

Llais Llandyrnog Voice

May 2020 – Volume 5 – Edition 8

A chance to give thanks and be grateful



From one end of the village to the other, the residents of Llandyrnog give a huge thank you to all key workers who have been toiling over the recent weeks – the list is very long and we don't want to omit anyone.

Thanks also to Ros and Rob at the Post Office and to all the staff of the butcher's shop for the excellent service provided during the past weeks. They have adapted excellently so that the business can carry on to provide a great service for the village and surrounding areas.



Our aim this month is to respectfully cheer you up – let's hope that Efan, Beca Jên and Cai, and Loti and Magi put a smile on your faces. Their sign says 'the sun will come out again'. It will. Some day. Stay at home, follow the guidelines, be safe, and we'll see the sun again.

STAY HOME ► PROTECT THE NHS ► SAVE LIVES

Thank you

Friends, neighbours of Louise Eccleston and members of the Church of St Tyrnog's say a big thank you to her. She's offered to run errands and keeps everyone in touch with what's going on, especially those not on Facebook. She also sends round little funnies to give everyone a chuckle – a real star!

Thank you to Ian Southwick who has been collecting garden waste free of charge, as the green bins aren't being collected at the moment.

Jack and Chris Palin would like to thank all those lovely people who have supported us during this difficult time, including local businesses, individuals presenting us with surplus rhubarb, owner of bouncing boy, Siop y Pentre, Llanrhaeadr, and Bob for his daily musical entertainment!

Around the village

Best wishes...

... to Ivan Butler, treasurer and compositor of *Llais Llandyrng Voice*, who celebrates a milestone birthday this month;

... to Paul and Wendy Evans, who have moved to Denbigh – we'll miss your valuable contribution to the village;

...to Sue Vine, who is home from hospital.

We send our condolences to Gwlithyn Owen, in her recent bereavement.

Llais Llandyrnog Voice Committee:

Ruth Griffith (Chair), Ivan Butler (Treasurer and Compositor), Anne Rowley-Williams, Anwen Davies (Compositor), Gwen Butler, Jack Crowther, Bryn Davies (subscriptions and advertisements), Ann and Iestyn Jones-Evans (translators), Rhian Jones, Rod and Margaret Williams, Sian Gwyn-Ifan (translator).

Send all news contributions and articles to llandyrnognews@gmail.com.



Elin, a pupil at Ysgol Bro Cinmeirch, Llanrhaeadr YC has designed a poster that has been adopted by the Rural Crime Team of North Wales Police.



Rich and Heledd of the Rural Crime Team with Elin's posters.

James Davies, MP for Vale of Clwyd

james.davies.mp@parliament.uk

Constituency office: 01745 888920

Westminster office: 0207 2194606

A message from China

My parents, Julia and Terry Duffy, have lived in Llandyrnog for many years. In normal times, my visits to Wales have included walks in the mountains, pub lunches, music festivals, National Trust gardens – all things that people are surely missing during the current lockdown. My most recent visit, however, was rather sudden and unexpected.

I live in Kunming, in China's southwest Yunnan province, but when the coronavirus epidemic was reported across China in late January, I was travelling by train down to Vietnam for the Spring Festival holiday. By the end of January, the UK foreign office had issued a travel advisory for mainland China, and so I decided to fly back to the UK from Hanoi, rather than attempting to go home.

For a few weeks staying with my parents in Llandyrnog, nobody knew which way events would turn, but by March it became clear that the UK was going to have an epidemic and that I would be better off returning home to China before the Chinese government closed the border to foreign nationals (which they did at the end of March). So, in short, I have been fortunate not to have experienced the worst of the lockdown either in China or the UK, although my journey back to China was pretty hairy at times and I did have to do 14 days' quarantine at a designated hotel on arrival.

Kunming is affectionately known in reference to its temperate climate. Most cafes and restaurants have reopened and people around my neighbourhood are going about their lives as normal under the jacaranda trees, which are now in full bloom.

Life here has not completely returned to normality, however. The epidemic has passed, but a second wave remains a real possibility as internal travel restrictions are lifted, schools and universities reopen, and meanwhile the pandemic continues globally. There is a continued sense of vigilance in order to keep oneself, loved ones and society safe. Despite there currently being no recorded community transmission, local residents here are still limiting their social contacts to family and close friends in order to keep the risk of a resurgence low. Face masks are still being worn outdoors by almost everyone, expressing awareness and solidarity, and are generally believed to reduce rates of infection.

