

Rhosgoch Gossip

Volume 25 Issue 6

July / Aug 2020

£1

FLAGS FLYING HIGH IN GLADESTRY TO CELEBRATE 75 YEARS SINCE VE DAY!



VE DAY

On 8th May it was 75 years since V.E Day. Grace decided to put her flags up to decorate and celebrate by having afternoon tea in the garden, social distancing with her neighbours next door.



Grace's knitting 'Girly as postie', Welsh baby booties destined for Australia and key workers in NHS.



WILDLIFE IN THE GARDEN



Those nuts look tempting - I wonder if I can get down there



Mummy & baby Spotted Woodpecker sharing breakfast



Phew, I did it, now for a feast, but I had better keep my eyes open



A Sparrowhawk takes advantage of garden birds at the feeders

OUR NATURAL WORLD



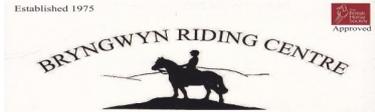
Great tits and House Sparrow having a feast



The summer lodgers (House Martins) have moved in

RHOSGOCH & DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB NEWS


 Despite not being able to meet up at the moment there is some Gardening Club news to report. Firstly the Club now has a page on the local community website, describing the club and its activities. You can find this at: <https://www.painscastle-rhosgoch.co.uk/gardening-club.html>
 Secondly we have created a private area for members of the Club who are also on Facebook. We will use it to keep us connected, to promote our meetings, share pictures of plants, recipes and garden visits, or to help each other identify mystery plants.
 If you are a Gardening Club member who is also on Facebook and would like to be a member of this private group, please contact me by phone or Facebook Messenger or email gardeningclub@painscastle-rhosgoch.co.uk.
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ANNA COOLEY, Llandeilo Graban

I was asked by Maureen if I'd like to introduce myself as I've been more active on the local Facebook group recently – and given that we've been here for nearly 7 years it's probably about time!

We moved to this area with our children in 2013 from a quiet valley near Abergavenny. One of our daughters moved to Gwernyfed High School, which she loved - and the other was ready to go to Hereford Sixth Form College (she's now a primary school teacher in Bristol).

We'd already lived rurally for 15 years, but this felt really like moving to the middle of nowhere - and we love it! We have a few acres and keep chickens, ducks and guinea fowl, alongside a few dogs and a couple of cats. (We used to keep a small flock of Balwen sheep but were glad when the buyers of our cottage said they didn't mind taking them on. We're not really farmers although I would love to keep pigs one day!)



I love walking and I have a little 'Bagley' Jack Russell called Mr Pepys, who is my constant companion. My husband, Simon, has always been a working sculptor and he uses the big barn next to our house as a studio. It's a fantastic space! He works in stone, metal and clay and is also a teacher of sculpture. You can see some of his work at www.simoncooley.com.



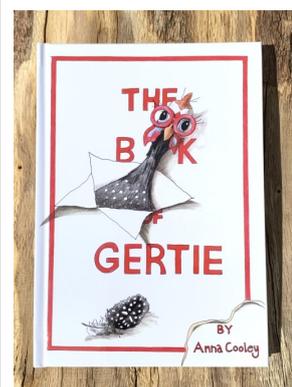
I have a science background (I did a BSc at the college in Treforest, which is now called the University of South Wales, but at the time it was still predominantly a mining college), but I started drawing following an accident in 2018.

I broke my ankle and was immobilised for several months. Later that year, on holiday but unable to do our usual walking, I decided to take a sketchbook and pen with me – and I've drawn every day since. It's addictive and I love it.

There's plenty of nature around to provide inspiration. I love to draw animals and (sometimes obscure) objects and structures that fascinate me. I'm particularly attracted to animals that bring a smile to my face; they can be such characters. I've enjoyed the cat and dog commissions I've done, but also a goat and a sheep!



Back in October, I was very excited to be asked by the brilliant, multi-talented Scientist and Broadcaster, Professor Alice Roberts, to help illustrate a book. 'The Little Book of Humanism' will be published later in 2020 by Piatkus Books.



I have a Facebook page (Anna Cooley Art) and an Instagram account (@annacooley.art) which have been great outlets for my drawings, especially for 'Gertie the Guinea Fowl'. During the lockdown she has persuaded me to make the most of my time and I have published a book featuring her and her commentaries on life. Much to my surprise, it's already sold to people all over the world – and I feel sure there are more books to come.

You can see my work at

www.annacooley.com



This was one of the key workers during lockdown



Now he has been furloughed

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Postie putting a smile on people's faces



Clown on 5th June 2020



Postie as a clown 5th June 2020, with little Ollie Dyer, Iris Morris' great grand son!!



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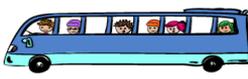


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Face to face classes will return ... when it is safe for us all to do so. Please do get in touch if you would like to find out more info regarding my classes.

Please look after yourselves & keep safe .. Emma

07702 241725 or
emma@pilatesemma.co.uk www.pilatesemma.co.uk
www.facebook.com/pilatesemma

Visitor to the Night Sky

Recently astronomers around the globe have been getting rather hot under the collar and extremely excited about a certain Comet, NEOWISE C/2020 F3. If the astronomers' predictions are correct,



then we can expect to see a bright Comet in the July evening skies. It was 34 years ago that Halley's Comet appeared in the sky and failed to live up to everyone's expectations and so the prospect of seeing a nice bright Comet is very exciting.

At the end of June, Comet NEOWISE will be making its closest approach to the Sun and at this time there is a distinct possibility that it may break up and disintegrate. All the latest observations indicate that it is in good health and so, hopefully, NEOWISE will survive its close encounter with the Sun and appear in the evening sky during the latter half of July.

When and where to see Comet NEOWISE C/2020
From the 15th to 31st of July between 10pm and midnight look towards the northwest at around 15 degrees above the horizon.



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EDITOR'S NOTES

I hope you enjoy this edition of the 'Gossip' despite the restrictions due to Covid-19. 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 [Sep/Oct 2020] - 31st Aug 2020. It is also the start of a new year so subscriptions and adverts will be due.

[mlloydlundy@outlook.com or 01497-851609].

The Rhosgoch Gossip is available at Clyro Filling Station. Articles are the opinion of the respective writers. All errors and omissions excepted (E&OE). {ML}
STOP PRESS: Mikey's Diary is to be made into a book which will be for sale in a few weeks' time. Price £8 profits to Painscastle Hall.

RHOSGOCH GOLF CLUB

Rhosgoch Golf Club is a wonderful community club and we are very lucky to have it. I would like to give an overview of where the club is with regard to the golf course and also the club house. Obviously, the current situation has put more pressure on the finances of the club and we are always looking for more golf members and for more customers coming through the door (or to the door given the current climate).

The Clubhouse

If you have been to the golf club recently you will more than likely have noticed the white render boarding and new windows and doors which Roger Jones has kindly installed. TD will be rendering over the boards in the next few weeks and I think you will agree it has and will help the external look of the building enormously. We have also been very lucky to have the support of Tim Francis who is applying for grants to hopefully renovate the toilets, kitchen and front bar.

