

Discover *Caerwys*



Welcome to Caerwys

Caerwys, the smallest town in Britain with a Royal Charter, has a long and fascinating history. The numerous Bronze Age burial mounds, other Bronze Age finds such as the gold torc, and the Iron Age hillfort on nearby Penycloddiau indicate that the area was well-used by Prehistoric tribes. Romans probably traded locally and, by 1086, Caerwys was of sufficient importance to merit a mention in the Domesday Book.

The town is proud of its royal connections. In the 11th and 12th centuries it had strong links with the Princes of Gwynedd who had a palace at Maesmynan. In 1290, Edward I granted the town its Royal Charter, making it a free borough. It was one of 10 towns in North Wales that were granted charters, but the others were all Norman fortified towns, such as Rhuddlan, Flint and Conwy, where the local Welsh had limited rights. Caerwys was unique as it was the only truly Welsh settlement granted this privilege.

The town continued to flourish and enjoy royal patronage throughout the Medieval and Tudor periods. Not only was it a commercial centre, but it also had strong Welsh cultural traditions, and is known as the birthplace

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of the eisteddfod in North Wales. Its long musical tradition is maintained today through its Male Voice Choir and Christmas carols on the Square.

By the 19th century the regional importance of Caerwys was declining, despite the opening of the Mold to Denbigh railway line. New main roads had bypassed the town and the nearby towns of Flint and Holywell prospered as industry developed. Caerwys remained predominantly rural. Eight mills ground corn on the Afon Wheeler and the regular livestock markets continued to flourish into the 20th century. Farming remains important today, with the annual Agricultural Show drawing crowds from miles around.

The trains brought day trippers and holidaymakers to the area, attracted by the historic town and the picturesque countryside. Many camped on farms or rented rooms from local people and gradually permanent caravan parks and holiday accommodation developed.

Local residents and visitors alike continue to enjoy Caerwys, with its thriving and vibrant community.

This booklet has been produced by the local community to celebrate the rich cultural and natural heritage of the area. Many thanks to all who have provided photographs or shared their memories and knowledge.

The booklet can also be downloaded from www.cadwynclwyd.co.uk or www.flintshire.gov.uk/tourism



Through the ages

2000BC

Bronze Age tribes farmed locally and built numerous burial mounds.



1290

Edward I granted the first Royal Charter to Caerwys.



1081-1272

Welsh Princes had a palace at Maesmynan and probably held their court locally.



750BC-47AD

Iron Age people built Penycloddiau hillfort on the nearby Chwydian Range.



1356

Grant given to hold a weekly market and two annual fairs.

1244

The Pope arranged a meeting in Caerwys church to decide the validity of a treaty between Prince Dafydd and Henry III.

Circa 1400 -1409

Troops sent from Rhuddlan to ambush Owain Glyndŵr's supporters at Caerwys during his rebellion.

1923

Memorial Institute opened.



1810

Bethel Chapel opened, the first of five Non-conformist chapels in Caerwys.



1568

The great Eisteddfod held in Caerwys, commissioned by Elizabeth I.



1869

Mold – Denbigh Railway opened, with a station at Caerwys.

1771

First paper mill erected at Afonwen.



1990

700 year anniversary celebrations of the 1st Royal Charter.

1975

Service held to dedicate the newly designed Mayor's badge and chain.



1985

Chwydian Range designated an AONB.




1968

Caerwys 400th Anniversary Eisteddfod held.



A centre for trade and commerce



For centuries Caerwys was an important administrative and commercial centre in the region. It first gained importance in the 11th century due to its association with the Princes of Gwynedd. Prince Gruffydd ap Cynan married a local lady and had a palace at Maesmynan. His successors, Llywelyn ap Gruffydd (Llywelyn the last), and his brother, Prince Dafydd, continued to use Maesmynan until their defeat by Edward I. In 1244, the Pope chose Caerwys church as the meeting place for two abbots to decide a dispute between Prince Dafydd and King Henry III, which reflects its importance at that time. A stone effigy, claimed to be of Dafydd's wife, Elizabeth Ferrers, still lies in Caerwys church.

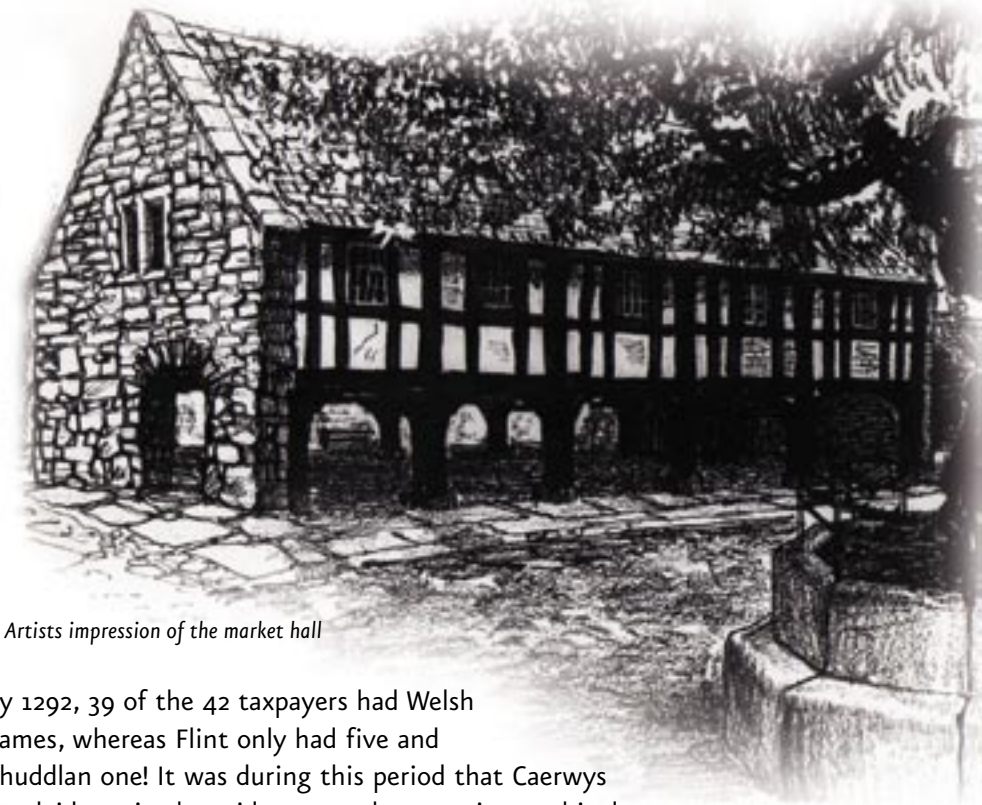
The town's importance as a trading centre grew as the nearby Norman settlements of Flint and Rhuddlan developed and Basingwerk Abbey became increasingly influential. It was also well placed for cross border trading with Chester.

