

Llais Llandyrnog Voice

✉ llandyrnognews@gmail.com

🐦 @LlaisLlandyrnog

£1

February 2025 – Volume 10 – Issue 5

Nominated for awards



Congratulations to both village shops on their nomination for the Countryside Alliance Awards. Tŷ Ceffyl Bach has been nominated in the Rural Enterprise category, and the shop in the Village Shop/Post Office category.

Visit <https://www.research.net/r/CA25walesbiz> to vote. You may vote for both shops since they are in different categories – urge your family, friends and neighbours to vote also! The vote is open until midnight, Sunday 23 February. The winners will be announced in the winners' reception in the Spring.

Around the village

Condolences to Helen and family of the late James Scott, Glanywern Cottage.

Welcome to Zeta Jones, Maxime Boucknooge and Edouard who have moved to Llawog Isa; to Tom Weyman and Libby Parson-Hann who have moved to 5 Maes Erw Isaf; and to Danielle Williams to 6 Maes Erw Isaf.

Congratulations to Matthew and Nickita Cooke on the birth of their son Huw, a first great-grandson to Sylvia Evans, 1, Maes Clwyd.

Congratulations to Richard Roberts (Dic y Fron), Bodfari who celebrated his 90th birthday on January 17th. From all his family and friends.



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Services at St Cwyfan's

| | | |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------------|
| 2 nd | 11.15 | Morning Prayer |
| 9 th | 11.15 | Eucharist |
| | 15.30 | Messy Church at the Village Hall |
| 16 th | 11.15 | Eucharist |

Angie Hughes, Tŷ Ceffyl Bach, is extremely grateful for the support to the coffee morning towards the Spinal Injuries Association. The grand total raised was £585. Thank you!

NEW - Scrabble Club


You are most welcome to come to the Shop Community Room on Thursday February 20th at 2 pm and play scrabble and other board games.

Llandyrnog Shop

Shop opening hours

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| Monday | 8am – 5.30pm |
| Tuesday | 8am – 5.30pm |
| Wednesday | 8am – 8pm |
| Thursday | 8am – 5.30pm |
| Friday | 8am – 5.30pm |
| Saturday | 8am – 12.30pm |
| Sunday | 9.30am – 12pm |



 07301 573362
01745 422099

 info@llandyrnogshop.com

 ShopLlandyrnog

 llandyrnogshop.com

Post Office opening hours

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Monday–Friday: | 9am – 5.30pm |
| Saturday: | 9am – 12.30pm |

Parcels ordered on-line can be collected from the Post Office, for your convenience.

Also, post all your items at the counter, since an income is received from this.

Cocoa Room Events

| | | |
|-----|------------------|--|
| Mon | 3 rd | Craft Group, 10am Trefoil Guild, 2pm |
| Tue | 4 th | Book Club, 10am WI, 7pm |
| Wed | 5 th | Llais Llandyrnog Voice committee meeting, 7pm |
| Thu | 6 th | Merfyn Parry, 9am–1pm Church committee meeting, 7pm |
| Mon | 10 th | Craft Group, 10am |
| Wed | 12 th | Mothers' Union, 2pm |
| Mon | 17 th | Craft Group, 10am |
| Tue | 18 th | Book Club, 10am Community Council meeting, 7pm |
| Wed | 19 th | Tuesday Club, 2pm |
| Thu | 20 th | Craft workshop, 6–9pm |
| Sat | 22 nd | Craft workshop, 10am–12pm |
| Mon | 24 th | Craft Group, 10am |

SP Energy Networks Information Evening

As you might be aware, OCU Group will be undertaking essential works to your current electricity supply.

We are organising a community event at the Village Hall on Tuesday, 25 February, allowing residents to drop in between 5 and 7pm to discuss upcoming plans for upgrading the electrical systems in your homes. This gathering will provide an opportunity for you to learn more about the proposed works, ask questions, and share your feedback. We will also be collecting contact details to ensure we can keep in touch with everyone throughout the project and to arrange appointments for the electric supply switchover.

Call us on 0845 330 8615 or email enquiries@ocugroup.com and we will be happy to talk to you regarding the works; please don't hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards
OCU Group

Village Hall Events

| | | | |
|------|------------------|--|--------------------|
| Sat | 1 st | Craft Group | 10am–4pm |
| Mon | 3 rd | Brownies | 5.30–7pm |
| Mon | 3 rd | Choir | 7.30–9.30pm |
| Wed | 5 th | Pilates | 7.15–8.15pm |
| Sun | 9 th | Messy Church | 3.30–5pm |
| Mon | 10 th | Brownies | 5.30–7pm |
| Mon | 10 th | Choir | 7.30–9.30pm |
| Wed | 12 th | Pilates | 7.15–8.15pm |
| Mon | 17 th | Brownies | 5.30–7pm |
| Mon | 17 th | Choir | 7.30–9.30pm |
| Wed | 19 th | Pilates | 7.15–8.15pm |
| Sun | 23 rd | Birthday Party – private booking | 10.30am– 1.30pm |
| Mon | 24 th | Choir | 7.30–9.30pm |
| Tues | 25 th | Scottish Power/ OCU Group drop- in session | 5–7pm |
| Wed | 26 th | Pilates | 7.15–8.15pm |