Within cities, certain measures are likely to remain in place until a vaccine has been developed and made available. An adapted form of social life has therefore taken shape for the medium to long term. But the good news is that, in most ways, this adaptation in behaviours, along with ongoing restrictions and monitoring, still allow for a rich and reasonably normal social life. Assuming no significant rise in reported cases, this will soon be combined with more freedom of movement between cities. Today, and for the foreseeable future, I can eat in restaurants, go to bars, see my friends, but numbers are restricted to maintain social distancing. I can walk in the park but have to scan in at the gate with a QR code using my smartphone and have my temperature checked. In fact, most large public places such as supermarkets, shopping centres and large offices require temperature checks and QR code scan-ins linked to an individual 'green health code' based on travel history and contact tracing.



Emerging from quarantine into a city where the worst has passed was a relief. After a hard two months for the Chinese, spring has most definitely arrived in the Spring City, as

A message from China: ctd

And talking about infection...



Temperature checks and scans for residents

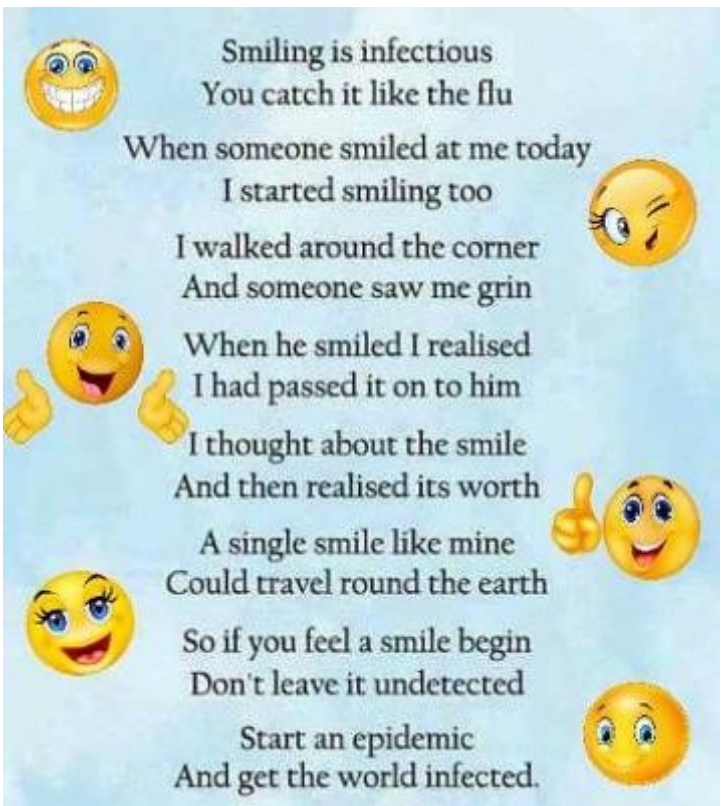
Many people in my community here in China have expressed their concern for my family and friends in the UK, and for all of you reading this. Their message for you is that the epidemic will subside, restrictions will be eased, and social life will resume. However, the medium- to long-term future will continue to make unusual demands on all of us to co-operate with each other and with the state in order to keep this disease in check, as well as to find every possible way to bring our communities together as a vital source of support.

Wei’ershi, jiayou! (Stay strong, Wales!)

Seán Duffy



We thank Seán, who is studying Chinese, very much for this interesting article – hoping we’ll hear more from him in the future!



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Notes from Plas Ashpool

Here at Plas Ashpool life rattles on apace, even though everyday life is a little topsy-turvy. After the arrival of our two daughters and three rather small grandchildren several weeks ago now, our daily routine has taken a lively turn. I hope you will not mind therefore, if I include some of our daily activities.

Day 1: Family arrive. One from London, the other from Deganwy (plus toddlers and new baby). Great excitement all round. Rooms allocated, toys found, meal organised, bed.

Day 2: Cats trying to self isolate having been 'found' by toddlers. Now in great escape mode.

Day 3: Eldest daughter and mum of toddlers being helpful. Managed to Hoover up Wi-Fi cable. Other daughter distraught as desperately trying to set up online yoga teaching to her pupils. Atmosphere tense.

Day 4: Go shopping for supplies (don't really need anything, as pantry already heaving). Return to find eldest (trying to be helpful daughter) has been 'reorganising' household furniture. Have to admit, does look better.

Day 5: Woken at unearthly hour (not by babies) but strange chanting and breathing noises from next door room (aka 'the yoga studio'). Online teaching must be going according to plan.

Day 6: Try to be a dutiful granny, decide to do cooking with toddlers. 7am and cooking ingredients are everywhere. Strange cakes are cooking, children are covered in flour, cats have fled and granny Fi Fi is exhausted!

