

Llais Llandyrnog Voice

August 2020 – Volume 5 – Edition 11

Scarecrow competition

Well done to everyone who entered, all the scarecrows were fantastic. Thank you for all the support and donations that have been made to the Friends of Ysgol Bryn Clwyd!

Ray Perrin

Winners


1st: Scarecrow #8 (Mr Bean)



2nd Scarecrow #1 (The Greatest Showman)

3rd Scarecrow #13 (Stickman)



Take a photo, have a go,
send it to our virtual 
(see page 2)

Around the village

Condolences to Robbie and Zoe, Nant Lewis Alyn in the loss of their Mother, Maureen Owen who passed away recently and was laid to rest 7th July in Llandyrnog. Also to the family of Richard Jones, Hafod – fondly known to his friends as Dick Deryn Du.

Best wishes to Beth, Pen y Bryn on her appointment as Chemistry Teacher at Penweddig High School, Aberystwyth.

A belated **happy birthday** to David Plumb who recently celebrated his 50th birthday. Best wishes and again, a big thank you for keeping our roads clear of litter, David!

Congratulations to Angharad Williams, Plas Bennett, on graduating with a first class honours degree in economics from the University of Reading.

Thanks: Mair and family would like to express their sincere gratitude for all the cards, phone calls and support they received following the death of Robin. They have all been a great comfort during this difficult time.

Correction: The son of Felix and Amy, is of course, Felix Lawford, not Langford as stated in the July edition. We hope that the happy couple accepts our apologies and wish the young family well.

**Thanks to all who have
contributed to this month's
edition**

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

Let's make a show!

Since there will not be a flower and produce show this year, *Llais Llandyrnog Voice* invites you to send us photographs of your gardens, flowers, vegetables or fruit. These will be included in the September edition. Take the photos when your produce is at its best and send them to llandyrnognews@gmail.com by 15 August. If you don't have the facilities to do this, contact Anwen on 07340 271051 to make arrangements for someone to take a photo. If you have a beautiful garden, but don't wish to reveal your location, that's fine – it won't be included.

There won't be any prizes, but the photos will bring some colour to our magazine and show the beautiful gardens of the village. Following the lockdown, it's certain that there are some fabulous sights around! A limited number of the September edition will be printed in full colour.



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Pwllglas Community Shop

For the health and safety of our customers and staff, we changed the layout when lockdown came about, putting a table at the shop's front door, and collected the provisions. 99% of our customers were happy with this arrangement, although some weren't!

After Boris Johnson announced the lockdown, things changed overnight with more and more people taking the situation more seriously. As most of our volunteers are retired, we had to have a chat and persuade them that it was safer for them to stay at home for a while. Then we contacted the students who had been on work experience with us and asked if it was possible for them to help us. In all fairness, the response was fantastic. We had to change the shop's opening hours as the demands were greater – fewer staff available and more work preparing the following day's orders. The opening hours were changed to Monday to Friday 8–2pm, Saturday 9–12pm and Sunday 9–11am.

It was decided to put the information on the shop's Facebook page and drop a leaflet in every household in the village, informing that we were there to help the community, and prepared to deliver goods to the vulnerable and people who were worried. We then asked for volunteers to help us accomplish all this. We had many people contacting us, and saying how grateful they were for this service.

Plas Meddyg Surgery contacted us asking whether we would accept prescriptions for people in the Pwllglas area, so as to reduce the number of patients going to the surgery. Every Wednesday, the prescriptions are delivered to us at the shop.

We were aware that the gardening centres were closed and many were keen to make hanging baskets and plant pots. We therefore contacted a local business and asked if it was possible to work together and sell plants and compost. We used the foyer at Pwllglas Hall to achieve this. Initially, I was rather anxious to order one pallet of 40 bags of compost, but by

the end we were ordering 4 pallets and 160 bags! We sold a vast number of plants and customers were very happy to be able to garden during the splendid weather of May.

The orders for bread, milk, veg, fruit, meat, newspapers, cakes trebled. There was a shortage of flour, sugar, pasta and toilet paper for a while! I often thought during this period of one of my father's favourite sayings '*mewn prinder mae gwerth*' (there is real value in something that is scarce).

It is so nice to be able to sell John and Olwen Rowlands's sweet peas and beautiful flowers from Sioned Rowlands, Pont y Tŵr.

Although we were quite worried at times, one must admit that one sees the importance of the small Village Shop such as Pwllglas Community Shop. We are proud to have offered such an important service, especially during these difficult times.

Rhian Jones

Congratulations to local resident Rhian (2nd from rt.) and the staff on providing an excellent and valuable service.

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Busy directors

Congratulations to Non Haf and Daniel Lloyd for their work as producers during the lockdown period.