To book the **Cocoa Rooms**, contact Emily Williams: emilylloyd1@tiscali.co.uk

To book the **Village Hall**, contact Ivan Butler:
07799 570549 or by email
ivanbutler897@btinternet.com

Llais Llandyrnog Voice Committee:

Ruth Griffith (chair), Ivan Butler (treasurer & compositor), Anwen Davies (compositor & translator), Gwen Butler, Bryn Davies, Ann & Iestyn Jones-Evans, Rhian Jones, Rod & Margaret Williams, Jane Borthwick

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

Realising a dream (part 1)

How many times do we dream of an adventure and then find a 101 reasons to put it off? So, it stays a dream! But as time passes us by and we celebrate yet another birthday maybe lose a family member or friends are taken “far too soon” we revisit those dreams and ask “well why not now?” We might get to a time in life when our mind is still enjoying travel but health may limit us?

That was kind of how we got to book our dream trip that would take us to the ‘White Continent’ of Antarctica. Antarctica can be visited in only a few ways; maybe as a member of the forces, exploration and scientific research or as we did, part of a research expedition cruise. Our journey to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and Antarctic peninsula required us to travel 420 miles overland, fly 17,200 miles and sail just over 4,500 miles.

From Santiago, Chile, we began our journey by flying to Punta Arenas to join our Norwegian ship, the *MS Fram*, leaving the Magellan Straits on 1st December en route to the Falkland Islands.

The Falklands are a British overseas territory, the archipelago is made up of approximately 750 islands of various sizes; the largest being East and West Falkland. It is located in the South Atlantic Ocean around 300 miles east of the tip of South America and 750 north of the tip of the Antarctica peninsula. Collectively the islands are $\frac{2}{3}$ the size of Wales. Half of Falklands residents were born on the islands with more than 70 nationalities making up the rest.

The capital is Stanley (a city since 2022), where the only newspaper, *The Penguin News*, is issued every Friday. The currency is the Falkland pound, equivalent to the UK pound, and both are accepted there.

The Falkland Islands are highly regarded for their wildlife, notably their birdlife, and is host to five penguin species – king, southern rockhopper, Magellan, gentoo and macaroni, also elephant seals, sea lions and 65% of the

world’s black-browed albatross birds. The two endemic species of bird in the Falklands are the steamer duck and the Cobb’s wren.

Our first landing early in December was New Island at the north western end of the islands. We had to adhere to strict bio-security measures, which were to become a daily routine before and after every landing. This was to prevent the spread of avian flu and later in the journey preventing the introduction of invasive species of vegetation through seed transmission in boots and clothing.

Here we spent some time trekking watching shags, black-winged albatrosses and rockhoppers aplenty. We saw a protective mother steamer duck fend off a greedy caracara successfully – well for the time we watched anyhow! Also, an elusive tiny Cobb’s wren!

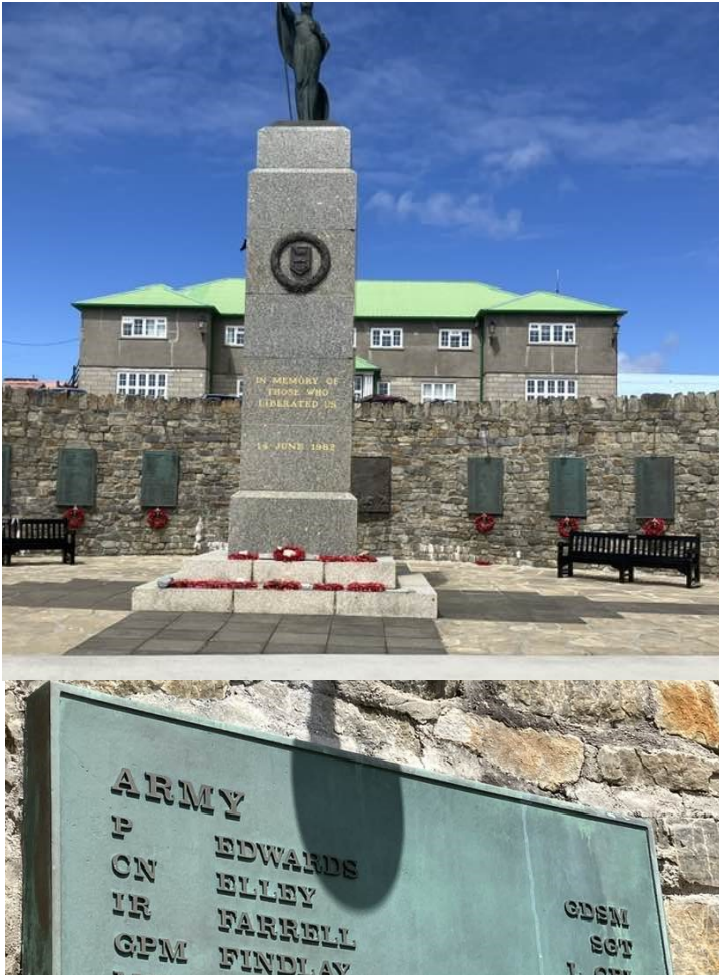
Later that day, West Point Island provided us with Magellan penguins, mainly standing outside their burrows, watching our arrival by zodiac boats. Three penguins took a quick dip, enjoying the freedom of a swim and feed in between incubating their eggs. High on the hilltops there was another colony of albatrosses and rockhoppers all sitting on their nests, quite unfazed by human onlookers. On our return journey we couldn’t help but think just how much pleasure we’d got from spending that blessed time with those little creatures.

