
Llais Llandyrnog Voice

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May 2021 – Volume 6 – Edition 8

One business fading away...

...and another thriving



August 2020

With more and more silos being removed from the site, it's looking very different now.



April 2021



On social media during the month, Dan, our local butcher, shared some exciting news:

'So, over five years have passed since we took over Clwyd Williams Family Butchers which was an already established butchers shop with regular, loyal customers and it's been an absolute pleasure to work under this well-known name.

As we have evolved a lot since then we decided to change the name to reflect that!

Same shop, same faces (with a new one too!), same fantastic service.

You'll no doubt notice a few slight changes to the shop's signage within the coming weeks – we hope you love it as much as we do.

Thank you for your continued support.'

We wish Dan well for the future and thank him for the excellent service he provides. Welcome also to his new member of staff, Rhys.

**Thanks to
Llandyrnog Community Council
for sponsoring this edition**

Around the village

Condolences to Hugh and David Plumb on the loss of Angie, a daughter and sister who passed away following a short illness recently. Angie moved from Llandyrnog in 1985 to the Macclesfield area and ran a successful coffee shop and had recently realised her dream of living on a houseboat in the same area. She leaves her husband Glen.

Hughie has not been well recently and spent a few days in hospital. We wish him a speedy recovery.

We also sympathise with the family of Olwen Roberts on their recent bereavement. Olwen participated in many local activities and for many years, she and her husband, Jack, were caretakers of the Village Hall. A dear lady who will be sorely missed.

Belated **birthday greetings** to Gwyn Rowlands, Dregoch, who has recently celebrated a milestone birthday. Twenty years ago, when he was fifty, he was promised that no-one would reveal his age in the future.



Birthday greetings again to Elwyn Evans who recently celebrated his 90th birthday, with a photo this time – you're looking well, Elwyn!

We also wish a very happy birthday to the treasurer of *Llais Llandyrnog Voice* – Ivan Butler. With the end of lockdown in sight, you'll have to start counting your birthdays again!

Best wishes to Elis Morris in his new job with Daniel Morris, Butcher, Denbigh.

Dyffryn Chapel A service was held at the Chapel on 18th April with the Rev Andras Iago, with the usual COVID regulations.

Congratulations to Beth Lloyd, Pen y Bryn, on her appointment as science teacher at Ysgol Glan Clwyd.

Successful funding bid

Members of Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan Local History Society were delighted that their bid for project funding from the Clocaenog Forest Wind Farm Fund has been approved. It will support a project called **Connecting our past to our present – Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan.**

By the end of the four-and-a-half-year project, revised editions of Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan Churchyard Inscriptions booklets will be produced, a Llandyrnog Parish Records volume 3, and reprints of volumes 1 and 2.

A book will be published in the autumn of 2025 to mark 80 years since the end of World War Two.

A Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan Local History Society bilingual website will be set up to provide a resource for people to study the local and family history of the two villages.

The War Memorial and churchyard will be visually improved to preserve the vital historical information that graveyard memorials provide.

For further information, contact llangwyfanhistory@hotmail.com or leave your details in the box in the post office or in the butcher's shop in Llandyrnog and they will pass them onto the project organisers.

Post Office Opening Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

9am–12pm, 2pm–5pm

Wednesday & Saturday 9am–12.30

01824 790310

MHC Scarecrow competition

Judging of MHC's 2021 Llangwyfan and Llandyrnog Scarecrow Competition will take place Thursday, 20 May. The theme this year is sport and the local community is welcome to take part.



Please send 'intention to enter' notifications by Friday 14 May to louise.blackhurst@mhc-uk.com. Please include address and postcode of where the scarecrows can be viewed.

Llandyrnog Virtual Show 2021

Unfortunately, we won't be seeing a flower and produce show at the Village Hall this year. However, you are invited to send photographs so that we can make a virtual show. These will then be published in a booklet.