Day 7: Thankful for glorious weather. Children spending lots of time outside. Ready to tackle the veg patch. Make quite good progress until helpers arrive. Apparently soil is a good substitute for sand. Abandon tasks for the day.

Day 8: Losing track of time. Decide to stocktake in pantry. Made good use of out of date chick-peas and vintage chutney (circa 2000). Find old box of Thornton's chocolates hidden behind bread bin, must have been from Christmas (not sure which Christmas however), decide to risk them anyway.

Day 8: Washing machine on overload, hoping it can survive the ordeal. Fun playing with children in garden, now exhausted, too weary to cook supper – husband in huff due to deteriorating culinary standards.

Day 9: Friend has the virus. Lives on his own. Calls ambulance. Told hospital treatment not required. Wish we could help.

Day 10: Washing machine still going. Loo suffering from over-enthusiastic two-year-olds' recent attachment to discovery of wearing knickers over nappies and fascination of the flushing mechanism of said appliance.

Day 11: Hooray! The first swallow arrives, hope the others follow soon. Good progress in veg patch. Little hands helping to sow seeds.

Day 12: Losing track of time again, is it really Saturday already? Love reading about all the wonderful community activities that are springing up around the country.

Day 13: Went for supplies. Wonderful to see so many people out walking. Great activity in everyone's gardens. Speak to friend who has spring-cleaned her entire house to within an inch of its life. Feel guilty, Plas Ashpool hasn't had a dust in weeks.

Day 14: Dishwasher has died, will have to go back to old ways (not a bad thing), beginning to lead a much more uncomplicated life. So grateful to have countryside around.

Day 15: Much like yesterday and the day before that. Taking more care to keep in touch with old friends.

And so it goes on my friends. A sense of quiet acceptance has arrived and with it a greater appreciation of all that we have. The news brings more sad news from around the country. As we go about our daily activities, we can only hope that when life returns to 'normal' (whatever that may be) we will all have a stronger sense of the preciousness of life and all that we have around us.

Until next time, keep safe and keep well

Fiona Bell

The fog that stayed all day

You may remember that back in January, fog descended on Llandyrnog and didn't lift at all during the day. To find out what caused this phenomenon, we asked a native of Llandyrnog, Professor Geraint Vaughan, for an explanation. Professor Vaughan's childhood home was Flora (now Llwyn Helyg) and he attended Ysgol Glan Clwyd, before graduating from the University of Cambridge. He has a doctorate in atmospheric physics from the University of Oxford. At present he's professor of Atmospheric Science at Manchester University and Director of Weather Research for the National Centre for Atmospheric Science. So we couldn't think of anyone better to explain it to us!



The above photo shows fog, or mist, on the floor of the Vale of Clwyd. On this day, Wales was under the influence of a ridge of high pressure, with light winds and virtually no clouds. Along with the long winter evenings, this provides the perfect conditions for the

formation of fog, as the Earth's surface cools by emitting infrared rays into space. As a result, it creates a shallow layer (sometimes only a few metres) of cold air that is sufficient to condense water vapour into drops of fog. The fog can last for days if the general weather does not change, increasing in its intensity and depth. But if the fog is light, sunlight can penetrate it by warming the Earth's surface so that the fog rises and forms a low cloud during daylight, as the photo below shows. The fog usually disappears soon after rising like this.

Valley floors are the most susceptible areas for fog formation, firstly because of the presence of a river and therefore a source of moisture, and secondly because cold air is denser than warm air and flows down the sides of the valley to accumulate at the bottom.

I don't remember that the Vale of Clwyd was particularly renowned for fog when I was a child – I remember it forming mostly near the rivers.

I once lived in the Thames Valley near Reading, and that was a foggy place! The locals blamed the lakes created by quarrying of shingle, as they kept the air moist. Whatever the cause, fog along the M4 is a constant cause for concern for motorists in this area during the autumn and winter. It is therefore heartening that Llandyrnog residents see fog as something special enough to tell its story in *Llais Llandyrnog Voice*!

Geraint Vaughan



Spotlight on... Richard Davies

I was born in Denbigh Infirmary 63 years ago and grew up in Bryn Ffolt before moving to Hafod y Bryn in 1971. I was faced with somewhat of a dilemma after doing my O-levels – leaving school, since I didn't enjoy it, or venture and go to the 6th form. Thanks to one special teacher at Ysgol Glan Clwyd, Tudur Aled Davies, I was encouraged to go to the 6th form and sit my A-levels. I then attended the Welsh College of Agriculture in Aberystwyth – this was a special education from enthusiastic staff.

