

# Llais Llandyrnog Voice

June 2020 – Volume 5 – Edition 9

## Arla site for sale

Councillor Merfyn Parry, Denbighshire County Council received this letter a few days prior to publishing this edition of *Llais Llandyrnog Voice*.

Dear Cllr Parry,

I am writing to let you know some news about our Llandyrnog site in North Wales. As you know, we took the decision two years ago to mothball the facility following a strategic re-evaluation of our cheese operations. Since then we have kept the situation under constant review before making any decisions about the future of the site.

We have now decided that the right course of action is to prepare to dispose of the site. The way that our business has developed since 2018 means that this is the correct decision for Arla Foods and our farmer owners. As you know, the site has been operating with a skeleton staff since 2018, so this change will in fact lead to only one colleague leaving the business. Instead, we hope that the site will be freed up for alternative uses, which in turn should create many new jobs and opportunities locally. We will shortly be asking for professional support to take us through the sales process and I wanted to make sure you knew about this news before it becomes public knowledge.

We will keep you informed as the process develops.

Yours sincerely,  
Ash Amirahmadi  
Managing Director  
Arla Foods UK

From *Llais Llandyrnog Voice*, January 2018

*Christmas Packing made a return this year. There were two lines, both of which were gift packs sold at Sainsbury's. One was cheddar and whisky and the other port and stilton, both of which were packed in an organza bag.*

*Despite the cold and snowy weather mid-December, three 45 year-old silos were removed and £700,000's worth of new food grade silos and equipment were installed in the whey processing facility. The new silos are chilled and fully insulated.*

*The World Cheese Awards took place in November at the Taste of London: Festive Edition. Around 3,000 cheeses made their way from six continents and were judged by over 230 of the finest palates and noses from every corner of the globe, including cheesemakers, technical experts, buyers, retailers and food writers.*

*Judges worked in teams of three or four, identifying any cheeses worthy of a bronze, silver or gold award. Llandyrnog creamery won a gold award for its Welsh extra mature cheese, and five silver and three bronze awards for its other cheeses. Congratulations!*

How ironic that six months prior to its closure, this report showed Arla's financial investment in it and the quality of the cheese produced at the creamery.

## Around the village

**Get well soon** to Willy Plumb after treatment at Broad Green Hospital and Ysbyty Glan Clwyd; and Albie Roberts, following treatment at Ysbyty Maelor.

**Congratulations** to Mark and Fiona Bowen, Cwm Hyfryd, on the birth of George, a brother for Tomos.

Also to Rhys Davies, Dre Goch Ganol, on his appointment to the board of directors of Meat Promotion Wales. He's also chair of the Welsh Livestock Auctioneers' Association.

**Thanks** again to David Plumb for his work in keeping our road and lanes litter-free, although apparently there is now much less litter on our roads.

**Greetings:** Jason and Julie Jones, 20 May. Hope you had a lovely silver wedding anniversary. Love Kate, Steve, Kayleigh, Craig and Pym x

A belated **happy birthday** to Helen of the butchers' shop – hope you managed to celebrate somehow! Thanks for your service to the customers.

**Urdd on-line Eisteddfod:** Congratulations to Mason Powell and his band, Bro Dyr Roc, on being runners-up in the rock or pop group competition and to Efa Gwen Roberts on winning third prize in the recitation competition.

**Best wishes** to Keith Jones in his new home in Skegness. We hope you will find contentment in this new chapter of your life.

## Llandyrnog Flower and Produce Show

I'm sure that for some time this year's show was in doubt. But we have delayed making a formal decision so long as there was a possibility that we could go ahead. We now feel that there is no longer any realistic possibility that we can hold the show this year. It is disappointing we know but any relaxation in the current restrictions will probably exclude large indoor gatherings. Sadly, therefore, we have decided to postpone our annual show until next year. Please look after yourselves and stay safe.

John Rowlands (Chairman),  
on behalf of the Committee

## A message from Australia

It's been two months since the international borders closed here in Australia, with the official 'lockdowns' enforced around mid-March 2020. Some 400,000 people lost their jobs overnight. The government worked quickly to come to the financial aid of those in need, mainly those who worked in hospitality industries. The family-run concrete plant that I work for here in Wollongong, New South Wales, continued to operate with hygiene and social distancing measures in place. While the world stopped around us, we were able to carry on with business as usual.

It seems a cruise liner, *The Ruby Princess*, was the key source of trouble for us here in Australia. Just before the lockdowns were enforced, some 3,000 people disembarked in Sydney, many of whom were unknowingly infected with COVID-19 and later died. As at today's date, Australia has had a total of 98 people die, with only one current case here at our local Wollongong Hospital.