Caerwys was already an established Welsh settlement when Edward I granted it a Royal Charter in 1290. This meant it was very different

Maesmynan Hall, near the site of the Medieval palace



from the other North Wales charter towns, which were newly-built fortified towns where trading rights were only granted to English immigrants. The local Welsh were forbidden to trade and discouraged from living within the English towns. In Caerwys, some of the Welsh were free burgesses with a merchant guild and equal trading rights to their English overlords.



Artists impression of the market hall

By 1292, 39 of the 42 taxpayers had Welsh names, whereas Flint only had five and Rhuddlan one! It was during this period that Caerwys was laid out in the grid pattern that remains to this day.

In 1351 it was granted a second charter, making it a Municipal Borough, and, in 1356 granted permission to hold a weekly market and two annual fairs. Until the late 17th century Caerwys was one of the main towns in Flintshire, where the Assize Courts and markets were held.

The town of Caerwys

As industry developed elsewhere, Caerwys lost its importance and gradually became the peaceful place it is today. However, local people remain proud of its illustrious history. In 1968 Caerwys was granted its Coat of Arms, the town crest, by the Lord Lieutenant of Flintshire.

The motto TANNAU ARIAN – GEIRIAU ARIAN relates to the eisteddfodau, meaning, 'silver strings (inspire) silver words'.

In 1974, the Local Government Act of 1972 triggered Caerwys to reaffirm its status as a town. A new Caerwys Town Council was created and the first Mayor, Councillor Elwyn Parry, was appointed. To celebrate this, funds were raised to design and produce a Mayor's Badge and Chain of Office.



On 7th Dec, 1975, a special Civic Service was held in the church, to dedicate the badge and chain. The oldest residents in the town presented the sitting mayor, Councillor Berwyn Roberts, and his wife with their chains. Civic Sunday, as it is known, has become an annual event.

The Mayor's chain includes eight symbols: the tree on the cross; the Prince of Wales' feathers to represent the association with the Welsh Princes; the church tower; a plough representing the agricultural links; a mill wheel representing Afonwen mills; a pinfold for stray animals, representing the famous fairs; the Welsh dragon representing the Royal Charter of 1290; a harp representing the town's association with eisteddfodau.

"At the service, I commented that the chain itself should be the ninth symbol, as it signified a thriving community. I am pleased to see that Caerwys continues to thrive today."
Berwyn Roberts

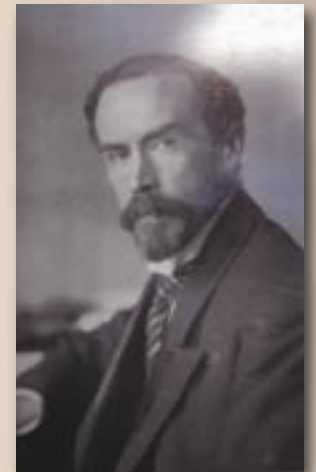


Mayor, Berwyn Roberts, and Mayoress, Betty Roberts, receiving their chains from Caerwys' oldest residents, Caroline Johnson and Percy Williams.



Sir John Herbert Lewis (1858-1933)

John Herbert Lewis, whose family had lived at Plas Penucha since the 15th century, became an influential liberal politician. As an Alderman he successfully campaigned for improved secondary education in the county. He was elected as MP for Flint Boroughs in the 1892 General Election and remained in Parliament for 30 years, as both a backbencher and a government minister, becoming a close friend and political ally of Lloyd George. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Welsh National Museum and Library.



Rocks and riches

The varied landscape of the Caerwys area is the result of the underlying rocks. To the south and east the land rises to the Clwydian Range, a 22 mile ridge of shale hills, that provide a stunning visual backdrop to the area.

The town itself sits on a limestone plateau that stretches north towards the coast. The limestone has been quarried on a small scale for centuries. Old stone walls still edge fields and most of the older local houses were built of the local limestone. There were numerous limekilns, where the crushed limestone was burned to produce lime for building mortar or to fertilise the soil. Tufa, a very soft limestone that was once used to make cement, and later, widely used in alpine gardens, was extracted at Caerwys Tufa Quarry.

The sands and gravels in the wide Wheeler Valley to the south, have also been exploited over the centuries and there is still a working sand quarry at Maesmynan. Several quarries still remain and the massive kilns from the old cement works at Afon Wen, now Heron's Retreat, remind us of its earlier industrial use.

Paper mills and a wire works developed along the river at Afonwen, harnessing the waterpower to drive the machinery. The first paper mill was opened in 1786 and a second in 1822. A report in

