

# Rhosgoch Gossip

Volume 26 Issue 3

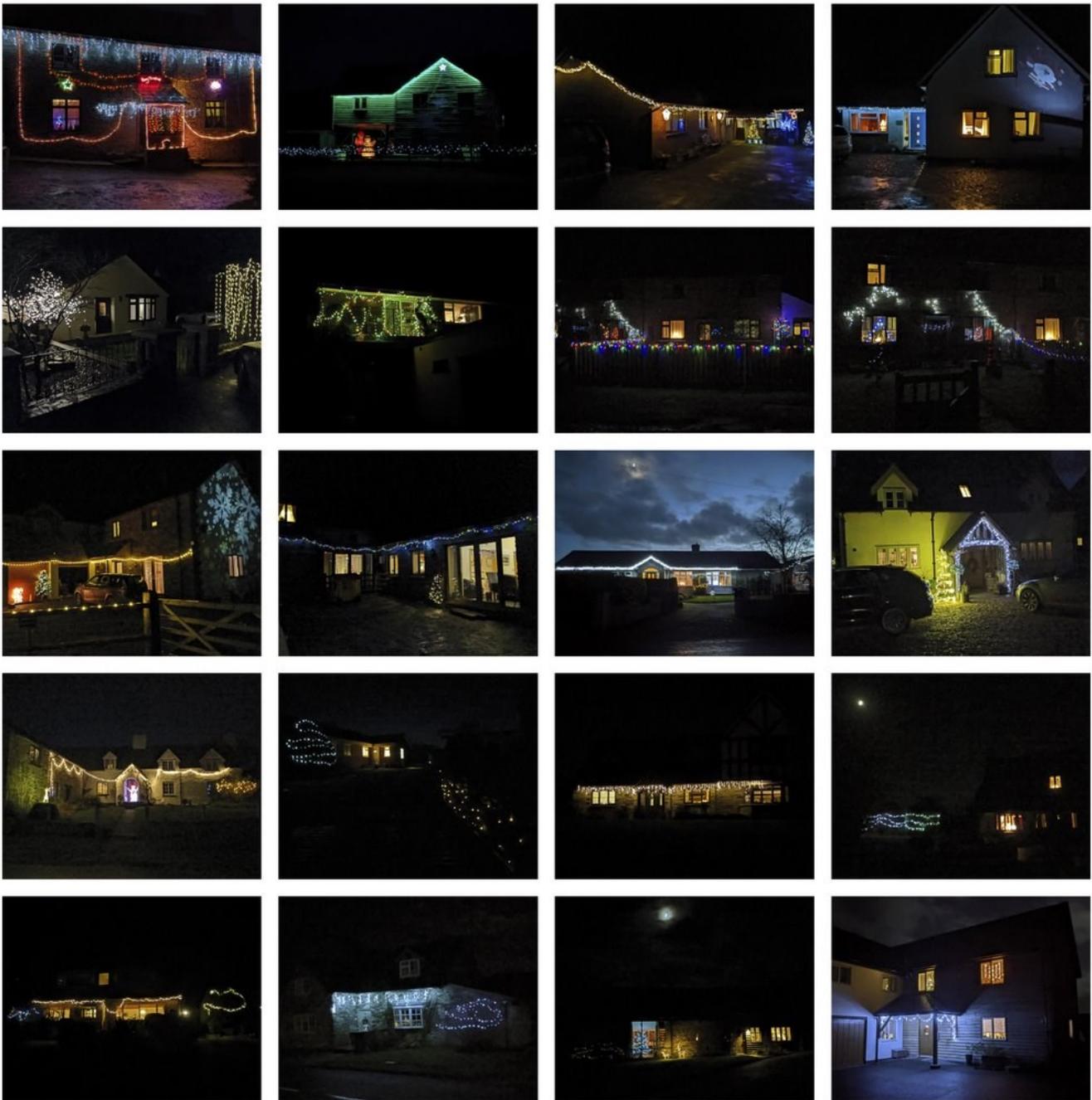
Jan / Feb 2021

£1

## CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMPETITION

What an unenviable, yet enjoyable task we had. The lights were amazing everywhere we went and really brightened up the local area, making the two villages and surrounding homes look very festive. People had made a really great effort with their entries. Congratulations to all of the entrants.

*Cont'd next page*



# BEST WISHES FOR 2021

Cont'd from previous page:-



We saw incredibly inventive use of trees and hedges, rooves and doorways. There were beautiful projections of snowflakes and a Santa, multi-coloured and single colour lights, both flashing and not. Some houses had extremely effective light displays which subtly changed colour every now and then. There were Santas aplenty (one cosseted individual sitting in his own glasshouse grotto), a huge festive polar bear in his own porch, penguins, snowmen, stars, and deer were very popular. Santa and his reindeer pulling his sleigh covered the wall of one house in an especially impressive display. We particularly liked some beautiful light trees that we saw in Rhosgoch, a small herd of reindeer in Painscastle and a very attractive modern tree made of lights and door surround, also in Painscastle. A few of the entries had most effectively used their lights and displays to draw one's eyes in towards a courtyard or front door.



The displays varied greatly in terms of scale and some of the smaller ones were as effective as the really large ones because they had made the most of the space available, for example at the Golf Club.

We liked the way that people had made use of natural trees and bushes rather than relying on artificial ones. In all the entries, the lights made the houses look so inviting that we wanted to knock on the door and go in to get away from the cold (and drizzle on one of the judging nights). Well done everyone!

But, we had been asked to come up with a winner. To this end, we devised a scoring sheet so that we could be completely objective in our decision. The winner is Llettypoed. The scale of the display was really staggering and there was a good deal of colour and wonderfully festive detail, making use of all sides of the house and garden. Together with Llettycoed next door, another lovely display, the impact of the lights was amazing, and even more impressive when you consider that these two homes are on a lane that not many people will drive down.

The Village Hall Committee should be applauded for coming up with such a brilliant idea to give everyone a lift at the end of what has been a pretty dismal year. Here's to a much happier and healthier 2021.

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## FARM FOCUS

Hello to you all from The Rhyscog, Aberedw or, as Jessie's school know it, "The Davies Farm".

I'm not going to dwell on the year we have had as there is very little to discuss that hasn't already been said and I am just hoping that by the time the article reaches everyone we are heading towards much better times.

You will all have heard of Terry at the Rhyscog but he is a man of few words so it's been left to me to do. I'm Lynn, the wife, and we have a daughter Jessie who is eight.



Our farm consists of sheep - Welsh mules and Welsh ewes using Suffolk, Blue Face, Texel and Welsh tups to produce fat lambs. We also have a small flock of poll Dorsets and a small flock of pure Herdwicks. We have a handful of pure Welsh Blacks at present, two Kunikuni pigs, eight dogs, four donkeys, two ponies and a parrot!

Of course, Terry also has the Pantau and Pentre Unt running Welsh ewes and he helps look after Lord Moran's Welsh Black Cattle at Pengareg Farm.

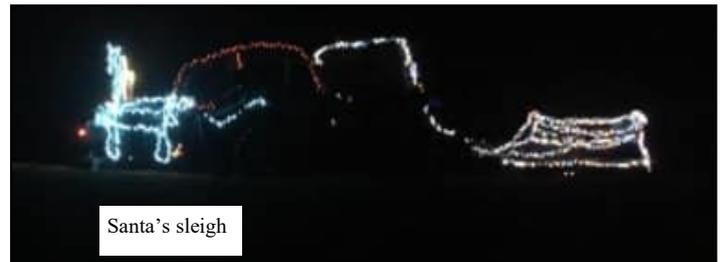
There is the Hendre shoot which utilises the ground and woodland of the above and Terry enjoys nothing more than taking the dogs for a good hunt around, finishing the day off with large amounts of cider in the Hen House. Many a man has been unable to remember much from their entering through the door to waking up the next day. It is a fantastic shoot with ground that any professional shoot would die for and the quality of the birds coming off the rocks would test any good shot, let alone the farmer with his double barrel, non-ejecting hammer gun from which he uses a rusty

nail to extract the cartridges. There is plenty of "Bang, Bang, Bu@@er!" I think most shoots take an average of 1 bird 3 to 4 shots but the Hendre average about 1 in 15 shots.

