



THE FIVE VILLAGES CHRONICLE

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ISSUE NO. 157
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SPRING (MARCH) 2026
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EDITORIAL

This issue of the Five Villages Chronicle records the sad passing away of one of our most loved contributors, Norman Closs-Parry. His status within our community is confirmed not only by the 'official' tribute, but also where he is mentioned in other articles by his friends and admirers.

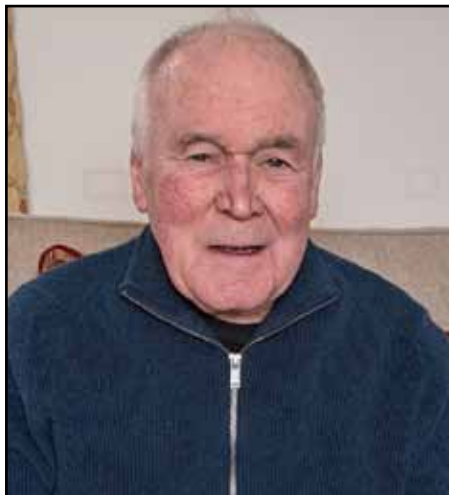
The Five Villages Chronicle committee work hard to continue producing a magazine which focuses on the life of our community and would welcome any contributions from our readers: stories, events, photographs, favourite family recipes, etc.

This is *your* magazine and your feedback is essential to enable us to continue producing a publication which will include something of interest for you all. Is there anything you would like to see included in future issues?

Can you help us to keep the Five Villages Chronicle a fresh and interesting magazine which will be of interest to all our recipients? Send your contributions or thoughts to: editor@5villages.org.uk or post on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/5villageschronicle/

We look forward to your responses.

BOB BROWN



It was just two years after the new Five Villages Chronicle had published its very first edition.

The treasurer was unwell and couldn't carry on. The call for help was answered by Bob Brown of Carmel who joined the team to produce the next issue.

In those early days it was a case of 'All hands on deck' to collate and staple the sheets of paper on tables set out in the village hall.

39 years later Bob was still the treasurer as issue 156 was rolling off the press and through letterboxes in Carmel, Gorsedd, Lloc, Pantasaph and Whitford.

This remarkable story of a community project designed to link the five villages

COVER PICTURE

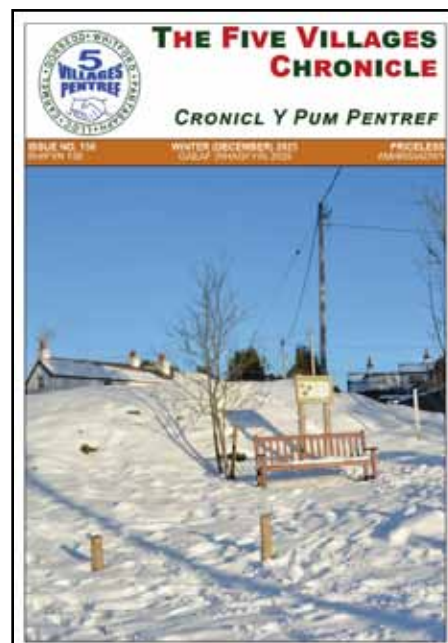
Snowdrops. Many thanks to Steven Jones.

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in the Whitford Community area is due, in large part, to the dedication Bob has shown over all those years in managing its finances which has enabled it to develop into the much admired community magazine it is today.

Bob's involvement has been central to the Five Villages Chronicle. Cheques to sign, invoices to send to every advertiser, annual audit to be done and presented to the AGM. Copies are sent to local MPs and AMs and those who request and pay for a posted copy. On top of that Bob has also



delivered regularly to a round in Carmel.

Changes in finance and banking practices have developed rapidly over recent years and Bob has recognised an opportunity to step back and take a well-earned rest. He leaves the Five Village Chronicle in good financial health as he 'hands on the torch' to Melanie.

The Five Villages Chronicle Committee, on behalf of the whole community, wish to express its sincere appreciation to Bob's immense contribution and wish him well in his retirement.



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NORMAN CLOSS PARRY: A TRIBUTE TO A FULL AND WORTHWHILE LIFE



Norman Closs Parry, who passed away suddenly but peacefully at Ysbyty Maelor on the 6th of February 2026, was a man whose life was as rich and textured as the Snowdonia landscape that shaped him. Born 85 years ago in the village of Fachwen, nestled above Llyn Padarn, he was the son of a nurse and slate miner. These rugged roots, combined with the spiritual influence of the chapel and a deep immersion in the Welsh Bible and poetry, formed the bedrock of a character that was both charismatic and profoundly rooted in tradition.

Educated at Ysgol Brynrefail and Bangor Normal College, Norman became an inspirational and highly respected force in education. He first gained widespread acclaim for his work at Rhes Y Cae CP School, which he saved from closure by embracing the school and community. Drawing on the philosophies of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Maria Montessori, he pioneered a curriculum where children built knowledge by "doing". His famous sheep trails became the literal backbone of the school's learning, allowing pupils to experience their locality first-hand.

This innovative spirit continued at Merllyn CP School in Bagillt, where as Headteacher he developed village-centred environmental trails. Under his leadership, standards rose significantly as he created a school where children and the community were truly valued and respected. His success led to an advisory role for the Education Authority, where he spread his methods of empathy and realistic goals across the county, particularly within science and natural history.

Norman was a man of deep faith and tireless community spirit, remaining active through to the end. A loyal deacon at Eglwys Gymraeg Bro Treffynnon, and lay preacher, he was known for his inspirational preaching and homilies. He served as the Chair of the Thomas Pennant Society since its inception and was a fixture in Welsh societies dedicated to nature, literature and poetry. Most recently, he was pivotal in the preparations for the Thomas Pennant 300 Centenary, an event he approached with immense pride and excitement, contributing significantly to the planned celebrations and publications.

Norman made a tireless literary contribution through his regular columns in local newspapers like the *Glannau* and *The Five Villages*. A man of profound observation, he used these platforms to share his lifelong passions for natural history and poetry through unbroken contributions that became a staple for local readers. His ability to translate the beauty of the natural world into the written word was a natural extension of his belief that his life experiences should be shared, as seen in his work published across dozens of other publications.

Beyond the classroom and chapel, Norman was an avid rugby, fishing, football and cricket enthusiast. His passion for sport was legendary; he was a founder member of the Carmel Cricket Club, recently recognised with a Lifelong Honorary Membership. He also shared his love for rugby with his family, often making trips to the Millennium Stadium and beyond.

At the heart of everything was his family, the true centre of his world. He was a devoted family man who cherished the time and experiences shared with his loved ones as the most important events of his life. This journey was shared hand-in-hand with his late, wonderful wife, Beti; he often remarked that he could not have achieved all he did without her constant love and support. Together, they raised two daughters, Heulwen and Gwawr, whom they nurtured with immense pride and devotion.

His role as Taid to Mali, Ela, Gwenllian, and Idris brought him a unique kind of joy, filled with so much love and fun. He took a deep personal pride in watching them discover their own talents, seeing his own passions mirrored in their success. He was moved to see Ela fulfil the ultimate dream of playing cricket for Wales, and to watch Idris represent North East Wales in rugby, carrying forward the sporting legacy he so loved. He would listen and watch with pride as Gwenni and Mali developed their musical, performing and artistic talents.

Norman's guiding philosophy was his motto: *Addysg Lawn Addysg Werthfawr* (a full education is a worthwhile education). He was a unique, passionate, and highly respected man who made an incredible and indelible impression on everyone he met. He was a "full life" that touched many, leaving a legacy of service, culture, and community that will be sorely missed.

Colin Roberts and Heulwen Closs – Sharp
(On behalf of the Thomas Pennant Society)



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**THE FOLLOWING CRIMES HAVE
BEEN REPORTED TO THE NORTH
WALES POLICE OVER THE
PAST THREE MONTHS, THAT
HAVE OCCURRED WITHIN THE
COMMUNITY COUNCIL AREA:**

Carmel - 1 x Anti social behaviour / 1 x Criminal damage / 4 x Violence

Gorsedd - 1 x Criminal damage / 1 x Other theft / 1 x Public order / 1 x Violence

Lloc - 1 x Criminal damage / 1 x Violence

Lloc (Services) – 2 x Anti social behaviour / 2 x Violence

Pantasaph – 1 x Public order

Whitford - No crimes reported

**WHITFORD COUNCIL BUDGET –
2026 / 2027:**

The Whitford Community Council have agreed their budget for the financial year 2026 to 2027. The precept will increase from £62,500.00 to £68,000.00 – an increase of £5,500.00. The Band D property charge will be £57.58, an increase of £5.20p a year (9.93% - 44p extra per month).

In reaching the decision to increase the budget the Council Members took into consideration, the following: (1) To support the additional costs for the twelve monthly litter picking contract, the children's summer bilingual play scheme has increased by £1,322.00 – Whitford is the only Council to hold the popular play scheme during both the morning and afternoon periods (2) The street lighting electricity costs have increased by £4,022.00 a year (3) The children's play scheme and electricity increases account for 6% of the 9.93% increase (4) The remainder of the percentage increase will be utilised to continue with the Council's general expenses and ear-marked reserves – which include the continuing financial assistance in providing the Carmel Village Hall and the

various local Groups and Committees; this will ensure there are recreational and other activities available for residents (5) Over the past three years the Council have provided funding for new children's play equipment in Carmel (£11,000.00) and Whitford (£15,000.00) - total cost £26,000.00 - which has resulted in a decrease in the Council's general and emergency reserves.

INCONSIDERATE PARKING:

Following complaints of inconsiderate parking in a number of areas within the community a resident asked the Community Council to consider the installation of parking enforcement measures (Yellow lines). Whilst the request was for the parking restrictions in the Gorsedd area, the Council are aware that this concern exists in a number of areas within the five villages. The Council took into consideration the following: Rule 242 of the Highway Code States: You must not leave your vehicle in a dangerous position or where it causes any unnecessary obstruction: Rule 243 of the Highway Code States: You should not stop or park opposite or within 10 meters (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorized parking space: The enforcement of the above Highway Rules is currently with the North Wales Police: Should a Traffic Regulation Order (Yellow lines) be made for the area, this would then be enforceable by the Flintshire County Council's Enforcement Team. This Team do not operate after 5.30pm: The comment from the County Highways Officer stated: Having taken an initial look, it's likely that this location may score relatively low on the assessment matrix: The Community Council could not justify the spending of public funds between £4,000 to £5,000 to alleviate parking concerns at a junction. In particular, as there are many, many junctions within the five villages that the

Council receive complaints in relation to inconsiderate parking.

**WHITFORD INTERPRETATION
BOARD:**



The interpretation board which is sited near the entrance to Ysgol Y Llan in Whitford has become water damaged (as photograph) - which has resulted in the bilingual information being almost illegible. Unfortunately, the printing firm who produced the signage are not able to trace the template. Should any resident have a clear photograph of the interpretation board bilingual information prior to its deterioration, the Community Council would appreciate a copy. Please contact the Clerk to the Council – as below details.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS BROUGHT
THE FOLLOWING CONCERNS,
AND OTHER MATTERS TO THE
ATTENTION OF FLINTSHIRE
STREET SCENE:**

(1) Parc Gorsedd: Concerns with inconsiderate parking (Reported to both County Highways and North Wales Police by residents) (2) Carmel Hill (Carmel side): Overgrown hedge causing concern (3) Whitford: Near big trees – pot holes (4) Flooding: Area of the bend at Maen Achwyfan. The Community Council are seeking the area be inspected with a view to a more permanent solution to alleviate the flooding (5) Gritting: From area of London Road to Maen Achwyfan the roadway was not gritted during adverse weather. Request for this roadway be added to the gritting schedule (6) Pot Holes: Whitford

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Road to Tre Mostyn (7) Signage: Tre Eden Owain Junction – Whitford to Mostyn Road. Request for the signage in this area be considered for review and renewal

PLANNING APPLICATIONS:

The Community Council Members provide their observations to the Flintshire Planning Authority on all planning applications received within their Community. Full details of the observations made can be viewed in the Minutes of each Council meeting, which are displayed on the Council's web site, or from the Clerk – as per contact details below: (1) Application number: FUL/000828/25 - for proposed erection of portal frame steel building for cattle housing, at Rhydwen Farm, Pen Ffordd Llan, Lloc (2) Application number: FUL/000831/25 - for proposed construction of replacement dwelling and associated works in lieu of existing dwelling and ancillary structures, at Ivy House, Tan Y Lloc Lane, Lloc (3) Application number: FUL/000831/25 – for proposed construction of replacement dwelling and associated works in lieu of existing dwelling and ancillary structures, at Ivy House, Tan Y Lloc Lane, Lloc (4) Application number: FUL/001082/25 – for proposed Re-Ordering to Downing Cottage to include re-roofing, extension work and the erection of a new garage, at Downing Cottage, Whitford.

PLANNING DECISIONS:

No planning decisions received from Flintshire County Council:

APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND DONATIONS:

The Community Council have granted the following financial assistance since the last edition of the Five Villages Chronicle: £500.00 - Wales Air Ambulance (Annual donation) /

£2,000.00 - Carmel Village Hall (Annual donation) / £1,000.00 - Holywell Leisure Centre (Annual donation)

R. Phillip Parry
Clerk & Financial Officer to Whitford Community Council
Tel: 01352 720547
E-mail: clerk@whitford-council.wales
Web site: www.whitford-council.wales

STRANGE SKY AT NIGHT (Stephen Hooson)

Like many people in the villages we are lucky and privileged to be able to walk our pet dogs in great countryside and on well marked paths.

I start my day fairly early. I'm out for seven am to work but I usually walk my dogs at about 5.30am towards the top of Mwdwl Eithin then across the fields towards the White Quarry or in the field behind the Calvary Woods and cross.

It's all pretty quiet at this time and for about six months of the year it is a walk in the dark. You will be surprised to know that more often than not it is dry but often blowing. One of the advantages is that on those clear nights you can see a fantastic display in the cosmos.



On Wednesday the 10th of December it was a cool pleasant morning at about

5.45am walking East. There was a little cloud but the stars in the gaps were bright.

There was nothing unusual about my walk the dogs were rooting following scent trails and enjoying the freedom as there was no livestock about. I happened to look up to get my bearings on the tell tale constellations only to see something which required a double take.

Looking East I saw about eighteen stars but they were perfectly aligned. This was unusual, I couldn't really explain it so I attempted a photograph in the dark. I was lucky I managed to capture what I saw which you can see from the photograph printed. They were high and I got this perspective from a cloud which passed to break up the line in the middle.

I'm not superstitious person or that excitable but I couldn't explain what I had just seen. The spectacle lasted for what seemed like a few minutes then it seemed to collapse as the sky just brightened a fraction.

As soon as I returned home I went online to see who I should tell about this observation.

I don't know where I navigated but I was a little disappointed when the second site I visited told me not to report this if it looked like one of the photographs shown.

I looked down to see a similar picture of what was called a satellite starlink. No space invaders, no curious ET'S to show the way but just another act of humankind's science and development. This one probably something to do with Elon Musk.

Nonetheless it was an unusual observation which I am happy to share and one I will not likely see again very soon.



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1ST CARMEL BROWNIES (Sharon Jones)

My favourite term of the year with the Brownies has been full of excitement!

We welcomed our new young Leader Emily who was a former Carmel Rainbow. She's been a big hit with the girls and a godsend to us leaders, a natural leader in the making.

The darker evenings, beautiful autumn colours, and festive celebrations like Halloween, Bonfire Night, and Remembrance Sunday have kept us busy and energised.

The Brownies have been working on the Be Well theme, along with earning their Pumpkin Challenge badge. The Be Well theme focuses on looking after ourselves—staying safe, healthy, and happy. We had so much fun during our session making armpit fudge, and trying to squash the mixture under our arms turned out to be both messy and hilarious! It was definitely one of the funniest nights we've had.