Takeaways

Since the beginning of July, Betty and her team have been doing takeaways on Friday evenings and Sunday lunches (for details of these please check Facebook). Not surprisingly, these have been very popular so far and I am sure this will continue.

The Golf Course

A lot of work has been put into the course this year to try and improve the greens mainly, but also to keep on top of all the mowing, strimming, etc. For a club of our size and limited finances, it is very hard to get the greens to a good standard and then to maintain them. We face a number of challenges, such as weeds, moss, compaction and drought, but with the knowledge and work of our greenkeeper, Gareth Jenkins, and the help from volunteers at the club, we have managed to improve the greens quite considerably and are aiming to continue that improvement.

We are seeing more players on the course which is great and we really would like more members to join the club to help it grow and thrive. We currently have a deal for new members for the first year of membership. Full membership is currently £275 for the year, which entitles you to play whenever you wish, but the offer is £150 for the first year. There are also different rates for junior membership and family membership, so please contact Norman or me for more details.

I must thank all the volunteers for the work they do for the club, whether it be fixing machinery, pruning trees, cutting grass or anything else. If anyone is interested in helping in any way, please contact me as we would be very grateful to receive your support.

Geraint Lloyd – gezlundy@gmail.com

Norman Lloyd – Rhosgoch Golf Club tel no. 01497 851251

Rhosgoch Golf & Leisure Club FRIDAY EVENING TAKEAWAY SUNDAY CARVERY TAKEAWAY

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ISOLATION DIARY

Week 1

Right, so I am staying at home for possibly 12 weeks. My first thoughts were to get organised so that I did not get bored and fed up AND to do those things which I never seem to get round to.

Biennial filing - I usually do my filing every two years but I may be a little behind so this project may actually be quadrennial filing. I should also produce a great deal of paper for burning.

Master the pilates roll up - I still have not achieved the Pilates roll up in spite of attending classes for 8 years. This is rolling up from lying on your back on the floor to sitting and forward to reach your toes ; this will also be one of my goals. We are fortunate that Emma Pilates has organised online instruction which should help. So I will participate in two on-line Pilates classes per week going forward.

Piano Practice - I started to learn piano when I retired 8 years ago but, of late, and certainly since I broke my ankle roughly 4 years ago this has slipped by the wayside. I will add into my daily routine a half an hour practice!

I baked some cakes which I haven't done for a long while. They didn't last long.

But I continue to complete the Telegraph cryptic crossword each day.

Week 2

I have now realised that trips to hairdresser, manicurists and podiatrists will not be possible for some time. But focusing on the silver linings, I looked at the pros

- will save money
- growing my hair much longer will give Nadine my trusty hairdresser the chance to restyle. Downside is eyebrows will compete with the best in the locality
- my roots will grow and I will be able to remember my natural colour. There is a downside though - my hair is now much greyer and by the time this is all over my hair should closely resemble the colour of 'guano'
- there are no pros to missing my bi-weekly manicure or 6 weekly podiatry appointments ! I shall have to concentrate on taking care of my nails, hands and feet as best I can

I am researching stain removal techniques and my first attempt is to remove linseed oil from chair and settee covers. Failed so far !!!!!

Great success though - have placed a delivery order from Sainsbury's. Being an online customer for a long time, we were disappointed that we could not place our normal weekly order. But eventually waded through all the changes that have been made to enable us to shop as 'normal'.

We have been entertained by the Sainsbury's messages and contradictions about maintaining our regular delivery. The whole game my husband has described as Russian roulette and must cause stress in many households. Friday morning at 4.00am he found a slot for delivery on Sunday evening but since we had a delivery on Thursday, the Sunday spot would be a bit too soon. Saturday morning at 2.00 am ish he found another slot for delivery on Monday. Hooray! I think he is developing a new sense - when Sainsbury's release new slots.

Have washed, dried and replaced loose covers on 3 piece suite, completed quadrennial filing, but not much else.

Week 3

Got to grips with on-line pilates - hooray.

The weather is brilliant and Rocco, our Pug Border Terrier cross, is enjoying the garden again. Pugs like to sunbathe which Rocco does in spades and Pugs also like to clean their feet - looks as if he is eating his paws. He is also very stubborn and will, if it takes his fancy, sit down in the middle of the lane if he has walked enough or if he doesn't want to walk at all, he hides under the truck where he cannot be reached.

His terrier characteristic is a preference for grabbing

parcels or indeed sometimes mats and he shakes them in his jaw as per a terrier making a kill! Often our parcels are ripped open if they are left on the patio behind the gate and the contents can be spread over the ground. So next move is to provide a black bin for parcels.

On Sunday had really sad news from a friend. A mutual friend who has been receiving Chemo for lymphoma has contracted Covid 19 after visiting local hospital. It sounds like he is nearing the end. He deserves so much more at this time. I understand that since January he has not wanted to speak to any-one other than his immediate family and has not read any of the many texts he has received nor the get well cards he has received. I completely understand this as the man I know would prefer to avoid any of the emotional stuff. I am so very sad that he has been in isolation but he is at home with his wife now which is what he wanted.

The son of another close friend has been hospitalised following a stroke which was undiagnosed for days. They had difficulty getting him hospitalised but he is now in Llandough stroke unit but cannot be contacted and the hospital will not provide an update on his condition over the phone. His family are heartbroken.

I had been thinking for a few days that concern for this very serious situation we find ourselves in cannot be reduced by trivial and light-hearted observations. Maybe I will feel better in the coming days.

Week 4

I'm still feeling saddened by what is going on around me; I am finding it difficult to rise above all this sadness. And just now received a telephone call to say that my good friend passed away this morning at 5.00 am at home with his wife by his side.

But, I have made some decisions - no more baking scrummy cakes as we are gaining the pounds. And some constructive plans are needed to help us get through this.

At 2.00 am this morning we had a discussion in bed about whether it was Good Friday or Maundy Thursday. Lord help us - I think we may be heading for the funny farm.

So Maundy Thursday was gardening and Good Friday gardening. And so was Easter Saturday and Easter Sunday and Easter Monday. I need chocolate!!!!

Had our 3rd Sainsbury delivery. We seem to be getting the hang of this - it goes wake up every morning at 2 am and check Sainsbury's site. This usually takes a few days but as soon as a slot becomes available we BOOK IT!!!!

Please don't think I am a good gardener - I am the tidier-upper and my project has been to find and clear the edges of the patio. This should keep me occupied for a couple of weeks at least.

The day has now fallen into a sort of routine which consists of

- Pilates - either 45mins, 30 mins or 15 mins depending on how my bones feel.
- Completing Daily Telegraph Cryptic Crossword and the Quickie Crossword
- Pointless - it can be on either of the channels and at various times
- Washing if the weather is good
- Ironing but only if desperate
- Cleaning one room at least

Week 5

Oh dear - getting fed up now! Got Welsh blankets out of storage so that I can start to convert the damaged one into cushions. The other blanket is in good condition and has been washed and aired.

I have just realised that Hairdressers, etc, could be closed for 6 months. Holy Moly - I shall be ready to audition as one of the witches of Macbeth - you know - Hubble bubble toil and trouble!