Under the auspices of The Other Room theatre company's programme to support new directors during lockdown, Non, Hafod y Bryn directed a very moving bilingual monologue called *The Motherhood* by Sophie J Warren. It was performed by Mali Tudno Williams.

During this strange time due to the pandemic, and as part of a Theatr na nÓg production for schools in Wales, it was decided to have a radio play instead of the usual stage production. This is the first time in 30 years that this has happened. It will be streamed to schools in the Autumn, with Daniel as the director.

Arandora Star is the title of the drama co-written by Mali Tudno Williams and Geinor Styles.

The story behind the production is both interesting and sad. The *Arandora Star* was a ship that sank on July 2nd, 80 years ago, during the second world war. On board were Italians and Germans who had lived happily in Britain till the outbreak of war. They were then hounded out of their shops and homes and declared 'enemy aliens' – they had to leave their families and friends as prisoners of war. They were on their way to a prison camp in Canada when they were torpedoed by a German U-boat off the coast of Ireland. About 143 Germans and 470 Italians were drowned. The play will concentrate on the 53 Welsh Italians who lost their lives that fateful day.

Calling all Liverpool fans!

As I've been editing and proofreading books for the last three years, I decided to have a go at writing one of my own – Liverpool: Matches of My Life, From Second Division to World Champions. It's just been published and I'm hoping it sells well. As author I can obtain copies at half price direct from the distributor, so I'm putting an offer out there for readers of *Llais Llandyrnog Voice*. If you want a copy, please contact me and I will place an order and deliver it to you if you provide your address. I'll make sure this is done safely of course.

The normal price is £19.99 and I can offer it at just £10 for a hard-back book. I'll even sign it if you want!

If you are interested, please ring or text on 07799570549 or email me on ivanbutler897@btinternet.com. Please remember to let me know where you live.

Thank you,
Ivan Butler

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State of alarm in Spain

After moving out to Spain at the end of October 2019, I didn't expect a state of alarm to be announced in the country four and a half months later and to be in full lockdown for three months and one week. A full lockdown here in Spain meant that we could not go out at all, not even for a walk or to exercise. The only time we were allowed to go out was to go shopping and only one person was allowed to go out at a time. Police were very present on the streets and if stopped you had to provide ID and prove why you were out.

After seven weeks of being in strict lockdown, it was announced that we were allowed to go out once a day for exercise with time slots for different age groups. The limit was 1km from your home but luckily for us, the beach is within this distance!

I must say that I have been impressed with how the Spanish government has dealt with this pandemic. Being a new resident in a foreign country, this does bring some much-needed comfort. The police don't take any messing and hefty fines were being issued to all that did not obey the rules.

Luckily, we have a nice garden with a beautiful view of the beach and the Gibraltar Rock and the good weather of course helped us through the lockdown.

However, it was a very difficult time for many here as Spain has the highest proportion of flat-dwellers in Europe with two thirds of the population living in flats/apartments, most of them without a balcony. It was a blessing, I suppose, that the lockdown did not happen in the summer months when temperatures reach the high thirties and the Spanish escape to the beach for some relief from the intense heat.

The toilet roll craze didn't seem to reach us here in Spain and we had no problem getting any supplies at all, even though we were only going shopping every fortnight. By the end of the fortnight, the fruit bowl looked pitiful!

We live three miles from the Gibraltar border and of course, during the state of alarm the border was closed. One of the

advantages of where we live is that we can pop over the border to shop in Morrisons in Gibraltar and get some home comforts such as Cadbury's chocolate and brown sauce! We did miss being able to go and shop in Gibraltar but it did make us try more Spanish supplies and a lot are just as good if not better.

The country's state of alarm ended on the 21st of June and life is pretty much the 'new normal' here in Spain now apart from social distancing and mandatory wearing of masks at all times when out in public. However, as I write this, Spain's Catalonia region has gone back into full lockdown as the government is concerned about the increasing amount of Covid-19 cases in the region. The government doesn't mess around here – if there is any concern, it takes action! Luckily, this area is quite a distance from where we live in the south of the country but it does raise concerns and the possibility of a second wave is maybe becoming a reality, especially now that the borders have re-opened.

The next challenge is of course Brexit. Luckily, we managed to obtain our full residency here in Spain before the pandemic. We believe that Brexit will make it very difficult for the British to gain residency and when we came over, our priority was to get our Green Card (the Spanish residency card). Fortunately, Mike can speak Spanish and this was invaluable during the process. Where we live, in southern Andalucia, the tourists haven't really found this beautiful area yet! This does however mean that speaking the language is essential to get by. My Spanish is coming along slowly! During the pandemic Llandrillo college has offered Spanish classes online, so I have been doing two lessons a week on-line with them. If the Spaniards spoke slowly, it would be far easier!

Keep safe all, and I do hope that the nice weather returns to Wales very soon. I try and send it over every day for you even if it's just for my Dad's sweet peas!

