

## **Siop iard**

7 February 2014

### **Stryd y Plas, Caernarfon, leading the way in destination retailing**

Promoting high-end craft is all in a day's work for three local artisans who have recently collaborated to bring their workshops to the 'High Street'. At 'Siop iard' in Stryd y Plas, Caernarfon, artists Ann Catrin Evans, Angela Evans and Dave Stephen are benefiting from shoppers' demands for a quality local product and unique retail experience.

"We are individual artists who work together regularly as a community group to teach craft courses. It was a big leap to decide to join forces and an even bigger leap to open a shop. We are so lucky to have joined a vibrant and exciting group of independent businesses on 'Stryd y Plas'. Opening our shop in Caernarfon is the best thing we have done; I don't know why we didn't do it earlier!" says Angela Evans, sterling silver and mixed-media jeweller.

In addition to running 'Siop iard' selling their unique handmade works of art, the creative trio work together as a community group running quality craft courses from their recently renovated unit, 'Saith', at iard Glynllifon. "You can visit us at 'Siop iard' where we are happy to recommend a course with one of us or one of our visiting artists. We hope to inspire you with a broad range of workshops held at 'Saith'." says Ann Catrin Evans, sculptor and jeweller.

The community group received funding to renovate a studio - 'Saith' at iard Glynllifon and they have created a luxury art and craft resource room. This project has received funding through the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007–2013, which is funded by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. 'Saith' is available to hire for up to 40 people for courses, conferences, as a space to make art work, lectures and other events.

"We wanted 'Saith' to be a well-equipped venue for art, craft and music. Fitting a wood-burning stove makes the space warm and inviting. We hope more organisations and groups will talk to us at 'Siop iard' about hiring 'Saith', says Dave Stephen, traditional slate worker, slate artist, creative musician and author.

As retail moves online, the big-brand 'High Street' is changing rapidly. "Shoppers want something different and you can find it at Siop iard, 'Stryd y Plas'. You can buy a special gift or unique artwork, all made here on the premises. Then move on to enjoy a coffee and something tasty to eat before visiting the other independent shops in the street. Perhaps Caernarfon is leading the way in destination retailing?" says Angela.

Destination retailing has been championed by Mary Portas, retail expert and broadcaster, and she states, "Our high streets are a really important part of building communities and pulling people together in a way that a supermarket or shopping mall, however convenient, however entertaining and however slick, just never can."

Following a successful 2014, they hope the 'Stryd y Plas' business community will strengthen and footfall will grow. "You can book a craft course online, but if you want to learn more about what we are offering, pop into 'Siop iard' to have a chat. If you are looking for a piece of jewellery, slate art or sculpture, you really need to see it and touch it. I guess meeting the artist who made it is a bonus," says Ann.

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Artists Ann Catrin Evans, Dave Stephen and Angela Evans at 'Siop iard' in Stryd y Plas, Caernarfon.

Mrs Jo Quinney MCIPR Ymarferydd Achrededig / Accredited Practitioner

**Q Marketing & PR Ltd**

Ffôn / Tel: 01248 715 611

Symudol / Mob: 07748 155 116

**Nodiadau i Olygyddion / Notes to Editors:**

7B Stryd y Plas, Caernarfon, Gwynedd LL55 1RR

01286 672472

<http://iard.co.uk/>