY 23-26** RWAS SUMMER SHOW, BUILTH WELLS

You may well be planning to visit this huge annual gathering of rural Wales people (and many others who love our countryside); if you are, call at the CPRW stand in the Countryside Area, where we shall be marking our 90th Year with celebrations and information about our work. More information on the website

If you wish to join in any of these celebrations, contact Head Office for more information – and check the website and eBulletins

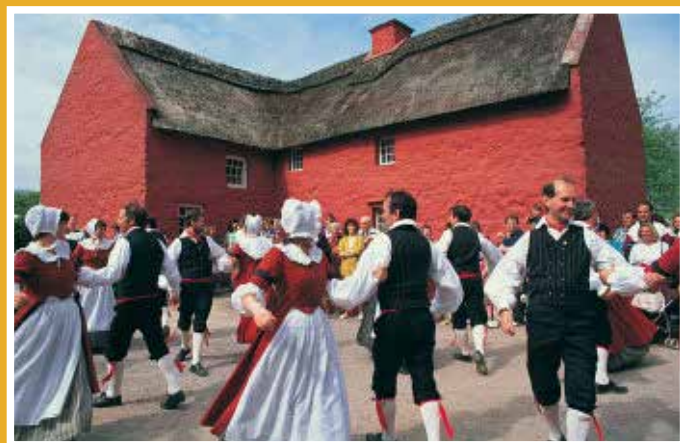
● **AUG 31 TO SEPT 2**

Joint Conference CPRW / CBA (Council for British Archaeology - Wales) – Archaeology in Wales (Lampeter)

● **OCTOBER 13TH**

A luncheon event at St Fagans Welsh Folk Musum. Come and spend a morning exploring or re- visiting the delights of St Fagans, Glamorgan, then join CPRW for lunch and a celebration of its 90 years, including talks by Cyllene Griffiths, Council for British Archeology (Wales) Robert Hepworth, Acting Chairperson of Campaign Against the Levels Motorway (CALM) and a speaker from the Campaign for Better Transport,

THIS EVENT WILL BE BY TICKET ONLY



VILLAGE AWARDS ARE BACK!

CPRW's mission is not only to protect our wonderful countryside, its charitable Objects include

'..... the protection and improvement of the landscape and environment of the countryside of Wales, recognising the importance of its communities

So we do support rural communities whenever we can - retention of local schools, pubs, shops facilities, green spaces.

Yet we spend most time and energy responding to schemes and policies that are potentially detrimental to our landscapes and the well being of rural communities With this in mind CPRW Montgomeryshire Branch were delighted to be able to resurrect Best Kept Village in 2016 with the support and interest of our generous sponsors, Morris, Marshall &

Poole. The focus was on vibrant communities and a sense of place reflected in a cared-for village rather than flower boxes and neatly mown lawns.

The judges were inspired by the breadth of activities and community cohesion of entries from villages large and small and we determined to make this a bi-annual celebratory event renamed Montgomeryshire Village Award to showcase our rural



Berriew Village – 2016 winner

communities. The 2018 Award launched in February in Berriew village hall, with representatives from 19 villages. Judges explained how they would seek evidence of distinctive character, a sense of place and a welcoming atmosphere.

Entrants are now busy putting together information packs and judges are touring the villages from May to July. This year village representatives will have an opportunity to meet members of the judging panel to explain why their village is a great place to live.

Thanks to generous funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation and the Millennium Stadium Charitable Trust, this

year the Village Awards have been expanded into other areas of north Wales. Dei Tomos, CPRW Vice President, launched the Conwy Village Award on 12 April. Representatives from Community Councils heard more about the new Award. Dei welcomed everyone, and spoke eloquently about CPRW's 90 year history and achievements. Branch Chair Joyce Hughes introduced the new competition in Conwy. She emphasized the importance of community involvement in villages, it was no longer just a matter of being the 'best kept'. This will be a good start to build on as Conwy Branch intends to hold another competition in two years' time. The competition was also launched in Caernarfonshire and Meirionnydd, again by Dei and Frances Llewellyn, Caernarfonshire Branch Chair, where there was much interest in the competition. We look forward to the entries coming in!