The community spirit in Australia has stayed strong. Whilst the early rush to the supermarket had people in a panic, mostly people have now adjusted to

staying at home for the betterment of the country. The restrictions are easing from this week, with children slowly returning to school. People seem optimistic that there is light at the end of our tunnel; however, we are mindful the colder winter months are still to come.

My thoughts are with those who are reading this in *Llais Llandyrnog Voice*.  
Stay safe,  
Kind regards,  
Gwyn Roberts (Gader Goch)

## A trip down memory lane

Old photographs of Llandyrnog have been put on the village's Facebook page recently. One which attracted quite a few comments was one of a 1956 calendar from D F Wills' shop. It was posted by Bryn Davies who asked, 'Does anyone remember Charlie Wills' shop? He was quite a character and had a mobile shop at Llangwyfan Hospital car park so that the busloads of weekend visitors could buy fruit, flowers and chocolates for their loved ones – a very enterprising chap! He retired to Denbigh and had a terrier who would walk from the bottom of town to the top and hop on the bus to go back down the hill.'

The daughter of Dorothy Wills (the shop traded under her name) has responded, as well as her niece.

Another who commented on the photo remembers that Charlie and Dorothy would split a packet of fish fingers for her grandmother as she didn't have a freezer! 'Service or what!'

A similar Austin van to the one he had for his deliveries is pictured below.

A few local lads used to chop up logs and bind them together with sliced inner tubes from car tyres for Charlie to sell in the shop. Apparently, he told them some very tall stories. If you have any memories of Charlie and Dorothy Wills and their shop, please share them with us. Send an e-mail to [llandyrnognews@gmail.com](mailto:llandyrnognews@gmail.com) or contact Anwen on 07340 271051.

## COVID-19 and the Land of Song

This virus has overthrown every sense of normality of life throughout the world – every nation in turn having to impose prohibitive restrictions that will change everyday living for many months and years to come. There was a survey of 13 countries recently, where different nations in different categories responded to restrictions better than others: the UK came out on top for voluntary self-isolation. The Swedes were the best for washing their hands often (14 a day!!). The Spanish were the best for NOT touching objects outside their homes!!

Well, I'm sure that if there was a category for a country responding by raising spirits through singing, Wales would certainly come out on top! In difficult situations, we tend to sing, compose, and create poetry to feel a little happier – it's part of our tradition, it's second nature. One of the songs of Bro Aled Choir, based in Llansannan, explains the pleasure of singing together through the good and bad times – '*a comradeship between hearts, because singing, singing, is in the blood*'. For many of us in Wales, singing in these uncertain times is our lifeline to normality.

As early as mid-March, Catrin Angharad Jones from Ynys Môn, decided to raise our spirits by creating a virtual choir on Facebook with the very clever name of 'Côr-Ona' (côr means choir) – anyone, anywhere can record their song or piece of music, and send it to Côr-Ona's Facebook page, which has thousands of followers already. We have a farmer's wife singing in the hen house with the hens pecking the rhythm to the music. Aled Wyn Davies, a well-known tenor, sings his heart out to the sheep while having a break from lambing – it could even have helped many ewes who were having a difficult birth!!

Shân Cothi on Radio Cymru has a new slot in her daily Welsh programme – *Y Gymanfa* (a Welsh hymn singalong) – where listeners choose their favourite hymn and anyone at home can join in with the 'on air' version. There are extra programmes of services on many channels where we can sing our hearts out in comfort, on our sofas!!

And not just hymns – we have talented singers in Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan who have joined virtual groups and choirs singing original and popular songs: Steffan Hughes from Llangwyfan, with his co-artists from the West End and Denbighshire, and Dan Lloyd and the cast of *Deffro'r Gwanwyn (Spring Awakening)* who are supporting for Tarian Cymru, a charity that buys PPE equipment for health workers. Then there's Lona, Llwyn Helyg, who is in a choir of former staff and pupils of Ysgol y Creuddyn with a song to raise the spirit and raise money. The words are especially meaningful: '*Cei godi'n uwch, cei deimlo'n well / Os oes gen ti gân i'w rhoi*'. ('*You'll raise higher, you'll feel better / If you have a song in your heart*')

At the beginning of May, Richard Vaughan, Côr y Gleision's conductor, had

another brainwave – get all the people who sing in Wales – sopranos, altos, tenors and bass to sing together. This tapestry of faces and voices in their own little boxes, together, was seen on S4C. Technology at its best!

