

# Llais Llandyrnog Voice

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December 2021 – Volume 7– Issue 3

## Tempestuous Arwen



(Image: Julie Hughes)

In common with many other places in Wales, the residents of Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan woke up on 27 November to scenes of devastation following Storm Arwen. Fallen trees blocked the road to Denbigh (above), to Bodfari and Llanrhaeadr. Some areas of the village were also left without electricity, but as usual, the community spirit reigned and many offers of help appeared on the Llandyrnog Community's Facebook page.

The History Society's coffee morning also went ahead at the village hall, providing free hot drinks for those who were willing to venture out into the windy weather. Although there was no electricity at the hall, large flasks were filled from a fortunate home that had not lost its energy supply.

**A very big thank you to all who have contributed articles to this edition and to those who have given generous donations.**

**All greatly appreciated.**

**When you pick up your copy from the post office or the butcher's shop, please remember to place a contribution in the collection box.**

## Happy retirement!



On the last Sunday of November, the parishioners of Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan bade farewell to their Rector, Rev. Val Rowlands. Best wishes to Val on her well-earned retirement and to Val and Trefor on the move back to Llanbedr DC. We are grateful for her regular thought-provoking articles in *Llais Llandyrnog Voice*.



# Around the village

## **Congratulations** to ...

Dafydd and Gwenno, Groes Efa on the birth of Ianto Dafydd, a brother to Mabon and Medi; Irving and Anna Lea, Henllan on the birth of their little daughter Kaya, a great-granddaughter to Winnie Wilson; and to Rob and Jordan on the birth of Willa Fleur, grandson to Stuart and Melanie Roberts.

**Best wishes** to Glyn 'Archie' Davies, Gwilym Evans, and Earle Wright who have been in hospital recently

**Welcome** to Jack, Alys and Douglas who have moved to Mountain View. Also best wishes to Jamie and Tabitha who have moved to 29, Maes Clwyd.

## **Condolences** to the following:

Ryan, Glesni and Efan, Tŷ Gerddi – Ryan having lost his father Emyr Pierce, Garreg Lwyd, Nantglyn, who was also a cousin to Margaret, Awel y Foel;

to Gerald Wills and family, Bontnewydd, whose son Paul died recently. Gerald is a born and bred Llandyrnog lad and proud of his roots;

to Gwen and Ivan Butler – Gwen's father, Ted Evans, BEM, from Rhewl passed away recently aged 99 years. Ted had a warm place in his heart for Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan – he met his late wife Joan (Hewitt) who was a nurse in Llangwyfan Sanatorium whilst he worked there in the early 1950's. He also gave many a St John's Ambulance First Aid lesson in the Cocoa Rooms;

to the families of Haf, Arwel and Lowri (and eight grand-children and one great-grandchild) in the loss of their father – Lesley Griffiths, Llanwnda, Caernarfon, aged 96 years. He was a civil servant who worked in Caernarfon and Shrewsbury before retiring to Llanwnda. He is remembered as a valued member of the community at Llandyrnog, being former Secretary of the Summer League Football, and a Warden and Treasurer of the Church of St Tyrnog.

**Screen stars** Two choristers from our village will currently be screen stars in various

cinemas in Wales because of their membership of the Trelawnyd Male Voice Choir. A recent S4C programme on the choir's efforts to attract new members has been adapted for the big screen, and Terry Duffy and Ray Hamill, along with other members of the choir were filmed singing in choir practices in Trelawnyd itself, and in concerts further afield. The producer of *Men Who Sing* is Dylan Williams, son of Ednyfed Williams, Denbigh (one of the original members). The film portrays the happy, close-knit, lifelong friendships of the choir, and the wider warm village community of Trelawnyd.

**Sunday Politics Wales** Arwyn Evans, Head of Development, Grŵp Cynefin, talked about the challenges facing social housing associations as they plan for a carbon zero future on the BBC's *Sunday Politics Wales* programme.

## **Congratulations to...**

... Rhyl-based Dafydd Roberts, Croeso, a director and head of the criminal law department at Gamlins Law, who has been appointed to LexisNexis. LN is a leading global provider of legal, regulatory and business expertise. Dafydd has been selected for the Welsh Panel where he will play a part in ensuring the Welsh legal offering is of the highest possible standard, improving coverage of Welsh law through practical guidance and research.

... Chef Bryn Williams and his restaurant 'Porth Eirias' that has been recognised as being one of the best in the UK and Ireland, for its 'culinary excellence' – out of 1700 restaurants! It has been included the brand new AA guide for 2022.

## **Post Office Opening Hours**

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday**

**9am–12pm, 2pm–5pm**

**Wednesday & Saturday 9am–12.30pm**

**01824 790310**

# Fundraising

A coffee morning was held at the Village Hall in November to remember Olwen Roberts, Maes Clwyd. There was an excellent turnout, and £1000 was raised towards two chosen charities of the family, Gateway Club and Air Ambulance Wales – a princely sum in fond remembrance of a kind lady. The family wish to thank everyone for their support, especially Diane (centre below) and Jamie (photo bottom rt). A special visitor also attended, Olwen's son, Mark, who now lives in Denbigh (photo bottom lt.)



