



KNUCKLAS CASTLE COMMUNITY LAND PROJECT  
[www.knucklascastle.org.uk](http://www.knucklascastle.org.uk)

**NEWSLETTER WINTER 2017/18**

Welcome to our latest Newsletter. The Project has been continuing to look after our castle and fields, with various improvements and activities in the year.

We still only own a proportion of the land and are trying to raise funds to enable us to purchase the rest. We have a 10 year lease but that will run out in a couple of years. Please support our fundraising efforts in any way you can!

**THE MORTIMER CASTLE**

On 28th September our AGM started with a talk by Philip Hume "On the trail of the Mortimers". He helped us to understand how the Mortimer family was so influential in the marches. It was a fascinating presentation by someone with such a huge knowledge of the Mortimers, so important in the Marches (he is secretary of The Mortimer Society). Knucklas Castle was, of course, a Mortimer castle, but with very little remaining information.

It is now thought that the medieval castle may have been built by Llewelyn before it fell to the Mortimers. Previously we had understood it was built by Roger Mortimer in 1240 in the absence of his father, Ralph Mortimer. However documents only refer to extensive work undertaken by Roger. Of course he himself wouldn't have actually done any of the work – and one wonders if he even had much of a say. After all, he was only 11 years

old at the time! We had also believed the castle had been partly rebuilt before being finally destroyed in 1402 during the rebellion led by Glyndwr, but Philip doubted this. It makes us all the more curious to establish the real story of the castle's history.

## **AGM**

At the meeting we heard that our first Chairman and inspiration for the project, Will O'Leary, was leaving the area and resigning as Chairman, though remaining a Director. We owe a great deal to him and he will be missed.

## **KNUCKLAS17**

"Knucklas17" was a one-day festival with an Iron Age theme held on the Castle Site on 19th August. The aims of the event were to generate funds and to raise awareness of the project.

The attendance was 150-200.

The event itself was extremely enjoyable and offered a really good range of activities: Iron Age crafts, story-tellers, talks on mammal bones and on re-wilding, pony and trap rides, lots of activities for children, guided botanical walks, balladeers,

coracle and horn maker, pot throwing, treasure hunt, facsimiles of Iron Age torcs, information stalls, pole lathe and shavehorse, poetry trail and much more. There were, of course, excellent food stalls, a bar, a tea and cakes café, top-notch dairy ice-creams and a wonderful café on the castle mound.



Our guest of honour was John Kenny, the world's leading exponent on the astonishing Iron Age instrument known as a carnyx, who was the centrepiece of our opening ceremony. The day was rounded off by a great

concert. Ian Marchant was the great MC and stand-up comedian introducing Dee Palmer (formerly of Jethro Tull) with songs, anecdotes and humour; Meg Cox, wonderful witty poetess; Rapsquillion, the singing group; Speedgums, a local blues band; and the absolutely brilliant Simon King Jazz Quartet.

We estimate that we made about £2000 and hope that we did spread awareness of the project further afield. I think we can certainly say that those who attended really enjoyed themselves and found lots to interest and entertain them.

Finally, thanks to the many volunteers who worked so hard to make the event work on the day; to the exhibitors, entertainers, guides, speakers, artists and musicians who entertained us, many of whom gave their services for free; to the Lewis family for that amazing café in the clouds; and to the steering committee for many months of hard work. Also to our sponsors: Celebrate National Lottery, Oakdale Trust, Comic Relief, Heyope Recreation Ground, Vegware, Debbie and Andrew's Sausage Co. Will there be another? Perhaps. Who knows? - Michael Green

## **RECENT ACTIVITIES AND PLANS FOR 2018**

In February a group of us cleared out all the bird boxes and replaced fallen lids. Of the 30 original boxes, 21 remain of which 11 had been used, mainly by tits. The map of their whereabouts was updated and records kept.

We held a candlelit volunteers get-together for all those that helped on Knucklas17. After a debriefing of the event we decided not to run a similar event next year but possibly in 2019. We then had a brainstorming of ideas for future events. These included a musical evening possibly early in 2018; a walking challenge similar to the Radnor Ramble (which has now finished), and since 2018 is the 150th anniversary of the opening of the the Heart of Wales train line, events are going to be planned around this, so it could be a good opportunity to incorporate Knucklas and KCCLP.

Wassaill will be Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January 7pm from Castle Green - a great fun event!

## **THE KNUCKLAS BEE GROUP**

This year has been the second year of bee hives on the site - and it has been extremely productive with over 300lbs from four hives. The weather was just right at the right times. All the flowering plants on the allotments must have helped too as the bees only had to travel a few yards to find nectar. Thanks to all those allotmenters who planted bee friendly plants. The bee group consists of Andy Kenyon-Wade and Ron Bywater (new members always welcome!) - we're still beginners with much to learn. Of the honey produced a proportion (this year it's a third part) is sold on behalf of KCCLP to help raise funds to purchase the land. It's for sale at the various events and is available from the Rhos Market Garden shop in Knighton. So why not treat yourself to some 'sunshine in a jar' and support the Knucklas Castle Community Land Project at the same time! If you'd like to have a go at beekeeping, come and join us in 2018. Give us a call on 529786 (Andy) or 520875 (Ron).