Elen Rowlands

Hospital at the White House

The White House, Llangwyfan is a two-storey country house on the road between Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan crossroads. In the late 1800s it was the Rectory for the parish of Llangwyfan until 1907, when it was sold.

At the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914, severely injured soldiers were admitted to general hospitals. However, the Red Cross, in partnership with the Order of St John's, realised it could provide an important service to less severely wounded servicemen using auxiliary hospitals and convalescent homes.

The White House was lent by its owner, Miss Mainwaring, to provide such a facility locally. The Llandyrnog hospital, as it was known, opened on 31 January 1916 under the command of Mrs Rigby, Pentre Mawr for 20 patients. They were looked after by paid doctors and nurses as well as cooks and gardeners and, in many cases, people (particularly women) in the local neighbourhood volunteered on a part-time basis.

The hospital was closed in 1919 after the end of the War and the last patient had left. In August 1920, the over 3,000 town halls, schools, large and small private houses across the UK which served as Auxiliary Hospitals were presented with a certificate signed by the then Secretary of State for War and Air, Winston Churchill, as a permanent record of thanks. The certificate remains at White House to this day, exactly one hundred years on.

If this short article has whetted your appetite for more information about the Llandyrnog Auxiliary Hospital or any other aspect of WW1 in the area, you would be interested in *Llandyrnog & Llangwyfan: Y Rhyfel Mawr 1914–18 The Great War*. It is available from Llandyrnog Post Office; Siop Elfair, Ruthin; Denbigh and Ruthin Libraries or by emailing llangwyfanhistory@hotmail.com. Price is £14.

Rona Aldrich

Recipe of the month

Fruit crumble with home-made custard

Fruit crumble is delicious in summer with fresh fruits available – strawberries, black currants, red currants, rhubarb, blackberries, apples etc. Oats or finely ground hazelnuts can be added to the recipe to get that added crunch!

Oven 200°C (Fan 180°C) / Gas – 6

Cooking time – about 30min

Ingredients

Crumble:

4 oz (115g) self raising flour

4 oz (115g) oats (or crushed hazelnuts)

6 oz (170g) butter, cut into cubes

4 oz (115g) *muscovado* light brown sugar

Cinammon – pinch

Filling:

2 lb (900g) of summer fruit of your choice

3 oz (85g) caster sugar or muscovado sugar

Making the crumble – sieve the flour into a bowl, add the oats (or hazelnuts). Rub in the cubes of butter with your fingertips, add the sugar and cinnamon and make a light bread-crumb texture (do not over-mix!).

Making the filling – Place the fruit(s) and sugar in a greased, shallow basin and mix well.

Add the crumble to the fruit(s) and level. Place in oven for 30min or until golden in colour.

Homemade Custard

350ml milk (or half milk/half cream)

2 egg yolks

25g caster sugar

1 fresh vanilla pod or ½tsp vanilla extract

Method

Place the milk (or milk/cream) and vanilla pod (essence) in a saucepan, and bring to simmering point over low heat. Remove the vanilla pod.

Whisk the yolks and sugar until well blended.

Slowly pour the milk (milk/cream) onto the mixture whisking all the time.

Pour into a clean saucepan, and re-heat on **low heat** stirring gently with a wooden spoon, until thickened.

ENJOY!

Spotlight on... Ian Roberts

What are your early memories?

My brother Dylan and I were brought up in Myddleton Park, Denbigh, before moving to the Green, Denbigh when I was about 5 years old. When I was 13, we moved to Glanywnn Bennett, Llandyrnog, where my grandparents used to live.

My earliest memories include going to our grandparents' farm at Glanywnn Bennett, and especially staying for a whole week during the half-term holiday in February, when it was lambing time.

What about school and college?

I attended Ysgol Twm o'r Nant, Denbigh and Ysgol Glan Clwyd, St Asaph. I decided to go to Aberystwyth University College to study economics and spent four happy and busy years (socializing!) there.

Did you head straight into work?

Yes, I worked at the BBC in Cardiff to begin with. I then moved to work in the Welsh Office, Carmarthen, where I met my wife Ceri. Then I worked as an accountant with the National Trust and Mowlem. Now I am the Financial Director at Portmeirion Village

What is it like to have an office at Portmeirion Village?

It's a wonderful place to work. There are about 250 members of staff, who are very industrious and totally committed to their work and the Welsh ethos of the site. Although it is quite a distance from home, once I've arrived, it's so striking – I can go for a walk every lunchtime and enjoy its tranquillity.

The village attracts about 220,000 visitors yearly. It has 71 guest units – visitors either stay in the hotel or in the luxurious cottages.

How has Covid-19 affected everything?