Halloween was the perfect opportunity to tie in with our Pumpkin Challenge badge. We kicked things off with a fun craft session, creating our own pumpkin decorations. Then, we had a thrilling pumpkin hunt in the dark—though, as it turns out, Brown Owl had forgotten where some of the pumpkins were hidden, which made the challenge even more exciting!

Bonfire Night came right after Halloween, and even though our session was held on the 5th of November, we still had an impressive turnout of 18 girls! They got creative decorating biscuits with their own bonfire designs, using chocolate fingers, icing, and strawberry laces. To finish off the evening, we headed outside to light sparklers while watching the fireworks light up the sky over the Wirral.

Remembrance Sunday is a significant date on our calendar, and it was heartwarming to see so many young faces at the church this year. We had a fantastic turnout from Carmel Girlguiding, with all three sections represented. A special mention goes to the 11 Brownies who attended the service at Gorsedd Church, with Rose carrying the flag and Alaw standing up to read. While it's always lovely to see the girls at church, we make sure to remind them that Remembrance Sunday is about honouring the bravery and sacrifices of those who have served our

nation. One of our Brownies, Martha, even took part in the Holywell parade alongside her mum (a Squirrel Leader) and her brother.



Our busy term continued with the Brownies being invited to a charity fundraiser hosted by Carmel Guides. The event was in support of the RNLI, and it was wonderful to see so many people come together for such a great cause. A few parents stayed for the talk and enjoyed learning about how every donation helps support the lifesaving work of the RNLI.



If anybody is looking to gain experience in volunteering, or if your daughters are looking to gain hours for their D of E or University applications the please drop me an email.

(Sharon Jones, Carmelbrownies2024@outlook.com)

1ST CARMEL GUIDES

Carmel Girl Guides have been enthusiastically taking part in the Girlguiding Cymru RNLI Mayday Challenge, a programme designed to help young people develop confidence and knowledge around water safety. Throughout the challenge, the girls explored a range of key safety messages. They learned how to recognise and explain the different warning signs, symbols and flags that might be seen at beaches or inland waterways, and discussed why each one is important. Working in small groups, they took part in role-play activities and problem-solving tasks where they considered how they would respond to various real-life water-related dilemmas, helping them build practical decision-making skills.

The second section of the challenge focused on celebrating the RNLI's proud history and its ongoing work saving lives at sea. To bring this to life, the Guides visited Flint RNLI, where they met volunteers, learned about the equipment used during rescues, and gained a deeper understanding of the dedication and bravery involved in keeping people safe on the water. The visit left a strong impression on the girls, who were

eager to find a way to give back to the station that had welcomed them so warmly.

Inspired by what they had learned, the 1st Carmel Guides decided to organise a fundraising event in support of Flint RNLI. The girls threw themselves into the planning, taking responsibility for different stalls and activities. They baked a wonderful selection of cakes and biscuits, which proved very popular, and—together with their leaders—set up a raffle, toy stalls and a treasure hunt to ensure there was something for everyone to enjoy.

The event was extremely well attended by Brownies, parents and local community councillor Richard Newsome, all keen to support the Guides' efforts. Thanks to the girls' hard work, enthusiasm and teamwork, an impressive £226.50 was raised in just one hour. This achievement not only demonstrated their commitment to the RNLI's lifesaving mission but also showcased the positive impact that young people can have when they work together for a good cause.



1ST CARMEL RAINBOWS AND CARMEL GIRLGUIDING

We had a fantastic turnout for the Remembrance service at St. Paul's Gorsedd, and it was truly heartwarming to see so many of the girls come together to pay their respects. The church was beautifully decorated with poppies, creating a poignant and reflective atmosphere. The service itself was a touching tribute to the bravery and sacrifices of those who have served our country, and it was a privilege for all the children to be part of such an important occasion. The congregation was incredibly welcoming, making all the young attendees feel comfortable and included. It was a wonderful opportunity for the girls to experience the significance of Remembrance Sunday, and it was clear how much it meant to them to be involved in this tradition.



CARMEL BOWLING CLUB (Jane Bowness)

The snowdrops are out and spring is nearly here along with the 2026 bowling season. Our green will open for the season on 6th April - Easter Monday.

Last season was enjoyable, helped by some stunning weather; we all had gentle, sustained exercise in the sunshine. We had some competitions, some practice and benefited from meeting old friends and new.

If we were not playing too well at any one time we could always gaze out to the gorgeous view of the Dee estuary which is below us.



Playing crown green bowling is challenging - the green looks flat but there is a gentle slope which makes bowling intriguing, frustrating, satisfying and fun.

Why not come and join us, you would be most welcome, any age and level of expertise, we can lend you the bowls to get going with. You don't need any equipment,

just bring yourself (in flat shoes or trainers). Once you are a member you have access to the green and clubhouse whenever it suits you. You could also be a team player, match days are generally Thursdays.

We are situated behind Carmel primary school- Ysgol Bro Carmel County Primary School, and from 6th April you will find us practising from 4.30pm (4.00pm in school holidays) on Mondays and Tuesday and from 2.00pm Thursday when we have a home match, first home match of the season is 23rd April.

You would be welcome to try out your bowling skills, if you are a novice you will be offered coaching to help you improve and get more out of your game. So join us at any of the times mentioned above or if you can't make it then but would still like to come and talk to us contact me, Jane, by email jane.bowness@btinternet.com and we can arrange a more suitable time for you.

CARMEL CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Gareth Roberts)

DO YOU HAVE A PURPOSE?

Many people wander through this life without knowing what their intended purpose may be. Of course, this is a fundamental philosophical question that many people have a subjective theory about depending on personal beliefs, cultural background and experiences. A depressing statistic is that many people

believe that life has no purpose at all!

There was a wealthy businessman who wanted to buy his mum a unique present for her birthday, something that would outshine all her other presents. He spots an advert for a bird that has a 4000-word vocabulary, can speak several languages and can sing three operatic arias. He immediately buys the bird for £50 000 and has it delivered to his mum. The next day he rang his mum and said "What did you think of the bird?" His mum replied "It was delicious."

As a Christian, the Bible teaches me that this wonderful gift of life has a purpose but unfortunately, like the businessman's mum, not many know what it is.

Our purpose is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

You can only glorify God by becoming a Christian which means you accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and saviour.

This life is a wonderful gift, but it is fleeting like the flowers of the field, here today and gone tomorrow. But God offers not only purpose in this life but a glorious eternal life when we quickly pass from this world into the next.

If you are questioning your purpose, come and find out what Jesus Christ can do for you through our services in Carmel Village Hall every Sunday at 5pm.

Watch out for our Good News Charity Quizzes usually on the second Saturday of the month. Everyone welcome.

Also, you are all invited to our Easter Service, Sunday 5th April at 5pm.



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A NEW SEASON BECKONS

At the time of writing (mid February) everybody connected with Carmel Cricket Club is starting to look forward to the forthcoming 2026 season. Committee members have been busy throughout the winter months making preparations for what promises to be another exciting season for the club. Last season was a success both on and off the field, and the challenge is now to continue to develop and grow in accordance with the club's principles of inclusion, participation, and community involvement.

Ben Sim will once again captain the men's First XI. Ben is a skilful player and captain who has led the team with great success in recent seasons. The men's Second XI will be captained by Dan Stuchfield, and Rick Kirkham will be

vice-captain. Both these individuals will be keen to develop the strong foundations set by former captain Cameron Ackroyd in recent seasons.

Carmel Women's and Girls' team will be captained by Carol Owen and will have two vice-captains, Jo Kirkham and Tracey Noakes. The success of this team since its formation four years ago has been a real source of pride for Carmel Cricket Club. The squad continues to grow and develop, and this process is set to continue under the captaincy of Carol Owen who has been a member of the team from the start.

Good luck to all these teams for the 2026 season, and please remember that the club always offers a warm welcome to any prospective new players of all ages and abilities. We are an inclusive and friendly club.

At the time of writing, the exact details of the club's junior teams for next season had yet to be finalised, but there will be an under 9 team and an under 15 girls team. Again, participation is a key element of the club's junior section, and the aim is to develop and encourage young cricketers in a fun and friendly way.

GROUND IMPROVEMENTS

The club has done further work to improve the drainage system on the field over the winter months. It has also replaced the water tank and heating

system by using solar panels instead of propane.

BEREAVEMENTS

Everybody connected with Carmel Cricket Club was saddened to hear about the recent passing of Norman Closs-Parry. 'Closs' as he was widely known was a founder member of the club and played in Carmel's first ever game. Prior to this he had played cricket for clubs like Prestatyn and Northop Hall and had also represented Caernarfonshire Colts. In recent years Closs enjoyed watching Carmel play and could often be seen sitting alongside his close friend, Paul Brighton, at Pen-y-Gelli on a summer's afternoon. Everybody at the club offers their deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Closs.

The club was also saddened to hear about the recent passing of Mike Dowling, father of Carol Owen, our women's team captain. Mike visited the ground several times over the years with his wife Rhian and other family members to support the women's team. Many people in the Five Villages will also remember Mike from his time as a postman in the local area. Mike was one of those people who always had a friendly and happy demeanour, and his smile will never be forgotten by those fortunate enough to have known him. Sincere condolences to all Mike's family.

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THE GOLDEN COCKEREL (Peter Smith, Whitford)

It was interesting to read Peter Stutchfield's feature in the last issue of The Five Villages Chronicle, about the vital restoration of the weathervane at Whitford Church.



The magnificent looking weathervane reminds me of an illustration by one of my favourite artists, Norman Rockwell (1894-1978). He illustrated the American way of life, often featuring families, playful school children and small towns. Most of his work was created for the front cover of the Saturday Evening Post over a period of 47 years.

He once said " Maybe as I grew up and found the world wasn't the perfect place I thought it to be , I unconsciously decided that if it wasn't an ideal world, it should be, and so painted only the ideal aspects of it".
"Under Sail" 1934 (also known as "On



Top of the World") is just one of the famous illustrations by Norman Rockwell that captures a youth exhilarated by being at the highest point of the town. He is staring out over the town holding a hat in his right hand and grasping the weathervane with his left, focused on the birds in the distance. Though simple, the perspective from high above the town suggests a feeling of being on top of the world. This scene could so easily be adapted atop of Whitford Church.

THOMAS PENNANT SOCIETY 300TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The weekend 12th to 14th June: The society will be holding a special weekend festival to celebrate 300 years since the birth of the renowned natural historian and author Thomas Pennant, The Squire of Downing

The society is looking forward to enabling members and the general public to embrace the weekend in celebration.

The itinerary is as follows with exact details distributed nearer the time

Friday 12th June in St Peter's Church: The Trelawnyd Male Voice Choir with soloists and contributions from an inter schools choir.

Saturday 13th June in Ysgol Y Llan Whitford: From 10.00am until 3.30 pm. the festival will be proud to have eminent speakers and authors from all over Wales to share their memories, stories and respect for Thomas Pennant.

There will also be a special book launch in the afternoon.

Stamford Gate Holywell: At 7.30 p.m. there will be a celebratory dinner with entertainment and speakers (short speeches). Further details will be communicated soon.

Sunday 14th June in Gorsedd Church: The Society will be holding a special Gymanfa where S4C will be leading the event

We hope that many people will be able to join us in the special celebrations.

Of course there will be a special tribute too to our Chairman, Norman Closs Parry, who sadly passed away recently

Further information can be obtained for Colin Roberts on stepinsidecolin@yahoo.co.uk

HOLYWELL AREA COMMUNITY MUSEUM (Michael Jones)

February is well and truly here which means Spring will soon be on the way. The Museum continues to host a number

of groups which meet weekly in the community room. The Knit and Natter group meets on a Wednesday and gets involved in a number of different crafts, many of its creations are for sale in the Museum shop. The Learn Welsh Group meets on a Friday and caters for everyone whatever their Welsh language skills. Every Monday Colin organizes his Museum bingo, a regular feature enjoyed by all who take part. The Santander Banking Hub continues to provide a much needed facility for the town and surrounding area. Ursula of Santander sets up at 9am and is available until 5pm every Tuesday. The Community Room is available to all groups for a small fee and can be booked through the Manager Jodie Bennett. The Museum had a busy Christmas, being open late during the Christmas Light Switch On, which proved very popular with many enjoying the festivities. It was an opportunity for the Museum to show what it has to offer as well as raising much needed funds. We have also been very fortunate in having a number of donations to the museum, which are always welcome and help to show the history and development of Holywell and surrounding area. The generosity of people never ceases to amaze us. Donations include an enamel Mostyn station sign, a Point of Ayr Colliery scrap book showing the development of the Colliery band, plus a variety of images showing Holywell in years past. John Wiltshire and David, who run the Point of Ayr mining aspect of the Museum, are holding a Mining Reunion (open to everyone just not ex-miners) at Rhyl Rugby Club on the 20th March 7pm. This year marks 30 years since closure of the pit. As usual we would like to thank everyone who supports the Museum, with a special thanks to our volunteers without whom nothing would be possible. If anyone has any time on their hands and wants to get involved please contact the Manager Jodie Bennett holywellmuseum@gmail.com 01352 217170.



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ACTIVE COMPASSION (Ceri Fishwick, Carmel)

On a visit to Liverpool recently, I witnessed several homeless people on the streets, on such a cold evening, some with pets, cuddled together to keep warm. Those living without permanent accommodation are much more vulnerable to a wide range of physical and mental health conditions. In the heart of every British city, we view street homelessness and beyond this, many, all over the country, will be in temporary accommodation, 'sofa surfing' or sleeping rough in crisis; a disproportionate high number attending hospitals, and many linked with poor health outcomes.

Interestingly, 'Homeless Link' a UK charity reported that over 70% of homeless hospital discharges in the year 2022 were discharged straight back onto the streets leading to further deteriorating health issues for those individuals.

Chronic conditions are made far worse, when living in poor situations and with delayed treatments. Infectious diseases such as Tuberculosis, hepatitis C, and HIV are more common amongst street homelessness, and rough sleepers due to lack of sanitation and with delayed access to health care. Although mental health disorders are often exacerbated by trauma, addiction, isolation, and chronic pain, we need to be reminded that not all those who are homeless have experimented with recreational drug use or taken alcohol to excess. There are those who are working and have fallen on hard times, through circumstances outside of their control and have been unable to continue to pay their bills, lost homes, and cannot fund themselves nor their families. Homelessness comes in all shapes and sizes and is very complex. Although in Flintshire we see less street homelessness than in other areas, we need to be aware that homelessness in other forms is still common.

People with no fixed abode are vulnerable, often weak and lonely and whilst councils do what they can to accommodate, there is so much more that we, as a community or individually, can do, even if a small gesture seems like a drop in a vast ocean of hope.

As we pass a homeless person in the street, a smile, a short conversation, provision of food and a drink, rather than giving money, ensuring to check for food allergies and if the person is Diabetic. More than anything, homeless people have been known to say that they need to feel seen, to be valued, respected and not downtrodden.

'Streetlink Wales' allows others to send an alert when they see someone sleeping rough, or homeless, via the website or app; their permission for the referral is not necessary. It is a service which connects people sleeping rough with local support services, the information is sent to local councils, and outreach teams to connect individuals with assistance to include



shelter.

The homeless person or those under threat of homelessness, need to be encouraged to contact Flintshire County Council authorities who will then provide him/her with suitable resources to include landlord mediation, and emergency accommodation support:

Housing Solutions Team, reachable on 01352 703777

Monday to Friday 09:00- 17:00.

Out Of these Hours the phone will divert to the emergency number of 01792 002128.

This team can help in many ways tailored to the individual's needs such as giving advice if struggling to pay one's rent or mortgage, if wishing to leave a partner as feeling unsafe, or should the family have asked a person to leave, and they have nowhere else to go, or there are complaints of neighbours or landlords causing harassment. Ask about the emergency options should a person be on the streets or sleeping rough.

For those who do not have a mobile phone or prefer face-to-face consultations, there is support through 'Connects' a walk in service for those wishing to contact for a housing solution or if feeling under threat of homelessness. These Offices in Flintshire are situated in Holywell, Flint, Connah's Quay, Mold and Buckley. There are also

drop-in services within local libraries.