The following day we landed at Saunders Island and Carcass Island and again saw even more stunning wildlife – the sight of penguins walking amongst cows was quite surreal.

The Falklands has its own backstory and to people of a certain age the Falklands War in April 1982 remains clear in our memories. The Falklands conflict lasted 74 days and cost over 900 lives including 255 British troops. Among those who were killed in action was Guardsman Peter Edwards from Llandyrnog who was on the RFA Sir Galahad when it

Realising a dream (part 1): ctd

encountered a devastating Argentine air attack on 8th June 1982.



On 5th December our ship docked at Port Stanley and a walk along the front enabled us to visit the 1982 Memorial wall. A most poignant, humbling and emotional time was spent at the memorial listing all those fallen and never to be forgotten. We noted Peter's name listed on plaque on the wall. The memorial was situated just around the corner to Thatcher Drive, commemorating the actions of the UK Prime minister at that time. There are a number of service men and women local to our area who have spent tours of duties in the Falkland Islands and they will have a greater insight and stories to tell, but such are often too difficult to reflect upon. Rarely in conflict are there true victors.

It is said that here it's possible to experience 'four seasons in an hour', which we can confirm! Even though here it was nearing the longest day, the temperature was around 2 °C with a stiff breeze. We experienced sun and clear blue skies then

moments later it was overcast with snow showers only to clear again 15 minutes later.

Whilst there, Steve visited the Falkland-born explorer, Mensun Bound, at his home for a talk and book-signing. Bound led the expedition to find the ship Endurance (Ernest Shackleton's ship) in 2022, and was the subject of a 2024 film/documentary covering Shackleton's tale of survival and the search for the sunken ship almost 10,000 feet below the surface of the Weddell Sea pack ice!

Late afternoon, we took the bus back to the ship. Apparently most residents here have more than one job – our bus driver also ran his own 32-acre vegetable farm!

We left the bay through 'the Narrows', setting sail to our next destination – the unique South Georgia Islands.

To be continued...

Helen Jukes-Hughes



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Full moons



Were you fortunate enough to see the first full moon of 2025 brighten up the night sky alongside Mars on Monday January 13th? Did you know that it was called the Wolf Moon, and that each full moon has its own name? Over the years people have assigned a name to each full moon, linked to aspects of life during the month in which they appeared. The names of the full moons come from a variety of sources, (some with different names sometimes) but mainly from Native American traditions because of their way of life. The cycle of the lunar phases were just as important a method of timekeeping as the longer solar cycle of the year.

January - Wolf Moon: howling of hungry wolves lamenting the scarcity of food in midwinter (also known as Old Moon and Ice Moon)

February – Snow Moon: because of typically very cold snowy weather in North America

March – Worm Moon: called after the worm trails that appear in the newly thawed ground

April – Pink Moon: named after a species of early blooming wildflower

May – Flower Moon: thanks to the abundant blooming that occurs

June – Strawberry Moon: time of harvesting strawberries

July – Buck Moon: male deer shed their antlers every year and begin to regrow them in July

August – Sturgeon Moon: when sturgeon fish are abundant in certain waters

September – Corn/Harvest Moon: gathering crops at the end of the summer season

October – Hunter’s Moon: ancient cultures hunted in preparation for the coming winter

November – Beaver Moon: beavers prepare for the approaching winter by building their dams and their huts

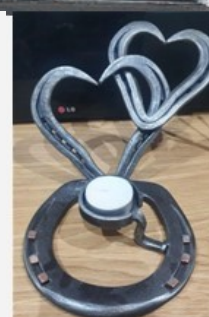
December – Cold Moon: the winter season intensifies and temperatures drop significantly

However as the lunar and modern calendars are of different lengths, sometimes there are more than 12 full moons in one year. The additional full moon is referred Blue Moon – however, the moon will not appear blue in colour!!