I am beginning to lose all sense of time - days have merged into today, yesterday and tomorrow. Funny farm here I come!

Carole Gibbs

CULINARY COLUMN

The Honey Café, Texmex takeaway evening menu.

Have you noticed that if you called a spade a spade before lockdown, having three months with your nearest and dearest has made you even more straight talking? Living months with just your family, where you can say exactly what you think, means that polite small talk might not come back very easily. I think it will make for more interesting pub chats! My Gentleman Friend did not partake in this takeaway as he 'can't eat that ****'. Some lockdown battles are worth fighting but apparently spicy food is not one of them. My Gentleman Friend would, however, give The Roast Ox a high mark for their takeaway fish and chips, which has been a lovely treat sat on the lawn in the sunshine.

I think lockdown has honed all our tastes, likes and dislikes. With the distraction and noise cut out, our lives have condensed down to the best parts. We know much better what we need from life, who and what makes us happy. Lockdown has highlighted that favourite question, 'if you were stuck on a desert island and could only take 20 people, who would you take?' Occasionally perhaps our nearest and dearest might not have made that list! As lockdown has relaxed we know who we have been desperate to see again, and these friends and family are pure gold. Some lockdown highlights with the Little Darlings at home have been sitting in the hot tub (cattle trough) drinking champagne (lemonade) on a hot evening, silaging in the sunshine and watching the children play in the stream, evening firepits in the meadow, and shearing with everyone pitching in. Actually, there are so many golden moments to pick from, I could go on and on. I think they might all make my desert island list after all.

Now, back to The Spice! I thought that The Honey Café Texmex takeaway did the issue of chillis rather well as the little red devils were on the top of the food, and you could add them in to whatever degree you liked. We chose meatball tacos, chicken enchiladas and chicken fajita burritos, with loaded fries and a Caesar salad. Everything was neatly boxed up with lots of little pots of guacamole, sour cream, salsa, coleslaw, dressings and brightly coloured napkins, and was given with a big smile through the serving hatch. Even now that lockdown is relaxed, every human interaction seems to have taken on a special significance, and those smiles from strangers can lift spirits unimaginably. I hope that people carry on smiling at each other more. The meatball taco was a delicious soft wrap filled with beef meatballs, coleslaw and salad, and topped with guacamole; it was delicious. The fajitas were five mini wraps which you filled yourself with chicken, fried peppers, onions and toppings, and were crunchy fresh delights. The loaded fries were a hit with melted cheese and a finger licking sauce (not a dish to share out of your family bubble!).

Lockdown has meant cooking three meals a day, baking for elevenses and, as bedtime has gone out of the window, there seems to be a new fourth meal at about 9 o'clock when everyone comes in from outside starving. It is therefore such a treat just pick up a takeaway and not to have to cook. The Little Darlings return to school tomorrow, and it is the end of this lockdown era. It's all down to your taste, but for me this was a pretty perfect meal to end an unforgettable few months. Food **** Service ***** Value ****
The Honey Café, Bronllys, LD3 0LH. Tel01874 711904.

Guacamole

It's my turn to be blunt as I have been sat at the kitchen table writing this for an hour now and I really want to go round the cows! Fajitas are really easy to make and made all the better for homemade guacamole. You can get away with an awful lot if it is smothered in melted cheese, sour cream, salsa and guacamole. If you want to save time then buy the salsa, but make the guacamole yourself.

Ingredients:

- 1 large ripe tomato
- 3 avocados, very ripe but not bruised
- juice 1 large lime
- handful coriander, leaves and stalks chopped, plus a few leaves, roughly chopped, to serve
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 chilli, red or green, deseeded and finely chopped

Method:

I am sure you can manage to work out the method yourselves as judging from the shelves in Hay Co-op everyone has been cooking up a storm these last few months, but roughly chop the coriander, very finely chop the onion, de-seed and very finely chop the chilli and then add as much or as little as you like. Roughly whisk it all together, and if you are leaving it a while then sit the avocado stone in the mix (helps stop it from going brown) and cover with cling film. Finger lickingly, lockdown relaxingly delicious!

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ERWOOD & PAINSCASTLE CHURCHES

Dear Friends,

Spring has turned into summer and the lockdown has continued. I truly hope that as we have continued to face our challenges during this time, individually and collectively, you have felt the wings of angels bringing you some warm comfort and reassurance.

The 'New Normal.'

There has been much talk of returning, in the future, to a 'New Normal'. This seems such an incongruous phrase. Surely, from our hearts, we have all asked, 'What is normal?' There is no single and real normal, we all perceive a different normal with all our varying temperaments, gifts and backgrounds; the journeys we are making through life within our own cultures and creeds are so diverse – thank goodness!

We are often so pressured to live within the values of a normality that is outside our natural temperament and it is difficult to see the value of our own journeys through the changing scenes of life. A favourite song of my generation, ***Tapestry* by Carole King**, was always a help in providing affirmation and inspiration when the way was unclear; I share some uplifting lines with you:

"My life has been a tapestry of rich and royal hue
An everlasting vision of the ever-changing view
A wondrous woven magic in bits of blue and gold
A tapestry to feel and see, impossible to hold."

Life is often seemingly impossible to hold and it is hard to see the everlasting vision within our own situation. In the song, a man of fortune arrives to help. We too may need help, for good results may not come if we strive to rely on the answers from a normality that has no reality for us. The secret is, perhaps, that *the new is already present in whatever our own normal happens to be*. God's great gift to us is that he is capable of renewing every part of our lives at any stage, no matter what our condition:

See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them, they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear
from their eyes.

Death will be no more, mourning and crying and pain will be
no more,

for the first things have passed away.

And the one who was seated on the throne said,
"See, I am making all things new." (*Isaiah 21:3-5*.)

This is reassuring because the value of life now may not lie in striving for some unattainable and stereotypical 'normal' however much the advertising companies would like us to believe so for marketing purposes. Perhaps the way to fullness of life is to revel in all our differences and embrace all the challenges that this brings even if it means facing our fears of being alone. Through this, life does become a celebration of all things new and, most importantly, the newness may always be experienced in the present. The Gospels contain very much of this feeling:

Mark 11: 24. – I tell you, therefore, everything you ask and pray for, believe that you will have it already, and it will be yours.

Luke 17: 20a, 21. – The coming of the kingdom of God does not admit of observation and there will be no one to say, "Look, it is here! Look, it is there! For look, the kingdom of God is among you."

Our Individuality is the key.

To take this a stage further, we may accept that if God is renewing all things constantly, then his love is without limit and encompasses the wide and varied nature of the world he created. The world itself is forming its own tapestry. The Jesuit poet **Gerald Manley Hopkins** celebrates this so well in his poem ***Pied Beauty***:

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

God's renewal of all that is unique becomes even more personal to us as he addresses our fears, again in *Isaiah*:

Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my glorious hand. (*Isaiah 41:10*.)

