



# THE FIVE VILLAGES CHRONICLE

*CRONICL Y PUM PENTREF*

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PRICELESS  
AMHRISIADWY



## MARK ISHERWOOD MS



My role as a Member of the Senedd for North Wales includes both speaking in the Chamber each week and holding the Welsh Government to account, and speaking at events both in and outside the Senedd.

Last month, as Chair of the Senedd Cross-Party Group on Disability, I was pleased to speak at the launch of the 'All Wales People First' Manifesto, which states "that people with Learning Disabilities have the right to speak for themselves, and to do that, they need support to build the skills that give them voice, choice, and control".

All Wales People First is the united voice of self-advocacy groups and people with learning disabilities in Wales, and is an organisation for, and led by people with a learning disability.



Self-advocacy empowers disabled individuals to speak up for themselves, make informed decisions, and assert their rights.

It involves understanding and using one's rights, making choices and taking control of one's life, building confidence and communication skills, and challenging discrimination and systemic barriers.

Speaking at the event, I said: "Organisations like All Wales People First define self-advocacy as 'speaking

## COVER PICTURE

The Bryn in Carmel. Many thanks to Steven Jones.

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up for yourself', and emphasise its role in enabling people with learning disabilities to live independently and participate fully in society".

The All Wales People First Manifesto states that self-advocacy is under threat.

I stressed that without self-advocacy, people will be forced to rely on others to speak for them, leaving them vulnerable to abuse and the stripping away of independence.

The Manifesto calls on the next Welsh Government to ensure that self-advocacy is funded across Wales and made a compulsory part of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

It also calls on Local Authorities to recognise the vital role played by self-advocacy and provide the funding needed for self-advocacy groups, so people with learning disabilities can live as active and equal citizens.

The Manifesto states that there are too many barriers to paid employment for people with Learning Disabilities, who need better opportunities, support and reasonable adjustments.

As it states, this is especially important right now, when people with Learning Disabilities are being pressured into finding work, and it calls on the Welsh Government to support and implement recommendations set out in the report by the Engage to Change Employment Project, 'Employing people with learning disabilities and/or autism: a feedback report from Engage to Change employers'.

It also states that too many people with learning disabilities live in services that restrict their freedom and human rights, sometimes causing physical and emotional harm. Many have no choice about where they live or who they live with.

At the event, I expressed concern that "Some are even held in secure hospitals when hospital is not the best place - often because the services they are entitled to simply aren't available" and stressed that this must change.

I went on to speak about the 'Stolen Lives' campaign in Wales, which I said "has shone a stark light on the number of Autistic people and people with Learning Disabilities who are placed in hospital or other long stay settings, often far from home".

Speaking at the 'Stolen Lives' event in the Senedd in September, which launched the Wales-based 'Good Life Alliance' in support of the Stolen Lives 'Homes not Hospitals' campaign, I told and listened to some heartbreaking stories of Autistic people and people with Learning Disabilities being unnecessarily locked up in hospitals, and said this "should not be happening".

Speaking in the Senedd in April last year, ahead of the Stolen Lives "Homes not Hospitals" protest outside the Senedd, I highlighted the lack of progress in reducing the numbers of Autistic people or people

with a learning disability still locked in Assessment and Treatment Centres in Wales and England.

The protest, supported by Learning Disability Wales and thirteen other organisations including Mencap Cymru, called attention to the Welsh Government's limited movement on this issue.

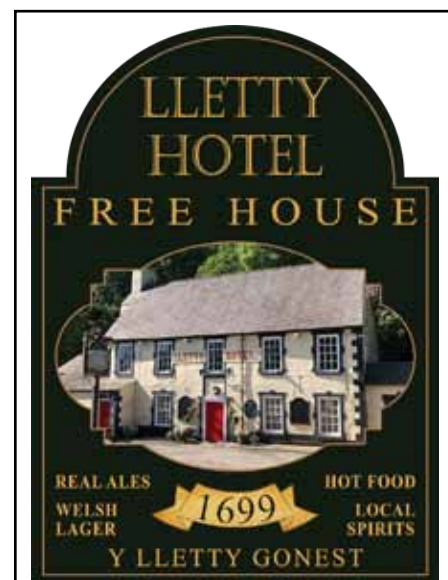
Over forty years ago, Wales led the world by launching a strategy to move people with a learning disability out of long-stay hospitals and into the community. We must not slip backwards into re-institutionalisation.

As I have repeatedly emphasised throughout my time as Chair of the Senedd Cross-Party Autism Group, Autism is not a mental health condition; it is a developmental condition that shapes how people experience the world and connect with others.

Many Autistic people have meltdowns when overwhelmed. This is not a tantrum or 'bad behaviour', but a response to overload—especially where communication or sensory needs are unmet.

Locking these people up should not be happening.

I will continue pushing for the transformative change that is needed to remedy these human rights abuses, ensuring that Autistic people and people with a learning disability do have the voice, choice, and control over their own lives.



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## CARMEL VILLAGE HALL



### (Gareth Sharp)

The hall hosted a Charity Night Quiz in aid of NSPCC on Saturday, 22nd of November. The Church group holds quarterly quiz nights in aid of various charities.

The church group will be holding a Christmas Carol event, so please keep an eye out for further information on the village hall's Facebook page or banners on the hall fence.

The Christmas coffee morning is on Thursday, 11th December, with children from Ysgol bro Carmel, singing Christmas carols.

I am happy to announce that the railing refurbishment is almost complete outside the hall. As you can see, it certainly makes a difference.



I do need to bring something to people's attention that it is now affecting the hall users. As some residents are using the hall car park for their own use, and it is taking up the space for regular hall users, it is becoming a problem, so before we need to take further action, can I please appeal to those residents to find alternate parking please.

Can I please wish everyone Nadolig Lawen

A very Merry Christmas



## HARDY PLANT SOCIETY CLWYD GROUP

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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, raffle tickets and free refreshments.

Visitors welcome £3 per meeting, members free.

### Forthcoming Events: -

#### Tuesday 24th February

#### Bugs and Slugs, Spots and Rots by John Scrase

John is a Freelance Plant Pathologist from Shrewsbury. This talk looks at some of the more common and damaging garden pests and diseases and how they can be managed. Items covered include lily beetle, vine weevil, potato & tomato blight, horse chestnut tree problems, honey fungus and slugs & snails. All John's talks are presented in a light-hearted way.

#### Tuesday 24th March

#### On the Shady Side by 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? by 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.

Information: 01352 781458 (leave a message)

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## HANNAH BLYTHYN MS



Since my last Chronicle column, we have seen the introduction of the Bus (Services) Bill in the Senedd – this landmark legislation will help to bring about the transformation of bus travel so that it serves our people and places rather than profits. In practice, the Bus Bill will mean one joined-up network, with one timetable and tickets that can be used across the network on buses and trains and it will allow publicly-run bus companies to provide services that are shaped by

our communities, allowing us all to have a greater say on which routes go where.

The introduction of the Bus Bill comes on the back of the Welsh Government's new MyTravelPass scheme, which allows 16 to 21-year-olds to pay just £1 for a single bus journey or travel all day for £3 – the latest figures show that 26,000 young people have applied for the pass since its launch in September. Since November, the scheme has been extended to include five to 15-year-olds as well – schemes like this really do make a difference and help to open up opportunities for young people, as well as support routes which otherwise might be under threat, linking our communities across North Wales. If you would like to find out more or apply for your MyTravelPass, visit <https://mytravelpass.tfw.wales>.

When we returned to the Senedd following the summer, I raised the need to prioritise improvements and mitigating measures on the A55, particularly around junction 32 where, sadly, a number of serious accidents have taken place this year. These incidents have a knock-on impact on our communities all along the A55 and for those visiting North Wales. A number of constituents have contacted me with their concerns, so it's welcome news that the Welsh Government has, among other things, allocated £30m of additional funding to ease congestion in North Wales – however, I will keep advocating for our area and pressing for improvements.

Recently I took part in a Senedd debate on the Draft Budget for 2026-27, which marks the start of the budget process for the next financial year – the Final Budget is due to be put before the Senedd in January and it's vitally important for Wales, not least because we're heading for a Senedd election in May and there is still a lot of work to do to tackle the lasting impact of more than a decade of cuts under previous UK governments. When it comes to the challenges we face and to inform the decisions we need to make, it's crucial that those who provide our services are front and centre. That's why I spoke about the importance of working together through social partnership, giving a real voice to those on the frontline of our public services. You can see many of my contributions in the Senedd on my Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/HannahBlythyn](https://www.facebook.com/HannahBlythyn).

In recent months I've been trying to get out and about as much as possible here at home including continuing my street surgeries, where I can talk to people about the issues they care about in the places they live. It's so important to talk to local people in my job as your representative and these street surgeries are a good way to engage people who wouldn't normally come into my office. If you have an issue you would like to discuss with me, whether it's transport, education, health, housing or something else, then please get in touch and I will do all I can to help you. I also hold regular face-to-face, phone or online

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help and advice sessions – feel free to get in touch with my office to arrange an appointment using the contact details at the bottom of this column.

Earlier in the autumn I popped into the Holywell Area Community Museum on the high street in Holywell to catch up with John Wiltshire and I was back there again recently to attend the unveiling of the model coal mine – the model mine



*Hannah with John Wiltshire at the Point of Ayr exhibition in Holywell*

featured in the new series of the BBC's The Repair Shop recently. My thanks to John for inviting me – the model was made by his grandfather in 1904 and he needed some help to get it working again so it could take up its place at the centre of the Point of Ayr Colliery exhibition. Like many in our area, I have family who worked at the Point of Ayr colliery – including my Taid and my uncle – so I'd like to once again pay tribute to John who has been instrumental in ensuring that our heritage is recognised and remembered. You can see John on The Repair Shop at [www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002kw0z](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002kw0z).

As a member of the Senedd's Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee, I often speak on the subject of animal welfare and during the summer I pressed on the next steps towards phasing out greyhound racing in Wales, so it was good to see the first draft of the legislation banning greyhound racing published in recent weeks. The Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Bill makes it an offence to use a stadium or similar venue for greyhound racing, and also makes it an offence to be involved in organising greyhound racing in Wales. This Bill reflects growing recognition that greyhound racing is incompatible with modern animal welfare standards. I've long campaigned for legislation on greyhound racing, joining the RSPCA in their calls for the sport to be banned – according to the organisation, 2,700 greyhounds were killed and more than 26,500 were injured from greyhound racing in Britain between 2018 and 2023.

Readers might be interested to hear that North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is asking for views on its Community Risk Management Implementation Plan for 2026-27, which helps to shape how our fire and rescue service keeps people and places across North Wales safe. It's really important that local voices are heard as part of this – the authority wants your

feedback to help make sure the right risks are identified and that the right action is being taken. The consultation is open until December 14th and you can take part by visiting [www.northwalesfire.gov.wales](http://www.northwalesfire.gov.wales).

Finally, as we're truly in winter now, if you're struggling to keep up with your energy bills and are with British Gas, you might be interested in the company's Energy Support Fund. The fund offers support of up to £2,000 this winter if you have energy debt on your pre-payment meter or through your credit account. Even if you're not a British Gas customer, you might also find support from the British Gas Energy Trust, which provides those struggling with energy debt with up to

£1,700 regardless of which supplier you are with. You can find information on both schemes at [www.britishgas.co.uk/energy/help-with-bills/british-gas-energy-support-fund.html](http://www.britishgas.co.uk/energy/help-with-bills/british-gas-energy-support-fund.html).

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](mailto:hannah.blythyn@senedd.wales). If you use social media, you can also keep up to date via my Facebook page – [www.facebook.com/HannahBlythyn](https://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.

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## CARNEDDAU ROMP! (Geraint Roberts)

Whenever I drive past the little hamlet of Aber or along one of the roads through Eryri I am often visited by memories of the wonderful times I had in the mountains when I was in the prime of youth. In this article I'd like to share one adventure I had with a friend who now lives in Australia.

It was a silly, macho, alcohol fuelled challenge, spawned whilst sitting around a campfire drinking Newcastle Brown nearly five decades ago.

At the time I was young, brash and fit, and was regularly competing in mountain races all over Eryri. I also had more confidence than sense. My friend and companion was a six-foot something ex SAS soldier fresh from two tours in Northern Ireland and bristling with muscles; he was more than capable of contributing his own share of testosterone into that campfire challenge.

The dare in essence was simple; we would race each other over the Carneddau mountains from the A5 in Ogwen to the A55 at Aber, and we would do it at night! I say simple, but it involved a fifteen-mile crossing of the highest plateau south of Scotland which comprised of six peaks over three thousand feet, and we would visit five of them.

Some sense however did filter into our madcap scheme. We decided we would stay together, and the loser would be the one adjudged to have paraphrased Shakespeare's Macbeth by calling "Hold enough!"

The forecast was awful, strong gales, showers, and hill fog down to two thousand feet, but neither of us were going to suggest an alternative route or anything sensible like going to the pub. So, having left Pete's jeep at Aber we drove round in my Landrover and a few minutes after 9:00pm we set off up the steep southern face of Penryolewen in a light drizzle. Already the wind was buffeting us as it raced up the Ogwen valley, the surface of Llyn Ogwen below, was an agitated stampede of white horses driven by the maturing gale and although nothing passed between us, we both knew we were in for some adventure.

It only took ten minutes for all conversation to 'freeze and cease' as we both concentrated on getting our lung scorching breathing synchronised with our steps; hands on knees, choosing foot placements and route finding between heather, bilberry and scree as we weaved our way in between large boulders and crags climbing ever nearer to the damp grey underbelly of the low cloud awaiting us.