Thanks to my parents for supporting me through college, especially to my mother for sending me a weekly letter and £5 in cash to keep me going.

After leaving college, I got a job with the Milk Marketing Board as a trainee agricultural consultant and moved to the south east of England. I stayed in lodging in Brighton for the first six months, which was a long way from home, then moved to Newark for another six months. I eventually settled and bought my first house in Buxton in the Peak District – a very special place and closer to home.

An opportunity then came to lecture at Llysfasi College, with my former lecturer in Aberystwyth, Fred Cunningham, now principal of the college. This was a good time, with big changes taking place in education and agriculture. I changed jobs at Llysfasi and became the farm manager. During this time I became active with the NFU, as county chairman and representing the union on committee meetings in London.

I married Iona in 1988, moved back to Hafod y Bryn and raised four children – Non, Elin, Tomos and Hywel. After twenty years at Llysfasi, I was approaching my fiftieth birthday, and thought that if I wanted to change jobs, I had to do so soon, or I would be at Llysfasi until I retired. I applied for a job in the dairy industry with the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and fortunately was successful. I've had great opportunities in this work to travel Britain and many European

countries, gaining insight into the industry and managing a team of young and enthusiastic staff.

Thanks also to Capel y Dyffryn for being elected elder and giving me the opportunity to contribute to a cause that has been important to our family for three generations.

So here I am, retired and in the midst of a serious pandemic and everything has come to a standstill; this is not what anyone had expected.

What are your plans for the future?

It's safe to say that the plans are on hold at the moment! I had intended finding work for 2–3 days a week while Iona is still working and fill the rest of the time with gardening and tackling the list of jobs she's given me! The main plan is to travel to New Zealand. I would also like to visit Buenos Aires – we'll see.

What memorable places have you visited?

This is a tough one! My parents took us for a week's holiday every year. One scene I'll never forget was the sunset we saw in Oban. It must have been really splendid to impress someone at such a young age, but the orange, red and purple colours over the sea were unforgettable. Closer to home, then it must be the Llŷn Peninsula. I have been very fortunate to visit dairy farmers with my work and get to know many families. I love going there for walks and weekends. The only disadvantage is that it needs to be avoided during school holidays!

Last year we went on holiday in Ireland. We stayed most of the time in Galway and travelled along part of the Wild Atlantic Way around Donegal and Connemara. If you haven't been to the city or the surrounding areas, all I can say is – go there! The views are unrivalled, but there's no need to pack your bikini!

For warmer climes, it's very difficult to choose between Tuscany or Provence. Both areas are special with small villages and lovely

Spotlight on... Richard Davies ctd



Iona and Rich enjoying a holiday

vineyards. All I will say is that it is safer to drive in Provence than Tuscany. Yes, it's true – Italians are very impatient drivers!

But to top it all, there's nowhere like the splendid Vale of Clwyd – when you come towards it over the pass down to Llanbedr, the view's delightful.

What makes you angry?

That's an easy one – untidiness! I can't bear having an untidy workshop or see a mess when walking and travelling. Yes, farmers – I'm talking about you! Black plastic and red buckets that have been feeding sheep strewn around the fields. And gates that don't hang properly, with twine holding everything together.

Who would you invite to a meal with you?

The programme that makes me laugh the most is *Have I Got News for You*, so I'm sure Ian Hislop and Paul Merton would be very entertaining company.

Graham Pickles from Llangwyfan runs Green Fingers Garden Centre in Denbigh and delivers plants.

Phone number 01745 815279.

He is able to take orders between 10am and 12am on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Llandyrnog vs the Virus

Covid-19 is certainly an event that is having and will have an impact on the villages of Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan. All of us have had to make changes to our everyday routines to discover and develop a new normal whether that is because of government restrictions, local business pressures or something we have chosen to do ourselves.

The Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan Local History Society tries to ensure a record is kept of any important events and changes to our villages. This is where you come in.

We are asking you to think about starting to keep a record of the changes and things that happen locally as a result of the changed circumstances. Another example is writing a piece describing what effect the cancellation of all clubs and societies, and coffee mornings has had on you personally and/or the charities that should have benefitted. Perhaps you have before and after photographs of what the villages or countryside looked like just before the restrictions started and how it changed as time moved on. Has someone gone the extra mile to make your life as comfortable as possible during these unsettling and strange times?

You can submit your information either now or at a later date in any format, sent to 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.

Do please help us to collect this information so that we can look back and remember and ensure that future generations are aware of the time of **The World vs The Virus** and the impact on Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan.