Myself, I am self-employed and helping on the farm and I clean for a few locals, but my love is being creative and particularly painting. For the last two years, I have been exploring ways to develop my art. I love to paint animals, in particular sheep, but to gain confidence I have been commissioned to paint people's pets, mainly dogs and ponies. I have been supported by our local pub, The Seven Stars, which thankfully was saved by a group of locals who managed to get enough funds together to purchase it. I have a collection of my paintings there, but in the last 12 months they have hardly been seen by the public due to the restrictions on opening hours. I'm hoping in 2021 that I am able to attend craft fayres and galleries and am hoping to paint live in public.

Now we can look on to lambing on the Davies farm and what sort of season this will be.

To you all, Stay Safe and the happiest of New Years. See you on the other side.....



Santa's sleigh



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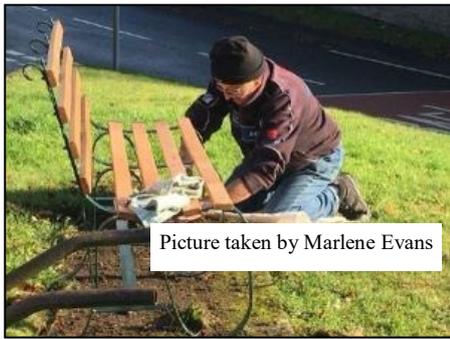
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**Gladestry News**

John Harrison, a resident in the village, repairing the broken seat on the village green. I'm not sure how long the other one was in situ but it was in a sorry state and it's good to know it's now smart and safe. Well done John.



Picture taken by Marlene Evans

Marlene and Norman Evans have been in Gladestry for many years. Marlene taught at Old Radnor School then John Beddoes and is now retired. John hasn't lived in Gladestry that long. Marlene started a Coffee Pop In (weekly coffee morning) outside and is still going during lockdown. She is there in the car park at the village hall in all weathers. There are often 15-20 under normal circumstances but obviously fewer at the moment.



Ann Dean



**National Garden Scheme – For immediate release**

**Contacts:** Helen Anthony (North Powys) or Gail Jones (South Powys)

**E:** [helen.anthony@ngs.org.uk](mailto:helen.anthony@ngs.org.uk)  
[gail.jones@ngs.org.uk](mailto:gail.jones@ngs.org.uk)

**T:** Helen 01686 941795

**U:** Gail 0797 410 3692

During 2020, volunteers in Powys put their heads together to find different ways of raising money such as selling plants at the roadside and in a bus shelter! Garden owners recorded virtual garden visits, asking viewers to make donations. There was even a virtual cocktail party and we had fun! A big thank you to everyone who joined our virtual visits, donated plants for sale, bought plants and made 'real-live' visits to our gardens. Looking forward, plants are being grown for sale, new videos being recorded and 68 gardens are due to open in Powys, including Tranquillity Haven, Whitton, near Knighton, featured in a virtual film tour for the Macmillan charity. Viewers can take a stroll over the garden's red oriental bridge and watch the babbling brook running underneath, as well as enjoying a multitude of greenery and flowers. In 2017, Val Brown was airlifted to hospital after she badly dislocated her right shoulder and damaged her right arm in a fall just a day before her beloved husband Dave's funeral. Medics initially told Val, who spent more than a decade developing a Japanese stroll garden with Dave, she would never garden again due to the level of nerve damage. With the help of physiotherapy and determination, the 79-year-old rebuilt her strength to tend to the garden. Val's garden will open on weekends in June and October. For more information and other opening dates see [ngs.org.uk](http://ngs.org.uk) and



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**QUIZ TIME**

**QUIZ—Answers on Page 11**

**Radnorshire**

1. What is the county flower of Radnorshire?
2. Which city is provided with water by the Elan Valley reservoirs?
3. How many Young Farmers Clubs are there in Radnorshire?
4. In the last census (2011), what was the population of Llandrindod Wells?  
a) 4709 b) 5309 c) 6109
5. Which river flows through Presteigne?
6. In which town is the Offa's Dyke Centre?
7. The highest point in Radnorshire is in the Radnor Forest. Is it:  
a) 580m b) 620m c) 660m
8. What happens every day, at 2pm GMT and 3pm BST, at Gigrin Farm near Rhayder?
9. Which musician's second album was called "Hergest Ridge"?
10. Which famous engineer and inventor bought Doldowlod Hall in 1785 as a retirement home?

**NEW YEAR'S HONOUR FOR EX-PUPIL OF RHOSGOCH SCHOOL**

Liz Mills had the shock of her life when she received an email nominating her for an MBE for her work with Food Banks.

Liz went to Rhosgoch School in the early 1980s and completed her school days in Gwernyfed before going to Leicester University. She works four days a week as an English teacher at Guilsborough Academy and spends the other three days working with a food bank in Market Harborough. She has been a volunteer for several years, but earlier this year the organiser died and she took over the role. She has continued to keep the food bank going despite the pandemic, and the award is in recognition of the part she has played in the vital work of the food bank to help people who are struggling.

Congratulations to Liz Mills M.B.E. from Rhosgoch

**PAINSCASTLE RECYCLING & RUBBISH COLLECTION**

**Recycling is collected** every Monday, and the next **rubbish collection** dates every three weeks are:

Jan 11th      Feb 1st      Feb 22nd      Mar 15th

**Garden waste** is collected every fortnight on Tuesdays from March to November for an annual fee, next collections:

Mar 2nd      Mar 16th      Mar 30th      Apr 13th

**LAST BABY BORN AT NEVIL HALL HOSPITAL**

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November, Lara Emily Bowkett made history by being the last baby to be born at Nevil Hall hospital. A baby girl for Alaw and Mark Bowkett from Fronhowey, Painscastle, a sister for Shân, another grand-daughter for Michael and Jane Bowkett from Pen-tre Jack.

**FESTIVE BABY**

Pete Bufton and his girlfriend Natasha Hodgkins had a baby boy on 22nd December, Mason Milwyn Kayden Bufton, a first grandchild for Marion Bufton from Penbryn. Best wishes to all the family.

**QUIZ—Answers on Page 11**

**Not quite what they seem!**

1. How long was the Hundred Years War?
2. From what animal is catgut usually made?
3. The lead in a pencil is made of what?
4. A slow worm is not a worm at all – what type of creature is it?
5. What type of tree is a Douglas Fir?
6. In which country was India Ink invented?
7. What is a flying fox?
8. From which country do Panama hats originate?
9. What actually is Bombay Duck?
10. A koala bear is not a bear – what type of animal is it?

**QUIZ—Answers on Page 11**

Can you unscramble the names of these local villages ?

1. CCEHHNRUW
2. BDGHOOORU
3. CGHHOORS
4. AAEHLLNPNST
5. DEORRW
6. BGNNRWYY
7. AALLMRTW
8. AAABDEGILLNNOR
9. ABDEERW
10. AACEILNPSST



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## Sharing thoughts on the Powys Moorland Partnership (PMP) project - Catherine Hughes reflects.

Like so many projects around the UK asking “What do we want our uplands to look like?”, it seems that the whole of Europe is grappling with the new way forward on how best to reward farmers and landowners as the Common Agriculture Policy ends.