There are available charities including Shelter's advice helpline on 0808 800 4444 free from landlines and on most mobile networks, or by visiting their websites. Other charities to donate to include Christian charities such as The Salvation Army, Housing Justice Cymru, who support housing projects and provide advice and training for churches, voluntary



and community groups who work with homeless people, Crisis and Centrepoin, not forgetting to support the charity shops locally. Many Church groups are intertwined with helping to bridge the gaps; however, the demands are great, with physical, mental health/emotional and spiritual needs.

We read in Scripture, the great compassion Jesus Christ had for the poor, and he had little earthly comfort himself, as he ministered. Jesus spent much time with the socially marginalized, the sick, and the poor, healing the lepers, the lame, the blind, and many others. Jesus taught us to sell possessions to give to the poor, rather than to hoard our wealth, and to give to those who ask for help in need. He taught us to invite those weak and poor to eat at our homes and to prioritize the marginalized. Jesus was actively compassionate for the poor and vulnerable, and taught to give without expecting repayment, ultimately, as God has loved us, so completely, so shall we show care and love to one another.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Any comments, opinions and feedback relating to the Five Villages Chronicle or any aspect of local news would be gratefully received.

CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to Eleanor Allen of Gorsedd, who has graduated from Sheffield Hallam University with a First Class Honours degree in Paramedic Science. Eleanor's achievement reflects her dedication, hard work, and commitment to her chosen career path and the whole family are very proud of her.



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CARMEL SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPH

This photo was taken in 1947 and featured in the Autumn issue 2025.

I have four siblings in the photograph which I have marked up on the attached copy.

The boy sitting cross-legged fourth from the left at the front is my brother Granville Gelder. In the middle and partially hidden is my sister Irene Gelder (now Sayle). Fifth row back and second from the right my brother Elwyn Gelder and at the back my eldest sister Grace Gelder. (Later Furnival but now deceased)

I hope this triggers some more memories for people to get in touch.

Regards

Moirá Gelder, 9th of 10 children.



HEARTFELT ART & CRAFT FAIRS

(Susan Parry-Harwood)

2025 Review and Update

2025 saw us take the fundraising art and craft fairs 'on tour' with fairs held in locations other than at our normal venue, Halkyn Parish Hall. In addition to two fairs held in Halkyn, we held our first outdoor event supporting RNLI in Flint, and held a fair in Pwllglas Village Hall, Denbighshire, supporting a children's charity 'Rally round Rupert' raising awareness and funds in support of clinical research for spinal muscular atrophy (SMA).

Holding the craft fairs in different venues was a challenge, but something we had often thought about doing. We were delighted the events were both well attended and well received by the local communities. We look forward to hosting 'on tour' fairs again in the future.

As a result of the 4 craft fairs held last year a total of £4,000 was raised for the charities, which also included Alzheimer's Society and Walk the Walk breast cancer charity.

Since commencement of the art and craft fairs in April 2014, a total of £40,282 has been raised and donated to 29 different charities. Thanks to a committed team effort and with the help of local volunteer fundraisers and supporters, the fairs remain a success.

The focus remains on raising money for charities, supporting local artisans and enhancing community engagement. Each event will raise vital funds for the different causes.

This year, we will be holding three events in Halkyn Parish Hall & Library. Our first event will be held on **Saturday 21st March** when we will be fundraising for Breakthrough T1D, a charity supporting research and care for people living with Type 1 Diabetes.

On **Saturday 20th June** we will be fundraising for Nightingale Hospice, Wrexham, supporting local volunteers from the Mold and Holywell area. This wonderful charity provides compassionate care and support for patients and families.

On **Saturday 21st November** we will be fundraising for Flint RNLI, supporting local volunteers and those helping to save lives at sea through the volunteer rescue services.

All the charities rely on public donations in order to continue to provide such a wonderful service.

By attending our fairs, shopping with talented stallholders or donating on the day, you will be helping us to support these amazing charities. Please help to raise awareness of the fairs by spreading the news with your friends and family. Together, we can support life changing causes and small businesses. We can all make a difference.

My husband John and I remain very grateful for the community support and engagement. Huge thanks to everyone who attends the fairs, helps us behind the scenes and help to raise awareness by displaying our event posters and fliers. Without such help and continued support the 'not for profit' fundraising fairs would not remain a community success.

Thank you. Diolch

For more information please contact Susan at heartfelt.mountainstudio@aol.co.uk

CARMEL VILLAGE HALL NEUADD PENTREF CARMEL



(Gareth Sharp)

It is with great personal sadness that I write this article, as the Carmel community has lost a much-loved and valued friend.

I know that I personally would not be where I am today without the advice, encouragement, and quiet guidance of my friend and father-in-law, Norman Closs Parry. When I was first asked to become involved with the Community Council and later the Village Hall, I turned to him for advice. He did not hesitate in encouraging me to step forward, as Carmel village truly lay close to his heart. He believed strongly in supporting local people and community involvement, and he always took pride in seeing others play an active role in village life.

His passing is a significant loss to the village, the wider community, and the five villages. Norman was an avid contributor of articles and a familiar voice in local news, always keen to share information, celebrate village life, and keep people connected. His commitment to the community and his willingness to give his time so freely will be remembered by many, and he will be greatly missed.

We would like to extend our thanks



to Colin Fishwick of Mertyn Lane, who has recently serviced the hall's boiler and heating system. It is always reassuring to be able to rely on a trusted local service, and we are grateful for his continued support.

Unfortunately, the hall experienced a small flood on New Year's Day. This was dealt with swiftly thanks to a great deal of mopping up and drying out by the Friends of the Hall, whose help and commitment are always greatly appreciated.

The hall continues to be a popular venue for birthday parties and celebrations, with several new bookings already coming in. It is encouraging to see the hall being

well used and enjoyed by the community.

In the interest of safety and improvement, Safety First, another excellent local firm from Windsor Park, has installed new LED lighting throughout the hall. Our sincere thanks also go to Gwydion Meurig (Gwids), a great friend of the hall, who once again erected the tower scaffolding — for the third time — to allow the lighting to be fitted safely.

If you are interested in any of the clubs currently advertised, please do not hesitate to contact the hall via its Facebook page, where enquiries are answered promptly.



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A PORTRAIT OF JIM MOORE – THE ALL-ROUNDER (Norman Closs - Parry)

"What was I going to do...?"

"Leave it with me."

A good headteacher's phrase. It buys thinking time. Jim used it too — not to delay, but to think properly.

To break into his story, I often think of that piece you see now and again where ex-rugby greats choose their best ever fifteen — best Lion, best winger, best all-rounder. Mind you, they were good themselves. World Cup final, Australia — the drop goal, the pressure, the moment — you know the one: Jonny Wilkinson, under the captaincy of Martin Johnson.

But when I say all-rounder, I don't mean sport.

I mean life.

Jim was born in the early 1930s in Rhes-y-Cae. He attended the V.P.; his brothers went to Holywell Grammar. Straight on to National Service — the R.A.F. — where he learned a trade. Precision. Discipline. He may have done a bit extra when he was demobbed — joinery perhaps — but eventually he landed at B.A.S. Broughton, working himself up to Inspector of Wings.

When looking up at mighty aircraft crossing the sky, people think of the precision engineer at the drawing board. I think of the factory floor — and Jim. A master slugger. No risks with Jim. Everything was done right.

After the Pete/Trevor call, I went round to Jim's place in the Park. A small bungalow, a big garage. Cars lined the street, because inside there were tools everywhere, timber stacked, rods and reels, nets and waders. The smell of turning — wood and steel. In the corners, fishing gear; everywhere else, ideas.

Holywell Anglers. Mostyn Estate. Turners the Agent. Llyn Helyg.

A club without waters, yet rich beyond measure.

Chair, Secretary, Treasurer — all filled.

NCP: jack of all trades, master of none — but a big fisherman.

JM: silver tongue. His Barbour smelt of wax when he came to committee.

Coarse fisher, mechanic, woodworker, photographer, speed reader — knowledge soaked up like blotting paper. Trips to Buildwas on the Severn. One Sunday — Sabbath fishing — I went as chair. When the distant church bells rang, I knew it was the bell of my doom. The Severn was a chocolate-milk flood. I found a quiet eddy, persevered with small stuff, and somehow won.

I grew in Jim's estimation.

We became big buddies.

Jim never went to an angling shop if he thought something could be made in

his garage. John Cooper, his lodger, had flash cars and coloured waistcoats. Jim had a sawdust jumper, a faithful estate car, and no intention of going to Hones or Lloc — they'd have gone bankrupt if it were left to him. Yet he was never stranded. I can still hear the cluck of chains on his front wheels in the snow.

Tall, black hair, sparkling blue eyes, one front tooth — and a healthy appetite. He took to game fishing with me, grayling in particular. I still have a transparency he took on the Dee at Llandderfel: two brace of pound-plus grayling and a massive bowl of blackberries. What a gathering. The following week B served grilled grayling, followed by roly-poly blackberry pudding and custard. Jim, chief guest, holding forth as usual.

Strict as an Inspector, stricter still as Secretary. Break the rules — out. It was a good club, well run; even the Mostyn Estate men were happy.

Jim was a poet and didn't know it. Shakespeare, Keats, Milton, Tennyson — they had nothing on him for metaphor.

"Is it raining, Jim?"

"Like a cow p***ing on a flat roof."

At the end of his days, he suffered. He became bent and gaunt. I gave him my prize blackthorn stick from the White Quarries — his third leg.

"How's your back today, Jim?"

"It's keeping my head and my backside apart, Closs."

A few weeks before he passed, I met him in Holywell. We talked of Chris, his only begotten son. We talked of Nancy — Topsy — taken too soon, leaving him to grow old with survival memories. We never spoke of religion. He knew me. I never

asked. He was kindness itself.

I remember his mam and dad in the old Little Pant cottage — warmth everywhere. Bob, his dad, had humour too. Once on Llyn Helyg, fishing for tench, Bob stood up and said, "Keep your eye on my rod, Closs, while I go to the woods." Then he removed his glass eye and placed it on the rod. I didn't know whether to cry or be sick. I think I did both.

One day, after a no-talks difference of opinion at home, Jim took me to Bala — Llyn Tegid — dead-baiting for pike opposite Llangower. I cast out. The button float began to swim against wind and wave.

"Closs! Look!"

An almighty roar followed: "DON'T LET IT RUN!"

When I struck, all hell broke loose. Dewi Bowen, the warden, came along and stood by while Jim instructed calmly. When the fish tired, Jim said, "If the head and the tail belong to the same fish, it's a bloody massive one."

It was. About 26½ pounds. I beached it, measured it, unhooked it carefully, and returned it to Tegid. Jim was even happier than I was. We celebrated by stopping the cream-and-red Vauxhall estate outside the chippy in Bala and having a massive tea.

The last time I saw Jim, not far from here, he was bent double, still leaning on my blackthorn. I didn't know what to say and said the wrong thing.

"How are you today, Jim?"

He gave the right reply.

"Upright and grateful."

There is no more to be said.

I knew a great all-rounder.

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COUNCILLOR CHRIS

DOLPHIN

Hello everyone, Sut mae pethau?

It's been a busy successful start to 2026. Monastery Road in Pantasaph resurfaced well, should be by the time you read this; Carmel Play Area improved and paid for by the match funding scheme between county and Community Councils, and our five villages having new nameplate signs paid for as part of the successful Active Travel bid, the same pot that paid for the final footpath extension on Babell Road, Gorsedd. Plus, county wide, a remarkable turnaround in our recycling figures, now slightly above the 70% required by Welsh Government (WG). This is all down to a partnership between the People and the Council. Perhaps now WG will waive the threat of over a million pounds in past fines for not hitting the required rate. We need to know, and remember, as do the government, that we are second in the world to Austria in recycling, with just a "small bag of potato peelings" behind them. We are good at this.

HOLYWELL STREET MARKET:

You may know that the County Council have decided to have engagement with, and offer the management of the Holywell street market, to Holywell Town Council. This is a great opportunity for Holywell as a town to lead on its own market. In the past, incentives for Holywell market traders have included paying half price pitch rent for eight weeks, then a full rate of only £17. Plus shops have been offered free stalls and advertising. The County Council have tried to make it work over many years, however with only 2-4 stalls pre-Christmas, and the Council having to have a market manager onsite, a loss is always made. The market has declined over many years; I have witnessed this as a shopper and local resident, and I have also witnessed the various relaunches. The Town Council have indicated their willingness to continue with the weekly market. This is a one-off opportunity for the Town Council to take over, and I am sure that with much less outlay they can make the street market a success. Flintshire will organise more specialist markets throughout the year.

HOLYWELL TOILETS:

The County Council have gained a Pride in Place grant from UK Government, part of which is being used to renew and modernise the public conveniences in Talacre, Mold and Holywell. Public toilets are not a County Council statutory provision, though it should be. That's something the Welsh Government should have sorted out with funding. Talacre needs a rebuild whereas Holywell and Mold have good buildings. The £70,000 set aside for Holywell conveniences will bring them up to a high standard. This then opens a massive opportunity for the Holywell Town Council to be in control of their own facilities. Perhaps this is how it should always have been.

WINTER MAINTENANCE:

500 grit bins are located across the county which are filled at the start of winter and following severe weather. Refilling a bin costs about £60, and this road grit is much coarser than privately available grit in the shops. The Council runs its highway gritters 24/7 in times of frost/snow ensuring all main routes are kept as safe as possible. I know it's frustrating when estate roads, lanes and other ungritted areas are left; it was the same frustration for me, when years ago I needed to be in Airbus for 6am, or as now in Ewloe for 9am, or worrying about family members going about their business.

NEW NATIONAL PARK?

The County Council once again forwarded its recommendations in December 2025 to Welsh Government concerning the proposal for a new national park which would be named Glyndwr. The council like all other authorities still has concerns regarding the absence of detailed information outlining governance arrangements. Added to this are the continuing awareness of duplication, value for money and Planning functions. The original doubts from 2023/24 also continued with no answers about the pressure on road congestion, verge parking, littering, toilet provision, and increased erosion of paths. Farm diversification for tourism is not a simple answer, how many camping, glamping and caravan sites do we need? Would house prices rise in and near to the park? Furthermore second homes would seem to be guaranteed. A new planning authority would also be introduced for the park area. The advantage would be tourism, if you consider mass tourism an advantage, and this may help produce a better economic benefit to our Flintshire towns, none of which would be in the park.

During January Natural Resources Wales in its role as statutory advisor concluded it "was satisfied that the proposed Glyndwr National Park, and its boundary, meet the statutory requirement for designation." A further public notice period began on 16th January until 15th February 2026. At the end of this period all responses and documentation will be presented to Welsh Government to

consider its options.

WEEDS:

I know there is a lot more of them visible on our footways, roads and public spaces, but why? The health and wellbeing of residents is a priority and Flintshire are among the 45% of UK Councils taking action to end or reduce pesticide use. Glyphosate (weed Killer) is classified as "probably carcinogenic to humans" by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Glyphosate can indirectly affect our natural environment by disrupting food chains and reducing sources of food and shelter. Glyphosate will travel through the whole plant and kill any plant it meets. Welsh Government guidance is to consider nonchemical methods first. In Flintshire we are using grant monies to trial and invest in chemical free alternatives such as hot foam and mechanical systems such as weed rippers. The council does not use glyphosate herbicides within town centres, school grounds, and green spaces such as parks and sport pitches. The effectiveness of the alternative weed control are monitored and we are learning from experience. We realise these alternatives are not actual weed killers and therein lies the answer as to why there are a lot more visible weeds. Glyphosate is still targeted use for the control of invasive species where it is necessary. For species like Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed, glyphosate is used if on Council land. Ragwort on Council land will be treated with a preference for a non-herbicidal control.

CONTACT:

If you need to contact your 5 Villages Whitford Ward County Councillor Chris Dolphin call 01352 713415 or e-mail chris_dolphin@hotmail.co.uk or write to me at 11 Ffordd Aelwyd, Carmel, CH8 8SH.