We are part of the world's tapestry and should celebrate our uniqueness. However, our joy in experiencing all things original and strange may be lessening. A worrying aspect of the current crisis is that as we become aware of medical statistics and very conscious of living with necessary rules and regulations, there is an overarching atmosphere that all the imbalances of our human condition become mere problems to be solved and, inadvertently, perhaps our sense of what it means to be alive through expressing our individuality is being lost. This is exacerbated by current racial tensions all over the world that centre around creed, colour and national histories. Also, there is a seeming growth of intractable, even aggressive, governments throughout the world. Injustice must be challenged and at the heart of all conflicts are people with great fears, hopes and longings.

This is the whole point of Our Lord's incarnation amongst us; Jesus would always halt his journey to heal, affirm (and renew) the lives of the individuals around him – he, literally, gives us his body; his eyes, his touch, his thoughts, his life – we now carry him in the world through our own lives and we should honour his presence.

The recent tragedy of George Floyd's death has outraged us so much because it was a visible and very personal human violation of life, this was not an abstract event – he has a name, a face and the scene was not hidden – perhaps George was flawed like most of us but he is still a child of God; may he rest in peace and may his legacy be just.

All loss and fear are personal as well as collective. This is naturally understood by all those in the caring and health professions and by many who are working hard in communities to keep things stable and generous at every level; whatever else, the new normal must recognise the care of the individual and this should never change.

There has been opportunity for much personal reflection recently. I revisited ***The Garden of the Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran** (a special present from 42 years ago). Thinking of both our domestic and the international situation, I would like to share the Prophet's thoughts on government:

"My friends and my road-fellows,
pity the nation that is full of beliefs and empty of religion.
Pity the nation that acclaims the bully as hero,
and that deems the glittering conqueror bountiful.
Pity the nation that despises a passion in its dream,
yet submits in its awakening.
Pity the nation that raises not its voice save when it walks in
funeral,
boasts not except among its ruins,
and will rebel not save when its neck is laid between the
sword and the block.
Pity the nation whose statesman is a fox,
whose philosopher is a juggler,
and whose art is the art of pitching and mimicking.
Pity the nation that welcomes its new ruler with trumpeting,
and farewells him with hootings,
only to welcome another with trumpeting again.
Pity the nation whose sages are dumb with years
and whose strong men are yet in the cradle.
Pity the nation divided into fragments,
each fragment deeming itself a nation.

As we attempt to make sense of weaving the tapestries of our own lives, we are also part of restoring the tapestry of our nation and our world. I am not a politician and certainly have no answers, however, I do strongly feel that a joint creative journey is necessary as the soul of our nation and other nations, the soul of God's world and the journey of our own souls come together. These are heart-breaking and interesting times in our history. It starts with all of us. Please do not give up your calling to be yourself as true as you may be; hang on

to your values, your loves and your dreams as they permeate the world around you and rise to the surface. May I share some lines from another inspirational song of my generation –

Let the River Run by Carly Simon:

We're coming to the edge
Running on the water
Coming through the fog
Your sons and daughters
Let the river run
Let all the dreamers
Wake the nation
Come, the New Jerusalem

May you feel the warmth of Christ within the deepest part of you

and may you grow into his love with each passing day.

God bless you and those you love now and always.

All love and prayers, Father Paul and Carolyn. XX

In Memory of Jill Coulson
Paincastle Mothers Union

Jill was a member of Mothers Union for 13 years, joining when Helen Williams restarted MU in Paincastle. She was an interesting and valuable contributor to our meetings, quietly supportive and with a wry sense of humour. She was great at finding quizzes for some of our Christmas meetings and when it was her turn to bring refreshments, provided us with delicious homemade biscuits.

Jill left MU a few years ago but remained a very good friend and would join us for our Christmas Dinner at the Roast Ox in December.

At home, Jill loved plants and flowers, indoors and out, and her orchids were a delight to see. She was happy with her life, caring for family and friends.

She will be sorely missed by all who knew her.

Fran Shaw / Pat Horne / Christine Rose

Autumn Competition 2020

Rhosgoch and District Craft Club have made the decision to postpone this year's Autumn Competitions as we are living in unprecedented times. So this year's theme "The Seaside", will now go on to next year on SATURDAY 16th OCTOBER 2021.

Some of you may already have been busy crafting in lockdown but, if not, here is the Winter Schedule to remind you of what the competitions are:

Open

1. A Jar of Chutney
2. 5 Pieces of Homemade Fudge
3. A Sea Creature - Any medium
4. Handmade Birthday Card - Any Medium
5. Photograph of the Seaside with a caption
6. A seaside postcard
7. A picture depicting the Seaside - Any Medium
8. My favourite Souvenir from the Seaside
9. 1 A4 side Short Story titled "A Day at the Seaside"

Grandparents

1. Jar of Jam
2. An Item using Sea Shells
3. My Favourite Fridge Magnet
4. A Ball - Any Medium

Men Only

1. A Coastal Photograph
2. An item from String or Rope
3. A Piece of Driftwood

Look forward to seeing you all with your wonderful creations in 2021. Take care and stay safe.

Caretaker/Cleaner Required

Caretaker/cleaner required for holiday let in Rhulen. Mostly Fridays with occasional other days. For further information please call 01869 345930 or 07758 354594 or email martyn.simmonds@gmail.com

POEM

We all need something to make us smile and to say a little prayer for in these strange times so I hope you enjoy another poem from Victor's Uncle Tom's repertoire.

Betty's Prayer (author unknown)

There lived within a country town,
A dear old Dame called Betty Brown.

Her cottage wasn't very big,
But there she kept a cow and pig.

On Sundays she would haste away,
To hear the Parson preach and pray.
Her faith in him was prim and strong,
The Parson could do nothing wrong.

When she was taken ill one day,
She sent for him to preach and pray.
Next day her neighbour called and said
"I've just popped in to make your bed".

But oh you look quite well again,
What did you take to ease your pain?
"Nothing" says Betty, "well I declare
It must have been the Parson's prayer".

Then sickness fell on Betty's cow,
It was queer but anyhow,
I'll fetch the Parson that I will
And tell him my poor cow is ill.

But when they reached the milking shed
The poor old cow was nearly dead.
But as they brought him to the test
He promised he would do his best. (He prayed).

"You poor old beast you look so bad
And your poor old Mrs looks so sad,
If you live you live, if you die you do
And that will be the end of you".

The cow got well and the good old Dame
Went to Church when Sunday came
To tell the Parson how his prayer
Had cured her cow and eased her care.

Next day the Parson caught a chill
Which made him feel extremely ill,
A violent cough shook his frame
And in his throat an abscess came.
Two doctors said unless it broke
He most decidedly would choke.

When poor old Betty heard the news
She quickly donned her Sunday shoes,
Her Sunday bonnet and her shawl
And at his house she made a call.

The servants they began to grin,
Of course they would not let her in.
The Parson heard the noise below,
They told him that she would not go.
Let her in was his reply, I'll see Betty ere I'll die.

But when she reached the Parson's bed
She gently coughed and then she said
"I can't pray much, I don't know how
But I learned your prayer for my dear cow". (She prayed).

"You poor old beast you look so bad
And your poor old Mrs looks so sad
If you live you live, if you die you do
And that will be the end of you".

The Parson laughed enough to choke
When all at once the abscess broke,
He felt no pain, his throat was clear
And he had nothing else to fear.