In the meantime, please stay safe and well.

With thanks

Julia Hughes and Rona Aldrich

Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan

Local History Society

Ysgol Bryn Clwyd



A great 'den day' at Ysgol Bryn Clwyd – showing excellent team work!



The completed Denbigh Castle artwork, part of an Arts Wales project with the visual artist, Jon Clayton. The intention was to work with an author and with a musician. All the work was then to be used by the children to create their own websites advertising Denbigh Castle. Hopefully the pupils will be able to complete the project when the school reopens.

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Ysgol Bryn Clwyd: ctd.

The winning entries of the competition to make a scene involving an egg were:



1st:

Lillie (above left)

2nd:

Daniel (above right)

3rd:

Jeff and Ethan (left)



Rights of way closures

Denbighshire County Council is urging people to respect the decision to close some rights of way in the county, in light on the ongoing coronavirus situation.

The Welsh Government has introduced emergency regulations that require local authorities to close footpaths and other rights of way where use poses a high risk to the spread of coronavirus.

Any person ignoring the closure of a path or place under these regulations may be asked or forced to leave and may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60, with that charge doubling for a repeat offence.

The closures relate to public paths in or around Llandyrnog, Llangynhafal, Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd, Llanferres, Llanarmon yn Iâl and Llantysilio communities. A full list is available on the Council's website: www.denbighshire.gov.uk.

This will remain under review and may change if areas are identified where groups of people are congregating and actively ignoring measures set out by the Government.



Visit Ysgol Bryn Clwyd's Facebook page to see footage of the resident blue tit in its birdbox.

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From the Rector

There is something special about living in the Vale of Clwyd. With the hills either side it is a haven of peace and extraordinarily beautiful. Over the past couple of months that peace has been shaken and the effects of the coronavirus pandemic are very real. We have been in lockdown for four weeks and we know how difficult this has been for many people, especially for those who fall into the vulnerable categories. But we have seen unprecedented levels of generosity and care and this village, like so many others, has risen to the challenge and reached out in love to one another. We give thanks for those who have offered help with shopping and vital tasks or e-mailed and telephoned those who are feeling isolated. The effects of the virus are horrendous and even if it hasn't touched our family it will have touched someone we know. Our thoughts and prayers are very much with those who are ill, those who have lost loved ones and all who are front line key workers.

Living in a beautiful place does not mean we are untouched by the devastation around us. But nature has put on her finest display and the blossom has brought a delicate beauty which at the time of writing the wind and the rain seems loathe to destroy. The sound of traffic is rarely heard and we hear the birdsong in a new way. The birds are busy building their nests, enjoying the rich pickings of twigs and leaves as they build a home for their chicks. A safe haven for their family from the perils of the world around them.

The message to us all at present is Stay Home and we have learnt to value our homes in a new way. They have always been a place for family and love, but now in a different way they offer a place of safety from this terrible virus. We may worry when we turn on the news or look at our computer screens but we need to remember that despite all that is happening God still holds the whole world in his hands. We have just celebrated Easter, a

very different Easter from the sort we usually enjoy. But the message of Easter remains the same, the promise of new life in Christ Jesus.

In the Queen's coronavirus address to the nation she thanked all key workers, all who selflessly carry out their duties to help others. Her Majesty closed by saying: 'Better days will return; we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again.'

Take care of yourselves and your family.
With every blessing,
Val Rowlands

Gaelic Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you
May the wind be always at your back
May the sun shine warm upon your face
And the rains fall soft upon your fields
Until we meet again
May God hold you in the hollow of his hand.



A candle lit over Easter in St Cwyfan's (left) and at St Tyrnog's with the work from Messy Church (below)



What I have learned during isolation

Well. One evening during this isolation period, Ifan, my son, decided it was time for his exercise. However, it was dark so he asked whether he could borrow my high viz jacket; I said, 'Of course, help yourself.'

Ten minutes later he appeared in the hall. He had somehow managed to put my jacket over his jacket. Needless to say, it was halfway up his waist; he could hardly move his arms and he was complaining of a pain in his chest and breathlessness. I naturally enquired did he have a cough as well. 'No', he said, 'it's just that the jacket is a bit tight.' I told him that it wasn't made to fit over a donkey jacket.

Whilst his mother tried desperately to unzip him and check his pulse, Ifan's comment was, 'What's a donkey jacket?'

And this got me thinking. There's a generation out there who have probably never heard of donkey jackets and where the name came from in the first place. Well here goes – 'bear with' as they say.