CYNGOR CYNGHORYDD:

Er gwybodaeth rhif cyswllt cynghorydd sir ardal Chwittfordd a'r pum pentref yw Chris Dolphin, 01352 713415, ebost chris_dolphin@hotmail.co.uk neu pe dymunwch ysgrifennu llythyr fy nghyfeiriad yw, 11 Ffordd Aelwyd, Carmel, CH8 8SH

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TRIBUTE TO MRS EURWEN JONES, BEDW ARIAN, GORSEDD (FORMERLY PLAS NEWYDD, BABELL)



Eurwen was born in Prestatyn on 20th November 1928, the only child of John and Myfanwy Hughes of Gronant.

During her early childhood, the family moved to Ffyddion Farm, Lloc, where Eurwen grew up. Her first employment was as a secretary at a well-established timber merchants in Rhyl, a role she greatly enjoyed, particularly the opportunity to meet people and socialise.

She met her husband, Trefor Jones, at the Eisteddfod in Rhualt, and they were married in 1953 at Dyserth Chapel. Following their marriage, Eurwen moved to Plas Newydd, Babell, where they made a happy and busy home life together. They were blessed with four children: Geraint, Delyth, the late Robyn and Teleri.

Trefor died suddenly and unexpectedly in 1991. Eurwen showed great courage and resilience, continuing to run the farm for a further four years before it was eventually sold. She later moved to Gorsedd, where she lived happily for the remainder of her life. She was very fortunate to receive loving and considerate care from Delyth and Teleri, who ensured that everyone knew her life was valuable and varied. She lived very happily to be 97 years old and was frequently visited and supported by her family, kind neighbours and friends. Our deepest condolences go out to Delyth, Neil, Bethan and Ffion; Geraint and Teleri.

Cydymdeimlwn â'i theulu a'i ffrindiau o golli mam, nain, hen nain, modryb a ffrind tu hwnt o annwyl a chyfeillgar oedd bob amser yn hoffi hwyl ac yn chwerthin yn braf.

Bu yn ffodus iawn o gael gofal cariadus a meddylgar Delyth a Teleri a sicrhodd i bawb fod ei bywyd yn werthfawr ac amrywiol. Oherwydd hyn bu fyw yn andros o hapus i fod yn 97 mlwydd oed. Hefyd i Geraint am y llw o alwadau Ffôn a'r cyfarfodydd gyda ei fam i gael paned yn y dref.

Bydd colled enfawr ar ei hôl.

Condolences to her family and friends on the loss of a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt, and friend who was beyond dear and always liked to have fun and laugh heartily.

She was very fortunate to receive loving and considerate care from Delyth and Teleri, who ensured that everyone knew her life was valuable and varied. With their support, she lived very happily to be 97 years old. Also to Geraint for the many phone calls and meetings with his mother for a cup of tea in town.

FIVE VILLAGES GARDENING CLUB (Janet Tattum)



NOVEMBER 2025

- after a busy A.G.M., Pauline Williams was presented with the cup and Menden Plate.

DECEMBER 2025

- our Christmas lunch was held in The Crown, Lixwm.

FEBRUARY 2026

- our first meeting of 2026 was Gardeners' Question Time, chaired by Keith Roberts from the community gardens in Greenfield Valley. He answered all our questions on gardening and as they also have beehives in the gardens, he told us all about the life of the honeybee. The meeting closed with our usual tea and cakes. Louise Jones won first prize with her seasonal table decoration.

March will be an illustrated talk by Janet Wainwright on Joleen Meadows, Lixwm entitled "From Field to Flower". We will be visiting this garden in June.

April will be an illustrated talk by Sarah Griffiths on the Ancient Egyptians.

May sees our Plant Sale, moved to St Paul's Church, Gorsedd due to the village hall being used as an election venue.

June will be a visit to Joleen Meadows, Fford Berthen, Lixwm. **Note change of time to 5.00p.m.**

July, a coach trip to Bridgemere Garden Centre, leaving Carmel at 9.30 a.m. Cost £23.00. All details to be confirmed.

All meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month at 2.00 p.m. in Carmel Village Hall. All new members are always made welcome. For further information please contact either Christine Hamer on 01352 716273 or Maria Evans on 01352 715156



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MY 96 DAY DIABETES DUEL

A measured reflection on illness, change, and what recovery actually looks like.

1. WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

My story began in the same doctor's office I'd visited many times since I was a child. The familiarity of the room made the moment feel even more stark. The latest 30 something junior Dr to enter the practice read my HbA1c result from the aging Dell screen. "It's 88" they said with clinical calm. It landed heavily and I didn't need a medical degree to understand what that meant, I had allowed things to slip further than at any point in my life. Then came the double whammy. Blood pressure sitting at 166/110.

To be fair the numbers weren't a surprise but I understood immediately that this wasn't just about diabetes it was about alcohol and the slow, quiet, powerful way it had shaped my habits, my routines, and the person I had become.

The doctor advised me I was well and truly in the danger zone and reached for the prescription pad but I asked for time. Not out of bravery more out of an instinctive need to face what I had created before resorting to tablets. I'd been here before in 2018 and I knew I could respond if I committed properly. The difference this time was recognising the role of alcohol in a way I hadn't before, and acknowledging the personal cost of pretending "it's fine"

Why 96 days?

Because that was the exact amount of time between returning from holiday on 15 September and my work Christmas party on 19 December. It was a clear, measurable period. Not open ended, not vague, not theoretical. A fixed stretch long enough to show meaningful change yet short enough to commit to fully. I needed something with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

It wasn't a complicated plan rather a line in the sand.

2. THE JOURNEY

The first days were the hardest not physically but emotionally. Stopping drinking so abruptly exposed all the quiet discomforts I had been using alcohol to blur, poor sleep, inconsistent appetite, anxious restlessness and a general feeling of being unwell that I had normalised over time.

I walked every day. Not dramatically, not heroically just consistently. Short 20-minute walks as often as I could commit to until walking became the structure around which everything else settled. Swimming played a part too, at first it was slow and slightly disjointed, but gradually it became a space where everything felt calmer and more manageable. The water made things quieter.

Food required a complete reset. I removed the "four white foods of the devil" white bread, pasta, rice, potatoes and as difficult as it was, I cut out sweets and chocolate entirely. I started reading food

labels properly for the first time in years and I began to understand how much of what I'd eaten had been working against me, not with me.

The most important tool, however, was the glucose monitor. Against the GP's advice, I used one from day one. It wasn't about obsession; it was about understanding. Seeing the direct consequence of food, movement, sleep, and stress made the process real. The early readings were unpredictable, highs in the 10s, and 11s with lows in the 3s. These would once have frightened me but they suddenly gave me clarity. They allowed me to adapt day by day, rather than wait months to learn whether anything was working and more importantly helped me chart what foods had the biggest impact on my readings.

There were huge setbacks to deal with too, losing my wonderful 13 year old dog halfway through the 96 days shook everything. Grief brought emotional stress, raised morning readings, and a gave me a deep sense of vulnerability. I came close to drinking but staying sober through that period taught me that grief doesn't need to be blotted out to be managed. It can be absorbed gradually with support and patience, something my partner provided a great deal of.

By November, my numbers began settling into a pattern. My morning readings were still elevated but steadier and my


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evenings calmer. My sleep improved in a way I hadn't expected. I started waking with energy instead of exhaustion.

And then, near the end, I slipped. On day 90, at my parents' house, a drink was offered and as I'd already had my bloods taken I accepted. Unusually for me though it didn't spiral into chaos instead it taught me how fine the line can be. More importantly, it taught me that the progress I'd made wasn't invalidated by a single misstep.

3. THE RESULTS

On 12 December, I had another HbA1c test. I had done everything I could. I walked, I swam, I monitored, I ate well, I slept properly, and I avoided alcohol for 95 of the 96 days.

The result came the next morning: 53 mmol/mol. A 35 point drop in under three months without medication.

My initial reaction was subdued. I had quietly hoped for a number in the 40s. I wanted a symbolic win, something definitive. Instead I'd landed in the middle ground, I hadn't reached the diabetic remission I'd hoped for but I was no longer in the danger zone.

What about my blood pressure? 124/87 a fall from 166/110 in the same period, again without medication.

As the news settled, so did a more balanced view. The numbers reflected the whole 96 day journey, including the chaos of the first few weeks. The early damage had its say in the final calculation and yet still the improvement was significant. It was clear evidence that the changes were working and my body was responding.

Emotionally, it felt like a checkpoint rather than a finish line which has set me up nicely for the next 90 days. It was another gentle reminder that improvement isn't always dramatic; sometimes it is measured, steady and cumulative. It showed me that I hadn't fixed everything but I had stopped the downward spiral.

Most importantly, it gave me confidence

and a quiet assurance that with consistency, rather than perfection things can change for the better and enforced the view that the effort was worth it.

4. THE FINANCIAL IMPACT

We often hear about that the NHS is under pressure and Type 2 diabetes is a major part of that pressure. Economic studies suggest that Type 2 Diabetes costs the UK around £14 billion a year, most of it spent on complications that develop when the disease is uncontrolled. It affects hospital admissions, GP appointments, medication budgets and long term care services.

Reflecting on this it's hard not to recognise the contrast between the cost of treatment and the cost of prevention. I didn't get Type 2 diabetes because of genetics, the hard fact is my past lifestyle was the cause and it wasn't just unhealthy, it was expensive. Large amounts spent on alcohol, takeaways, confectionery, convenience foods and habits that seemed normal at the time but cumulatively created financial problems and health problems in equal measure.

By comparison, the lifestyle changes that lowered my HbA1c from 88 to 53 and stabilised my blood pressure were almost entirely free. Walking costs nothing. Preparing meals at home costs less than ready made options. Drinking water instead of alcohol costs nothing. The monitor and strips had a cost, but it was small compared to the long term expense of unmanaged diabetes.

What struck me most, once the fog of the first few weeks had lifted, was the simplicity of what was actually helping me. Walking, eating properly, sleeping well, staying sober, none of it was complicated and none of it cost anything. These weren't heroic interventions or specialist programmes. They were ordinary actions that anyone could take.

That led me to a thought I kept coming

back to. If people living with cancer could cure it simply by walking, everyone would do it, without a seconds hesitation, no debate, no bargaining. Why should diabetes be any different? It might be that people tend to think of diabetes as a curable disease but medication doesn't cure diabetes, it purely masks it.

Walking didn't cure my diabetes but it consistently moved every marker in the right direction. It steadied my glucose, improved my sleep, reduced stress and stabilised my blood pressure. It helped me understand my body's patterns and it gave me back a sense of control that I'd quietly lost over the years. Most importantly, it replaced habits that were slowly harming me with habits that supported recovery.

I know many people can't do the things I did and medication is a life saver but it puzzles me that with a condition so responsive to lifestyle change medication seems to be the first recommendation. This isn't a judgement; it's an observation born out of my own history.

As Dr David Unwin, a GP and diabetes researcher in the UK puts it "The greatest diabetes drug we've ever discovered is lifestyle change and it comes with no side effects."

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MARK ISHERWOOD MS



Each year, as a Member of the Senedd, I support and take part in National Days, Weeks and Months. These days often shine a spotlight on critical health issues and are instrumental in raising awareness. They also act to inspire action from Governments.

In the last couple of months, I have shown my support for a number of National events.

In Less Survivable Cancers Awareness Week 2026, I visited the 'Less Survivable Cancers Taskforce' drop-in reception in the Senedd, a chance to learn more about the six less survivable cancers, meet charity representatives, and speak directly with leading researchers conducting innovative research in Wales. They highlighted both the importance of research into the less survivable cancers and some of the excellent work taking place nationally.



Information, obtained from a series of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, shows that research into the less survivable cancers - those of the brain, liver, lung, oesophagus, pancreas or stomach - receives less than one-fifth (18.92%) of all Government-funded cancer research, despite them accounting for nearly 40% of all common cancer deaths in the UK. The actions I, along with my Welsh Conservative colleagues, have repeatedly called for over the years - targeted screening and monitoring those most at risk - would have a huge impact on survival.

Less Survivable Cancer Awareness

Week (January 12 to January 16), was followed by World Cancer Day on February 4th. On the day, the Wales Cancer Alliance stated that "Wales is the only UK nation without a long-term plan to drive improvements in cancer care and outcomes. With cancer incidence in Wales rising – adding pressure to an already stretched system – the next (Welsh) Government must urgently address this and drive the progress patients and NHS staff so desperately need. We firmly believe that a new approach is needed in Wales to plan and deliver the cancer services patients and NHS staff deserve".

Their new report, "Fixing the Foundations: Building a long-term strategic approach to cancer in Wales", details their rationale for taking a new approach. Sadly, cancer patients and their loved ones have been let down for too many years here in Wales.

We all know that early diagnosis improves cancer outcomes and ultimately saves lives. It is therefore deeply concerning that the Welsh Government's targets for starting cancer treatment in Wales are still not being met - some four years on from when they were first introduced.

At least 75% of patients should start cancer treatment within 62 days of first being suspected of having cancer. In October, the latest figure available for Wales, showed only 59.4% of patients began their treatment on target. With one in three of us set to get cancer, it is vital that the Welsh Government take action to ensure that all cancer patients in Wales are given the best chance of survival.

Meanwhile, January 29th marked Stroke Prevention Day 2026, and ahead of the day I joined a meeting of the Cross-Party Group on Stroke in the Senedd/ Welsh Parliament for the Group's AGM and a Stroke survivor's presentation on their lived experience.

There are currently around 70,000 stroke survivors living in Wales and stroke is estimated to cost NHS Wales

£220 million annually. For all sectors of the Welsh economy this is a combined £1.63 billion (£45,409 per patient in the first year), and this is forecast to rise to £2.8bn by 2035 if no action is taken to mitigate against this.

This underlines the vital importance of making stroke the priority that it needs to be in Wales, and of making people aware of the biggest risk factors for stroke.

One of the main risk factors is blood pressure, which is why on Stroke prevention Day, the Stroke Association were encouraging people to have their blood pressure regularly checked. Those with high readings can aim to lower their blood pressure by making some simple lifestyle changes. These include eating healthily, being active, reviewing alcohol consumption and stopping smoking or vaping. High blood pressure can lead to stroke in different ways. It can lead to blood clots in the brain and can damage the tiny blood vessels deep inside the brain. It can also make a stroke, due to bleeding in the brain, more likely.

Some things that put you at greater risk of high blood pressure include:

- Eating too much salt.
- Being inactive.
- Being overweight.
- Drinking too much alcohol.
- Smoking.

The Stroke Association Stroke Support Helpline is available for anyone affected by a stroke, including family, friends and carers. The Helpline can give you information and support on any aspect of stroke.

Call on 0303 3033 100, from a textphone 18001 0303 3033 100 or email helpline@stroke.org.uk

I will continue supporting these National Days, Weeks, and Months, recognising the important role they play in turning awareness into action, and most importantly saving lives.



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EILEEN LEWIS



Eileen Lewis passed away on 25th January at Bod Hyfryd Nursing Home in Flint aged 87.

Eileen was born in Coventry to Maldwyn and Lilian Thomas, the family returning to Mostyn at the outbreak of WW2 to reside with relatives at Quay House, and later Maes Pennant.

She began her working career at Salem Engineering in Holywell then moved to the National Provincial Bank in Flint. After marrying Raymond

in 1961, she left work, as was usual in those days, to give birth to their only child Lynda late in 1962. Once Lynda began school, Eileen, always a career woman at heart, returned to work for Clifford Ogle, developer, as he built the first houses of Ocean View Estate, Carmel. Following this she worked at Little Timber Nursery, Lloc before joining Raymond in retirement.

Raymond and Eileen lived in Carmel before moving to Gorsedd in 1988. Most weekends and free time saw them touring the British Isles in their beloved caravan, disappearing for weeks on end when they both retired. They also spent time in Canada visiting Lynda, Bryan and their adorable dog Zoey.

A keen member of the Guild, Eileen had many long standing friendships in the community, and will be fondly remembered.

In later years Eileen became housebound as her health declined, resulting in her recent move to a Nursing Home. She was cremated at St Asaph and ashes returned to Gorsedd.

