



## Winners of the “Wales Volunteer of the Year 2009” from Gwynedd.

Through this award, an opportunity is provided annually to acknowledge and appreciate committed volunteers who have made a difference in their communities. The Award is administered by the Wales Council of Voluntary Action, and in December, each year, a challenge is set to people across Wales to nominate someone special who has inspired them by what they do as a volunteer. There are five different categories:-

- young person under 25,
- adult,
- green volunteer,
- trustee,
- groups (consisting of two or more).

Throughout Wales, 215 nominations were received, nine of them from Gwynedd, and this year there was at least one nomination from each of the five categories. The judging panel has selected Mrs Bettina Harden, who volunteers as a trustee with the Gateway Garden Trust, to be among the national winners.

### **Trustee Category**

#### **Bettina Harden - who volunteers with the Gateway Garden Trust.**



Bettina is the founder, inspiration, mentor and the drive behind the Gateway Garden Trust. Her vision, back in 1999, was to share the beauty and joy that she found in the historic gardens of Wales with disadvantaged and disabled people who would never usually visit such places. Having set up the Gateway Gardens Trust as a millennium project, she succeeded in getting 2000 people to visit Welsh historic gardens in 2000. Through her tireless work, the 'area' of the Trust has expanded to cover Wales and parts of England. Bettina regularly volunteers 7 days a week – developing new ideas, researching to the history of the gardens, opening her own garden to Gateway groups, supporting and helping other volunteers as well as attending meetings. This year with the Trust celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday and Bettina also celebrating a special birthday it is delight to announce that she is a national winner. A tribute to her dedication is in the number of garden visitors last year – over 6000 people. Her enthusiasm and devotion makes her a deserving winner of Volunteer of the Year 2009 Award

***Nominated by Mrs Cath Baker – Gateway Garden Trust***

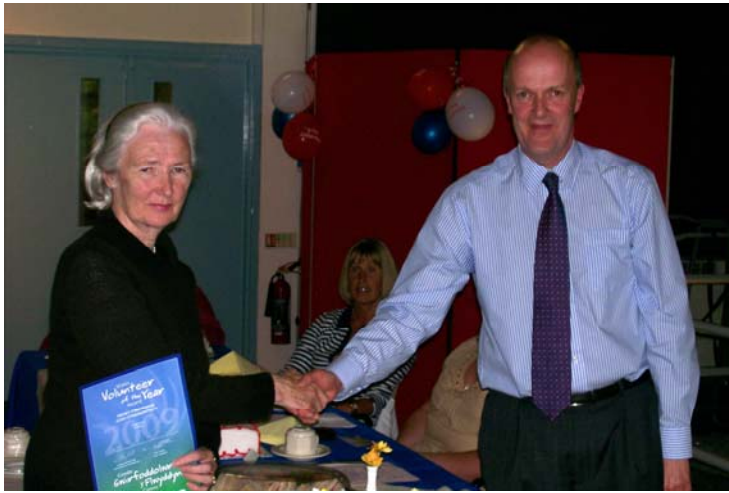
8 more nominees – each of them worthy of a 'Highly Commended Certificate' to mark their commitment to volunteering were given recognition for their hard work during a special “Celebration and Thank you Tea” held at The Electric Mountain on 4<sup>th</sup> of June

Also, in the Trustee category is

#### **Elinor Ellis – who volunteers with Plas Glyn y Weddw.**

Following eight years of being the volunteer co-ordinator Elinor decided to retire at the end of 2008. During her time she devoted long hours every week co-ordinating and supporting up to 78 volunteers at Plas Glyn y Weddw Gallery. The Gallery is wholly dependant on the contribution the industrious team and Elinor was the key to the success at Plas. Elinor was a rock in her support of the Gallery for nearly 10 years and her contribution has benefitted hundreds of people. She fully deserves the commendation and high praise for her contribution.

***Nominated by Gwyn Jones, Oriel Plas Glyn y Weddw.***



Elinor Ellis receiving her certificate from Mr Aneurin Phillips—Chief Executive of the Snowdonia National Park. He was the guest speaker at the Celebration Tea held for Volunteers at the Electric Mountain during 'Volunteers' Week 2009'.

**Green Category**  
**Mark Lawrence – volunteering with BTCV Wales.**



Mark works alongside a number of groups in Gwynedd who are involved with various BTCV Wales projects. The groups include students in woodlands, Glan Cegin School, gardening clubs in Caernarfon as well as a homeless hostel in Bangor. He deserves to be acclaimed for his work, his friendly nature and his readiness to give of his time without complaint.