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- ≈ **Winter opening hours: 11am-4pm, Thursday–Saturday**



A Tribute to Robyn William Dowell

On the 17th of January, family and friends came together to celebrate the life of Robyn William Dowell—known to many simply as Rob or Dowell—a man who brought laughter, mischief, and unforgettable memories wherever he went. After the service in St Asaph Crematorium, hundreds gathered at Ruthin Rugby Club for a wake full of laughter, stories, and fond recollections. Later, the celebration continued at the Golden Lion in Llandyrnog, a place where Rob's larger-than-life presence will be sorely missed.

Born on the 12th of March, 1958, Rob was the son of Bill and Sheila Dowell. His father, a skilled joiner, inspired Rob to follow in his footsteps, while his mother's athleticism was undoubtedly the source of Rob's incredible speed. Rob grew up in Ruthin and a brother to Bryn, Wyn, Clwyd, Del and Rhys.

From an early age, Rob's athletic ability stood out. He was a talented sprinter, once completing the 100 metres in an impressive 10.7 seconds, earning him a spot on the board at Eirias Park in Colwyn Bay. His footballing skills were equally legendary, as he tore down the wing for Ruthin Town and Llandyrnog with blistering pace and a fiery determination. His teammates and friends still chuckle at stories of his red cards and playful disregard for the offside rule, but they'll never forget his talent, passion, and sense of humour on and off the pitch.

Rob's life wasn't without challenges. In 1995, a devastating brain haemorrhage changed everything, ending his football and joinery careers. But Rob's resilience and sense of humour never faltered. He faced life's difficulties head-on, becoming an inspiration to everyone who knew him. Despite losing much of his sight, he amazed everyone with his skill in darts and pool leagues—especially



when he turned up with his white stick and guide dog, Alba, at his side. Alba, his loyal “blonde female companion”, was a constant in Rob's life and their bond was something special. She accompanied him everywhere, from trips around town to countless evenings in the Golden Lion. Her calm presence balanced Rob's lively personality and she quickly became as much a part of the community as Rob himself.

Rob was also a man of music, often found belting out *Ring of Fire* on karaoke night or singing solos with Côr y Porthmyn with Bov on the organ. His cowboy boots, hat, and love for Westerns made him a local version of John Wayne. His cheeky one-liners and larger-than-life personality brought joy to everyone he met, and his love of a good laugh was contagious.

Despite his playful nature, Rob's love for his family was clear to all. He was immensely proud of his sons, Jamie and Ben, and adored his grandchildren—Levy, Jasper, Max, and Rylan—who were the light of his life. In his later years, Rob found happiness with Dora, his partner and best friend, who cared for him with unwavering love and patience. She was a rock in his life, and her support brought him great comfort in his final years.

Rob's passing leaves a void in the lives of his family, friends, and community, but the turnout at his wake was a testament to how much he was loved. The stories shared at Ruthin Rugby Club and the Golden Lion will keep his memory alive for years to come.

Rest easy, Rob. You were fast on your feet, sharp with your tongue, and unforgettable in every way. The laughter, memories, and stories will ensure your legend lives on.

Merfyn Parry

Our trip to New Zealand

For many years, it had always been our dream to visit New Zealand one day, and, when retirement eventually came, the time was ripe. After much planning, we ventured on our journey on November 6, last year. We flew to Singapore and stayed there for three nights – a beautiful, hot city and exceptionally clean. The Botanical Gardens and their wonderful collection of national orchids were impressive to say the least. And so was the tasty food on sale in different markets dotted around the city.

We then flew to Auckland in the northern island of New Zealand and stayed there for two nights, and hired a car for the next three and a half weeks.

Our first stop was Hamilton, to visit Marc and Nia – a couple from the Vale of Conwy who farm and live there with their four children. They were recently on the S4C programme *Cefn Gwlad*. We spent a very interesting afternoon in their company and had a great welcome.

We then travelled to Rotorua, famous for its hot geysers roaring up from the ground and the strong smell of sulphur in the air from so many of these thermal pools in the area. We did see one very special event – the Maori march objecting to the Government's intention to discuss an agreement where the Maoris would have less rights. They looked formidable with their leading group of Haka dancers.

We then reached Mount Taranaki National Park before eventually reaching Wellington to take the ferry to South Island. A lovely crossing and the Cook Strait a deep blue.

We stayed at Blenheim, and had an afternoon of wine-tasting in Wairau Valley – the famous Marlborough wine region. We had a wonderful time travelling in a mini-bus with a couple from Virginia and a couple from Brisbane.

We then travelled west – we had intended travelling down the coast to Queenstown, but

because of a landslide, the road was closed. We amended the plans and travelled through Arthur's Pass, and past Lake Tekapo – a beautiful and memorable place because of the lake's colour and acres of lupins surrounding it. We managed to get a glimpse of Mount Cook's snowy cap before reaching our next destination – Queenstown.



