

## Haverfordwest 900 Committee 2010, Chairman's Report

It was in March 2008 that the first public meeting was held in the Picton Centre to discuss what should be done to celebrate our achieving the 900 years in 2010. A committee was formed which first set out its aims for 2010 and another public meeting was called in September 2008.

The agreed aims were to encourage organisations, schools, sporting bodies and individuals in the town and district to participate in organizing events and functions during our 900<sup>th</sup> year, in order to make the year truly memorable and enjoyable and in so doing engender pride in our town which would continue for some years to come. It was also decided that it was to be the responsibility of the committee to be ready to give assistance when required and to see that events were properly coordinated in order that maximum benefit was achieved from everyone's efforts.

Those were our aims, HOW WELL HAVE WE SUCCEEDED ???

It was decided early on that the first event would be a Church service which would be held at the oldest church in the town – St. Martins also that there should be a permanent feature to commemorate the year, and that ideas and suggestions for this should be sought from the public and the various organisations in the town. Also that events should be held throughout the year both celebratory and fund raising and that we should get as many organisations and people involved as possible.

The church service was held at St. Martins and got the year off to a great start in spite of the awful weather. The Bishop preached the sermon, we had a really delightful soloist and an excellent attendance including the Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriff who had come all the way from Aberystwyth. A wine reception was given by the Gild of Freemen after the service.

After some considerable deliberation and discussions concerning a Permanent Feature it was decided to adopt the proposal of the Civic Society to have a stone placed in the castle grounds with a plaque giving details of individuals who had been an influencing factor in the history of the town.

We had hoped and had indeed applied for a Royal Visit to tie in with the unveiling of the stone but unfortunately we were unsuccessful. However, the Lord Lieutenant performed the task admirably for us and the afternoon was a great success, and was followed by a really fabulous tea in St. Martins hall provided by the Civic Society Ladies.

Before the year started. We wrote to all the organisations, schools and sports clubs in the town asking them to become involved in the year's activities and offering our help if required. Also, a webpage was set up on which events could be advertised, by December 2009 we had 14 events in the planning stage ; this had grown to 23 by the end of February before the 'Town Guide' went to print and 38 listed on the webpage by the end of March. Very many more were added over the year

Who has been involved???

I have already mentioned the Civic Society who in addition to the permanent feature in the castle grounds also organised a production of Mark Mullers excellent book on the people who shaped Haverfordwest.

Cleddau Community Arts organised the children's dragon walking, a number of walks and plays and an excellent Children's Walking Pageant, which was a really colourful event. The HIPS group also organised a number of events.

The schools gave a marvellous concert in March at which a fan fare specially composed for the 900 years by one of the pupils Gareth Trott, was played, this was played again at the Civic Carol service on the 20<sup>th</sup> December at St. Marys Church. All the junior schools were involved in the Walking Pageant and I am sure all the children that took part will remember it for many years.

The service organisations in the town all got involved, the Inner Wheel had a really great Medieval night completely transforming the Picton Centre and again this was an occasion which will be long remembered.

The Rotary Club helped the Round Table and Ladies Circle in organising the Medieval day in July and they also provided all the logistical support for the Choir of Gentlemen Charity Concert, so well organised and directed by the musical director Christine Shewry at the Brithdir Hall at Withybush in September which was kindly provided free of charge by the Agricultural Society ; this was the major fund raising event of the year raising funds for our local charity the Paul Sartori Foundation.

The Soroptomists also organised a charity fashion show at Withybush at the Pavillion , and this again was very successful.

The sports clubs have also been involved with both the Rugby and Cricket clubs organising special events and matches during the year.

The churches and the chapels and town have also been active, and there have been excellent concerts organised by the Landsker singers and other groups who have provided a lot of entertainment for wide audiences.

I must also mention the main committee who have put in a lot of time and effort during the last 2 and a half years, we have had 3 Mayors involved, Cherie Harvey in the early planning stages, Jim Campbell with the later planning and the start of the year and Chris Blakemore for the final half of the year. They have all worked hard. Our Town Sheriff Roy Thomas organised a very well supported Charity Supper early in the year at the Picton Centre which was most enjoyable.

Our main committee members have been actively involved in a number of events and of course Phil Thompson and his sub committee organised the really excellent main Celebratory Evening at Withybush after the county show in August. Again with the support of the Agricultural Society. A really super evening which greatly impressed our visitors from Germany and Ireland.

I must also mention the help we have had from the County Council they provided immense help in the siting of the stone in the castle grounds. They have also been extremely co-operative when we asked for things to be done.

And of course the Town Council staff – Jane Clark the Town Clerk and her assistant have both worked hard to make sure everything ran as smoothly as possible.

I sincerely apologise if I have left anyone out, so many people have done so much over the year and I congratulate them all.

We are also of course, very grateful to all the sponsors who have been so generous in assisting with and providing financial help for various activities throughout the year. They have certainly made things much easier for us. I can tell you that South Hook LNG are going to provide elegant new seats to be placed near the war memorial and also new flower towers for Castle Square. They have also helped financially with a number of events and of course Chevron again have helped with a number of things through the year. Also I must not forget County Councillor Mark Edwards who has been most generous in his sponsorship of events.

I feel that we can be justifiably pleased about the way that things have gone with activities carrying on throughout the year. Simon Hancock launched his magnificent book on Victorian and Edwardian Haverfordwest in November, this was an incredible effort on Simon's part and forms an important part of recorded history in the town. The Landsker singers gave an excellent rendering of St. Cecilia's mass by Gounod at St. Martins church later in the month and the Glanleddau dancers gave a Charity concert at Witybush. In December there was a walking Carol Concert on the 17<sup>th</sup> attended by the Bishop of St. Davids.

The final celebratory event of the year was the memorable Civic Carol Service held at St. Marys Church which was a very fitting way to close the years activities

We will all have our own different memories of events, which we have been to during the year – I certainly have – unfortunately I have not been able to attend all the events, but have greatly enjoyed the ones that I have been to and I would like to urge that we continue with some of the activities in future years. I would certainly like to see the website kept going, I know that visitors coming to the area do look at the towns website, and it is a means of advertising events for organisations without incurring heavy costs.

Malcolm Green