The categories are:

- 🌸 Young persons (16 and Under)
- 🌸 Fruit and vegetables
- 🌸 Craft
- 🌸 Flowers
- 🌸 Photography

There will also be a garden competition – an opportunity to win £30 in garden centre vouchers.

Further details on how to submit your photographs and how to enter your garden are in the schedule which will be distributed around the village and available online on the Community Council's website.

In the meantime, please return all Flower and Produce Show trophies to Wyn Wilson at Monfa, or to Roger Warner, Cross Keys. Thank you.

National Lottery Community Fund

The National Lottery Community Fund will be hosting a Welsh-medium online session for community groups and charities on 26 May. The session will provide more information for communities across Wales on making an application. The organisers are particularly keen to speak with community groups that haven't previously applied for a National Lottery grant.

National Lottery Awards for All fund up to £10,000 for community projects, including those responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

People and Places Awards fund up to £500,000 for projects where people and communities are working together to make positive impacts on the things that matter to them the most.

Further information about the funding programme is available on <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/wales>.

RAISING FUNDS FOR THE DPJ FOUNDATION

TAITH DRACTORAU 6ED O FEHEFIN TRACTOR RUN 6TH OF JUNE

A poster for a tractor run event. It features a blue background with a photograph of several tractors in a field. The text is in white and yellow. At the bottom, there is more information in Welsh and English.

[justgiving.com/fundraising/clwydtractors](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/clwydtractors)

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YSGOL BRYN CLWYD



The lovely weather has seen us really enjoying learning in our outdoor area.

(More photographs in Welsh section)



Our topic of celebrations continues. This week we have been learning about marriage ceremonies in different cultures. We went outside to create our own wedding dress designs out of natural materials.



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During our topic on the UK, we have learnt about famous landmarks and have been studying maps of Wales to learn about the different counties.

We are pleased to let you know that we have birds nesting in our nest box. The children will be able to follow what happens by watching our live feed on screen in school.

Notes from Plas Ashpool

As May arrives, I am sure that, more than ever, we must all look forward to the arrival of warmer weather and hopefully some welcome rain in the garden. As we have continued the major clearing and re-planting of a number of borders in the garden, I am horrified to find that the ground is so dry. I think the cold winds of a few weeks ago had a lot to answer for!

My childhood dream of living in a walled garden has moved one step nearer to reality. As planned, the old pig paddock has been cleared of its pig ark, stones, bits of wood, so lovingly snuffled about by the last pair of pigs and rotovated. We now have a blank canvas with a beautifully fine tilth of (hopefully) fertile soil.

Of course, there are no walls yet, just a fence, but at least I can have fun marking out new veg beds and paths. The dream of red brick walls clothed in productive fruit trees and borders brimming with vibrant produce still remains. For now, I am happy to whack in a few rows of spuds and beans, just to get started.

I don't know about you but I find the art of dreaming very helpful, in fact, I have, on many occasions, been teased by family and friends, for "too much dreaming and not enough doing"! However, my thoughts are that in your dreaming/ wishful thinking you can fulfil anything, and anything can be achieved, therefore there is always the satisfaction of success. Unlike the reality, which can often fall short of such a joyous outcome.

Every day, over the last few months of restrictions, I have reminded myself how very lucky we are to have the wonderful countryside of the Vale of Clwyd around us. This has not stopped me, however, from dreaming about and planning a time when we, once again, will be able to get out and about to visit new places (and return to old favourites too). I think top of my list will have to be Bodnant Gardens, there is no better place to be at this time of year. A friend of mine whose daughter works there, tells me that during the last year,

they have witnessed a significant increase in bird and wildlife in and around the garden. I suppose the lack of visitors will have contributed to this fact. Let's just hope that when we start visiting again, we will not disturb this happy outcome.

Until next time, I hope that we will witness the arrival of the swallows, the departure of COVID-19 and all its restrictions and have a happy time welcoming in spring with all its magnificent finery and breath of new life. Happy gardening!