PMP was one of 50 projects in Wales funded through the Sustainable Management Scheme looking at landscape scale solutions; aimed at drawing in all the key stakeholders but putting farmers and landowners, who own and manage 80% of the land in Wales, centre stage

My job as facilitator was to encourage a wider participation from a more diverse audience and to have new conversations/collaborations to see what joined-up approaches could take place and try to respect opposing points of views to strengthen our landscapes as dramatic losses in bio-diversity are reported on a daily basis.

In a nutshell, the project aims were:

*To support collaborative landscape scale projects delivering action that improves our natural resources in a way that delivers benefits to farm and rural businesses and rural communities*

Over the 3 years, heather habitats have been restored alongside the grazing regime in a bid to help recover the ground nesting birds and boost biodiversity, but engagement with the public was essential, in line with new Environment (Wales) Act and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

*This project has received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.*

The three cluster moorlands in the project – all with different management levels - included; Ireland Moor, Painscastle; Beacon Hill, near Knighton; and, Bal Bach in the Llanthony valley. All had an interest in red grouse and wanted to bring back the management of the heather before it is lost to the ever encroaching bracken.

They also chose 5 species of birds as flagship species which included the red grouse, curlew, lapwing, golden plover and hen harriers – all ground nesting birds and all benefiting from similar management. All these moors were, back in their day, thriving grouse moors which depended on active heather management and which brought a lot of private money into the rural economy. Beacon Hill even had its own train station at Llangunllo to make it easier to get the shooters to the lodge. But, since the demise of shooting in the ‘80s, there has been a gradual decline in overall biodiversity and sheep grazing too has reduced, along with cattle grazing. The questions were why has biodiversity nose-dived? Why has land degraded? What can be done to reverse the trend? Is it the loss of the shooting which managed the heather? Have we underestimated the value of the different grazing systems by sheep, cattle and ponies which kept the habitats in order? A big discussion was clearly needed and the aim was to pull everyone together and widen the debate to find some meaningful common ground.

With all the project area being ‘common land’ with multiple users and no dividing fences to allow a shared space, the landscape is more complex to manage, so the need to talk with everyone was even more urgent if we were to find areas we could agree on.

Over the 3 years of the PMP, lots of community events have taken place. Integrated moorland management was the first in Painscastle village hall in October 2017, hosted by the Heather Trust and PONT – the conservation grazing body - to start new conversations to discuss new approaches. And, although heather and grouse were a particular focus, the shooting was only ever to be a by-product, and only when a shootable surplus could be achieved. The bigger picture was to increase the numbers of all ground nesting birds who thrive

under grouse management by creating a mosaic of different habitats to encourage much more biodiversity.

We interviewed and captured stories of the past to get a picture of what these places used to have and to try to see if we could recover them. I was particularly lucky to talk to Walter Price, who was then 93 years, to hear of life being brought up on Ireland Moor where he was surrounded by an abundance of curlew and the rivers were bursting with salmon.

School children from Hay and Clyro came on several occasions to meet the farmers/the gamekeepers, and

helped bracken brushing and rounding up sheep. They walked miles across the landscape to hear and re-enact the tales and myths of the Mabinogion, they watched and heard the curlew and they visited farms and took part in the Big Farmland Bird Count.

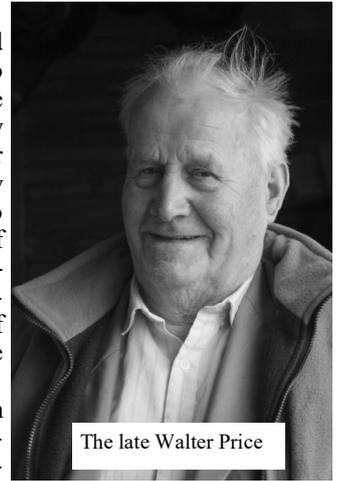
Brecon MIND visited on a regular basis, equipped with binoculars to watch the bird life, and they spent a lot of time with the ponies at Hooftrek – the pack pony initiative – based in Erwood. Some of the group are now volunteers. We led walks for the Talgarth, Kington and Hay walking festivals and various groups such as the WI, U3A, the Scouts, MPs, AMs, Government officials, the local social prescribing team (looking into the health benefits of landscapes), the Royal Commission food and farming team to discuss what the new approach might look like if future payments are to focus on public goods.

We held open days with presentations and site visits and heard about the challenges of the hills from various organisations such as the Fire Service, who highlighted the damage of wildfires and the need to reduce fire load; the different techniques of managing bracken by Professor Marrs; the need for more targeted and mixed grazing; the use of drones which will play an important role in the future in mapping key areas and monitoring of the effects on the ground of the various actions.

Powys County Council highlighted the need for more effective communication with members of the public, especially in bird nesting season and lambing time to keep dogs on leads and pointed to the Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 which states that footpaths and bridleways are open 365 days of the year. Their message was that communication and engagement were key if we are to find a way of living in harmony on common land, especially as more people are being encouraged to get outside for health and wellbeing reasons.

Common land stirs a lot of passion for a lot of people who use it to walk, run, cycle, ride, write, but to farmers it is a hugely important part of their livelihoods, which in many cases go back generations. It is their home, their community and, with farming incomes falling and many taking other jobs away from home, farmers have to be at the centre of discussion on any future plans, mainly because they are already there and they know the land, and therefore in the best position to deliver what is needed. They have always been quick to respond to market signals and it is vital that any new scheme is co-designed with them alongside trusted ecologists and other environmentalists, so they can start to pull together and design a more bespoke approach into each hill and each farm to deliver suitable sustainable land management to connect all wildlife in one continuous passage across the landscape.

Nick Myhill is the project conservationist. He points to



The late Walter Price

greater collaboration between farmers, gamekeepers and conservationists which could have a significant effect on boosting overall biodiversity in the uplands. "Grazing cattle on the moors, as well as sheep, would be positive, and farmers could assist in protecting the nests and young of breeding birds such as curlew and lapwing as they move from moor to in-bye fields."

Our hills are our lifeline. With 70% of our drinking water coming from the uplands and the incredible flora and fauna which naturally filters the rain, they store vast quantities of carbon in the peat and hold back huge quantities of water to prevent flooding downstream. Investment in these areas are what is known as 'public goods' and is why the uplands are being revalued as climate change presents new challenges.

Carbon farmers, wildlife farmers, call them what you want, I have met so many innovative, progressive, young dynamic farmers, already working on soil fertility, habitat management, focusing on animal health and welfare and who are more than ready to embrace the new challenges to bolster our natural resources alongside producing highly sustainable nutritious food.

Tree planting, double fencing and keeping livestock away from streams is nothing new as they have been in agri-environment schemes for years, but the heavy bureaucracy has failed to attract the majority. This is what has to change.

The aim from now on is to keep and develop conversations so that there is a meeting of minds in how best to deliver food and environmental goals. For me, the school children participation is key if we are to educate the next generation about the value and importance of our hills. This is the group that will inform others, including parents, and get the message out there firmly with great conviction.

Farmers need to be at the heart of the conservation and it appears to me there is no shortage of them willing to keep restoring the habitats and adding carbon to our soils, which will hopefully not only encourage more birds and wildlife back to their home but put resilience into the places where we live.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone, but particularly farmers, who gave me such a warm welcome and shared their views and stories with me. We will be presenting our findings from our project at Rhosgoch Golf Club when possible. Please look up <https://powysmoorlands.cymru/> and please do email me for any further information [catherine@thebridgehay.co.uk](mailto:catherine@thebridgehay.co.uk)

### A THOUSAND MILES IN 2020

On January 1st 2020 Sheila MacGough signed up to 'walk 1000 miles in 2020' with the Country Walking magazine. She managed it by December 5th and so wore her 'medal' on her big birthday.

