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# Llais Llandyrnog Voice

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July 2020 – Volume 5 – Edition 10

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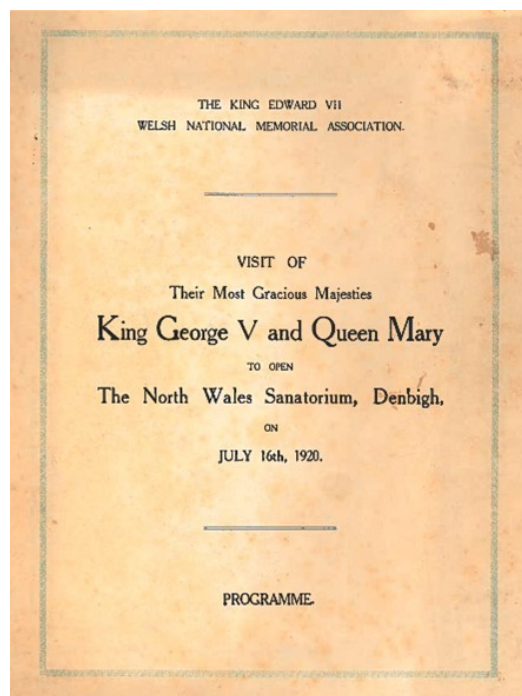


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*A Canberra T4  
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these? (page 11)*





# Clwyd Williams Butchers poster competition

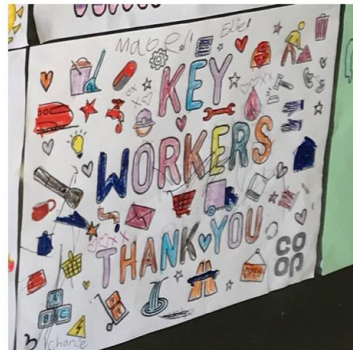
A big thank you to all the children for all the fantastic posters we received. They have put a smile on everyone's faces as they visited and passed the shop. They created positive vibes and a great show of appreciation for all the keyworkers.

We were delighted that Auntie Winnie Wilson braved the wet weather last week to come out to judge the competition for us. It was a very tough decision and Winnie chose Efa Roberts, aged 11, and Mabel Jones, aged 5, as the winners for each age group. With one of the staff's children chosen as one of the winners and all the entries being so fantastic, we have teamed up with Chilly Cow to give all the children a pot of local ice cream. So just pop in and collect. A big thank you to Chilly Cow for their donation and don't forget to support the honesty cart they have at the farm.

*Staff at Clwyd Williams*



*Winnie and the poster competition winners*



A very happy 11-year-old Efa Gwen Roberts collecting her ice cream and barbecue box for winning the poster competition. Efa, who attends Ysgol Penbarras, said she was willing to share the barbecue box with her brothers but not sure about the ice cream.

## Around the village

Congratulations to **Dan and Hannah** on the birth of **Nellie Lucia**, a sister to **Max** and **Milo**. And to **James** and **Amy** on the birth of their son, **Felix Langford**.

Condolences to the family of the late **Nia Jones**, formerly of Dyffryn Chapel House. We send our deepest sympathy to **Delyth, Carys and Gwyn**, her sisters and brother who lived here in our midst. Also to the family of the late **Ronnie Slater**, Maes Clwyd.

Best wishes to **Olga**, Ger y Llan, following her treatment at Abergelge Hospital.



# A message from Thailand

I hope everyone is keeping safe and well in Llandyrnog – I miss you all dearly.

Thailand has not had many cases of coronavirus as it is a very hot country, so the heat is keeping it away for now.

People are now allowed to travel home from the cities to the countryside and the government has been helping the people in need, but only for three months. They have received a payment, which everyone will have to pay back.

We’ve had lockdowns when we had a curfew of everyone having to be home by 11pm. If anyone went out they would be fined. This has been lifted now. Everyone has to wear a mask when they go out to any place or be fined 2,000 baht (around £50).



Where I live we had a massive tornado last week that ripped through the town, taking many people’s roofs and houses, but we are all safe and helping to sort out the people in need.

But I'm all fine and keeping myself busy – you’ll always find me at the temple, helping with planting the flowers and making the place bright and colourful.

Stay safe, with love.

Nok Burge x

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# Locked In, Looking Out

The winter storms racked the earth  
And made rivers of the roads.  
Trees buckled and thick splinters of stone  
Swam with grey-brown boulders.  
The land became a reservoir of ruin.  
People retreated to an island of isolation.  
Suddenly it was spring,  
Strangely early this year.

Was it just serendipity  
That my heathers appeared more vibrant,  
Seemingly alive with the murmurs of  
Humming bees foraging frantically  
To store their honeyed hoard?

Was it just chance  
That in the race of the first flowering,  
The silent snowdrops arrived  
With arrays of March daffodils in close  
pursuit?