Raymond and Lynda would like to thank their family and friends for their kind support and cards of condolence.

ROADWORKS (Robert Moore)

The lower part of Carmel Road presented unusual scenes at the end of November. Various road closures were in force with cones and traffic lights as contractors arrived to upgrade the gas mains. Large holes were dug in order to feed the bright yellow pipe under the road and haul it through the lines of the old gas main. Various items of very large machinery were brought into play, giving the lower part of the road a positively industrial aspect – and occasional industrial sounds.



All households with metal pipe connections to the gas main also needed to have them replaced. Once the pipes were through the road and connected to the houses, the holes were filled in and the surfaces made good. Finally the road was resurfaced. Safety checks were carried out before the gas was reconnected, the inspectors did all the necessary work of checking domestic boilers and re-lighting pilot lights.



The new pipe has an expected lifetime of more than a hundred years and could be used to supply an alternative source of domestic energy when natural gas is replaced. Meanwhile residents have the immediate benefit of reduced traffic noise as vehicles speed up and down the road.

It was an interesting few weeks. The teams of contractors were invariably cheerful and friendly, quite willing to show us the work and explain what they were doing. They completed the work speedily. Although most of us may not be interested in the long life of the pipes, we are grateful for the nice new road surface.

(Photos, Lindy Moore)



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BROTHERS IN ARMS (Geraint Roberts)

A few weeks ago I ventured down into the rural fastness of the Llyn peninsula with my brother and cousin. The focus of the visit was to look for and photograph three specific boulders I needed for my growing album of 'Welsh Stones with Interesting Stories'.

Two were standing stones (one recumbent) said to have once been thieves escaping with silver stolen from Llanfaelrhys church. When they were a mile away and confident they had made their escape, they were suddenly turned into granite for their heinous crime. One still stands while the other lies nearby, both now part of a boundary wall. I don't think there's a standing stone in Wales which doesn't command a legend of some sort.



The petrified thieves of Maerhys

The third stone we sought was a flat boulder mounted in Rhyd y Clafdy cemetery on which the controversial preacher Howel Harris stood to deliver his first sermon in Llyn in 1741. The day out was also an excellent opportunity for a family catch up.

It was whilst we were enjoying lunch in the Botwnnog Community café that the seed for this article was sown. A chance conversation with one of the locals went something like this –

"Have you heard the story about the two brothers who never spoke to each other ... around here somewhere ... and there's



Howel Harris' makeshift pulpit

something about a ruined chapel ... and a killer dog ... don't know myself..."

It's teasingly frustrating to hear only half a story, but that's all that was available, and that was all I got!

Over the next few days, I began trawling through my books and periodicals, dipped into google and made one or two phone calls and slowly the story unfolded. It's not a swashbuckling, edge of your seat tale of daring dos, but is nonetheless worth telling if only because I've done the research and made the journey down there twice in three weeks!

Watkin and Griffith Jones were born in 1864 and 1870 respectively and from what I could gather lived their whole lives in a farmhouse called Mount View high above the village of Rhiw.



Mount View (as was)

The view from here is spectacular. To the east the southern peaks of Eryri morph

into the northern hills of the Cambrians in a bold panoramic vista, whilst the wide sweep of Cardigan Bay stretches south, the land sinking with distance into the sea leaving only the upper slopes of the Preselau mountains visible. Westwards the twin Gwyllanod islands lie in a twinkling sea bedazzled by the sun beyond with Ynys Enlli (Bardsey) coyly peeping from behind the plunging cliffs of Uwchmynydd. Just above Mount View, the slopes continue to rise to reach a neolithic axe factory, the remains of an old fort and further fabulous views to the north. Indeed, it is a beautiful place.

At some point the two brothers had a falling out; not an uncommon event with brothers perhaps, especially if they lived together; but seemingly this was serious. From that moment on they refused to speak to each other, and this went on for several years, in fact for the rest of their lives. Their parents were long departed so when one considers that only the two of them lived in the house it is easy to imagine the tremendous strain this rift must have caused. This was in the days before television and likely as not there was only one wireless set (if at all) in the house.

They were both ardent worshippers in the little Baptist chapel of Galltraeth which stood at the bottom of a steep track half a mile away.



Galltraeth chapel

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Griffith was a gifted singer and country poet who went by the bardic name of Ehedydd Mai (May Skylark) and would always be the one to stand and start the singing. There was no organ in the tiny chapel so a tuning fork was used to set the tone! Watkin would take his seat at the back and was no less enthusiastic in joining in the service. As time went on the congregation in the tiny little chapel dwindled; some Sundays only the two brothers attended. Eventually it seems Watkin and Griffith were indeed the only congregation. Bizarrely Griffith continued to stand at the front, say a few words, offer a prayer and start singing whilst Watkin would then stand at the back and follow. But they still wouldn't speak.



Galltraeth chapel 2

In 1942 Watkin died and was buried in the small cemetery by the chapel; a plot



Tiny cemetery of Galltraeth

of land which is not much bigger than a room in a house.

Griffith continued to live on his own in Mount View. He had two dogs; a small terrier which accompanied him everywhere and a huge savage dog which was kept chained as a guard dog in a shed by the house. It had the reputation of being a dangerous dog and any visitors to Mount View would have to hail from a distance to be escorted in.

In the winter of 1944 after an unusual and particularly heavy blanket of snow had fallen on Llyn the little terrier was spotted one morning wandering around on its own. Soon after, Griffith's body was found; he had died in the snow whilst on his way home from buying potatoes from a nearby farm the night before.

All efforts to carry his body to the house were thwarted by the ferocious guard dog whose chain was long enough to reach the door of Mount View. The policeman sent one of the men to fetch a shotgun with the intention of shooting it when it rushed out, but the canny dog then refused to come out, possibly because it could smell the gun. Eventually a ladder was used and enough slates removed from the roof of the shed so that the snarling dog could be shot from above!

It is said that several men with ropes were employed to hold back the cart



The two brothers' graves

carrying Griffith's coffin down the steep track to prevent it sliding in the snow and injuring the horse.

Griffith was laid beside Watkin in an identical but separate grave.

There is an irony that two brothers who didn't speak during life are now lying side by side for eternity guaranteed to never speak again.

In 1949 the little chapel shut its doors for the final time and abandoned to the elements. Today, only the crumbling shell remains, its walls festooned with invasive ivy, brambles and nettles, and surrounded by trees. The little graveyard hosting not many more than half a dozen graves is also from another era and seldom visited. Mount View is now called Rhiw Awel and sports two cars, a campervan and with such a view could command a price way beyond the imagination of Watkin and Griffith.

The steep track down to the site of the chapel is no longer used and is overgrown with gorse.



The steep overgrown track

It was whilst I stood for a moment enjoying the super view and reflecting on the story of the two brothers before starting back down the steep track to the car that I also briefly wandered where the poor guard dog which had been shot through the roof had been buried!

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YSGOL Y LLAN



We have been very busy since our last *Five Villages* article! Pupils have been out at about in the community and have been learning lots of new things.

We are very proud to share with the local community our October 2025 Estyn report which was published just before Christmas on 19th December 2025. Please take a look and have a read of our full report.

ESTYN: <https://estyn.gov.wales/education-providers/ysgol-y-llan-whitford-v-p/>

MR WILLIAMS (HEADTEACHER)

SHARED; Following the recent inspection by Estyn, we are delighted with the positive report and the recognition of the many strengths within our school. It reflects the commitment, professionalism and care shown by staff each day to ensure pupils receive high-quality learning experiences within a supportive and nurturing environment.

We are particularly pleased that the report highlights pupils' positive attitudes, behaviour and engagement in their learning. Their enthusiasm, confidence and respect for others make our school a special place to learn and grow.

This outcome would not be possible without the strong partnership we share with parents, carers, governors and the wider community. Your ongoing encouragement and support are invaluable and play a key role in our continued success.

While we celebrate this achievement, we remain committed to ongoing improvement and ensuring the very best outcomes for all learners at *Ysgol y Llan*.

KEY POINTS:

"A caring school where children feel safe, confident and inspired to learn."

"High expectations, engaging learning and strong community values."

"Where every child is known, supported and encouraged to succeed."

"An inclusive school with excellent teaching, strong wellbeing and inspiring outdoor learning."

SPOTLIGHT: Engaging pupils in highly stimulating learning opportunities

Teachers work together effectively to identify engaging themes and plan a wide range of purposeful activities that challenge, captivate and excite pupils. Staff

invest considerable effort in preparing high-quality resources and provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to influence the direction of their learning and develop a strong sense of ownership of their work. This supports pupils to develop highly positive attitudes to learning and engage enthusiastically in the experiences provided

Whitford Playgroup and Wraparound Childcare continues to go from strength to strength, with places filling quickly. We are proud to work in close partnership with Ysgol y Llan, providing a seamless and supportive childcare experience for local families.

We now offer high-quality wraparound care for children aged 3–11 from 7:45am to 5:15pm, supporting working parents with flexible provision before and after the school day.

For our youngest children, 2-year-olds can attend from 8:30am to 5:15pm, giving them a nurturing early start in a safe, stimulating environment that supports their development through play and exploration.

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DOSBARTH 1

But we have loved discovering all about winter down in Dosbarth 1. We have been busy exploring signs of winter, what animals get up to in winter and animals that live in the very cold countries. We listened to lots of winter poems and worked together to write our own poems and used our digital skills to redraft them and create fantastic pictures to go with them

Outdoors we investigated how many polar bears we could balance on an iceberg, moved our muscles to keep us warm and followed an assault course around the playground.

In our maths we have been exploring winter patterns, learning all about heavy and light and had great fun playing the build a snowmen game! In our Welsh sessions we have been trying really hard with the *Helpwr Heddiw* questions and enjoying

setting up a picnic

Towards the end of the month, we listened to and acted out the story of Chinese New Year and made our own new year resolutions on wish wands.



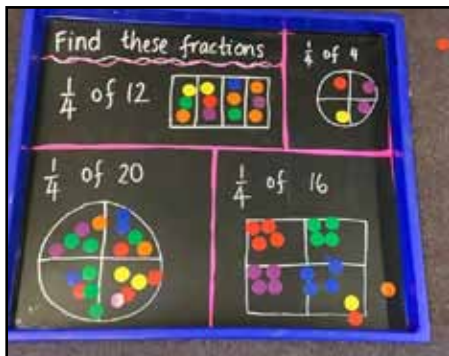
DOSBARTH 2

Fantastic fractions have been on the menu in Dosbarth 2 this half term! The children have been making pizza fractions, working out fractions of amounts, and creating colourful fraction wands.

Our new topic is all about diversity in Wales. We have been learning that diversity means celebrating differences, so we have been outside taking pictures of the diverse range of plants and trees we have in our school grounds. We used these photos to help us draw some different plants and trees. We have also discussed how humans can be diverse, and our pupils have created wonderful collages of people who live in Wales.

Nila Ann is a Welsh artist who sells her

work in her shop in Llanrwst. We loved her colourful, digital images of local towns so much that we have tried to replicate her style by using J2Create and collage work to draw daffodils. Children learned about Santes Dwynwen and used animations to bring the story alive.



DOSBARTH 3

The class have settled back in really well after the Christmas break, returning with a positive attitude and a real eagerness to learn, which has been lovely to see. We are just about to finish our class novel 'When the Sky Falls', a story that has captured the children's interest and prompted some thoughtful discussions - please ask them about it. Alongside this, we have begun our new topic. So far we've looked at Welsh history, starting by exploring what life was like before castles, learning about the Celts and Romans, and developing a growing understanding of life during these periods. We are now focusing on the impact the Normans had on Wales after 1066, particularly through the building of castles, churches and monasteries, and

the children have shown great curiosity and enthusiasm so far. This week, we also had a fantastic expressive arts morning at Ysgol Bro Carmel, where the children engaged enthusiastically in creative activities, and we will be working towards a performance inspired by this experience with further sessions planned. As always, the class was a real credit to yourselves, demonstrating excellent behaviour and a positive attitude throughout.

Pupils have been creating Welsh posters to promote Cymraeg in the local community. They will be visiting local shops to share their work and hopefully raise the profile of Cymraeg. As we prepare for the Eisteddfod and Diwrnod Dewi Sant, we have been learning Welsh poems.



We welcomed PC Mark and PC Louise to school to talk about being cyber safe

We were delighted to welcome William from Gwella to school to run a fantastic Dodgeball fun competition. The pupils had a brilliant time showing teamwork, determination and excellent sportsmanship throughout the event. A big thank you to Ysgol Brynford, Ysgol Mornant and Ysgol Trelawnyd for taking part and helping make it such an enjoyable and energetic occasion for everyone involved.



What an amazing turnout at our annual Diwrnod Santes Dwynwen at Ysgol y Llan. Our Criw Cymraeg did a fantastic job organising and running the event, and it was lovely to see families creating cards, using Welsh, and celebrating together. Thank you to everyone who came to support, as always—your continued involvement means a great deal and helps make these occasions so special.



HANNAH BLYTHYN MS



I know that from where I live and serve, local pubs, cafés and restaurants and are at the heart of our town centres and communities – these businesses don't simply bring people together and support local jobs, in many cases they are key to keeping our high streets alive. That's why I welcome the decision by the Welsh Government to provide another year of business rates support for food and drink hospitality businesses, on top of more than £300m a year in existing relief. I regularly speak with local business owners in our corner of North East Wales about rising bills and operating costs and I have made sure that their voices are heard in the Senedd. You can read more about the schemes in place at www.hannahblythyn.cymru/updates/hannah-blythyn-ms-welcomes-extra-rates-relief-pubs-and-restaurants.

Our town centres are not just places to shop – they're part of who we are and where we come from. Growing up in a small town, and living in one today, I know how important it is that our high streets are able to thrive, not just survive. That's why I recently asked the Welsh Government for an update on investment in town



centres across north Wales. Through the Transforming Towns programme, more than £80m has already been invested – helping to support local businesses, create jobs and bring new life back to our high streets.

In Holywell, I helped to secure funding to reopen the high street and I'm continuing to work with traders and local voices to shape what comes next – in February I held a business forum in the town, bringing together business organisations, the police and the council.

Since my last Chronicle column, I started the New Year as I mean to go on – getting out and about in the community, talking to local people. The early part of the year saw me busy delivering my latest newsletter, which updates constituents on a range of issues from the matters I have been raising in the Senedd on your behalf to a focus on transport – tackling potholes, fairer fares and better buses.

From when I was first elected to represent Delyn in the Senedd in 2016, it's been a privilege to serve the community that shaped me. For nearly a decade now I have stood up for our corner of North East Wales, both in the Senedd and locally, engaging with the people I represent, listening to their views and tackling local issues. From my Democracy in Action days with local schools to holding funding fairs, my Public Transport Forum bringing together rail and bus operatives alongside trade union representatives, as well as my Our Home, Our Health survey which asked for your views on our NHS, I'm committed to work hard for our people and places, this

year and every year I am privileged to be able to do so.

Recently the Welsh Government published a Green Paper on Shaping the Future of Water Governance in Wales – paving the way for better water industry regulation, cleaner rivers and protecting not only our environment but our communities as well. Water is essential to every part of life in Wales and over the past decade there has been real progress, but there is still a lot more to do – the current system is complex and out of date and our ageing infrastructure isn't ready to deal with the realities of the climate and nature emergencies.

The Green Paper outlines a complete overhaul of the water system, cleaning up our rivers and introducing a new water watchdog for Wales, a response to the recommendations of the Independent Water Commission, published in July last year. Change is essential to ensure the industry meets the needs of people, the environment and our economy – find out more and give your views at www.gov.wales/green-paper-shaping-future-water-governance-wales.