Between walks she has been knitting beanies for premature babies. She took 75 to Hereford hospital during the summer and they asked her for green/red ones for Christmas Day. She delivered 16 at the beginning of December. The idea of those new babies wearing their beanies has warmed the hearts of many.

Well done Sheila! We look forward to hearing your plans for 2021.

### WEEKLY QUIZ

Erwood Together produces a weekly quiz that is emailed out each Wednesday around 2pm, to anyone who'd like to receive it. It's free and just for fun! You can send an entry in or just do your own marking when the answers are sent out on Thursday mornings (there are no prizes either way!).

Anyone interested please email Pam Banks [pamela.banks1@btinternet.com](mailto:pamela.banks1@btinternet.com) to be added to the mailing

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No service in January  
Sunday Feb 28th 3 pm Rev Brian Reardon  
Sunday Mar 28th 3 pm Rev Brian Reardon

**ERWOOD & PAINSCASTLE CHURCHES**  
Dear All,  
It is with great joy that Carolyn and I find ourselves entering the New Year again with you. We did not move away as planned. There may be many logical and rational reasons why we did not follow that particular way set before us but, in straightforward terms, the Holy Spirit was making his presence felt in our hearts within the process and, indeed, had been for some time. Eventually, I fully listened to the Spirit's call to remain here and we changed direction. We have been truly blessed that everyone who has been affected by the inconvenience caused has been most gracious and understanding. It is hard to believe that we have now spent our fifth Christmas with you and let us hope for many more.

Because of the continuing situation, we are still taking a cautious approach to opening for Church services in the Erwood and Painscastle groups. Safety is so important - so less must be more at the moment. Thanks to all who keep the churches readily maintained with respect to the regulations. It is a considerable responsibility and people, though willing, cannot always be available for the necessary cleaning and monitoring. Who knows what the future will bring - we may have to become even more circumspect.

We still may have more churches in use than is acceptable for some - but it is lovely for us all to meet and invoke Christ's healing presence among us. At present, we are able to continue with one weekly service. The first Sunday of the month will be in Aberedw, the second week will be situated in the middle of the churches - Llandeilo Graban, the third week in Bryngwyn (for the Painscastle area) and the fourth week in Gwenddwr (for the Erwood area). Llanbedr and Crickadarn will alternate for when there is a fifth Sunday or any extra services.

<b>Sun 10th Jan</b>	<b>Baptism of Christ</b>	
10:30am	Llandeilo Graban	Eucharist
<b>Sun 17th Jan</b>	<b>Epiphany 1</b>	
10:30am	Bryngwyn	Eucharist
<b>Sun 24th Jan</b>	<b>Epiphany 2</b>	
10:30am	Gwenddwr	Eucharist
<b>Sun 30th Jan</b>	<b>Candlemas</b>	
10:30am	Llanbedr	Eucharist
<b>Sun 7th Feb</b>	<b>2 before lent</b>	
10:30am	Aberedw	Eucharist
<b>Sun 14th Feb</b>	<b>1 before Lent</b>	
10:30am	Llandeilo Graban	Eucharist

<b>Wed 17th Feb</b>	<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	
7.00pm	Crickadarn	Eucharist with giving of ashes.
<b>Sun 21st Feb</b>	<b>Lent 1</b>	
10:30am	Bryngwyn	Eucharist
<b>Sun 28th Feb</b>	<b>Lent 2</b>	
10:30am	Gwenddwr	Eucharist
<b>Sun 7th March</b>	<b>Lent 3</b>	
10:30am	Aberedw	Eucharist
<b>Sun 14th March</b>	<b>Mothering Sunday</b>	
10:30am	Gwenddwr	Eucharist
<b>Sun 21st March</b>	<b>Lent 5</b>	
10:30am	Aberedw	Eucharist
Sun 28th March	Palm Sunday	
10:30am	Llandeilo Graban	Eucharist and Liturgy of Palms

2020 was a traumatic, sad and shocking year for all. The true blessing that the Christ - Child brings us is that he is Emmanuel, God with us, in all our sufferings and struggles for all time.

As the year turns and our hearts long for new hope, may we feel his light in the darkness, his comfort in our loneliness and his healing power pouring into our world. May a bright and safe 2021 be yours. God bless you and those you love.

*All love, Fr Paul and Carolyn. XX*  
(New number - 01982 560823)

**EDITOR'S NOTES**

I hope you enjoy this edition of the 'Gossip'. Thanks to so many people who have sent contributions in during this difficult time. Please continue to send articles, news, etc, all comments are gratefully received. Deadline for next issue [Mar/Apr 2021] - 28th February 2021. [mlloydlundy@outlook.com or 01497-851609].

Articles are the opinion of the respective writers. All errors and omissions excepted (E&OE).

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**The Sunday Night Email**  
(by Cherry Williams 31/12/2020)

Let me tell you a story  
About someone called Mo,  
Who from the onset of Covid  
Has kept us all in the know.

A few excerpts from  
the Zoom New Year's  
Eve Entertainment  
Evening

Who hasn't been cheered  
On a Sunday night  
When the email in the inbox  
Has popped into sight?

All local news covered  
Stories both happy and sad,  
It's kept us all in touch  
And for that we're very glad.

Where to find local  
Takeaway food,  
A treat in these times  
To lighten one's mood.

But I know for the "Lundies"  
It wasn't just the food  
But the jug full of cider  
That lightened their mood.

We learned about the birds,  
Wild flowers and trees,  
Fungi and wild fruits  
Plus delicious blackberries.

The life of the mole  
And the Lundy mouse  
Who evaded capture  
And just left the house.

The changing seasons  
Spring, Summer and Autumn hues  
The thrills and spills of farming  
And looking after ewes.

Different ways of shopping  
And trusting family to go,  
The first attempt at Click and Collect  
That proved a trial for Mo.

The story of the car  
That turned from white to green  
And spotted by some locals  
A sight I wish I'd seen.

The joys of funny things  
That grandchildren say  
And decorating the tree  
Ahead of Christmas Day.

Mo, we say thank you  
For all that you do  
It takes so much time  
And it's all credit to you.

We're now back in lockdown  
With rules we must obey,  
The vaccine is being rolled out  
With hope of saving the day.

Wishing you all a very Happy New Year and in  
the words of Captain Tom "It will get better."

**A Covid Lockdown Poem**

Author Unknown – but with apologies to:  
William Butler Yeats, John Masefield, William Wordsworth,  
J. Milton Hayes, Rudyard Kipling, Sir Harold Boulton  
GK Chesterton, AE Housman, John Keats  
Michael Drayton, William Shakespeare

I won't arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
I'll sanitise the doorknob and make a cup of tea.  
I won't go down to the sea again; I won't go out at all,  
I'll wander lonely as a cloud from the kitchen to the hall.  
There's a green-eyed yellow monster to the north of Kathmandu,  
But I shan't be seeing him yet and nor, I think, will you.  
While the dawn comes up like thunder on the road to Mandalay  
I'll make my bit of supper and eat it off a tray.  
I shall not speed my bonnie boat across the sea to Skye  
Or take the rolling English road from Birmingham to Rye.  
About the woodland just right now I am not free to go  
To see the Keep Out posters or the cherry hung with snow.  
And no, I won't be travelling much within the realms of gold,  
Or get me to Milford Haven – all that's been put on hold.  
Give me your hands, I shan't request, albeit we are friends,  
Nor come within a mile of you until this virus ends.