We stayed there for four nights – a beautiful city with a rich history. The first person to build a house there in 1836 was William Gilbert Rees, from Haverfordwest, South Wales. There is a monument in his memory in the town where he became a very influential man and was held in high esteem by everyone. From Queenstown, we had a bus ride to Milford Sound, and took a boat trip to see the spectacular waterfalls. We then travelled eastwards. One of the highlights here was Oamaru, where we saw over 200 blue penguins coming ashore as darkness fell, passing within a couple of yards to us!

We completed our adventure in New Zealand in Christchurch. An incredible city with its ancient and modern buildings skilfully intertwined after the rebuilding, following the terrible earthquake in 2011. Visiting the Quake City Museum was a very moving experience – listening to the evidence from some of the survivors and seeing the white marble wall with the names of the 183 people who lost their lives.

Our trip to New Zealand: ctd



Another striking building was the ‘Cardboard Church’ – a temporary modern, simple church, and it was a strange experience, being dressed in shorts and taking a photo of the manger scene! The streets were full of Christmas trees and decorations, in a temperature of 35 °C!

The last night before our return journey, it was so nice to meet up and have a pleasant time with Lowri, daughter of Emyr and Nan Lloyd, Ruthin and her partner Vin. A delightful end to a memorable month the other side of the world!

Richard and Iona Davies

Tuesday Club

Members of the Tuesday Club had a very enlightening talk in the January meeting from Eleri Jones of Citizens Advice, giving information on the allowances and benefits available. Examples were the attendance allowance, carer’s allowance, extra council tax reductions, and pension credit. Citizens Advice offers help in filling forms and offer a free benefits check, so that individuals can learn what they are eligible to claim.

A Citizens Advice representative is in attendance at the community room of the shop on Friday mornings, from 10 till 12. Call in for friendly, helpful, impartial and confidential advice. If you would like further details, contact Eleri Jones on 01824 719623 or advice@dcab.co.uk.

After Eleri’s talk, tea and biscuits were served and the raffle drawn. The members were reminded that the next meeting will be on Wednesday, 19 February.



Please keep your dog on a lead at all times in areas with livestock or wildlife. Lambing season and ground-nesting bird periods make this especially important.

Key points:

- Allowing your dog to chase or worry livestock is a criminal offence and could result in legal action. Farmers are permitted to protect their livestock, including by shooting dogs actively worrying animals.
- Dogs off leads can harm wildlife, particularly ground-nesting birds.

Protect livestock, wildlife, and your dog by acting responsibly.

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

Dyffryn chapel

Y Gymdeithas On Monday 6 January a Prayer Meeting full of blessings was held in the Vestry

On Monday 20 January Dafydd Evans introduced Cledwyn Ashford, a former football scout with Man Utd, Liverpool, Everton etc, now scouting for Wrexham FC. A very interesting and informative illustrated talk, having been once described 'as a North Wales legend when it comes to developing young talent in the region'. Hywel proposed the vote of thanks.



Happy birthday to Gwenan and Meilir, Pen y Bryn on their 21st birthday on January 18th.

Services

| | | |
|-------|-------|-------------------------------|
| 02/02 | 9.45 | Prayer meeting |
| 09/02 | 11.00 | Rev Andras Iago |
| 16/02 | 10.00 | Circuit service – Llanrhaeadr |
| 23/02 | 9.45 | Arwel Emlyn Jones |

Thanks to all who have contributed to this month's edition – all articles are gratefully appreciated.

The History Society

Film night in Llandyrnog!

There was a bumper turnout at the Llandyrnog and Llangwyfan Local History Society meeting on Wednesday 15th January in the Village Hall in Llandyrnog when a film "The Lady in the Wardrobe" was screened with free popcorn for all!

Members and visitors found out who the Lady was, what she was doing in the Wardrobe and what happened to her AND... there was a very surprising twist to the tale towards the end!

Tony Griffiths, a notable local documentary film-maker who also has a photography, picture framing and portrait studio business and shop in Bridge St. Denbigh, introduced the film which he



produced under the name North Wales Film Makers with the support of good friends and local volunteers. Some of the local actors in the film were also present at the meeting for the screening. The film centres on events during WW2 and afterwards.

The next society meeting will be on Wednesday 19th March when Paul Evans will give a talk titled Thomas Pennant, naturalist, traveller and writer.

All are welcome to society meetings with members paying only £8 for the yearly programme of 4 meetings and visitors/non-members £3 per meeting. Light refreshments are served for all at the end of every meeting.

For additional details or queries or to join the society, or volunteer to be part of the projects, please e-mail Cymdeithas Hanes Lleol Llandyrnog & Llangwyfan Local History Society on llangwyfanhistory@hotmail.com.

It's not long until showtime

Well, I suppose that sounds a bit odd as I am writing this in January when most of us have done very little in the garden. Nevertheless in a few weeks time the planning process for this year's flower show in August will begin.

There is much to be done, working out the list of classes, arranging judges, refreshments, stewards and perhaps most critically, raising funds from advertisers and sponsors, without whom there would be no show. All being well the result will be a successful show, bigger and better than you would expect in a village the size of Llandyrnog. I suppose as secretary I would say that wouldn't I?