The coffee morning at Cae Nant on Saturday 7th raised nearly £500 towards a defibrillator at Cae Nant. And the Quiz Night at the Golden Lion on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> raised nearly £400 with Phil O'Loughlin as quiz master with help from Mark and Sam. Organisers wish to thank all for the support.



These events highlight the generosity of the residents of Llandyrnog – £1900 raised in 8 days. We can truly say that we live in a wonderful village.

*Christmas greetings*

Wyn Wilson, Monfa, wishes a very merry Christmas and a happy new year to her friends, neighbours and readers of *Llais Llandyrnog Voice*.

Margaret Evans, Awel y Foel, sends her best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to her friends and neighbours.

Season's greetings from Bryn and Anwen, Bryn Ffolt – wishing everyone good health, contentment and peace over the Christmas period and New Year.

Elwyn and Olga, Ger y Llan, wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all their friends and neighbours.

**Grace Jones** We would like to express our sincere thanks to everyone who has sent messages, cards, and good wishes to Aunty Grace following her current ongoing time in hospital. She has been really touched.

Aunty Grace has also asked us to relay her good wishes to everyone for Christmas and the New Year.

*Alison and Nicola*

**Sylvia Evans** wishes to thank her family, friends and neighbours for the excellent care she received during the recent power cut. All gestures of help were greatly appreciated.



# Shortbread

'Anyone fancy a cup of tea and biscuit?' – isn't this a common cry you hear mid-morning or mid-afternoon?

Do you know that people in the UK buy 96 packets of biscuits per year, and each person, on average, eats 11 biscuits every week? Are you one of them? What's the history of the humble biscuit?

The word comes from the Latin words *bis cotus*, which means cooking something twice, used during the Roman Empire, and this idea developed through the Middle Ages. Today, the biscuit is so popular – there is a biscuit for every occasion!

In a recent survey of all the biscuits on the market e.g. *Bourbons, Custard Creams, Rich Tea, Jammie Dodgers, Chocolate Digestives, Shortbread, Garibaldi, Ginger snaps, etc.* the No 1 favourite was the *Chocolate Digestive* followed closely by *shortbread*. It's no wonder really that receiving a box of biscuits as a Christmas present is quite acceptable!

But the shortbread, the second favourite biscuit, is the most popular during Christmas time. Shortbread in Welsh is called '*teisen frau*', which literally means a 'crumbly cake' – perhaps because the shortbread *melts* in the mouth? The shortbread is associated mainly with Christmas and *Hogmanay* in Scotland. The usual recipe is 1 part white sugar, 2 parts butter and 3 to 4 parts plain wheat flour, but without the leavening agents yeast or baking powder. Some believe that the shortbread originates from Scotland, but others disagree, and point out that the oldest shortbread recipe in Britain comes from Aberffraw, Anglesey dating back to 13<sup>th</sup> century, and called Aberffraw Biscuit (sometimes Aberffraw Cake or *Teisen Berffro*). It's a basic shortbread that comes in the shape of a scallop shell. According to legend, it is said that Llywelyn the Great, Prince of Wales, lived and held



court at Aberffraw, and was walking with his wife on the beach there, and spotted a pretty scallop shell. He asked his chief baker at court to bake a cake in the same shape – the *Aberffraw biscuit* was born!

Perhaps the true reason, a more credible tale, is the one involving pilgrimage to the famous *Santiago de*

*Compostela*. The pilgrimage to the Church of St James Church in Galicia, north-western Spain began around the 8<sup>th</sup> century with pilgrims wearing badges on their hat in the shape of a scallop shell – these were available in their thousands on the beaches of Galicia. The pilgrim could easily put a biscuit into the empty scallop shell for the journey. That is the reason why the Aberffraw biscuits are sometimes called 'James Cakes'. Under the patronage of King Gruffudd ap Cynan (1075–1137) or his son and successor, Owain Gwynedd (1137–70), a stone church was built at Aberffraw with Romanesque features, similar to other 12<sup>th</sup> century churches seen on the pilgrimage route to *Santiago de Compostela*.

The usual method was to make the dough into small balls, and press them into the empty scallop shell. In some areas it was called James Cake, but *Aberffraw biscuit* in Anglesey! The Aberffraw Biscuit Company was formed in 2013 reviving the production of the traditional Aberffraw Biscuit. In 2017, a new range of the traditional biscuit was launched, and the company was renamed *Shepherd's Biscuits*. There are many varieties available eg the traditional shortbread, lemon or chocolate flavour, and if you want to venture, why not try the one with the *bara brith* flavour!!

So if you are looking for a different Christmas present this year, why not give a box of traditional or flavoured shortbread? Or, cook your own at home – it is certain to go down well!!

## Recipe

### Simple Christmas Shortbread

250g butter, softened  
1 pinch salt  
130g caster sugar  
2 egg yolks  
1 vanilla bean, seeds scraped  
300g plain flour

### Method

1. In a large bowl cream together the butter, salt, sugar, egg yolks and vanilla seeds. Add flour all at once and knead mixture quickly, until a ball of dough is formed. Wrap tightly with cling film and put in fridge to chill for at least 1 hour
2. Preheat oven to 180 C / Gas 4. Lightly grease a baking tray, or line with baking parchment
3. Roll out dough with a rolling pin to a thickness of about 5mm. Cut biscuits out of dough using your favourite biscuit cutter shapes
4. Bake on prepared baking tray for about 10 minutes, then let cool and enjoy!