*Workmen and staff, Denbighshire
Portland Cement Company*



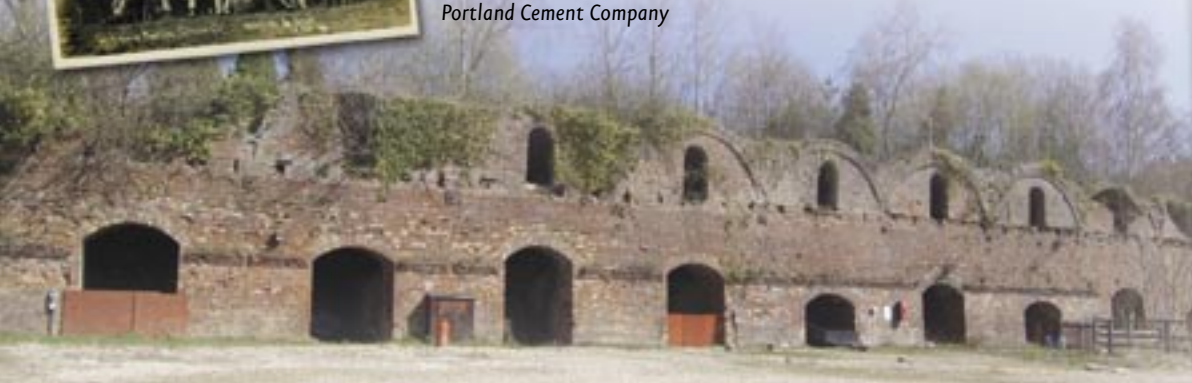
Paper making at Afonwen

1870 refers to the cleanliness of Afonwen mill and the high quality of its paper, which was in demand for lawyer's deeds, account books and bank notes. It closed in 1918 and a glove factory opened on the site. In 1966 the mill was used to make Welsh tweeds. Today tourism has taken over as the main industry and the former industrial buildings are now part of the attraction for visitors. The chimneys have been demolished but Afonwen Craft and Antiques Centre and Edenshine Restaurant is located in some of the original mill buildings, alongside the river (Tel: 01352 720 797).

A small fellmongers' yard was opened along a tributary of the Wheeler at Seven Springs. Here the wool was stripped off the sheepskins and the good supply of fresh spring water was essential to the process. Several fishing lakes are now fed from the spring water, stocked with hand-reared rainbow trout (Seven Springs fisheries and café, Tel: 01352 720511).



Workers at the fellmonger's yard



Fairs and farming

Farming has always been an important part of Caerwys life and, until recently, there were three farms within the town itself. Locals remember collecting milk from the farms and seeing cattle being walked through the streets.

From Medieval times, the regular livestock fairs drew buyers and sellers from far and wide. One street was used for cattle, another for pigs and another for sheep. More recently, the Smithfield on Holywell road, (now Llys y Goron bungalows) became the livestock market.

During the fairs Caerwys would have been crowded and noisy. There were at least seven pubs in the town but on Fair Days some private houses were also given permission to sell alcohol, marked

"One old man told me that one would hear the dialects and accents of all regions in the kingdom in Caerwys on Fair days."

The late Tom Lloyd Roberts



'In the 1890s, Robert Evans, my great grandfather, ran a market garden at Waen Rodyn in Bodfari and regularly came to Caerwys Fair. After selling his produce, he spent all his takings in the pubs then roll out drunk. Someone would put him on the back of his cart, slap the horse on the backside and say "Take him home, Charlie!"'

Julie Thomas

"Some farms had bought tractors in the early 1940s to replace horsepower but, during the heavy snow of 1947, the tractors proved useless and horses were invaluable for pulling sledges."

John Rees

with a holly wreath on the door. Fights sometimes broke out and, reputedly, disputes were settled at Maes y Gwaed (Field of Blood), adjoining the Drovers Arms! The Pinfold on Drovers Lane is a reminder of those busy fairs. It was used to pen stray animals until their owners could be found.

Horses were used to pull farm machinery into the 1950s. Caerwys has bred many fine ploughmen who took great pride in ploughing a straight furrow. The annual Flintshire Ploughing Match was sometimes held on The Blorant. In 1973 two brothers, Ted and Bob Jones, with their pair of shire horses, beat the tractors in a ploughing match at Caerwys! The annual Caerwys Agricultural Show has been held most years since the end of World War II, and continues to be popular.

John Edwards was the first vet to practice in Caerwys and was highly respected, writing the first veterinary book for livestock in Welsh. He was also a talented bard and fervent preacher. He is buried in Caerwys churchyard and the Welsh poem on his tombstone is a tribute to his talents as both vet and preacher.



A cultural centre

Caerwys has a long bardic tradition. From the days when the Welsh Princes held their courts here, it would have been a place for bards and minstrels to gather and perform. The first eisteddfod was thought to have been held by Gruffudd ap Cynan around 1100 and, by Tudor times, it was a well established venue for eisteddfodau.

Henry VIII commissioned an eisteddfod here in 1523 to codify the bardic laws. His daughter, Elizabeth I, commissioned a second eisteddfod in 1568, to which all bards were commanded to appear and be judged, graded and licensed. Fifty-five bards were awarded certificates, allowing them not just to perform, but also to teach others, ensuring their high standards were passed on. Interest in the traditional bardic arts waned for a period until a revivalist eisteddfod was held in Caerwys by the Gwyneddigion Society on 29th May 1798. This event was the forerunner of the National Eisteddfod.

Locals organised many events, including this hog roast, to raise funds for the eisteddfod.



In 1968, another eisteddfod was held to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Elizabeth I's Eisteddfod. The celebrations began the previous summer when the forthcoming eisteddfod was proclaimed in all the market towns across North Wales.



"In July 1967, the eisteddfod proclamation was read out in Caerwys Square, followed by a street market and celebrations. A small group of us, dressed in Elizabethan costume, then rode to Rhuddlan Castle with the proclamation scroll where it was read out. Over the next few weeks we took the proclamation to the towns further afield. We boxed the horses to the outskirts but always rode into the town centre to hand over the scroll."

John Rees

This eisteddfod also attracted royal support. Queen Elizabeth II was the patron and Princess Margaret attended the event on her behalf. People thronged the streets to see the glittering opening ceremony and to watch the procession of Bards walk through the streets in full bardic regalia for the first time outside a National Eisteddfod. 32,000 people visited Caerwys that week!



HRH Princess Margaret meets Caerwys Brownies.



Celebrations continue

"For teenagers in the 1950s, the choir was a great opportunity to socialise. We enjoyed giving concerts and the choir practices on Friday and Sunday evenings were great fun. Many of us found our future husbands and wives through the Youth Choir!"

Dilys Rees

The musical and cultural traditions continue to thrive in the town, adapting to meet the changing times. Between the wars, Caerwys was noted for its mixed choir, winning a chair at the The Rev T.R. Jones, from the Welsh Presbyterian Chapel, encouraged youngsters to sing using the tonic sol-fa technique (doh, ray, me...). The adult choir was resurrected to compete in the National Eisteddfod

at Rhosllanerugoch in 1945 and again for the Festival of Britain. A youth choir was formed at this time too.