Was it not predictable  
That my garden was a profusion of blousy  
primroses  
Vying with shy violets for vantage in the  
fertile soil  
Made rich by the January floods?

Was it merely a scientific phenomenon  
That rainbows were more bright and  
kaleidoscopic,  
Making double arched bridges that  
Pointed to the treasure trove  
That had transformed into shimmering gold?

Was it alchemy in April  
That a red moon appeared, reflecting its  
magic  
On ragged clouds, frayed and ruffled by  
A blustering wind, brazenly showing  
The pink edges of a petticoated tutu?

Was it preordained  
That we should embark on a journey of the  
senses  
So that in our dark imprisonment  
We recollect in solitude the wonders we have  
witnessed?

May I meet my memory with joy tomorrow,  
Suspending itself in time so for a few  
moments  
We stay the sorrow.

*Wendy Grey-Lloyd©*

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**Send all news contributions and articles to [llandyrnognews@gmail.com](mailto:llandyrnognews@gmail.com).**

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# Journey to Patagonia

My husband and I have enjoyed a lot of travelling over the years but as teachers we were limited to the places we were able to visit during August, so southern hemisphere countries were off the list until we had both retired.

Since learning Welsh in 2013, I really wanted to have the opportunity to speak Welsh in Patagonia, so the first place we picked to visit was South America. We were so fortunate to take this trip in February this year, getting home just before lockdown kicked in!

However, there were times when we thought our trip would never take place, with Storm Ciara arriving on the day of our departure. We had to drive through the storm down to London as all flights from Manchester were cancelled.

After two days in Buenos Aires spent enjoying sites linked to the life of Eva Peron, we set sail for Patagonia. After attending a Spanish language lesson on-board ship, I enquired whether there would be any Welsh language lessons before arriving in Puerto Madryn – there were not, so I volunteered.

I was immensely proud to share the status and history of the Welsh language with almost 40 fellow travellers from the USA,

Australia and Britain, most of whom did not realise we have a living language used daily in schools, business and government.

I spoke about the 'Welsh Not' and the fight for the language during the second half of the 20th century, culminating in it becoming an official language in 2011. I taught them basic greetings, how they could say where they came from and how many children they have, which they practised with the people sitting near to them.

Throughout the rest of the trip, people greeted me on deck, in the lift or in the restaurant with phrases they had learned. Others asked how to speak to their pets in Welsh or how to order a medium T-shirt when we docked.

We docked in Puerto Madryn, where the immigrants first arrived in 1865 using the caves along the coast to make temporary homes during that first winter.

My first impression of the land was shock. It was flat, dry, with not a blade of grass nor a tree in sight and everything was yellow or brown. The colour palette of Kyffin Williams's paintings convey it so well. My heart went out to those first settlers. If I had made that long journey from Wales, dreaming of a better life, and had come to this, I would have been devastated.

We drove for around an hour, passing through the outskirts of Trelew before arriving in Gaiman. What a difference the River Camwy made! Gaiman is a pretty town with trees and lush vegetation. We had the opportunity to see the oldest house, original post office and the local school but the children were on their long summer holiday, returning at the beginning of March for the new school year.



*Me, with husband Ed*

## Journey to Patagonia contd

We visited a Welsh tea house and were entertained by a small choir who sang traditional Welsh songs but also 'Cwm Rhondda' in Spanish.

It was there I had a chance to speak Welsh with one of the girls in the choir, fulfilling the dream. It was a real 'pinch me' moment to think I was 7,000 miles away in Argentina but the atmosphere of the tearoom truly felt like home!

*Catherine Howarth*



*Teaching Welsh to my fellow voyagers. I'm in the centre, wearing blue.*

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# Llangwyfan Sanatorium



After the death of King Edward VII, one of the many movements created to commemorate him was the King Edward VII Welsh National Memorial Association, which was formed to combat the dreadful disease of consumption.

Llangwyfan Sanatorium was one of several owned by the Association and was built on land donated by Sir D.S. Davies, MP in memory of his father-in-law, Thomas Gee of Denbigh. It was opened in 1916 with 110 beds. The official opening by King George V took place on 16 July 1920.

Surgery was sometimes necessary, and in 1920 Mr Morrision Davies was appointed Consulting Thoracic Surgeon and carried out pioneering chest surgery at Llangwyfan. In the early 1950s, surgery was carried out on a regular basis with visiting surgeons from Liverpool and elsewhere operating almost weekly. The hospital also provided nurse training for the Certificate of the British Tuberculosis Association.

