

The history of the National Garden Scheme – a talk for Denbigh and District Probus club

At the May meeting of the Denbigh and District Probus club, members were delighted to welcome Jane Moore who presented her illustrated talk on “The history of the National Garden Scheme and open gardens in 2023”.

Jane has been County Organiser of N.E. Wales for the last 13 years and opened her previous garden in Llanrhaeadr near Denbigh many times but her new garden in Denbigh only once so far.

The story began in Liverpool in 1847 when William Rathbone, a wealthy Liverpool merchant employed a trained nurse to care for his dying wife, and realised the huge difference nursing would make to the lives of the general people in his city.

Rathbone retained Mary's services (the nurse) so that people in Liverpool who could not afford to pay for nursing would benefit from care in their homes. Seeing the good that nursing in the home could do, William Rathbone and Florence Nightingale worked together to try to develop the service – and so organised ‘district nursing’ began.

The National Garden Scheme (an enabling charity) has evolved and grown over the years since being established in 1927 to raise funds to support the nursing and caring charities and this year it gave £3.11 million from the proceeds in 2022, with N.E. Wales contributing £18,000 of that total. The core beneficiaries include Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie, Hospice UK, and The Queen's Nursing Institute. In 2016 the Scheme began an annual funding programme to support gardens and health-related projects run by charities. The first gardens and health beneficiary was Horatio's Garden who received a donation of £130,000.

For every £1 raised, 82 pence is donated and garden owners can also

choose to donate 20% of the proceeds of their opening day to a charity of their choice.

The Scheme opens over 3,500 private gardens to the public each year with many opening their gates to everyone on set days, but others opening exclusively for groups or friends and family by arrangement with the garden owner. This year, 25 gardens in the N.E. Wales area will be open through the scheme.

Health and Safety is a key area in the organising of the opening of the gardens and there is emphasis on how gardening benefits people's health and wellbeing but also tea and cake are an extremely important part of the opening day. Mary Berry is the President of the scheme and opens her own garden to the public.

Gardens in the N.E. Wales area still to open this May are Aberclwyd Manor, Hafodunos Hall and Garthewin with Brynkinalt Hall, Aberclwyd Manor, 33 Bryn Tŵr and Lynton, Scott House, Glasfryn Hall, Gwaenyng, 17, Ffordd Walwen and White Croft due to open in June.

Denbigh and District Probus Club welcomes new members to join their group for monthly meetings (held at the Oriel Hotel, St Asaph) where they enjoy lunch, friendship, and a talk from a guest speaker.

For further information have a look at the club web site denbighprobus.com or contact –

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Our next club meeting will be on Monday 5th June when Vicky Macdonald will speak about Conwy and Mulberry Harbour.

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