

BORTH-Y-GEST UPDATE
March 2011

Annwyl Cyfeillion/Dear Friends

Spring has just about arrived in Borth – gardens are becoming colourful, snowdrops have passed their prime and wild [or escaped!] daffodils are brightening up some unusual and unexpected places around the village. There are a few things to update you with:

1. The Old Well clearance [under the road wall near the Lookout and St Cyngar's] on Feb 26th
Well....it went well!!

We had about a dozen volunteers turn up on Saturday 26th Feb – blessed with sunshine as clearly they were all righteous. Cathy allocated tasks such as path clearing, litter picking, ivy chopping and well dredging, and about an hour and a half later we had good access from the Lookout side, an ivy-free wall and a rubbish free, if rather muddy, Well. The younger volunteers [and me] officially re-opened the Well by throwing in pennies and making wishes. Over the next few months we plan to work with the Council to re-open the footpath from the bay side of the Well – where there is currently an ugly barrier and 'Danger – Keep Out' sign which detract from the look and feel of this lovely area. We will also remove some of the cleared vegetation that has been dumped over the wall near here.

2. A Little History of Borth-y-Gest – to be published!

Last year we produced a .PDF [electronic] and also a printed version of Richard Walwyn's paper on local history which was well received. Richard has now done some more work on this, and Cathy Woodhead has found a number of old photos and pictures to illustrate it, so we have a plan to publish their work as a small book. This will be in English and, if we can get a grant towards translation, also in Welsh. Richard and Cathy hope to have the book printed and available by Easter, when we will have another photographic exhibition – see below.

3. Historic Photograph Exhibition 23rd-28th April

The Friends' contribution to the Cob 200 Celebration is to be a repeat of the exhibition, in St Cyngar's Church Hall [below the Church] from 23rd to 28th April, Easter Week. It was very popular in August last year so if you didn't catch it then, I hope you will be able to at Easter. If you did, it's well worth seeing again!

If you are able to help with the setup on April 23rd and/or the dismantling on April 28th, please let Sheila Roberts know on 01766 512735.

4. Road Waste clearance

I missed this item off the last update, sorry! Last year we had a bit of difficulty with the road contractor who resurfaced the road beyond the School, at the top of Mersey Street. He did a good job on the road, but dumped a lot of waste over the fence on to the Local Nature Reserve land, which was both unsightly and inappropriate considering that The Friends have a project to restore this area in terms of access and natural coastal vegetation. I'm pleased to say that an amicable agreement was made and the waste has been removed and some areas re-levelled. All that remains to be sorted out is some very old Gwynedd Council debris, including an old "School" sign, that was previously hidden by the bracken! This should disappear in the next few weeks.

5. Street Lighting changes

As reported in the last update, the old sodium lights are being progressively changed to new, more efficient and more effective halogen lights. This work is continuing – it's difficult to work out the pattern that is being followed, but there are now only a few old lights left. Good work!

6. History Walk on Portmeirion Peninsula – Saturday 19th March

Details of this were in the last Update and are on the Noticeboard. In brief, turn up at Portmeirion car park at 2pm, wearing clothing suitable for the weather and shoes or boots that you don't mind getting wet, muddy or both! If you have any questions, please contact Richard Walwyn on 01766 513288

7. Coastal Walk and Open Meeting on Saturday April 9th

I'm very pleased to say that Rhys Jones of Gwynedd Council's Environment team has kindly agreed to lead a walk along the estuary, from Borth-y-Gest bay to Ynys Cyngar [The Powder House]. Rhys will tell us about the marine environment, plants and wildlife – especially the birds – along the way. This will be at 4.30pm [2 hours before low tide] from the Car park. Meet by the Noticeboard and wear suitable clothes and shoes/boots – it will be sandy and perhaps wet. Rhys will bring a telescope, but if you have binoculars, bring them along. After the walk there will be an Open Meeting at which I hope we will have a speaker from the Council Maritime Dept to talk about the management of the estuary and its facilities. There will certainly be a report from the Committee on the activities since the last Open Meeting [though if you've been reading these updates, you'll know all about them!] and also an Open Forum for questions and suggestions. I will need to confirm details of the meeting, but it will probably be in Bethel Chapel at 7pm with tea and biscuits beforehand.

8. Tidy up of the "new wood" beyond Parc-y-Borth – Monday April 18th

If you ever walk up into the fields alongside/above Borth Woods, you will know that a few years ago a new area of woodland was planted. The plantation now needs some loving care to tidy up the now redundant plastic sapling protectors which rather spoil the area. Later in the year we'll identify where saplings have failed to grow and replace them, and we'll have some bracken bashing sessions to keep this growth under control. There will be a notice on the noticeboard, but the aim will be to meet either at the Car Park noticeboard at 2pm or in the plantation at around 2.15pm. Children will be welcome – gloves are advised and adults could usefully bring secateurs.

If you have never walked up there, it's well worth it for the fantastic views, and the opportunity to see our 'rare breed' sheep. Currently there are just eight of them in residence – a mixture of non-breeding Hebrideans and Welsh Mountain – but we hope that the new lambs will be rejoining us in the near future.

9. Future Events

The AGM is planned for Wednesday May 18th. More details in due course.

In the summer we hope to have an evening bat walk, a History Walk near Penrhyndeudraeth, a 'celebration barbecue' on Borth-y-Gest beach and repeats of the Nature Walk, the 'original' History Walk and a number of bracken bashing sessions in various places in the Local Nature Reserves – no doubt there will be changes to this list, but there will be updates to keep you informed.

As ever, let me know if you have any questions, suggestions or offers of help for any event!

Cofion gorau/best regards

David Medcalf

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

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