Since Covid-19 started in March, the village has been closed, and I have been working partly from home and partly on the furlough scheme. The tourist business has been hit particularly hard, nearly causing us to enter a three winter-period. Despite this, since early July,

Portmeirion has begun to re-open slowly to daily visitors and self-catering cottages. The hotel intends to re-open on August 3rd.

What about your interests outside work?

I have always had an interest in rugby and football, and recently I have started cycling, running and swimming and completing a few Triathlons. In this respect, the lockdown period has been of great advantage to me, as I have tried to improve my personal times. It has been nice to take advantage to cycle more often, as the roads have been empty.

What makes you angry?

I hate seeing rubbish being dropped or being washed down by the rivers, destroying our wildlife and beautiful countryside.

Who would you like to invite to dinner at Sgubor Wen?

I would invite Alun Wyn Jones, Welsh Rugby team captain for years, Tudur Owen, for some humour, and Barack Obama for a more intense conversation!

What are your hopes for the future?

Continue to keep fit, and increase the intensity, if time permits! Enjoy time with the family, and hope to go abroad for a holiday next year!

Thanks very much, Ian.

A night on the Orient Express

‘Enjoy the Orient Express!’ said a doorman as we walked towards London’s Victoria Station. How did he know? Was it because we were all dolled up at 8am? Walking against the flow of commuters coming from the station? The fancy labels on the cases?

The packing had been the most difficult thing for me. Cabin space on the Orient Express is very limited, so we were only allowed a suit hanger and one small overnight case, which had to contain our ‘very posh for the evening’ (you can never overdress, they said) and absolute essentials, plus something more comfortable (but smart) for the second day on board. However, once we had checked in at Victoria, we wouldn’t see any of this again until we got on the Orient Express in France.

Before that we had a night in Manchester, then a night in London, and smart wear for a day on the British Pullman train from London to the south coast. Then yet another case of stuff for our week in Verona, which we were warned would be inaccessibly stored in the guard’s van on the Orient Express.

Victoria Station was fairly quiet, and we followed the signs to Platform 2 and the Pullman Lounge. Here we had to check in all the luggage and get our seat allocation. I was intrigued by the different interpretation of the dress code. I had gone for a nice dress (but stretchy, as there was going to be a lot of food) with a matching coat and scarf; Ivan wore his suit. Some of our fellow travellers had gone full 1920s, while others went more for comfort. June Whitfield (of *Terry and June* and *Carry On* fame) was on board with her family – they wore proper hats.

The first leg of the journey included brunch on board the British Pullman train to Folkestone. We were in a carriage called Audrey, which had apparently been used by the Queen. It was beautifully decorated with wooden marquetry panels and comfortable armchairs. Even the toilet had wood panels

and a mosaic floor. (I noticed there was a carriage called Gwen, but it wasn’t as nice as Audrey). Brunch started with a Bellini, pastries, fruit and yoghurt, crumpets and scrambled egg, smoked salmon and caviar (which was okay, but I wasn’t keen, really) and plenty of coffee in light-blue china cups and saucers.

The journey through Kent to the coast was lovely and a jazz band played for us as we got off the Pullman train at Folkestone station. Then it was on to the poshest bus I’ve ever seen, with free champagne to keep us going through the Channel Tunnel. Passports were checked and the bus was driven on to the Chunnel train with inch-perfect precision. It felt odd sitting in a vehicle that was moving along without really moving, but we soon reached Calais and were driven to a special section of the railway station.

Here the Venice Simplon Orient Express was waiting for us. A band was playing, and the liveried stewards were lined up in front of the blue-and-gold train. We had time to admire the train from the outside and took loads of photos before getting on board. Each of the train carriages had its own steward and ours (Enrico) showed us our cabin and offered us another glass of champagne. The cabin was tiny but beautiful, lined with wooden paneling. It had a bench seat along one side, a little table under the window with a lamp on, a stool and a clever corner cupboard with a hand basin and shelves inside. Our overnight bag was there on the high luggage rack and our suit carrier was hanging on a coat hook.

Then the ‘Man with the Best Uniform’ (navy with gold piping) arrived to tell us which of the restaurants we would be allocated to. He said we would get a different one tomorrow as each had its own atmosphere. We were to be there for 6.30pm in our ‘very posh’ outfits. It was a bit short notice, I thought, but that’s okay, better than eating too late. Then we realised that France is an

A night on the Orient Express: ctd.

hour ahead and we actually had less time to get ready! Our very compact quarters meant one of us had to sit down out of the way while the other got washed and changed as there was so little floor space to stand up and get dressed. But within half an hour we were both ready. It felt odd not having a shower but there were no bathing facilities on board, just one (rather splendid marble and polished wood) toilet at the end of the corridor. But they had thoughtfully supplied a lovely leather box of toiletries (which we could keep) so we didn't smell too bad. At least everyone else would be in the same boat, so to speak.

