

British Dam Society: e-News and “Dams and Reservoirs” journal

Dolgarrog centenary commemorations – a call for help

This November marks the centenary of the flooding of Dolgarrog in North Wales caused by the failure of two reservoir dams in 1925. Sixteen people died that night: six children and ten adults. This event was a significant prompt for the introduction of legislation to demand minimum standards needed to protect people from dam failure.

The community in Dolgarrog has remembered its loss for 100 years. Memorial services are held annually, and the physical memorial was reimagined and renovated in 2017 with help from the British Dam Society and others (Natural Resources Wales, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, Innogy and Severn Trent). A more thought-provoking and longer lasting memorial is perhaps the pensive woodland walk where the remains of heavy pipework lay, crumpled by enormous boulders that were carried down the hillside 100 years ago.

This year, the community are seeking to host a series of events to commemorate the centenary and are looking for help with this.

The events, under the title “Pentre Bach: Stori Fawr” (Small Village: Big Story), seek to not only remember that fateful night but also to be the culmination of a transformative year in the history of Dolgarrog, building on opportunities to commemorate the past, engage with the present and envision a future to celebrate the strength, diversity and vitality of the current community.

Spectators and participants will be exposed to a range of unique, specially commissioned audio and visual art, drawing on Wales long history of writing, poetry, song, and more; with works devised by local school children through to nationally renowned artists, writers and performers.

Other events before and following the day will provide an archive of legacy materials. The events will be:

- a formal service of remembrance supplemented by a live event staged to commemorate the personal elements of the disaster and the hope the village residents have in moving forward
- a recital of the names of the 16 victims, and a homily dedicated to them by family members
- narrated prose of the disaster by local resident
- poetry recital commissioned from a Welsh poet
- walks through the memorial gardens and woodland walk

As a principal event for the area and for Wales nationally, 2 November will truly be a day to remember.

The community still needs additional funding to realise all the proposed events. The target cost is forecast to be in the region of £75,000 though the more that is raised the

more can be developed. BDS members are asked to support this event in any way they feel able – with financial and other support. The planned expenses include:

- venue hire
- equipment hire, installation and management
- public safety and security
- production of legacy archives that captures all the activities and creative writing.
- accessibility for all
- creation of a time capsule
- web development
- public and media relations
- provision of a variety of catering needs
- materials, expenses,
- writing, filming, production and publication of key works
- live streaming
- translation
- insurance
- copyright expenses

Offers of help, sponsorship and gifting should be emailed to:

Jackie Ley (jackieley@me.com) and Ruth Fabby MBE (ruth@ruffyarts.com).

For more information about BDS commitment to this please contact Gerallt Richards (Gerallt.Richards@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk).



Figure 1. the renovated memorial remembers the sixteen people killed on the evening of 2 November 1925.



Figure 2. a pause for thought in this bench illustrates the size of the boulders brought down by the torrent.



Figure 3. the water pipe which fed the Dolgarrog aluminium works lies crumpled amongst boulders and trees.