

August 2012 update

Annwyl Aelod/Dear Members

"It's funny weather" someone remarked to me, earlier this week. To which I could only agree – funny peculiar, though, not ha-ha. A strange mixture of wind, heavy rain and hot sunshine which seems to have gone on for weeks. However, it all adds to the charm of summer in Borth-y-Gest, and the vegetation, at least, appreciates the good growing conditions – our paths need regular clearing.

There are, as usual, a number of things to tell you about.

The Pilot Boat Race – Saturday 25th August

Yes, the second Annual Pilot Boat Race is just two days away. The boats will be arriving in the bay at around 1.30pm and the race itself starts at 2pm. There are fewer boats this year, due to the clash with other Bank Holiday events, but it will still be a great event. The course has been altered to give spectators a more continuous view of the racing and we hope to have a commentary to provide information about the progress of the race. There will also be a number of stalls on the car park, all with a 'marine' theme, and St Cyngar's are holding their Flower Festival in the Church, with teas & coffee for sale. See later in this update for more details.

The Friends will be presenting the winning crew with special Borth-y-Gest Pilot Mugs, and the winning Club will receive the beautiful Cob 200 Trophy to hold for a year. After the racing the boats will return in procession to Porthmadog Harbour where the Yacht Club will be providing sideshows and refreshments, including a Victorian Afternoon Tea for crews and spectators. Lots of people will be dressing in "Victorian" style to add to the atmosphere, so don't be shy, use your imagination, dig into your wardrobe and dress up a bit!

The planting of the Jubilee Tree



Chairman Richard plants the sapling

Last week we were blessed with perfect weather for the official planting of our Jubilee Tree, provided by the Woodland Trust from a Royal Estate, on top of "Spyglass Hill". About 25 people turned up to see our Chairman Richard "do the honours". There were

some fireworks to mark the occasion and we toasted Her Majesty with fruit juice and sparkling wine.

It was a very nice social occasion and an opportunity to see the Hebridean and Manx sheep who graze on the hill and came to see what the commotion was all about. I recommend a stroll up there to see the amazing views and, with luck, the sun setting over the Llŷn Peninsula.



The Jubilee group on Spyglass Hill

Work on the paths and the Pen-y-Banc LNR

A number of the Friends have been out and about trimming the brambles back from the paths, which is a constant battle at this time of year. If you can, take a pair of secateurs when you go for a walk and snip any strands which encroach on the paths. Every little helps to keep the paths free.

We don't have much of a litter problem, considering our vast number of visitors, but it's also useful to carry a plastic bag to pick up the odd plastic bottle or tincan that gets left behind. Did you know that the section of Coastal Path from St Cyngar's towards the coves and beaches is one of the busiest public footpaths in Wales? There is a hidden counter which records how many people pass over it – over 60,000 in the last six months of last year.

We have had contractors working on the bracken problem in Pen-y-Banc for a couple of days, strimming the awkward areas and 'weed-wiping' with a bracken specific herbicide in the more open parts. This process should enable more diverse plant species to get established – indeed that is already happening thanks to the efforts of the last two years. Finally, there was a drainage problem on the new Well Path, below St Cyngar's, resulting in a puddle bigger than the Well! A drain has now been installed. We hope the problem is now fixed, but we'll be keeping an eye on the area.

Car Park notices

You may have noticed the return of a number of "No camper van" notices on the Car Park – this seems to be a precursor to a change of status for the parking area from 'Highway', which it is currently, to 'Car Park' - which allows controls to be put in place.

St Cyngar's Flower Festival

St Cyngar's was built in 1912 so the congregation are celebrating the centenary of this charming church. There will be a Flower Festival in the Church next week, from Saturday 25th August to Wednesday 29th August. It will be well worth a visit.

Exhibition and Talk – the Loss of the Criccieth Castle.

Our member Cathy Woodhead has written a book, published earlier this year, about the extraordinary survival of a local ship's captain and his family after their ship sank in the south Atlantic, between Cape Horn and the Falklands, in 1912. There is an exhibition about the research for the book in St Cyngar's, in conjunction with the Flower Festival, from August 25th to 29th. Cathy will be giving an illustrated talk about the story at St Cyngar's at 4pm on Tuesday 28th August – free entry.

Wildflower Walk

In the Spring we had a very successful Wildflower Walk around our Local Nature Reserves and learned a lot about the variety of beautiful plants which are native to the area. In Autumn there will be an entirely different display of flowers and colours, so I am hoping that we'll be able to have another Wildflower Walk then. The tentative date is Sunday 7th October, but I will confirm this and other details nearer the time.

Local Wildlife

Those readers who are interested in local wildlife may be interested to know about a Facebook group called Glaslyn Nature, set up by a small group of knowledgeable observers and photographers from the Porthmadog area. It's a fascinating day to day photographic and written record of our local nature – much, much more diverse than I ever imagined. It's free to join and you can find it by searching for Glaslyn Nature within Facebook [I think you probably have to register with Facebook first].

Finally.....

All of our events, plus photographs, can be found on our own website at www.friendsofborthygest.com

That's all for now. Here's hoping for an Indian Summer [or any kind of summer!]

David Medcalf

Ysgrifennydd/Secretary Tel: **01766 512115** Email: **medcalf959@btinternet.com**

Cyfeillion Borth y Gest - yn gofalu ac yn gwella ein pentref

The Friends of Borth y Gest – looking after and improving our village