



News from The Pales

The Pales Newsletter - May 2017

The Pales : A Vision for the Future

How can one achieve the aim of the Pales Steering Group ‘to preserve the special and unique quality of the Pales and to enable it to be appreciated by others’? We need to ensure that the buildings are fit for purpose while preserving their historic character and that there are amenities for visitors which do not diminish the sense of rural tranquillity and the impact of the surrounding landscape. To further this we have appointed the architects Simmonds Mills; their brief includes the refurbishment of the Warden’s cottage in as sustainable a manner as possible, improved heating for Meeting House and Schoolroom, and a small amount of tactfully sited accommodation in the grounds. This will not happen instantly; planning permissions need to be negotiated; a fundraising campaign will be launched later in the year. But this is an important step forward.

Simmonds Mills are an eco-building and sustainable architecture company.

"We are U.K. based specialists in ecological building design. We design healthy, low-energy, high-comfort domestic & non-domestic projects to the AECB Silver, Passivhaus & EnerPHit energy standards. We use both traditional and innovative building techniques. We have detailed knowledge of locally available and renewable materials.

Simmonds Mills incorporate key principles of energy efficiency and the use of appropriate renewable energy resources.

We have particular experience of using UK woodland timber, and are practised in earthen building techniques. We have completed a wide variety of built projects, including: Passivhaus and Enerphit certified projects; historic conversion and renovation; new housing; public buildings for housing associations, charities, educational centres."

Meanwhile there is plenty happening, both organised events and informal visits – the Meeting House is always open. Visit our website (thepales.org.uk) for more details about events :

June 1st Hay Festival visitors. Visitors to the Hay Festival will be invited to visit The Pales in the afternoon for a talk, given by Peter Hussey, followed by cream teas and activities.

June 10th Southern Marches Area Meeting. In the morning there will be a talk given by Darrel Booth on Animal Welfare. This will be followed by a Bring-and-Share lunch. The afternoon will be spent in activities revolving around wool and its uses. If you have any spare balls of wool please bring them.

June 13th Art at the Pales, the first of our Art Days, a drawing and painting workshop led by local artists Lois Hopwood and Bronte Woodruff. Be inspired by the landscape around The Pales at a painting and drawing workshop led by Lois Hopwood and costs £25. Lois studied Fine Art at The University of Newcastle Upon Tyne 1982 - 86 and won the South West Open painting prize in 1987. Lois lives and works with the Potter Tony Hall at their studios in Knucklas on Castle Hill Farm.

We will begin the day of landscape painting with making a lot of small pen/pencil/charcoal sketches, walking and stopping and drawing for an hour. For more details of this event please [click here](#).

June 18th Gardening Day (see below for more)

July 15th Refugee day. The Pales will be hosting a visit of refugees from Hereford

And make a special note of the exciting activities in our tricentenary week, September 11-17 (<http://thepales.org.uk/tricentennial-events>)

Gardening Days. The grounds at the Pales range from historic burial ground to modern meditation pool and peace pole, vegetable and fruit garden, mixed woodland and wildflowers, as well as a camping field and picnic area. All these need different kinds of care. Grass is cut regularly, but other areas have needed attention. Gardening Days at the Pales are an opportunity to join with other Friends in maintaining the grounds. Lunch is a bring-and-share occasion and we join with Friends in Meeting for Worship at 3.00. The first gardening day focused on the Meditation pool, clearing it of overgrown rushes and reducing the exuberant greenery that had overwhelmed the sitting area



On the March gardening day we started to shift the wood left after the coppicing of 'Williams' Wood', the mixed woodland planted by Martin and Lynda Williams. The thinning and coppicing has given more space for the young trees to develop, encouraging an undergrowth of wild flowers. More work on the clearing is needed; help on the next gardening day, June 18, will be welcome.



April Events.

Abergavenny Foolish Day. Abergavenny Local Meeting held a Foolish Day at The Pales on 1st April. Here is Kate Evan's report.

A foolish day at the Pales on April 1st

“The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.”— William Shakespeare, As You Like It

It was the children who could say about the emperor’s new clothes.

“Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” Matthew 18:3

“I ... ask the Lord to give you every blessing and joy and to keep ever fresh and young your ‘child’s mind’ which is the only one worth having” Thomas Merton

The date we selected for our 300th anniversary visit to the Pales happened to be 1st April and, though the hoaxes, tricks and “false news” traditional to that morning did not figure, we did think we might be foolish in the spirit of the child in all of us. But then we became foolish in our lack of preparation and though our planning really did not happen the day somehow evolved through conversations and holding it in mind. In the end eleven met for bring and share foolishness and lunch – beginning with meeting for worship.

I found myself slightly shocked by misreading the framed quote on the wall as “Be silly and cool in thine own mind and spirit”. As I was caught and held by the sunlight, the “glamourie” of the slug trail on the Pales door step and the sequins in the 5 year old’s dress, I felt silly in gratitude and joy in the company and the warm embrace of the Pales and Carole’s and Johns’ quiet welcome.

We sang the chicken song. I will only say it involved knitted chickens and we even sang it in rounds. We shared ideas and reflections on foolishness acknowledging its dark side as well as an account of the fool archetype which came from The Inner Child Cards by Isha and Mark Lerner. The foolish lunch included “fool” and tasty gluten and sugar free cooking. We enjoyed the garden and at the end two of us set off to walk a foolish half the way home taking a luxurious 3 days.

But what has this got to do with anything? – how will it solve the troubles of the world? – where we meet the dark side of foolishness in the trickster of Trump, the denial of climate change and the injustices of our economics of manipulated greed. I don’t know but perhaps there is a link with knitting slugs.

For many of us slugs are bad for their devastation of our gardens and hopes of growing productive plants and just generally yucky. They are also an essential part of our ecology and its need for recycling. Even earth worms who are a much more clear good as they don't eat the flower and vegetable seedlings are not sufficiently treasured. Can we love slugs and find what they may have to teach us?

I came across the idea of "glamourie" in John Burnside's "I put a spell on you". It is apparently Old Scots, meaning a "charmed condition where everything, even the most commonplace of objects or events, is invested with magical possibilities, Glamourie is a different way of being in the world, a sudden and sometimes frightening openness, the soul like a door ajar, to paraphrase Emily Dickinson, the physical world immediate and intimate and erotic, invested with new energy and light and, at the same time, beautifully perilous."

If inclined that way it is worth re-reading Jung for the seriousness of it all.

We finished with the Appalachian Shaker Song:

*Tis the gift to be simple, tis the gift to be free - Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be.
And when we find ourselves in the place just right, 'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
When true simplicity is gained. To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed. To turn, turn will be
our delight, Till by turning, turning we come round right.*

Arwystli Artists Day - April 2017

The Arwystli Artists are a group who had the crazy idea of meeting, once a month, in an attractive place and drawing or painting there. Aberystwyth beach, in the pouring rain, Aberdovey on the day that storm Doris arrived, Montgomery Castle on one of the coldest days of the winter, are just some of their venues. Surprisingly the group attracts new artists to join this stalwart band. As a continuation of this programme the Pales in April was a delightful change.

Eight artists met at the Pales on a Thursday at the end of April, a group of mixed ability, enjoying painting or drawing in the proximity of others. The Pales offers a variety of subjects, there is the Meeting House itself, the burial group, the famous views, the woodland, the reflection pool, peace pole. Pictured here are a selection of the people and their pictures.





Noted by John Davies, in his book: “100 places to see before you die”, as the most spiritual place in Wales. What a place to stand aside from the craziness of the world for a moment or two. What a place to be creative in. Of course the peace and beauty of this gem of a place does not only attract painters, what a place for creative writing, or for just sitting and enjoying.

There will be a tutored day of "Abstracting the landscape" led by well known local artists Lois Hopwood and Bronte Woodruff on the 13th June. Cost £25, and there will be a further unstructured at day during the Pales three hundredth anniversary week in September. Details of both these events can be seen on The Pales website - www.thepales.org.uk



For a full Calendar of Events please [click here](#).