**To the Town Cousin**

You would live in the town, I believe,  
With its glitter and glamour and 'fun',  
With its smells and its noise.  
With its mercenary joys,  
Far hid from fresh air and the Sun.  
Have you never been up with a Dawn  
And felt the birds pour out their souls,  
In a chorus of praise  
To greet the first rays  
Of the Sun rising over the hills?  
Have you leant on a gate 'neath the moon,  
And heard, in the still of the night  
A far away call ...  
And the Peace of it all  
Asleep in that soft silvery light?  
Do you know of the men of the Land,  
Of the bond between them and the Earth,  
Of the Faith that is bred  
From the lives they had led,  
In bringing new Life to its birth?  
So, live in your town if you must,  
Till your spirit is broken, and ill,  
The flee from the strife,  
And come back to the life  
Where your soul can find peace, and be still. S M Joyce 1944 ©

**Radnor Shepherd**

These hills of Wales have known his tread  
And I, in turn, do follow him  
as others will.  
Though speech and clothes and methods change,  
And modern means replace the old,  
the Craft does not;  
For when my arm is in a ewe  
And fingers feel to find the feet,  
and then the head,  
I know that past and present meet;  
For Jacob lambled and loved his sheep,  
as I do mine.  
And when I'm gone, and other men  
Will tread upon the whimb'ried ways  
of Radnorshire,  
And cries of lambs come on the wind,  
As down the ages they have done,  
a part of me  
Will haunt these well loved hills and vales  
Until the One Great Shepherd calls  
the Final Gathering. S M Joyce 1988 ©

## POWYS PRATTLES

by County Councillor James Gibson-Watt

So, that's it. We can now look forward to hearing no more about bl\*\*\*y Brexit! If only. Powys County Council has prepared its systems as best it can for the major changes that kicked in on the 1<sup>st</sup> January; and yes, to much relief, a trade agreement was at last reached that should, for example, enable our vital lamb and beef exports to the EU to continue tariff-free, at least until the UK diverges from EU rules in the future. But this is not a full free trade agreement that replicates what we had as EU members. All our trade with the EU will now, for the first time in over 45 years, be subject to new customs and regulatory checks. More 'red tape', not less. So, expect some trade disruption and lurid media stories about lorry queues, irate drivers and frustrated business owners over the next few months.

It's come to something when politicians congratulate themselves on creating the first 'free trade' agreement in history that increases trading barriers and which will, according to the independent Office for Budget Responsibility, reduce economic growth in the UK by 4% over the next few years, when compared to if the UK had stayed in the EU. How many billions the leaving preparations have actually cost the UK taxpayer is unknown but, and you may need to sit down before you read this, the respected business media company Bloomberg recently released figures that claim that, due to delayed business investment and uncertainty, since the UK voted to leave the EU in June 2016, the country has lost nearly £130 billion in lost economic growth. Put in context, that's enough money to build 70 new hospitals and goodness knows how many new schools. Whatever one's views about Brexit, these are startling figures.

I make no apologies for being particularly annoyed about one particular aspect of all this – the UK Government's unnecessary choice to withdraw the UK from the EU's Erasmus+ Programme, which has funded hundreds of thousands of young people and teachers across Europe to study in other European countries and beyond. A House of Lords Committee recently concluded that doing this would most adversely affect students from disadvantaged and low-income families in the UK. Many young people locally have benefited greatly from Erasmus+ and to deny future generations those benefits seems cruel and more about politics than anything else.

These major changes all come of course at a time when the Coronavirus crisis is at its second, deadly peak. The vaccines roll-out is underway in Powys as elsewhere and the county council and health board's Test, Trace & Protect system is working quite well. But beating this thing is actually down to us in how we conduct our everyday lives. So, please, please stick to the mask-wearing, hand washing and social distancing rules to protect yourselves, your families, your neighbours and our NHS. It really will contribute to making 2021 better than 2020. Happy New Year!

## COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWS

Chairman, David Nicholls, Castlefield Close  
Vice-chairman, Sian Powell, Lletycoed  
Jenny Smith, Penrhiw  
Becky Miles, The Cwm  
Iris Lloyd, Caemawr  
Andrew Ritchie, Castle Brook  
Bruce Evans, Lower Pentre

Clerk: Marion Hughes, Waun y Pentre 01497 851628  
Minutes are on the Painscastle-Rhosgoch website:  
[www.painscastle-rhosgoch.co.uk](http://www.painscastle-rhosgoch.co.uk)

## ASSEMBLY NEWS

Firstly, can I wish all 'Gossip' readers a Happy New Year. The last year has been incredibly difficult for so many of us with the coronavirus pandemic affecting us all in one way or another. Unfortunately, we are not through it yet and again we all owe a huge debt of gratitude to the NHS, care staff, key workers and volunteers who are keeping the country going.

As ever, the sheer resilience, fortitude and courage of the people and communities in Brecon and Radnorshire have been incredible. I am prouder than ever to have represented this area for the past 21 years. I know that in the hills above Painscastle, Mo Lloyd has been working hard to keep everyone's spirits up, with regular Sunday evening emails and I am guessing the first virtual New Year's Eve celebrations that have ever taken place in the area. I hear that it was a really entertaining evening which gave many people a much needed boost, so I wanted to say a big thank you to Mo for what you have done and continue to do for your community. It is quite easy to do nothing but it can be quite hard indeed to organise something, especially at the moment with all the changing regulations.

A new year signals a new start and fresh hope. Although things still remain very difficult, the roll-out of the AstraZeneca (Oxford) vaccine on 4<sup>th</sup> January, in addition to the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, is a "game changer" given that this vaccine is cheaper and supply will be more plentiful. Crucially, it also presents significantly fewer logistical challenges than the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, with storage at normal fridge temperatures. Every care home is now within reach and this priority group will be a key focus for the NHS over the coming weeks, together with those aged over 80.

The new Oxford vaccine will also enable home visits for bed bound, elderly and vulnerable patients, facilitating the targeting of other priority groups that have been difficult to reach over the past weeks. As of Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> January, more than 35,000 people had received their first dose of a vaccine. That number will increase exponentially over coming weeks. There is, therefore, high cause for hope that this year will be better, brighter and we will all be able to see more of our loved ones.

In the meantime though we have to persevere; please keep thinking about what you should do rather than what you can do. The winter months ahead are daunting but we can see the light at the end of the tunnel, let's keep making the effort to keep each other safe whilst we get there. Please keep up to date with the latest coronavirus guidance at [www.gov.wales/coronavirus](http://www.gov.wales/coronavirus) and please do contact me at [kirsty.williams@senedd.wales](mailto:kirsty.williams@senedd.wales) if I can be of assistance at any point.

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## NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER

Last year was a year we will all want to forget. Many of you contacted me to describe the impact which Coronavirus has had on your health, your livelihood and your liberty. None of us has emerged from last year unscathed in some way.

But there were some amazing positives too. Covid has highlighted the very best of our community spirit; volunteers and businesses have bent over backwards to prioritise our elderly and shielding residents and I am so very grateful to everyone who looked out for their neighbours this year.

There is a saying that 'the night is always darkest before the dawn.' The last few months in the fight against this virus are likely to be the toughest of all. But with two vaccines now being rolled out, we know that there is a bright light at the end of the tunnel. The Oxford / Astra Zeneca vaccine is a huge step forward for Brecon and Radnorshire; it is much easier to be transported so we can get it delivered across the constituency to nursing homes and rural areas as soon as possible.

I have no doubt 2021 is going to be a challenge but I feel confident that we will be able to recover from Coronavirus – both economically and emotionally – in short order.

On Christmas Day a farmer who grazes sheep on the land next to my house knocked my door to give me a Christmas present – a box of swedes. He said 'we'll call it quits for the deal now'. I know the news of the Brexit deal did so much to make everyone's Christmasses. Voting for the deal during the recall of Parliament was a special, if not slightly strange moment, as I watched from my sofa in Crickhowell. This deal allows the UK to move forward as an independent trading nation. I found it very odd that Liberal Democrats, after years of stoking the fears of No Deal, should end up voting for it...But then 2020 was a very strange year.

