



TINTERN FESTIVALS ASSOCIATION

TINTERN FETE 2023 - REPORT

Overview

Tintern Fete was held on Saturday 24th June 2023. Once again, the weather was hot and sunny. The temperature remained high into the evening, encouraging more people than ever to stay on for the live music and relaxed atmosphere. It is hard to calculate precise numbers of people attending but there was a steady flow throughout the day and evening. The feedback we have received has been overwhelmingly positive.

Fete Committee

The Committee is a sub-committee of the Tintern Festivals Association and this year its hardworking members were Rod Adshead, Helen Carter, Paul Christie, Fiona Gillespie, Elle Graham, Julian Iddon, Nichola Foreman (General Manager, The Anchor Inn), Harry Hoskins, Jessica Carter James, John Livermore (Treasurer), Andrew Reid, Vivien Richards (Chair), John Topp, Giles Ward, Julie Ward.

Andrew Reid is standing down from the Committee this year. Andrew has been a member of the Committee since 2012 and has produced most of our publicity material during that time as well as taking on extra duties such as organising the photographic competition and the design and production of our calendar. His wise advice will be sorely missed and we cannot thank him enough for his very significant contribution to the success of the Fete

Theme

This year's theme was "The Vikings are Coming" in acknowledgement of the incursions into the Wye Valley by Viking raiders in the ninth and tenth centuries and the renewed fascination with their culture, sparked by several tv series.

We were fortunate to be able to book the South Wales re-enactment group, Blaeddau Du, who are exceptionally knowledgeable and passionate about the Viking period. They established a settlement on Leytons Field demonstrating authentic Viking living conditions, craftsmanship and a fearsome display of weaponry. Thankfully, the young people of Tintern were not intimidated and they triumphed in the ensuing pitched battle, leaving the scary Viking warriors beaten, bruised and dejected. Part of the reason for the children's success may have been the battle training that pupils at Llandogo School received the day before the Fete from the Viking Jarl (leader) and two of his men.

Family Activities

The Fete Committee are pleased and proud that the Fete continues its tradition of providing great family attractions and a varied programme of live music from midday into the evening, which are all completely free of charge.

As a result there were many families present with lots of excited children enjoying, not only the Viking re-enactment, but also a shield-making workshop, Arnie Kazam's Magic Show, Rainbow Gecko's wonderful bubble display, the Community Martial Arts demonstrations, face painting and a fancy dress competition. For the adults, the Tug of War, aided and abetted by some Vikings, was reintroduced this year and the calmer activity of a Yoga Class was provided in the marquee by Forest Retreats.

Live Music

Throughout the afternoon music fans were able to enjoy a varied programme featuring local musicians. Chepstow Singing Club opened the Fete harmoniously, followed by a talented young singer from Tintern, Isla Davies, and then the Rob Connolly Band. The evening performers were Lee McCrory, Up to Eleven and, headline band, The Hickory Sticks Boys.

Stalls

33 pitches for stalls were hired to 28 stallholders. Of these almost half were non-commercial. The commercial stalls sold mainly craft items with a small number selling packaged foods and plants. Further information regarding the non-commercial stalls can be found below in the Community Opportunities section.

Food & Drink

Food outlets in the Food Court next to the Village Hall catered for a variety of tastes and dietary requirements including vegetarian. There was also a vintage ice cream cart from Brookes Dairy, Devauden. All the caterers had a successful event with several hoping to return next year. Wye Valley Meadery and Monnow Valley Cider created an outside bar area in the Village Hall grounds which, unsurprisingly, proved a popular attraction.

The bar in the Village Hall was run by the Fete Committee and was staffed by volunteers. Kingstone Brewery provided the draft ale, with other drinks being supplied on a sale or return basis.

Health and Safety

St John's Ambulance were present once again to ensure the well being of visitors. No injuries were reported, however one near-miss was recorded this year. A member of the public tripped on a guy rope securing the "parachute" tent and fell over.

The incident has been reviewed and additional safety precautions will be put in place next year to ensure greater visibility of all guy ropes and there will be some changes to the field layout.

Finance

It continues to be the policy of the Fete Committee to prepare a budget for the fete on a break even basis and also to ensure there is sufficient cash left in the bank to cover ourselves against any unexpected costs, the main risk being that of very bad weather. However, it has to be stated that in the early part of the year we were faced with a difficult financial situation due to the cancellation of the fund raising Spring Ball because of a lack of support together with a serious escalation of storage shed costs which were being partly funded by the fete. It is pleasing to report these concerns were not realised because thanks mainly to a group of new Fete Committee members, a last minute promise auction was arranged raising a considerable amount of income and this together with another superb effort by Paul Christie and his team of unpaid volunteers, the bar on the day made a very healthy return.

In general terms we were yet again blessed with superb weather and this no doubt contributed to the finances on the day.

Our planned income mainly comes from fund raising social events organised beforehand including the promise auction as mentioned above, a village quiz and the ever popular Wye Duck Race, 2023 calendar sales, grants from the Wye Valley Community and the Monmouthshire Housing Association, local sponsorship, stall and food outlets and bar sales. Our costs included generator/ marquee hire, licenses, insurance, shield making workshop, publicity, bands, Viking re-enactment group and other entertainment and by careful management we were able to keep our costs below that allowed for in the budget.