In half an hour it was completely dark, and we were nicely warmed up; a subtle relenting of the slope and a series of teasing false summits told us we were approaching our first peak, Penryolewen. We barely stopped, pausing only to touch the summit



*Penryolewen*

cairn. The wind was considerably stronger at three thousand feet tugging and testing our balance as we strode towards the next top, Carnedd Bach. Several of these thunderous air tsunamis hit us regularly, but thankfully from behind. The fog came and went; a sure indication it was low cloud being driven by the deep cyclone moving north-east.

As we climbed towards Carnedd Dafydd we were hit by another branch of the gale which was funnelling up Cwm Llafar from Bethesda and two or three times we had to drop on all fours as some nasty rogue gusts hit us. It must have been a steady force seven with gusts of eight and we were both grateful to reach the summit. At that point we could barely hear each other shouting in the banshee wailing of the wind and the demonic vibration of collars and hoods as we clung to the summit cairn to wrestle with the map and set the compass.

The relatively flat two-mile plateau to Carnedd Llywelyn comprises of a mixture of coarse grass, potential ankle twisting boulders and a few large outcrops of rock rising out of a lunar-esque landscape. There are few darker places above ground than a moonless night in thick fog on a mountain unless it is raining, and as we started down it started to rain.

Some ten minutes later we sensed rather than saw that we were on the broad plateau moving with a gait which was half-way between jogging and trotting. Suddenly the roar of an approaching gust beckoned its fierce arrival and despite stopping to brace for its impact we were both plucked bodily and pushed forward some ten feet without any semblance of control. As we lay there panting, waiting for the wind to die a little, the true folly of our undertaking began to hit home as the potential seriousness of our position occurred to me. Below, to our left were the Black Ladder cliffs, an



*Carnedd Llywelyn, the Black Ladders and proximity of path*

unsurvivable precipice which dropped 900 feet from an abrupt lip less than ten feet from where we lay. It struck me that Pete had no personal knowledge of the terrain beyond his map reading skills; I on the other hand knew these slopes intimately as I had spent the previous eight years as a Mountain Instructor. It was a sobering thought, and a huge wave of responsibility hit me.

Despite trying to explain the danger in the roaring wind and gesturing we should keep well away from the edge two or three times, Pete continued running along the path which was a freak gust away from oblivion; we plodded on with my heart in my mouth.

Eventually and thankfully, we began up the steepening slope of Llywelyn, the second highest peak in England and Wales, and safely away from the scenario of a being hurled over the Black Ladders.



*Carnedd Dafydd and the Black Ladders*

By now it was evident that our fitness and stamina levels were about the same, and any competition had morphed into an adventurous companionship. We reached the crude round wall shelter on the summit and revelled in a few minutes out of the wind to hydrate and eat a mars bar. We both cheesily agreed there wouldn't be one winner, but two. Another vicious gust telegraphed its arrival and arrived impressively hurling a couple of slaty rocks through the air. We needed to get going and down off the mountain.

As we set off for Foel Grach, our next target which was a mile away we were very conscious of another steep drop, this time to our right and the wind was doing its best to push us in that direction. Eight hundred feet below was the highest lake in Eryri, Ffynnon Llyffant and although not a vertical cliff, to be hurled over by the wind could have been fatal. We were almost doubled up in gust anticipation mode as we set off



*Between Foel Grach and Foel Fras*





*From Carnedd Llywelyn to Foel Grach*

down the rocky slope.

In ten minutes, we were more than half-way to Foel Grach, jogging comfortably on a broad but very exposed ridge, all danger from being blown over cliffs seemingly over. A small wave of euphoria passed over me as I relished where we were, doing what we were doing: re-enacting the spirit of the Edwardian rock climber James Archer Thompson's words—

*"The sheer joy of living, the leaping from rock to rock."*

We noticed the wind had shifted slightly to the west and we both felt it was stronger. Several times we had to drop on to the grass in the brief roaring which heralded the more ferocious gusts, it was almost funny, lying there as an almost living thing tugged at our rucsacks.

Suddenly, without any warning a significantly more powerful blast hit us. I was luckily thrown down flat on my face, my woolly cap probably ending up on the high street in Llandudno, Pete wasn't so lucky.

In the gloom I saw the darker shape of my friend hurled sideways a full twenty feet to tumble over a few boulders and into a shallow peat hag; he was bruised, bleeding but with nothing broken. Pete probably weighed fourteen stone, and he had been picked up like a rag doll! That gust must have been of hurricane strength and was very sobering in its potential. We picked ourselves up and in another ten minutes were in the relative comfort of a little refuge hut just below the summit of Foel Grach.

We sat on the crude wooden benches enjoying no wind for perhaps a quarter of



*Foel Grach refuge hut*

an hour. The shrieking and howling as the gale fought to get at us through the cracks and gaps in the hut was to be heard to be believed, it was an elemental opera conducted by a force nine demon, quite surreal.

Eventually our cooling bodies told us we should get going, we had two more three-thousand-foot peaks and one two and a half thousander to climb before our long

downhill run to Pete's waiting jeep.

The next leg, about a mile and a half and taking in Carnedd Gwennllian would lead us to Foel Fras, the most northerly of the big peaks. The fog had cleared again and apart from a few boulder fields near both summits it was joggable. There were no steep drops, but we were extremely wary of the wind which was constantly buffeting us from the left in case it decided to send another monster gust.

Part of the way we were able to use a dry-stone wall as a wind break and by the time we were dropping down to the col to climb Y Drum, the final peak we had begun to relax. The wind had eased slightly; we put it down to the eye of the storm passing over us. The distant lights of Anglesey



*Summit of Foel Fras*

and Conwy greeted us as we reached the summit, our final top. A rough five-mile track would now lead us all the way down to Aber, all we had to do was ignore the lactic in our legs and not trip as we cantered down. The returning fog which closed around us was probably a good thing, forcing our night



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*Pete; on another adventure!*

vision to focus on foot placements rather than the twinkling lights of Beaumaris.

The final three miles was against the wind and on occasion it stopped us dead, for the first time that night we had to lean into the wind to make progress. Eventually we reached the steep tarmac above the village and soon the wind couldn't reach

us as we ran the final couple of miles in the shelter of trees.

Going back to Bangor along the A55 even the jeep couldn't remain in top gear as it battled the storm head on which continued for most of the night. By 2:00am we were showered and in bed, I fell asleep listening to the gale playing with the sycamores outside, tired but very satisfied.

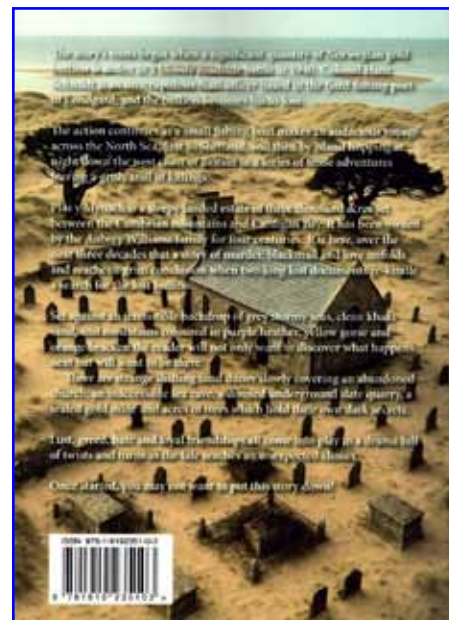
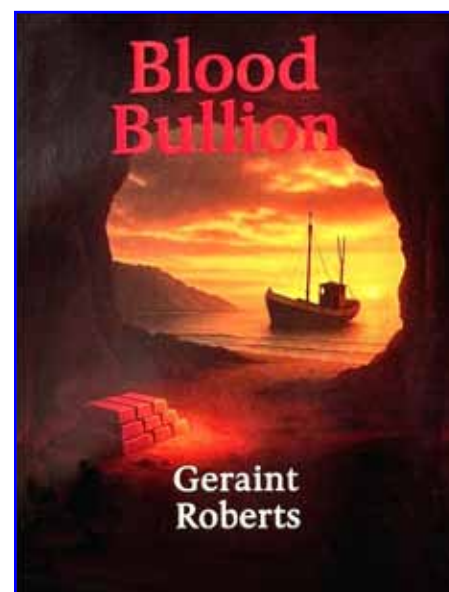
These days, I can only dream of such outrageous trips, and despite their legacy of dodgy knees and other worn body parts do not regret any of the silly adventures I planned and undertook; my only regrets are those which I planned but didn't get round to doing! Today, the relevance and truism of Wordsworth's words certainly strike a chord –

*"Bliss it was to be alive in such a dawn,  
and to be young was heaven."*

*If you've enjoyed my article and possibly some of the others, I've written in the Five Villages over the last few years you may be interested in my debut novel which is just coming out.*

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## FIVE VILLAGES GARDENING CLUB

(Janet Tattum)

### SEPTEMBER

Our visit to Nantclwyd in Ruthin was an ongoing adventure. We approached from a side street into a lovely old building, where with the help of head phones, we explored and heard the history of the house and its occupants. Once the tour was over we exited into the gardens, which were extensive. The views over the Vale of Clwyd were a lovely surprise, as were the range of trees and fruit bushes. A very enjoyable afternoon.

### OCTOBER

An illustrated talk by Dawn Gough, entitled "The Crafty Gardener" was exactly that. She showed us very many ways to save money but still keep our gardens tidy and healthy. The competition for a vase of autumn fruits and flowers was won by Christine Hamer.

The vote of thanks was given by Pam Hunt.

### NOVEMBER

Our AGM

### DECEMBER

Our Christmas lunch.

Meetings are held in Carmel Village Hall on the first Thursday of the month at 2.00 p.m. There is no meeting in January. New members will be made very welcome.

## Five Villages Gardening Club

### Spring Programme for 2026

All indoor meetings held in Carmel Village Hall, Carmel on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month unless otherwise stated.



Thursday 5th February	Starting at 2PM G.Q.T. chaired by Keith Roberts from the Community Gardens Holywell including a talk on the Community Gardens
Thursday 5th March	Starting at 2PM An illustrated talk by Janet Wainwright on Joleen Meadows, Flower Farm, Lixwm The talk is entitled 'From Field to Flower' There is a visit to Joleen Meadows in June.
Thursday 2nd April	Starting at 2PM An illustrated talk by Sarah Griffiths, Deputy Editor of Ancient Egypt Magazine. The talk is entitled 'The Ancient Egyptians, 'The World's First Gardeners'.
Thursday 7th May	Starting at 2PM. Plant Sale. Venue: St Paul's Church, Gorsedd. <b>Free entry</b>

For further details please contact:

Christine Hamer on 07778872913

or

Maria Evans on 01352 715156

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**COUNCILLORS:**

Tim Barks - 01352 720375 / Caradoc W. Jones - 01352 712079 / Alexander Lamb - 07887 724200 / Matt Marshall - 077639 75531 / Richard Newsome - 07738 621755 / Sandra Roberts - 01352 714366 / Gareth Sharp - 01352 715614 / Paul Urquhart - 01745 563133 / Melanie Wallis - 01352 712369 / Emma Warbrick - 01352 712356 / Steve Watts - 07778 673334 / Joseph Williams - 07850 924805

**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 Criminal damage / 1 x other theft

Gorsedd - No crimes reported

Lloc - No crimes reported

Lloc (Services) - No crimes reported

Pantasaph - No crimes reported

Whitford - 1 x Violence

**COMMUNITY AWARD:**



*Ruth Davies receiving her  
Community Award from Chair of  
Council – Councillor Caradoc Jones*

Ruth Davies was the 2025 Community Award winner for her services to the Guide movement for over 40 years - both as a guide & as a leader in the 1st Carmel Guides. The Chair of Whitford Community Council – Councillor Caradoc Jones whilst making the presentation to Ruth stated the following: 'Ruth has been involved with the Guide movement for over 40 years both as a guide and as a leader in the 1st Carmel Guide unit. She has also served a term as District Guide Commissioner.

Ruth has helped organise numerous activities, both indoors and out, including camps that included 100's of girls from both within and outside the local community area who have all benefited. Ruth has been an inspiration, a source of advice and help to many within this community, together with other guide movement leaders that she has worked alongside'.

Councillor Jones further stated: 'On behalf of the Whitford Community Council I am pleased to present to you an engraved crystal vase, a bouquet of flowers, a monetary voucher, together with a framed certificate. Congratulations from the Councillors and Clerk, together with the residents of the Community for your exceptional voluntary work over a substantial period of time, which has been welcomed and appreciated'.