Despite the fact that I wasn't able to get around the constituency as much as I would like, spending so much time at home reminded me why this is best place in Wales to live. I very much hope that our tourism and hospitality industries are given every chance to recover as people make up for lost time. But, it's important to remember that Covid 19 inadvertently gave us some important benefits such as working from home and travelling less to meetings. I am determined to improve the infrastructure required to sustain these by focussing on improved rural broadband and greener transport solutions across the constituency.

My very best wishes to you for a happy new year.

Fay.jones.MP@parliament.uk

## RECOLLECTIONS OF A WORCESTERSHIRE FARM CHILDHOOD.

My father, a Somerset man, married a Malvern girl and bought an 88 acre farm, near Pershore, in 1946 for £6000, with a £4000 loan.

He milked Ayrshire dairy cows (into churns), kept pigs and chickens, had a small orchard and tried a bit of market gardening. The farm had a horse 'Tommy', a TVO Fordson tractor, family Labour and 3 employees, including Hans, a German POW and committed Nazi, who nearly killed Tommy, trying to demonstrate the superiority of the German ploughman!

In the Coronation year Dad grew red, white and blue flowers for sale. I don't think he made a killing! The same year a 200 acre adjoining farm came up for rent and he took it on, increasing the cows, pigs and hens, adding sheep and growing corn, which we milled and mixed to feed the stock. At harvest teatime he would emerge from a cloud of dust surrounding the 6' cut Volvo combine looking like a coal miner, with only a handkerchief for dust protection! The rented farm had some rough and floodable land, on which sheep could get stranded, and was crossed by the main London/Hereford railway, which was a hazardous twin track, where both cattle and foxhounds lost their lives over the years. The embankments were a riot of wildflowers in the summer, before a blanket spraying policy was adopted by British Rail in the 60s. At hay time we sometimes found the track workers asleep in the swathes! There were a few rabbits in the embankments but myxomatosis was rife. When I was 11, Dad gave me his single barrel 12 bore, made me fire 1 shot at an oil drum and told me to get on with it! I had to buy my own cartridges out of pocket money, which came in return for jobs done. It made me a careful shot! The rats around the pig and poultry feed were so bad we used to get the 'Rat Hunt' in occasionally, a mayhem of assorted terriers and mongrels, flailing sticks and pitchforks!

The brook was a clear stream full of swan mussels, water crowfoot and lilies, water voles and all species of coarse fish. I caught eels and the occasional perch for the table. The work-force expanded to 5 plus seasonal help from the Romany camp in the village. They were dark skinned people with Slavic surnames and were semi-settled. Most winters there was a building project underway for stock or grain storage and in the coldest weather the days were filled with defrosting pipes and tractor fuel lines, breaking ice, carrying feed and water and sawing wood with the arm-killing heavy chainsaw or alarming circular saw, driven by a huge flapping belt from the Fordson Major pulley, with no guards. We made our own pit silage and thousands of small bales of hay and straw. They and 1 cwt. bags of fertiliser and feed were all moved by hand. The work was physically hard, dirty, dusty and noisy. There was not much health and safety. I can remember Dad or the men often coming into the kitchen, covered in blood, for my mother to patch up! I broke both of my arms and nearly drowned in the sheep dip before I was 8!

As the years passed the farm was 'improved' and made more efficient and productive but at the cost of the wild flowers, grey partridges, hares and lapwing. It enlarged and became an arable and sheep farm. Neither 60 cows, 2000 battery hens, nor 80 sows were viable numbers any more. A River Board policy of dredging destroyed the swan mussels. Then water abstraction and sewage outfall changed the brook into a algae-choked shadow of its former self. Mink took the water voles. Gone is the labour force and its camaraderie.

Farming has become more efficient and markets more centralised. It has become a more solitary occupation but it has also become cleaner and safer. I am not sure if it is more sustainable - it may be that one day we shall see a return to a more diverse and localised model, taking the best from past and present. If we want to be more self-sufficient in food, as a country, I think that would be the way to go. John Lewis

Answers to Quiz:

### Radnorshire

1. The Radnor Lily
2. Birmingham
3. 13
4. b) 5309
5. River Lugg
6. Knighton
7. c) 660m
8. Red Kite feeding
9. Mike Oldfield
10. James Watt

Answers to Quiz:

### Not quite what they seem!

1. 116 years
2. Sheep (or horse or goat)
3. Graphite
4. Lizard
5. Pine
6. China
7. Bat
8. Ecuador
9. Fish
10. Marsupial

Answers to Quiz: Villages

1. NEWCHURCH
2. BOUGHROOD
3. RHOSGOCH
4. LLANSTEPHAN
5. ERWOOD
6. BRYNGWYN
7. ALLTMAWR
8. LLANDEILO GRABAN
9. ABEREDW
10. PAINSCASTLE



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## LIFE AT LUNDY

Well at last Mo is letting me have my column back. I wrote a lovely piece three issues ago and then at the last minute she said there wasn't room for it! First she orders me to write something then she cancels it. Doesn't she realise that I can't switch on and off my creative juices just like that. She seems to have more changes of mind than a politician! However as I have started, + with a bit of luck she will let me finish.

I am sure you are all wondering how we are getting on at the Lundy. Well there have been some changes. I had noticed that Matthew was having some walls built alongside the old cattle shed. There were three cubicles in a row. I thought they didn't look big enough for cows, and we have got plenty of places for sheep, so I didn't think it could have been for them. Then one day in December Matthew started making a door to go on the front. They didn't have a roof, but Mo found a piece of galvanised tin and put it over the far end of the 'shed'. 'That will do until we have time to make a proper roof' said Matthew. There was a bed for someone and Ken made some adjustments to a box to make a little house within the 'shed'. It was then I discovered, this was to be my home even though I had never suggested that I wanted to move out of the home I shared with my mum Gyp. Mo said I was to live there all on my own. I was a little lonely to begin with, after all I am only two and a bit. I didn't understand why I couldn't cuddle up in the nice warm bed that I shared with Gyp. A couple of days later I went to have a look at my old room and Gyp was in there with 8 little black and white babies. She didn't seem very pleased to see me and she told me that she couldn't look after me any more as she had a whole new family. All the fuss is now centred on Gyp and the

puppies, 6 of them are girls with only 2



boys.

However there has been a lot of activity on our hill. Every day there seem to be lots of people playing in the snow, they make snowmen, or big snow rocks. Some of them go whizzing down the hill on sledges. They take quads to pull the sledges and the dogs race them downhill.

Someone seems to have had the idea to create an ice sculpture and arranged slabs of ice to form

a circle. Mo thinks they were imitating a pre-historic stone circle called Stonehenge, I'm not sure as I haven't been any further than Painscastle, so I haven't seen Stonehenge.



I am not sure whether I will be having a regular column or whether I will be part of the off-cuts yet again! Sweep



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## PAINSCASTLE BUS SHELTER

Please remember to take any old postage stamps or old bras to the bus shelter to help raise funds for The Bracken Trust in Llandrindod Wells.

Old printer cartridges are also required for re-cycling, to raise money for the Centre of Alternative Technology.

It must be a virgin cartridge ie an original cartridge eg HP, Lexmark; a cartridge that has not been refilled previously and a cartridge that does not carry any other branding than the original (Cartridge World, Tesco, Asda not allowed).

For more details please email Lucy Trench: [lucy@66sg.net](mailto:lucy@66sg.net)

## IN THE GARDEN

Frosts? Snow? Gales? Torrents? Who knows what the weather is going to throw at us in the new year? Of course, us gardeners are a stoic lot and are always prepared for the worst, never complaining(!)