It wasn't easy trotting through the moving carriages in my best high-heeled shoes, but we made it to the Lalique Dining Car in time. It's so called because of the beautiful opaque glass panels that line the black lacquered walls. Original Lalique apparently. Fabulous glass wall lights illuminated the carriage and even the glasses on the table were heavy crystal and had the VSOE logo on them

We rattled on through the French countryside towards Paris ... eating. Lobster tails and caviar (the thin black sheet underneath the lobster tails, which I thought was just something to stop it sliding about was apparently caviar, flattened), then sea bass and a layered vegetable thing (very nice), then lemon sorbet, followed by a huge selection of cheese and biscuits. I was just thinking I could do with something sweet when the waiter, singing 'Happy Birthday', brought me a fruity cheese-cake with a candle in it! Yes, 60 today, happy birthday to me!

(to be continued)
Gwen Butler

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

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.

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

**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.**

A chat over the hedge

I'm sure that most of you have spent more time in the garden than usual during the lockdown and pity those people without a garden and those that live in flats in town. I'm also sure that you have already heard far too much about my sweet peas in the past, so I'm not going to mention them this time, only that I am growing far less of them this year. Olwen says that I'm beginning to see sense!

One reason of course is that the shows across the country have been cancelled because of the crisis. I'm sure that some of the smaller shows will find it difficult to carry on.

I've taken the opportunity to plant more vegetables than usual this year – the freezer will be full for winter with a continuous supply of greens for the family. But growing vegetables is not without its problems as most of you realise. We had an unusually hot, dry spell, then cold weather followed by windy weather and as I write this, the weather is rather miserable. One huge problem that I have is snails of every size and shape. I think that the mild, wet winter that we had accounts for this. The tendency is to reach for the pellets, but thankfully, the ones containing *metaldehyde* have been removed from the market. They were poisonous to anything that ate dead snails, e.g. birds, toads, snakes etc.

Nowadays, 'organic' gardeners are encouraged to use pellets containing *ferric sulphate* that are now available for use. The snails eat them, stop eating and die within six days. A rather painful death, don't you think? They are safer to use, but unfortunately, they also contain *chelators* which kill earthworms.

I've decided to wage war on snails in the garden by using a completely safe way – beer traps. Yes beer! I've caught hundreds! The beer's smell attracts them into the pots, but I'm not sure whether they drown or are just drunk!

The traps are effective for three to four days and the contents can be poured onto the compost heap. The traps can be easily made. I use large plastic yogurt pots or small milk

cartons. Just cut small slots 1.5in x 1in on both sides, $\frac{3}{4}$ way up – place it in the soil an inch deep, add an inch of beer, and put a lid on the carton to avoid rain getting in. Of course, some say that you attract more snails than usual to the garden, but I find that this method works for me.

Plants in pots require a different approach, just wrap a copper band around the pot, as snails hate copper! It works very well and will last for many years.

Interesting facts about snails: everyone has 90,000 grandchildren! They can eat 40 times their weight daily. If two snails mate, both become pregnant. Believe it or not, they can bite, as they have more than 27,000 teeth. They can lay between 80 and 120 eggs several times during the year.

I don't think, after reading these facts, that I have much hope of getting rid of all the snails in the garden, but I will continue with the war for the time being. Some would say that I'm only getting rid of good beer!

John Rowlands



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Notes from Plas Ashpool

Today is one of those days when the mist and the rain appear to encompass all around us, turning every view into a watery palette of dreariness. And of course, today would be the day that we leave the garden and have chosen to set out on our first adventure to the sea-side.

For months everyone has been dreaming of the day when restrictions were to be lifted and we would be free to make our usual journey to enjoy the delights of the seaside with the whole family. Being a relatively optimistic bunch we chose to ignore the usually tried and trusted weather forecasts, convincing ourselves that all would be well on arrival. The cars filled with all the usual beach equipment, children, dogs etc set off at a merry pace. Few minutes had passed before the wind-screen wipers came on, half an hour later the busy chatter of earlier began to turn into groans of 'I knew we should have listened to the weather'. 'Are we nearly there yet?' 'When can we eat the picnic?' etc.

Of course, being hardy British folk, we pressed on.

As we pulled into our usual spot and began to unload, there was an uncanny silence, apart from the reassuring lapping of the waves and the calling of the gulls and familiar sounds of the oyster catchers, there was hardly a sound (unsurprisingly, due to the now, almost horizontal rain!). Not a boat, not a jet ski, not one single windbreak, complete with party of cheerful people, adorned the salty landscape.

We huddled miserably into our little hut suitable for two – eight adults, five children and two dogs. Not to be outdone by the weather we put the kettle onto the remaining working ring of the ancient gas stove and made a brew. The older children headed straight out to do some rock pooling, followed by the dogs (thankfully).