Regular readers will know that Wales has been leading the way on recycling for some years now, something that I helped to champion when I was Minister for Environment back in 2017. In 2019, I helped to kick-start the ban on single-use

A promotional flyer for 'Sue Wilcox MCFHP MAFHP'. The top half features a close-up of a foot being treated with a tool. The text 'Sue Wilcox MCFHP MAFHP' is prominently displayed in the center. Below this, it says 'CALL TO BOOK NOW - 07455290253'. To the left, a list of 'TREATMENTS AVAILABLE' includes: CORNS, CALLUSES, VERRUCAS, NAIL TRIMMING, CRACKED HEELS, INGROWING TOENAILS, FUNGAL NAIL, DIABETIC FOOT HEALTH, and BASIC NEUROVASCULAR ASSESSMENT. To the right, it mentions '(45 MINUTE SESSIONS) MOBILE' and an 'INTRODUCTORY OFFER - £28'. At the bottom right, it says 'ALTERNATIVELY FIND ME ON FACEBOOK - @SUETHINGSOLES' with a Facebook logo. The background of the bottom half shows a pair of striped shoes.

plastics and the move towards creating a circular economy by launching the Beyond Recycling policy in Llangollen, one of Wales' first 'plastic-free' towns. Recently new figures were released from local authorities which show the recycling rate has gone up to 68.4% in 2024-25 – a complete transformation from around 5% pre-devolution.

These statistics are the first annual data published since new workplace recycling measures were introduced in Wales, requiring all businesses, public and third sector workplaces to separate key recyclable materials. This is good news for our nation and for our environment as an extra 8,187 tonnes of recyclable material has been collected from workplaces by local authorities – up 42% on the previous year. This means thousands of tonnes of additional recyclable materials are being fed back into the economy instead of being incinerated or landfilled – just 0.7% of waste was disposed of via landfill in 2024 to 2025, a vast decrease on the 95% sent prior to devolution.

Access to healthcare shouldn't depend on how you get there – that's why Welsh Labour has pledged to take action to improve access to hospital transport, especially for people in rural communities. We all know how important it is that we bring waiting lists down in our NHS, but it's equally vital to enable people to reach those NHS appointments, especially if they are far from home. Free parking is already available at all NHS hospitals thanks to a Welsh Government policy from back in 2008 and new bus routes and fairer fares are on their way thanks to the Bus Services (Wales) Act which became law on February 2nd, but what Wales also needs is better patient transport to remove barriers to NHS appointments.

Finally, local residents could be entitled to more support with the cost of living than they are currently getting. Since 2020, more than £10.5m has been put back into people's pockets, meaning support with bills, daily expenses and debt – thanks to the Welsh Government's Claim What's Yours campaign. Just one call will tell you all you need to know about what you're entitled to and how to get it – call Advice Line Cymru for free on 0800 702 2020.

As always, if you would like advice and/or support, please don't hesitate to get in touch on any of the following contact details – 52 High Street, Mold, Flintshire, on 01352 753464 or, if you prefer, by email hannah.blythyn@senedd.wales. If you use social media, you can also keep up to date via my Facebook page – www.facebook.com/HannahBlythyn. Constituents are, of course, welcome to contact my office to arrange an appointment to see me, you don't need to wait until an advice surgery.

EGLWYS GYMRAEG BRO TREFFYNNON. HOLYWELL & DISTRICT WELSH CHAPEL.

Mawrth/March 2026:

22ain Y Parch. Huw Powell-Davies
29ain Arwel Roberts

Ebrill/April:

5ed Sul y Pasg – Y Parch. Huw Powell-Davies – (Cymun)
12fed Debbie Roberts.
19eg I'w drefnu
26ain Y Parch. Huw Powell-Davies.

Mai/May:

3ydd Huw Vaughan Jones
10fed Y Parch. Huw Powell-Davies
17eg Y Parch. Brian Huw Jones
24ain Y Parch. Huw Powell-Davies
31ain I'w drefnu

Mehefin/June:

7fed Dr. Phillip Jonathan
14eg Y Parch. Huw Powell-Davies – (Cymun)
21ain Marion Simkin
28ain Y Parch. Huw Powell-Davies

Yn ystod yr wythnosau diwethaf cawsom fel eglwys golledion mawr ym marwolaeth dau o'n haelodau ffyddlonaf, sef Mrs. Eurwen Jones, Bedw Arian, Gorsedd a Mr. Norman Closs Parry, Bryn Ceris, Carmel. Mae ein cydymdeimlad dwysaf gyda'r ddau deulu yn eu profedigaeth.

During the last few weeks the chapel lost two of our most faithful members in the passing away of Mrs. Eurwen Jones, Bedw Arian, Gorsedd and Mr. Norman Closs Parry, Bryn Ceris, Carmel. Our deepest sympathy goes out to both families during this incredibly difficult time.

Y gwasanaethau i gyd am 10 o'r gloch. Croeso cynnes i bawb.
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ST.WINEFRIDE'S

Year 1 and 2 had a visit from a company called Past Productions to have an engaging start to the new topic Kings and Queens. Queen Elizabeth I visited for the day and the children took part in a variety of activities such as jousting, Tudor dancing, looking at different artefacts, making popular toys and learning about the War of the Roses and the Spanish Armada. We learnt lots about different kings and queens and had a fantastic day.



Dosbarth Dyfi have been brightening others' days and making people smile this half term as part of our Prayer Box Action. We have been baking heart-shaped Welsh cakes with an "I love you" message to



give to someone in our family, following instructions, learning about recipe writing, and then creating our own recipe cards. Da iawn pawb!

We were very busy in Nursery last term as we prepared for Christmas. We learned



all about Advent and how an Advent wreath helps us to count down the weeks until Christmas. We even made our own Advent wreaths, both indoors and outdoors! Each week, we counted down together and lit the

candles on our class wreath.

We also learned to retell the story of The Nativity off by heart using actions, and we created our very own "living Nativity" outside, just like those seen in countries such as Italy. During our art activities, we designed beautiful angels, inspired by the angel who told Mary about the baby Jesus, and made postcards to send to Mary to congratulate her.

We practised our scissor and joining skills by wrapping presents and creating beautifully crafted packages to give to baby Jesus, just as the Kings and Shepherds did. Alongside all of this, we made some wonderful Christmas crafts to take home and share with our families and, of course, we didn't forget to write our Christmas lists!



Dosbarth Melyn have enjoyed participating in a number of activities to raise awareness for NSPCC Number Day 2026!

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Dosbarth Melyn enjoyed creating their own version of Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' picture as a part of our Light and Dark topic this term!



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RECIPES

BREAD & BUTTER CHEESE PIE

3 Slices of bread, buttered
2 medium Onions
1 Red Pepper
2 Medium Courgettes
1 Level tspn Mixed Herbs
350 ml (12 fl oz) Milk
2 tblspn Chopped Nuts or 2 tblspn Chopped Ham
1 Large Carrot
2 Cloves Garlic
1 Stick Celery
4 tblspn Oil
3 Eggs
6 oz Grated Cheese
Salt & Pepper

Preheat oven to 350F/180C/Gas 4. Cut buttered bread into slices. Scrape the carrot and dice it. Skin and chop the onion and garlic finely. De-seed and chop the pepper.

Cut tops off celery and courgettes and slice finely. Heat the oil in a large frying pan and add the carrot first, then the other vegetables – garlic and courgettes last. Season with herbs, salt and pepper. Leave to cook gently for 5 minutes stirring regularly.

Beat the eggs with the milk, season. Cover the base of a shallow oven-proof dish with bread fingers, buttered side down. Pour in a third of the milk and egg mixture, sprinkle with a little cheese, then spread on half the vegetable mixture and a spoonful of the chopped nuts or ham and more cheese. Repeat the layering, using the rest of the vegetables but reserving enough bread, milk and egg and cheese to make a final layer. Bake in the oven for 30 – 35 mins, until golden and bubbling.

SALMON SINSIR

2 salmon fillets
Topping:
40g raisins
30g pine nut kernels
1 garlic clove, sliced finely
3 pieces of stem ginger, chopped, plus a couple of tablespoons of the syrup from the jar.
juice of 1 orange
salt and pepper

Place all the topping ingredients in a bowl and mix. If you have time, let this stand in the fridge for a couple of hours so let the flavours infuse. I never have time, so usually use it straight away.

Put salmon fillets in baking dish and pile the topping mix on top, including all the juices and bake in a preheated oven (200C/Gas 6) for 20 minutes.

Nice served with new potatoes and any greens.

Many thanks to Sandy Nevile for these recipes.

Have any readers got any favourite seasonal dishes for the next (summer) issue?

Please email: editor@5villages.org.uk

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GORSEDD CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

(Sandy Neville)

In the last edition of the magazine we extended a challenge to readers of writing a story in exactly 25 words on the theme 'A New Beginning' and I do thank those of you who took part in this. It was a shame that only a few 'locals' had a go. All entries appear below.

The members of the Writing Group acted as judges and it was a close-run thing in the end. Many congratulations to our ultimate winner whose prize will be winging its way to her in the next few days.

THE WINNER

Heads, I will go and start anew. Tails, I will stay.

On the toss of the coin, it was decided.

Now, where is my passport?

Susanne Livingstone, N. Yorkshire

Starting Over

New year, new start. Perhaps a New Year's resolution?

Not this time.

Just a simple pledge to myself: move forward, embrace life, and be happy.

Josie Lane, Dorset

A new beginning when I had a dream of you
I am reaching out to your heart

To tell you how much I love you

Michael Slater, Caerwys

Making the Change

Shock diagnosis. Pre-diabetic. List of instructions.

Some dietary tweaks.

A few tears shed as into the bin goes my large, unopened, box of Black Magic.

Judie Jones, Dorset

Makes You Think, Don't It?

You can't go out anywhere. There's no atmosphere, even if you do. Seems a long way from everywhere. Mind you, that's outer space for you!

Neil Jones, Gorsedd

Seemingly, an age since a notion evolved into possibility, becoming then focus of searches, stringences, also frustrations, but today I take over my own flat.

Marjorie Budd, Ceredigion

When the Alarm Clock goes off!

Right eye flickers. Left eye gluey. YUCK!

Right hand stretching. SLAM! OUCH!

Head shake and wobble. CLICK!

Bottom shuffle. Feet planted NOT. AH!!

Nice carpet?

Susan Jenkins, Ceredigion

My best friend was a pigeon.

It laid an egg, then died.

I took the egg and kept it warm.

When hatched, my friend returned.

Colin Lloyd, Gorsedd

Retirement

Gifts fill drawers, no vase stands empty, speeches linger fading in memory. No further need for cramped swaying journeys but querulous wonder leads into tomorrow.
Marjorie Budd, Ceredigion

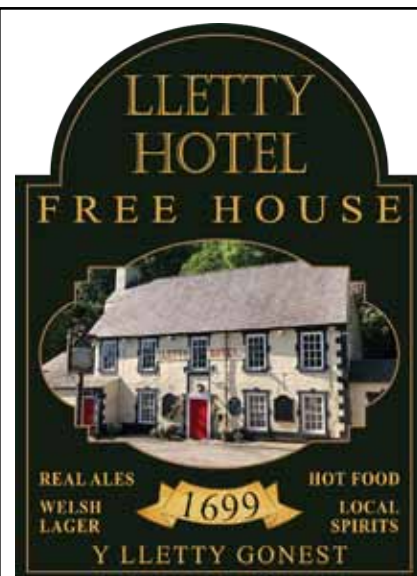
If you are interested in creative writing and are looking for friendly encouragement, support and inspiration, we would welcome you to our group. Come along to one of our meetings. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 7.00 – 9.00 p.m. in St Paul's Church, Gorsedd (opposite the Druid Inn). For further details contact me on 01352 961597 or email sandy@thenevilles.net

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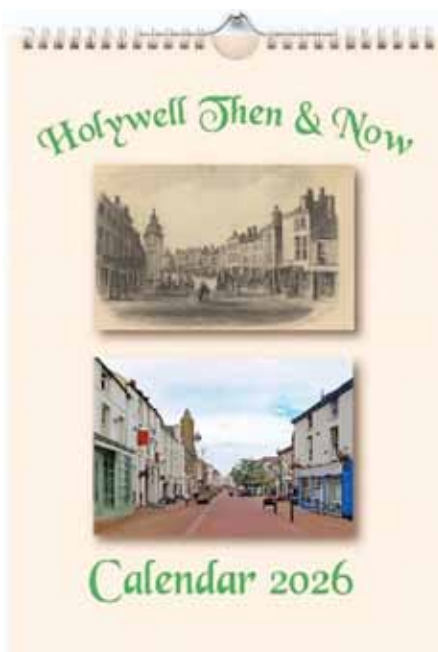
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HOLYWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS (Donna Coulson, Secretary)

We hope your year has begun well and continues to be a good one. We have many exciting plans for the year ahead and the group continues to grow and prosper,




We may finally be seeing the back of January, but there are still 11 months of the year left to enjoy our 2026 calendars, the A4 spiral-bound Holywell Then & Now, and A4 all-year calendars in 2 designs, Transport in Holywell and Holywell's Public Houses. Once again we have been amazed at the popularity of both the Christmas cards and the calendars – with cards and calendars being sent as far off as Australia! The calendars are available to buy from our stall at Nexus Creative Spaces, the pop up shop in Holywell town centre (at the rear of the Post Office), along with our greetings cards and books on local history. This year we have decided to add to our greetings card selection with two new cards – an Easter card and a Sympathy card. Our Easter card contains a bespoke verse evoking memories of the Easter Fair that came to Holywell every year, along with an illustration of a typical fairground scene from those bygone years – we can all remember the thrill of riding on those swing boats with the wind in our hair – such carefree days! Our sympathy card shows a picture of Holywell High Street from the late 1950s with a poignant verse for those whom we have lost from these familiar streets. These two new greetings cards will be available to buy in the next few weeks. All of our merchandise, and details of where to purchase, can be found on our website. <https://holywellreminiscing.wixsite.com/historical-society>






We are also in the process of compiling a book of memories collected from the members of the Holywell Reminiscing Group. The motto of our group is **Every Memory Matters**, and we thought this an apt and fitting title for this collection of stories. This book should be available to buy at the end of March – the details of the release date will be on our Facebook page. Our group continues to meet every Tuesday morning at Holywell Leisure Centre (10:00-12:00). We're always happy



to welcome new members, if you'd like to come along and share your memories of Holywell with us. We also have a general knowledge quiz on a Thursday afternoon (1pm-3pm) - £2 per session which includes refreshments. For those who are not available to come to the meetings, we have our Facebook group, now with over 1600 members. The page is regularly updated with members' stories and photographs, and our resident experts are always





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Talwyd costau'r cyhoeddiad hwn gan Gomisiwn y Senedd, o gronfeydd cyhoeddus
The costs of this publication have been met by the Senedd Commission from public funds

available to answer questions relating to the history of Holywell <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2256532077884382>

A Date for Your Diary Following the success of our first ever Holywell History Fair, we have decided to hold the event again this year. The Fair will be held on Sunday 12th April 2026 at Holywell Leisure Centre, 9:30-3:30. As before, entry is free of charge and there is also free parking at the Leisure Centre. The café will be open for refreshments and there will be a raffle. If you would like to have a stall at the event, or you are able to donate a raffle prize, please contact us holywellhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

We are continuing in our quest to forge links with local schools, to bring awareness of our rich heritage to the younger generation. This month we have been approached by Ysgol Bro Carmel who were looking for a contribution to their World War II project this term. Several of our members have first-hand experience of being a child during war-time, and we are looking forward to visiting the school to share our stories with the children, along with an informal presentation that will include our collection of World War II memorabilia.

A few weeks ago, we were delighted to be presented with a huge box of historical volumes, books on both social history of Flintshire and family history journals. This donation was made anonymously, and we'd love to know the name of our benefactor, so that we might thank them for their generous gift. The contents of this box will be duly indexed and added to our archive page on our website. Our archives are available to view on appointment. Please contact us for more information. holywellhistoricalsociety@gmail.com



We're putting together the finishing touches for the Family History Hub website, which should be live by the end of next month. Our proposed Family History Group should also be up and running in the next few weeks. We are planning on an evening session once a month at Holywell Library. A start date is yet to be confirmed, but details will be posted on our Facebook page. In the meantime, we are happy to help with any family history queries you may have. Our resident genealogist, Donna Coulson,

has over 30 years' experience in family history research and is currently offering a free one-hour, one-to-one consultation dcfamilyhistoryhub@gmail.com

Thanks to everyone who supported us by buying our merchandise in 2025. We look forward to seeing you at our History Fair in April.