*Iestyn and Ann Jones Evans*

## Ysgol Bryn Clwyd

The pupils came to school in their spotty/ colourful clothes on to support Children in Need and raised a fantastic £50.



The school has also been fundraising to build an outdoor stage at school in memory of Mrs Lis Morris. Further funds are needed but work on building the stage will start soon.

The school council has met to finalise their plans for the school year. Top of their list is to organise a residential school trip and replenish the outdoor resources.

The theme for the Babanod is the Arctic, and they have been exploring different ways to build an igloo, learning about the Canadian Arctic artist Ted Harrison – and trying to re-create his Arctic landscape art using contrasting warm and cool tones!

For the Juniors, the new topic is Space/Y Gofod, and they created a scale model of our solar system on the playground, using the programme 'Scratch' to code rockets. Every week we are exploring a new piece of music from The Planet Suite by Gustav Holst. We used water colour powders and acrylics to express how we felt about the music accompanying Venus – bringer of Peace.

### Ysgol Bryn Clwyd MERRY MARKET!

**Thursday 16th December**

**Outdoor carol concert at 5.30pm  
on the new Mrs Morris memorial  
stage.**

**Market stalls, hot food & drinks,  
outdoor cinema and Sion Corn!**

**£10 a table at the market - contact  
school as soon as possible .**

**All welcome!**

## J & G

### TYRE SERVICES



CAR - TRUCK -  
FARM TYRE SPECIALISTS  
BATTERIES & EXHAUSTS

Unit 1

Dyffryn Trading Estate

Rhyl Road

Denbigh

LL16 5SJ

01745 817676

07775 717602

# Three places

## Llangrannog



Llangrannog will always have a very special place in my heart. We first went there on a family holiday when I was 2 years old and we went every year, except one, until the year I went to university. Although we lived fairly close to the seaside and often went to Porthcawl, there was something different about being in Llangrannog perhaps because it seemed so much more remote. Compared with today, the places we stayed were fairly primitive too. In common with many homes at that time, the first house we stayed in, at the top of the village, had no indoor loo, but, unusually, the loo was across the road! There wasn't so much traffic in 1951 but even so it could be a bit awkward at times! We would spend all day on the beach when it was fine and every afternoon we watched enviously as the children from the Urdd camp came down for their daily dip; they seemed to be having so much fun. We always wanted to go in the sea with them, but Dad said we were being selfish, because we had all day to swim and they had just a short time. Secretly I think he worried that he might lose sight of us in the crowd!

The second house we stayed in was overlooking the beach, so we had more freedom to wander. The landlady lived in the annexe, and the adjoining door could only be bolted on her side. The poor lady must have spent all her time listening at the door, because if we left a light on, however briefly, she would nip smartly through the door and turn it off!

Where we all slept remains a mystery to me. We would have my Yorkshire Granny with us, and Mam's brother would bring his family, and that made 8 of us in a small house. Sometimes Dad's sister and family would come as well (in a different house!) and they brought Mam-gu with them. When we all descended on the beach there wasn't much room for anyone else. The two grannies would sit resplendent in hats, coats and lisle stockings, however hot the weather. We used to go down to buy mackerel straight from the boats and Uncle Tom taught me how to fillet them.

When we were older, we would then go out checking the lobster pots and it all felt very intrepid! There were dances most Saturdays in the village hall and I remember at the end, often someone would shout 'Who's for a swim?' and we all rushed home for our bathers and went in the sea. (Health and Safety, anyone?) They were happy days in a more innocent age.

## Isle of Mull



In the summer of 1977, while home on leave from Nigeria, my husband Richard and I chartered a boat to go sailing off the west of Scotland and Richard's brother David came with us. David and I were often to be found muttering in the bows as Captain Bligh issued his orders from the stern! One night I went to my bunk and left the boys to it as we sailed through the night. At about 6am the next morning, I woke up and put my head out of the hatch and was met by the amazing sight of Tobermory in the sparkling morning sun. The

brightly coloured houses looked like something from a story book (and eventually it became one, called Balamory!)

We sailed right round the coast of the Isle of Mull, calling in at little harbours and working our way through all the malt whiskies on offer! In one pub, we fell into conversation with an older gentleman and it turned out he he'd worked in Nigeria in the 1930s so we had much to talk about. He was very surprised that we used to go to the French Club in Kano, because in his day, only ladies 'of a certain sort' frequented it and he would have been dismissed if he'd been found there!

That was my first visit to the Isle of Mull, but not my last. A few years later a friend and I went to stay on the south of the island and we loved it so much we went back each year. We sometimes stayed at a place called Red Bay, overlooking the island of Iona. If we were lucky, we could watch the otters playing in the little inlet below the house. Catching the ferry over to Iona and walking on the pristine white sands was a joy all of its own.