This virus has also seen an upsurge in Welsh poetry of all kinds and there is a platform for budding poets on a website known as ‘Cerddi Corona’ (Corona Poems). One of the most moving poems can also be seen on YouTube – ‘Mae’ by Mererid Hopwood in which she is adamant that there will be better times ahead.

‘Through mists of time/There **will** be better times / The day **will** come / A new morning **will** come’

*Ann Jones Evans*

## Recipe

### **Chocolate Fudge**

An easy recipe from store cupboard items.

#### **Ingredients**

75 g/3oz butter cut into even-sized pieces

500 g/1 lb 2 oz plain chocolate – broken into pieces

400 ml/14 fl oz can of condensed milk

½ teaspoon of vanilla essence

#### **Method**

Grease a 20cm square cake tin (or similar).

Put the butter, chocolate and condensed milk in a heavy saucepan.

Heat, stirring constantly and do not allow to boil.

When smooth bring off the heat, add vanilla essence and beat until thickened.

Pour into tin and smooth over the top.

Leave in fridge 1 hour then tip out, cut into squares and eat (but probably not in one sitting!)

*Louise Eccleston*

## Spotlight on... Ray Hamill

My earliest memories are of the small end-of-terrace house in Bagillt. The large pear tree at the end of the garden, which I fell out of, the Staffordshire terrier, which bit me when I tried to remove its bone; and my favourite teddy, which I

lost when I left it sitting on a wall. I was only three so just a few memories remain from a happy early childhood

About then we moved to a semi-detached house, still in Bagillt, which remained the family home. Shortly afterwards my brother was born and several years later we had a sister. Dad worked in Courtaulds as did Mam sometimes, but she was at home mostly.

We all attended The Boot school in Bagillt. I enjoyed school and I quickly discovered that I was a fast runner, my football talent was limited but I could beat most in a straight race.

Out of school we enjoyed playing outside with our friends. We rode our bikes up and down the street, not many cars then! We played in the nearby woods and fields, built dens and tree swings and fished the lakes in Greenfield Valley. We brought home tadpoles and minnows and made ponds to keep them in. Later on we acquired rods and caught larger fish. We also played where we should not have, on the Dee marshes and in the abandoned lead smelting works and coal mine. We would throw stones down the open shaft and count until we saw and heard the splash from the flooded workings deep below. I must admit I approached the edge with some trepidation because the ground was very loose and a slip would have resulted in a terrible accident. Best if my grandchildren do not see this.

I passed my 11-plus and with several others went to Holywell Grammar School where I made new friends. I still kept in touch with my old friends after school, in fact we all went to school on the same Crosville bus.

I joined the school's athletics team and over the years I had great success at sprinting and long jump. The peak of my athletics career was to represent Wales on the under-20s team. Although I was not the most gifted rugby player, because of my speed there was always a place on the wing for me.

In my final years at school I developed the ambition to join the RAF, as a pilot. My teachers and parents advised that I should go to university to study science. I suppose they thought I would forget about flying and get a 'proper job' when I graduated. I succumbed to this advice and I was accepted to study chemistry and physics at Liverpool. During freshers' I noticed the stand for the university air squadron and went across for a chat. It turned out that if I joined as a Voluntary Reserve member, I could learn to fly at Woodvale aerodrome near Formby at weekends and during vacations. The training followed the military syllabus and the instructors were regular RAF pilots. I applied immediately and over the next weeks went for interviews and a medical. Spaces were limited and there were many applicants. We were told that we would be informed after Christmas if we had been successful.

Over the next few weeks, I settled into the routine of laboratory work and

lectures and made new friends on the course and in my hall of residence. I told myself not to get my hopes too high with the air squadron application for fear of disappointment.

I will finish there for the time being. If anyone is interested in hearing about the next 50 years, I would be happy to continue in a future edition.

*Ray Hamill*

## Denbighshire Cycle Path Support Group

We are living through surreal times, and if one thing is sure – we are learning new behaviours and facing new challenges! Some behaviours go against everything that is most important to us – like not seeing the people we love. However, maybe some of the things we are doing are actually benefiting us, and those around us. One is the focus on physical activity each day and getting out during this amazing weather.

I have always been a keen cyclist. Nothing serious and I've never worn lycra (!), but I just love cycling around the country lanes, and now and again going down the Vale, to the sea and over to Ruthin and Corwen. And is it me, or are there really more insects and birds around?