The annual carnival was revived in 1974 to raise funds to restore the Town Hall and continued until the 1990s. Cor Meibion, a Male Voice choir, was formed in 2000 to celebrate the Millennium. There was so much interest that the group stayed together and continues to perform regularly. A local drama group also flourishes.



"There was always an expectant atmosphere as the carnival procession gathered outside the Piccadilly. The Carnival Queen would arrive, seated in a decorated horse-drawn vehicle, followed by her retinue and accompanied by outriders. Once everyone had gathered, the brass band struck up and the long cavalcade slowly progressed to the Institute field."

Mags Owen



One of the most memorable events was in 1990 when the town celebrated the 700th anniversary of the granting of the first Royal Charter. The highlight of the celebrations was a pageant based on the history and folklore of Caerwys, with Princess Margaret as guest of honour, once again.

"Her Royal Highness, wants me to let you know that she found the pageant so wonderful, and would like you to congratulate everyone who took part and helped to make it a success."

Letter from Kensington Palace to Mayor Phillip Parry

"I was asked to show Princess Margaret around the exhibition that I had helped to organise. I was dressed as Elizabeth I and she was amused when I curtsied to her as it's not often a princess receives a curtsey from a queen!"

Hazel Formby



HRH Princess Margaret signing the visitors' book

Travellers and transport

In the days when Caerwys was a regional centre for trade and commerce, a steady stream of travellers would have visited the town. Some of the earliest visitors would have been pilgrims seeking cures at St Michael's Holy Well. Caerwys was on one of the most important Medieval pilgrimage routes from St Winefride's Well, Holywell, to St Davids. Two pilgrimages to St Davids were considered to be equal to a pilgrimage to Rome and three were the same value as a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Reputedly pilgrims stopped to pray at a sacred stone in the middle of the town on the site known as Caerwys Cross.

Numerous drovers and traders would have passed through the town from the Middle Ages until the fairs ended in the 1950s. In the 18th and 19th centuries, drovers would bring herds of cattle from north west Wales to be sold at the Caerwys Fairs. Many were then walked hundreds of miles to the Midlands or southern England to feed the growing population in the cities. Even in the 20th century the drovers and their dogs would be on hand to herd the bought cattle to local destinations or down to Caerwys station at Afonwen.

Several pubs, including the Pwll Gwyn, offered accommodation for the drovers and facilities for watering their livestock. Summerhill Farm on Drovers Lane was formerly the Drovers Arms and there was a pond for watering livestock on opposite Glan Llyn on North Street. Several of the lanes and paths radiating from the village are old drovers tracks, with wide verges



Lidiart Cerrig toll-gate, on B5122 to the north of Caerwys

and occasional old Scots pines that marked the route or showed where drovers were welcome.

The 17th century Chester to Holyhead post road did not pass through the town itself but met the current Denbigh road at Afonwen. In the 18th century Turnpike Trusts were set up to improve the condition of roads. Funds were raised by charging road users a fee that was collected at toll-gates along the route. Several toll-gates were positioned on key roads around Caerwys. The tolls were unpopular and many took alternative routes to avoid paying. Reputedly, Ffordd Myhernia (Bohemia Road), which runs down the side of Argoed, Pen-y-Cefn Road to join the A541, was used to avoid the tollgate once sited on Caerwys Hill, near Bryn Derwen.

Thomas Wynne

One of the most famous travellers associated with Caerwys is Thomas Wynne, a Quaker who sailed with William Penn to America to found Pennsylvania in 1682. The grid pattern street plan of Philadelphia is reputedly based on that of Caerwys. Wynne was born at Bron Fadog in nearby Ysceifiog parish but worked in Caerwys as a barber surgeon.



The train era

The opening of the Mold - Denbigh Railway in 1869, with its station at Afonwen (called Caerwys Station), had a great impact on the area. It gave a boost to local industry, providing faster transport of raw materials and finished products. The railway ran alongside the mills and a private siding was built to the cement works to the north of the line. A thriving timber yard developed and a goods shed was built to handle other freight.

It had great benefits for agriculture too. Livestock could be transported by train so it brought long distance droving to an end.

Milk from local farms was sent to Merseyside and supplies were brought in by train. Mr George Rees developed a flourishing agricultural feed business, using the train to bring feed from Liverpool.

Until the railway opened, few people travelled far from Caerwys. A footpath through Coed Pwllgwyn linked the town with the station and there was also a bus service so the train was easily accessed. It widened employment options as Mold and Denbigh were within easy reach and also gave opportunities to travel further afield to Liverpool, Manchester or even London. Youngsters took the train to secondary school in Mold

and locals could more easily enjoy a visit to the cinema or go to dances or bands.

Large numbers of soldiers, from all over Britain, came by train to the army training camps near

Maesmynan before the First World War. No doubts their training was demanding but, judging by the postcards, they also had time to mix with the locals and enjoy the rural setting!

The trains also brought large numbers of holidaymakers and day trippers from Merseyside. Many were keen ramblers, enjoying exploring the hills and wooded valleys.

Local people began to provide for the growing number of visitors. Several cafés opened, farmers allowed informal camping on their fields, and others rented out rooms or holiday homes.

Many more visitors came through Caerwys on bicycle. Intrepid cyclists thought nothing of covering 80-100 miles in a day. White River Camp near Caerwys was a much-loved stopping point.

Widespread car ownership and the increased use of roads for freight transport brought about the demise of the railway and it closed in 1962, but visitors have continued to come. Many visitors now stay on one of the caravan sites around the town. The oldest is Barlows, established in the early 1960s and many of the current owners first came to Caerwys as children. Others enjoy staying at the Pwll Gwyn Inn, local B&Bs, holiday cottages and apartments.

Ideal weather favoured the Shropshire D.A.'s all-night ride on May 30th-31st, and the glorious moonlight views over Halkin Mountain and the Dee Estuary were particularly enjoyed before the party reached White River Camp, Caerwys, for breakfast. Then, passing Ysceifiog, Nannerch, Cilcain and the Leet Valley, a crossing of Moel Famma was made...
Cyclists Touring Club Gazette, July 1931





Daily life

In the early 20th century, few people travelled far from their homes and the wide range of shops in the town provided all daily needs.