At the time of writing, the mild conditions have meant that many spring bulbs are already showing. It's often rewarding to see how many plants in flower can be found at the turn of the year. Denizens of the hedgerow, such as Cow parsley and wild Arum, or Cuckoo pint, will often thrust their shoots through the leaf litter.

The Arum family (Araceae) as a whole is a fascinating one, comprising many garden-worthy plants. *Arum italicum Pictum* (syn. *Marmoratum*) is easy going, and gently spreads its delicately patterned leaves through corners where little else will grow. *Arisarum proboscideum* or Mouse plant, produces a low-growing clump of leaves under which the curious brown 'flowers' with their long tails hide. Kids love looking for them. The showy *Zantedeschias* are rather more demanding, needing good soil and the right conditions to thrive for more than a season. *Z. aethiopica* Crowborough is a beautiful white form. Much easier are the *Arisaemas*. They need shade and humus rich soil but are long lived and require little attention once established. *Arisaema consanguinum* produces architectural palmate leaves which set off its lovely purplish, white striped spathes in May. The whole plant gives an exotic feel to a shady border.

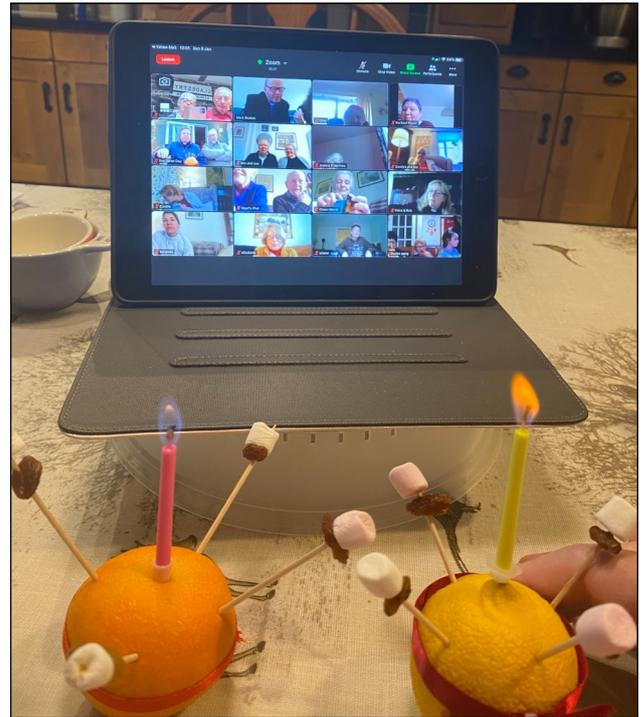
In the veg patch, the sprouting broccoli should start to produce well. There are now varieties which will shoot from summer onwards, needing no winter chill. The sprouts of these can be hit by caterpillars in the late summer, but sown later will start more usefully to crop in October/November. Given reasonable weather, the winter ones will get going in February and continue through to May depending on the variety. A good mixture of early and late forms is Lancer Mixed; several seed firms do it.

However much you feel the need to, avoid walking on or digging wet soil. There are some of us who find that a couple of hours gentle digging beats any mindfulness therapy. Wait until the end of February, early March or later. May the White Tailed Eagle be with you (you never know!).

John the Gardener

## CHRISTINGLE WITH ZOOM

Like many other churches during the COVID pandemic, Builth and Radnor Deanery Group has been meeting on Zoom for worship. An early Epiphany home celebration of Christingle was held just after Christmas. This is a time in the Church year when we remember Christ the Light of the World and the many blessings He gives us, and which we have enjoyed even in the darkness of COVID. Kitchen tables turned into hives of activity as the congregation made a Christingle, comprising an orange, four cocktail sticks decorated with sweets and dried fruit, some red ribbon and a small candle. The orange represents the earth and the four sticks, the four seasons. The cocktail sticks are pushed into the orange and sweets and dried fruit affixed to the other end. These represent the many gifts God gives us. A piece of narrow red ribbon is attached around the centre of the orange, representing the Blood of Christ which He shed for the world. A small candle is then pushed into the centre of the orange and lit, representing Christ, the Light of the World. Rev Petra Goodband, Vicar of Knighton, received 'help' from her puppet, Bob the snail, (who



managed to purloin some of the sweets on Petra's Christingle). Petra explained how Christ, even in our darkest times, can bring us His comforting light. The Christingle is an annual tradition. It is a reminder to be thankful for all the gifts God has given us, but it is also a reminder for us to be especially thankful for the gift of His son Jesus, Light of the World.

## GLADESTRY'S VANE

Following an absence of twelve months, St Mary's,

Gladestry has had the weathervane refitted. The cast iron Flying Serpent was removed for repair after the rigours of time and weather had made it unsafe. The work was done by local builders, Jones and Fraser, a Traditional Building company specialising in repairs to listed buildings.



Another of the welcoming Christmas lights which helped bring a little festive cheer to the area over the yuletide season. Thanks to the local photographers who recorded the scenes.

**Series Title: 'Conflict and rivalry: Painscastle and Elfael is Mynydd in the medieval period'**

**Article 4: Painscastle is demolished by Llywelyn ap Gruffudd; but Welsh rule finally ends and Elfael is established as a Marcher lordship.**

The previous article described how control of Elfael was split, with the northern commote of Elfael Uwch Mynydd coming under the control of Roger Mortimer of Wigmore (d.1282), whilst the southern commote had been restored to the rule of the Tosny family.

The oppressive rule of Lord Edward, the heir to the throne, in his lands in Wales, combined with the growing power of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd of Gwynedd led to further hostilities between Welsh and English. In 1260, Owain ap Maredudd, who ruled the northern commote on behalf of Roger Mortimer, submitted to Llywelyn, in effect conceding to him Elfael Uwch Mynydd. The turmoil in England caused by the breakdown in relationships between the barons and the King and the consequent battles allowed Llywelyn to strengthen his hold in the central Marches. Simon de Montfort, the leader of the baronial opposition, allied with Llywelyn and in 1265, whilst Simon held the King captive, the Treaty of Pipton granted Llywelyn full recognition of his title of Prince of Wales. Painscastle



The site of the intimidating fortress at Painscastle built by Henry III in 1231. Image taken from a 3D digital model made by photogrammetric techniques from multiple photographs. © CPAT image 4236-3418, photograph by Julian Ravest

was surrendered to him and Llywelyn promptly levelled the castle to the ground. Although Henry III repudiated the treaty following the royal victory at Evesham in the same year, the Treaty of Montgomery in 1267 gave similar recognition to the position of Llywelyn, though he was to hold Painscastle only until Ralph Tosny (d.1295) came of age (his father, Roger, having died in 1264).

For ten years from 1267 to 1277, Llywelyn himself controlled Elfael is Mynydd, installing a local bailiff there, whilst Elfael Uwch Mynydd continued to be held from him by Owain until his death (sometime before 1271), followed by his sons, Iorwerth and Madog ab Owain.

When relationships between Llywelyn and the new King, Edward I, broke down, Edward decided on war to solve the problem. The English were quickly victorious with the subsequent settlement restricting Llywelyn to his ancestral lands in Gwynedd. It was decided that all lands taken from Llywelyn would be held by the King until royal inquisitions decided on their lawful owners. Accordingly, Roger Mortimer, who had taken all Elfael during the war, handed it over to the Crown. The royal inquisition decided that Elfael is Mynydd belonged to Ralph Tosny, and that there was no evidence to support the Mortimer claim as descendants of de Braose. Despite this, the rival claims of Mortimer and Tosny continued to be disputed for many years, with the added complication that John Giffard also made a claim on the basis that Elfael had originally been conquered from and held from the lordship of Clifford that he now held.