Now the various governments are actually encouraging us to do this, in response to the challenges of the virus. But this isn't new. In September 2014, the Welsh Government introduced the Active Travel (Wales) Act which made it a legal requirement for local authorities in Wales to map and plan for suitable routes for active travel and this focuses on cycling and walking. Denbighshire has built this into its own plan and is committed to actions that will help reduce global warming.

Some of you may remember the original plans that Denbighshire had to open up the old railway line between Ruthin and Rhyl, down the 'spine' of the Vale of Clwyd. Sadly, although many people supported it, it did not progress for a range of reasons. If you compare that to the current path between Dyserth and Prestatyn, also along an old railway line, it shows what can be done!

On 5th May I decided to see if we could bring people together to support the idea and the Council in positive and creative ways, and maybe see if we could draw down external grant funding in the longer term. Timing is everything and I formed the Denbighshire Cycle Path Support Group on Facebook with a vague hope of reaching out to maybe one or two hundred people in the short term. After six days we had over 1,200 members – the response has been amazing!

The vast majority of members live in Denbighshire; others have links to the county in some way. Most are 'normal' people and families, just wanting to

have safe paths they can cycle and walk on. One lady from Llandyrnog works near Rhyl and cycles the current roads. She just wants to be safe. I know this because each person was asked why they were joining as part of the 'sign-up' process.

I really think the concept is a bit of a 'no-brainer' (as they say). It connects communities, promotes health (physical and mental), helps the environment and supports the economy (through tourism and linked areas).

Of course, there are challenges. There are still people against the idea. It will cost a lot of money. And people's habits will need to change (in the longer term). On a more practical note, only people who are on Facebook can currently join the group – other options may involve the dreaded GDPR!

But this is something I am really passionate about. If we can stay positive, committed, constructive and most of all value each other's views, this has to be a worthwhile cause with so many benefits. Watch this space and spread the word!

*Roger Rowett*

If you have positive ideas and suggestions, contact him on [rogerrowett@btinternet.com](mailto:rogerrowett@btinternet.com).

## Ysgol Bryn Clwyd

This month we've covered lots of topics including heroes, pirates, bees and famous hoaxes, to name just a few.

Every child has been sent a pocket hug (it's a small wooden token) and some sunflower seeds from school so that we can have a sunflower growing competition.

Photos:

*'Owelette', Lillie's superhero!*

*Amelia making honey cake*

*The school's nesting box – four fledged blue tits ready to leave the nest. The box is now empty.*

*Callum growing sunflowers*

*Nellie's hoax photo, inspired by the Cottingley fairies*

# HUN comes home

My grandfather, Thomas Davies of Bancer Farm, was born in 1892 and died aged 73 in 1965 when I was seven. It's quite surreal to realise that my grandfather was born during the century before last and that I had the pleasure of his company for a few years of my life. I feel very privileged to have known him, although he passed away before he could make a lasting impression on me.

Anyway, my grandfather was a farmer and in 1952, at the grand old age of 60, he decided to upgrade from his trusty Allis B to a Cropmaster tractor that would, according to some of my tractor friends who are of a certain age, have cost about £400 in 1952. This would be the equivalent of about £12,500 in today's money and an average wage would have been £450 a year – so that was quite an investment for him. We must remember that while a horse ploughed an acre a day, these small tractors would probably do the same in an hour or so, once the plough had been prepared and adjusted correctly.

The tractor was registered in Taid's name in 1952, changed hands within the family in 1961 and went off the farm in 1968 to Mr Evans of Mount Pleasant, Henllan. Then the trail stopped dead.

So where's this story going now?

A few years ago, a friend of mine reluctantly had to sell his lifetime collection of tractors – about forty in all. Such was the variety and rarity of some of the tractors for sale that it was advertised nationally. There were literally hundreds of people there from all over the UK.

Anyway, the vendor greeted me at the gate – perfect host as he is – and asked me whether I intended buying. Well I said that I was and he pointed towards a double-seated Cropmaster – HUJ 124 – 'if you're buying – buy that' he said and pointed towards a bench-seated David Brown Cropmaster. These Cropmasters are unusual in that they can carry two people side by side. He was keen to keep it local and had been chatting to someone from East Anglia who had come up with that tractor in mind and was finding it difficult to let it go that far.

To cut a long story short, by the end of the sale there were two happy men – one richer, one poorer – and HUJ 124 was mine. OK, red mist did set in but by following morning, that was water under the bridge. Red mist is when you start bidding and ignore your limit. Ideally you should have your wife by your side to give you a good poke in the ribs once you've passed the agreed limit.