"From time to time, when we boys were walking to school, we heard pigs squealing and knew the butcher was slaughtering that day. After school, we would go straight to the butcher's in North Street and ask for a pig's bladder. Then we lads would blow it up, tie a knot in the neck and have a grand time kicking it about The Cross until it burst."

Tom Anwyl (recalling the late 1920s, early 1930s)


In the 1950s, there were three butchers, three grocers, two drapers, two bakehouses, an ironmongers, a blacksmiths and several smaller shops, mainly selling sweets and newspapers. Many locals recall the smell of

ground coffee and the boxes of broken biscuits in the grocers and the tantalising smells from the chip shop at Liverpool House.

Caerwys also boasted two banks and a Post Office. The first Post Office was originally on the High Street. It later moved to The Square but was gutted by fire in 1963 and then reopened in Central Stores on Water Street (where it remains today, now part of Morgan's Pori Gwych).



"The shop at Manchester House, next to the Town Hall, sold newspapers and books. People would buy a book, read it and then bring it back to be re-sold."
Dilys Jones



"Oswald Stores, now Will's News, sold groceries on one side and was a drapers on the other side. You could order anything from a corset to a suit!"

Berwyn Roberts

The fire triggered Jack Featherstone, then landlord of the Royal Oak, to organise a volunteer fire service to provide early assistance whilst the fire engine was travelling from Holywell.

Only four shops now remain in the town but several of the former shops are recognisable by their large front windows.

In 1828 the town had eight inns, to meet the needs not just of locals but the numerous travellers, drovers and fair goers. Nowadays only three pubs remain but all provide a welcome to both locals and visitors.

The Piccadilly Inn is situated at the northern edge of the town, and may date from 1662. Many years ago the inn was owned by Lord Mostyn, who was extremely fond of horseracing. One of his horses, named Piccadilly, won a race on the old Holywell Racecourse near Babel and, as a reward, Lord Mostyn gave the inn to his jockey who named the pub after the victorious horse. (Tel: 01352 720284)

The Royal Oak on Water Street in the heart of Caerwys, dates back to the 16th century. (Tel: 01352 720269)

The Pwll Gwyn on the Mold-Denbigh road at Afonwen may have originally been a dower house for Maesmynan Hall. It was later a coaching inn and a stopping point for drovers. (Tel: 01352 720227)



Church and chapel

Reputedly, St Michael's church dates from 8th century when the cult of St Michael was at its height. His holy well in Maesmynan woods was thought to cure warts and sore eyes. The well was also used for baptisms and a small chapel once stood above the well. The water is still occasionally collected and used for baptisms in the church.

The present church was probably built in the late 13th century, when Anian II was Bishop of St Asaph. Anian, a former Dominican friar from Rhuddlan who had been Edward I's confessor on his crusade, carried out a great programme of rebuilding. Many of the double-naved Clwydian churches, including Caerwys, are likely to have been his work.

The walls and lower part of the tower are some of the oldest parts, dating from the 14th century. The church is unusual as it has two lych gates. One was erected to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The south-west gate is much older with a pre-Reformation oak frame.

Not all townspeople chose to worship at the parish church. In the late 1700s itinerant preachers drew large audiences and their simpler form of Non-conformist worship appealed to many local people.

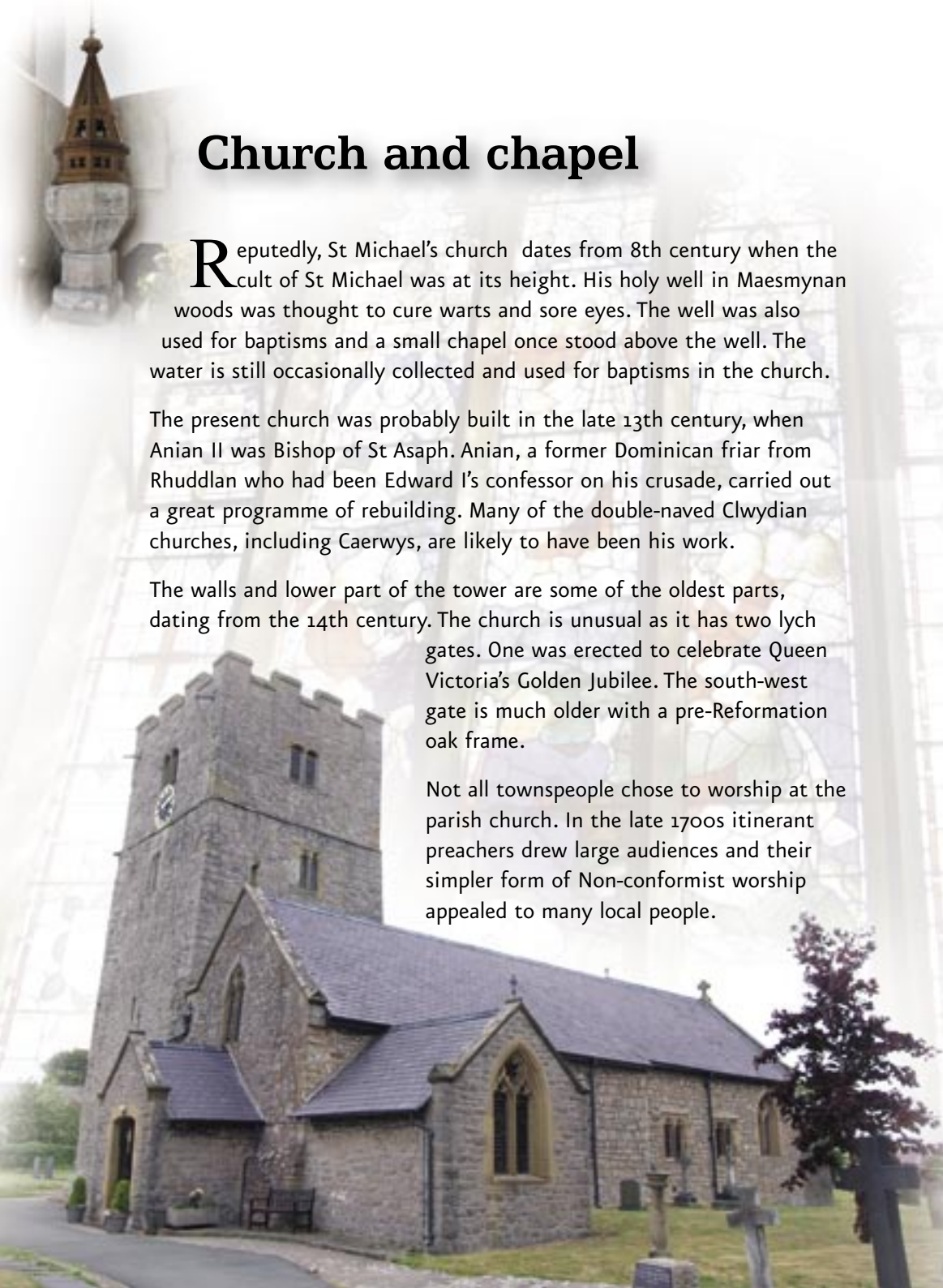
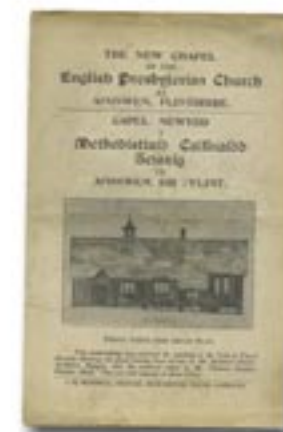
At first, groups of devout folk met to pray in private houses but, as numbers grew, larger venues were needed and chapels of varying denominations were built. By 1905, there were five chapels in Caerwys, including three relatively large chapels in the centre of the town. All had been extended or rebuilt in late 1800s, with the costs largely met by local fundraising, which indicates the strong level of support. Inscribed stones on the external walls of some of the chapels pay tribute to key subscribers.