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

(1) Potholes: From area of One Way Street in Lloc and travelling towards Gorsedd. (Some have been repaired previously but require further repair) (2) Pot holes: At junction opposite MacDonald's (Middle of carriageway) (3) Pot holes: Travelling from Gorsedd towards Babel - and opposite the first house (4) High hedge obstructing pavement: Carmel

Road, Carmel. The hedge is also impeding pedestrian access (photograph provided) (5) Carmel Road, Carmel: Following a number of pot hole repairs, the road appears to be in need of resurfacing (6) Public Right of Way concerns: (i) Glol Woods: Rights of way footpaths require cutting back (ii) Glol woods: Broken styles by entrance to the footpaths requires attention (photograph provided) (iii) Between the Milk Shed and Ty Newydd Farm: Rights of way footpaths require cutting back (7) A5026 Road – Travelling from area of Lloc Garage to junction of Lon Y Waen, Gorsedd – a number of mature trees whereby the branches hang over the public footpath. Request to be inspected for safety and possible reduction (Photographs provided) (8) A5026 Road – Travelling from area of Lloc Garage to junction of Lon Y Waen, Gorsedd – the pavement has been engulfed in overgrowth and is difficult to negotiate) photographs provided) (9) A5151 Road in area of Flintshire Fabricators in Lloc. The pavement has been engulfed in overgrowth and is difficult to negotiate (6) A5151 Road: Travelling from McDonalds towards Lloc – and adjacent either side of Pen Y Gelli Quarry - a number of trees have overhanging branches onto the pavement. Request for inspection with a view to the owners of the land being approached to make safe (10) Carmel Hill, Carmel: Numerous pot holes (11) A5151 Road:

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Loose grit - travelling from McDonalds up towards Pen Y Gelli. Request for the road be swept (12) Babel Road, Pantasaph: Area of Pickpocket Hall / Racecourse – there appears to be subsidence in the road, possibly due to heavy machinery use in the area (13) A5151 Road outside Singing Kettle Services: Holes in roadway

#### 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 web site, or from the Clerk – as per contact details below: (1) Application number: FUL/000280/25 - for proposed removal of current structurally unsafe pre cast garage to be replaced with new pre cast garage (retrospective), at 37, Ffordd Aelwyd, Carmel (2) Application number: FUL/000502/25 – Proposed conversion of an existing detached garage to an annexe for holiday rental accommodation, at Le Mirage, Whitford Road, Whitford (3) Application number: FUL/000467/25 – Proposed demolition of existing garage, erection of new gym outbuilding, erection of a new workshop building and erection of stone wall to front and timber fencing to side of dwelling, at Bryn Teifion, Babel Road, Pantasaph (4) Application number: FUL/000518/25 – Proposed alterations to existing conservatory to provide dining room, at Linden House, 2 Druids Close, Gorsedd (5) FUL/000624/25 – for proposed demolition of existing sun room and erection of new single storey rear extension, at 10, Park Avenue, Carmel (6) Application number: FUL/000562/25 – for the proposed erection of a two-storey extension to rear of the existing dwelling, incorporating a balcony area to the rear, and associated works, at 1, Llys Yr Orsedd, Gorsedd (7) Application number: FUL/000678/25 - Proposed change of use of agricultural land to domestic and the erection of a new garage barn for the storage of vehicles, at Gorsedd House, Gorsedd.

#### PLANNING DECISIONS:

The following planning decisions have been received from Flintshire County Council:

(1) Application number: FUL/000215/25 - Demolition of existing detached garage. Erection of wooden shed on the opposite, at Halfway Cottage, Mertyn Lane, Carmel. Approved (2) Application number: DET/000252/25 - Application for Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions 3, 6 and 7 – at McDonalds Restaurant, Lloc. Approved (3) Application number: FUL/000172/25 - Proposed reinstatement of former door opening and insertion of new external door, at 6, St Clare's Court,

Monastery Road, Pantasaph. Approved (4) Application number: FUL/001103/24 - Earth banked nutrient storage lagoon, at Bryn Coch Farm, Whitford. Approved (5) Application number: FUL/000704/24 - Replacement dwelling and associated works, at Sarn Farm, Whitford. Approved

#### LITTER COLLECTION & FLY TIPPING:



*Fly tipping (Fan collected with general litter)*

During this current financial year the Community Council have increased their litter picking contract from the summer months to an all year collection. The Council thank the positive comments from residents. The contractor visits two days a month and removes numerous bags of litter. However, more lately, there are a number of items that have clearly been fly tipped – which is an illegal offence and residents are kindly asked to report any fly tipping to Flintshire County Council, by either e-mailing: [streetscene@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:streetscene@flintshire.gov.uk) or by telephone: 01352 701234

#### BRITISH RED CROSS TRAINING:

The first of two Red Cross First Aid & Defibrillator training sessions were held



*Attendees at the First Aid & Defibrillator Course in Gorsedd*

in St Paul's Church, Gorsedd on 25th September, whereby the course was fully booked with the maximum of 15 people registered.

The second course was held on Thursday 13th November in Carmel Village Hall.

#### APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND DONATIONS:

The Community Council have granted the following financial assistance since the last edition of the Five Villages Chronicle: £2,000.00 towards the cost of the new Carmel Village Hall boundary railings.

R. Phillip Parry  
Clerk & Financial Officer to Whitford Community Council  
Tel: 01352 720547  
E-mail: [clerk@whitford-council.wales](mailto:clerk@whitford-council.wales)  
Web site: [www.whitford-council.wales](http://www.whitford-council.wales)

Please note there is a notice concerning the 2026-7 budget on the next page →

*Hair and nail*  
*By Sam*



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## YSGOL BRO CARMEL (Michael Martell, Pennaeth / Headteacher)

As always, we are pleased to share all the latest news from Ysgol Bro Carmel with the Five Villages.

In school, four new areas have officially opened up for the children. These are our new Sensory Garden, our Forest School area, our allotment and orchard and our mini-golf course on the playground!

Our Forest School curriculum has been a huge hit so far. We have a bespoke Forest Schools area on site, and each class has 3 half-terms a year of Forest Schools to look forward to! The children have been learning about different types of trees, how to safely use tools, how to build dens outdoors and even how to safely build a fire! Alongside our new allotment and orchard and our recent pond redevelopment, we are able to offer a wide-ranging and engaging outdoor curriculum for all of our pupils. Additionally, our mini-golf course is now officially open, with each class having a week in turn to play at break and lunch.

Towards the end of the summer term, the biggest event was definitely the KS2 performance of Star Warts, which took place across one afternoon and two nights. The Year 6 children were fantastic in the main parts, ably supported by our super Year 5 pupils, and our Year 4 and Year 3 pupils provided songs, dancing and entertainment which really made the show come alive—we are incredibly proud of all of them! A huge thank you to the community who were able to come and see the shows, a thank you to the staff who stayed late to run the performance, and of course a thank you to the children for being incredible, as always!

In amongst the rehearsals, KS2 have somehow managed to fit in a visit to Drayton Manor, as well as Year 4 and Year 5 spending two days working with Bigfoot Arts Education on a stop-motion workshop! The children learned a huge amount about animation and have made some very impressive (and occasionally slightly unusual) stop-motion videos. Not to be outdone, the Foundation stage have been to Blue Planet Aquarium, following their topics on the oceans, recycling and the environment. It was a super trip and really helped bring their learning to life. Along the same theme, we have had the RNLI in to ensure we all remain safe during the summer months, especially important for coastal communities such as ours. Year 1 and 2 have also been at the Jambori, celebrating and singing in both Welsh and English! We even

had 3 of our Year 4 children went down to Cardiff for the Climate Challenge Cymru Award Ceremony, after their presentations made the finals of the Climate Cymru competition! Wow!

In sports news, we have seen more sporting events take place with the Brownlee Triathlon in Mold for our Y5/6 pupils, as well as the Panathlon Kurling competition in Deeside. We have also

hosted the Holywell Cricket Festival at Carmel and had lots of other local schools come to visit.

This year, we have welcomed our local MP, Becky Gittins into school. She met with Year 6 after the pupils wrote to her at the end of last year. The children discussed topics including road safety around school, climate change and the role of an MP. Dosbarth Y Fan Fach

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**CYNGOR CYMUNED CHWITFFORDD  
WHITFORD COMMUNITY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL BUDGET  
FINANCIAL YEAR 2026 / 2027**

At the Whitford Community Council meeting to be held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2026 at 7.00pm in St. Paul's Church, Gorsedd, the Council will discuss and agree their budget for the financial year 2026 to 2027, which commences from the 1st April, 2026.

Residents of the Whitford Community Council area are invited to either attend the meeting or provide direct to any Community Councillor, or the Clerk, any suggestions for consideration to be included in the budget. Whilst the Council have limited powers to spend money under the various Wales Measure Acts and the national Local Government Acts, details of the Council's current objectives and financial aspects can be found in their End of Year report that was advertised in a previous edition of the Five Villages Chronicle. This document is also currently displayed on the Council's web site - as below link (Page named Public Notices & Financial) scroll down page to 'Whitford Community Council - End of Year Report - 2024 / 2025'. A pdf copy can also be obtained from the Clerk.

**R. Phillip Parry – Clerk & Financial Officer to Whitford Community Council**  
01352 720547 / [clerk@whitford-council.wales](mailto:clerk@whitford-council.wales) / Web site: [www.whitford-council.wales](http://www.whitford-council.wales)



definitely impressed Ms Gittins with their knowledge, maturity and questions. Year 6 made such a positive impression on Ms Gittins that she has invited Year 6 down to London to visit the Houses of Parliament - a really exciting opportunity which we will definitely be utilising! Da iawn pawb!

As well as this exciting visit, so far this term, we've had the kerbside recycling team in to work with Year 4 on how we can continue to grow and develop our environmental sustainability in school, and to show the children what they can do as they grow up to support this too, and had some wild and wonderful animals visit the school, enabling all the pupils to hold, stroke and learn all about how to look after wildlife.

Lastly, a huge thank you to Carmel Christian Church, who have donated £100 from their Good News Charity Quiz to the school. Their donation will be used to support the development of our new sensory room. Thank you to everyone at the church, and all the attendees of the quiz. We have also had Carmel Playgroup donate £500 for Forest School equipment and would like to thank Playgroup for their generosity too.





## GORSEDD CREATIVE WRITING GROUP (Sandy Neville)

We have recently worked on an exercise to write a story in exactly 25 words. Sounds impossible? Have a look at some of the pieces written on the theme of 'The Gift' by our members.

### READERS' CHALLENGE

Why not have a go yourself? We're throwing out a challenge to any of the 5 Villages Chronicle readers who wish to give it a try. All you have to do is write a story in exactly 25 words (titles not included in word count and valid hyphenated words count as only one word). The theme will be 'A New Beginning' and the reward to stretch your brains a little, have a bit of fun and the chance of your writing appearing in the next issue of the 5 Villages Chronicle. We might even throw in a small prize for what the group judge as the top entry.

All entries to be emailed to me: [sandy@thenevilles.net](mailto:sandy@thenevilles.net) by 31st January 2026.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue's offerings. If any of you are interested in joining our very friendly and welcoming group either email as above or phone 01352 961597. Alternatively, simply pop along to a meeting. We meet every 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at St Paul's Church, Gorsedd from 7.00 – 9.00 p.m.

### THE GIFT – 25 WORD STORIES

If I had asked for socks, I would be delighted,  
but I didn't ask for socks, so I'm not,  
particularly as I bought you this.

**Gareth Williams**

Tiny claws digging and displacing dirt. An acorn pressed  
gently into a perfectly round hole. A gift of life from a tree to a squirrel.

**Louise Fury**

Once upon a time a man bought a ring for his girlfriend.  
"Will you marry me?"

She said "No" and she lived happily ever after

**Maira Gelder**

Went upstairs for something.

At top.

Forgot!

Went back down.

Remembered.

Repeat.....Repeat.....!

Smart watch says:

"Congratulations, achieved daily steps!"

"How did I manage that?"

**Kath Winn**

**May I?**

Carmel school, 1965.

"May I?"

She stepped forward, flagstones warm beneath her shoes.

Now, she writes stories—each one a step, still asking, still moving.

*This piece written from a childhood memory of a playground game.*

**Neil Jones**

It's not over by Christmas. The torn-apart family glance at the one colourful parcel  
remaining beneath the tree, desperately hoping it will soon be claimed.

*This piece was inspired by the refrain 'the war will be over by Christmas'.*

**David Grieve**



### OCTOBER

by Neil Jones

Autumn leaves,  
a hundred shades of gold  
and, through windows,  
the shadows of old men  
turning back the clock.

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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.



Do you remember the photo from the last edition showing the pupils at Carmel School in 1947? Well we have one name so far - Hywel Williams 2nd row from bottom just to right of centre sent in by Nerys Jacob, his daughter. Many thanks Nerys.

### YSGOL GWENFFRWD (Angharad Rule)

It was lovely to welcome all the children back in September after the Summer Holidays. Everyone has settled back brilliantly and has been enjoying our exciting whole school topic, Fry Uwchben y Nen ac i'r Gofod (Above the Sky and into Space).

In September, pupils from Years 1-6 enjoyed a fantastic trip to the science museum Xplore! in Wrexham, where they explored a wide range of fascinating scientific exhibits and took part in hands-on, informative workshops. The children came back buzzing with enthusiasm and full of questions about the wonders of space and science.

During the first half term, we held a wonderful fundraising event organised by our fantastic PTA – The Colour Run. There was a real buzz around the school on the day! The children spent the morning making healthy snacks and taking part in health and wellbeing activities before ending the day with a colourful race around the school grounds. Everyone was covered head to toe in bright powdered paint. A huge thank you to all the families who came to support and donated – an amazing £1,094.50 was raised, plus Gift Aid.

In October, we welcomed families into school for our Thanksgiving Service, where the children sang, danced, and recited beautifully. Thank you to all who kindly donated to the Flintshire Food Bank – your generosity will make a real difference to local families.

Preparations are now well under way for our Christmas Shows. The Infants will be performing a traditional Nativity, while the Juniors are busy rehearsing for their space-themed show, Bus to the Moon – we hope it will be out of this world!

Finally, we would like to share some examples of our pupils' wonderful work. We have an informative explanation text about why we have day and night by Jax Bolton in Year 4, and an imaginative diary entry from the perspective of an astronaut on the ISS by Dylan Ryan in Year 5.

### WHY DO WE HAVE DAY AND NIGHT?

#### Introduction

Have you ever wondered why it is light during the day and dark during the night? Let's have a look at why this happens.

#### Explanation

Did you know that the Earth rotates on its axis? The axis is an imaginary line that connects the North Pole and the South Pole.

When the Earth is facing the sun it is day and when the Earth is not facing the sun it is night. The Earth takes 24 hours to rotate

once. The Earth orbits around the sun, which gives us a year. The Earth has 365 days in one year.

### Conclusion

In some countries it is night, and people are in bed, in other countries it is day and people are awake and in school or work. All this happens because the Earth rotates on its axis.

DATE: 1/9/25

LOCATION: ISS

Dear Diary,

Today was finally the day of my first ever space walk. Before the most wonderful time of my life I felt all different emotions. I was nervous and excited at the same time.