In 1888 a tailor called George Key from Rugeley, Staffordshire was commissioned to design and make a coat that would brave the elements as a coat for the navvies who were about to start building the Manchester Ship Canal – who would have thought!

He came up with the idea of using woolsack, which was a very hard-wearing and windproof material, and there were two deep pockets in the coat. This coat had no name as such. However, since the navvies worked with donkey engines, a steam-powered winch or logging machine, this inspired the name of Mr Key's new coat – a donkey jacket.

But does it bring back memories of who actually wore this jacket in more recent days.

Trigger the roadsweeper in *Only Fools and Horses*, for example, and some of his one-liners – the programme must have had brilliant script-writers:

Trigger explaining to Uncle Albert that when he was a child, he banged his head against a 'mind your head' sign – and that may explain



why the penny was at times a bit slow to drop.

Uncle Albert: How did you walk into a mind your head sign – didn't you see it?

Trigger: Of course, I saw it – but in those days I couldn't read.

Also, Del Boy and Trigger reminiscing at a school reunion:

Del Boy: We had Denzil in goal, Monkey Harris at left back, we had... camaraderie.

Trigger: Was he the Italian boy?

The donkey jacket became standard National Coal Board issue – the trademark attire of miners' strikes and hard-left activists. Although I did not see Mr Corbyn wearing one, I am sure that given half a chance, he would.

Who remembers Michael Foot being slated for wearing a donkey jacket to the Cenotaph parade in 1981? His wife maintains it was an expensive garment she brought from Harrods and she was probably right.

While on Michael Foot, one of his many famous quotes goes go back to the Profumo

What I have learned during isolation: ctd

Scandal of 1963:

‘The members of our secret service have apparently spent so much time under the bed looking for communists, they haven’t had time to look in the bed’.

‘Watch out for the red under the bed’.

Happy days!

Back in 1963, the Profumo scandal did not mean much to a five-year-old. However, I watched the series last year and it brought it all back. If you ever to go Cae Dai in Denbigh – and please visit after this madness is over – one of Christine Keeler’s cars is there and Sparrow will tell you all about it.

By now the humble donkey jacket has shed its working-class connotation, and contemporary styles and colours and fabrics have ensured that they are an essential part of some men’s wardrobe. But to me, it’s still a donkey jacket.

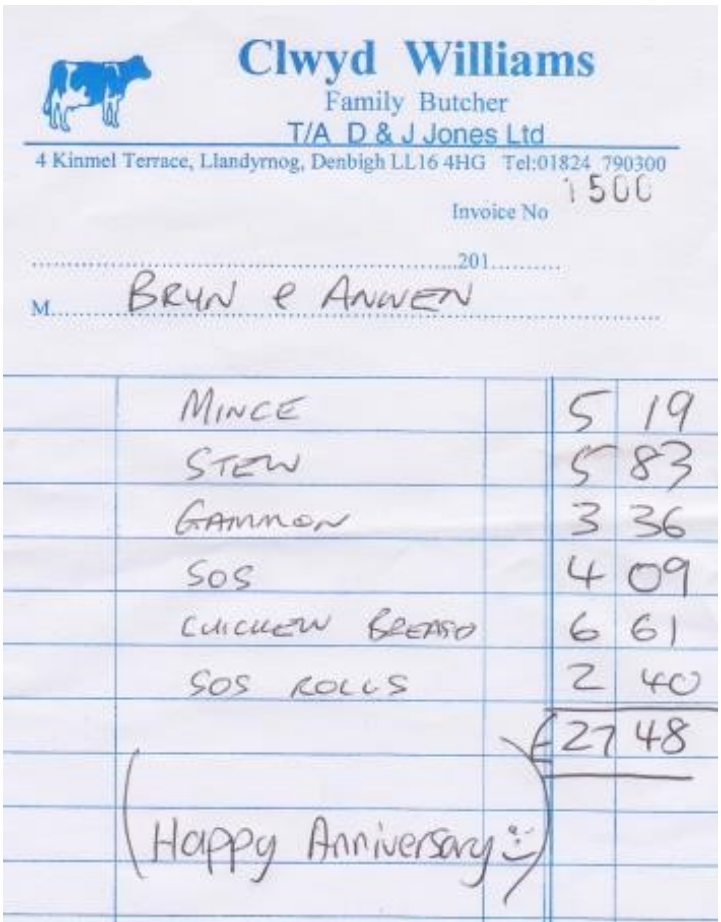
Ask Anwen – apparently in our courting days she showed me a jacket she’d just bought. I said it looked like a donkey jacket. [It didn’t. Anwen] I’ve still got the limp.