Much of the work will get done routinely but there will be one big difference this year as John Rowlands, our Chairman for many years, has stepped down. Fortunately we shall still benefit from his input and experience, but we are looking for someone to take on the role of Chairman/woman. Ideally we need someone who knows the village well, doesn't mind being 'front of house' for the show, is bilingual and has an interest in gardening. However, none of those things is essential as the new person doesn't have to be a replica of John (there couldn't be anyone!).

Perhaps there is someone reading this who would be willing to take on the task, or perhaps you know someone who would be suitable. If so, why not have a word with them. This doesn't have to be a commitment for life, we would be happy for someone to take it on for a couple of years or so. John will be pleased to talk through details of the show day routine. If anyone would like an informal chat about the role then please contact either John on 07879813940 or me at Cross Keys, 01824 790768 or send an e-mail to llandyrnogshow@gmail.com. We would also welcome any new volunteers for our group, particularly anyone with experience of fundraising via advertising.

Roger Warner
Show Secretary

Ysgol Bryn Clwyd

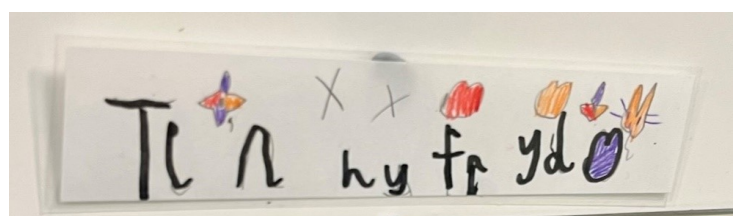
Dosbarth Iau started the new year with ukulele lessons with Denbighshire Music Co-operative. They enjoyed it so much and were playing along with Bob Marley by the end of it.



Nel the dog has been back in school listening to the children read, thanks to Mrs Godfrey for bringing her along.



The infants have been learning to give compliments in Welsh and made special compliment signs which they have put up all around the school.





The Wright Life



February provides the time to undertake any large projects and this year I wanted to concentrate on the front garden. It's always overlooked and neglected, with a beech perimeter hedge to the lane and a long holly hedge between myself and my neighbour. There is a large, raised bed and the 'bakehouse' building which is very overgrown with old ivy, jasmine and clematis.

A set of collapsed stone steps leads up to the upper floor, but were unusable as the ivy had dislodged many of the stones. The raised bed is dominated by a Bay bush, Buddleia, Berberis and a Philadelphus which I had bought as a small variety and unfortunately turned out to be a large one. However, before the work started and when the weather was too cold to be outside – an indoor job was to service and sharpen my pruning tools such as secateurs, loppers and shears to get them ready for action.

My poor secateurs haven't been the same since an 'incident' in which they were used to open a bag of cement. I am not pointing a finger and all I will say is, 'it wasn't me'. I was mortified; but as the chap wasn't a gardener he didn't understand how attached you get to your secateurs. I have been oiling and cleaning them frequently with liberal amounts of WD40 and this has loosened the hinge mechanism, and they are gradually easing, much to my relief.

Most blades can be finely sanded with steel wool or an emery cloth, as it removes the fine rust. I inherited a good hand-held sharpening stone, but nothing compares to the large round stone which was connected to the PTO (power take-off shaft) at the rear of an old tractor. This provided the power to turn the stone at a frightening speed and allowed you to finely sharpen the blades.

Today it would be considered a health and safety nightmare, but historically people didn't bother. No PPE (Personal Protective

Equipment) was worn and there were no guards fitted.

Once a year my father used to take all his garden implements up to our neighbour to use this lethal apparatus. It certainly made the job easier and was far less effort than manual sharpening on a



whetstone. Alternatively, another option was to use an angle grinder, which from my experience is rather scary and not for the faint-hearted. Today I use a whetstone, wearing sturdy gloves and eye protectors. However, never ever test the sharpness by running your finger along the blade. Instead, gently stroke across the blade with your finger at 90 degrees.

At last, I am all set up to tackle the front garden. However, we soon found that more robust tools were needed and so a friendly chainsaw man did all the hard work for me. Now it's clear I can have a think about new shrubs or ornamental grasses. The raised area dries out quickly in the summer so I think a variety of Miscanthus is the best choice as they can be sensational and architectural giving a stunning display with different coloured varieties and by late summer fabulous feathery panicles. I may also try some Cornus, as this provides dramatic colour from the stems in the winter. I feel a garden centre trip coming on or a browse on the computer or later in the year there maybe some plant stalls at local events which always provide a bargain.

Hazel

Tom running ultramarathons

Tell us about your early years.

I grew up on the family farm, Pentrefelin, and have many fond memories of my childhood surrounded by the countryside. As the third of five siblings, life on the farm was always busy and full of energy. While I loved living there, I quickly realized that farming wasn't the career I wanted to pursue. After finishing secondary school at Ysgol Brynhyfryd, I decided to study Marine Geography at Cardiff University, where my passion for the environment grew. Today, I'm a qualified teacher living in Carmarthen and working in Port Talbot, and I'm grateful for the experiences that have shaped who I am today.