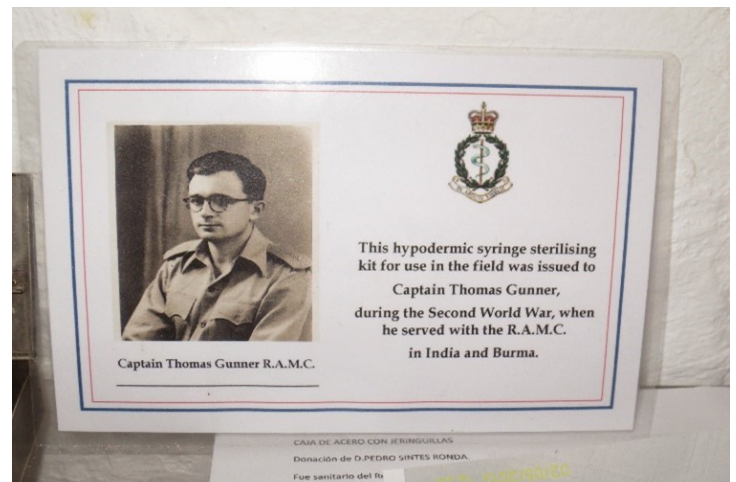
Iona is known as the 'Cradle of Christianity' and it has a very tranquil and restorative feel about it and a day spent on Iona is soothing to the spirit. On Mull and Iona, the pace of life is slower and people have time to stop and talk, and over the years, we met and made friends with some remarkable people. Each year we explored new places, but we were always drawn back to our favourites: Iona, Loch Ba, Tobermory and, of course, the Argyll Tea Room for haggis and chips!

### **Menorca**

I went to Menorca almost by accident the first time! I'd booked a holiday in Greece from a brochure called 'Small and Friendly', and just weeks before departure date, the company contacted me to say that, as it was under-subscribed, it had been cancelled. I then went through the brochure again and found a small hotel on Menorca. I arrived by taxi from the airport and was astounded when the owner of the hotel came out to meet me. He said, 'You must be Mrs Steel. Welcome to my hotel,' and

kissed my hand! The Hotel del Almirante is named after Admiral Collingwood, who stayed there when he commanded the fleet in the Mediterranean after Trafalgar.

On the Isla del Rey, in the middle of Mahon's harbour, stands the oldest British military hospital in the world, and a team of dedicated volunteers have set about restoring it. In one of the cabinets now sits a photo of my Uncle Tom, beside a syringe sterilising kit he was issued while serving with the Royal Army Medical Corps during WW2. I'd been wondering what I should do with it and I think Uncle Tom would be pleased that it's found a perfect home.



One Sunday morning in the Anglican Church, I noticed a lady and all through the service I kept thinking 'She looks just like Dolly Martin', (a former colleague). Of course, it was Dolly! She and her husband Mike had retired to Menorca and lived in a beautiful house in the nature reserve. We spent many days together gallivanting about the island and enjoying lazy lunches overlooking the sea, sometimes even being serenaded!

I visited Menorca for 25 years and I don't suppose I'll go back again now, but I have many special memories of all my three places and I often think of what R S Thomas said in his poem:

*'Let the mind take its photograph  
Of the bright scene, something to wear  
Against the heart in the long cold.'*

I am so blessed to have lots to wear against the heart!

*Mary Steel*

## The Tuesday Club

A meeting of the above was held in October to decide the future of the Club. As Gwilym and Glenys are retiring from the running of the Club, after 16 years, members were asked for their observations. The members were keen to keep the Club and an unanimous decision was made that Mrs Anwen Davies be approached. I am pleased to say that she agreed.

Sympathy was expressed with the family of the late Les Ward, one of our faithful members, also to Eva whose husband, Oswyn, had passed away and to Sylvia on the passing of her sister-in-law.

The Club together with other groups in the village had received a donation from the Community Council to help each one to restart following the covid-19 virus. Members decided to have an early Christmas Lunch in November at the Cherry Pie.

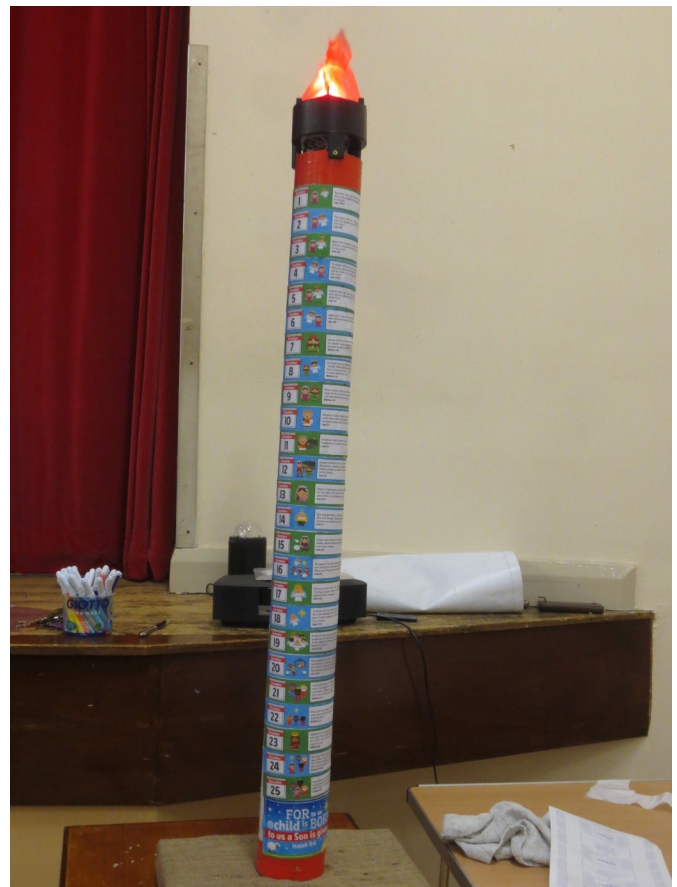
Gwilym and Glenys were thanked by the members for all their work with the Club and Buddug presented them with flowers.