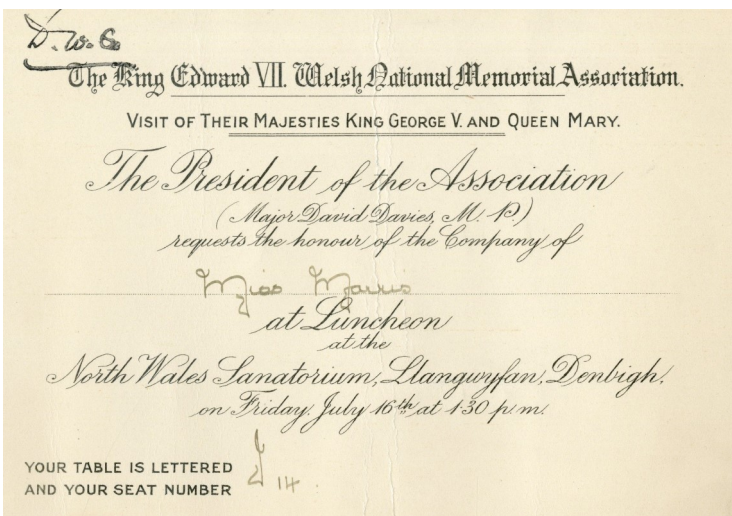


*Surgical block*

By 1952, the term 'sanatorium' was changed to 'hospital' and other conditions as well as tuberculosis were treated. In the early days, the main treatments were fresh air and rest, but the advent of new drugs meant changes in prescribed treatments.

At its peak in the 1940s and 50s there were over 400 patients at the sanatorium, many of them from South Wales, Gwynedd and Anglesey. At weekends, several coaches, as well as numerous cars, would bring visitors to the hospital and many would stay for the weekend in various houses in and around Llandyrnog.

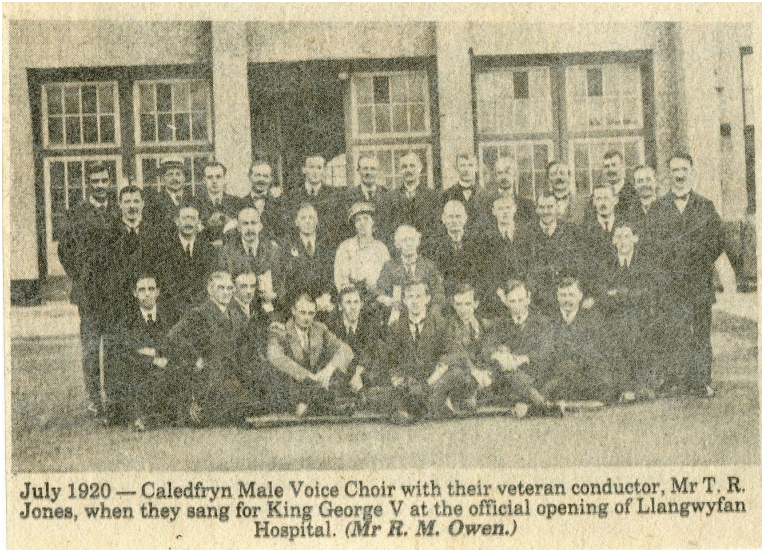
By the 1970s, moves were underway to close Llangwyfan Hospital. The site was put up for sale in 1980 following the reorganisation of hospital services in North Clwyd. Despite vigorous efforts by a local action committee, the closure took place in 1981.





# Llangwyfan Sanatorium contd

The site is now called Highfield Park, and its owner, MHC (Mental Health Care UK), provides support to individuals with learning disabilities, mental health issues, behaviours that challenge and autism.



We thank the staff of North East Wales Archives (Ruthin) for their help and co-operation in providing the archive materials for this article and for permission to reproduce them.

## Dyffryn Chapel

Although the chapel's doors have been closed since the beginning of the lockdown, services have been held throughout this period, initially on Bro Dinbych's Facebook page. Since then, our use of Zoom technology, a pattern of online virtual services, has developed:

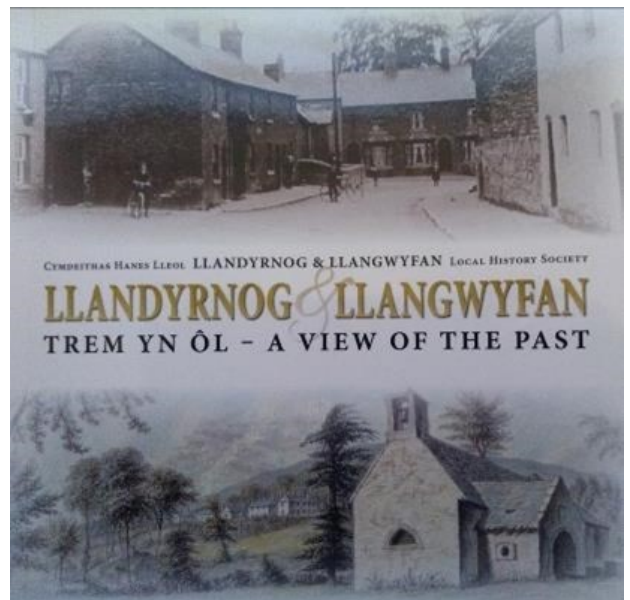
Sundays: service at 9.45 a.m. followed by Sunday School at 10.30 a.m.