Fiona Bell

After sending this article, Fiona later reported that she had heard the cuckoo for the first time on 20 April. Has anyone else heard it?

James Davies, MP for Vale of Clwyd

james.davies.mp@parliament.uk

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Memories of Aberdaron: Earle Wright

In last month's edition, we had Earle's account of his childhood holidays in Aberdaron, his special place from childhood. It ended with the description of arriving following a seemingly never-ending journey from Hawarden, and the first glimpse of the village that never changed.

As we came to a halt, Dad would look at the milometer and announce, as he did each year, that it was exactly one hundred miles from our house; that hadn't changed either! In those days there were no parking restrictions – our car was parked on an area of wasteland at the bottom of the hill; it was never locked, nothing was ever stolen or damaged.

The first thing I always did was to check that the sea, the sand and the two small islands out in the bay, Ynys Gwylan Fawr and Ynys Gwylan Fach, were just where we'd left them last year. So was the Post Office, the bank (The Midland, I think), the café, called Y Gegin Fawr, with an open roof terrace, and of course The Ship where we always stayed.

There was always an almost mandatory list of things to do over our stay in Aberdaron:

- ◆ Visit Mary and Humphrey at Uwchmynydd.
- ◆ Go up to 'The Top', as we called it, along a wartime concrete road that winds itself up to the Coast Guard Station. A good place to blow the cobwebs off.
- ◆ A day trip to Pwllheli for a look around the shops. I always seemed to come away with a new Dinky Toy; the spoilt only child probably whinged on till he got one!
- ◆ Last on the list was Hell's Mouth (Porth Neigwl), a few bays around the coast from Aberdaron. I was always fascinated by the huge military target, standing in the centre of the bay on tripod legs, a remnant of World War Two. It resembled a massive archery board; presumably connected with the nearby RAF base; both airfield and target have now long gone.

Most days of the holiday were spent on the beach in Aberdaron, all the way down to the



right hand side of the bay, under the cliffs of the headland. The time and the sunshine seemed to be endless. 'Endless sunshine' brought about the dreaded ordeal of the sun cream application. This was the first job that Mum did when we had downed buckets and spades at our chosen spot. The sun cream of those days never seemed to sink into the skin; Mum attempted to disprove this property by vigorous and protracted rubbing; the wind-blown sand would mix with it and produce a top grade grinding paste! Which was worse, exfoliation or sunburn?

Back then, two weeks was going to last for ever, but suddenly it was nearly at an end; only a day to go, which was the day that I usually made friends with somebody; sadly, all too late, maybe next year? I suspect that it was a common occurrence on holidays.

Leaving was always sad, each year culminating in a visit to Mr Ellis's office, the owner of The Ship. Mr Ellis was a small, thin, cheery soul, with his hair combed straight back, always dressed in a double-breasted suit and with a cigarette in his mouth. Entering his office was like entering the headmaster's study, to be caned for some misdemeanour unspecified. There was no escape for Dad, he put on a brave face and paid the bill.

That was it for another year, into the unlocked car, up the hill past the bakery, the bay and village disappearing from view as we rounded the top.

One particular year, the day we drove home happened to be a Sunday; it was raining hard

Memories of Aberdaron... ctd

with little traffic on the road. As we shot through Cricieth I was suddenly aware of a bell ringing, getting louder and louder. The bell (no sirens then) belonged to a big black Wolseley, which overtook us. A uniformed sleeve appeared from the driver's window, indicating that we should slow down and pull in. That was it, my dad was going to be arrested and thrown into a Cricieth police cell! As the police officer got out of his car and came towards us, my dad wound down his window and perhaps unwisely started to plead a very weak case: it was Sunday; there was no traffic on the road; it was raining. These points were not going to hold up in court. My dad was told in no uncertain terms that he had exceeded the statutory speed limit. I remember the officer's words as he handed over a piece of official looking paper, 'You're a very nice man, but I'm afraid I still have to book you'. That put a damper on the whole journey home; we never drove through Cricieth again over thirty miles per hour, no matter what day it was or what the weather was doing.