On November 18th, a lovely meal in good company was enjoyed at The Cherry Pie. A very warm welcome was given to Anwen. The intention is to restart the Club meetings in March 2022.

Gwilym and Glenys wish to thank all who have supported and shown their kindness to the Club and also for the lovely flowers.

## Messy Church

November's Messy Church was busy and noisy with 19 children enjoying all the fun! As it was Remembrance Sunday, we thought about why we all wear poppies and we made poppy windmills and poppy lanterns. The children all had a poppy cake to take home. We also thought about Advent and how we prepare for Christmas and the birth of Jesus. We made cardboard Advent wreaths, and the candles bore the words, Love, Joy, Peace and Hope, with a white candle in the middle for Jesus.



## Sam's Tale

*The Story of a Rescue Dog*



To buy a copy of the book *Sam's Tale*, contact Sylvia Evans, Fforddlas: syl.evans@sky.com or send message via Facebook. £8.99 each plus £2.50 p&p or come and collect. £1 for each book sold will go to North Clwyd Animal Rescue Centre.

We completed an Advent activity sheet and we all helped to make a giant Advent candle, which will go into church for everyone to see. This was Rev. Val's last Messy Church before she retires and so we said a huge thank you to her for all she has done and for all the fun we've had with her. The children presented her with flowers, cakes and goodies and a thank you card. We will miss Rev. Val very much indeed but hope to see her when she brings her grandchildren. Our next Messy Church will be on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> December at 3.30pm in the Village Hall and we hope to see everyone there.



# From the Rector

The last Sunday in November marks the start of the season of Advent; the word Advent means 'coming'. Advent is the time we begin opening our Advent Calendars as we look forward to the coming of Christ at Christmas. Advent Sunday is also the start of the Church's year. The start of any new year causes us to reflect on all that has taken place in the year that has ended and look forward to what the new year will bring.

December this year will bring a new beginning for our family and the life of our Church as I begin my retirement. Clergy come and go, most clergy, hopefully, are remembered fondly but they will eventually be replaced by someone who people will come to know and support in the years to come. The pattern of one Church one cleric has had to change and with it the need for us to look wider than our own Church. All the Churches in the Denbigh area are now part of what is called the Denbigh Mission Area and we have formed new friendships and fresh understanding because of this.

The pandemic has changed many things, not least that most of us have become familiar with Zoom. We have learnt the benefits of Zoom either on a family basis or through our work, but that doesn't mean that those who do not have access to a computer have missed out, we have still kept in touch and now once again we are able to meet in person. We do still have some restrictions, face masks have to be worn in Church and an

## Village Hall hiring charges

Until the end of March 2022, the main hall and kitchen will be available for hire for a special charge of £28 for two hours but only to people living within the community wishing to arrange a coffee morning to raise funds for recognised charities. The organisers will be expected to lay out the tables and chairs and put them away afterwards.

element of social distancing is still in place, but this has worked well in keeping us safe.

This year we look forward with great joy to spending time with family and friends as we celebrate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Church services will continue to take place and the services we know and love are planned for Christmas. Our services are detailed below and we extend a very warm welcome to all.

My time in Llandyrnog may have come to an end but it has been a privilege and a joy to minister here. Thank you for your friendship and support.

May the joy and peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas and the year to come.

With every blessing,

*Val Rowlands*

## Church services

### Llandyrnog

**5 December** 11.15am Holy Eucharist

**12 December** 11.15am Morning Prayer

**19 December** 11.15am Morning Worship

**Christmas Eve** 5pm Christingle and Crib

Service: a Christmas service for the whole family

**Christmas Day** 10am Holy Eucharist:

Ven. Bernard Thomas

### Llangwyfan

**5 December** 9am Morning Prayer

### Messy Church

**12 December** 3.30–5.30pm at Llandyrnog Village Hall. 12 days of Christmas – 12 things to make, do and eat! For all the family, a warm welcome to all. Free entry. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

**James Davies, MP for Vale of Clwyd**

[james.davies.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:james.davies.mp@parliament.uk)

Constituency office: 01745 888920

Westminster office: 0207 2194606

## Children's corner

### The moon

The moon has a face like a big round plate,  
She shines on the cat  
by the garden gate,  
On cows that are  
heading for the  
warm, dry barn,  
And on the farmer  
who's asleep in bed on the farm.



The fast asleep dog and the wide-  
awake cat,  
The mouse by the door that's wearing  
a hat,  
The fox that's awake by late  
afternoon,  
But never fear it's just the moon.

As curtains and children close their  
eyes,  
Until the sun shall again arise,  
For now the moon is far away gone,  
Until another day is done.