***Nominated by Jenny Crouch, BTCV Wales***

**Young People Category – Under 25.**

**Mathew Penri Williams – volunteering with Lleisiau'r Llan.**



As the secretary for Lleisiau'r Llan, Mathew from the beginning has been inspirational to the community group from Llaniestyn. The project for the group was to create a garden out of a piece of land in the village, to establish a seating area in a beautiful natural niche and a safe place for children to experience nature. Even though still a teenager Mathew it is incredible that he has the skills to lead on such a project. He was responsible for getting the grants, contacting various agencies, obtain estimated costs and make plans for the piece of land. Lleisiau'r Llan would not exist without his enthusiasm and eagerness to create the piece of land for the benefit of the community. He fully deserves the high commendation for his hard work.

***Nominated by Catherine Theresa Evans – Chair Lleisiau'r Llan.***

## Adult Category.

### Marion Hughes – volunteering with Menter Fachwen.



Menter Fachwen has been assisting with projects for schoolchildren with learning disabilities in Kerala, India. Marion volunteers by going to schools and local groups in Wales to raise awareness not only of the poverty and problems in India, and also to raise funds towards the project. She has succeeded in creating connections between schools in India and Wales which is an opportunity for pupils to share experiences. Marion also volunteers in the greenhouse at Menter Fachwen. Following her recent retirement she has spent her time making a difference to the lives of other people – and fully deserves the commendation for her devotion.

**Nominated by Simon Higgins, Menter Fachwen.**

### Jenny Jones – volunteering with Relate North Wales



Relate is responsible for managing the Child Contact Centre on two Saturdays every month at Bangor. The aim of the Centre is to provide a safe and friendly environment for children so that children can spend time with non-resident parent, grandparents or siblings following family break down. Volunteers are responsible for the running of the Centre and until her current illness, Jenny has been volunteering regularly with the Centre for 8 years. She has unassumedly led and encouraged other volunteers to accomplish a hard task, which at times can be challenging. She has been the local contact for a number of organisations and she is determined once she is better to again partake in the work. Congratulations to her on receiving High Commendation for her devotion to volunteering.

**Nominated by Alex Jaundrill, Relate North Wales.**

## Mrs Glenys Parry – volunteering with Welsh Ambulance Service



Volunteers help Welsh Ambulance Service by using their own cars to take patients to hospital appointments. This frees ambulance vehicles for emergency cases. Over 45 years Glenys has carried hundreds of patients to hospitals. Because she comes from the Harlech area her contribution is especially valued because it is not easy for the elderly and disabled in rural areas use their own transport to the hospitals. Glenys gives three days a week of her time to volunteer and the patients think the world of her. This is not the first time for Glenys to be nominated for an Award – she recently received an Excellence Award from the Ambulance Service itself. – Congratulations to her!!

***Nominated by Joan M Roberts, Welsh Ambulance Service.***

## Ernest Wright – volunteering with SSAFA



Ernest Wright volunteers as secretary and Case Worker Arfon Area SSAFA – which is an organisation which offers support for workers and ex-workers in the armed forces. Since 2001, he has dealt with 203 cases and obtained over £180,000 to support them. His enthusiasm for his clients, and his endeavours on their behalf suggests someone much younger than Ernest. Through his professional attitude one of his clients succeeded in raise over £1,000 for this branch o SSAFA. Congratulations to him!

***Nominated by Col. John Egan – Chair SSAFA***

Congratulations and thanks to the eight of them for giving their time and their faithful dedication to the different organisations

## Group Category

### Barmouth Resort Improvement Group



The group has planted 60 palm trees along the promenade in Barmouth. They have also worked with the local school on projects and placed benches on the promenade to improve a popular area of the town. Through the endeavours of this group the visitors and residents of Barmouth enjoy a leisurely environment and the benches allow everyone to enjoy the spectacular views. The project has regenerated the area and encouraged others to improve the environment in the town. Of course no project succeeds without a lot of hard work – planning, raising funds and a tireless commitment. The success of the venture in a deprived area is a credit to them and shows what can be achieved in a short time.

CONGRATULATIONS to the group.

***Nominated by Kevin Chambers Group from Dyffryn Ardudwy.***

It is vital that the people who took the time and trouble to nominate these dedicated volunteers are not forgotten – without their efforts it would not be possible to sing the praises of these special people this year. So a big thank you to all the nominators – and remember there will be an opportunity for YOU to nominate at the beginning of next year!!