The commander told me to prepare my gear and get my suit ready! He said "your mission is going to be fixing a bolt on satellite 6b. It will take about 6 hours and 40 mins. You will get distracted by the wonderful view and loud noise but don't look down because you will fall and waste time". He wasn't wrong about the view! Before heading out I had my breakfast. It was terrible! I had some sort of gooey freeze dried porridge. It smelled horrendous. I took one taste and immediately threw up!

As I stepped out of the door I felt the freezing metal. Even through my thick boots. I saw the infinite but growing void and the big blue shining earth. We were moving about 500 miles an hour. That might sound crazy but earth was spinning about 5,000 miles an hour. I turned around to look for the satellite 6b. Only then I realized I was never going to find the exact satellite I needed to fix. There were like 1,000,000,000 satellites with different numbers on them. After what felt like days I finally found it. It took 2 hours, but at last I was done, I thought to myself.


I felt like a superhero. I had finally felt a tiny bit of relief. Now I could be the coolest out of all my friends I thought. I could finally say I fixed the biggest man made object in space. I looked out the window and I felt like an ant compared to the giant earth. I was buzzing that I fixed the ISS. Then I remembered I was globally famous.


Today was the best day of my life!

## HANNAH BLYTHYN MS


Member of the Senedd for Delyn  
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**COUNCILLOR CHRIS DOLPHIN**  
**Hello everyone, Sut mae pethau?**  
**GLYNDWR NATIONAL PARK:**

If our part of Wales is to have a new National Park it will be named Glyndwr, that is decided. The third and final consultation on the proposed park for Northeast Wales began on September 15th and is open until December 8th, 2025. The County Council needs to have replied by this date, and it will have been debated upon at Environment Scrutiny in November. New in this consultation are alterations to the boundary with Flintshire areas of Talacre and Gronant dunes being added. Other areas of Flintshire within the park will be Gwaenysgor, Trelawnyd including Gop Hill, Afonwen, Nannerch and Cilcain. Online consultations which I attended and face to face events have also been available. The central main area of the whole park would be Llangollen and stretches from the Talacre coast to the Dyfnant Forest in Powys beyond Lake Vyrnwy / Llyn Efyrrwy. Main towns such as Prestatyn, Holywell, Mold, Denbigh, Ruthin, Wrexham, Oswestry are all outside of the park.

The more in-depth ARUP reports are interesting and signpost the advantages and disadvantages of a National Park. For example, there will be significantly more visitors to the park area, 500,000 to 1 million per annum. Could our local towns, none of which are in the park benefit? What about our local infrastructure outside of the park? The park area would have more sustained Welsh Government funding, however would the wider area of Flintshire be disadvantaged? ARUP conclusions asked for further work on "value for money" and an update on an economic impact.

**VISITOR LEVY (TOURISM TAX):**

This is another decision the Council is having to make, to charge visitors or not to charge visitors to our county. How much? Camping and hostels 75p per person per night excluding under 18 years of age; £1.50 including VAT per person per night for all ages staying in all other accommodation, including caravans, hotels etc. The price starts to add up - a family of 4, paying £42 for 7 nights. The council must give one year's notice were it to be implemented. Now, this could be worth a million a year to the Council, perhaps more, perhaps less? However, will visitors come in the same numbers? Will families with young children still want to come? Welsh Government (WG) guidance is to have a Community and Stakeholder consultation. Firstly, though the Council has questions to be answered by WG; Specifically, the council needs to

better understand; the proposed operation of the Levy in relation to the caravan and camping sector; the scale of income that could be generated through the Levy compared to costs of the operation; how income generated through the Levy will be apportioned back to participating authorities, as the collection will be by the Wales Revenue Authority, who will make the decision. Standby for a Visitor Levy consultation in 2026.

**RECYCLING AND WASTE:**

The three weekly waste collections are now established, and the latest Recycling figures have seen a few percentage increases because of all the work and cooperation of residents and the Council. The Wales target is now 70% and Flintshire is now at 69.76%. Overall, this is a positive shift in total performance which has been driven by a reduction in residual waste (black bin) sent for incineration. Plus a 16% increase in food waste being collected at kerbside, which goes toward generating biogas and renewable energy and fertiliser.

Missed collections of recycling, AHP (medical and nappy pink bags) and brown bins has been problematical throughout the county. I have been contacted by various residents within the 5 Villages regarding such issues, which I have helped to resolve.

These early results also show a saving

of £313,783 in costs between April – July 2025 compared to the previous year, which is strong progress towards the originally estimated saving of £650,000. It is now hoped that the fines from Welsh Government (WG) for having not previously hit the WG targets may be waived. Those fines are a combined total for 2022/23 and 2024/25 of £1,326,000

**WINTER MAINTENANCE:**

In summary last winter the gritters covered 44,895 miles, spread 9,708 tonnes of salt, and had 950 tonnes spread by hand and in grit boxes. The weather stations used are in Rhualt, Bodfari, Shotwick and Bwlchgwyn, this gives a more informed decision for the Clwydian Range, Semi High and Coastal and Deeside. There are also Ice Prediction Sensors for the A55 at Brynford and the A541 at Hendre.

The Priority of Roads treated is: Priority 1, roads carrying substantial traffic including: Trunk Roads, A roads, B and C roads, Core Bus Network, main access to schools or higher education, Town Centres and Industrial Estates. This is 45% of the total County highways network.

Priority 2 – Housing Estate roads, access between smaller rural communities, remaining bus routes, known problems such as significant gradients and council owned car parks.

Priority 3 – remaining adopted routes.

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Priority 2 will only be treated in the event of icy conditions or a forecast of prolonged ice conditions, and only after Priority 1 is completed. During the onset of snow conditions and the completion of all Priority 1 routes, all available plant and resources will be deployed to clear snow within the Priority 2 routes.

Materials used include de-icing from the tendered process and are with Compass Minerals through the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation from 3rd March 2022 – 21st February 2026. The Rocksalt is 6.3 mm nominal size and spread at a prescribed rate of 10-15 grams per square metre for precautionary measures. This rate can be increased to 40 grams per square metre when treating snow conditions.

#### **GRANT SUCCESS:**

The Council Regeneration team have secured funding for the proposed green infrastructure improvements to the top entrance of Greenfield Valley Heritage Park from Holywell town and work will start and end this year. This is part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and gained through the Town Centre Investment Programme. The Council biodiversity team will also contribute financially to the award, and their work will take place in February 2026. This work will help connectivity between the valley and the town as outlined in the recent Holywell Place Making Plan.

Carmel green banks frontage A5026: Following resident feedback both for and against the wildflower site on the frontage of Ocean View Estate, a new ongoing management plan has been agreed with the Council. This will also be aiming to address concerns and maintain biodiversity benefits. There will be a minimum of 3 cuts per year to manage grasses, preventing them from becoming too long but still maintaining interest and biodiversity. Bulb planting for early year colour and interest, which will be cut back with the first cut and collect of the year. Flail cut before winter; winter /spring flail cut; Mid-season flail cut; Autumn flail cut. Autumn bulb planting in 2026.

#### **DOMESTIC ENERGY:**

Flintshire Council has a Domestic Energy Team which is self-financing, with funds coming from fees and charges raised against work carried out on behalf of various clients. Professional advice and information are provided for all Flintshire residents, working with numerous referral partners with the aim of helping families in fuel poverty. During 2024/25 the team achievements in Council properties included installing 515 new energy efficient condensing gas boilers in council homes; installed cavity/loft insulation into 301 council homes; gained £135,408 of solar

PV installations; £100,100 of Air Source Heat Pumps; £139,128 of smoke alarms, heat meters and general repairs. The team have also worked for all residents with Wales and West Utilities, Eco Flex and Wall Lag in Mold. The Wall Lag contract was worth an estimated £20m over four years and included an additional social value offer from Wall Lag valued at £5.68m

#### **DID YOU KNOW?:**

The County Council has four solar farms within Flintshire and generate around 4MW of electricity. The solar farm in Flint near the coastal path has 5,200 panels and has a capacity of 2.1 MW.

#### **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](mailto: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](mailto:chris_dolphin@hotmail.co.uk) neu pe dymunwch ysgrifennu llythyr fy nghyfeiriad yw, 11 Ffordd Aelwyd, Carmel, CH8 8SH

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## HOLYWELL AREA COMMUNITY MUSEUM (Mike Jones)

The weeks seem to have flown by at the Museum. Summer is a distant memory, and we are careering headlong into a new year. But before we reach that point we will be playing an active role with the Town Council Christmas Lights Switch On, taking place on Friday 28th November. The Museum will be open late that day.

A highlight at the Museum was the return of the model colliery made by the taid of John Wiltshire who is in charge of the mining element at the museum. Constructed in 1904 it's a fascinating working model and has been repaired to a high standard by the BBC television programme, 'The Repair Shop'. Its return to the Museum was kindly unveiled by Town Council Mayor, Councillor Matt Sprake.

Following the closure of Santander, the last remaining bank in town, we are fortunate to be hosting the Santander Banking Hub at the Museum every Tuesday 9 am – 5 pm. Although no cash transactions can be carried out all other services are available, especially important if you are not tech savvy.

### WELL INN FESTIVAL

We continue to receive donations which go towards explaining the history of Holywell and district for which we are extremely grateful, after all it is a community museum. A recent donation, which we will hopefully make a display of in the new year, highlights the life and times of a Holywell resident who emigrated with his family to Kenya. A fascinating collection of paperwork and photographs together with African spears!

The annual Remembrance service took place with The Museum providing refreshments to all the participants. It was a very moving ceremony, and it was a pleasure to see so many people paying their respects.

The Knit and Natter group continues to meet at the Museum every Wednesday morning and it is very heartening to see new faces getting involved.

The Museum sewing repair and alteration service continues to prove a big hit, with more people taking advantage of this local and professional resource. Prices are very reasonable, call in for more details.

As usual out thanks go to all the visitors, volunteers, Holywell Town Council and Wales & West for all their help and support.

For more information, please phone the museum on 01352217170 and speak to our lovely manager Jodie Bennett.

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To access most online library resources you will need to enter your library membership number and pin. If you are not a member don't worry you can join online in the comfort of your own home, via the Gwella website for instant access. All links and further details about our digital library resources can be found here: [www.gwella.wales/libraries](http://www.gwella.wales/libraries) or for further information [libraries@gwella.wales](mailto:libraries@gwella.wales)



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- **Monday** Lego Club 10.00 a.m. and 3.30pm
- **Tuesday** Rhymetime 10.00 a.m.
- **Wednesday** Craft and Chat (every two weeks) 2.00pm
- **Friday** Welsh Conversational Group 2.00pm (1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month)
- **Saturday** Lego Club 10.00am

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

### **\*\*COMING SOON\*\* Festive Fun at Holywell Library**

#### **Jack Frost's Snow Time Adventure at Holywell Library**

with Theatr Clwyd in partnership with Gwella Libraries

**Holywell Library, Tuesday 23 December 12pm, 1pm, 3pm, 4pm**

(45min sessions)

**Step into the enchanting world of Jack Frost where children and grown ups become part of the story!**



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Jack Frost's Snow Time Adventure is an immersive installation for the young and very young which offers a sensory and imaginative story experience which captivates and delights. Audiences enter a welcoming tent-like space and are transported into the magical world of Jack Frost who travels the land to bring cheer to children.

This is a pay what you can event (from free!) so book your place as soon as you can and join us in an enchanting adventure.

To book follow this link [Jack Frost's Snow Time Adventure at Holywell Library | Theatr Clwyd](#)

#### **GWELLA Home Library Service - bringing the world of books direct to your door!**

We feel passionately that all Flintshire residents should be able to access and enjoy a library service. GWELLA Home Library Service is free and delivers library books across Flintshire to customers who are unable to get to their local library for reasons such as limited mobility, illness, or caring responsibilities.

Our Library Assistants will select a collection of books based upon your personal preferences, these can be in whatever format you require, and these will be delivered direct to your door every 5 weeks. To register a friend, relative or yourself for the Free service email [libraries@gwella.wales](mailto:libraries@gwella.wales) or contact 01352 704400.

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## THE CURIOUS TRAVELLERS PROJECT (Peter Stutchfield, Church Warden)

Thomas Pennant, a renowned naturalist and antiquarian was born at Downing Hall in Whitford in 1726. He was buried beneath the altar in Whitford church following his death in 1798. He is best known for his travel writings about a Tour in Scotland, made in 1769 and 1772 and Tours in Wales published between 1778 and 1784. He also wrote the History of the Parishes of Whitford and Holywell 1796 which explores in great detail the landscapes, communities and wildlife of this area. He travelled on horseback and foot accompanied by his artist Moses Griffiths, who illustrated the places of interest along way. He is buried in the churchyard.

Professor Mary-Ann Constantine of the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies Aberystwyth, established a research project editing Pennant's letters, exploring the history of tourism and travel in Wales and Scotland. The Curious Travellers project was established and is accessible via this link, <https://www.curioustravellers.ac.uk> where a great wealth of information can be found about Thomas Pennant and his travels, including correspondence with naturalists all around the world. As his home, Downing Hall no longer exists, the building where the modern traveller comes closest to Thomas Pennant is Whitford church.

A number of talks have been arranged by Prof Mary-Ann Constantine and an artist in residence, Sean Harris, who worked with the children of Whitford primary school, Ysgol y Llan, examining the detailed drawings and paintings of birds which appear in Pennant's book on British Zoology. This led to an illuminating talk by him showing the children's amazing drawings. These are featured in a booklet The Whitford Ornithology.

A website has been developed accessible via <https://www.whitfordchurch.wales> where a great wealth of information can be found about the church and Thomas Pennant.

A beautifully illustrated guidebook about the church and Thomas Pennant has been published recently by Prof Mary-Ann Constantine and Martin Crampin. Copies are available at £5 each at Whitford church or by contacting e mail [pstutch30@gmail.com](mailto:pstutch30@gmail.com)

2026 marks the 300th anniversary of Thomas Pennant's birth. There will be various events to mark this momentous milestone; to be announced.