WALKING FOR HEALTH (Terry Ireland)

Everyone these days seems to complain about the pace of life. Research by Dr Carol Holland of Aston University's Centre for Healthy Ageing suggested that "Thirty minutes of moderate exercise a day can reduce the risk of age-related diseases." It was also found to reduce your risk of cognitive decline.

Walking is a wonderful exercise as it loosens up muscles and joints gently, reduces blood pressure and helps the immune system get stronger. If you know any really old people you will probably discover they are or were regular walkers.

In the spring of 2009 two men met each other by accident for the first time as they left their hotel on the shores of Lake Geneva for a late evening walk. One was the British-Egyptian heart surgeon Magdi Yacoub and the other was Erling Kagge – the Norwegian explorer who had walked to the North Pole and had crossed Antarctica and climbed Mount Everest! Magdi Yacoub was fascinated by Erling Kagge's stories and the latter was amazed by Magdi Yacoub's heart transplants. The eminent heart surgeon commented that he would be virtually out of business if everyone walked as they were every day.

Walking is a funny business, and we

all had to learn the process with many tumbles as young babies. Walking consists of leaning forward until you start to fall but then sweeping a foot forward to stop it and then repeating the process with the other foot. We all do it naturally but stand up and try it to see what I mean. The best method of walking is the heel-toe technique, so the heel lands first as you step forward and then the foot rolls forward as you then lift the foot with the toe pointing upwards to miss protrusions on your path and then placing it down on your heel. Effectively it is heel landing and toe pushing forward.

The connection between the brain and feet as you walk overcomes all distractions, otherwise you will fall over.

In the process of walking you get free foot massage, vital exercise for your skeleton especially hips, knees and back. If you walk with a companion you will find you talk more freely as you have little eye contact. "Let's go for a walk and think about this problem we have" is very good advice. A daily walk is like a magic pill to slow ageing. Someone I know was a diabetic and overweight, but she started early morning daily walking with her husband. In a few months she had lost weight, felt stronger and happier, her blood sugar levels improved and her doctor was pleased. Today she is no longer diabetic and is a much happier person and so is her husband.

Please wear comfortable good shoes or thick-soled trainers as feet are fussy. Perhaps it would be wise to add don't walk in traffic along main roads but in quiet lanes, parks or footpaths. Breathing in fresh air is all part of the process of supporting healthy ageing. Walk on to a healthy active old age!



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IS 'NO MOW MAY' THE RIGHT MESSAGE? (Jan Miller-Klein)

I was at an international symposium of Butterfly Conservation a few years ago, and a professor from the Czech Republic mentioned something he thinks is very damaging to Czech biodiversity. He said, having been a Soviet satellite state for a long time before independence, their farmers and municipal contractors had a very disciplined attitude to mowing the meadows and verges. If the rules said they had to be done by the 16th July every year, then by God they were all mown short by 16th July, and you would have to drive 50 Kilometres to see a single nectar source, not one thistle or daisy anywhere!

Now I have to say, first of all, that I am very glad to see this 'No Mow May' campaign take hold of the UK. It seems a simple rule makes a more memorable headline in the media.

But it does not mean that there are no insects that need nectar or more importantly, larval foodplants after the end of May! Nor does it mean that all wildflowers will have set seed by then. As with everything in biodiversity management, making interventions need to be done on ROTATION. This means you don't cut or graze all the grass meadows, lawns, verges, hedges at the same time, but leave half or a third each time, even within a small garden. This allows at least some species to feed, nest, hibernate or seed, depending on their different seasonal needs. I am afraid that encouraging all gardeners to cut their wildflower meadows before October will only attract lots of our insect species to take up residence there, only to be destroyed by mowers and strimmers before they can continue their life cycles.

Also we are in danger of causing a backlash of gardeners who stop allowing grass to grow long when they discover that once it rains and the grass fall over, it is impossible to cut with a normal garden mower or even a strimmer.

I have four smallish unimproved fields (between one and two and a half acres each) separated by old, spreading hedges. I have been only mowing or grazing them on a two- or three-year rotation for over 20 years. I started doing this because I found out that several insects, some species of butterflies, moths, grasshoppers, beetles etc. actually must overwinter in the dead grass or other plant stems from the year before. Thus annual cutting or grazing will destroy their life cycle. But then, unbeknownst to me, I discovered I had created just the right kind of fallen, rough grass habitat that is needed for breeding voles and mice, and in turn this meant that I had vole-hunting Barn Owls, Tawny Owls, Kestrel and Buzzard all come to nest in my uncut hedges. Also, these hedges provide overwintering sites for butterflies that lay their eggs on hedging shrubs like Blackthorn, Elm, Ivy and Holly that must stay there throughout winter before they hatch as caterpillars the following Spring.

This is the wonder of all our attempts at contriving sites for wild species to thrive. We may not always attract the species we wanted to, but lots of other wonders will come to take advantage. So you don't have to leave your wildflower meadows to grow too long into June so that your lawnmower or strimmer can't tackle it. You can cut part of your lawn every three weeks and allow the little plants that flower in between, like the daisies, clover, bugle, eyebright and trefoils in your grass feed the insects between cuts. But if you can leave some margins and corners to grow long and leave them all through the winter until the next spring then do so, on rotation if you like; some bits one year and some the next. It will be much more beneficial to wildlife than cutting everything at the same time, whether it is at the end of May, the middle of July or even in November. If you want to see a detailed list of the kinds of plants you can grow in a lawn that will flower after 4 inch cut you can find it in my book 'Gardening for Butterflies, Bees and other beneficial insects' which is nearly out of print after selling 3000 copies, but I have a few left if you get in touch with me (jan@7wells.org).

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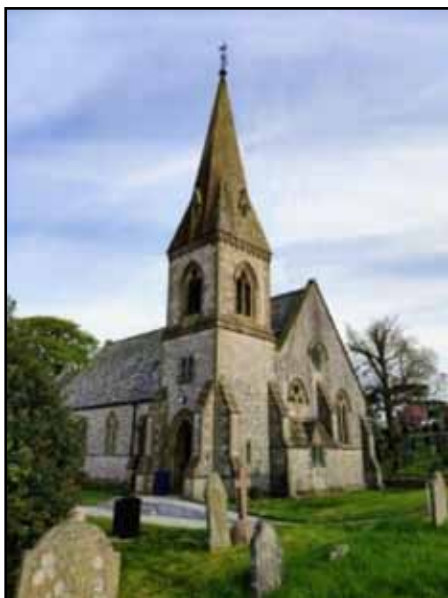
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ST PAUL'S CHURCH, GORSIEDD (Ian Austerberry, Warden)

The new Vicar for the Gorsedd and Holywell churches, the Rev Phillip Chew, will be licensed on Palm Sunday March 29th. The service will be held at St Peter's Church, Rosehill, Holywell commencing at 3.30pm, and will be taken by the Bishop of St Asaph.

Palm Sunday at 9.30am the Rev Andrea will be presiding.

Friday April 3rd at 11.00am Family Friendly Stations of the Cross Easter Service with Rev Andrea presiding.

The Church has regular booking from Ladies Keep Fit; Ladies Guild; Carmel Rainbows, Creative Writing Group and Whitford Community Council.

On the 3rd Saturday of the month we hold a coffee morning, come along and meet friends old and new.

On Saturday June 20th we will hold our Summer Fête from 11.00am to 2.00pm.

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- **Thursday** Knit and Natter
- **Friday** Welsh Conversation 2pm (1st & 3rd Friday of the month)
- **Saturday** Lego Club 10.00am

For further information on events and activities in your library email libraries@gwella.wales



Love Reading and a chat?

Join us at Holywell Library for our Book Club. We meet on the **last Friday of every month 11.00 – 12.00noon**. Share your thoughts, recommendations or come along for a chat over a new chapter and a cup of tea or coffee with fellow book lovers for ideas to read.

For further information on events and activities please contact: Holywell Library
holywell.library@gwella.wales or 01352 703850

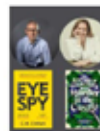
Gwella Author Evenings - Coming Soon to Mold Library

Gwella Libraries in partnership with Mold Bookshop invite you to join us at our author evenings in March 2026. Tickets are available from The Bookshop and online 33 High Street, Mold website www.mold-bookshop.co.uk contact info@moldbookshop.co.uk



Our Beautiful Mess - A Literary Night Out With Adele Parks

Mold Library & Museum, Mold, CH7 1AP
Friday 13th March 2026 at 7.00p.m.



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Mold Library & Museum, Mold, CH7 1AP
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****COMING SOON****

Once Upon a Tide... Ar Lan y Mor... at Holywell Library

Tuesday 7th April (2 sessions 1.00pm and 3.00pm)

This event is Pay What You Can



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Delivered by Theatr Clwyd in partnership with Gwella Libraries.

(Families are welcome to join in the craft activities 30 minutes before or after the show. These will be provided by Homestart Flintshire.)

Book your tickets through www.theatrclywd.com/event/once-upon-a-tide

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CROESO! Grŵpiau Sqwrsio Cymraeg Welcome! Welsh Conversational Groups

Are you learning Welsh? Or want to join a conversational Welsh group?

[Holywell Library](#) have a conversational group session on the 1st and 3rd Friday of every month at 2.00pm.

These sessions are a friendly and relaxed space for Welsh learners and Welsh speakers to socialise and build confidence. A very warm welcome awaits you

For more information, contact libraries@gwella.wales

Citizen Advice Bureau

Looking for help or guidance a representative from Citizen's Advice is available to help at Holywell Library from 9.30a.m. every Wednesday morning.

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BECKY GITTINS MP



It has been another busy few months both in Westminster and here in Clwyd East, with continued progress on a number of issues that matter to people across our local communities. From improving rights at work to road safety, transport and bringing new investment into North Wales, my focus has remained on making sure the voices of residents across our villages are heard and reflected in the decisions being made.

I know from speaking with residents across Whitford, Carmel, Lloc, Gorsedd and Pantasaph just how important it is that national decisions work in practice for rural communities like ours. The challenges faced in village communities are often different from those in larger towns and cities, and it is important that this is recognised when new policies are developed.

In Parliament, one of the most significant recent changes has been the Employment Rights Bill becoming law. The new legislation introduces stronger protections for workers, including ending



exploitative zero-hours contracts, improving rights around sick pay and parental leave, and strengthening protections against unfair dismissal.

For many people here in Clwyd East, particularly those working in care, retail, hospitality and other frontline roles, these changes will provide greater security and stability. I regularly hear from constituents who simply want the confidence of knowing their work is secure and fairly treated. Fair employment is essential not only for individuals and families, but also for building a strong and resilient local economy.

Road safety has also been raised with me frequently in recent months. The Government has announced a new road safety strategy, which I welcome, and it comes at a time when a number of residents across the Five Villages have contacted me with concerns about speeding, unsafe driving and parking near schools. These concerns are entirely understandable, particularly for parents and pupils travelling to and from school each day.

I was very pleased to see North Wales Police recently run a Speedwatch session with pupils at Ysgol Bro Carmel after students contacted me directly about speeding and unsafe parking near the school. It was encouraging to see young people taking an active interest in improving safety in their community, and I would like to thank the officers involved for taking the time to work with the school and raise awareness. Improving road safety

requires partnership between residents, schools, police and local authorities, and I will continue to support efforts to address concerns raised locally.

Transport continues to be one of the most common issues raised with me across the constituency. Over the past year many residents took the time to respond to my transport survey, attend meetings or get in touch to share their experiences. I am very grateful to everyone who contributed. The feedback received has now been brought together into a report which has been shared with Transport for Wales to help inform future decisions about services in our area.

The message from residents was clear. Public transport is a lifeline, particularly in rural communities, but services must be reliable, affordable and properly connected to where people need to travel. Many people highlighted the importance of better links between villages and nearby towns, improved evening services and making it easier for young people to access work, education and social opportunities. I will continue pressing for improvements, including better rural connectivity and progress on long-standing priorities such as improved rail access along the coast. The full report can be downloaded at www.beckygittins.co.uk/campaign-transport/

Alongside transport, I have continued to focus on bringing investment and skilled employment opportunities into North Wales. Our region is increasingly recognised as a leader in clean energy, and the announcement of the Awel y Mor offshore wind project is an important development for the area. The fact that the project will be serviced from the Port of Mostyn means real opportunities for well-paid, skilled jobs locally, both during construction and in the longer term.

I was pleased to welcome Jo Stevens, Secretary of State for Wales, to the area recently to meet apprentices who are

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already working on wind projects across North Wales and who will be involved in the Awel y Mor project. Meeting young people training for these roles highlighted the opportunities ahead for our region. Clean energy investment is not only about environmental responsibility, but also about creating long-term employment and ensuring North Wales benefits from future industries.

One of the most rewarding parts of this role is meeting people who quietly make a difference in their communities. Across the Five Villages and wider Clwyd East there are many individuals and groups who give up their time to support others, organise local activities or simply look out for their neighbours. To recognise that contribution, I have recently launched a Community Champion of the Month initiative. The aim is to highlight those individuals and groups whose commitment and kindness help strengthen our communities. If you know someone locally who deserves recognition, it would be wonderful to hear from you. Nominations can be made through my website at www.beckygittins.co.uk/contact/community-champions/.

Many people also ask how they can keep up to date with what I am working on locally between editions of the Chronicle. I regularly share updates from across the constituency, including school visits, local projects and Community Champion videos, on my Facebook page. If you use social media, you can follow along at www.facebook.com/BeckyGittinsLabour to see more of the work taking place across Clwyd East.

Finally, on a personal note, Michael and I would like to say a sincere thank you to everyone who has taken the time to send kind messages following the birth of our daughter. We are all doing well and have been very touched by the warmth and generosity shown by people across the community. It has meant a great deal to us both.

As always, if there is an issue you would like to raise or something you think I should be aware of locally, please do get in touch. You can contact my office by email at becky.gittins.mp@parliament.uk or by phone on 01352 218 123. You can also use the contact form on my website at www.beckygittins.co.uk to get in touch directly. It is a privilege to represent our communities and to continue working on the issues that matter most to people Clwyd East.



THE HARDY PLANT SOCIETY CLWYD GROUP

We are a friendly gardening group.
We enjoy talks and garden visits.

Meetings are held at the Halkyn Cricket Club, Holywell CH8 8BS once a month on a Tuesday. Talks start at 7.30pm. Doors open from 7pm for plant sales and raffle tickets and free refreshments.

Visitors welcome £3 per meeting.

Forthcoming Events

Tuesday 24th March On the Shady Side, Jill Cawthray

Jill has a degree in environmental sciences and much experience in conservation and education having worked for the Field Studies Council, Shropshire Wildlife Trust and through teaching geography and the environment in several schools and colleges. She also has a formal horticulture qualification with the RHS Advanced Certificate. She runs Chicken Street Plants Nursery with husband Andy in Oswestry. Plants for sale.

Tuesday 14th April What have plants done for Us? Tracy Foster

Chelsea Gold Medal Winning Garden Designer Tracy Foster has a degree in plant biology and has worked as a mentor and director for the Society of Garden Designers. She has written a book on gardening in retirement and runs garden design workshops for the RHS as well as working as a botanical tour guide and running her garden design business in Leeds.

Tuesday 12th May Ashwood Specialities – Nigel Hopes

Nigel has been Head Gardener in John Massey's Private Garden at Ashwood Nurseries in the West Midlands since 2018. This talk gives an overview of some of the wonderful plants Ashwood Nurseries is renowned for including Hellebores, Hepaticas, Cyclamen, Salvia, Hydrangeas, Snowdrops and more. Plants for sale.

PLANT FAIR, Sunday 17th May, 11am to 2pm at the Holywell Leisure Centre.

HPS Clwyd and invited nurseries plant stalls.

Members of the public are very welcome. Free admission and free parking.