The chapels played a key role in cultivating the cultural traditions within the town, organising eisteddfodau, choirs and lectures and fostering the use of Welsh, at a time when it was actively discouraged in school. Many older residents remember reciting or singing at the March Meetings at Bethel Chapel, when members of four local chapels met to compete. This annual event continued until 1967.

Most of the former chapels have been converted into private dwellings but Bethel Chapel and the Presbyterian Chapel are still thriving, now sharing the same building on Water Street.

Rev John Lloyd (1773-1793)

John Lloyd was appointed rector of Caerwys in 1778 and held this position until his death. He was highly regarded as a scholar and became a great friend of Thomas Pennant, the renowned travel writer, naturalist and antiquarian. He accompanied Pennant on all of his tours around Wales, helping him with the Welsh language and advising on Welsh folklore and customs. His daughter, Angharad Llwyd, was also a learned historian.



School days

The first record of a school in the village is in 1813, when the small cottage on Drover's Lane was described as a 'commodious schoolroom'. This school was funded by a grant from the National School Society and by subscription from parents (when they could afford it) and local landowners.

Pupil numbers must have grown because, in 1833, a new school was built on the corner of the High Street and Pen-y-cefn Road. It is now a private house but is still clearly recognisable as the school bell tower is still in place.

By the late 20th century this school building was in need of considerable modernisation and was too small to suit contemporary teaching. Ysgol yr Esgob was built opposite the church and opened in 1993.

Whilst the fabric of the building and teaching styles have changed considerably, pupils today still have much in common with their predecessors. Nature walks and learning about the local area were an important part of teaching 60 years ago, as Annette Jones'

exercise book illustrates. Pupils today still enjoy walks in Maesmynan woods and are proud and knowledgeable about their local heritage.

Evacuees

In 1939, following the outbreak of the Second World War, pupil numbers rose dramatically with the arrival of many evacuees. The docks on both sides of the Mersey were targets for enemy bombers so evacuees came from Wallasey and Birkenhead as well as Liverpool itself. In 1944, 22 children from London were also admitted to the school, evacuated when London was suffering heavy bombing.

The experiences of the evacuees varied considerably, depending on their circumstances. Some children were billeted with families and went to the village school. Many Catholic children were housed at Bryngwyn Hall, along with their teachers and taught separately in Caerwys Town Hall. Whilst some were homesick and found it hard to settle, many seemed to thoroughly enjoy country life and some settled in the town after the war.

"My aunt Joan was evacuated from Sacred Heart School, Liverpool, to Caerwys. She stayed with Mr and Mrs Jones, who were friends of the family, and was very happy there. After the war, she returned many times for holidays and the Jones became like aunt and uncle to her own sons."
Maureen Roach



Historic buildings in Caerwys

Bell House dates from the 16th century. Reputedly a bell mounted in a recess or upper window was rung to signal the opening of the market. It may also have been tolled when a funeral procession passed.

Old Court was the site of the Manorial Courts, and later, the Assize Courts. The house is Tudor but does not look its age as it has a Victorian façade.

The Old Gaol (now a private house) on South Street was once linked to Old Court by an underground tunnel.