## BECKY GITTINS MP



It's been a busy few months both in Westminster and here in Clwyd East, with real progress on the issues that matter most to our communities. From improving workers' rights to strengthening local transport, I've been focused on delivering for people across the Five Villages.

In Parliament, I was proud to support the Employment Rights Bill, which fulfils our promise to make work fairer, more secure and better paid. The new law ends exploitative zero-hours contracts, bans "fire-and-rehire" practices, and gives every worker day-one rights to sick pay, holiday pay and protection against unfair dismissal. It also strengthens protections for pregnant women and new parents. For many here in Clwyd East – where jobs in care, retail and hospitality are such a vital part of our local economy – these changes mean genuine peace of mind. People will have more stability, more security, and a fairer deal at work.

Closer to home, I marked Anaphylaxis Awareness Week with a visit to Ysgol Maes y Felin in Holywell. The school has gone completely nut-free to protect pupils with severe allergies, and the children have produced their own posters, leaflets and podcasts to raise awareness. As someone who lives with allergies myself, I was moved by their creativity and sense of care for one another. Earlier this year I introduced a Ten-Minute Rule Bill calling for improved NHS guidance on baby and infant weaning for families where allergy risks are identified. My goal is simple: to make sure parents get clear, evidence-based advice and that health professionals have the information they need to spot potential allergies early on and work towards prevention of these life-threatening conditions.

If you couldn't already tell, school visits are one of my favourite parts of this job. I was lucky enough to also meet Year 6 pupils from Ysgol Bro Carmel, who had written to me about their passion for the environment and tackling climate change. They had some fantastic ideas for addressing local issues around this alongside some truly original questions for me about what life is like as an MP.

Transport is another big focus for me. In October, I met with Transport for Wales to discuss how people in rural areas like Whitford, Carmel, Lloc, Gorsedd and Pantasaph can more easily reach train stations and mainline services. Capacity on the North Wales Main Line is being expanded, with up to five trains an hour running on some sections once upgrades are complete. It's also been confirmed that a new direct train from North Wales to Liverpool will begin running in May 2026 – fantastic news for our region. It will open up more opportunities for work and education, and make travel between our coastal and rural communities and the wider North West far easier. But that only works if local people can get to the mainline in the first place. That's why I'm pressing for better rural bus connections and for the Holywell

flecsi service to be built permanently into the wider Network North Wales plan, so our villages aren't left behind.

I've also been continuing my work on green energy and local jobs. North Wales has a growing reputation as a leader in clean energy, and the carbon-capture project at Padeswood near Mold is a brilliant example. Once operational, it will capture around 800,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year – the equivalent of taking 400,000 cars off the road – and it will create hundreds of skilled jobs both during construction and in the long term. This is part of the UK governments wider target of creating 15,000 new clean energy jobs across Wales by 2030. It shows what can be achieved when we bring together innovation, environmental responsibility and good local employment.

Back in the constituency, I'm continuing to push for better access to cash after recent bank closures in Holywell. I've been in touch with LINK and the Financial Conduct Authority to press for a community banking hub, and I'm not satisfied with the initial assessment that the town doesn't qualify. Access to face-to-face banking is essential for local residents and small businesses, and I'll keep campaigning until we get the right outcome.

Finally, on a personal note, my husband Michael and I have been touched by the kind messages we've received since sharing that we're expecting our first child. The photograph we used for the announcement was taken by Ruthin-based photographer Rae Seaman as part of the 40 % Project, which celebrates women in Parliament. It felt like the perfect way to share our happy news while recognising the importance of representation. When the time comes, I'll be making use of the six-month proxy voting system in Parliament, meaning Clwyd East will always be represented while I take maternity leave. My office will continue to operate as normal, with my fantastic team on hand to help with casework, queries or local issues, and I'll be spending more time

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here at home in our community over the coming months.

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As we head into the festive season, I want to wish everyone across Clwyd East a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. Thank you for the kindness, encouragement and community spirit you've shown throughout the year – it's what makes this job such a privilege.

## EGLWYS GYMRAEG BRO TREFFYNNON HOLYWELL & DISTRICT WELSH CHAPEL

*Dyma restr o'r gwasanaethau am yr wythnosau nesaf.*  
Here is a list of services for the next few weeks.

### Rhagfyr / December.

- 14eg Gwasanaeth Dwyieithog -  
Pnawn Sul am 2 o'r gloch yn Eglwys Gorsedd  
Joint Bilingual Carol Service  
Sunday Afternoon at 2p.m. Gorsedd Church.  
21ain Gwasanaeth Nadolig gan yr aelodau.  
28ain Maryl Rees.

### Ionawr / January 2026

- 4ydd Cyfarfod Gweddi  
11eg Y Parch Huw Powell-Davies - Gweinidog. (Cymun)  
18fed Uno yn y Berthen - Debbie Roberts  
25ain Y Parch Huw Powell-Davies

### Chwefror / February:

- 1af Arwel Roberts  
8fed Y Parch Huw Powell-Davies  
15fed Hedd ap Emllyn  
22ain Y Parch Huw Powell-Davies

### Mawrth / March:

- 1af Dennis Davies  
8fed Y Parch Huw Powell-Davies (Cymun)  
15fed Geraint Owen  
22ain Y Parch Huw Powell-Davies  
29ain I'w drefnu

### Ebrill / April:

- 5ed Sul y Pasg - Y Parch Huw Powell-Davies - (Cymun)  
12fed Debbie Roberts.

*Y gwasanaethau i gyd am 10 o'r gloch. Croeso cynnes i bawb.*  
All services at 10a.m. All are welcome.

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Come and visit, and enjoy food and drinks with us from midday, every day. You can book a table online or drop in. We look forward to welcoming you soon. *Cheers, Ray and the team*

## CHRISTMAS



### Opening Times

**1st - 24th December:** Usual opening times apply

**Christmas Day:** BAR 12-3pm (bar only)

**Boxing Day:** BAR 12-6pm | FOOD 12-6pm

**27th - 30th December:** Normal opening times

**New Year's Eve:** BAR 12 - Late | FOOD 12-6pm

**NYE PARTY** from 7.30pm

**New Year's Day:** BAR 12- 6pm | FOOD 12-6pm

### Events

**Christmas Wreath Making** - Tuesday 2nd December

**Candlelit Carols** - Tuesday 9th December

**Christmas Market** - Saturday 20th December

**Christmas Quiz** - Tuesday 16th December

**Christmas Walk** - Saturday 27th December

**New Year's Eve 2025** - Wednesday 31st December,  
from 7.30pm (*booking is essential*)



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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 energized.

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](mailto: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.



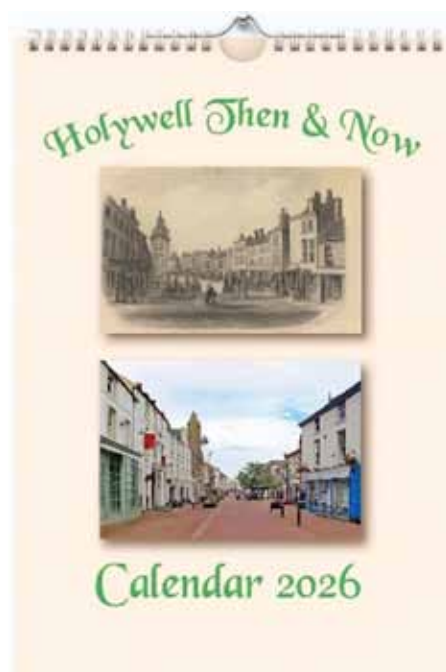




### (Andrea Dakin)

We are now getting into the busy season and putting the finishing touches to our stall in readiness for the local Christmas Fairs. We will be at Stamford Gate Hotel on 23rd November, in Holywell for the Christmas Lights event on 28th November and St Peter's Church Christmas Fair on 29th November.

This year we have an addition to our events stall – a 1.7m roller banner promoting the Holywell Historical Society. Creating the collage of Holywell photographs for the background was a painstaking task, but well worth the effort. We were thrilled with the superb print quality and the sturdy finish of the banner. A photograph wouldn't do it justice, so we hope you'll come along to one of our events and see it for yourself – we'll be hard to miss!



Our 2026 calendar is just hot off the press and we are very pleased with the end result. This year we decided on a larger A4 spiralbound wall calendar with the theme Holywell Then and Now. We also have A4 all-year calendars in two designs, Transport in Holywell and Holywell's Public Houses. Our unique Holywell themed Christmas cards are back by popular demand, and both the calendars and cards will be for sale at all the events this month. We continue

to trade from our stall in Nexus Creative Spaces, the pop up shop in Holywell town centre (at the rear of the Post Office), where you'll find our calendars and greetings cards, together with books on local history written by our members. In the New Year we hope to extend our merchandise to include coasters, tote bags, fridge magnets and key-rings, all of which will depict scenes of Holywell in years gone by. All of our merchandise, and details of where to purchase, can be found on our website. <https://hollywellreminiscing.wixsite.com/historical-society>



The Holywell Reminiscing 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 available

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

We were delighted to be invited back to Llys Gwenffrwyd residential home in Holywell at the end of September to take part in their MacMillan coffee morning. A lively event that included musical entertainment from Holywell's Morris Dancers, and of course plenty of cake! Earlier that month we visited Rhiwlas, a care home in Flint, and spent an enjoyable afternoon chatting with the residents about their memories of Flintshire. One lady had some interesting stories to tell of the evacuees who came to stay in Holywell during the war. We know that over 100 children came to live in Flintshire at that time from cities all over the country – quite a few of those families settled in the area after the war, preferring the tranquillity of a Flintshire village over returning to a war-torn city. We continue to recognise how powerful reminiscence can be, particularly for those living with dementia or Alzheimer's. Familiar scenes and photographs often spark memories, conversation, and moments of connection – and we're always honoured to play a small part in that experience.

One of our members sadly lost his sister recently. He very kindly donated some Holywell themed memorabilia that she'd collected over the years. These included framed postcards, a pin dish and a China teapot with a picture of St Winefride's Well on it. Another member, Kate Clifford, donated two framed photos of Station Road in Greenfield. We're always grateful for any donations of memorabilia in connection with Holywell and the surrounding areas. Our archives are available to view on appointment. Please contact us for more information. [hollywellhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:hollywellhistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

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We're excited to announce plans for a new website dedicated to our Family History Hub. While details of the proposed Family History Group are still being finalised, we'd love to hear your ideas on how it could develop — and what you'd like to see from such a group. Our resident genealogist, Donna Coulson, has over 30 years' experience in family history research and is always happy to help. You can also contact Donna to arrange a free one-hour, one-to-one consultation for guidance on your own family history journey [dcfamilyhistoryhub@gmail.com](mailto:dcfamilyhistoryhub@gmail.com).

We would like to take this opportunity to wish all the readers of this magazine a very Happy Christmas. We'd like to thank all of our members, and everyone who has come along to one of our events this year, for your continued support. It means so much to us to know that people appreciate what we're doing to help preserve the history of Holywell and the surrounding villages. Here's to a prosperous 2026!

## DRUID INN NEWS Hello Everyone,

As the temperature drops, the smell of mulled wine and mince pies drifts through the air, I'm struck by just how special this time of year is — especially here at The

Druid Inn in Gorsedd. I thought I'd take a little moment to share what we've got planned for Christmas this year, and why I think it's going to be one of our cosiest and most joy-filled yet.

First things first: Whether you're popping in for a quiet pint, joining us for a Christmas meal, or simply wanting some company by one of our roaring fires, we've got space, warmth and plenty of cheer. As the Landlord (and unofficial Christmas elf), let me assure you: there's nothing I love more than seeing the pub full of friends old and new and lots of good cheer!

Our Christmas menu — lovingly crafted by our kitchen team — is ready to delight. Think hearty, comforting fare with a festive twist. I won't spoil all of our surprises, but expect traditional favourites, seasonal specials, and dishes that make you feel like you're wrapped up in a Christmas jumper (only tastier and less itchy). You can find all the details on our website <https://druidinn Gorsedd.co.uk/>.

But wait, there's more than food! We've lined up a delightful calendar of festive events to bring the spirit of Christmas to life at the pub: from wreath making workshops with Waterhouse Flowers and carol singing (these will have taken place by the time the Five Villages news letter is published) to quizzes where you can prove just how well you know your mince-pie trivia. (Yes, there *is* such a thing.) The Quiz starts at 8pm on Tuesday 19th December and it's £2 per person entry with all proceeds going to Giddo's Gift. Our socials are jingling with all the details.

We know how busy things get at Christmas. Family to see, food to cook, and stockings to stuff — so we'll be open for food and drink as usual every day up until the big day itself, then on the 25th everyone is welcome to come and raise a glass of something with me and my team between 12pm-3pm. Boxing Day will be a more relaxed affair - we'll be open and serving all the pub classics between 12pm - 6pm.

If, like me, you will need to burn off some of those Christmas Day calories and get some fresh air, then we'll be running our annual Christmas Walk again on Saturday 27th December. A free event, simply join us for complimentary breakfast rolls and hot drinks before we set off on an approximate 2 hour walk around the local area.

If you've still not made plans for New Year's Eve and don't fancy heading far from home, you're sure of a very warm welcome here. We'd love to see 2026 in with you in good old Druid Inn style. Our New Year's Eve festivities get going from 7:30pm. You'll receive a warm welcome and glass of fizz when you arrive followed by canapés and an amazing five course menu, we'll also have some great live music to keep you entertained until the clock strikes midnight. Spaces are limited, so I suggest booking early (especially if you're a bigger group). The bar will be open as usual all day in case you just fancy a drink.