When did your interest in sports begin and especially running?

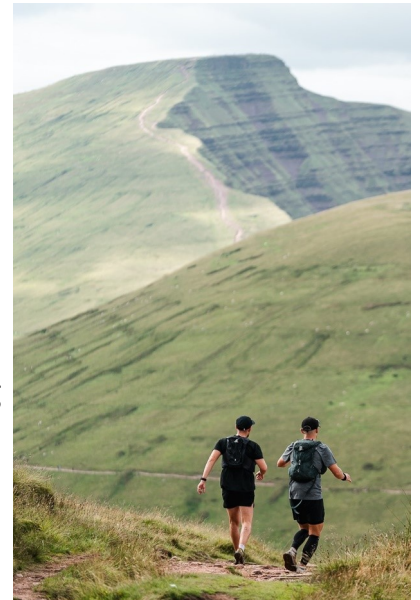
From a young age, I've always had a passion for sports, playing both football and rugby for the Ruthin youth teams. Sport was a big part of my life growing up, and it taught me the importance of teamwork and dedication. During lockdown, I took up running to stay active, and soon found myself thoroughly enjoying it. This newfound love for running sparked an interest in triathlons, and I began entering races. Since then, I haven't looked back, and triathlon has become a major part of my life, pushing me to challenge myself and stay fit.

What about your latest, big challenge?

Recently, I had the incredible experience of running my first ultramarathon—the Beacons Way 100-mile race in the stunning Brecon Beacons. It was undoubtedly the toughest race I've ever taken on, testing my endurance, determination, and mental strength in ways I never expected. Despite



the challenges, I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and pushed myself further than I thought possible. To my surprise, I crossed the finish line first, completing the race in a time of 25 hours and 50 minutes. It was a truly unforgettable achievement, and I'm incredibly proud and grateful of the support I received from friends and family along the journey.



What's the next challenge?

After completing the Beacons Way 100-mile ultramarathon, I'm setting my sights on an even bigger challenge—the UTMB Mont Blanc race. Known as one of the most prestigious and toughest ultra-trail races in the world, the UTMB spans 106 miles and includes over 10,000 meters of elevation gain, taking runners through the stunning mountain landscapes of France, Italy, and Switzerland. I'd love to experience the camaraderie and resilience that come with such a demanding race, and crossing the finish line would be a dream come true for me.

Tom Foulkes, formerly of Pentrefelin Farm



A Journey to South Africa and Namibia

Over two weeks in November and December, I was fortunate enough to go to South Africa and Namibia as a member of a group of 20 people from every corner of Britain. I started the journey by flying from Heathrow to Cape Town, and spent two days there to become acquainted with the group and the city. It was a beautiful city, the temperature being about 35 °C. We visited the market and had an afternoon on the beach. We saw the huge 'Table Mountain' with its flat top in the distance, but with the temperature so high, we did not climb it.

Next day we travelled to the east to the Stellenbosch region, with its renowned South African wine. It is a most beautiful region with its vineyards growing a variety of grapes which produce a variety of different wines. We had a conducted tour of the Waterford vineyard, had a 5-course lunch and tasted 6 different wines!

We travelled northwards during the next few days with the temperature increasing and the air becoming much drier. That's when we went on our first safari, staying in lodges in the nature reserve. The first animals that I saw were the hippos – they seemed very happy in the lake in front of the lodge. We also saw elephants, rhinos, ostriches, zebras, water buffalos and many other kinds of animals.

We then experienced a bungee jump – the third highest bungee jump in the world! It was both a horrid and exciting experience, and one that I'll be happy not to repeat!

Following this, we travelled to Addo National Reserve to see a herd of elephants. We were allowed to drive around the park on a morning and evening safari, seeing more elephants and many other wild African animals. We then travelled further northwards, the landscape becoming hotter and more wilderness. We stayed overnight on a farm which hadn't seen rain for over two



years! Our next adventure was canoeing 30 km down the Orange River, the boundary between South Africa and Namibia, and sleeping under the stars – a wonderful experience. Another exhilarating experience was hot air ballooning over the wilderness! Then over the last few days, we travelled into Namibia and stayed in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, for two days.

A most wonderful experience and making very good friends.