I have returned to Aberdaron many times since those childhood days of the fifties; it's always nice to go back and experience all the happy memories, apart from the odd speeding fine.

In the seventies Mary and Humphrey were still taking in guests and one year Elaine and I stayed there, with our three small children. Today, the chapel (where Mary played the organ) and the phone box are still there, but I suspect that neither are functional. The corrugated tin buildings that used to house the shop and the workshop are also still there but are closed and empty; Mary and Humphrey are long gone.

In all the years that we took holidays in Aberdaron, the one thing that we never did was go over to Bardsey Island (Ynys Enlli). Very early on in our trips to 'The Top' on Mynydd Mawr, Dad had spotted the restless swirling currents between Bardsey and the mainland; my parents were no sailors.

In those days, the boat to Bardsey left from the shore, in front of the Tŷ Newydd, unlike today where it goes from Fisherman's Cove (Porth Meudwy). I can't remember how many times a week it went over to the island, but of course it was all weather dependant anyway. We often watched passengers scrambling into the boat whilst the crew tried to keep it steady in the surf – a feat in itself for the passengers, even before the trial of 'the boiling cauldron', just around the headland. It occurred to me then, it was a very small boat in a very big sea. When everybody had clambered aboard, the boat was pushed into the lapping waves and it immediately started to bob up and down. It was at that point that Dad announced his stance on the unfolding scene, 'You wouldn't get me in that for all the tea in China!' So, we never got to Bardsey.

In the year 2019 Elaine and I stayed in the Tŷ Newydd for a couple of nights for a short break, snubbing the once treasured Ship Hotel; times and things change. One evening, after a couple of drinks, Bardsey came up in the conversation; our host behind the bar had a relative who was going over to the island tomorrow to carry out some maintenance work on one of the buildings – would we like to go? There were more drinks, a telephone call and the deal was done: report to Colin in Fisherman's Cove, 09:30 hrs. sharp. When morning came, the first thing that I noticed was the wind, it was definitely blowing above zero miles per hour. Fisherman's Cove is just a few miles around the headland from Aberdaron. By the time we were walking down the narrow gorge that leads to the cove, we were convinced that the wind was now at gale force and surely the crossing would be cancelled? Colin, the skipper and his crew of one, were there to welcome us; there was no hint of a cancellation! That was it then. Elaine and I and a galvanized tin bath (which we didn't ask about) were ushered on board; just five of us, including the bath. My dad's words

Aberdaron ... ctd

from years ago, 'for all the tea in China', came suddenly to mind. It was a fairly gentle swell until we rounded the headland, where things definitely became more lively. Our fingernails buried themselves into the gunwale, whilst the skipper and mate chatted happily to each other, as if we were just on a boating lake. Colin was obviously concerned about these two frail, elderly people he had on charge, as he kept turning around to us, asking if we were OK? 'We're fine, no problems!'; although we must have looked terrified. Very soon though we realised that we were in safe hands and we settled to the rhythm of the waves: it was just a routine crossing for the crew.

As we neared the island, the cliffs plunged vertically into the sea and the east face of Mynydd Enlli towered above us. Then we rounded the headland and sailed gently into the harbour, towards the slipway, a welcome sight after some three quarters of an hour of watching the horizon bobbing about. After all the years of seeing the island from afar, it was strange to see the side of it always denied from the mainland – only the lighthouse can be seen from there. Now the cottages, farms, chapel and ruined monastery were plain to be seen, strung out in the lee of Mynydd Enlli. It was a privilege to visit the island, especially as we were the only two passengers that day.

Perhaps it was a surreptitious ambition that I had grown up with from first visiting Aberdaron, that one day I would visit the island where twenty thousand saints have their resting place. Luckily, the ambition didn't turn out to be, 'looking for tea in China!'