Every day is a school day as they say – keep smiling.

Bryn Davies



Michael Foot in his “short, blue-green overcoat” bought for him by his wife, Jill at considerable expense.



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to Deiniol and Rachel who put their daily 1-hour's exercise to good use and cleaned a sign!

to Bryn Davies and Ruth Griffith for making flower boxes on the roundabout a sight to behold;

to the Rev. and Mrs Williams for decorating the lions and putting a smile on our faces once again.



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
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Musings during self-isolation

In this time of self-isolating, I have divided my days into what I call 'The Three C's – Cleaning, Creating and Communicating'.

Before the actual isolation date was announced, I wondered when we would be told and I composed the following lines:

Waiting

Waiting waiting waiting
For the waiting to begin.
But wait, the waiting has begun.
No longer waiting to wait
Now waiting for it to end.
How long the wait?
We must wait and see.
Perhaps the wait has ended
And I never knew
So we wait and wait and wait...

Now I wait in isolation. As an only child I was able when young to amuse myself but I am gregarious by nature and having been born into a tight-knit mining community, there were many playmates to share adventures.

My love of words, situations and meeting people began early. I love hearing other people's stories and I have also been bestowed with a sense of humour. It must have been given at my baptism. I was baptised in St. Mary's Church in Aberfan and another baby was being baptised at the same service. The vicar took me in his arms and asked my god-parents to name me. My parents had chosen family names – Susan Keturah Wendy. So the vicar duly baptised me Susan Keturah Wendy. The vicar then took the other baby and asked the godmother to name the child. 'Just plain Jane,' was the reply. Apparently, my family held their breath and wondered if she would be given the names 'Just Plain Jane'!

The following week a baby boy was baptised and he was called Dwain. Unfortunately, his surname was Pipe. So he was Dwain Pipe!

When I was 8 years old, I had to isolate for six weeks as I became ill with a kind of rheumatism and was unable to walk. I was not

allowed to have visitors therefore my chair was arranged so that I could at night flash the light of my torch across the garden to my friends' windows. I don't think we used Morse code, it was more in the manner of the Famous Five in Enid Blyton's books!

Years later, living in Bodfari, I became ill with meningitis. I had to lie in a darkened room on my back for ten days. The consultant said to me at the beginning of the treatment, 'This illness will either affect your legs or your head.' I prayed, 'Dear Lord, let me be able to use words,' and I began to compose lines in my head. When I was getting better the same consultant said, 'You must be very bored just lying here.' I replied, 'No I am writing poetry in my head.' The look exchanged between him and the nurse said it all!

The poem that I wrote lying on my back was dedicated to the nurses who looked after me and I feel it is as appropriate for today as those years ago.

A View from a Hospital Bed

Crisps as lettuces, they bobtail down
The tiled warrens, sisters of mercy
Nipped in the bud of their uniforms,
Scurrying each to its own burrow.

Like magicians they can suddenly
Appear down the corridors
And with stealthy hands they
Conjure up a quickening mixture of magic phials
To dampen the boiling cauldron of the mind.

They offer hope where there is none,
They give peace where there is turmoil,
They place cool hands where the head is burning,
And they smile when they could shed tears.

At the evening of the day, do they
Shut the door of memory fast against the night?
I wonder?

I would like to share with you all an Irish saying: 'May God hold you in the palm of his hand until we meet again.'

Wendy Grey-Lloyd

My time in Malaysia

At the end of my university social work course in 1986, when the words coronavirus and pandemic were things we read about in science fiction novels, I was offered a six-week placement in Malaysia during which I was able to visit some of the facilities that the then government provided.

The first was a home for young children with both physical and emotional difficulties. It was situated in a rural area far from any centre of population and I was to learn later that the majority of the children had been estranged from their families, especially the girls. All had their heads shaved as there had been an infestation of lice. Those looking after them became particularly animated as I knelt down to play with them, such was their concern that I would also catch the lice. All they had to play with were scraps of paper and red colouring pencils. It was a sad beginning to my journey.

Far more uplifting was a day centre for young people with disabilities. Each was taught a skill which would enable them to play a meaningful part on their return to their villages. Many of the men had gravitated to the car and bike mechanics courses, while the women were taught skills which would enable them to play an active part in the village life. One lady (who had lost both hands) asked if she could borrow my jacket during the visit. As I left she showed me the patterns she had made from newspapers so that she could make copies and sell them. Very enterprising!