Hywel Davies

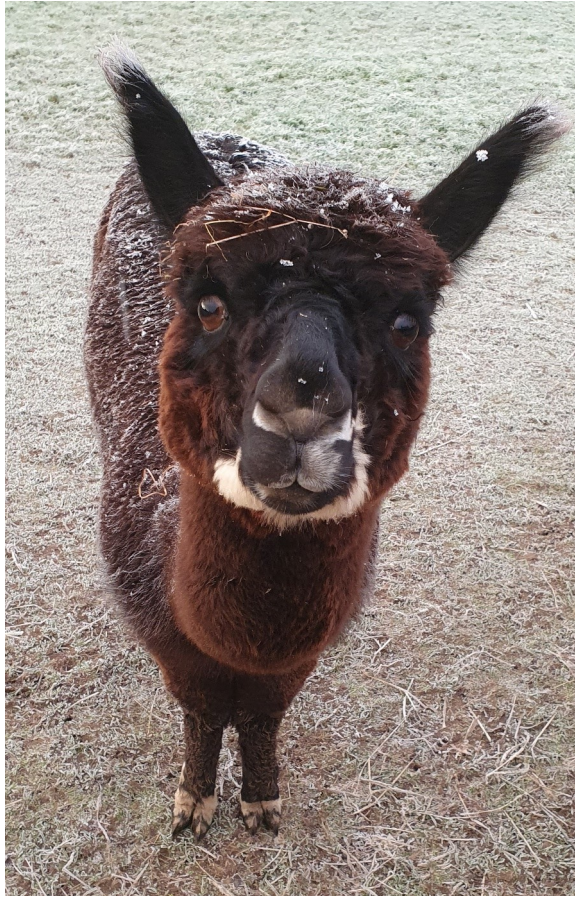


Tales of an Alpaca

Hello! My name is Cedric! I am a 3 year old Huacaya Alpaca. I was born in South Wales, but have been living here since 2022 when I was about 6 months old and am one of Edith and Mark's pets.

I am mainly dark brown in colour, but have white 'socks' and a white beard. I live with my friends Samuel, Dougal and Harvey and collectively we are known as a 'herd'. (They might introduce themselves one day!)

My diet is mainly grass and hay, but I also get an occasional treat (slice of carrot!) and I eat a small amount of special alpaca dry feed that I really, REALLY enjoy! When I hear my owners in the shed preparing the feed I run around like a child in a sweet shop! It's full of vitamins and minerals to make sure I am as healthy as possible. Did I mention I really enjoy this feed?! I like it so much that I scoff my own portion up quickly before running around to the other troughs and trying to steal the other boys' portions! That causes arguments and we occasionally spit at each other! Did you know that we produce different types of spit? The most common one is an 'air spit' where we simply 'spit' air as a bit of a warning. But if that's not heeded, we spit green stuff from our tummies which stinks! We don't usually spit at humans, but unfortunately Edith was in the wrong place at the wrong time one day and got caught in the crossfire when we had an argument! The funny thing is, she had only popped out to say hello to us before heading to work but her hair got covered in green spit!! Oops! She had to go back inside and wash her hair three times



before her long hair stopped stinking!! Her boss didn't believe her reason for being late until he saw the photos!!

I have a cheeky personality and I'm always very curious – I enjoy staring at the postie when he comes down the drive and chasing squirrels around the paddock. In the summer, we enjoy dipping out feet in the paddling pool and rolling around in dust baths.

Well, I must go now - it's time for me to go and munch on hay

Toodlepip!

Edith Price



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Matters discussed in the January meeting of Llandyrnog Community Council

- ◆ The community policeman was not present however there were reports of anti social behaviour on the multi use games area late at night and it will be asked whether the PCSOs could increase their presence.
- ◆ Wendy Jones from Keep Wales Tidy had numerous packages available for food-growing packages and would like to be involved with the allotment project to the rear of Nant Glyd. The community council has enabled a meeting and is awaiting feedback as to how the project was going to be rolled out to the whole community.
- ◆ The bench which is going to be placed opposite the factory was due for delivery the week commencing 27th. However the base will need to be constructed first and this is in hand with Jones Bros.
- ◆ The planning for an outhouse at Old Coach House at Plas Bennett may require a site visit and referred to the full DCC planning committee.
- ◆ Water issues on the road from Cross Keys to Capel Dyffryn – surface water running down from the lane. Whilst DCC had attended to deal with the matter as a short term fix, a longer term solution is required. It was requested whether or not DCC could attend to the gullies either side of Maes y Wern dip – gullies need cleaning and drains jetting. Serious concerns about the condition of the road surface leading towards Glan y Wern Isaf primarily due to surface water damage – matter to be reported to DCC and hopefully given priority when resources are available. There is extreme dissatisfaction at the standard of repairs to potholes around Sgubor Efa.
- ◆ The bridge crossing the stream on the Nant Lewis Alyn road has collapsed and DCC to check whether or not this stretch is adopted or not – work in progress.
- ◆ There was a request for a grit bin at Celynog which would allow residents to assist during extreme weather conditions.
- ◆ The request for a precept had been submitted to DCC well within the deadline and confirmation received.
- ◆ Electric supply to Cocoa Rooms – it was decided to switch to BG Lite who offered a three- year fixed price deal.
- ◆ Everyone was urged to vote in the Countryside Alliance competition both Shop and Tŷ Ceffyl Bach having been nominated in separate categories.

Becky Gittins, MP for Clwyd East

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