Then he told his loving wife
How Betty's prayer had saved his life
Good luck to Betty and her cow
She beat the doctor's anyhow. Cherry Williams

POWYS PRATTLES

The last four months have brought out the best and the worst in people - from the extraordinary way that neighbours and communities have assisted each other and protected the vulnerable among them to, in stark contrast, the cavalier and selfish attitude a minority of the population has shown towards the restrictions imposed to try to control the Covid-19 pandemic. We in Wales are used to living in supportive communities, rural and urban. It's in our DNA. Yet we tend to think that it's not like that in big conurbations like London or Birmingham. But it appears that the sort of mutually supportive communities that we are used to are also alive and kicking in the UK's biggest cities. That's been really good to see.

A lot of people have suffered and many have sadly died. Some of those who survived the trauma of a serious infection will suffer long term effects. Many health and social care staff have not only succumbed to the disease while caring for others, but have also suffered the mental and physical trauma of seeing those they care for in great distress. All confirm that great fear was one of the emotions they experienced. I am pleased and proud to say that health and social care staff in Powys and our neighbouring main hospitals have been absolutely excellent throughout.

Although the crisis is not over, there is no doubt that the situation is greatly improved and now we can concentrate on recovery. Our market towns are opening up again, slowly but surely, and please support our local businesses as much as you can. We should soon even be able to enjoy a drink and meal in the local pub or club, socially distanced of course and preferably outside! Instead of the focus being on all the bad things, we can concentrate on the plus sides – sustaining the community support that has developed so successfully; preserving the environmental gains accrued from the greatly reduced levels of road traffic and air travel – ‘building back better’ to use the current jargon; maintaining the long-overdue public recognition of those who care for the sick and vulnerable and, of course, the lesson that being prepared is so important. There is evidence now to show that the UK has suffered more from Covid-19 than all other developed countries; and although I believe at local level the public authorities were as prepared as they could be, a lack of preparedness at national level has been very apparent.

As a county councillor, the really effective joint working of the county council and the local health board in responding to the pandemic has ‘warmed the cockles of me heart’. It's something I have argued for long and hard, but have seen too little of. To lose that gain when this crisis is over would be unforgivable. We owe it to the people of Powys to ensure that joint working continues uninterrupted long in to the future.

by County Councillor James Gibson-Watt

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
www.painscastle-rhosgoch.co.uk

PAINSCASTLE RECYCLING & RUBBISH COLLECTION
Recycling is collected every Monday, and the next rubbish collection dates every three weeks are:
July 27th Aug 17th Sept 7th Sept 28th
Garden waste is collected every fortnight on Tuesdays from March to November for an annual fee, next collections:
July 21st Aug 4th Aug 18th Sept 1st

ASSEMBLY NEWS

Week 14 since lockdown restrictions came into force and I am pleased that we are now at a stage where restrictions are being eased. At time of writing, the R rate in Wales is the lowest in the U.K. This is due to the huge sacrifices made by so many and again I want to thank everyone who has followed the guidance and stuck to the rules to help keep themselves and their community safe and to help to protect the NHS.

From Monday 6th July, two households in Wales will be able to form one "extended household" to meet indoors and stay overnight. The local travel restrictions are due to be lifted the same day. I know that this will be a huge boost to so many who have badly missed seeing loved ones who do not live nearby.

This follows the opening of schools in Wales to "check in, catch up and prepare" on 29th June and the opening of non-essential retail on 22nd June. I know that for many communities the local businesses that have stayed open, diversifying into takeaway or home deliveries as needed, have been absolutely invaluable. When some products were hard to come by, I know that local shops stepped up to stock these to help support their local communities. Now with the opening up of all retail we have the opportunity to pay back the support of our local shops and indeed help to protect them and the local economy for the future. In Powys, the County Council has launched a campaign to #SupportLocalPowys and, additional to this, my colleague Cllr James Gibson-Watt and the Welsh Liberal Democrat Council Group have called for free parking in all Powys County Council car parks to help revive the county's market town centres. I hope that the Powys Cabinet can support this request.

One issue that has blighted our rural town centres in recent years is the closure of banks. I was therefore very pleased back in May to write a letter of support for Hay-on-Wye Chamber of Commerce's application for Hay-on-Wye to be a pilot town for the Access to Cash Scheme. Hay was chosen as one of the eight UK locations to be a pilot for this scheme which is absolutely fantastic. I look forward to working with the steering group on this pilot project and hope that these trials will help to find innovative solutions to help tackle this important issue for Hay and our other towns.

As ever, my staff and I are available at Kirsty.williams@senedd.wales if we can be of any assistance.

NEWS FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WYE

I have completed my survey of gravestones in Gwenddwr church and chapel yards and, as advertised on the Gwenddwr Show Facebook page, will be pleased to email the resulting data to anyone who is interested pame-la.banks1@btinternet.com.

Gwenddwr Show: we shall be running a Virtual Show this year - Gossip readers are invited to check the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/GwenddwrCarnivalAndShow/> during July to find out about it.

One further piece of Gwenddwr news: Gwenddwr Church is now open for private prayer, visitors being asked to use the hand sanitiser provided, and follow the safety advice.
PB

CONGRATULATIONS

Best wishes and congratulations to Clare and Huw Jones from Glanyrafon, Painscastle, on the birth of a baby boy, William Owen Rees Jones, on May 8th.

Best wishes to Pam & Matthew Lloyd, Lower Lundy Stables, on the birth of a little boy Conor Rhys Lloyd on May 14th, a little brother for Abbie (nearly 6) and Paige (nearly 2).

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER

For me and for many within the constituency for whom farming and agriculture are their passion, the cancellation of the Royal Welsh Show, which generates up to £45 million for our local economy, is devastating. The Show is a national highlight and the effect this has had on our local businesses and community has been catastrophic.

I made a speech in the House of Commons where I highlighted the Show and the other international events Brecon and Radnorshire is home to: Brecon Jazz, Hay Literary Festival, The Green Man Festival, even The International Bog Snorkelling in Llanwrtyd Wells. All of these are cancelled this year. These events mean so much to everyone – I am deeply concerned about the effect that the Coronavirus will have on our mental health.

Cancelling these events jeopardises the rural economy; as well as the money spent by tourists in our shops and pubs, hundreds of seasonal workers have also lost their jobs. With economic growth lower in rural areas than urban areas, we urgently need both the Welsh Government and the UK Government to prioritise rural recovery.

I have, however, much to thank this Government for, not least the thousands of employed and self-employed jobs that have been saved in Brecon and Radnorshire. This Government has dug deep to provide an unprecedented level of support both in terms of finance and guidance. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same for the Welsh Government.

In England, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is working with the Arts and Culture sector advising when they can reopen; in Wales we have no idea.

Whilst the £59m Government grant for the Welsh Government to distribute to the arts in Wales is an absolute lifeline for many, we have thousands of artists and performers in Wales who do not know when they can return to work. Of course, we need to pay close attention to the rate of infection and we must not be afraid to reimpose restrictions if we have to – but while counterparts in England have visibility, we in Wales are in the dark.

The Government's priority was to protect jobs across the country, and it has provided a lifeline for millions of people and businesses. The Furlough and Self Employment schemes have provided Brecon and Radnorshire with an extraordinary amount of economic support during the coronavirus outbreak.