My favourite visit was to a maternity hospital where women were taken if they were experiencing difficulties with their pregnancies and subsequent births. Many came from particularly rural areas accompanied by their families. The size of the family was indicated by the size of the bed as all shared the same one! During their stay some of the families were employed in the gardens. Here I was able to see greenhouses filled with many varieties of orchids. The colours and smells were amazing.



After these uplifting visits I was shown an institution for young offenders. It was apparent that it was a strict environment and used a 'short, sharp, shock' philosophy. Some of the young men had scars on their backs where they had been beaten with a 'whip' of rattan soaked in water. I was unable to discuss with them if the punishments used by the staff had positive results.

In the thirty-plus years since my visit, the world has changed immeasurably and I hope that some of the practices no longer take place. During my social work career I was able to reflect on those I saw in Malaysia. The establishment in which the young people developed their work skills was one which interested me greatly, enabling young people to make a positive contribution in their future lives. The institution for young men, however, did not sit comfortably with my view of developing young people in a positive way.

PS: On my return to Kuala Lumpur I bought and sent drawing books, colouring pencils and felt pens to the young children.

Jon Morgan



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.

Gone viral!

Congratulations to Steffan Hughes, formerly of Plas Llangwyfan, on his phenomenal success with his videos of 'Seasons of Love', from the show *Rent*, and 'From Now On', from *The Greatest Showman*. Search for 'The Welsh of the West End' on www.youtube.com.

Useful telephone numbers

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01824 706101

Out of hours: 03001 233068

North Wales Police: 101 (Non-emergency)
Report dog fouling free 0800 2300 2345

Post Office Opening Hours

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Tuesday 9am–12pm, 3pm–5pm

Wednesday 9am–12.30

Thursday 9am–12pm, 3pm–5pm

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From our Councillor

I'm writing this on 26th April; I hope that everyone is keeping safe. As expected, the strength of Llandyrnog's community is showing through during this strange time in our history. Offers of help from residents to neighbours and the service from the local butcher's, Clwyd Williams, has been praised by many.

Wearing my Councillor's hat, there is little to report as all our meetings have been cancelled but there is an attempt to try to do these over the web. I do it with my work but the Welsh Government insists we continue with our bilingual meetings, which I support, but apparently this is creating technological problems. Some of the services that you have been used to are not being provided due to staff shortage because of self-isolation, but the remaining members of staff are being used to deliver the statutory services the County is obliged to deliver. I have been receiving lots of texts, phone calls and social media messages which I'm doing my best to answer. Please keep them coming – I'm always happy to help.

It's been good to see so many people out exercising, be it walking or cycling, and we have been blessed with some good weather for you to stay at home.

Can I ask that you keep up the good work you are all doing and please stay safe when offering to help others. My contact details are below – don't hesitate to contact me over anything.

Merfyn Parry

Denbighshire County Council

Merfyn Parry



Contact details

Mobile: 07836 208446

E-mail: merfyn.parry@denbighshire.gov.uk

Or leave a message on **Facebook**

Baa Stool diversifying



Michelle and Ian Bartlett-Greavy are pictured above left wearing the visors the company has made. 700 have been completed so far from the foam in stock. The 240 micron acetate was ordered and elasticated upholstery webbing and staples were used to make them comfortable. The visors have been delivered as far out as Anglesey and are being used by doctors in Wrexham and in many of our local care homes and hospices.

Sanna (below) has been making two-ply cotton masks and 475 have been distributed so far. Sanna’s husband, Ray, is pictured above right wearing one of the masks. Sanna’s using calico – luckily Baa Stool had just taken delivery of a 100m roll. Michelle washes it and cuts it to size before ironing it then passing it to Sanna for sewing. Sanna designed the pattern herself having studied the equivalent of a degree in dressmaking, tailoring and fashion in Finland – 6 years! Her design is snug fitting but also comfortable. She has made a ‘How to make a face mask’ tutorial that is available on Baa Stool’s website.



Ruth’s reflections

I’ve made a cake,
I get up late,
My chair is warm and cosy.
My iPad’s always on the charge –
How can I be so lazy?!

We’re all shut in
With time to think
Of those who work to help us live,
Of those who’ve gone, my heart goes out
To families who are left without.

Saints and angels keep in touch,
We feel so very grateful
To everyone, to all our friends
We send our thoughts and prayers.
One day soon we’ll meet again
To cheers and cheers and cheers.

Ruth Griffith

To all who have contributed to this month’s bumper edition – a very big thank you!



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Baa Stool is a range of luxury British sheepskin furniture and home accessories with removable covers lovingly created in our workshop at The New Barn, 13 Vale Park, Colomendy Industrial Estate, Denbigh LL16 5TA.

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