Historic Llangollen Chain Bridge re-opened to the

Pont Gadwyni Hanesyddol Llangollen yn ail-agor i'r cyhoedd ar ôl 30 mlynedd

Llangollen Town and Llantysilio Community Councils embarked on a painstaking project to restore the historic Chain Bridge in Llangollen after buying the bridge for £1 after it had fallen into disrepair after years of neglect, receiving funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, WREN (who distribute funds donated by FCC to the Landfill Communities Fund), Denbighshire County Council, Cadwyn Clwyd and the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB.

A gem of the Dee Valley, the Chain Bridge was originally built in 1817 by local coal merchant, Exuperius Pickering to open up a cheap transport route across the River Dee, enabling him to transport coal to the A5. Later rebuilt by Henry Robertson during the 1870s and later by his son Sir Henry Beyer Robertson in 1928, who rebuilt the suspension bridge we see today, reusing the old chain links as suspension cables. The bridge will now re-establish the strong link between the Llangollen railway and the canal, part of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage site.

Descendants of both Exuperius Pickering and Henry Robertson will attend the official re-opening along with the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Ken Skates AM and local MP, Susan Elan Jones. Banners will frame the bridge made by local artists with pupils from Ysgol Caer Drewyn, Ysgol Carrog, Ysgol Bryn Collen and Ysgol Y Gwernant along with adults with additional learning needs who attend Llysfasi College in Denbigh who have been actively involved in the project.

Samantha Jones, Chain Bridge Heritage Officer said: “This has really been a labour of love for all involved and it’s so exciting to see all that hard work finally come to fruition. Communities in both Llangollen and Llantysilio have really come together to ensure that the bridge becomes an important transport link once more. We can’t wait for descendants of those who built the original bridges to mark the next chapter in the bridge’s history with us.”

A distinctive engineering landmark, the bridge is of vital importance to the area’s industrial heritage and the re-opening has been welcomed by **Nigel Clubb, member of the Heritage Lottery Fund Committee for Wales**: “We’re thrilled to see this prominent feature from Llangollen’s past restored to its former glory and that National Lottery players' money has played a part in this. I would like to congratulate the project team on their hard work on bringing the bridge back to life and look forward to seeing it thrive as an important local attraction once more.”

Meleri Jones, WREN Grant Manager said, “WREN is committed to funding projects that make a real difference to local communities, children and families. We’re delighted to have been able to support the restoration of the Chain Bridge and look forward to seeing the new bridge in use once more.”

Clwyd South AM Ken Skates, the Welsh Government’s Deputy Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport: said: “The reopened Chain Bridge sits in the heart of a key part of the thriving tourism industry in Clwyd South and will provide another fantastic addition to the wide and wonderful heritage offer in our beautiful part of North East Wales.

“I congratulate everyone who has worked so hard on this important, long-awaited project, and I am delighted the Welsh Government has been able to help bring it to fruition.”

Susan Elan Jones MP said: “The Chain Bridge is one of Wales’ most significant engineering feats and offers a visible link to the area’s industrial heritage. I’m thrilled that both local people and visitors will now be able to access the bridge again and congratulate the project team on all their hard work.”

Notes to editors

About WREN

WREN is a not-for-profit business that awards grants to community, environmental and heritage projects across the UK from funds donated by FCC Environment as part of a voluntary environmental tax credit scheme called the Landfill Communities Fund. Since 1998, WREN has granted over £150m to more than 6,000 projects which benefit people living within 10 miles of a FCC Environment landfill site.

Event details:

Where: 12:30pm Berwyn Station, Llangollen

When: Thursday 28 May 2015

What: Press are invited to meet guests as they arrive via steam train at Berwyn Station where they will alight and make their way down to the Chain Bridge for the re-opening ceremony. After the ceremony, guests will make their return via a horse-drawn canal boat.

Running order for the day:

- **12.30** Press to arrive at Berwyn Station to provide time to familiarise yourself with the site and set up any equipment

- **13.09** Train carrying guests arrives
- **13.15** The opening ceremony will take place at the railway side of the Chain Bridge by Eddie Butler

There will be photo and interview opportunities on the bridge as well as beside the horse-drawn boat on the canal.

Available interviewees:

- **Funders** - Heritage Lottery Fund, Wren, Cadwyn Clwyd and Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB
- **Gareth Thomas** (Clerk to Llangollen Town Council) and Sandra Baker (Llantysilio Community Council) who have led the project from the start
- **Samantha Jones** (Heritage Officer for the Chain Bridge Project)
- **John Pickering** (direct descendent of Exuperius Pickering who built the first bridge)
- **Sarah and Jamie Robertson** (descendents of Henry and Sir Henry Robertson who built the second and third bridge)
- **Harry Edwards** (Shemec Ltd) who have restored the bridge

Available media:

Historic images of all three bridges but please contact before the opening for these to be sent in time.

Further information

If you would like to attend and would like to discuss interviewees or any other details please contact Samantha Jones at chainbridgeheritage@gmail.com or 07949 221 841.

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