6,300 jobs in the constituency have been protected through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), with Government grants covering 80 per cent of people's wages, up to £2,500 a month.

4,300 self-employed people across Brecon and Radnorshire are receiving grants worth a total of £11.9 million from the Government to help with the impact of coronavirus.

While this is a really good start, many businesses in the constituency still face uncertainty. A number of you have contacted me since the announcement that Castell Howell faces potential job losses, particularly after they worked so hard during the lockdown to ensure that people could 'click and collect' from the Showground in Llanellwedd.

On a positive note, I have heard wonderful reviews about the takeaway service being offered by the Roast Ox and Rhosgoch Golf Club and I look forward to being able to visit both. Pubs and Restaurants with outdoor facilities are able to open on July 13th, so let us hope for some excellent July and August weather.

Surgeries are now being offered remotely, by telephone or Skype/Zoom. I can be reached on 07515034124 or Email Fay.Jones.MP@parliament.uk. Please stay safe.

Fay Jones Member of Parliament for Brecon and Radnorshire

"British Boys for British Farms"

In Britain between 1932 and 1968 the YMCA ran a training scheme called "British Boys for British Farms" known as BBBF. This scheme was open to boys between 14 and 17 years of age from varying backgrounds, but mainly deprived urban areas. The scheme was highly respected and promoted in agricultural circles such as The National Farmers Union, The Ministry of Agriculture, schools, colleges and many more, and seen as a platform for life. Those who entered this scheme were exempt from National Service and filled a void in agricultural labour as well as receiving a training in agriculture.

A friend of my husband, Victor, and myself was one of those boys. He was Roy Cook who sadly died in March this year in Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd. Roy was from Rochdale, Lancashire, and in 1952 at just 15 years of age he volunteered for BBBF and was placed with Mr Trevor Lloyd and his mother at Lower Noyadde, Llowes, where he stayed for about a year. During that time Roy recalled that he had follow up visits from a YMCA Field Officer. At the same time there were other BBBF boys from different areas of the UK who came to other local farms i.e. Upper Noyadde, Brunant, Penforest and Upper Cwmgwannon. Do any of these names ring a bell with anyone: David Spinks, Dennis Prendergast and Terry Salter?

After a year Roy went to Agricultural College and later found work on a dairy farm in Northhamptonshire, but he longed to be back with the friendly people of Radnorshire. He wrote to Mr Michael Haines, Upper Cwmgwannon, who invited him back and gave him employment. Alistair and Mark were small lads then but do remember Roy.

At 21 years of age, with every halfpenny he could scrape together, Roy bought Penyrhoel, a small holding on the Begwyns, and started farming on his own account. It was there that he made a friend for life, Arthur Davies, The Hall, who would lend a hand to anything needed. To make ends meet, Roy also worked on an adjoining farm and during that memorable winter of 1963 the County Council also hired him to clear the snow-blocked Painscastle roads.

During his time in the area he was active in Clyro YFC and over the years he held all of the official positions in the club. It was in the YFC that he forged friendships that he would never forget.

After leaving this area he lived and worked in several different places, including running a Post Office and shop in Maerdy in the Rhondda Valley, and when there was a potato shortage and he needed potatoes for his shop he knew he could turn to his old friend Ron Francis, Penyworlod. Roy never forgot those who had been good to him.

Those of you who knew Roy will remember him as a man short in stature with a big heart and great company. He always said that our beautiful Radnorshire area was his home and where he felt at home. He loved the countryside and the people who welcomed and looked after him when he was far away from his family. He and his wife Julie, a Hay girl, returned here often and when lockdown is over his resting place will be his beloved Begwyns.

Cherry Williams

Food for Thought – 5

More from my great grandfather James Nunn's notebook.....

- Nothing is troublesome that is done willingly.
- To the looker on all work is too hard.
- Who receives should thank and who gives should be silent.
- Keep your face towards the sunshine and the shadow will fall behind you.
- One rotten apple in the basket affects the whole lot.
- He who loves well obeys well.

Cherry Williams

SHETLAND BY CAMPERVAN

We had always wanted to visit Shetland and here we were, 4 weeks into a 7 week campervan tour of North Wales, the Scottish Highlands and the Northern Isles. We had had an incredibly smooth overnight sailing from Aberdeen and arrived in Lerwick on time at 7am. Surprisingly for Shetland, the weather was warm and sunny!

The main island (perversely called Mainland) is about 50 miles long with 1 main road running along its length and another to the west. The only other roads are single track - - thankfully with many passing places. 1st stop was to stock up with provisions (mainly cider) at the local Tesco. Within a few yards of Tesco was an ancient stone tower/fortified house (nobody really knows) called a broch. These are found mainly on Shetland and Orkney and are at least 4000 years old. This one was about 10 metres high and quite well preserved - reached by a causeway as it stands in a freshwater loch. Amazingly 2 otters were playing in the loch and treated us to a 20 minute show - the first otters we had ever seen in the wild.

After a walk around Lerwick, with its many Shetland jumper shops and breathtaking cliff top views, we drove north to the village of Toft and caught the ferry to the Island of Yell. Island hopping is very easy - but best to book in advance as the ferries are fairly small. Our 1st night on the Shetland Isles was at a small campsite located on the quayside at Burravoe, - 6 hard standing pitches all with electric hookups and facilities in an adjoining community centre. This we found was the norm around Shetland. A beautiful setting and very peaceful.

Next day we drove the 10 mile length of Yell and caught the ferry to Unst-the most northerly island in the UK. We drove the 5miles to where the road ended at the Herma Ness nature reserve and walked the 3 miles to the cliff edge where we were amazed by the thousands of sea birds. Arctic Terns, Oyster Catchers and massive Skuas as well as the more common types of Gull. The Puffins were the highlight which kept us entertained for ages- some literally inches away from us. Like most of Shetland, both Unst and Yell are bleak, wild and very beautiful - no trees because of the very peaty soil. We camped in another community campsite on Unst before catching the morning ferry back to Mainland.

The weather continued to be kind and the next few days we visited the north and west of Mainland, visiting numerous historic sites ranging from Neolithic, Bronze Age, Picts, Norse and Viking through to Medieval. We even visited a croft lived in until the late 1960s and preserved- as it was left by the last occupants - as a museum with dirt floors, turf roof covered with barley and wheat stalks, a peat fire and no running water or electricity- not far removed from Neolithic living!. The custodian was a Shetlander so broad in dialect he was barely understandable.

The Point of Fetherland was another fascinating visit, about an 8 mile circular walk from where the road ended to the cliff edge, stunning views along the walk and an interesting lighthouse at the Point. At Fetherland there are dozens of abandoned stone dwellings (called Haafs) built in the mid 1800s by deep sea fishermen. They used to row, 16 men in a boat, up to 65 miles out to sea to fish with nets. Once back on land, the fish used to be dried and cured on the beach. What an existence.

One night we camped at the marina of a small town called Brae. Expanded to accommodate the oil industry, Brae boasts 3 pubs, a couple of hotels (1 built exclusively for Total oil workers), a cracking fish and chip restaurant, and the only other supermarket on Mainland. That evening we were invited to a traditional Shetland folk evening - fabulous evening but a sore head in the morning.

