

SLOW NEWS

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Academic support for Cittaslow UK



Dr Tessa Holland (left) with her thesis on Cittaslow, is congratulated by her tutor, Dr Helen Jarvis.

Cittaslow UK is the network of towns in the UK, which have been awarded accreditation to the Cittaslow movement, these are currently Aylsham in Norfolk, Berwick-upon-Tweed in Northumberland, and Mold and Llangollen in North Wales; and this is our regular newsletter.

To better understand and research Cittaslow, Newcastle University in partnership with Cittaslow UK were successful in attracting PhD student funding from the Arts Humanity Research Council (AHRC) to study what makes Cittaslow towns so special. Tessa Holland was appointed and has just been awarded a PhD at the end of her studies.

The value of academic collaboration is explained by Tessa's tutor, Dr Helen Jarvis of Newcastle University, "My academic life has always involved collaboration with civil society organisations. It can be hugely rewarding to identify shared concerns and build effective relationships – whether for a stand-alone piece of research, undergraduate volunteering, or full-scale PhD. It takes time to establish effective two-way relationships which is why the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award presented the ideal opportunity – for Tessa to develop her academic career, and for Cittaslow UK representatives to tap into the technical support, funding and impact that University partnership can provide. It's not enough to produce evidence 'from an ivory tower': the real challenge is to communicate and explain real-world situations. Dr Tessa Holland is to be congratulated for sensitively navigating shared concerns to produce a wonderfully original thesis".

And from Cittaslow UK's members - well done Tessa - and thank you for sharing your thought-provoking ideas, and helping to develop our projects.



BA and BSc Geography students from Bangor University on their annual visit to Mold, as part of their sustainable development module field work.

Cittaslow is a worldwide network of small towns that aim to be places where people enjoy living, working and visiting. The membership stretches from Iceland to Australia, making Cittaslow an internationally recognised standard. Cittaslow encourages its member towns to support practical projects that help local people and businesses by maintaining the unique traditions, strengths and character of their town. At the same time, it is a forward thinking movement that aims to promote cutting edge solutions and improve peoples' lives in a sustainable manner.

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New Town Square for Llangollen

After some trials and tribulations, regarding to the funding of the project, Cittaslow Llangollen are pleased that work has now commenced on the new Centenary Square in the heart of the town.

The original proposal for the site came about as a result of the Town Council's acquisition of an area of land, formerly known as Royal Gardens, which was owned by the previous proprietors of the Royal Hotel. The hotel had secured planning permission for a cafe/ice cream parlour on the site but then offered the hotel for sale or lease and indicated that if a brewery obtained the property that they could use the area for a beer garden.



Original site

The Town Council, and local community, felt that this would not be a suitable use of the site; it being next to the War Memorial and the only open space in the centre of the town, and as a consequence the site was secured by the Town Council in 2010. The aim of the Town Council was to work through its Cittaslow Committee to undertake improvements to the site which would reflect its significance in the town centre, its co-



WW2 War memorial returns

location with the Town's War Memorial and the surrounding listed buildings in the heart of the Llangollen Conservation Area.

Cittaslow Llangollen appointed Groundwork Manchester Salford Stockport Tameside & Trafford Ltd to design a new scheme for the site and the contract has been placed with G H James Ltd, a North Wales Civil Engineering company which has a proven record in delivering this type of project, having worked on similar schemes in Mold, Holywell, Flint and Buckley.



Artist's impression

Over the last few months the work has started in earnest on the scheme and the new design involves a complete reconfiguration of both War Memorials and the adjacent garden. The levels across the site have been reduced to street level and both the First and Second World War Memorials have been resited on the square. The edges of the square will be landscaped with the northern boundary flanked with four large liquid amber trees; to restore some of the greenery lost within the town centre in recent years.



Excavation of the tree pits

The surfacing will be of high quality and will allow for free drainage of rainwater, which will be collected in purpose-built tree pits to help irrigate the planting on the site. Whilst the plans have had to change very slightly, the end result will provide a high quality multi-use space in the heart of the town centre.

The works are scheduled for completion on the 25th June 2018, and it is proposed that the new square will be officially opened on 8 July, which will be the 95th anniversary of the original unveiling of the First World War Memorial.

The Cittaslow Committee have funded a third of the costs of the works and the remainder has been supported by grant aid from Cory, Wren and Cadw.



Berwick Food and Beer Festival

The annual Berwick Food and Beer Festival is from 31st August - 2nd September 2018. The Beer Festival marquee sited opposite the town's Georgian Barracks will offer a range of local beers and the opportunity to explore Berwick's malting history. A Food Street links the Beer and Food Festival areas.

Heritage Open Days

From September 13th - 18th buildings of every age, style, and function throw open their doors to members of the public in Berwick to support the Heritage Days. These

Open Days provide visitors and locals with opportunities to explore and enjoy properties and places, sometimes hidden, often curious, always interesting and without charge.

Berwick Literary Festival

England's most northerly town will be playing host to a celebration of books and authors. Talks, workshops and other events will be staged between October 18th - 21st at venues in Berwick. This festival prides itself, on not only attracting speakers of national renown but also on promoting Northumberland authors and this year many of the sessions are allocated to talented regional speakers.



Wild About Mold



Volunteers planting 14 Silver Lime (*Tilia Tomentosa*) in Mold Cemetery extension



Pruning fruit trees in the Park Avenue Community Garden



Grafting a fruit tree demonstration

Every Cittaslow town appreciates that a green infrastructure is what brings our towns and communities alive and makes them great places to live in. Here in Mold we recognize that street trees deliver a wide range of tangible and cost-effective economic, social and environmental benefits. Trees make a town look fantastic as well as performing many services. They promote better mental and physical health according to the Forestry Commission. They act as carbon sinks and air filters and reduce pollution, soak up excess water and reduce the urban heat island effect, and also provide oxygen. The

Wildlife Trusts Wales gives an example of an 80-foot beech tree absorbing the daily carbon dioxide output of two family homes.