Mondays at 8 p.m. the 'Craft Crew' with Heledd.

Wednesdays: Prayer Service at 8 p.m.

In addition, a synopsis of the Sunday services is circulated to members who do not have access to Zoom technology. Many thanks to Andras and Heledd for their hard work.

Thanks to Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan History Society for permission to reproduce the information from *Llandyrnog & Llangwyfan: Trem yn Ôl – A View of the Past*. Should you wish to read more about the area, the book can be purchased, price £10, by contacting [llangwyfanhistory@hotmail.com](mailto:llangwyfanhistory@hotmail.com).



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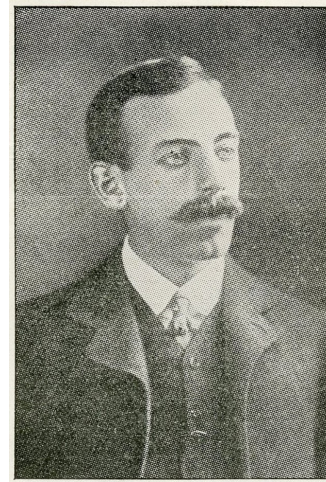
# The royal visit

The visit had obviously taken much preparation since the roads from Denbigh station to the sanatorium were closed from 11.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. The station and its approaches were reserved for the school-children of the area and their teachers, ex-servicemen and the widows of soldiers.

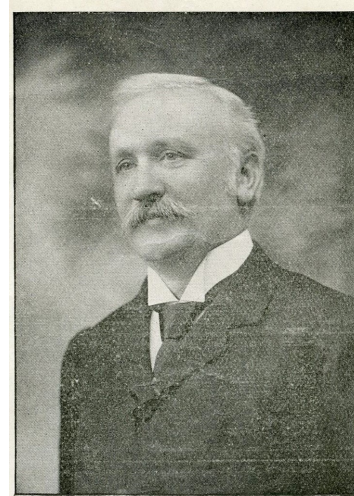
A guard of honour of 100 soldiers, a band and a small gathering of local people received the royal party on its arrival. This included the Mayor and Mayoress of Denbigh, the Aldermen and Councillors of Denbigh and their wives, and the Town Clerk, along with many other dignitaries. These included Sir D.S. Davies, MP for West Denbighshire, who donated the land for the hospital, in memory of his father-in-law, Thomas Gee the eminent preacher, activist, printer and publisher, and Major David Davies, MP, President of the King Edward Welsh National Memorial Association.

The mayor presented an address from 'the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the ancient borough of Denbigh' to the King. This was an illuminated work, in Welsh with an English translation and enclosed in a case.

The royal party travelled by car from Denbigh to the sanatorium and schoolchildren from Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan lined the road near Groes Efa. On their arrival, the Girl Guides of Denbighshire under the command of Miss Rosa Ward, Segrwyd, County Commissioner for Denbighshire provided a guard of honour. The Archbishop of Wales and the well-known Methodist minister, Rev. John Williams, Brynsiencyn, took part in the service of dedication of the institution. Other attendees included the honorary consulting surgeons, the tuberculosis physicians and the architect, Mr T. Taliesin Rees, who presented His Majesty with a gold key. The King then used this key to unlock the front door of the institution.



*Major David Davies, MP, President of the King Edward Welsh National Memorial Association*



*Sir D.S. Davies, MP, donator of the land for the sanatorium*

After signing the visitors' book, the royal party proceeded into the dining hall, where the invited guests were assembled. The Queen received a bouquet of flowers. It's interesting to note that two of the patients presented these flowers, one from Blaina, Monmouthshire, and the other from Cardiff. This shows how far patients came for treatment. The King was given an album containing views of the sanatorium. There followed an inspection of the buildings, including the surgical pavilion.

The Caledfryn Male Voice Choir Society sang 'God Bless the Prince of Wales' and everyone joined in with 'God Save the King'. At 1.50 p.m. the royal party entered their cars and left for Denbigh station.

# Drone photography

I've been building and flying model radio-controlled aircraft since 2008 and, until lately, I haven't been that interested in drones. They're not models of anything and don't pose much of a challenge in flying or building. However, I've kept one eye on the technology and their sophistication and I'm impressed with how they have developed and what they can do.

They sometimes hit the news for all the wrong reasons – do you remember the Gatwick shutdown in December 2019? My brother does – he and his wife missed a friend's wedding in Spain because of it. Since that fiasco, the CAA (Civil Aviation Authority) has implemented new rules governing their use with a registration scheme and a 'drone code' to be followed by all operators of aircraft weighing more than 250gms. The rules are mostly common sense and are designed to protect full-size aviation and people's privacy and property. I registered last year because my model aircraft are also regarded as UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles).