The southern part of Shetland was equally interesting with lots of ancient sites.

We took the passenger ferry to the small island of

Mousa which is now a RSPB nature reserve but which also boasts the best preserved broch in Scotland. Standing over 10 metres high, you can climb to the top via the stone stairway built between the outer and inner stone walls over 4000 years ago. The ground floor was definitely used as living accommodation as the stone bedchambers, storage units and water cisterns are still evident. What a fantastic structure.

No visit to Shetland is complete without a visit to Jarlshoff. This is an ancient settlement occupied continuously for over 4000 years, with each successive occupation improving/adapting the existing buildings. Interestingly Jarlshoff was unknown until unearthed by a massive sea storm in the 1890s.

After lovely weather for most of our trip, we were now shown more typical Shetland weather - driving rain, cold and very windy (reminded us of Painscastle!). Thankfully this did not last although one of our clifftop walks did become very scary.

Back to Lerwick for our last afternoon on Shetland before catching the evening ferry to Orkney. A very interesting textile museum and History of Shetland museum along with a 'must do' photo outside the house used by Jimmy Perez in the Shetland TV series.

Shetland was fabulous. We both fell in love with the wildness and beauty of the island, its wonderful and very friendly people, and its history and wildlife. We will definitely go back.

Tony and Julie Jaques

LIFE AT LUNDY

Sweep's News: One day Mo was playing in the garden and I got a little bored. I could see those sheep wandering around the Poor Field and they looked bored as well, so I thought I would liven up their lives for them and go and round them up. It was great fun. I did the proper thing, I went around them as Mo had told me. I went round as fast as I could but then they ran to the top corner and I didn't know what to do. I haven't got to that lesson in my training. So I sat down and I watched them. In the meantime I could hear Mo shouting. Then I saw that both her and Gyp (my mum) were coming up to help. I was very pleased with myself, I must be a proper sheepdog now I thought. When Mo and Gyp got a bit closer, I suddenly had inspiration and decided if I ran really fast I could get between the sheep and the fence and then there could be a lot more fun running around them. Gyp was keen to help me, so I was going 'away to me' while Gyp went 'come bye'; this was great fun, of course I can run faster than Gyp and we were tearing around while the sheep looked at us in amazement. Then we didn't see each other approaching at a hundred miles an hour, and bang, Gyp and I landed in a heap, we went head over heels and crashed to the ground. The sheep then took the opportunity to run over to the edge of the wood where they thought they were safe. Gyp and I, like true sheepdogs, picked ourselves up and went after them but they were hiding from us in amongst the trees so we just sat down and watched. Mo was not exactly happy with us, although as she said we had learned something, in fact she thought I had gathered the flock very well and kept them together. However, she felt that a little less speed and a little more listening to her when she told me it was time to stop would have been much better, however, I did help her exercise routine, and I thought if she only ran up that field after me every day she would soon be fit!

LES BOWEN

Upper Llanshiver Farm, Whitney-on-Wye. HR3 6HN

For all your fencing/hedging requirements
Please contact Les on

01497 851254

ELFAEL IS MYNYDD, OR LOWER ELFAEL

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

The First Conquest by the Norman barons

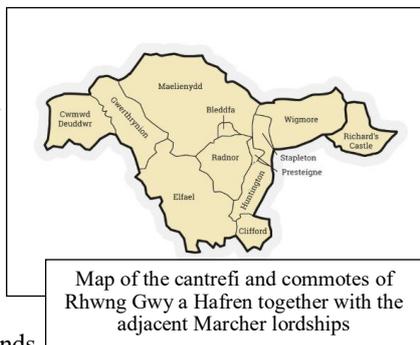
The region around Painscastle is now a remote and tranquil rural area. However, for over 200 years during the medieval period, it was a territory of great strategic importance. It was the scene of many battles and conflicts as the



native Welsh rulers contested for control with the invading Normans. The lands were part of the Welsh cantref of Elfael, with Painscastle situated in the southern commote of Elfael is Mynydd. This series of four articles will explore that fascinating period as fortunes fluctuated, and control swung back and forth until it securely became one of the Marcher lordships in which the lord exercised regal-like powers.

Rhwng Gwy a Hafren

It was the physical location and political circumstances that gave the area around Painscastle its strategic importance. In the 8th and 9th centuries, the region had been part of the ancient Welsh kingdom of Powys, which probably extended as far south as the river Wye at Glasbury (with its eastern boundary extending well into Cheshire and Shropshire). When the lands



Map of the cantrefi and commotes of Rhwng Gwy a Hafren together with the adjacent Marcher lordships

of Powys retracted northwards, there remained a block of cantrefi and commotes that by the end of the 10th century seem to have come under the control of a single ruler. This area became known as Rhwng Gwy a Hafren, literally the lands between the Wye and the Severn, consisting of the cantrefi of Buellt (though this was on the west side of the Wye), Maelienydd, Elfael, and the commotes of Gwerthrynion and Cwmwd Deuddwr. It is possible that the whole area was ruled by a single person, first Elystan Glodrydd (d.c.1010), followed by his son Cadwgan ab Elystan (d.1066+). But by the late 11th century it had fragmented into separate lordships under the rule of Cadwgan's children.

For the Welsh, Rhwng Gwy a Hafren was a buffer between the competing dominant principalities of Deheubarth to the south, and Powys and Gwynedd to the north. When the Normans established themselves on the English border to the east, the district was an opportunity for them for conquest and new lands. Furthermore, the region contained key routes into the heart of Wales, providing access across to the west coast and down to the south-west. Consequently, Elfael was fought over for 200 years, sometimes in the control of the Marcher Lords, but frequently re-taken and controlled by native Welsh rulers.

The Normans fortify the border

In the period after 1066, in order to ensure a secure border with Wales, William the Conqueror established three powerful earldoms at Chester, Shrewsbury, and Hereford. Although the earls and their followers probably had license to acquire lands to the west, the king himself had no desire or need to conquer Wales. Conquest of a country that was so fragmented geographically and politically would have consumed large amounts of time and money when priorities lay elsewhere. Anyway, direct rule was unnecessary as Welsh rulers had acknowledged the king of the English as their overlord for nearly 200 years.

The earldom of Hereford had been granted to William

fitz Osbern, a close companion of the king. However, four years after fitz Osbern's death in 1071, the earldom was discontinued when his son and heir, Roger of Breteuil, forfeited all his lands following a failed rebellion. Instead, smaller compact lordships were established, with each lord holding his lands directly from the king as a tenant-in-chief. The lordship of Clifford, separated from Elfael by the river Wye, was granted to Ralph Tosny (d.1102), who had married the sister of William fitz Osbern. From Conches in Normandy, Ralph Tosny is one of the few proven companions of William the Conqueror known to have fought at the Battle of Hastings.

The first conquest of Elfael

In 1093, when a Norman army made a major attack across central Wales then down into the south-west, it seems that Ralph Tosny, or possibly his son another Ralph (d.1126),

used their base at Clifford to seize from Idnerth ap Cadwgan the two commotes of Elfael.