As a consequence the Fete Committee is able to report the achievement of an overall healthy surplus. An AGM of the Tintern Festivals Association is being held on 5th October 2023 when the final and formal accounts will be discussed and agreed.

Community Opportunities

The aim of the Fete is, first and foremost, to celebrate and support our community and that aim underpins everything we try to do.

In particular, we have been keen to continue to develop our links with Llandogo Primary School. As mentioned above, we arranged for members of Blaeddau Du to go into the school on Friday 23rd June to talk to the pupils about Viking life. This built upon previous learning opportunities: a whole week set aside by the school to explore the world of the Vikings, plus an introductory presentation the week before the Fete and a workshop earlier the same day, both delivered by one of our Committee members, primary school teacher, Elle Graham. The artwork and models produced by the children to demonstrate some of what they had learnt in "Viking Week" and a video of Blaeddau Du's visit were proudly on display in the Village Hall during the Fete and were

much admired. It was clear to see that the children had become quite knowledgeable about the Vikings.

Another aspect of our community support is our policy of providing free pitches to stallholders representing community groups and charities. This year there were 13 stallholders in this category, including local organisations raising funds such as The Church Lads and Church Girls Brigade, Tintern Sports Club and Tintern Garden Club; Charities covering, for example, child care and fostering, animal protection and rehoming and environmental charities such as Gwent Wildlife Trust, The Woodland Trust and volunteer groups like the Tintern Ambassadors.

We were also delighted to welcome back once again the Fire Service who, as in previous years, dispatched a Fire Engine to the Fete from Chepstow Fire Station, which is always a popular attraction for a lot of excited children.

Volunteers

Putting on the Fete involves a great many people in our community pitching in and working together, especially over the whole of the Fete weekend. Most of the tasks are unglamorous and unseen. Some require specialist skills or knowledge. The rewards for lending a hand are the sense of satisfaction from seeing the event come together successfully and the enjoyment gained from sharing in a collective effort.

Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who volunteered, in what ever way they could: helping with the preparations; giving up time on Fete day; and/or showing up for that most challenging of tasks - cheerfully clearing up on Sunday morning.

Sponsorship

Despite continuing difficult trading conditions, several local businesses provided support for the 2023 Fete through our sponsorship programme. These partnerships help to fund much of the Fete's free entertainment.

The Fete Committee is therefore immensely grateful to our 2023 sponsors:

- Forest Retreats
- Kingstone Brewery
- Monmouthshire Cottages
- Monnow Valley Cider
- Wye Valley Cosmetic Tattooist
- Wye Valley Meadery

Acknowledgements

In addition to our sponsors, the Fete Committee would like to acknowledge gratefully the support of other businesses, organisations and individuals who have made an outstanding contribution:

- Heartstone Inns who own Leytons Field. The active support, in all kinds of ways, of their management and staff at The Anchor Inn is invaluable and much appreciated.

-Tintern Sports Club put considerable time and effort into maintaining Leytons Field and provide us with a close mown, safe, level surface every year.

- Wye Valley Community Council, Monmouthshire Housing Association and The Wild Hare have given substantial monetary donations towards the 2023 Fete.

- The Village Hall Committee host the bar and provide storage for some of our equipment.

- St Michael's Church, loaned their display panels and hosted us for the Duck Race in May.

-Tintern organisations, local businesses and individuals who have helped with our fund raising activities. In particular we would like to thank: Abbey Mill, Abbey Stores, Chepstow Race Course, The Filling Station Cafe, Gales Garden Maintenance, Parva Farmhouse Hotel, Parva Farm Vineyard, The Rose and Crown, Superfish, Tintern Blooms, Tintern Film Night, The Wild Hare, The Wye Valley Hotel, Karen Flanagan, Fiona Gillespie & Julian Iddon, Toni Harvey, David Hurn, Mark McCrum, Chris Van Buren.

- Neil Mackie, Mark McCrum, Dave Tuffery, Paul Scheres and Chris Van Buren made important contributions to the safe and smooth running of the Fete this year.

- Monmouthshire County Council officers gave friendly and helpful advice on event safety and management.

And Finally ...

This year's Fete report would not be complete without mention of the storage shed that we have purchased to bring together all our assets in one place.

The process of finding a suitable location for the shed, obtaining planning permission, financing the purchase and arranging the installation of the base and the shed itself has been an almost unbelievably challenging and time consuming saga. It would not have been possible without the assistance of some key individuals (see below), the support of the Village Hall Committee and a grant from the Wye Valley AONB sustainable development fund, part of which was a contribution to the shed purchase cost.

- Andrew Reid wrote the funding application and liaised throughout with the AONB

- John Topp prepared and steered through the planning application on a voluntary basis and also covered the cost of the planning fee.

- Elsa Wood was our ecology advisor. She wrote and submitted the required ecology report to accompany the planning application, donating her expertise and time.

- Rod Adshead spent many hours overseeing the installation.

- John Livermore managed the finances and shed purchase.

Our thanks go to all of them, the Village Hall Committee members and the Wye Valley AONB.