At the end of the day (or the evening, if you'll be staying a while), my greatest hope is that The Druid Inn feels as comfortable as home for you during the Christmas season. Whether it's your first festive visit or part of your beloved tradition, My hope is that you leave us feeling restored, comforted and in good cheer — because that's what Christmas is all about.

So, from all of us here at The Druid Inn — myself included — thank you for being part of our community. Thank you for choosing to spend time with us, laugh with us, and soak up the magic we're creating together this Christmas.

Here's to mulled wine, good food, cheerful company, and a truly merry Christmas.

Cheers,  
Ray  
Landlord  
The Druid Inn, Gorsedd  
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## NATURE COLUMN (Jan Miller)

I sat late at night typing on my computer with my back to the bookcase where I had put a ziploc bag of oak galls I had recently collected from a hedgerow up the lane. I kept being distracted by a 'flick, flick, flick' noise behind me. I eventually traced it down to the sealed bag of oak galls. I had carefully checked that the wasp larvae that caused them had been able to escape before I picked them by looking for the quite large emergence hole about 3 or 4 millimetres across.



Oak galls are those marble-sized and shaped brown things you sometimes see on newly planted oak saplings along new road developments. They do not appear to be able to get a toe hold on older mature oak trees so easily. Caused by the oak gall wasp that lays its egg in a leaf-axil under the bark, the larva feeds inside a ball of tannins exuded by the tree to try and poison it. Acorns are the fruit of the oak which also contain a lot of tannins, and in this incredible fruiting year due to increased pollinators in the unusually warm dry spring, there have been reports in Wales of sheep dying of acorn poisoning. Which is strange as pigs used to be reared in oak woodland because they could fatten up on acorns in autumn. They must have a special organ or enzyme to counteract the toxins, wild boar having evolved in ancient forests. In California there were Native Americans who ate acorns as their staple food, before maize and grain crops arrived. They had to do a lot of processing and washing of the ground acorns in baskets suspended in a flowing river to reduce the tannin to make it edible. At Mount Diablo, not far from the city named Oakland (now a big port in the east of the San Francisco Bay Area) where we have been with our son who lives out there, there are still holes in the flat areas of rock that were used as grinding mortars for acorns.

Back at home I was saving galls to make a tannic acid solution for mordanting fabric before dyeing with plants, or to treat paper on which to print leaves. The mordant helps natural dyes to 'bite' into the paper or material, and so not wash out. Oak galls have also been used for millennia to make long lasting ink, which, fortunately worked and means some of the beautiful ancient documents, like the book of Kells, or the Domesday book are still legible today.

A classical Scribe told me just recently that his old uncle told him that the best ink is made when the grub is still inside the gall. Then I found a source that says to preserve as much of the tannin as possible, galls were harvested preferably before the insect had become an adult and made its way out. At this stage the galls are referred to as 'blue galls'. They are small, heavy, and dark in colour. 'White galls', gathered just before or after the insect has escaped, are bigger, lighter in weight and colour, and contain fewer tannins. The holes through which the insects escaped are generally clearly visible.



*Gall nuts with escape holes.*

But what was the flicking noise about, then, if the gall wasp had gone? On talking to people who knew about these things, I discovered there were a number of different, even smaller insects which took advantage of the galls too and emerged later. Wouldn't you know it? So much interdependence in our ecosystems! I learnt in Latin lessons once; 'big bugs have little bugs upon their backs to bite them, little bugs have littler bugs, and so ad infinitum.'

So then a got a book on galls, there

are so many types, on so many different plants, it is amazing. Seems to be a common breeding behaviour around the world but usually does not harm the host plant. Once or twice I have found a sapling with a massive infestation, that seemed to have killed it. But it was close to others that were not affected at all. It seems the wasps look for trees that are weaker in some way, maybe they give off a different smell or pheromone. Cabbages do this when attacked by cabbage white butterfly larvae, to warn other butterflies that the site is already taken. This benefits both the cabbage's longevity and the butterfly's.

Robin's pin cushion, also made by a wasp on wild rose stems. There are hundreds of different species of wasps that make galls, each on their own specific plants. But galls can also be caused by a fungus - like Ergot on wheat or rye that caused a lot of madness (St. Anthony's Fire) in the Medieval period, and also bacteria can cause a plant to form protective galls that contain a lot of tannin.

Tannins are distributed in many species throughout the plant kingdom. But in the family of the oak, Fagaceae, 73% of the species tested contain tannin. For those of acacias, Mimosaceae, only 39% of the species tested contain tannin, among Solanaceae the rate drops to 6% and 4% for the Asteraceae. Some families like the Boraginaceae, Cucurbitaceae, Papaveraceae contain no tannin-rich species. The latter do not seem to be over troubled with insects eating them, so why do the other plants have so much tannin? I suppose some of these like the Solanaceae (deadly nightshade, potatoes (don't eat the berries)) and the Papaver (poppies - heroin) have evolved other, more lethal, poisons.

Tannins are a group of high molecular



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weight, water soluble, phenolic compounds that tend to form strong bonds with proteins and other large organic molecules. They tend to be found in high concentrations in the bark, particularly tree bark.

Their exact role within the trees is uncertain but it is thought that they inhibit microbial activity, act as a chemical barrier and prevent colonisation by pathogens, prevent freezing by acting as an anti-freeze and, probably most importantly for the tree, their bitter, astringent qualities prevent browsing by herbivorous animals and insects. It is tannins that make acorns and sloes incredibly bitter and unpleasant to eat.

However, in smaller concentrations, tannins are present in many plant-based foods, tea and wine are the best-known examples. Too many tannins in the diet are considered harmful and they have been shown to be carcinogenic with long term consumption. But don't rush to give up your morning cuppa, by adding milk to tea the tannins present in it bind to the proteins in the milk rather than inside your digestive tract, effectively rendering them harmless.

Tree tannins have been utilised by humans for centuries. Because of their astringent (tightening pores and drawing water out) properties they have a long history of being used medicinally for a variety of medical complaints including tonsillitis, pharyngitis, haemorrhoids and skin eruptions as well as thorns and stings. Tannins also effectively form insoluble precipitates with some notable plant toxins such as alkaloids and glycosides as well as heavy metals and have been used as an antidote in cases of poisoning.

Tannins have been reported to produce other physiological effects including speeding up blood clotting, lowering blood pressure, lower blood lipid levels, and modulating immune responses.

Different tannins react with iron salts to form coloured insoluble precipitates which range from dark blues and greens through to blacks and in this form have been used to make a range of dyes and inks that have been utilised in everything from old manuscripts through to furniture making.

Other uses of tannins include clarifying wines and beers, preventing lime scale formation in water boilers and even as viscosity adjusters when trying to drill through mud!

Perhaps the longest and most well-known use of tannins and one with which they are linked by name is in tanning leathers. Generally known as vegetable tanning these days to differentiate it from other tanning methods using chemicals, oils, etc. it utilises tannins extracted from the different parts of various tree species.

Historically, a wide range of tree barks have been used in various parts of the world so in addition to the species mentioned above, Birch (*Betula* sp.), Alder (*Alnus* sp.), Willow (*Salix* sp.) and, in North America

Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) as well as Sumac have been commonly used.

To make vegetable tanned leather, essentially all that happens is that fleshed, membraned animal skins (generally de-haired by soaking in a strong alkali solution) are soaked in a tannin solution. This process can take several months depending on the size and thickness of the hide. To start with the prepared skins are immersed in a weak solution which over a period of time is gradually topped up to increase the tannin concentration. This allows the tannins to penetrate the skin and prevent something called case hardening, where too strong a solution at the beginning can result in the outer layers of the skin tanning and then preventing the tannins to penetrate the skin and tan it all the way through.

The tannins bind to the proteins in the collagen fibres of the skin, coating them and at the same time causing the hide to tighten. This creates the characteristic

properties of veg tanned leather which is different from other leathers in that it can be tooled and also wet-formed to make things like knife sheaths.

Undyed vegetable tanned leather generally will be varying shades of brown or reddish-brown dependent on the source of the tannins. Generally, tannins fall into two groups condensed (catechol type) and hydrolysable (or pyrogallol based) which will give different properties and colours to leather. The former tans skins more quickly and produces leather of red, pinks and dark brown colours, whereas the hydrolysable tannins give a paler tan but produce a harder wearing leather with more water resistant qualities. The skill of the ancient tanners was using appropriate sources of tree tannins to give the specific qualities to the leather being produced. Birch, alder and hemlock contain more condensed tannins whereas chestnut and sumac contain more hydrolysable tannins. Oak bark has both sorts.



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## IMPORTANT RESTORATIONS AT WHITFORD CHURCH (Peter Stutchfield, Church Warden)

The grade 1 listed church of St Beuno and St Mary in Whitford stands in the centre of our village, where worship has taken place since the seventh century. The earliest record of the church is in the Domesday Book in the year 1086. The oldest part of the present building now is the north aisle, dating back to 1500-1520. The tower was rebuilt in

1842-4 and is topped by a weathervane. It was jointly funded by Lord Mostyn and Lady Pennant. Standing against all weathers for nearly two hundred years, the weathervane was showing its age. This was highlighted in the quinquennial report of 2022 which stated that it was in need of conservation repair due to serious rusting.

The first known weathervane, a bronze figure of the Greek god Triton, was built in Athens around 48BC and placed on the Tower of Winds. In the 9th century AD, Pope Nicholas 1 decreed that all churches should display a rooster as a reminder of St Peter's denial of Christ, (Gospel reading Matthew 26:75). It also represents the bringing in of a new day, a symbol of hope and the resurrection of Christ. Roosters are commonly used as a symbol of Christianity, fixed to weathervanes on Anglican church towers.



We are extremely grateful to have received generous grants from The Ironmongers Guild, Benefact Trust and a Diocesan Building Grant making it possible for Flintshire Fabrication to undertake their expert restoration. Scaffolding was erected and the cockerel and ironwork removed, leaving the central core standing. New sections were reproduced where necessary, all missing iron leaves were recreated and rust removed from all areas. The structure has been repainted in black, the cockerel and points of the compass in gold. The beautifully restored weathervane was re-erected on October 10th 2025 on a glorious autumn day with



the sun illuminating the transformed golden cockerel. Our newly restored weathervane stands proudly on top of the tower, fit for another century.

Further restoration has involved expert re-leading of two of the clear glass windows which had deteriorated significantly. We were grateful to receive a Diocesan building grant to enable Meridian Stained Glass of St Asaph to undertake the restoration.

The rainwater system also needed restoring and the railings repainting. The wrought iron gutters, hoppers, dated 1874 and downpipes have rusted over time. With a grant from the Churchfield Trust, Community Foundation Wales and a Diocesan grant, North Wales Decorating from Rhyl undertook the treatment of all the rust and the repainting in the original green colour. This has made a great difference to the appearance of the church and preserves the rainwater goods and railings for the future.

This summer, following a successful bid for a National Lottery grant, a sound system with a hearing loop was installed improving the sound quality for all.

We are particularly grateful to Mostyn Estates who have given their time and expertise so generously to help us in maintaining the churchyard, renewing the lighting, interior decorating, restoring



the ancient doors and annual servicing of the tower clock, coordinated by Stephen Gladwin. We are very grateful to all other volunteers who keep the clock wound each week, undertake the grass cutting and church cleaning without whom the church and churchyard would not be maintained.



By August 2025 the church was looking at its very best for the wedding of Lord Gregory Mostyn and Lady Gillian, an historic event, reaffirming the Mostyn family connection with the church. The church was beautifully decorated with flowers for the very special event. We wish them every happiness for their future in Mostyn Hall.

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## AUTUMN TERM ROUND-UP AT YSGOL Y LLAN (T Williams, Headteacher)

It has been a wonderfully busy and memorable start to the new school year at Ysgol y Llan. Pupils have returned to school with enthusiasm, curiosity and a readiness to learn, embracing new topics and experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Our children have been busy exploring the world of WWII and Ancient Egypt, or stepping into the Enchanted Forest and enjoying the magic of *The Gruffalo*.

### Class Learning Highlights

Dosbarth 1 have stepped into the magic of the Enchanted Forest, thoroughly enjoying their learning through the story of *The Gruffalo*. The children have:

- Explored what the characters might say to each other

- Collected and used exciting descriptive vocabulary

- Designed their own 'BEWARE!' posters to warn others about the Gruffalo

Outdoor learning has also been a key focus. The children have spent time spotting woodland animals and using positional language to describe where they are. They have also been practising giving and following instructions on a woodland grid—skills that will soon support their next exciting step of programming Beebots around a forest map!

Dosbarth 2 have had a fantastic start to their Ancient Egypt topic. Pupils explored the structure of pyramids by building their own models from marshmallows, Lego, sugar cubes and building bricks—developing excellent teamwork and problem-solving skills. In Science, they investigated light and shadows before applying their learning to perform an Egyptian-themed story using a shadow puppet theatre. The class were also delighted to harvest beetroot from their raised beds—carefully grown from seed last term. Their creativity continued outdoors, designing their own Egyptian cartouche using natural materials, alongside thoughtful learning in RVE about the 5 Ks of Sikhism.

Dosbarth 3 have taken a meaningful and reflective approach to their World War II topic, learning about the causes of the war, evacuation, rationing and life on the Home Front. They have made strong cross-curricular links in RVE, discussing moral dilemmas and the experiences of Jewish communities during this period. They also represented the school wonderfully during a Keep Wales Tidy litter pick, and were inspired by a visit from the Urdd, where we are hoping to take part in the National Eisteddfod in Anglesey this year.

### Enrichment Across the School

Our Eco Group have been hard at work in the school polytunnel, planting a range of herb seeds which they hope to sell later this term. Their care and sense of responsibility has been fantastic to see.

Our children have also been making excellent use of their new football goal,

which has brought plenty of energetic and enthusiastic play to the yard each breaktime.