*The drone*



*Penycloddiau*

On a more positive note, drones are increasingly being used by the fire service to spot heathland fire outbreaks and by the police to find missing people. You can't watch the TV these days without seeing some images from the air. Whether it's a wildlife programme or the news, there will be footage from a drone.

My own interest lies in photography and capturing landscape images of our beautiful vale from a bird's-eye vantage point, along with the local farming year.

*Martin Fraser*



*Llangwyfan Church*

**Contact Llais Llandyrnog Voice:**  
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## Spotlight on... Ray Hamill (2)

I returned to a grey, wet Liverpool in mid-January to continue my studies. In February I received an official brown envelope. I hesitated nervously before opening it. To my immense relief and joy it informed me that I had been accepted into the university's Air Squadron. As well as weekend flying training at Woodvale, there was a town HQ in the city with a bar and classrooms where we did our ground training and socialised. This was a turning point in my life and I was determined to follow a career in flying.

I successfully applied for a commission in the RAF and, following graduation, I went to the RAF College at Cranwell to complete my officer and initial flying training.

One day during my first summer break at university I met Iona. I found out that she lived at Lletty Farm, Llangynhafal, where her father Ifor Roberts farmed. So started a long and often long-distance courtship with Iona – no mobile phones or internet then, just letters and calls from the nearest public phone. Before I could afford a car of my own, my father would allow me to borrow his to visit Iona whenever I was at home.

I completed my advanced flying training at RAF Oakington near Cambridge. I remember weekends punting up the Cam to Grantchester for cream tea. During this period of intense training I came home whenever I was able and sometimes Iona would come to visit. My first posting was to 617 Sqn at RAF Scampton near Lincoln, flying Vulcan bombers.

Before the move to Scampton, Iona and I were married at Llangynhafal Church. My friends from the RAF formed an arch of swords as we came out of the church and then we went to the Woodlands to continue the day's celebrations.



Although I enjoyed my time on Vulcans, as it was an impressive aircraft, crews only got to actually fly the aircraft once, possibly twice a week, so when I was posted to Canberras at RAF Wyton, an exciting new period commenced. I joined 360 Sqn, the RAF's electronic warfare training unit. Our main role was to teach radar operators to operate under degraded conditions due to enemy jamming and interference with radio communications. We flew, often twice a day, against fighters, ships or ground base radars. The Canberra was fun to fly and the job involved formation, low-level and some simulated combat training against the fighters.

Iona and I moved to St Ives, a quaint, old and friendly town nearby and, soon after, Gail was born. I applied to the RAF Central Flying School to train to become a flying instructor. On completing my Canberra tour I went to RAF Leeming, Yorkshire to undertake the six-month instructor course and was subsequently posted to the University of Edinburgh's Air Squadron based at RAF Turnhouse at Edinburgh Airport. Similar to Liverpool, we had a town HQ near the university for ground training and socialising.

## Spotlight on... Ray Hamill contd

It was a busy and rewarding time and lots of fun. As well as the social side of the Air Squadron, Iona and I quickly settled into our new home in South Queensferry, next to the famous bridges. We made many friends and thoroughly enjoyed our three years in Scotland. Cath went to the local school and Gail started nursery.



*Bulldog training aircraft over the famous rail bridge. I'm in the closest aircraft.*

Many of the students joined the RAF and, whilst I was there, for the first time we started recruiting and training female students. This was the first chink in the male-only policy for aircrew and today the career is open to all. As my tour was drawing to a close I received a phone call enquiring whether I would be interested in returning to 360 Sqn as the squadron instructor. This would involve the training, testing, and maintaining and improving the standards of the squadron pilots. It was the job I would have wanted.

We returned to Wyton and settled in Stilton nearby, where we would remain until our return to Wales, by which time the girls had finished school and we were settled in the community. Many of the old faces had moved on but my second tour in 360 Sqn was as much fun as the first, despite the extra responsibilities and workload.

For many years none of the airlines had been recruiting pilots but, with an impending retirement boom and expansion plans, they announced plans to recruit. It was also approaching the time when I needed to decide whether to retire or remain in the RAF. Although I was happy in the RAF I decided now was the opportunity for a change. Military flying qualifications are not recognised by the CAA but the flying experience is recognised. Many of us in the RAF had to undertake more ground and flying training, at our own expense, to pass the examinations and flying tests to obtain an Air Transport Pilots Licence. With this in hand I successfully applied to British Airways and in 1989 I started my training on L1011 Tristars at Heathrow.