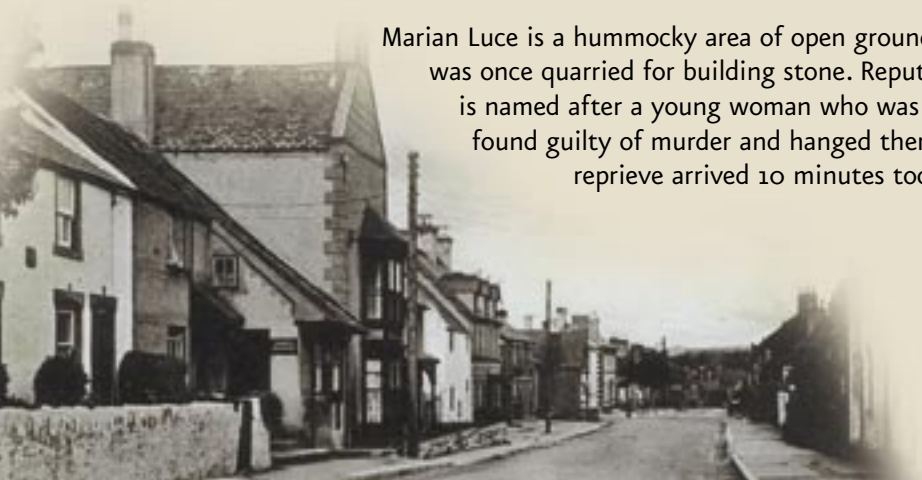
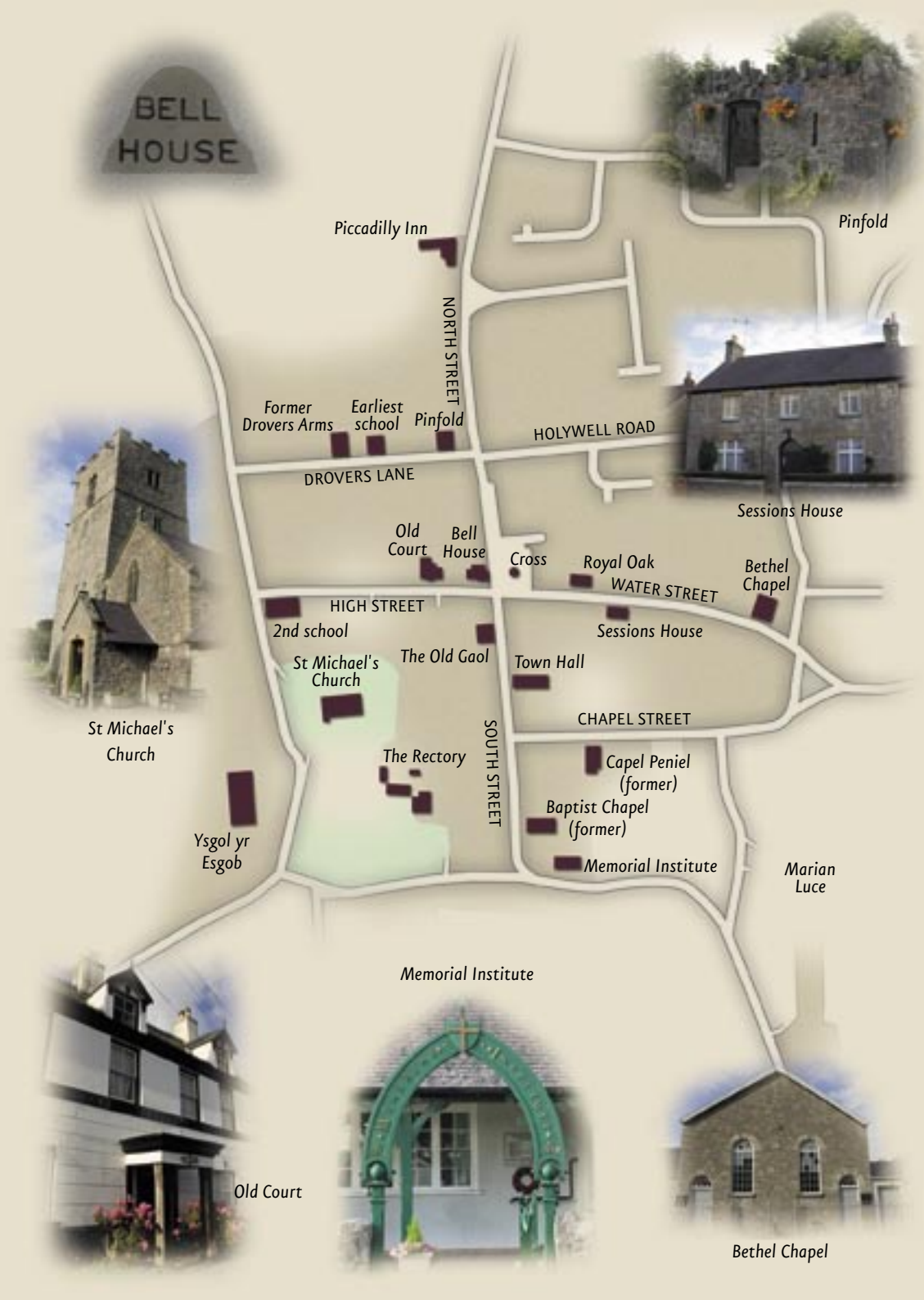
Sessions House was built in 1869 and was used as the Magistrates Court. It had a courtroom, a gaol with two cells and also provided accommodation for the policeman.

Caerwys Cross was named after a sacred stone that stood in the middle of the town. An ash tree at the Cross was mentioned in a verse composed at the 1568 Eisteddfod and, since then, a series of trees have been planted there. In the late 1960s, the Cross was moved to its current position for road safety purposes and a new tree planted.

The Town Hall was funded by money raised by public subscription and opened in 1874.

The Memorial Institute and bowling green were built as a memorial to the local men who had been killed in the First World War on land donated by Sir Herbert Lewis. Tennis courts and a children's play area were added later.

Marian Luce is a hummocky area of open ground that was once quarried for building stone. Reputedly, it is named after a young woman who was unfairly found guilty of murder and hanged there. Her reprieve arrived 10 minutes too late!



A place for wildlife

Caerwys lies on the northern side of the Wheeler Valley, a landscape of rolling farmland, thick hedgerows and wooded valleys, with the open moorland of the Clwydian Range to the south and west. The Clwydian Range was designated an Area of Outstanding

Natural Beauty in 1985 in recognition of its nationally important landscape quality. It is one of only eight protected landscapes in Wales, five AONBs and three National Parks. A good network of footpaths, bridleways and quiet lanes enable easy exploration of the area.

An unusual array of plants grow in the damp soils of the wooded valleys, including herb Paris and many ferns and mosses. In early spring the woodlands are dotted with primrose, lesser celandine and wood anemones. By late spring, pungent wild garlic and bluebells carpet the woodland floor and early purple orchid and twayblade can also be found.

Wildflowers thrive on the drier grassland including knapweed, cow parsley, red campion, meadow vetch and common spotted orchid. Field edges, hedgerows and road verges are a riot of colour in summer. The flowers in turn attract butterflies and other insects to gather nectar. Plants such as ragged robin and tall, feathery-flowered meadowsweet grow in damper places.