Despite these benefits, urban canopy cover across the county of Flintshire is only 14.5%, the seventh lowest in Wales; with Mold's canopy cover at 15.3% being below the average for Wales at 16.3%.

In 2012 the More Trees for Mold project developed from Cittaslow Mold's existing interests in improving the local environment, and providing sources of locally grown food, combined with Lions International who aimed to plant one

million trees worldwide that year. The Mold project worked with local communities and planted over 100 trees in schools and public spaces, and trained and supported local people to look after the trees.

Now, in partnership with North Wales Wildlife Trust and Mold Town Council, the work continues and sites for more tree planting are being identified in Mold. Funding from the Big Lottery People and Places award will enable tree planting in communities along the Alun and Chwiler river corridors as part of the Wild About Mold scheme.

Classic cars invade Aylsham

Aylsham was invaded by 100 classic cars in May when a Gay Classic Car Group rally visited the town. From Jensen Interceptor to Morris Minor, Aston Martin to Triumph Vitesse, there were cars packed into the town centre to suit all tastes for the many Aylsham residents who turned out to view the wide selection of vehicles, shimmering in the warm sunshine.

Some 220 drivers and passengers accompanied the cars and were treated to a picnic-style lunch, produced and served by members of Aylsham Country Market. The Town Council had arranged for the 12 o'clock wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle to be screened in the 161-year-old Town



Hall, so the visitors, many from overseas, were able to view the spectacle in an historic setting, while enjoying something to eat.

Car Group members were impressed by the welcome they received, so much so that some returned the following day to see more of the town. Roger Willis, chairman of Cittaslow Aylsham, commented, "This was a great event for the town, with a good number of visitors from Europe and as far afield as the United States. The organisers of the rally, which was celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Group's formation, seemed delighted with the organisation and

food provided and of course, residents had a chance to see some fantastic cars."

Deby Kidd, Manager of Aylsham Country Market was very pleased too, "This was a major undertaking for us," she said, "requiring careful planning, including one of our members getting up at 4.30 on Saturday morning to cook 250 sausage rolls! I was delighted that it all went smoothly and that our visitors were so pleased."

There's more about the Gay Classic Car Group at www.gccg.org.uk and Aylsham Country Market at www.aylshamcountrymarket.simplesite.com





Chefs demonstrate in Aylsham!



Jill Willis cooking demonstration

Cittaslow Aylsham has again teamed up with sister-organisation Slow Food Aylsham to present a series of cookery demonstrations throughout the summer. Local chefs will be demonstrating their skills in the town's Market Place with a special guest appearance in July by students from the High School, together with the school's head of Hospitality and Catering, Jason Baxter.

The first demonstration was by Slow Food member Jill Willis, former head of the Hospitality & Catering faculty at the High School. Jill has wide experience in catering, having owned her own restaurant. She also worked with many 'celebrity chefs', including Jamie Oliver, Ainsley Harriott and Rick Stein, on the 'Cooking Bus', which tours the country, visiting schools and events, promoting healthy eating and cooking.

The cookery demonstrations coincide with the town's Farmers Market, held on the first Saturday of each month, and Jill's choice of ingredients were all sourced there wherever possible.



Berwick's Coronation Park Sculpture Trail

At the top of the park is the site of Gallows Knowe and public executions have been recorded here from when Edward III held siege to Berwick. Those accused of treason were hanged here. The last execution was Grace Griffin in 1823.

The land for the park was donated by a local baker in 1937 to mark the coronation of Edward VIII but after his abdication it was dedicated to George VI. The royal theme was continued with the planting of a tree to mark the Queen's 90th birthday. The park is the most northerly formal park in England and has stunning westward views of the River Tweed and the remains of Berwick Castle form part of its boundary. At the top of the park is the site of Gallows Knowe

After considerable investment the park has been restored with beautiful planting, a wildflower meadow, a pergola in the Arts and Crafts style and a traditional shelter with stunning views of the river.

A path through the park leads to the New Road, built by soldiers returning from the Napoleonic Wars, which follows the river into the town.

The latest addition has been the Sculpture Trail. Eight of the local first and middle schools were involved in helping produce the designs based on images of local animals and plants, which include a robin, a moth, a woodlouse, an otter, pipistral bat, a tawny owl, a barley straw and a mole.

The designs were then translated into wooden features using a range of different woods by a contemporary sculptor based in Seaham, County Durham. The main tool used was a chainsaw. The finished carvings were placed within the park by the Berwick Detachment of the Northumbria Army Cadets. The trail adds play opportunities for children and a trail leaflet is being developed which will include a quiz for both residents and visitors to be challenged.

Shape my Llangollen

Cittaslow Llangollen have embarked on the production of a Place Plan for Llangollen; based on the Shape my Town model of community engagement.

The Cittaslow Committee of the Town Council will act as the steering group for the process, which was launched at a recent Community Café consultation event held in March.

A town team has been appointed and they are now looking at the methodology of the Shape

my Town toolkit. Their role will be to start working on the implementation a planning exercise to complete a community or Place Plan for the Town.

The work will incorporate an analysis of three aspects of the built environment:

- **Landscape:** how our town sits in its surroundings
- **Townscape:** the character of our town and its buildings
- **Streetscape:** the spaces between buildings.

It is hoped that the plan will be completed in the near future and that the result will be able to be feed into the Denbighshire Local Development Plan which is currently subject to review.