Mynydd Enlli on Bardsey Island

Recipe

Pineapple and Coconut Cake

6 ozs self-raising flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
6 ozs caster sugar
6 ozs soft margarine (Stork)
3 eggs
3 ozs dessicated coconut
4 tablespoons crushed pineapple
2 tablespoons pineapple juice

Preheat the oven to 170 °C (160 °C fan, Mark 4) and grease a 2lb loaf tin. Sieve the flour and baking powder, add all the other ingredients and beat together. Turn into the baking tin and cook for 45–60 mins. Leave to cool in the tin.

Veronica Roberts



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From the Rector

Churchyards are places of solace and peace, a tranquil place for relatives to visit and find comfort in their loss. The loss of a loved one is hard to bear and visiting the Churchyard offers a place to bring flowers to express our sorrow and grief. As times change not everyone chooses the Churchyard for a resting place but each one of us is able to decide the way that will bring most comfort to our family. We are very grateful to our volunteers who faithfully ensure the Churchyard is kept neat and tidy.

The funeral of HRH Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh had been meticulously planned; it was greatly scaled down from what would usually have taken place for a senior member of the Royal Family. There was a military presence in accordance with the Prince's wishes, but above all it was a time for the family to say farewell and express their grief at the loss of a loved one. As for so many families the service was held with Covid restrictions in place and only 30 invited mourners were able to attend. Sadly, it is a situation that has been faced by many families over the past year.

As we watched the funeral service on the television, we were poignantly aware of the grief of Her Majesty the Queen. Theirs was a love story that touched the heart of a nation and brought joy following the dark days of the Second World War. Prince Philip's life was a life of service and duty, both to the Queen and to the nation and we give thanks for his life.

For all of us grief is part of our love, the greater the love the deeper the pain.

In March last year I wrote about a visit to the Churchyard by Iwan Edwards of North Wales Wildlife Trust and the plans to explore the biodiversity of the Churchyard. Due to lockdown this couldn't take place as we had hoped. This year we have been able to start the project again and walking through the Churchyard you will notice three small areas that have been roped off. This will enable us to allow plants to grow and to examine the ground and record the native plants which flower naturally in the Churchyard.

Our Churchyards are unique places, thank you to all who take the time to care for them and ensure they remain places of solace and peace for future generations.

With every blessing,

Val Rowlands

Oh dear!



A driver had a narrow escape from injury when his tractor tumbled off the Roman Road. Luckily, the man, who came from Holywell, had got off and was sitting admiring the view and having a cuppa so was not injured. He has been restoring the tractor for 6–7 years and it won first prize in the Denbigh and Flint Show two years ago.

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A stroll in Llangwyfan

One thing the lockdown has taught us is that there is no need to go very far – let's enjoy what's on our doorstep here. Why not take a stroll around the beautiful Llangwyfan area? It's not a long walk at all – about an hour at most.

If you park in the large car park on your left before reaching Llangwyfan church, you should be fine. It's not a public car park but the owner is a respected farmer in the area, so if you come across him you need to praise to high heaven the condition of the stock you see on the fields nearby.

This was the main car park of Llangwyfan Sanatorium, as it was previously known, which you passed on your approach. Buses would come here from Gwynedd and Anglesey every weekend, transporting relatives and friends visiting their loved ones who had tuberculosis. One local businessman, Mr Wills, who had a shop in the village, went there every Sunday to sell flowers and fruit and make quite good money. That's a man who saw his opportunity!

Highfield Park is the current name for the former Llangwyfan Sanatorium. The history of the hospital is recorded in great detail by far more competent people than me. Essentially, after the death of King Edward VII, many organizations began to commemorate him and the Sanatorium is one of them, to fight that dreadful disease, tuberculosis – TB.

So, approach the church gate from the car park. You will notice that there are stocks near the gate – although the posts are original, unfortunately the beams were stolen (isn't that ironic?) But they have four holes, to keep two villains locked up for the duration of the punishment. Llangwyfan must have been a dreadful place – Llandyrnog didn't need stocks.