Anyway, the deed was done and I even survived the white knuckle ride home from Holywell over Moel Arthur not even knowing whether the brakes worked

properly. I had worked out a plan: if the thing ran, I was just going to jump off – end of. I reached Bryn Ffolt with the tractor banging and clacking, but I was a happy man.

About twelve months later I was out on a tractor run (boys and their toys as my wife would say) when I met my friend who held the sale and noticed he was driving another Cropmaster – HUN 313. Knowing it was a Denbighshire number I asked him where it had come from and he was unsure of the exact provenance but he had found it in under a shed that had collapsed on top of it. That was the end of that conversation. He later said that he had purchased a shed with a house next to it on the slopes of Moel Malogen in Gwytherin and had started to assemble a collection of tractors again. I wished him well and we parted company

A few months later, I came across him again in a ploughing match. We were sitting down having a coffee on some bales of straw when he told me, ‘Bryn, I’ve found the paperwork – the tractor was registered to Davies of Bancer Farm, Llandyrnog.’ Well I nearly fell backwards off my bale.

I explained that Mr Davies was my grandfather and that I was now a happy man, knowing that HUN was in safe hands. I told him jokingly, ‘Put my name on it!’ (i.e. if you are selling, I would like first refusal. It’s not the done thing in these circles to ask bluntly whether you want to sell – it’s a bit like courting. You have to make the right moves first.)

Anyway, slowly slowly catchy monkey as they say and I was sat at home one evening many months later and my phone rang. It was my tractor friend. He’d been thinking – it would be nice for HUN to be back with the family. I was in shock. I do remember telling him to ‘put my name on it’. The deal was very straightforward – he remembered how I had bought his favourite tractor – HUJ 124 and simply wanted it back in his collection. A straight swap – two happy men.

I went to see the HUN amongst countless other lovely vintage tractors in his shed next to his new home. The engine number on the book matched the one on the brass plate on the dashboard – the collar and cuffs matched – 100% provenance, all signed by one Thomas Davies, Bancer Farm dated 1<sup>st</sup> March 1952. I was elated. A handshake and the deed was done and fortunately he agreed to deliver it to Bryn Ffolt.

So the HUN 313 has been here for a while now. What happens to it after my days I have no idea but we have a lot of fun together. With the help of friends here in Llandyrnog we arrange an annual tractor run and over the years have probably raised well over £25k towards various charities.

And to think that it all started with a little red mist.

*Bryn Davies*

*The Davies' of Bancer Farm were, Arthur, Glyn and David, and their parents Thomas and Esther. Glyn came to see the tractor after it came home and his prized possession was a photograph of him with it. He passed away in 2019 and the photograph was on his funeral leaflet.*

## From the Rector

Life has changed beyond recognition in the last three months and we are no longer able to do the things we took for granted at the start of the year. The lockdown period has taught us many things, not least that people are kind and caring and willing to go the extra mile for friend and neighbour.

Our NHS heroes and those in key roles have cared for the sick and vulnerable and kept essential services in place, and we have shown our appreciation by clapping on a Thursday night. We may not be front-line workers but we have all played our part, we have all made a difference. Small acts of kindness have shown that we are a caring nation and to show someone we care means a great deal. It is often the small things that have made a huge difference. As St David said, '*Do the little things, Gnewch y pethau bychain.*'

When Captain Tom Moore decided to walk 100 laps of his garden to raise money for the NHS he hoped to raise £1,000, but it captured the nation's imagination and he raised more than £30 million. What started out as a small gesture made an enormous difference. He was a veteran of WWII, and although the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day was a cause for celebration, on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 the war wasn't over – fighting still continued in the Far East and Burma, as it was known then. It would take until 15<sup>th</sup> August for the fighting to finally cease and until the mid-1950s for rationing to end. It was a slow road to recovery.

And that will be true of the lifting of the lockdown. Plans are being put in place to lift at least some the restrictions but we know this will be a slow process. Coronavirus has not gone away and until a vaccine is found it will impact on our lives in many different ways. We have learnt many lessons but let us keep what is good and endeavour to continue to show kindness and respect to all people, to continue to play our small part in caring for the world.

In playing our part I am reminded of this humorous little story:

It was a chilly overcast day when a horseman spied the little sparrow lying on its back in the middle of the road. Reining in his mount he looked down and inquired of the fragile creature:

'Why are you lying upside down like that?'

'I heard the heavens are going to fall today' replied the bird.  
The horseman laughed and said, 'And I suppose your spindly legs can hold up  
the heavens?'  
'One does what one can', said the sparrow.