Megan Jones, Llys Aled  
(9 years old)

### GLYN EVANS AUTOCLINIC

Canolfan Trwsio Ceir

Ystâd Ddiwydiannol Colomendy  
Dinbych LL16 5TA



GWAITH YSWIRIANT

TRWSIO CEIR AR ÔL DAMWEINIAU

CEIR I'W BENTHYG

GWASANAETH NÔL CEIR WEDI TORRI I  
LAWR

01745 815141

07808970364

### Cadi's Mince Pies Recipe

6 oz self-raising flour  
6 oz plain flour  
Tablespoon caster sugar  
Pinch of salt  
4oz lard  
2oz butter  
About 90ml cold water  
Jar of mincemeat

### Method

1. Put the flour, sugar and salt in a food processor, switch on and mix thoroughly.
  2. Cut the lard and butter into small cubes, add to the mixture and mix until crumbly.
  3. Add the cold water until it forms a soft dough, but not too wet.
  4. Put the pastry on a surface dusted with flour. Roll out the pastry and cut circles out.
  5. Put the pastry rounds in greased patty tins and fill with mincemeat. Cut smaller rounds for the lids.
  6. Cook the mince pies in an oven at 180 °C for 15mins, or until golden. Sprinkle with caster sugar.
- Enjoy your warm mince pies!

Cadi Jones, Llys Aled  
(9 years old)

## Dyffryn Chapel

Congratulations to Gwenan, Pen y Bryn for winning the solo from a musical or film competition at the national Young Farmers' Clubs' eisteddfod.

Congratulations also to Lowri Smith who has been appointed Governor of Alder Hey Hospital, representing the public of North Wales public.

### Services

**5 December** 11.00 Rev. Andras Iago  
**12 December** 9.45 Carols and lessons  
**19 December** 9.45 Christmas service  
**26 December** 9.30 Service on Zoom

## Prints by Elysteg

**Elysteg** is a small digital printing business created by Mari Williams, Maes Tyrnog.

*Mari:* 'I started the business during lockdown, over twelve months ago. I have loved to paint since I was a very small child and I also love running along the mountains of Snowdonia. So, in fact I combine my two favourite hobbies when I create my prints.

I use the graphic pad *Affinity Design* to create my pictures. I started off printing the view from my window at home – Moel Arthur, then opened a digital siop on the *Etsy* website, and advertised my prints on social media.



Since creating the Moel Arthur print, I have created prints of many other hills, including Moel Famau, Penycloddiau and Moel Fenlli. I have also created prints of Denbigh Castle, Snowdon and Alwen, Brenig and Tegid lakes.

I am happy to receive commissions to create single prints.

Together with my *Etsy* shop, my prints are available in many local shops – Siop Clwyd, Denbigh, Siop Elfair, Ruthin, Siop Mati a Meg, Mold and the shop at the Llanbenwch Caravan Site.'

It is possible to see Mari's work and contact her by using the following links:

Etsy: [www.etsy.com/uk/shop/Elysteg](https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/Elysteg)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/elysteg](https://www.instagram.com/elysteg)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/elysteg-103126461879107](https://www.facebook.com/elysteg-103126461879107)

## The Spider Rowan of Penycloddiau



This magnificent Rowan tree was first noticed and given the name 'Spider Rowan' by Thomas Iliff Simey of Cilcain, who sadly passed away in November 2020. Iliff took many friends and visitors along the Offa's Dyke Path to see the tree and admire its resilience, growing old in such a hostile environment. The Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) rarely lives beyond 100 years in this situation, being at the mercy of the wind, snow and browsing sheep. This tree, in contrast, is probably approaching 200 years of age.

This form of tree is known as the Spider Tree, because if you approach Penycloddiau from below its eastern slope, you'll see the tree's enormous branches spreading like legs over the outer ramparts of the hillfort like a spider. With a crown measuring 61 metres in circumference, it really is a spectacular tree, and this year it won the Great Trees of Offa's Dyke Competition, which recognises the incredible trees to be found along the path in its 50<sup>th</sup> year as a National Trail. The Spider Rowan is now being protected as part of the Woodlands for Water Project at North Wales Wildlife Trust, who are collecting seed for their tree nursery in Maeshafn and are in discussion with CADW about installing a protective fence to safeguard the tree for future generations.

*Jonathan Hulson*  
Project Manager  
North Wales Wildlife Trust

# Thomas Ramsbottom MSc

I was born at H M Stanley in 1980 and went to Gellifor primary school and Brynhyfryd. I left school at 16 and spent the next four years attending Llandrillo College where I completed an Advanced GNVQ and HND in Information Technology. I then had several jobs including employment in the creamery, which was very handy for commuting as I live across the road from the factory! I've lived in Llandyrnog for 36 years of my life, with 5 years spent living between New Zealand, Prestatyn and Dublin. I currently work as a landscape contractor with my father, and I'm extremely lucky to be able to work outdoors in the most beautiful part of the world.