If you enter the churchyard, take some time to enjoy the tranquillity and beauty of this beautiful spot. It really is a 'place for souls to rest' – the only sounds there are the stream babbling and the sheep bleating.

On the right, near the gate, you will find the gravestone of a young man called Thomas Charles Jones, who lived in Fron Haul Cottage. This gravestone is cared for by the War Graves Commission and on it are the words '*a ray of sunlight, an endless day, to the better land he leads the way*'.

There's an interesting story about this young man. The name does not appear on the honours list at Llandyrnog Church as he may not have been on the battlefield at all. He was one of five young men who died of scarlet fever in hospital in Chester in May 1916.

It was a heartbreaking day for his parents when they and other relatives from Llangwyfan went to Denbigh Station to collect their son's body to take him home to be buried. Someone else's name was on the coffin and they went home from the station empty-handed. Their son's coffin came later and he was taken to Llangwyfan Church for burial the next day.

Right – we're still at the gate! Walk towards the church porch and opposite the door, on the left you will see a gravestone with a slate on it with the inscription 'Foulk Jones 1699–1801/Lived in Three Centuries'. That's quite a feat when you consider that the average lifespan of that period would probably be somewhere around the forties. Despite searching, no one can find any more details about this remarkable man. There's no need for a solution to everything, is there? – some things need to be left to the imagination.



A stroll in Llangwyfan: ctd

The church itself is ancient and is dedicated to St Cwyfan. The existing walls are at least 500 years old but it must be remembered that it has been rebuilt many times and was probably thatched in the early days. It is remarkable because it was not renovated in Victorian times, as was the case with many churches.

If the porch is open, look closely at the stone panels and you will see a Cross of Consecration carved into the stone. These are very rare and evidence of the age of the church. When a bishop first dedicated a building, he would go around the church putting a cross or two on the walls using holy oil. Church members would then carve the cross into the stone.

Right, now we'll leave Llangwyfan and head up the lane on the left. Further up, you will see the grand Fron Yw mansion on your right.



Without going into too much detail, what you see today is the Fron Yw which was rebuilt in 1906, not the original. The original mansion was the home of a woman named Jane Williams, dating back to the early sixteenth century. Jane got married to a gentleman called John Madocks. Jane remarried after John died but the Madocks family remained in the area.

In 1758 the funeral of Edward Madocks was recorded and the heir to his estate was John Madocks, a barrister in London. He was the father of the famous William Alexander Madocks, the great civil engineer who built Tremadog and the Cob leading to Porthmadog harbour. William eventually went bankrupt due to a number of factors and there are many volumes written about this man's adventures.

By 1851 tenants were farming at Fron Yw, which was a 440 acre estate – the Hastings family – but was still part of the Madocks' estate, Glan y Wern. In 1893 the estate was sold in its entirety.

Fron Yw was later merged with the Sanatorium estate and was home to the hospital's chief medical officer and some of the staff lived in the cottages nearby. In 1988 it became a private nursing home but is now back as a dwelling house.

That's enough of that. Follow the track down to its end and you will be near Pen Llwyn where there was a quarry years ago. Evidence of lead mining has been found nearby. Indeed, in a census it is recorded that two lead miners lived in Fron Haul cottages, Llangwyfan, so there must be some truth in that story.

After going through the gate at the end of the track, turn left and go down a steep hill. After passing Islwyn on your left, you will reach a brand new kissing gate – enter the fields, known as y Parciau (the Parks) there. Islwyn, incidentally, was the home of Llangwyfan's engineer. A home came with the job for staff members, whether doctors, gardeners, drivers, engineers, or craftsmen – all had a home that came with their job.

This path will take you back to Llangwyfan church and yes, this path has its story too. It was originally made of substantial concrete slabs in two parallel rows, which are visible in some places and at one time, the path was flat like a billiard table. It started at Llangwyfan church and there were white posts at regular distances. The purpose of these was for staff to take patients for a walk along the route and to see how many posts they had passed. If they could walk from Llangwyfan to Islwyn and back, they were ready to go home, perhaps after a very long time in hospital and away from loved ones.