*Source  
unknown*

Stay safe.  
Every blessing,  
*Val Rowlands*

## VE Day 1945

*From the diary of the mother of Mrs Sylvia Evans, Fforddlas:*

*'Don't feel at all elated, weather dreadful.  
Mr Churchill told the world Germany signed unconditionally to General  
Eisenhower yesterday morning. Some German units still fighting Russians.  
Heard King tonight, went to church.'*

Victory in Europe in May 1945 was a time of great celebration and we remember well the parties in streets and on village greens. Families were reunited with children returning from evacuation and fathers and adult sons coming home after demobilisation. Items of food like jellies, blancmanges, tins of fruit, the ingredients for cakes and trifles, all mysteriously appeared, presumably hoarded for years for such an event. Bunting and Union Flags were everywhere. Bonfires were lit. Pubs did a roaring trade with their pianos being wheeled outside for singing and dancing. Everyone let their hair down and for most it was a happy and memorable time.

However, whilst victory in Europe had been secured in May 1945, there was a tendency to forget that fighting against the Japanese continued. This went on until August of that year and many veterans of the Burma campaign resent that this is often overlooked. A neighbour of Paul's was taken prisoner whilst fighting the Japanese and spent a number of years subjected to brutal forced labour, returning eventually as a shell of the man who left. VJ Day was celebrated when the Japanese did finally surrender after the dropping of the atomic bomb. However, we do not remember the celebrations being on quite the same scale as for VE Day.

*Jean and Paul Grange,*

*Parc Ty'n Llan  
originally from the south of England*

*Thanks to Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan Local History Society for recording this information*

## Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan Local History Society

### **WW2 project**

The Local History Society is continuing its research and collection of information, records and memories of life during the war period in these villages with the intention of producing a sister book to the WW1 volume in 2025. Once again, we are asking for the help of all *Llais Llandyrnog Voice* readers with this research.

***Do you have memories of living in Llandyrnog or Llangwyfan during WW2? Were you living somewhere else in the UK or abroad and have such memories? Do you remember stories told to you about that time by family or friends? Do you have photographs, newspaper clippings, artefacts or other items?***

The work has already started of collecting this information and we start with two women born and bred in Llandyrnog – **Sylvia Evans and Buddug Foulkes**. In better times, Julia and Rona took them for coffee in The Lodge, Llanrhaeadr and here is a brief resumé of some of the stories which came to light during that chat.

### ***Home Guard***

*Before he was called up, Buddug's father was in the Home Guard which met in a shed at Clwyd Bank. They were all in bed one night and someone knocked the door to say there was a report of a flashing light on the mountain which was thought to be from a German plane. The whole troupe of the Home Guard were gathered together and walked up the mountain to investigate but it was found to be burning bracken moving in the wind. It should have been extinguished before dark to meet blackout rules.*

### ***Village life***

*Children made their own fun mostly outdoors. The boys loved looking for birds' nests, climbing trees, making mud pies, playing with kites (often made by Sylvia's father) and looking for hazelnuts amongst other things.*

### **Shortages and rationing**

*What they missed most was sweets, bananas and fruit, bacon and butter (unless they made their own) but they did not go particularly hungry. They still had ration books in 1954. Coal permits were provided to get coal from Wil y Glo who collected coal with a horse and cart from Llanrhaeadr station and delivered to the village. The coal permit arrangement finished on 31 October 1948. Neither Buddug nor Sylvia have any means of heating other than coal fires to this day.*

*Both remember Mrs Richards of Cerrigllwydion Hall bringing toys to be shared among the village children.*

Artefacts or gifts can bring back memories. **Edith Hughes** has the military issue sewing kit which belonged to Bob Blackwell, her uncle.

**Remember also the Society's request for your contributions towards a record of events and experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic.** You can submit your information either now or at a later date in any format, sent to [llangwyfanhistory@hotmail.com](mailto:llangwyfanhistory@hotmail.com) or it can be picked up from you or from a drop-off box in the village, when all returns to normal. If you want to submit it anonymously, that is fine.

