

Adroddiad Gwerthuso Prosiect / Project Evaluation Report

Enw'r Prosiect / Name of project: Gwrych and The Great War: People and Place

Beth oedd y mater a ddyluniwyd y prosiect i fynd i'r afael ag o? / What was the issue the project was designed to address?

1. Looking at the First World War, seeing how Gwrych and Abergele were affected by it.
2. Engaging local school children in what went on during WWI and also with Gwrych Castle
3. Community engagement, history and a love of learning

Sut oedd y prosiect yn bwriadu mynd i'r afael â hyn / How did the project propose to tackle this?

The project proposed to tackle this through discussion with the Emrys ap Iwan pupils involved for the majority of the project, bringing in outside help to develop ideas – ie regarding mental health the pupils invited Stewart Harris of the Soldiers Charity to speak of his experiences, invited author Elizabeth Duncan and poet Geoff Skellon to explore creative writing, had Arlena Thornton of ART Theatre help with dramatisation.

There were regular weekly workshops with the pupils of Emrys ap Iwan with the above people visiting, as well as events coordinators involved with Gwrych Preservation Trust.

As well as having the Emrys ap Iwan pupils involved Diane, Gwrych Preservation Trust's education officer, also went to local primary schools to get them involved with Gwrych and WWI. Llanfair Tailharin and Betws yn Rhos primary schools attended workshops at the castle in January and February where they looked at the castle and wrote poetry based on WWI and Gwrych.

Because both these schools had visited Gwrych Castle earlier in the year they were keen to come to the 4th July performance. As well as these 2 schools St Georges and Sant Elvod's primary schools attended on 4th July. This has led to all 4 schools wanting to be involved more with Gwrych. So point 3 is seeing a very exciting knock on effect

Emrys ap Iwan pupils, by doing outside of the set curriculum have developed a love of learning that will hopefully put them in good stead as the older ones enter their GCSE year.

Pa wersi a ddysgwyd o gyflawni'r prosiect? A fydddech chi'n newid unrhyw beth os byddai y prosiect yn cael ei redeg eto? / What lessons were learnt from delivering the project? Would you change anything if the project was to be repeated?

To repeat the project again it would be much easier because of the relationships Diane has gained with the schools and local organisations like Fusion Project and Bodelwyddan Castle.

So the lessons learned are probably to develop relationships first with schools and other organisations, but then without doing the project these relationships would not have been forged anyway.

Next time will be so much easier

We did try to get local people involved with the project by advertising at various Trust events and open days but very few people were interested. Some did give email address but then when followed up never responded.

The best contact came via the U3A where Diane went in January 2018 to give a talk about the project. From there Geoff Skellon, a local poet and WWI enthusiast, joined the team, came and spoke with the pupils about WWI, about poetry and his own thoughts. It was his poem "Flanders Mud" that the pupils used for the first part of the performance.

Looking back on the original application there were things that were touched on in different ways. For example once working with the Emrys ap Iwan pupils it was clear that the use of archives would have to be modified. Though we did touch on part. Diane spent one session with the pupils looking at The Countess's involvement with the Prisoner of War Camp at Llansannan, which led to the poem "Escape?" written by one of the pupils and performed by another pupil being used on the 4th July at the performance to look at mental health attitudes, suicide and the need to escape. It may not have been clear that this came from the POW camp, but it was inspired by that along with class discussion. Because of talking about mental health issues in WWI the pupils asked to meet a more recent veteran and so Stewart Harris of The Soliders Charity, himself an Afghan veteran and local man (ex Emrys pupil living in Rhyl) came and talked about his experiences. Discussion followed about the differences.

In the end it was decided that the use of training from The People's Collection was not necessary, due to the lack of archival material given by members of the public, and by the age and time constraints of those involved – Emrys ap Iwan pupils who only had two hours per week in term time to give rather than adult members of the public.

Again no oral history training was needed as no members of the public came forward to want to give their stories.

The YouTube channel never happened because no film makers came forward to offer to film. Again, as I have said in a previous comment, I think we aimed too high too soon. If I did this project again I would know what I had to work with before submitting the funding application and would know, either who to contact to do film, or know that there was no one who had the time or skills to do it.

Feedback from the School pupils:

- Marketing needs to be improved, Flyers were made but they didn't reach enough people.
- Children agreed that social media was needed to promote.
- The performers were concerned that the school children (the audience) were a bit bored and that the content was for an older audience.
- The lack of signage meant that paying members of the public were uncertain of where they needed to go.
- The organisation could have been better.
- A microphone would have been useful for everyone to hear.

Beth oedd effaith y prosiect? Amlinellwch beth a gyflawnwyd, gan gynnwys unrhyw astudiaethau achos (os yn berthnasol. / [What has been the impact of the project? Please outline the achievements and include any case studies \(is appropriate\).](#)

The impact has been:

- relationship with Emrys ap Iwan who would be more than happy to have Gwrych involved with their pupils again
- relationship with the 4 primary schools that attended on 4th July who have asked for Gwrych education side to do further workshops with them
- relationship with Shirley Williams of Fusion Project which is opening up doors to do much more in the local area there. And we are also learning what we can do
- articles in the local paper which show that Gwrych is doing more than just restoration which,

hopefully will lead to more involvement with local area

- From the Emrys pupils a love of learning, a realisation of what they can do, and hopefully a great confidence in doing something outside of their comfort zone
- from the parents who were involved Gwrych has gain some more volunteers for our events
- 13 students took part.
- Confidence boost for the performers having an audience of over a 100 primary school children.
- The students would have preferred to take a lead instead of the teacher.
- There creative writing skills have vastly improved.
- Students that previously didn't know each other were brought together by this project and problem solved and worked together.
- Brilliant performance to think that most of the children do not study drama.

Sut fydd y prosiect yn gynladwy yn y dyfodol? Beth yw'r camau nesaf? / [How will the project be sustainable in the future? What are the next steps?](#)

- More recent material to add to the Gwrych archives in the form of the workbooks the pupils use, photos of the event
- sustainable by knowing that we are able to do schools projects which will lead to the need for an education room

Unrhyw sylwadau eraill / [Any other comments:](#)

"I was so proud of them yesterday they were amazing and like you I had a tear in my eye on several occasions. The learners have really enjoyed working with you and you have been great with them." Anne Hickey, Emrys ap Iwan Literacy Coordinator

Charlie McCourbry – supporter of Gwrych Preservation Trust, Conwy County Councillor and local estate agent – “ My youngest son attended with St George primary school today and before going to bed tonight he told me how much he enjoyed it and how interesting it was. All the children had a time and the teachers who accompanied them commented on what a successful event it had been. Keep up the great work. “

Marion Beaumont – supporter of Gwrych Castle Preservation Trust – via email “Thank you so very much, I am very impressed and so pleased the young have really taken Gwrych to heart because, as you say they are the future of the castle also pleased that they learn about the awfulness of war. Well done again, a huge amount of work and thought justly rewarded. All very best wishes, Marion”

Cath Waldron – Deputy head Ysgol Sant Elfod, Abergele - “Many thanks again for organising a wonderful event and inviting us to attend Gwrych Castle. Angharad Hughes, Y5 Class teacher mentioned to me that you'd offered to become involved in our topics so I thought I would let you know what we do in each year group and perhaps it'd be a wonderful opportunity for us to visit again in the future? (She then lists topics) Let me know what you think anyway and many thanks again for inviting us along to your special event.”

(Photographs saved on file)