Information: 01352 781458 (leave a message)

email: clwydgroup@hardy-plant.org.uk

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YSGOL BRO CARMEL (Michael Martell)

As always, we are pleased to share all the latest news from Ysgol Bro Carmel with the *Five Villages Chronicle*. Some of our highlights from the autumn term included the election of our pupil groups, which



included our new School Council – they wasted little time in getting to work, having already written to me to request new playground equipment for the yard. They



have been very persuasive, and I had no choice but to meet their demands! We also marked Remembrance Day in school by making our Carmel Wreath, which was placed in the Memorial Garden in Holywell



by our Year Six School Councillors. This is the second year we have done this, and each child in school contributed a hand-decorated poppy to our wreath. We also marked the two minute silence impeccably in a service on Tuesday and have raised

plenty for the Royal British Legion through our poppy sales, raising £306. In sports news, the Year 6 football team won the Holywell Football Tournament at Maes Y Felin in the autumn term—da iawn pawb! As well as performing really well, the children were impeccably behaved and wonderfully represented Carmel. Other highlights included children coding, filming and observing nocturnal wildlife, cooking pizzas and toasting marshmallows! All in all, plenty of authentic, meaningful learning, with plenty of fun, enjoyment and amazing learning opportunities!

Our festive season was a festive whirlwind! We must mention the wonderful Christmas performance put on by our Foundation pupils. The Christmas production always gets the whole community feeling festive, and reminds us all that Christmas is about family, love and kindness. The children performed wonderfully, under the watchful guidance of our incredible staff team.


We had a fantastically exciting visit from The Grinch who spooked and scared

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us into being good ready for Xmas, as well as Santa visiting the children for two days, giving presents and spreading festive cheer! A hugh diolch yn fawr to the Grinch and Santa for helping make the Christmas period so special for all the pupils. Our Catalog Nadolig took up a huge amount



of learning time, and children were able to apply their measuring knowledge, D&T skills, artistic creativity, data handling and entrepreneurship to a real, authentic learning experience, as well as producing some wonderful products. Thank you to everyone who has supported the Christmas catalogue this year, and we hope you enjoyed your presents. Music always plays a big part of Christmas, and our fabulous Choir has been to the Village Hall to sing

Christmas Carols to the Carmel Coffee Morning attendees, who rewarded the children with cakes and treats for all their beautiful singing! Dosbarth Llyn Celyn have followed the musical theme by attending the Sinfonia Primary Schools Concert, playing their newly-learned p-buzz instrument



alongside the orchestra at William Aston Hall. It was a hugely inspiring show and really exemplified the value and importance of live musical experiences. Speaking of live musical experiences, the panto at Rhyl Pavilion was great fun, and the production of Sleeping Beauty was hilarious! (Oh no it wasn't! Oh yes it was!) As you can see, it has been a busy, fun, wild few weeks, and we were all ready for a nice, quiet Christmas....!

Our new Spring Term topics are well underway, with some really exciting learning taking place! Foundation Phase are learning all about Knights and Castles, and have started off their topic with a really enjoyable workshop - the children discovered knightly rituals, courtly dancing and all about the type of people who built and lived in these amazing buildings! Dosbarth Elsi and Y Fan Fach have started their topic on the Second World War, and have also been immersing themselves in artefacts, breaking codes and exploring what life was like during the air raids. Dosbarth Celyn and Dinas are learning about the Celts and the Romans in Britain, and will be visiting the Deva Roman Experience later in the term to see all the remains of the Romans and Celts in Chester! Dosbarth Dinas have this week started a collaborative expressive arts project on the topic of 'Saints' with pupils from Ysgol Y Llan and Ysgol Trelawnyd. We hosted the other schools here at Carmel, and the workshops contained some dance, some drama and some art, really getting the creative and expressive arts ideas flowing! We will be meeting up with Ysgol Trelawnyd and Ysgol Y Llan in a few weeks for a music workshop and to see where we are up to, in preparation for a performance at Theatr Clwyd in the summer term! For our Year 6 pupils, January brings about our annual residential to Cardiff. Dobarth






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Y Fan Fach were safely returned home following their residential trip - we did offer one or two of the pupils to Bristol Zoo whilst we were down there, but alas, they were full! The pupils had a wonderful time, thank you to the staff who again provided a memorable, adventurous and exciting learning experience for our eldest pupils.

Following the successful submission to the Tesco Stronger Starts grant, we have been able to upgrade and update our sensory room, and what a calming, wonderful space has been put together following the grant. The room looks fantastic and will provide a safe, sensory-led space for those children who need that little extra. Thank you again for all the blue tokens which were submitted on behalf of the school—it really does make a tremendous difference.

Carmel Christian Church

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WINTER 2025/26 IN THE FIVE VILLAGES (Robert Moore)

<i>Weather in the Five Villages Winter 2025/26 (2024/25 in brackets)</i>				
	Temperatures °C			Total rainfall mm
	Average	Maximum	Minimum	
November	7.9 (7.8)	15.8 (15.4)	0.0 (-0.6)	184.1 (55.9)
December	6.8 (7.2)	15.6 (10.9)	0.0 (2.3)	99.7 (164.9)
January	4.5 (3.6)	10.3 (11.0)	-1.0 (-2.0)	122.4 (187.7)
February	6.4 (5.4)	12.0 (16.1)	0.3 (-1.0)	140 (36.0)

Winter averages (December to February)		
	2000 - 2020	2025 - 2026
Air Temperature at 1800	5.1	5.9
Maximum Temperature	12.0	12.6
Minimum Temperature	-2.2	-0.2
Total days air frost	6	3
Total days ground frost	16	15

Because the full November data are not available for the Autumn edition of the *Five Villages Chronicle*, they are included in the winter table above. December 2025 was warm and dry. The rainfall was only 60 percent of December 2024's rainfall and a little below the station 20-year average. The average temperature at the weather station was slightly cooler than 2024 but still above the 20-year station average. North Wales had the highest maximum temperature in the UK. The whole of north Wales was a degree above the 1991 – 2020 average and had above average sunshine and below average number of days air frost. The ground temperature never fell below 6.0 degrees, the 20 year average for winter is 4.4. degrees. At the Carmel weather station only three days of air frost were recorded for the whole of the winter season. North Wales achieved another UK record, with the highest recorded wind gust. This was probably during Storm Bran (9th to 10th December).

Conditions changed in the new year, the most common entry in my daily record for January is 'rain' (followed by 'mist'). The whole month seemed damp and gloomy, with low cloud, poor visibility and rain. Or so it seemed, but we had less rain than in 2025. The rain, plus drizzle and mist just made it *feel* like an unusually wet month.

The five villages escaped the worst of the storms, *Claudia* in mid-November, *Bran* in December and *Chandra* late in January. There was widespread flooding and disruption throughout southwest England, south Wales and Northern Ireland. In Monmouthshire, the Monnow overflowed a second time in January, causing widespread flooding. We escaped lightly from the weather, although the coast of north Wales experienced some remarkably high wind. Northern Ireland had even windier weather with an orange wind warning. Snow fell on high ground as the storm moved north. Readers who have lawns (or who continued with county walks) will have noticed how waterlogged the ground was. Our lawns and gardens have the capacity to hold a lot of water, which moves away slowly (downhill for most of us). Concrete and asphalt prevent the ground absorbing water and thus contributes to flooding. If you are thinking of paving your drive, choose materials that will let the water through.

Why was there so much wet weather? Atlantic storms usually cross the UK fairly quickly, but from December onwards we had a blocking system over Scandinavia that held the frontal systems and associated storms over the UK and western Europe. What is more, the Atlantic air was coming up from the Caribbean, it was very warm and carrying a lot of water which it dropped as rain on encountering colder air over the north-eastern Atlantic. The satellite images received at the weather station showed the UK blotted out by cloud for days on end.

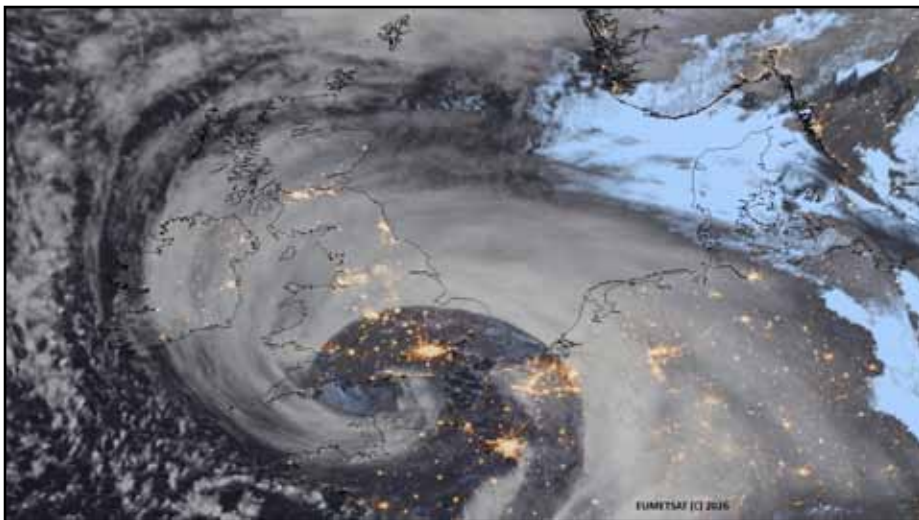
As February progressed, we gradually emerged from under the clouds, so we saw the sky again, with sunshine and relatively warm days at the very end of the month. We only had about 80 percent of our average sunshine in February.

Meteorological Spring begins on March 1st but it feels as if we have not had a proper winter yet. Who knows, perhaps Spring will be the new Winter? Most of us must hope not.

There are two satellite images this quarter. Both show the UK at 2150 on the 8th January. One is an infrared image with city lights overlaid, the other is a 'colour-composite' showing the cloud structures: the brown is thick high cloud with ice crystals, darker is thicker, the pale brown are watery clouds, the green and yellow are mid- and low-level clouds, black is cirrus and the slightly pink areas are cloud free. This latter image is one of the many different colour-composites that are used in weather forecasting.

I receive images from geostationary and polar orbiting satellites right around the globe. These are available strictly for educational purposes only. Images are normally kept for seven days, so students and teachers should email to ask about them sooner rather than later and book images in advance (rsmoore@liverpool.ac.uk). Geostationary satellite images can be used to produce spectacular animated displays.

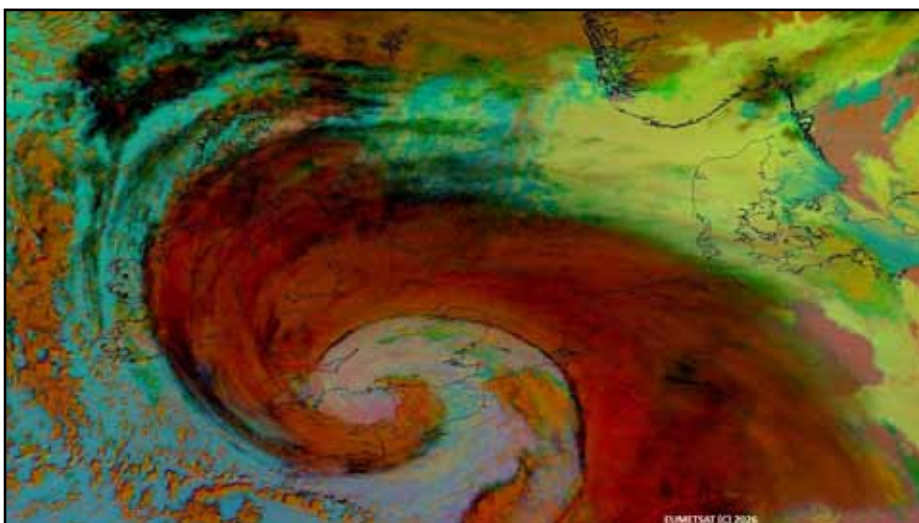




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WHITFORD CHURCH

Easter is almost upon us, and as I reflect on my first year in Whitford, I do so with a full and grateful heart. It has been a real joy to serve here. I have grown to love this beautiful church and the faithful community that gathers within its ancient walls.

It may be a little cold during the winter months, even with the heating on! but it is always full of warmth in spirit. One of the highlights of the past year was our Crib Service at Christmas. Seeing so many families gather, building the crib together and singing with enthusiasm, was deeply moving. There is something profoundly special about children helping to tell the story of Jesus' birth.

During the Christmas season, all the children from the school, and many visiting families, made angels, stars, and nativity decorations for our tree. Each decoration carried the name of someone special: a family member, a friend, or someone in need of prayer. As a church, we had the privilege of praying for every name written on those decorations. It was a beautiful reminder that Christmas is not only about celebration, but about holding one another in love and prayer.

We have also been wonderfully blessed to see our weathercock restored to its former glory. It now stands gleaming once more against the Welsh sky — a visible sign of care, heritage, and hope. It feels symbolic: even the smallest details matter when we cherish what has been entrusted to us.

A particular highlight of each week for me is leading the school service on Tuesday mornings. The children are thoughtful, curious, and full of life. It is a privilege to watch them grow in their understanding of faith and Bible stories, asking the most profound and unexpected questions. Their honesty keeps faith fresh and real.

We continue to hold Messy Church once a month to reach out to families from the school and wider community. From this term, we will be moving Messy Church from Sunday afternoon to Fridays straight after school (the second Friday of each month). We hope this new time will make it easier for busy families to join us for craft, story, snacks, and a time of shared reflection together, strengthening the beautiful spirit that already connects church and school.

As we approach Easter, I find myself especially excited. Easter is one of the most beautiful times of the year. The days grow longer, bulbs push through the soil, lambs appear in the fields, and creation itself seems to whisper of hope.

There is a story told of a little boy who planted some seeds in a paper cup at school. Every day he checked the

soil, growing more and more impatient. "Nothing's happening!" he complained. His teacher gently smiled and said, "Just because you can't see it yet doesn't mean something isn't growing."

A few days later, a tiny green shoot appeared. The boy was astonished. What looked like empty soil had in fact been full of quiet life all along.

Easter reminds us of that same truth. On Good Friday, it seemed as though all hope had been buried. But in the quiet darkness of the tomb, God was at work. And on Easter morning, new life broke through in a way no one expected.

Spring reminds us that endings are never the final word with God. New life is always possible. Hope rises. Light overcomes darkness.

As we prepare for Holy Week and Easter, I warmly invite you to join us. Service times will be available on our website and on the Whitford Facebook page. Whether you come regularly or have not visited for some time, you will be most welcome.

May this Easter season bring you hope, renewal, and the quiet assurance that even when we cannot yet see it, God is always at work bringing new life.

With every blessing,
Rev'd Andrea de Vaal
Priest of St Mary's and St Beuno's Church,
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Wednesday 15th April

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in

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NEXT EDITION

Our next edition will be published on 12th June 2026 and the submission deadline for that edition will be 15th May 2026.

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THE FIVE VILLAGES CHRONICLE ASSOCIATION

Established in 1986, the Five Villages Chronicle Association publishes the *Five Villages Chronicle*, a quarterly community magazine which is delivered to most households in the Flintshire villages of Carmel, Gorsedd, Lloc, Pantasaph and Whitford, with 1,300 copies of each edition currently being printed and distributed by a dedicated team of volunteers.

Chairman - Peter Erasmus (01352 746896); Secretary - Sandy Neville (01352 961597); Treasurer - Melanie Wallis (01352 712369); Advertisements - Melanie Wallis (01352 712369) and Luyun Downes; Distribution - Steve Neville (01352 961597); Jonathan Duggan-Keen, Terry Ireland, Robert Moore, Chris Dolphin. At present there is an editorial committee.


We do have a web page where previous issues may be downloaded at www.5villages.org.uk

Published with the support of Whitford Community Council, commercial enterprises and residents. The Five Villages Chronicle Association does not accept responsibility for, nor necessarily agree with, any of the views expressed, statements or claims made in articles or advertisements herein.

Please send any articles, photographs, comments, snippets of information or local humour, details of births, marriages, deaths, graduations, emigrations and other events and achievements to editor@5villages.org.uk or post: FVC, Bodlondeb, Chapel Street, Caerwys, Flintshire, CH7 5AE (01352 720477).

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