Tea was drunk, fit younger generation went for a bracing swim, binoculars were found (for anxious granny to track progress of swimmers

across completely and utterly safe bay) and a sense of calm began to prevail. Huddled under several waterproofs and numerous blankets we began to enjoy the perfect peace of an empty beach.

The rain continued, obscuring the usual panoramic views of sea with mountains beyond, stretching away into the distance, yet none of this seemed to matter. We had arrived, we had escaped, we were free, the children were in their element, the months of lockdown seemed a thousand moons ago. All we needed now was to hear the familiar tinkle of the ice cream van. A perfect day out after all.

I hope that you have all managed to find a little moment of freedom this month and that we will all, be able, very soon, to resume some of our happy pastimes once more.

Until next month, happy adventuring and of course, happy gardening.

Fiona Bell

DBP

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Experiences in Patagonia

On 28th July this year, it will be 155 years since the Mimosa docked at Puerto Madryn (Port of Madryn) Patagonia, Argentina, in 1865. On reflection, it's a wonderful feeling to think that I had the opportunity to live and work as part of the Welsh society that flourishes 8,000 miles from Wales.

In 2018, I was appointed as one of three Welsh Development Officers by the British Council for a year. The three of us would be working as part of the Welsh teaching strategy under the Patagonia Welsh Scheme that was established in 1997. The British Council seeks new and enthusiastic people every year to face this challenge. Some officers opt to stay longer than a year, whilst others decide to reside there for good, as traditional patriots! It was a pleasure to meet these people as part of my work – those who work tirelessly to preserve the language in the colony.

I lived in Trelew, a city north-east of the Chubut province. It was named after Lewis Jones, one of the first Welsh leaders in Patagonia. I was fortunate enough to work with one of his descendants, Luned Gonzales, during my stay in Patagonia. Quite often, Luned is referred to as an embodiment of the Welsh colony. She has worked tirelessly to ensure that people understand the history of Welsh culture in this unique area.

I travelled daily to work by bus from Trelew to Gaiman and it took me a while to get accustomed to the dry, flat landscape with the white cliffs in the distance – scenery totally different from the one I was used to back in the Vale of Clwyd on my way to work! I enjoyed observing families of grey partridges, buzzards hunting and the occasional mara (similar to a hare) bouncing through the tough shrubs. As these views flew past on my journey, I often had the feeling of pride and admiration for the early Welsh settlers – how strong and brave they were to try and create a new life in a country that was so different to that back in Wales, as regards landscape and

weather.

There are over 5,000 Welsh-speakers in Patagonia, and the number is increasing thanks to the fantastic work the teachers do in the four Welsh schools in the Colony. In light of this, I was very excited to learn that one of our first duties was to take part in the opening ceremony of a new classroom built on the Hendre Primary School site in Trelew. And whilst visiting Trevelin in the Andes, we were shown the new primary school that was built there in 2016. An extension was being built during our visit, and once completed the school can accommodate 200 pupils – very encouraging news. To me, these experiences were evidence that Welsh education in the colony is at its peak – it made me feel so proud to be able to help in this growth.

As part of my work as a Welsh teacher and tutor, I was working in the Welsh club at Hendre School and teaching adults in the Hendre Nursery School in town. It was a joy to teach adults who were so enthusiastic and who realized the importance of learning a minority language such as Welsh – many having no Welsh roots at all.

I also ran a Welsh Club for Years 2 and 3 in the Welsh school – Ysgol Gymraeg y Gaiman. One of my most pleasant experiences while working in Gaiman was to join the whole school at the end of the day to sing the Welsh National Anthem – 'Hen Wlad fy Nhadau'. I was also privileged to take adult and young people's Welsh classes in Gaiman College – where the first Welsh school in the world was established in 1906! Looking at the school's motto – *Gorau Arf, Arf Dysg (Education is the Best Weapon)*, it was difficult to remember that I was in South America – thousands of miles from Wales.

As well as working in Gaiman and Trelew, I used to catch the bus once a week to Puerto Madryn to provide Welsh classes and social evenings under the guidance of Lorena Peralta. Teaching and having conversations in Welsh with adults of all ages in a place so

Experiences in Patagonia: ctd

ingrained in Welsh history was amazing. One experience in Puerto Madryn stands out. I had the opportunity of seeing the actual caves by the sea at Puerto Madryn (below). This is where the Welsh landed and first took shelter and lived after disembarking from the *Mimosa* in 1865. A very profound and poignant experience.

As Welsh Development Officers, we also held different social gatherings on behalf of Menter Patagonia (the Welsh-language initiative). Many interesting activities were organized during the year – ample opportunities to socialize naturally through the medium of Welsh outside the classroom. There was something for everyone – soup and song evenings, presentations by students from Wales who had won scholarships to come to Patagonia, concerts by the Urdd group, picnics, afternoon tea with the reading group, and an afternoon watching the film *Poncho Mamgu* (Granny's Poncho) on Llain Las Farm on the outskirts of Gaiman – the original location for the story. All these things were so beneficial to the local community, and the Asado and the innumerable cakes were feasts to the eyes and stomach!