The Tristar was a small but happy and friendly fleet, mainly flying long haul to the US, Middle East, Far East and West Africa. I would have remained there but BA started to withdraw it from service after two years. I transferred to 747 Jumbo jets. This was a much larger fleet and it could take years before you were on the same crew with a colleague again.



*Me on the flight deck of a 747-400*



## Spotlight on... Ray Hamill contd

After two years I transferred to Gatwick. This was a smaller fleet and, like the Tristar fleet, one got to know people sooner. We were known as the 'Beach Fleet' because we served the Caribbean and Indian Ocean holiday destinations as part of our route network. After a further two years, BA started to replace the original 747 aircraft with the new 400 series 747. The Gatwick 747 base was closed, our routes being flown by the new 777 fleet.

I retrained on the 400 series. This was the first of the new generation of digital aircraft that I had flown. The flight engineer was dispensed with and it was operated by just two pilots. These new aircraft had ultra-long range and could reach all destinations apart from Australia in one hop. The flights could last up to 14 hours. This exceeded the legal duty day, so regularly on longer flights one or two extra pilots would be carried to provide inflight rest.

In 2000, during a visit home, Iona's father, Ifor, mentioned that Bee Farm was for sale. It had always been our intention to return to this area when I retired but we made the decision to move early, so Bee Farm became our home.

Within a few years both Cath and Gail had joined us and the whole extended family now live locally. For several years I was a long-range commuter, but fortunately only three or four times a month. These days, apart from holidays, most of my journeys are local!

Many people assume that pilots get used to jetlag, but this isn't the case, and they just have to learn to live with it. Although I may miss many things from what was an interesting and privileged career, I don't miss being permanently jetlagged!

*Ray Hamill*

Please remember the Vale of Clwyd Food Bank is appealing for financial donations to buy goods for those in need. Contact Idris Humphreys on 07833 560516 for details of how to contribute.

Also, visit [valeofclwyd.foodbank.org.uk](http://valeofclwyd.foodbank.org.uk).



*Me doing pre-flight checks on a 747 – note the size of that engine!*

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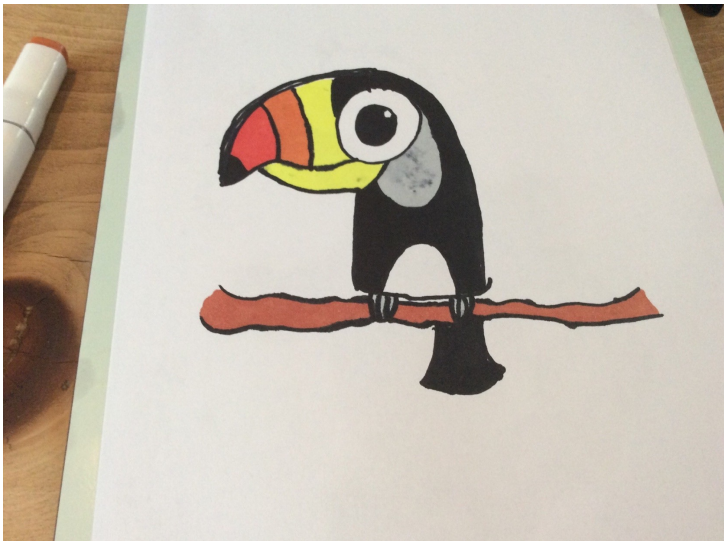
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# Ysgol Bryn Clwyd

This month the infants have been asking their own questions and working together to answer them. One of their favourite topics was animals, which was also a chosen topic in Dosbarth Iau recently. Dosbarth Iau have also covered the topics of colour and adventure and enjoyed a science week this month.

Here is some artwork from the juniors from over the past few weeks: a toucan (by Olwen) from our adventure to the rainforest, service dogs (pencil drawing by Jefferey and colour by Nellie) from our topic on animals, and painted pebbles (by Amelia E) from our colour topic.

The final photo from the infants' class shows Stanley, who has made an animal from recycled materials.





# From the Rector

After months of lockdown the reopening of schools and non-essential shops has encouraged us to know that our efforts to stay home have made a difference. Before shops and schools could reopen, they had the mammoth task of putting the necessary precautions in place to ensure the safety of all, and we give thanks for their hard work in these difficult times.

The recent announcement that places of worship can reopen for private prayer has also been most welcome but, in the same way as our shops and schools, before we can open the doors, strict safety measures must be put in place. Reopening is not simply a matter of unlocking the door and dusting off the cobwebs but ensuring all the necessary measures to keep people safe have been observed. At the time of writing, we are waiting to see whether we can meet the strict guidelines for reopening. If we can, we hope to open the church for a limited period on certain days for short periods of individual private prayer.

In the absence of Sunday services, many people have been enjoying services on the television and on line. It has offered a rich variety of different styles of presentation and introduced us to new ways of worship and to new hymns. The services are new but most of the singing was filmed before the lockdown.