## A letter of gratitude from the government

*On Behalf of His Majesty's Government I wish to thank you for the Service you have rendered to the nation during the war. The task of British agriculture, an arduous, indeed a vital one, was to keep the nation fed. With your help it has been done.*

*WAECs, by their care and consideration, secured the willing co-operation of the farming community, and have, by their energy and example, raised the production of our farms to a new high level.*

*I am confident you will always be proud of having played so important a part in the contribution which British agriculture has made to our Victory.*

*(Signature)*

*Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries,*

*8<sup>th</sup> May 1945*

*To J.E. Foulkes Esq., Chairman of the Llanrhaeadr District Committee of the Denbighshire War Agricultural Executive Committee.*

This letter was shared by the Foulkes family of Pentrefelin, Llandyrnog, who have lived there since 1920. It is dated 8th May 1945 and sent to Mr J E Foulkes, Chairman of the Llanrhaeadr District Committee of the Denbighshire War Agricultural Executive Committee.

This shows the gratitude towards farmers back then; let's hope that our generation will appreciate the work and commitment of our farmers and growers to the British public.

Just as an interesting footnote to those of you who have visited the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagan's – it was Mr Foulkes who donated Hendre'r-wydd Uchaf Farmhouse to the museum in 1956. It was a late-medieval cruck-framed hall-house built in 1508 and typical of the better class of Welsh farmhouse in the late Middle Ages. To read more about it, visit [museum.wales/stfagans/buildings/hendrerywydd](http://museum.wales/stfagans/buildings/hendrerywydd).

## Dogs and COVID-19

### *What is the relationship between dogs and COVID-19?*

The majority of scientists across the world are doing their utmost to find a vaccine for Covid-19. In the meantime, others are trying to find ways of detecting the virus early in people, take appropriate action, thus preventing it spreading – and this through training dogs! Why use dogs you may ask?

Animals, especially dogs, use their 5 senses, in many different ways if we compare them to human beings. Their sense of smell is much more sensitive than humans.

In humans and animals, the sense of smell, called *olfaction*, involves particles, or chemical molecules (*scents/odours*) entering the nose and dissolving in mucous within a membrane called the *olfactory epithelium*. In humans, the *olfactory epithelium* is located about 7 cm up and into the nose from the nostrils. Inside the nose is an open area called the nasal cavity. On the roof of the nasal cavity are special sensory hair cells called *olfactory receptor cells*. They extend through small holes in the bony roof of the nasal cavity. These hair cells are the receptors that respond to particular odours. In turn, these cells have small hairs called *cilia* on one side and an *axon* on the other side. In humans, there are about 5 million olfactory receptors, and they respond to smells by transmitting the signals to part of the brain called the limbic system. The limbic system in the brain involves emotional behaviour and memory – that is why when you smell something, it often brings back memories associated with that object.

Dogs, however, have a second olfactory system above the roof of their mouths called the vomeronasal organ, and a larger area of the brain for more scent receptors. This helps dogs sense things that they cannot see, such as human emotions, e.g. the bloodhound (dog with the highest sense of smell) has 300 million receptor cells. Generally, a dog's sense of smell is 10,000 to 100,000 times more accurate than a human's smell. Put another way, dogs can detect some odours in parts per trillion. What does this mean? Well, while we might notice if our coffee has had a teaspoon of sugar added to it, a dog can detect a teaspoon of sugar in a million gallons of water, or two Olympic-sized pools' worth! Dogs have the ability to catch a whiff of one rotten apple in two million barrels! As we 'see' the world through our eyes, dogs 'see' the world through their 'noses'!

Here are a few amazing facts about dogs' sense of smell. They can:

**Recognize humans based on their individual scents.** It does not matter how clean you are, each human has a unique smell. Why? Our skin is covered in sweat and sebaceous glands, which are regularly churning out fluid and oils holding our particular brand of scent. We shed 50 million dead skin cells every minute. Wow! They fall like microscopic snowflakes, and we can't see this winter wonderland ourselves! But these rafts and scurfs, with their biological richness, including the bacteria that is shed with them, are very 'visible' to dogs' noses.

**Smell certain emotions.** Different emotions such as being happy, angry, anxious, fear, etc. involve releasing different chemicals in the body, and dogs can detect these – we might be able to conceal that fact from other people by maintaining a different facial expression, but that won't be enough to fool a dog!

**Smell Cancer.** Dogs that can smell cancer are responding to the smell of a specific chemical released by the body when someone has cancer, e.g. they can be trained actively to detect the skin cancer melanoma, by just sniffing the skin lesions.