I suppose you've heard about the yearly Eisteddfods held in Patagonia. I was honoured to take part in many – from Puerto Madryn to the Andes. As officers, we had the task of adjudicating, but we also took part ourselves in the folk dancing, choral recitation, and singing with the Gaiman Choir. It was a very familiar and comforting feeling, so far from home.

Another pleasant experience was attending services and concerts in Bethel Chapel, Gaiman – one of the first chapels to be built in the settlement in 1884. The thrill of singing the National Anthem at the end of the concerts, and the Cymanfa Ganu (sacred singing festival) in a packed chapel will stay with me for years to come.

Glesni Edwards

Ysgol Bryn Clwyd

The pupils of Dosbarth Iau have made their own well-being shields, acknowledging all the great qualities we have within us to keep us safe and happy .

They also made faces on the trees around the playground, forming a treasure hunt for the infants the following day.

Unfortunately it wasn't possible to hold a leavers' service this year but videos were made of memories and special messages for Callum and Mya. A special visitor came for their last morning breaktime – Mr Whippy.

On the last day of term, the infants started a very special snake made out of rocks outside the school gates. We hope that our fun designs and messages bring a smile to people's faces when they walk past. We would LOVE our friends who haven't been in school and anyone else to join in and add a colourful rock to our snake this summer. We wonder how long it will be when we return to school in September! Gwyliau haf hapus i bawb!

J & G

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From the Rector

In May's edition of *Llais Llandyrnog*, Wendy Grey Lloyd wrote a poem about waiting. The waiting had just begun, we didn't know what the future would hold and all our plans had to be postponed. Although things are now slowly opening up again, in many ways we are still waiting. We know that whatever happens in the future life will be different, and so, we wait to see what that will mean for every one of us.

We have all learnt new skills during lockdown and maybe waiting is one of them. Usually we are continually in a hurry, finding the quickest queue in the supermarket, or looking for a shortcut in all walks of life. Now we wait patiently in the marked-out areas to queue in the supermarket, and we take life a little slower. We have seen wonderful acts of kindness and support and we need to continue show patience and understanding as we adjust to new ways.

Becoming more computer literate has been a new skill for many. Working from home or simply keeping in touch with the family has meant we have endeavoured to master video calls and social media in order to keep in touch. For those who have become familiar with Zoom over the lockdown period being in the waiting room is part of being connected. You have to wait for whoever is hosting the meeting to allow you join the meeting. Sometimes this is a matter of seconds, but particularly if you are joining a large meeting (think Government Cabinet meeting) ten minutes can pass and you are still not in. The tendency to get fed up and try another way in is very tempting, we can't see if the host is trying to connect someone else or we are simply in a queue.

In the Bible, many people who were told to wait upon the Lord's timing tried to take things into their own hands to hurry things along. Some thought that God had forgotten his promise as they found themselves in circumstances that seemed to prevent them fulfilling God's will. God promised Joseph he had a plan for him. It took many years of hardship for

Joseph to journey from his Coat of Many Colours to becoming Pharaoh's right-hand man. The road was via betrayal, slavery and imprisonment until God knew the time was right. Joseph saved a whole nation from starvation and saved his own family even though they had betrayed him. God causes things to happen at the right time, and the time spent waiting is not wasted, it is preparation for what is to come.

We are currently preparing for the re-opening of the Church in Llandyrnog for Public Worship and private prayer. It won't be open every day as before but we are delighted it will reopen. We have waited a long time for the final go ahead. It won't look quite the same, social distancing and a one-way system will be in place, but it will be good to be back. Things may be a little different but the Church is still a holy, sacred place in the midst of our village and we give thanks to God for the peace and solace it brings. A warm welcome awaits.

'But those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.'

Isaiah 40 v 31

With every blessing,
Val Rowlands

James Davies, MP for Vale of Clwyd

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Or leave a message on Facebook

The wandering peahens

On a wet Sunday morning, too wet to be outside, I noticed something odd in the garden. No, it's not 'Russell Crowe' the carrion crow who patrols the yard, but two enormous birds strutting about – what are they? I Googled – peahens!



These are large grey birds with iridescent green necks and an odd crest, with stiff spatula-like feathers that resemble the helmet of a Roman centurion, making an odd 'honking' sound like a clown's car at the circus. My hens retreated into their huts traumatised by these 'aliens' – where had they come from?

They were quite content in my garden, until spooked by my dogs and then they flew up onto the top of the house and stayed there till morning when they swooped down, bullied my hens and ate all their breakfast.