Meanwhile, our Criw Cymraeg continue to shine. They have been running the Pod Siarad, offering pupils a special space to siarad Cymraeg, paint, draw and enjoy creative play together. Bendigedig pawb!

Da iawn, Mrs Cook! Another 5\* rating for our School Kitchen! We are really proud of all the excellent work you do! Presented by NEWYDD.

Children have taken part in the Poppy Appeal and have donated generously!

### PTA and Community Support



We are delighted to share that we have been successful in our application to take part in the Tesco Community Grant Scheme. We could receive £500, £1,000, or £1,500 depending on customer votes.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO USE YOUR BLUE TOKENS TO VOTE FOR YSGOL Y LLAN IN HOLYWELL TESCO FROM OCTOBER 2025.

A huge thank you to the PTA for leading and submitting the application on our behalf—your support is truly appreciated.

### Estyn Inspection

In October, we welcomed the Estyn inspection team to Ysgol y Llan. It was a very positive experience with the support,



positivity and encouragement from pupils, parents, staff and the wider community has been overwhelming. We look forward to sharing the report with you on its official publication date of 19th December.

We ended the first half term with a joyful Pupil Voice reward disco, chosen by the pupils themselves—a wonderful celebration of their efforts and achievements so far this year.

Church Harvest Service— We welcomed many parents, and families from the community. It was great to see so many faces. All food raised will be donated to the

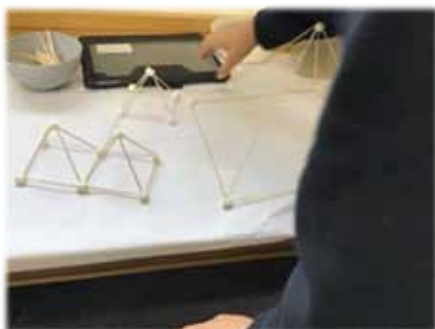


Flintshire foodbank.

Whitford Playgroup continues to grow and places are filling up quickly, please get in touch for further details. We will be opening a holiday club in the new year.

At Whitford Playgroup, our children





have been busy exploring, imagining and creating in wonderful ways. A collection of simple cardboard boxes became rocket ships, boats, shops and hideouts, offering endless opportunities for imaginative play, problem-solving and friendship-building. The children also helped to make their own cinnamon-scented playdough, taking responsibility for adding ingredients, working together and developing independence before enjoying the sensory

fun of playing with the dough they had proudly made. Our budding bakers made chocolate rice crispy cakes, developing fine motor skills as they mixed, poured and carefully filled their cupcake cases. It has been a joyful term full of creativity, curiosity and hands-on learning.



## THE THOMAS PENNANT SOCIETY: A PERSONAL REFLECTION (Norman Closs - Parry)

In the late 1960s, while lecturing at Holywell Grammar School one Saturday evening, a local gentleman remarked to me, "The trouble with Pennant is that there are no anecdotes about him." I disagreed, but chose to say nothing.

By then, I had already been captivated for more than a decade by the romance surrounding such a great Welsh polymath. When I moved here in 1965, the late Meirion Griffith took my late wife Bet and me to 'see' Downing. That visit fired my imagination, and it has done so ever since.

Little did I know then, that by the late 1970s, one of my students would become the national expert on Thomas Pennant and is now preparing a popular two-volume biography of him. Dr Paul Evans, now our Vice-President, was among those early scholars.

### Formation of the Society

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Paul Brighton, Paul Evans and I came together to form what soon became Cymdeithas Thomas Pennant.

Our early committee included the late Eric Masterman – chemist, councillor, and loyal supporter – and, of course, Meirion Griffiths, whose remarkable mind first introduced me to Pennant.

Our first formal project was locating Griffith's grave and placing a plaque on the north wall of the cemetery. The Reverend Kilgour granted reluctant permission, saying, "His ministry was with the living not the dead".

Our next major project was the National Eisteddfod Festival, Mold. Shortly before this, the Pennant Group formally became Cymdeithas Thomas Pennant, with Dr Goronwy Wynne as our first President and Paul Brighton as Secretary (a role he held until illness last year).

From the outset, our aim was clear: to enhance Pennant's reputation as a Welsh polymath and to strengthen the cultural identity of the area known as Pennant Country.

### The Pennant Lecture

Arguably, our flagship initiative has been the establishment of the Annual Pennant Lecture, now held for twenty-seven consecutive years at various venues.

Our guest speakers have included many distinguished figures such as: Dr Paul Evans - 'Thomas Pennant - An overview'

Dr Goronwy Wynne - "Pennant the Scientist and his relationship with other European Scholars".

Professor Mary-Ann Constantine and her team (Aberystwyth)

Professor Nigel Leask and colleagues (University of Glasgow)

I had the honour of delivering the prestigious celebration when I lectured on Pennant and Owain Glyndwr...because I

had learnt that.

Such was the import of the man, the eminent historian Sir R. R. Davies of Cambridge declared that Pennant was the first historian to record and analyse the Glyndwr Rising professionally.

### Academic Partnership: Curious Travellers

A tremendous boost came with the Curious Travellers projects – collaborative initiatives between:

University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies

University of Glasgow

Later supported by the Natural History Museum, London

Funded by the AHRC, these partnerships have brought fresh scholarly attention to Pennant's work and acknowledged the Society as a key collaborator.

It has been a privilege to attend conferences in Aberystwyth, London and Glasgow as part of this work and having the honour along with Paul Evans of addressing/speaking at some of them!

### Community & Scholarship

Meeting so many knowledgeable scholars has been a delight. We firmly believe that the people of this region – especially young people – deserve access to high-quality scholarship about one of Wales's greatest literary figures.

My hope has always been to spread appreciation of this remarkable genius of Downing that is one reason we got the eminent Welsh author and environmentalist to Gorsedd Church of late Jon Gower! It was a real success as we heard him mention on Radio Cymru and those of us there can testify.

### Looking to the Future: The 300th Anniversary

Over lunch some years ago at Efyrynwy, Paul Brighton, Dr Eiddwen Jones (now

retired from Flintshire Education Authority), and I asked, "What next?"

The answer came like a lightning bolt: June 2026 marks 300 years since the birth of Thomas Pennant.

And so we resolved to hold a major celebration – a festival worthy of such an extraordinary Welshman. A huge thank you to Mr and Mrs Colin Roberts for their willingness to become the Celebration Managers to ensure that it will be a worthwhile 300 for a great Welsh person

Planned features include:

A three-day programme: Friday–Sunday, June 12–14, 2026

Choir concerts, including Trelawnyd and junior choirs

A commemorative Cymanfa Ganu

The annual Pennant Lecture is delivered by a leading scholar of Celtic and Welsh Studies

Launch of Dr Paul Evans's new biography (hopefully)

Publication of Pennant's Birds with contributions by Dr Goronwy Wynne, Alun Williams (ornithologist and photographer), and me.

### Ongoing Work

The Society continues to grow its influence through:

Annual lecture series

School engagement and learning projects

Collaboration with Curious Travellers

Work with Whitford and Holywell Parish councils

Projects with heritage partners, including Gilbert White's Museum, Selborne

Support for emerging scholars of Pennant's work

Creative practitioners are now joining us to help bring Pennant's legacy to life for young people in Flintshire and even on the Isle of Skye, where Pennant once travelled and wrote memorably.



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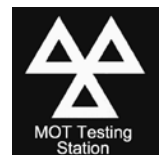
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## Contact

In the event of any enquiries, please contact our hardworking Secretary, who stepped in during Paul's illness:

Mr Glyn Meirion Jones  
Tel: 01745 887414

## Conclusion

It has been one of the great delights of my life to work for and with the Thomas Pennant Society. As we look forward to celebrating his tercentenary in 2026, we honour not only a remarkable Welsh scholar and traveller but a cultural legacy that continues to inspire curiosity, pride, and scholarship today.

*Thomas Pennant deserves nothing less.*



## RECIPES

### CHEESECAKE

250g Ginger Nut Biscuits (you can also use digestives or Hobnobs)  
125g Butter, melted  
A few drops Vanilla Essence  
600g Full-fat Cream Cheese  
100g Icing Sugar  
284ml pot Double Cream  
Fresh Raspberries, Strawberries or Blueberries for topping  
25.5cm (10in) cake tin

Grind biscuits into fine crumbs (*I use a coffee grinder*) and mix with melted butter. Press into base of cake tin and chill for an hour or more.

Add vanilla essence to the cream cheese and icing sugar and beat until smooth. Whip cream separately to soft peaks, then gently but thoroughly mix into the cream cheese mixture. Spoon mixture into the biscuit base and chill in fridge for at least 6 hours, preferably overnight.

Remove from tin by running a knife gently around the edges of the cheesecake, lifting from tin and sliding off base. Arrange the fruit topping and serve immediately or keep in fridge until needed.

*This is an extremely rich, delicious cheesecake, which is simple to make. A fabulous dessert for a special occasion.*

### SCRUMMY CHOCOLATE BROWNIES

250g Dark Muscovado Sugar (preferably unrefined)  
200g Unsalted Butter  
350g 70% Dark Chocolate chopped into pieces  
3 eggs  
50g Self-raising Flour

Preheat oven to 190C/Gas 5. Line a 20cm square tin with baking parchment.

Melt the chocolate and butter in a heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water.

Whisk the eggs until pale and fluffy. Add the Muscovado Sugar and whisk until thick. Gently fold in the chocolate.

Sift in the flour and fold in until the mixture is smooth.

Pour mixture into the prepared tin and bake for 30 – 35 minutes, until you see a paper-like crust on top. There should still be some movement in the centre of the tin.

Remove from oven, leave to cool and then cut into squares.

*Learned this recipe from our lovely daughter-in-Law. The best brownies ever!*

*Many thanks to Sandy Neville for these recipes!*

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## ST. WINEFRIDE'S SCHOOL

Children in Dosbarth Melyn have been busy exploring and looking after God's wonderful world this half term. We went on an Autumnal walk around our school grounds and helped care for God's animals by feeding the birds.



Dosbarth Melyn have enjoyed settling in to their new class this half term! Here they are on their first day of term!

Dosbarth Melyn enjoyed coming to school in their pyjamas as a part of their prayer box action to support CAFOD's World Gifts.

Dosbarth Dyfi had a fantastic morning



at the Holywell Community Council Litter Pick! We're doing our bit to care for God's creation in response to Pope Francis' Laudato Si', looking after our common home.



Back in class, we've started writing letters to Pope Leo to tell him all about our litter pick!

Dosbarth Coch had a wonderful visit to Chester Zoo. Our topic is 'Amazing Animals' so a trip to Chester Zoo was essential to see all their wonderful animals. We had a fantastic day, learnt lots of amazing animal



facts and saw many fantastic animals.

In Nursery, we have been busy settling into our new school for the first time. We have been making friends and learning about the story of Creation.

We learnt the story of how God made



the world and all the things in it. Then, we went out to find some beautiful things God made and we took some photos of them on our Ipads. We even made our own beautiful worlds just like God did!

We talked about how important it was to look after God's world and we even did some recycling to help keep everywhere tidy!





Then, we found out that God made each of us and we did lots of things to celebrate how special we are including making unique faces inside and outside with different materials!

Finally, we explored how we can join God's family through Baptism. We loved acting out the Baptism and designing clay crosses that will be a sign to everyone that we are part of God's family!



The children in Year 4/5 enjoyed creating sweet treats for the school's Fairtrade café.

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## A SOGGY AUTUMN IN THE FIVE VILLAGES (Robert Moore)

Weather in the Five Villages Autumn 2025 (2024 in brackets)				
	Temperatures °C			Total rainfall mm
	Average	Maximum	Minimum	
September	13.8 (13.8)	20.9 (26.0)	5.0 (2.1)	181.5 (264.4)
October	11.2 (11.0)	19.1 (17.6)	4.0 (2.0)	79.0 (153.3)
November	10.4 (9.4)	15.8 (15.4)	5.0 (4.1)	100.0 (5.2)
November data until 14 November only (2024 to 14th also)				

Autumn 2025 and Autumn 2001 – 2020 (including whole of November)				
Air temperature at 1800 UTC	Average	Maximum	Minimum	Rainfall (mm)
2001 to 2020	10.7	18.0	3.4	87.7
2025 to Nov 14	11.8	18.6	4.7	360.5

Tables for 2001 to 2020 are available at Holywell library and the County Archives.

There were no remarkable differences in temperatures from 2024, except that the minimum temperatures were higher than last year, and above the 20-year average. The maximum daily temperature did not fall below 10 degrees until November 14th, when it was 9.9 degrees. Autumn 2025 was, however, a wet season. Like last year, September's rainfall alone was double the whole 20-year *seasonal* average. While October saw around half last year's rainfall, November also exceeded the seasonal average. Autumn rainfall 2025, so far, is more than four times the 20-year seasonal average. So, it is a record Autumn for rain.

In the first few days of October, we avoided the worst impact of storm Amy, which caused considerable disruption to transport and power supplies in Northern Ireland and the west of Scotland. We escaped with minor damage – fortunate given that the trees were still in full leaf. On the 4th and 5th the weather station recorded wind speeds in excess of 20 knots, with a couple of gusts at 36 knots. Wind speeds were probably higher in more exposed parts of the Five Villages.

It was the UK's third duller October since records began in 1919, only 1960 and 1968 were duller years. Wales and Northern Ireland saw their second duller October on record. As regular readers will know, the Carmel weather station cannot record hours of sunshine. However, it was notable that on the 28 days when I recorded cloud cover at 1800 UTC all but three days were totally overcast (and one of the three was seven eighths covered). This was a result of high pressure over the eastern Atlantic and Europe. In summer we expect high pressure to bring sunny weather. High pressure gave us some lovely summer sunshine this year. By contrast in October and early November the sinking air trapped moist air that was coming up from the southern Atlantic, the cooler maritime air could not rise above the descending (and warming) air, but it could condense over the cool water. As a result, we had gloomy but mild days, with the cloud also providing a blanket that kept nights warmer. The blanket of cloud can be seen in this quarter's Meteosat image at noon on the second of November. The 'blocking high' also held off the impact of what was left of the tropical storm (ex-hurricane) Umberto. By the second week in November cold air was moving in from the north while the jet stream continued to bring warm air from the south. There were rain warnings for south Wales where warm air forced up over the hills gave heavy rain. There was also some very vigorous activity on the boundary between warm and cold air, greatly enhancing the rainfall in northern England and the borders. The overall weather pattern was a result of a relatively unusual configuration of Jetstream, highs and lows right around the world.