So can dogs be used to sniff out COVID-19 in humans? Scientists think so because scent detection dogs can pick up on low concentrations of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) (*smells*) linked to diseases. These are found in human blood, saliva, urine or breath. Dogs therefore could be especially helpful in detecting COVID-19 among asymptomatic patients, or in hospital or business environments where testing is difficult. Research studies have already started. The University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine is training 8 dogs to differentiate between samples from COVID-19 positive and negative

patients. The charity, Medical Detection Dogs, is working with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Durham University to train six dogs – *Norman, Digby, Storm, Star, Jasper* and *Asher* – and the clever canines could be able to detect coronavirus in just six weeks! After completing their training these dogs could be used to check passengers arriving at UK airports, including people who are asymptomatic. Look out for the names of these dogs in future, perhaps they will become famous!!

As Alexander Graham Bell challenged science to understand smells in 1914, '*If you are ambitious to find a new science, measure a smell.*'

*Iestyn Jones Evans*

## Positive pebbles

'Positive pebbles' have been painted and left around the village to show support for key workers and to cheer everyone up whilst out on their daily exercise. Let's hope more join in to provide an extra interest to the daily walk!

## from Plas Ashpool

I don't know if it's just me or does anyone think that the countryside is looking glorious this year? The grass verges are bursting with a great froth of cow parsley, dotted with the vibrant pink of the campion and if you look closely there are many more, less noticeable but equally beautiful, smaller flowers nestled amongst the multitude of grasses. If we could only bottle the sights, sounds and smell of nature at this time of year, then we would surely have a potion fit to treat all ills. The swallows have returned (in greater numbers this year, thank goodness) and are busy refurbishing old nests and building new ones. As for the cuckoo, I have never heard so much sound in many years. The other evening, I was pottering in the veg patch when I heard the cuckooing from the big oak just behind the house. I was unable to see him but the calling went on for ages – just perfect!

Multigenerational living is providing some interesting moments in the Bell household as you might imagine. The grandchildren are definitely keeping us on our toes! There was great excitement this month when we took delivery of two ponies, on loan, for a few weeks. Jasper and Pishyn are providing us (well, me in particular) with lots of entertainment. From grooming to fussing and

hugging to walking out on little adventures and picnics around the field, it is bringing back many happy memories.

In the same week, our two new pigs, 'Lion King' and 'Ja Ja', (don't ask!) arrived safely and have been enjoying exploring their new surroundings and being fed tasty apple treats from the children.

A friend asked me the other day, how we were getting along with 'home schooling'. Well, to be honest, we don't bother. What is the point of sitting indoors, struggling over some dreary tasks when they can learn so much more in the great outdoors?

Here is my list :

Physics: driving and fiddling with 'Ted Ted' on the little green tractor

Maths: cooking with 'Fi Fi'

Health and safety: making dens and having camp fires with Uncle Bobby

Dancing and acting: with Aunty Mims

Not to mention the social skills of living and getting along with all ages!

The list for learning is endless. I sometimes wonder how they will cope with the confines of the classroom and nursery once we return to our old ways.

Every day there is something new for them to experience and an opportunity for more learning through looking, doing and discussion. I think their lives will be richer for it.

The other morning, on my outing for the weekly food shop, I happened upon a magical sight. Just as I was heading to Ruthin along the back roads, I rounded a bend and there in front of me, trundling along, was a coloured pony pulling a beautifully decorated gypsy wagon. Of course, I had to stop and have a chat. The man leading this delightful procession told me that he had travelled from Loggerheads and was on his way to Llanynys, where he would camp for the night before returning home the next day.

He said that he would often set out on journeys, just following his nose and camping out wherever he could find a good spot. The wagon was perfectly appointed with a little stove and bunk bed, cupboards for all the essentials and a special rack at the back for extra items. I think there was even a little wooden crate, where traditionally, chickens could have been kept. It all seems so romantic now but, of course, things would have been very different long ago.

I hope that as we move towards midsummer, we will all be able to continue appreciating the good experiences of living a different yet seemingly less complicated life.

Until next time, happy gardening.

*Fiona Bell*

## Healing to the World

And the people stayed at home and read books, and listened,  
and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games,  
and learned new ways of being, and were still.

And listened more deeply.

Some meditated, some prayed, some danced.  
Some met their shadows.

And the people began to think differently.  
And the people healed.

And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous,  
mindless and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again,  
they grieved their losses, and made new choices,  
and dreamed new images,  
and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully,  
as they had been healed.

*Kitty O'Meara*

Please remember the Vale of Clwyd Food Bank is appealing for financial donations to buy goods for those in need. Contact Idris Humphreys on 07833 560516 for details of how to contribute.  
Also, visit [valeofclwyd.foodbank.org.uk](http://valeofclwyd.foodbank.org.uk).

**On behalf of all landowners in the area: please ensure that you close all gates when walking across farmland**

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