My interests include learning ancient crafts and I have self-taught skills such as pole lathe woodturning, spoon carving, tablet weaving and nalbinding (which is a Scandinavian and Nordic craft similar to knitting but using only one wooden needle and short lengths of wool to make garments such as hats and gloves). This led me to pursuing my interests at a higher level, and in 2020, I completed a Master of Science degree in Experimental Archaeology and Material Culture at University College Dublin. The course was amazing with lots of new experiences and I have made new friends and contacts who all have varied and interesting specialised subjects within experimental archaeology and the wider archaeological community.

## ***Why is experimental archaeology important?***

In our current climate where growing focus is aimed at sustainability and using natural products, it's important to test and discover how our ancestors used raw materials such as plants, wood and wool, and how those skills and materials can be used in the modern era to make sustainable products and to ultimately benefit our planet.

Covid hit my studies at the beginning of the third trimester of the course which meant the main practical element of replicating an Iron Age penannular brooch originally found in

Dooley, County Donegal, using all raw materials and experimental working practices to end with a finished brooch, had to be cancelled and the whole semester was converted to desk-based theory and conducted via online lessons over Zoom, something I'm sure we've all become familiar with! The missed practical elements have afforded me the opportunity to go on workshops this last year to fill in the blanks of the missed practical lessons, and I have cast my own Bronze Age sword, learnt medieval distaff wool-spinning and hand-forged several Iron Age socketed spearheads. Along with attending additional workshops to further my ancient craft skill set, I will be teaching tablet weaving at an archaeology-based educational centre next year, something which I am very much looking forward to!

*Thanks very much Tom, and best wishes with your teaching!*



*Pair of gloves and a hat made using 'nalbinding' technique with pure wool*



*A small desk-top loom that I made*

## Our Councillor's Christmas message

December 2021 has come around much quicker than I expected, I'm convinced as I get older the years go quicker. I'm typing this before heading off to Abu Dhabi to see Jacob and his family before Christmas. I would like to thank the residents of Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan for all that they do for the community – everyone is so generous with their time and money and care for their neighbours.

November saw a coffee morning in the pavilion and a quiz in the Golden Lion to help raise funds for another defibrillator for the village, this one to be on the pavilion wall in Cae Nant. The total raised was £900. There was also a coffee morning to remember Olwen Roberts in the village hall that raised £950 for the families' chosen charities. Be very proud of yourselves for helping and supporting.

We had a very touching Remembrance Sunday at the cenotaph on the 14th with our very own bugler Heather Powell and it was lovely to see the Brownies there. This will be Rev. Val's last remembrance service before she retires, I wish her a long and happy retirement.

I am trying to organise a feasibility study for the village which will give residents a say on what they might like to see in the village. We have three community buildings being the sports pavilion, the Cocoa Rooms and the village hall along with the facilities at Cae Nant. If this does happen, we will contact every household for their views. Please reply to this when you get it as this is what will help us shape the facilities in your village. If you have any strong views, please contact me.

There are two housing developments in Llandyrnog likely to start in 2022 which will be donating a substantial amount of money through a commuted sum to the village. Knowing what the residents want from the youth to the more mature residents will be very useful.

I think as a village we have coped very well with dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, but it's still with us and precautions still need to be

taken. Booster jabs are now being offered so hopefully we will all, if desired, receive that extra protection.

I'm hoping soon that we will see the return of the yellow salt bins in readiness for the winter weather.

I would like on behalf of myself, Hilary and all my family wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

If you feel I can be of any help to you or your family in any way or you need to bring something to my attention please contact me directly, my contact details are below.

### Denbighshire County Council

**Merfyn Parry**



#### Contact details

Mobile: 07836 208446

E-mail: [merfyn.parry@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:merfyn.parry@denbighshire.gov.uk)

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# Notes from Plas Ashpool

What a stunning morning it is today. The first frost and the clearest of skies. Finally, winter is on its way, and for that I am grateful. Whilst the recent mild weather has been welcome in many ways, it seems as though the garden has been almost calling out, 'hurry up and bring in the cold weather, I am tired of having to keep going'. The flowering can now stop, the beautiful autumn leaves can finally fall and the garden can take its well-earned rest.

Rummaging through a drawer of birthday and greetings cards the other day, I found a little note at the bottom of the drawer containing this saying, which perfectly sums up this time of year:

When skies are grey and flowers fade,  
Fall and wither to the ground,  
Know in your heart that  
This is only the changing of a season.

Whilst life in the garden has started to quieten, the same can not be said of life indoors at Plas Ashpool. The arrival of a new kitten has seen to that. A beautiful ball of black and white fluff has seen to it that no peace can be had (other than when he finds the cosiest of spots to curl up in and recharge his seemingly ever lasting batteries).

He arrived a few weeks ago and since then has been ruling the roost amongst both the feline and human occupants of the house. For one so small he already shows that he has an enormous personality. Hours are spent hips crouched, tail wagging, ears alert as he gazes out of the windows with an ever watchful eye, at anything and everything that might be prey. From the tumbling leaves to the unsuspecting robin, from the spiders making their webs to the giant cockerel, Burt (who, by the way, is still seeking a home if anyone knows of one)!

The only time kitty appears to be exhausted is when the grandchildren arrive for the day. During the first week alone he had been dressed up in the dolls' clothing, paraded in the dolls' pram, operated upon in the 'doctor's surgery', had his teeth polished by

dentist Freddie and entered into the final of *Strictly Come Dancing* with his partner, Miss Bea, sporting her most exotic of outfits. All of this he accepts with amazing grace, collapsing into any lap that will receive him. No wonder he sleeps well after all that!

