

Llyn Archaeology and History Society model

The official launch of this new society will take place on 17th July, during the CBA' Festival of British Archaeology 2013 and include Richard Suggett from RCAHMW who will discuss the Dating Old Welsh Houses project and Tegid Rhys Williams (former CBA placement at Gwynedd Archaeological Trust) on *The Value & Importance of the Welsh Language when Undertaking Community Archaeology Projects in North-West Wales*, which was presented at TAG 2011 and Iwan Parry from Gwynedd Archaeological Trust discussing community excavations at the Iron Age promontary fort of Porthdinllaen.

The society has been established by myself, a third year BA Archaeology undergraduate at Durham University, I am also a committee member and trustee of Llyn Maritime Museum, Nefyn (since I was 17), which thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund grant will be reopened after 10 years in March 2014. I am also 2013 Vice Chairman of MOROL - Institute of Welsh Maritime Historical Studies. Other founders include Tegid Rhys Williams (History graduate, former CBA placement and now librarian), Rhys Mwyn (Graduate archaeologist, former 80s punk band member from famous Welsh group Anrhefn and now community archaeologist) and John Dilwyn from Gwynedd Archives.

We hope it will be a dynamic and innovative society with a focus on community archaeology and history and bottom up heritage management which will work closely with existing heritage bodies - GAT, RCAHMW and Bangor University. More importantly and surprisingly rare for Wales, it will create a society which aims to promote the study of archaeology and history through the medium of Welsh, which we hope will lead to greater participation from those who wouldn't usually participate.

We aim to raise awareness of the PAS, Arfordir scheme and process of heritage management - who to contact, information about scheduled monuments etc. (in heritage guide under preparation, thus empowering local people, creating a bottom up cultural heritage management network complementary to and easing pressure on the trusts.

It will create greater transparency in the heritage sector, allowing for communities to know what research / excavation is being undertaken and contribute to the wealth of local knowledge.

We have launched the Facebook page which has more info and is very popular, over 130 followers in the first week: <http://www.facebook.com/archllyn>

Our email is: archllyn@hotmail.co.uk

We have received support, backing and hopefully partnership with Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Bangor University, AONB Llyn, Llyn Landscape Partnership, Llyn Maritime Museum, National Trust, Ancient Arts, Peoples Collection Wales and RCAHMW. See note below about work with partnerships to catalogue past projects.

The Llyn Landscape Partnership are so supportive, they want us to start think about publishing a book about the heritage of the area, which they could fund.

A local publishing company has offered to sponsor the newsletter, covering printing costs.

We will work with Bangor University who have a research excavation on the peninsula- provide publicity and encourage local people to visit.

We are planning to apply for the new HLF Sharing Heritage scheme.

From April 2013, Start-up grants will also be available to community groups taking responsibility for heritage, to create the right constitutional framework (including the costs of professional advice on legal forms and governance structures) and to assess options in arriving at a strategy for managing the heritage. They may then make a further application for a grant for a project focused on their heritage.

This will enable us to create website (which links into Facebook), fund lecture series, create a modern constitution and cover translation costs.

Initial ideas/ framework on which the society is based , may provide the model for future societies, if the experiment is successful. Only time will tell...

New Model/Future of Societies:

Based on community engagement, inclusion, conversation and bottom-up heritage management:

- **Both a History and Archaeology society** - both are the central tenants of heritage, therefore why should they be separate? Better together as it saves resources and prevents duplication - of mutual benefit in research.
- **Partnerships** - should work closely with a variety of existing groups/organisations - heritage bodies - national and county, landscape and environmental organisations, museums and cultural organisations - see list above
- **Bottom up cultural heritage management - see empowerment of members**
Not to undertake the professional services of local archaeological units, but to ease their burden/costs (which will only get worse) by fulfilling their educational role by informing and empowering people about the heritage management system - reporting finds, monitoring sites etc.
- **Role of social media** - prospect of a virtual society
By empowering local people with information about cultural heritage management (Heritage Guide in preparation) and online resources to enable them to undertake research, it creates the prospect of DAMs (Digital Active Members) or Digital Engagers (my terms).

Enables members who do not live locally to assist with the publicity and more importantly the research online, thereby providing a wider community base. I managed to set up the society from Durham - evidence that you can be an active member and not have to live in a local town.

Benefits of social: Publicity, Research, Online platform to share information and undertake research.

- **Understand what has been done** -
Through working with our partners who over the years have undertaken much individual and project research into the archaeology and history of the area, we can collate and catalogue this, in order to know what has been done before, prevent duplication and make the information accessible. This includes research into history, archaeology, culture and landscape.
- **Understand what people want** -
Following the above, identify the 'community' heritage. This is based on the work of John Schofield at the University of York, the modern and multiple and ever-changing perceptions of heritage, based on the Faro Conventions. We are doing this through a questionnaire. We

hope to get 1000 responses which include questions which gauge local inhabitants' perception and knowledge of local heritage, both archaeology, history and culture.

This will be used to identify what is important/significant to the local population, identify sites at risk and discover the 'Forgotten Heritage'.

It will enable the creation of a community driven research agenda which can be applied in addition to the national framework.

Transparency - a newsletter which provides updates not only from the society but also from heritage bodies GAT, RCAHMW and CADW and commercial (through planning officer) about any archaeological work or ongoing projects which are within the society's area. Not only will this raise publicity of archaeology, but will lead to advocacy as discussed.

Finally a note on youth engagement:

This model should create a higher proportion of youth engagement - especially through the 'Digital Engagers' .

As discussed societies need to target youth through the following ways:

- Primary school - fun and engaging
- Secondary school and especially sixth form - attract students who have to do volunteering as part of the compulsory BAC
- Potential to take advantage of the new curriculum changes
- University students are under-utilised, societies need to target these students and highlight how becoming an active society member will help them with a future career - volunteering, transferable skills, heritage experience.

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