It has been a mild Autumn so far, with leaves on many trees and garden plants still flowering early in November. The ground temperature fell slowly; it was 15 degrees Celsius on the 1st September and 11 C on the 14th November.

It was all change as this report was being written. Storm Claudia (named by the Spanish Met Office) swept up from the south. As forecast, it rained nearly all day on the 14th and there were flood warnings in south Wales and warnings of high wind gusts in north-west Wales. The seasonal rainfall looks set to be exceptional and will be reported in full in the winter issue of *Five Villages Chronicle*.

If you would like weather information for any particular day or a longer period, please contact me at [rsmoore1936@gmail.com](mailto:rsmoore1936@gmail.com) (email only). Students or teachers who would like weather data or satellite images for projects or teaching please contact me in the same way – note that unless requested otherwise I only keep satellite imagery for one week. So, don't delay if there's something you need. Satellite images are available strictly for educational purposes only.

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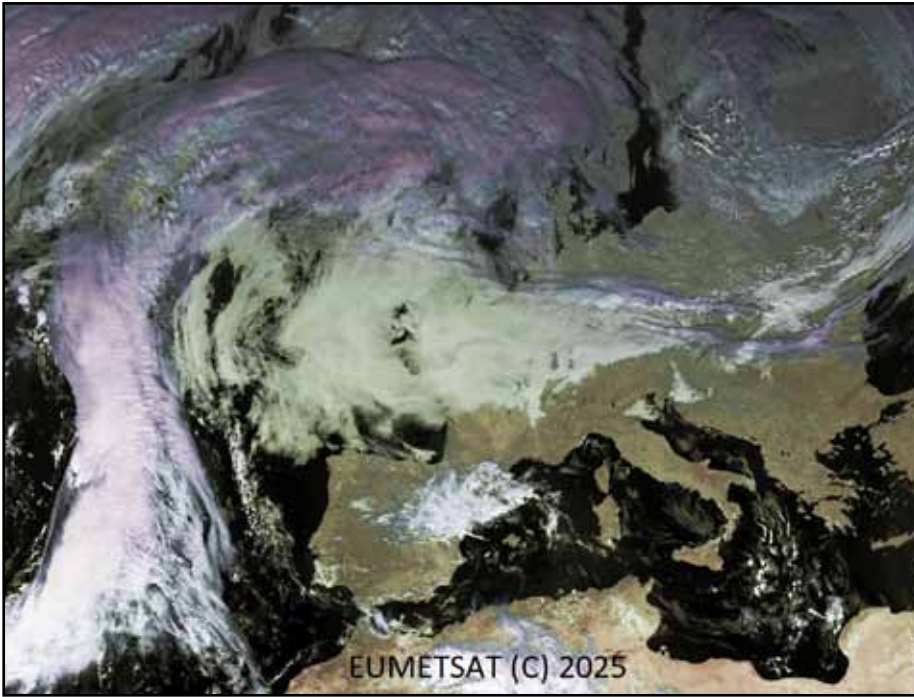
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## HURRICANE (Chris Dolphin)

The two pictures are of the Royalton Hotel near Falmouth, Jamaica after Hurricane Melissa had passed through. We were in the eye of the hurricane which was a category 5 in a hotel built for a Category 4.



The Hurricane was tracked beforehand travelling very slowly for days at 2mph then 3mph and 7mph on land. The record breaking warm waters at depth in the Caribbean fuelled Melissa as it travelled so slowly over a long period.



After about 2 hours, there was a lull, when people came back out to take stock and assess damage, maybe have a drink and some fresh air, then the breeze started and it was time to take cover as Melissa starts its end trail, which was another 2 hours or so.

We were always coming home late, and leaving the island. For those Jamaicans it's part of a life story, before Melissa and now after Melissa. Devastation on the island, homes, and countryside.

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## SOUNDING THE SEASONS (Norman Closs - Parry)

I used to read the *Church Times* regularly — always back to front. (I used to look at the *News Chronicle* from the sports page first — politics last!) On the back page of the *Church Times* (through my friend the Rev Brian Taylor - Vicar of Bagillt), I found "A Word from Warmingford" a regular column by the doyenne of Country Writers, Ronald Blythe (then approaching his 100th birthday - which he achieved - but now with God). When he was 90 years plus, he retired! And the Editor found another writer/poet to take on the task of filling Blythe's shoes.

I then started to read the ecclesiastical pages from front to back, as a true Christian ought. I glanced at the Country/Poets' Corner written by a cleric, a Chaplain at Girton, Cambridge - I could not (at first) pronounce his surname — Guite. I had never heard of him.

Months went by...one day to relax from writing Welsh verses that refused to 'come' (the muse is like that - fickle!) I Googled...Wow! I found a series of talks by Lord Oystermouth (ex-Archbishop of Canterbury) - Rowan Williams...fantastic - this man is a Polymath (overused adjective) - then miracles do happen...There he was in his chaotic study in a comfortable chair - surrounded by ancient and modern volumes and a little table in front of him - with a moderate Glenfiddich with ice. His name?...Dr Malcolm Guite — POET.

He was just like my vision of an ideal Father Christmas: short, rotund, white whiskered, apple cheeks aflame (Glenfiddich). inviting the viewer to listen to his exposition of the Psalms - I was absolutely captivated.

When the Google video was over, I rose and looked for Church Times Book back numbers!

That was a few years ago now. Enough to share my admiration of him with others...My title for this essay is Sounding the Seasons - actually it is from a volume of Seventy Sonnets for the Christian Year by him and on the telling cover and promotional blurb in a highly recommended analysis and encouragement to read by Rowan Williams...I need not say more.

As we approach Advent and Christmas, the time of preparation and reflection, I am going to leave Malcolm Guite to speak. I only wish I could write fourteen lines of poetry that could be read in a minute, yet show the hours of thought behind them. I wish this work were mine.

I, even at my 86 years to heaven, love Christmas. I have not tried to compete with the Christian Cambridge Chaplain, but I have written a Christmassy Sonnet, which I will share:

### On the Edge

Christmas sets the centre on the edge:

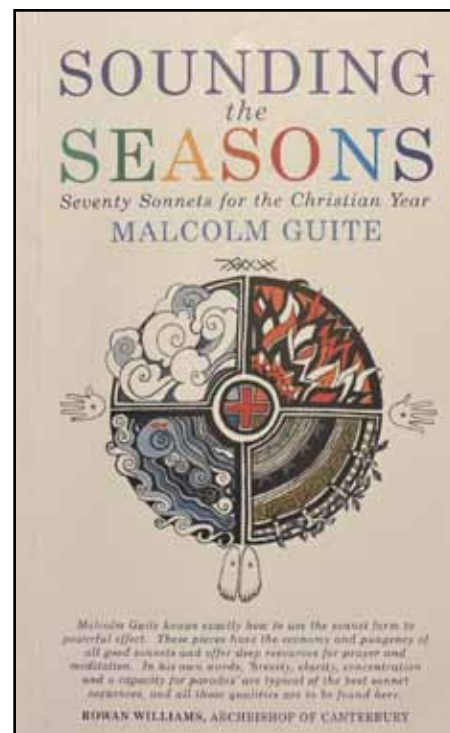
The edge of town, outbuildings of an inn,  
The fringe of empire, far from privilege  
And power, on the edge and outer spin  
Of turning worlds, a margin of small stars  
That edge a galaxy itself light years  
From some unguessed-at - at cosmic origin.  
Christmas sets the centre at the edge.  
And from this day, our world is re-aligned:  
A tiny seed unfolding in the womb  
Becomes the source from which we all unfold  
And flower into being. We are healed,  
The End begins, the tomb becomes a womb,  
For now, in him all things are re-aligned.

### Sports Annual, 1949-50

I did not ask Santa in my letter  
for such a gift. That Christmas, long ago,  
But I'd like him to know — nothing better  
He could have left me. They who know me, know!  
It was not just rugby - but cricket too.  
My hero — the Right Rev — a bishop fine.  
He and Heeney and Liverpudlians true  
He batted well, just like old Sussex wine.  
Did Santa know that minor sports as well  
were chosen from that day? I always played the game!  
Be it casting, bouldering, on high tarn or fell  
The finding out, win or lose - it's the same -  
Baron de Coubertin did have it right  
Taking part's the thing, do not quit but fight!

\*\*\*\*\*

For the enunciated - the Bishops - Shepherd and Heeney -  
Baron de Coubertin - reviver of the modern Olympics and its motto...  
David Sheppard, of course, played cricket for Sussex,  
Captain England (M.C.C.), but gave it up,  
only playing when on vac — the Anglican Church  
benefited...I think he should have gone to  
Canterbury - but there I am a  
Calvinistic Methodist - whatever it meant  
*Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.*



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## SUMMARY OF 2025 SEASON

This year marked the 60th anniversary of the club's formation at its original Golch Farm home in the village of Carmel. The club is rightly proud of its history and early beginnings, and this year it produced special caps for the players to celebrate the milestone. Here's to the next sixty years!

## PRESENTATION EVENING

The club held its annual end of season presentation evening in the clubhouse on Friday 17th October. In addition to the winners of the various awards who are listed below, special caps were issued to Dafydd Timothy, Mike Jones, Barry Davies and Norman Closs-Parry. Dafydd Timothy has now taken over 2,000 wickets for the club during his long playing career, and Mike Jones scored over 15,000 runs for Carmel between 1968 and 2009. Barry Davies and Norman Closs-Parry both played in the club's first ever game.

Here is a full list of this season's award winners:

Men's First XI  
Batting Award – Supun Eranga  
Bowling Award – Amer Jamil

Men's Second XI  
Batting Award – Jonathan Fisher  
Bowling Award – Dafydd Timothy

Women's and Girls' Team  
Batting Award – Haf Morgan-Read  
Bowling Award – Haf Morgan-Read

## SEASON'S HIGHLIGHTS

The Men's First XI can look back on a very satisfying 2025 season. Competing in Division 2 of the North Wales Cricket League under the captaincy of Ben Sim, the team ended the campaign in fourth place on 207 points. This represents the highest league placing for a number of years and is testament to the team's hard work, application, and excellent team spirit. There was further good news at the end of the season with the announcement that three members of the team had scooped divisional awards for batting (Supun Eranga – 780 runs), bowling (Amer Jamil – 41 wickets) and wicket-keeping (Ryan Roberts – 24 catches and 8 stumpings). Many congratulations to these three players on their outstanding achievements.

Carmel Second XI also enjoyed a successful league campaign in Division 4 and ended the season in eighth place – again the highest placing for a number of years. Special thanks must go to captain

Cameron Ackroyd whose hard work and commitment has really developed the team in recent years. This was Cameron's last season as captain as he is relocating outside the area and everyone at the club would like to wish him well for the future and thank him for all his hard work, both on and off the field.

The Women's and Girls' team competed in the Softball Division 1 East Division this season and ended the campaign in a very creditable fourth place. The team continues to go from strength to strength, attracting new players and growing in confidence all the time. Everyone contributed to this season's success and there was a terrific team spirit amongst the squad. At the end of the season, it was great to see Haf Morgan-Read winning the divisional batting award for scoring the most runs and the fielding award for the most dismissals. Many congratulations to Haf on this fantastic achievement.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The club was due to hold its Annual General Meeting in the clubhouse on Friday 21st November. Full details of the outcomes will be included in the next Five Villages report.

Finally, once again this year the club is very grateful to the Five Villages Chronicle for all its support and coverage. Diolch o galon. We would also like to wish readers of the publication a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Nadolig Llawn a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i chi gyd.

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**Croeso cynnes / A warm welcome awaits!**

### **FIVE VILLAGES CHRONICLE AGM**

**Wednesday 15th April**

**2026**

**at 4.00 pm**

**in**

**St Paul's, Gorsedd**

### **NEXT EDITION**

Our next edition will be published on 21st March 2026 and the submission deadline for that edition will be 20th February 2026.

### **FACEBOOK - LIKE US? LET US KNOW!**

We have a new Facebook page that you can use to submit comments, feedback, short articles and any other snippets of information. Visit [www.facebook.com/5villageschronicle/](https://www.facebook.com/5villageschronicle/) or search '5Villages Chronicle'. If you enjoy this edition, please click the 'like' button to let us know!

**Please note our email address:**  
**[editor@5villages.org.uk](mailto:editor@5villages.org.uk)**



### **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 - Bob Brown (01352 710967); Advertisements - Melanie Wallis (01352 712369); 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](http://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](mailto:editor@5villages.org.uk) or post: FVC, Bodlonddeb, Chapel Street, Caerwys, Flintshire, CH7 5AE (01352 720477).**

Please send original prints, not photocopies; all pictures and photographs will be returned. Though contributors can choose to remain anonymous in the publication, we will not publish material without knowing the name and contact details of contributors. Previous editions of the Five Villages Chronicle are available to view at the Flintshire Record Office, Hawarden and at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

**'IF YOU DON'T COLLECT ME, PASS ME ON TO A FRIEND (OR THE LIBRARY); AND WHEN YOU'RE ALL FINALLY FINISHED WITH ME, PLEASE RECYCLE ME'**





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*"Many thanks for arranging our wills in an efficient & friendly way which we can understand"* Jean – Mold (Jan 2025)

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