Well, I hope you enjoyed this little walk – there's plenty of history around every corner in this vale!

Bryn Davies

Learning Welsh

I have lived in Llangwyfan for over 20 years. I was born in Manchester but have lived in Wales for nearly 40 years after moving to Wales in the 80s to study at Y Coleg Normal in Bangor. I completed a degree in Environmental Studies with a postgraduate in primary education. I was a teacher in Ysgol Licswm, Flintshire, for more than 30 years and I retired as the headteacher there in December 2019.

I started learning to speak Welsh eight years ago when I had the incredible opportunity to go on a sabbatical course for primary school teachers – three months out of school to learn the language! I had been on lots of short courses over the years to help me to teach the children but I wasn't able to speak with people nor use the language in daily life, but after two days on the sabbatical course I realised I was able to say what I wanted to say – I was on the way! I then carried on with weekly night classes through Coleg Cambria, and one-day courses with Popeth Cymraeg in Denbigh. I sat the exams at Sylfaen and Canolradd and at the moment I'm continuing to learn online in a weekly class at level Uwch. Also, I enjoy weekly chats via Zoom with people who are learning Welsh. I have enjoyed learning about Welsh culture and history as well as the language. Every tutor has been patient and supportive in helping me on the journey towards being fluent.

The purpose of the sabbatical course was to raise standards in Welsh in primary school children, and of course I wanted to teach Welsh better, but I was eager to learn the language for myself. My grandmother had come from Aberystwyth but unfortunately, I didn't get the opportunity to know her as she died before I was born. In my childhood, I had lots of connections with Wales, e.g., spending time with family who lived on Anglesey, so when I went to study in Bangor, I felt very much at home. Over the years I have felt more and more Welsh as this has been my home all of my adult life but without the language it



wasn't enough for me.

After starting to learn Welsh, it felt like a door into another world! The first thing I did was volunteer in the Maes D in the National Eisteddfod here in Denbigh in 2013. I loved it and have tried to go to the Eisteddfod every year. By 2016 I had more confidence in using Welsh in my school and I felt so proud when I took pupils to compete in individual recitation in the Urdd Eisteddfod. I was able to speak to parents in Welsh in events such as the Harvest Thanksgiving, Christmas concert and Sports Day. I really missed the Eisteddfod this year but I did take part in the Eisteddfod Amgen (alternative online eisteddfod) in a discussion group with other learners from across Wales and Welsh tutor and author Pegi Talfryn, on the subject of 'Reading and how it helps people to learn Welsh'.

Through the first lockdown last spring, a friend of mine who lives in Bangor had asked if I would help her to start speaking Welsh. Well, it helped the two of us to survive that period with a daily chat through FaceTime. I can honestly say learning Welsh has been one of the best things I have ever done. If you've ever considered learning Welsh, I encourage you to do so. It's so easy in our locality with an excellent Language Centre in Denbigh offering many courses. The community of Welsh learners is a very friendly place and we have so many opportunities to use the language with our neighbours and in our shops and facilities in this area.

Catherine Howarth

Welsh of the West End

Covid has had a major impact on numerous sectors over the last 12 months and one area hit really hard has been the theatre and live music industry. Many performers and musicians found that their diaries were cleared of work and events for the foreseeable future and even re-arranged work was cancelled as the virus brought about prolonged restrictions.

During the first national lockdown in March 2020, Steffan Hughes, Plas Llangwyfan, decided to bring a group of Welsh West End singers together virtually to create an online performance in order to lift people's spirits, and provide some much-needed entertainment. He had worked previously with many musical theatre singers on his BBC Radio Cymru show *Sioeau Cerdd Steffan Rhys Hughes*, and therefore was aware of the incredible young Welsh talent currently succeeding in the theatre industry. The brand was named **Welsh of the West End**, and their first cover: 'Seasons of Love' from the musical *Rent* was released on March 8th, last year. The singers were Sophie Evans (*Wicked*), Luke McCall (*Les Misérables*), Jade Davies (*West Side Story*), Tom Hier (*Miss Saigon*), Mared Williams (*Les Misérables*), Samantha Thomas (*Wicked*), Siwan Henderson (*Pirate Queen*), Rhidian Marc (*Wicked*) and Glain Rhys (*Phantom of the Opera*).