## **GROWING GROUP**

Thanks to all our allotment holders for a wonderful display of fine vegetables and wildlife-encouraging flowers. Allotment excess produce was left on the stall in the village in abundance this year, making a healthy contribution to our funds. Also, the community beds produced bumper crops of strawberries, blackcurrants and rhubarb, sold fresh on the stall or as jam.

A well attended spring work party saw the planting of a new community asparagus bed and the building of new compost bins and in August the allotment open day was again a great success.



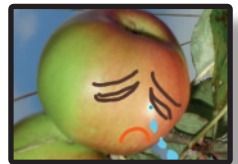
Plans for next year include: increasing the flock of hens, building a compost loo, planting a small willow bed and increasing wildlife friendly areas.

Don't forget we have a Family Allotment where you can bring your children to grow their own veg in tyres, boxes or buckets and it is free. We have space for more allotments so please ring 528223 if you would like one.

In these uncertain times local food production is becoming more and more important. Thanks to all of you for your support and I hope you will be with us to work towards a even more productive future.

### **NO APPLE DAY!**

Sadly we had to cancel our Apple Day this year because of atrocious weather (storm Brian!). This was the first time we've had to cancel this since the Project began.



### **"A YEAR AROUND THE HILL"**

Starting Saturday 6th January, 10.30 - 12.00, a chance to get to know Knucklas Castle in all its seasons!

On the **first Saturday of each month** throughout the year there will be a FREE workshop session for families to find out the secret history and living world of Knucklas Castle and its surrounding land.

Come along on the 6th, and find out what happens on the hill in January: what's growing, what's sleeping - and why we have to wake up the trees!

## FLOWERS AND TREES

In June the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust did a thorough survey of the flora on the hill. They found a total of 111 species. Highlights are the early purple orchids, the great quantities of yellow rattle in the orchard and the ladies bedstraw on the castle. The flora have benefited greatly from the managed grazing of the last few years. (The list is available on the web site under "News".) We are very appreciative of the support of RWT, who have also done several moth surveys, and next year hope to do a butterfly survey.

Acorns were collected from one of the castle hill oak trees this autumn, hopefully in spring they will show signs of life - woodland for the future. There will be sheep grazing the hill soon, if not already there, usually till early in the New Year, **please keep your dogs under control when walking up there, thank you.**

## SALES

Available from the Project:

**KCCLP postcards** – 50p each or 5 for £2.00

**Greetings cards** –Blank inside. Size A5, £2.00 each or £10 for a selection of 6.

**Delicious honey** - made by the bees on the allotments. £6.00 a jar.

### Pottery

Another good Christmas present? These are made by Tony Hall of Castle Hill Pottery, and hand decorated by Katy Mac.

Tiles, mugs, jugs and platters show themes related to Knucklas: Arthurian, Iron Age, and cider-making. Each piece is different. Contact us for availability and prices, or visit Knighton Fine Art where some are on sale.



## **'IN THE SHADOW OF KNUCKLAS CASTLE'**

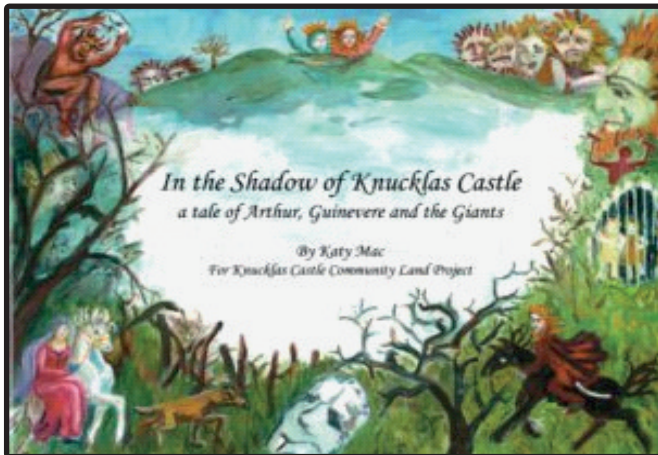
by Katy Mac

This retells an ancient Welsh legend, in which Arthur kills the giants of Bronn Wrgan across the River Teme. He turns a giants' heads to stone, stepping on it to cross the river, then marries Guinevere in Knucklas Castle.

The book is full of vivid paintings. The Castle Hill itself smiles and winks at us – as if it alone knows the secrets. It's a lovely story for adults and children alike.

It's available for sale directly from the Project, or from the Castle Inn, Knucklas, and in local shops in Knighton. You can also order it from your local bookshop. Why not give it to someone this Christmas and support the Project at the same time?

*Published by YouCaxton price £12.00*







**WHY NOT BUY SHARES IN THE CASTLE? HELP SECURE THE LAND FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF ALL.**

Shares make a good Christmas present. This way you can escape from the consumerism of the season and instead help secure access to the land for future generations.

If you have not already bought shares for yourself please consider buying some, and if you already have some why not buy some more? Shares start at £20, and you can increase your shares at any time up to £20,000.

If you cannot afford to become a shareholder at the moment please support the Project in whatever ways you can. We are happy to accept donations and we always need volunteers. Contact us and see how you can get involved.

**Contacts:**

via web site - [www.knucklascastle.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.knucklascastle.org.uk/contact-us)

KCCLP, Upper Treluggas, Bwlch-y-Plain, Knighton LD7 1RE

Instagram page: [knucklas\\_castle](https://www.instagram.com/knucklas_castle). Also on Facebook and Twitter.