

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016 TO 2017

I am very pleased to report that the last year has once again been another very good year for the Friends.

Two Services were held in the Conway Chapel over the last 12 months, both were well attended. I would like to thank Rev. Simon Douglas Lane (Hon. Chaplin to the Conway Club) for his continued support. Along with David Hilton, John Southwood and Haydn Lockwood for providing the music and arranging the services, and thanks to all those who attended.

On Saturday 13th May the dedication of the Conway Window on Bangor Pier took place. This project was organised by the Friends of Conway. Our heartfelt thanks and congratulations must go to Mr Alfie Windsor for his unfailing determination to complete the Conway Window.

For the unveiling the following dignitaries attended the Mayor of Bangor, the Lord Lieutenant of Gwynedd, Lord Rupert Paget, Jayne Ford PhD and Dr James Olsen. The parade assembled in the Bangor Pier Car Park for the walk to the end of the Pier.

The Parade was led by the Sea Cadet band from TS Conway (Liverpool) followed by 50 Sea Cadets from Units based in Holyhead, Conway, Rhyl, Prestatyn and Colwyn Bay. In addition 23 "Bangor Boys", Old Conway who had been aboard HMS Conway whilst moored off Bangor Pier, and 70 Old Conways were also in attendance and joined the parade.

The service was conducted by Rev Simon Douglas Lane. Capt. Derrick Kemp introduced Lord Rupert Paget of Anglesey who unveiled the window. There followed a sail-by of various craft from Bangor, including a Sailing ship. We thank Captain John Duggan for organising the flotilla sail past. A fitting end to the dedication. All then made their way the University of Bangor for a splendid Buffet. A great day was had by all in spite of the fresh breeze (nearly gale force) which persisted throughout.

Many favourable comments were received including much praise for the Sea Cadet units who were described as "very professional and a credit to the youth of today – carrying on HMS Conway traditions into the future".



The Chapel has once again had an increase in the number of visitors this past year. We are indebted to John Davidson, Glynn Parry, Haydn Lockwood, Graham Holden Roland Owen and Peter O'Donnell who volunteered to man the Chapel during a very successful Heritage Week where over 260 members of the public visited including a descendant of Captain Richard Mowll RN (Old Mobby 1862- 1871) the third Captain of the Conway who had previously been Chief Officer.

A sincere vote of thanks goes to Frank Campbell for his support and enthusiasm showing visitors around the Chapel. We owe him a giant vote of gratitude.

Sadly a high profile visit from the Archbishop of York, the Very Rev John Sentamu together with the newly appointed Bishop of Birkenhead and the Rev Paul Bentley, newly appointed Rector of the Priory Parish, visited the site. Due to a shortage of time the Archbishop was unable to fit in a visit to the Chapel but Frank Campbell managed to give him a copy of Alfie's Chapel booklet.

The Conway Chapel is still in need of local volunteers to act as guides during our opening hours. We request anyone interested to please make contact with Capt. John Southwood.

Sadly we have received a steady stream of applications for Memorial Plaques to be positioned on the Conway Memorial Windows in memory of our former 'Chums'. All applications receive a copy of Alfie's Chapel Booklet and Photographs of their plaque in place, together with a 'Friends Christmas Card' (a personal touch from John Southwood). This year's card will be copy of the Bangor 'In Memoriam Window'.

Finally we must acknowledge the generosity of Ann Fraser who donates the flowers in memory of Dennis Hewett (1954-53) at our Annual Father's Day Remembrance Day Service and Remembrance Day in November.

The Conway Club and the Friends of Conway were represented at the celebration of Merchant Navy Day in Liverpool 3rd September by me. The Sea Cadets of TS Conway provided the Band for the parade well supported by Sea cadets of TS Starling and the Maritime Cadets of Merseyside. Wreaths were laid for HMS Conway by the Friends of Conway.

The Friends have been involved in commemorations for the three World War I Conway VCs. A service was held at Ashby de la Zouch on 1st October for Lt Col Philip Bent VC commemorating the action on the Western Front where he lost his life and was awarded the VC.

Once again I would like to put on record a huge vote of thanks to Frank Campbell and Mark Bell from the Williamson, who help and assist in showing visitors around, also Sylvia and her daughter for the continued assistance at the Priory and Refectory throughout the year.

Once again my thanks to all the Trustees and Subscribers for their help and continued invaluable support.

My very best regards to you all.

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Derrick Kemp
Chairman
1st October 2017