Hymns are very much a part of our Christian heritage and will bring back memories of both happy and sad occasions. Some of our most popular hymns are easy to call to mind, but there will always be at least one that someone mentions that we haven't heard before. What will be familiar to one person is sometimes completely unknown to another.

Singing is a great gift, and living in Wales we are blessed with many wonderful singers. The recent passing of Dame Vera Lynn has reminded us that a song can mean so much

in even the most trying of times. In a tribute to Vera Lynn it was said it was not just her immaculate voice that made her one of Britain's greatest singers, but the warmth and sincerity she was able to put into every song.

We may not all be able to sing with wonderful dulcet tones, but as one lady always used to remind me, 'I may not be the greatest singer, but God thinks even the crows can sing.' Sadly, she really wasn't a great singer but her joy when singing was infectious. And singing is a joy and it's good for us; it helps our mood, relieves stress and even helps us to sleep. The rise of community choirs, and now virtual choirs, is testimony to the joy singing brings. As we continue in what is now the new normal, may we 'keep singing'.

Every blessing,

*Val Rowlands*

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- ☞ **Concrete blocks**

# Countryside catch-up: The dragons awake

The winter is a quiet time in our ponds but as the spring progresses into early summer they become full of activity. Tadpoles have appeared and turned into frogs, newts take to the water having spent time in undergrowth and woodland edges, and the dragonflies and damselflies begin to emerge. This might seem like the start of their lives but this is far from the truth – they have been busy developing under the water.

Dragonflies, unlike butterflies, bees and beetles, do not undergo a pupal stage but exhibit three distinct stages of development. Mating in dragonflies is unique, with the male and female interlocking in a ‘wheel’ formation. Once a male and female dragonfly have mated, fertilising the eggs, the female looks for a safe place to lay them. Eggs are typically laid close to the water’s edge, either on plant material or deposited loosely in the water.

The eggs hatch within two–five weeks, depending upon the species, and emerge as a small larval form. This lives and feeds in the water for around one to two years before it is ready to undergo the next phase of its development. Species such as the golden-ringed dragonfly can spend more than five years in this larval stage.

Larvae feed on a host of vertebrates and invertebrates, including other insect larvae, worms, snails, tadpoles and small fish. Once the larva is fully grown, it will crawl from the water and attach itself to some nearby vegetation. It now begins to slowly break through its larval skin and pushes its way out through a tiny hole just in front of the wing sheaths. Once its upper body is out, the newly emerged dragonfly will stay put for a short period, giving its legs a chance to harden, before slowly easing the rest of its abdomen free.

At this stage, all that is left is for the dragonfly to ‘pump up’ its wings and abdomen by redirecting its bodily fluids. Once fully inflated, the dragonfly’s body is twice the length of its larval skin. After about an hour, the wings are sufficiently inflated and hardened to allow the dragonfly to take its very first flight, known as its maiden flight. Once emerged, the lifespan of most adults is extremely brief, typically lasting only a week or two.



*Broad Bodied Chaser (female) – Moel Arthur*

Now is a great time to look out for dragonflies and damselflies around the area, from small ponds to streams and rivers – each offering different habitat for different species.

*Jim Kilpatrick*

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**Your dog can scare or harm farm animals:  
Stay safe – use a lead around livestock, but  
release your dog if chased by cattle**



# Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan Local History Society

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

The work has already started of collecting this information and here are a few examples of what has been received so far, which might prompt you.

Maureen Fuge, née Idle, was an evacuee to Llandyrnog. David Sylvester prepared an audio recording of her story. Here is a transcript of some of the words she spoke.

*When war broke out in 1939, I was four and I lived in Wallasey but we were on holiday at Plas Isaf, Hendrerwydd, a country hotel. We used to go there for our holiday, and that's where we were when war actually broke out. The proprietor brought all the guests together to make the announcement. Of course, we came home, and in 1940 was when our house was bombed.*

*The first bomb to fall on Wallasey was 10 August 1940. I've been thinking back ... it must have been after that time when our house was bombed. We were in the shelter and the back of the house fell over the shelter. My mother and I were buried in the shelter until they got us out. Of course, we had nowhere else to go.*

*We moved from Wallasey to Llandyrnog. We stayed with a lady called Mrs Roberts and she lived in the Anchorage, just outside the village. So, mother and I . . . I suppose we had rooms there. And my mother heard about this cottage (Llawog Bach) that Mrs Richards (Cerrigllwydion Hall) owned. And I can remember it was deep snow and my*

*mother had to carry me from Llandyrnog. My mother knocked on the door, the main entrance to the hall, and we were ushered into the lounge. There was a roaring fire, and Mrs Richards stood with her back to it, in her tweed skirt and woollen stockings, keeping herself warm; perfectly understandable given the bad weather outside. So we went in, and Mrs Richards said, 'Yes, the cottage is vacant. You can move in.' So my mother said, 'What's the rent?' Mrs Richards said, 'You have no need to pay me rent. You've been through enough.'*

*My father worked for what was then the Liverpool Corporation and he was putting all of the electrics in the air-raid shelters. He wasn't called up. But he used to come whenever he could from Wallasey; get the train to Denbigh, then he'd cycle to Llandyrnog.*

Artefacts or gifts can bring back memories. Rod Williams is proud of his *Ces y Germans* (the Germans' case).