Herb Paris

Greater spotted woodpecker



Dipper

Red Admiral



The rich mixture of woodland, mature hedges, fields and verges provide homes and food for many birds and animals. There are many active badger setts and, in spring, the woodlands resound with birdsong as birds compete to find a mate. The native species, such as coal tits, great tits, greater spotted woodpecker and nuthatch are joined by numerous summer migrants, including chiff-chaff, willow warbler and spotted flycatcher.

Skylarks and lapwings are increasingly rare nationally, but are still seen on farmland around Caerwys. In winter, flocks of redwing are common and birds like goldfinches and siskins are seen feeding in large flocks.

Rabbits, mice, voles and grey squirrels abound and hares are sometimes seen in the fields. These provide plentiful food for foxes, stoats and birds of prey. Buzzards are frequently seen

circling overhead and smaller kestrels hovering above a roadside verge. Sparrowhawks may be spotted flying fast and low in pursuit of its prey of small birds and red kites have occasionally been seen.



Badger

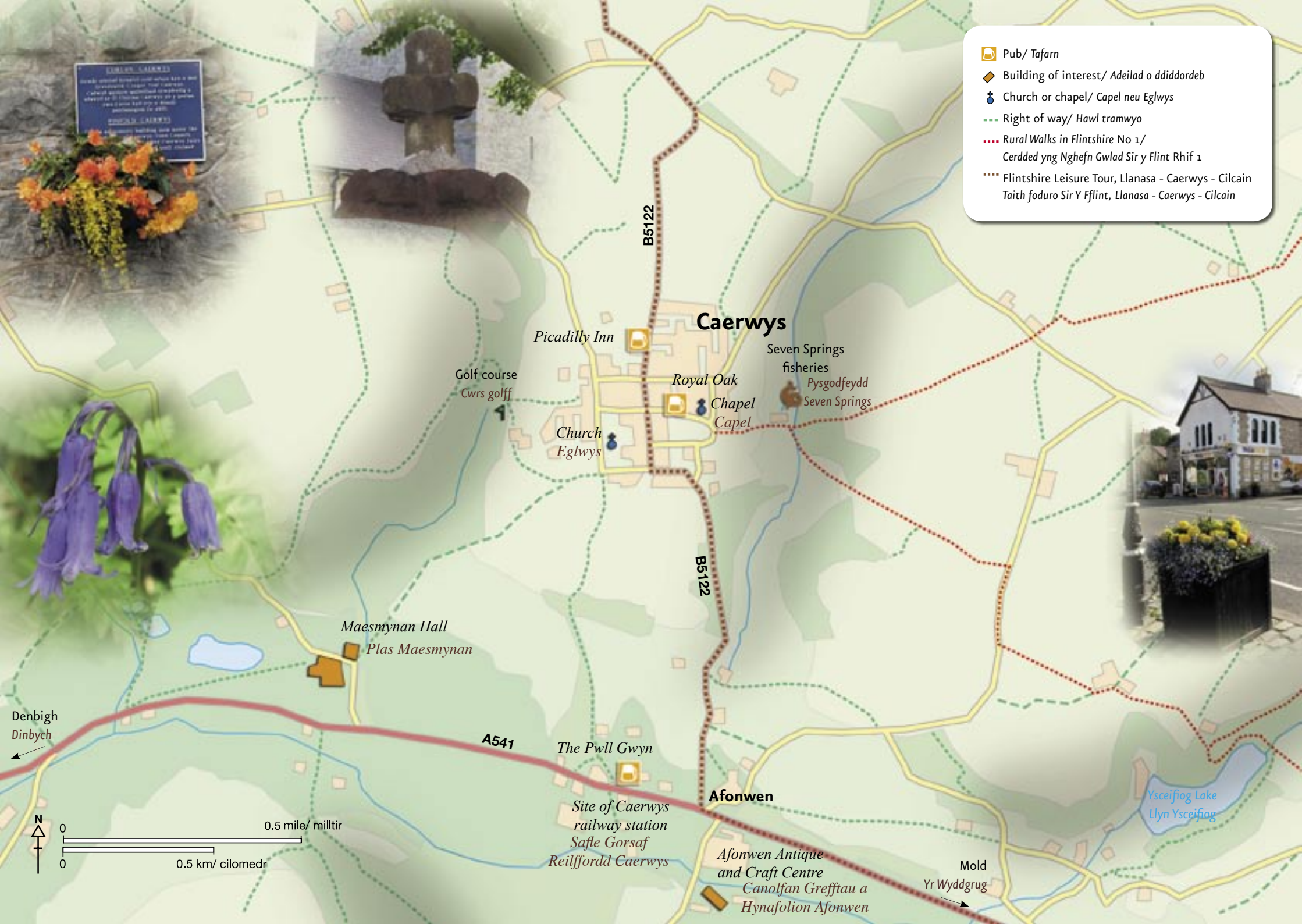
The lakes and the faster flowing rivers provide other rich wildlife habitats. Coots and ducks thrive on the lakes and herons are often seen standing in the water looking for fish. In summer, swallows and house martins fly acrobatically above the water hunting flying insects.

Tortoiseshell



Common spotted orchid





- Pub/ Tafarn
- Building of interest/ Adeilad o ddiddordeb
- Church or chapel/ Capel neu Eglwys
- Right of way/ Hawl tramwyo
- Rural Walks in Flintshire No 1/
Cerdded yng Nghefn Gwlad Sir y Flint Rhif 1
- Flintshire Leisure Tour, Llanasa - Caerwys - Cilcain
Taith foduro Sir Y Fflint, Llanasa - Caerwys - Cilcain

Caerwys

Picadilly Inn

Golf course
Cwrs golff

Church
Eglwys

Royal Oak

Chapel
Capel

Seven Springs
fisheries
Pysgodfeydd
Seven Springs

Maesmynan Hall
Plas Maesmynan

The Pwll Gwyn

Site of Caerwys
railway station
Safle Gorsaf
Reilffordd Caerwys

Afonwen

Afonwen Antique
and Craft Centre
Canolfan Grefftau a
Hynafolion Afonwen

Mold
Yr Wyddgrug

Ysceifiog Lake
Llyn Ysceifiog

Denbigh
Dinbych



0 0.5 mile/ milltir
0 0.5 km/ cilomedr