Roger Mortimer, however, resumed control of Elfael Uwch Mynydd as the royal inquisition decided that he did hold Colwyn as part of his de Braose inheritance, and when Roger died

in 1282 it came under the control of his widow Maud (de Braose). However, in 1291 Ralph Tosny seized Elfael Uwch Mynydd from Maud, initiating another protracted round of legal disputes. These must have been decided in favour of Tosny, as in 1292 Maud was recorded as holding nothing in Elfael. Finally, after 60 years Elfael was reunited as a single lordship under the control of its original conquerors, the Tosny family.

Elfael was now securely a Marcher lordship. One of the series of lordships that ran from the Dee estuary in north Wales down to the Severn estuary and across south Wales to Pembrokeshire. The Marcher lordships were a unique area as a border region that lay between Wales and England, with its own laws and with exceptional powers exercised by their lords. It was referred to as 'Marchia Wallie' to distinguish it from 'Pura Wallia', and was politically separate from both Wales and from England. The Marcher lords were barons of England and held their lordships from the King, yet they were not subject to many of the institutional and legal structures of the English crown. They claimed and exercised within their lordships many of the powers which the king exercised in his kingdom.



Painscastle and Elfael had had a strategic importance

for over two centuries as lands coveted by Welsh and English alike, and with routes into the heart of Wales. However, with the final conquest of native Wales by Edward I and his Statute of Wales (Rhuddlan) in 1284, that strategic importance disappeared with Elfael becoming a remote rural part of its lord's great estates. The powers of a Marcher lordship, though, meant that it provided a good income for its lords.

Having finally regained their inheritance, Tosny rule did not last long. Ralph died in captivity in Gascony in 1295, and when his son, Robert, died childless in 1309, his lands were inherited by his sister Alice, held by right from her by her second husband, Guy Beauchamp, 10<sup>th</sup> Earl of Warwick. After Guy died in 1315, Alice married for a third time to William de la Zouche Mortimer, who held Elfael after Alice's death in 1325 until his own death in 1337, when it reverted to the son of Alice and Guy, Thomas Beauchamp 11<sup>th</sup> Earl of Warwick (d.1369). It then passed to his son, another Thomas, the 12<sup>th</sup> Earl (d.1401), then to Richard, the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl (d.1439). When the 14<sup>th</sup> Earl and 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Warwick, Henry, died at a young age he left only a two-year-old daughter, Anne, born to his wife Cecily Neville. When the child died three years later the succession was contested by the surviving daughters of the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl. The inheritance passed to the full-sister of Henry, another Anne, the law regarding her as a full-aunt in preference to her three older half-sisters from the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl's first marriage. Anne was already married to Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, who thus became the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Warwick (and subsequently known to history as 'Warwick the Kingmaker'). Their elder daughter, Isobel, married George, Duke of Clar-

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ence, the brother of Edward IV. Their second daughter, Anne, married first Prince Edward, the son and heir of Henry VI and after his death at the Battle of Tewkesbury in 1471, she married another brother of Edward IV, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, becoming Queen of England when Richard took the Crown in 1483.

Already a remote part of the vast estates of Warwick and Salisbury, Elfael became the property of the Crown. Long before this, though, the castles had fallen into disuse, disrepair and been abandoned. The last use of Painscastle was when it was garrisoned against Owain Glyn Dŵr in 1403. The Laws in Wales Acts of 1536 and 1546, which abolished the powers of the Marcher lords, incorporated



Elfael into the new county of Radnorshire (see map).

John Speed's map of Radnorshire: By permission of Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru / The National Library of Wales

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**HERMON CHAPEL NEWS**

**Worship in the time of Covid**

For those who believe in God, there is a common drive to get together in fellowship to share their devotion by way of prayer and song. To do this we now face the restriction on social gathering plus the constraint on moving air. Let me explain. It is considered dangerous to move air around in case it is loaded with virus—so in the worship context, singing, even with a mask, and wind instrument playing are not permitted. It is okay, according to the very detailed guidelines, to preach providing there is a suitable distance between the mouth of the preacher and the congregation.

Readings are permitted, so to make up for the loss of singing, which we love to do, readers deliver the words to the hymn over its music—speaking rather than singing. This Christmas has been very difficult as it's the time when Christians traditionally want to celebrate the birth of Jesus, a man who came to change the world for the better. We are happy and want to express that—and that better way than giving full voice to some of the most uplifting music ever written. Doesn't matter if your voice is not up to operatic standard—its just good to sing. And what better way than to be led by an organ?

At Hermon Chapel we knew that we would have to do without an organ anyway as our brilliant organist John Meredith retired this year but we have sourced the music, though not the atmosphere, using electronics. That aside, we still can't sing!

Another problem, we can't sit near each other unless we are part of the same "bubble". Social distancing of two metres is strictly enforced and it's hard to chat through masks at that distance. There's one more difference—no tea and cake afterwards. You have to remember that in Chapel we are all friends with a common purpose—to worship God. That done, one great way to meet with friends is over a cup of tea and homemade cake.

One upside, we have had some first class preachers come to join our minister Geoff Cable and share their message. Gordon Bingham, Minister of Bethesda Evangelical Church, Hay on Wye, for one.

Overall, the great gain is to still meet in friendship to share our faith and belief on God and celebrate the birth of his son Jesus. That's the main point. It is said often that Christmas has become too commercial—and that is a valid viewpoint. But



most Christians don't care about how many toys the kids receive if they get pleasure and the giver enjoys that pleasure. After all, if Jesus hadn't been born, the 25th December would be just another day and there would be no giving and taking, laughter and fun.

The Worshippers of Hermon Chapel hope you enjoyed your Christmas and have kept some good memories to savour as 2021 rolls on. We are not alone in praying that it will be a better year for all, whatever your beliefs.

Mike Head, Deacon Hermon Chapel

## RHOSGOCH AND PAINSCASTLE TOTS GROUP

When we had to stop running Playgroup back in March we thought it might be a pause for a few weeks, we could never have imagined that nearly 10 months later we would still not be open again. Fingers crossed that with the rollout of a vaccine, soon to follow will be a gradual return to normal and we will once again be getting the slides, trampoline and ride on toys out of our lovely new shed, cutting up grapes and cucumber for snack time and getting into a circle on the mat to sing “Wind the bobbin up” and “Baa baa black sheep”... And we’ll be so pleased to be able to do these everyday things again which we once took for granted!

In the meantime please check our Facebook page “Painscastle and Rhosgoch Toddler Group” for updates and if you know anyone who has a new baby or preschool age child then point them towards our page too. We plan to start meeting online for some songtime (nursery rhymes with actions) soon, so check the Facebook page for more info on how to join us.

Wishing everyone a happy new year full of play, smiles and giggles, which are now even more important than ever :)

SENSORY/MESSY PLAY IS IMPORTANT FOR LITTLE ONES’ DEVELOPMENT (and doesn’t have to be too messy!)  
THIS EASY NO-COOK PLAY DOUGH RECIPE IS GREAT (recipe from [www.theimaginationtree.com](http://www.theimaginationtree.com))

### You need:

- 2 cups plain flour
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil (baby oil and coconut oil work too)
- 1/2 cup salt
- 2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 1 to 1.5 cups boiling water (adding in increments until it feels just right)
- gel food colouring (optional)
- a few drops of glycerine (for stretch and shine!)

### Method:

- Mix the flour, salt, cream of tartar and oil in a large mixing bowl
- Add food colouring to the boiling water then into the dry ingredients
- Stir continuously until it becomes a sticky, combined dough
- Add the glycerine (optional)
- Allow it to cool down then take it out of the bowl and knead it vigorously for a couple of minutes until all of the stickiness has gone.
- If it remains a little sticky then add a touch more flour until just right
- Store in an airtight container for up to 6 months!