This is how Rod remembers it:

*I do not remember them presenting the case to my parents, but I do remember my mother always reminding me that the case was given to them by a prisoner of war based at the Ruthin camp. I suppose it was a gesture*

## Local History Society contd

*of thanks. I understood that the case had been made in the camp.*

*Communication was usually by sign language – the POWs did not understand Welsh or English and my parents obviously had no knowledge of German. I do not recall any animosity towards them as German or Italian soldiers. They would be regarded as equals.*

We hope you have enjoyed this taste of the type of material we have collected so far and that it may inspire you to want to be part of the project. Maybe you could write any information down or let us know of any Second World War items or documents you have.

You could photograph them, scan them or just tell us about them and we could arrange to see them at a later date.

You can submit your information in any format – written, typed, digital, audio or video. These can either be sent to [llangwyfanhistory@hotmail.com](mailto:llangwyfanhistory@hotmail.com) or we can, in the future, when we all get to what will be a new normal, either pick the information up from you or arrange a drop-off box in the village at a point to be sorted then. Or if you prefer someone else to do the work, Julia and Rona are always up for a coffee and cake!

Thank you!

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## Messy Church

As the children couldn't come to Messy Church this month, we decided to take it to them instead. In our June session we would have been looking at the story of Pentecost, which is known as the birthday of the Church. So we put together a 'birthday bag' for each of the children and inside was the story of Pentecost, which they could colour,

so we also put in some colouring pencils! There were all sorts of craft activities and puzzles, a card to make for someone special and a small gift of a book. We hope the children will enjoy all the activities and we look forward to the day when we can all be together again.



Marcy



Chloe & Ella



# Notes from Plas Ashpool

Lockdown restrictions remain as life at Plas Ashpool continues. The family is still in residence and the early-morning yoga teaching has hotted up a few degrees. If we are not woken by bouncing toddlers at some early hour, the narrative from the 'yoga studio' will surely do the trick! Yesterday, I am sure I heard something along the lines of, 'As you breathe deeply, broaden your sitting bones, lengthen the neck, put your left elbow under your right arm and then stretch with the left toe under your right ear; breathe out and at the same time put your head on the floor whilst pointing your remaining toes to the east!' Well, something like that anyway. I hope this was the advanced class!

Midsummer has arrived, bringing with it some welcome rain and thundery, sultry weather so typical of this time of year. As beekeepers, we would always expect the bees to swarm around this time – the hives are full to bursting and the change in weather often seems to prompt their natural instinct of finding new homes. Right on cue, my one and only remaining hive did just this the other day. The noise of the bees as they leave the hive and ascend into the air in what appears to be one huge black cloud is deafening and unmistakeable in its intent. My bees decided to settle at the top of a huge walnut tree quite close by, completely inaccessible for me to capture them. A few hours later they took off again, this time gathering on a hedge at a lower level. An afternoon spent scurrying around the house and outbuildings searching for all the essential equipment necessary for catching the swarm was complete. It was at this moment that they decided to make a final bid for freedom. By now, the thunder was rumbling and spots of rain beginning to fall. After one final look along the hedgerows of the field I found them again and made a successful attempt to shake them into my old straw skep and carry them back to a newly

appointed hive. As the last few bees scuttled up a makeshift ramp into the hive entrance, the heavens opened. I think that they were very lucky bees that night.

Another moment of great excitement came this month with the arrival, for a night of camping, of three gypsy wagons and ponies. The three explorers, Andy, Jack and Stephen, arrived with their beautiful wagons, each one so well appointed and cosy. They soon had their campfire going, and Jack's dog, Lady, entertained our grandchildren with her playful antics.



They meet regularly and would, under normal circumstances, have been at the famous Appleby Fair on this particular evening but, due to restrictions, were making the best of a leisurely trip in the Vale. It was wonderful to see the wisps of smoke drifting from their fire and hear the contented munching of the horses as they grazed, tethered close by. As we left the happy travellers and walked back to our conventional home, there was definitely a feeling of peace that this simpler way of life can give.

I hope we can all still find some simple pleasures during our restricted days. I have loved seeing the delightful garden emerge next to the Golden Lion in the village – it's a joy to behold. Thank you. So, until next month, happy gardening.

*Fiona Bell*