I still have a box of bulbs waiting to be planted and a few bare rooted roses too. Now the frost has wilted the remaining plants in the pots, today might be a good day to get on with the jobs I have been putting off for the last week or so. I finally planted some garlic in the veg patch, but unlike some will leave planting sweet pea seeds until the spring. I will cut back the dahlias and give them a good covering of mulch and keep fingers crossed that they will make it through the winter. Hopefully, the bees will settle in to their hive now, and I hope they will over winter successfully too.

The new Pekin bantams have a new house and run, to keep them fox safe on the odd days when I am too late to lock up before darkness falls. And the log stores are full to the brim, ready for many winter fires to come. As the saying quoted points out, this is only the changing of a season, but with that can come so many things to look forward to. So, I hope, that as we approach Christmas, everyone can find some changes to enjoy or look forward to with great happiness.

Until next time, have a peaceful Christmas and as always, happy gardening.

Fiona Bell

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# Local History Society

Llandyrnog & Llangwyfan Local History Society members and visitors attended their first history society meeting in person since the start of the Covid restrictions at the Village Hall on 17<sup>th</sup> November.

Following the AGM with updates about the on-line meetings, finances, progress with projects, election of the officials for 2021-2022 and programme for 2022, the Society's Chairman, Ven. Bernard Thomas introduced the speaker for the evening, the former Deputy First Minister of Wales, Ieuan Wyn Jones.

The subject of Ieuan's talk was the life of Thomas Gee (1815 – 1898), of Denbigh. He was a Welsh non-conformist preacher, politician, journalist, campaigner and publisher as well as a shrewd businessman.

One of Gee's most well known publications was the Welsh language newspaper *Baner Cymru* which he introduced in 1857. The paper was used to further Thomas Gee's campaigning for his various causes – the most famous being opposing the payment of tithes by farmers to the established Church. This came to a head in 'The Tithe War' in Wales and ended in 1891 with the Tithe Bill.

Thomas Gee died in 1898 and thousands of people attended his funeral.

Thomas Gee's legacy lives on in the Medal Gee which is presented to this day to members of Calvinistic Methodist chapels for years of service to the Sunday school.



*Hywel Davies (secretary of the Society), Ieuan Wyn Jones, and Bernard Thomas*

# Remembrance service



Colin Dew-Parry from Chester with his aunt, Barbara Hammond from Broughton, who were at the remembrance service in St Tyrnog's church on Sunday 14 November.

They were there to pay their respects and remember Barbara's great uncle Martin Luther Williams who was killed in WW1 at the Battle of the Somme, France on 10 July 1916 aged 28 (Pages 145–149, *Llandyrnog & Llangwyfan, Y Rhyfel Mawr 1914–18 The Great War*).

# Photo of the month



A wintry scene from Phil O'Loughlin's library this month – let's hope we don't have too many snowy days this winter!

# Art exhibition

Some paintings by James Eccleston will be for sale in the Christmas mixed exhibition at Ffin y Parc, Llanrwst, 5– 19 December. The exhibition also includes works by Sarah Carvell of Denbigh.

# Matters discussed in the November 2021 meeting of Llandyrnog Community Council

Members' thoughts that evening were with Cllr Butler who had recently lost her father.

Denbighshire County Council (DCC) has confirmed verbally that a new gate will be installed on Llwybr Tyrnog between The Old Rectory and Groes Efa.

The shrubbery at Cae Nant has been removed. Thanks to Cllr Rowley Williams who arranged for the work to be carried out and to Cllr Parry for re-seeding.

Defective BT outside Village Hall - missing cover - has been reported since 2017 but not actioned.

Broadband to Cocoa Rooms. The installation is internally complete but Openreach has not yet completed external works. Apparently, there are similar problems in surrounding villages – Openreach is under-resourced and community buildings are not given priority.

The Community Council has requested signs

warning motorists of horses near the liveryies on the B5429 but is awaiting a response from the Road Safety Unit in DCC.

Dŵr Cymru and DCC have been approached about the excess surface water on the road outside the treatment plant but there has not been any response. Soon there will be frost on the road and the Community Council is trying to be pro-active rather than reactive.

The Community Council has requested a joint approach with Denbigh Town Council to see if DCC could implement some simple cost-effective measures around Pont Glan y Wern. One side of the Bridge comes under Denbigh Town Council the other side under Llandyrnog CC – work in progress.

Cllr Parry has approached Marc Roberts, a community involvement specialist, to seek a quote for carrying out a community engagement event to cover all public buildings and the play areas in Llandyrnog.

Planning – three matters were discussed:

- ◆ Extension to Coed Coppi Fancer
- ◆ Twelve ground mounted solar panels in Pen y Bryn, Llangwyfan
- ◆ A pre-application consultation by Caulmert regarding the plans to develop land by Maes Llan.

The Llandyrnog Sports and Football Association intend to apply for a grant to extend the pavilion to make it more of a village hub and concept drawings were shown. There has not been a formal application by the Sports Association to date.



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## Useful telephone numbers

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