I had to find the owners, Facebook and word of mouth works wonders and owners were located. Somehow, they had flown up from Cilcain over Offa's Dyke and down to me. So we needed to catch them – not easy, they fly so high, even up into the enormous oak or the house roof. A lucky break came as I was giving my hens their night-time corn and one started to eat out of my hand and miraculously walked into the hen hut. Owner arrived and the plan was to entice the second into the hen hut with 'custard creams' – their favourite.

Over an hour of 'peahen whispering' and no luck! The caught peahen was getting quite worried so we decided to retrieve that one from the hen hut and try again the following evening. The plan was to use an old football net to catch it, with a military style assault.

Day 3 – a soggy evening. Armed with chocolate Bahlens biscuits (all I had left over from Christmas) I managed to tempt the second into the hen hut. Success at last – no netting required.

I heard that they would soon be joined by a peacock – hopefully enticing them to stay at home and not wander. BUT, the peahens went missing again a few days later despite the peacock's arrival. They were seen at Llangwyfan Forest, but luckily made their way back home to the relief of the owners and the new peacock!

So, if on a wet Sunday you look up at the Clwydian Range you may see peahens gliding towards the village – but if you do, make sure you have plenty of Bahlens biscuits.

On a footnote, I have heard reports of peahens above Llangwyfan forestry so perhaps the saga continues...

Hazel Wright

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

Post Office Opening Hours

Monday 9am–12pm, 3pm–5pm

Tuesday 9am–12pm, 3pm–5pm

Wednesday 9am–12.30

Thursday 9am–12pm, 3pm–5pm

Friday 9am–12pm, 3pm–5pm

Saturday 9am–12.30

01824 790310

Radio to the rescue!

Due to the coronavirus, the National Eisteddfod of Wales has not been held at Tregaron, as was originally intended. In its place, the Eisteddfod has created an alternative festival, *AmGen*, which has presented activities using a wide range of platforms since 18 May. The first ever Eisteddfod AmGen will be held during the first week of this month.

But this is not the first time that the National Eisteddfod has had to resort to mass media to stage it. In 1940, it was originally to have been held at Bridgend. The local committee decided to postpone it because the largest bomb factory in the world at that time was situated there, employing 37,000 people. This would of course be a possible target for German bombs. At the request of the National Eisteddfod Council, Mountain Ash came to the rescue, offering to take the risk.

But soon the Eisteddfod authorities quickly realised that the risk had become too great. It was too dangerous for thousands of people to congregate in a narrow valley and become a possible target for enemy planes. So the sad decision to cancel was made and the Welsh accepted it as one of the added irritations of the war. But it would not be cancelled completely – it was agreed that the literary and musical compositions would be published, the names of the winners published in the press, and prizes awarded.

Then the BBC came into the picture. Could the Welsh staff of the BBC help the Eisteddfod by putting it on the air? Representatives of the National Eisteddfod Council and the BBC met to discuss the project. This is a translation of Archdruid Cynan's announcement on the radio:

"Through this medium, officials of the BBC offered an excellent proposal, first suggested by Mr T. Rowland Hughes and which was gratefully received by our Committee as a truly national service. In effect, this was the proposal: that a joint-committee of represent-

atives of the Eisteddfod Council and the BBC collaborate on a scheme to endeavour to save what is possible from the programme of the 1940 Eisteddfod."

During the first week of August 1940 nearly all the periods available in the Home Service for broadcasts in Welsh were devoted to the Eisteddfod. Items were transmitted from Bangor studio daily at 5.05 p.m. and were listed in Welsh in the *Radio Times*.

The schedule:

Monday 5th: Opening ceremony and adjudication of competitions in Drama Section.

Tuesday 6th: Adjudication of *englyn* competition (4-line verse in strict metre).

Wednesday 7th: An evening service, with former Archdruids Elfed and Crwys taking part. At 7.30 listeners heard the address by the Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd George. One memorable quote from the address was, 'This is the day of the agony of small nations'.

The address was followed by the adjudication, 'illustrated by recordings', of the chief male voice choir competition.

Thursday, 8th: Adjudications including the poetry competition to win the eisteddfod crown, by Professor W.J. Gruffydd.

Unfortunately, the crown was not awarded.

Friday, 9th: Adjudications of the Literature and Arts and Crafts sections. These were followed by the 'Cardiff Snowflakes Choir in an Eisteddfod Week programme of songs'.

Saturday, 10th: Adjudications of poetry competitions, including announcing the winner of the Eisteddfod Chair. The chaired bard was T. Rowland Hughes – the same T. Rowland Hughes mentioned in Archdruid Cynan's quote. Hughes was a producer of feature programmes for the BBC in Cardiff, 1939–45. After just five years, he was described by *The Guardian* as one of the best producers working in British radio.

Visit genome.ch.bbc.co.uk if you would like to read copies of the Radio Times between 1923 and 2009 – they make fascinating reading!