The reaction was incredible and a year on, they've released over 20 performances, gained over 10 million views as well as 200,000 likes online. Their videos have been featured by Official London Theatre, What's on Stage, ITV, BBC and S4C, and they've supported over 20 charities and deserving causes along the way.

A highlight of 2020 was being able to perform two sold-out open-air shows at Theatr Clwyd in Mold, titled *Welsh of the West End: LIVE*, as well as creating performances for the National Eisteddfod, S4C and the WRU. On March 1st this year they performed in the St David's Day in London Celebration, which was



streamed online by the Wales in London Society to audiences around the world.

When restrictions ease completely, they're excited to finally be able to perform together on stage. Some of the group have never met in person so they're looking forward to finally meeting one another. Steffan would like to thank everyone who has supported the videos in any way, and if you'd like to watch them, search for **Welsh of the West End** on YouTube. You'll find songs from *Miss Saigon*, *Frozen*, *Les Misérables* and everything in between...

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Matters discussed at the on-line April meeting of Llandyrnog Community Council

Items discussed at the meeting included:

- ◆ Concerns about lack of lighting on Hwylfa/Maes Llan car park – concerns to be relayed to DCC Street Lighting but this has been refused in the past.
- ◆ A note of thanks was received from *Llais Llandyrnog Voice* and the Church for the recent donations.
- ◆ Details of virtual one stop shop for volunteers in Denbighshire –<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/volunteering>.
- ◆ Wicksteed, the company that is extending the play area and providing additional equipment, is still on target to commence works on 10 May in Cae Nant.
- ◆ It seems that the potholes between Celynog and Kinmel Arms have been filled and are satisfactory for the time being.
- ◆ The gullies around Maes y Wern have still not been emptied despite two requests to DCC.
- ◆ Merfyn Parry was thanked for cultivating areas of grass verges and sowing wild-flower seeds at his own cost. Ruth Griffith was also thanked for replanting the tub outside the Cocoa Rooms.
- ◆ Denbighshire County Council has booked the Cocoa Rooms for the forthcoming elections on 6 May and has forwarded the risk assessments etc.
- ◆ M. Parry gave a verbal report on the multi-agency task and finish group whose membership includes Dŵr Cymru, National Resources Wales, DCC, the NFU and the FUW who are working collaboratively to reduce the flooding on the lower areas of the Vale.
- ◆ It was reported that the give way sign by Capel Isa junction is damaged. This to be reported to DCC.
- ◆ The Council has received a notice of audit which will be discussed at the finance sub-group.

- ◆ A very generous local business, that wishes to remain anonymous, has donated £250 towards planting flowers on the roundabout.
- ◆ There were preliminary discussions as to how the community could benefit from the covid compensation funds which have been received from DCC. This will be discussed in more detail at the finance group.

Denbighshire County Council

Merfyn Parry



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Or leave a message on **Facebook**

Useful telephone numbers

Denbighshire CC Customer Service Centre
01824 706101

Out of hours: 03001 233068

North Wales Police: 101 (Non-emergency)

Report dog fouling free 0800 2300 2345

Llais Llandyrnog Voice Committee:

Ruth Griffith (chair), Ivan Butler (treasurer and compositor), Anwen Davies (compositor), Gwen Butler (co-ordinator), Jack Crowther, Bryn Davies (subscriptions), Ann and Iestyn Jones-Evans (translators and co-ordinators), Rhian Jones, Rod and Margaret Williams (co-ordinators), Sian Gwyn-Ifan (translator).

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