The Tosny's fortified the cantref by building a castle in

the north in the plain of Colwyn, at the place now known as Glan Edw (the site now known as Colwyn Castle is nearby but was not built until c.1200 when it replaced the castle at Glan Edw that had been destroyed in 1196).

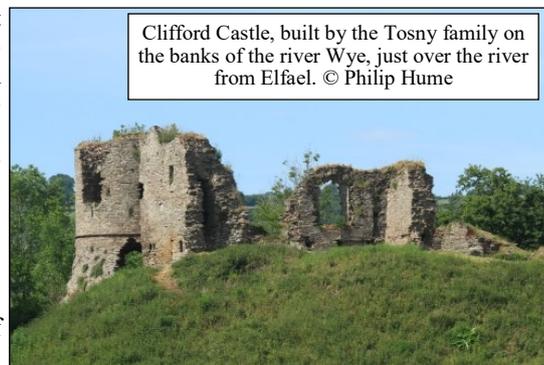
The Tosny family were active mainly in Normandy, rarely visiting their lands in England and the Marches. As absentee landlords, there is little record of Ralph's ownership of Elfael, nor his son's, Ralph (d.1126), or grandson's, Roger (d.1157). Indeed, due to their absence, the Tosny family ceded control of Elfael and were unable to regain it for 100 years.

Payn fitz John and the castle at Painscastle

In 1135, Roger Tosny (d.1157–61) whilst in Normandy was dispossessed of his lands for a time for rebellion against the ageing Henry I, and was in prison in Normandy when the king died in December that year. By the time of Roger's imprisonment in 1135, and possibly from as early as the death of his father in 1126 when Roger was both a minor and absent in Normandy, Elfael was held by Payn fitz John who had been appointed sheriff of Shropshire and Herefordshire. Payn was a minor nobleman, but an excellent administrator and loyal servant who owed his position and wealth to Henry I. Having acquired Ludlow through marriage, Payn gained a reputation for acquiring lands that did not belong to him and built up a strong power base in the central Marches. It was most likely Payn who first built the castle in southern Elfael. There is no direct evidence for this, however, it is surmised from its name – Painscastle – and that it would have been very unlikely for the Tosny family to have built a castle in that location. Whilst Payn would need a castle to control the southern end of the cantref, the Tosny family would not have needed another castle between their own at Clifford and the one newly built at Colwyn.

Payn was killed in July 1137, caught in an ambush whilst pursuing a Welsh raiding party, his head split open by a javelin. This was typical of the widespread Welsh resistance that gathered pace in the years after the death of Henry I, when the native Welsh rulers were able to eject the Normans from Elfael to re-establish their own control for a lengthy period. This period of Welsh control will be the focus of the article in the next edition.

Philip Hume



Clifford Castle, built by the Tosny family on the banks of the river Wye, just over the river from Elfael. © Philip Hume

HOLLAND

Back in March 2019 Rich was asked to judge at the National Show of Clun Forest Sheep in Holland, taking place in September at Kootwijkerbroek, a small village in the centre of the country. We had met several of the members before when they came over to Trewylod to see our Cluns, meeting up with them again when they visited the Royal Welsh Show and the Clun sales in Ludlow.

As we had booked an early morning flight from Bristol Airport, it was a great opportunity to stay with friends who live near Bristol. It was lovely to see our ex-neighbours Doug and Louise Grant, who lived at Wern Newydd until 2001.

Arriving at Schiphol airport at 10:15, we were met by our host Bert Theunissen, a very keen member of the Clun society. He and his wife, like a lot of farmers in Holland, only have a few hectares of land to keep their sheep, so most have other jobs; Bert is a lecturer in the local university.

Next morning with Clun tie found, Bert picked us up to take us to the show.

Due to the very hot weather the show was taking place in an indoor horse arena. There were a lot more sheep than we had expected, around 120, with many younger members showing.



The Clun Society in Holland try to encourage the younger members to show their sheep, so the rules are no extra concentrates, only grass and no trimming, this helps to keep the cost down. The sheep are not shown with halter, as we do, but have a neck collar, which I think makes them more difficult to handle.

In Holland lambs are birth notified each week to the society. This means that the lamb classes were split into 3 age groups. This gives the smaller later born lambs a chance to get in amongst the prizes. None of the sheep are trimmed and, as we say over here, "in their working clothes".

There was an excellent show of yearling and older ewes along with some very good older rams but the breeders were disappointed with the ram lambs on show. I did discuss with some of the members about coming over to purchase more sheep to try and get different bloodlines. The cost of the vets to do the tests and complete the paperwork make it very expensive to import sheep into Holland, so importing the semen may be a better way to go. The overall champion of the day was an aged ram from Ton Van de Toorn.



After the show we joined everyone for a barbeque and a few beers, everyone seemed happy, whether they were going home with a prize or not. It was lovely to see whole families very proudly showing their sheep. We had a thoroughly enjoyable day with the breeders and hope we have the chance to go over and meet them all again.



We had decided to extend our trip and next morning Burt picked us up to take us into Amsterdam for a 3-day visit. Our hotel was situated at the very bottom end of the main shopping street with all the best names, near Vondelpark.



This is known as Amsterdam's version of New York's central park.

Our first encounter with the city traffic was a little scary; our first near accident came later that afternoon as we tried to cross one of the biggest roads in the city. We were looking out for the cars but the bikes are the biggest danger. They have their own lanes and traffic lights but didn't seem to take much notice of these. Health and safety from over here would have a field day.

With bikes to your left cars to your right and in the middle trams, none of which seemed to want to stop, it was very exciting walking and Rich calculated that we must have walked 6-7 miles a day. Not known for walking long distances, it was surprising how well he did and amazingly his aches and pains seemed to disappear.



No visit to Amsterdam would be complete without visiting the museums and parks; we managed to see the Rijksmuseum of Art, the Science Museum, Our Lord in the Attic church and walked around the famous flea market and of course the red light district. We were unable to visit the Anne Frank Museum as you need to book 3 months in advance. We also went on a canal boat trip around the city.

One of the best vantage points to see the city is from the roof of the Nemo Science Museum at 22 metres above sea level.

We had a wonderful time and hope to revisit in the future.

Richard & Celia Price

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**In The Garden
July/August**

The clamour of birdsong has subsided. Perhaps just the lazy sound of yellowhammers, or the gentle counterpoint of pigeons and doves. The sound of the breeze through the hedgerows or across the grass becomes more apparent. The vibrant greens of spring give way to a richer, darker, hue, complementing the purples of wimberry/winberry/ blaeberry/whortleberry/bilberry (all the same!) foliage, willow herb and heather flowers.

Those in the know can find usable amounts of wimberries on the hills. In the garden, strawberries, currants red white and black, and raspberries yield their delights to the gardener as well as the blackbirds.

August is the time for dahlias to come to the fore. It might be a man thing, but there is an entire world of decorative, cactus, and pompoms, from tiny gems to blowzy giants. They need careful staking and are difficult to incorporate into the mixed border. But how glorious they are in all their vivid finery. Looking through the websites of the dahlia specialists in winter is a pleasant occupation. The best and cheapest way to buy plants are those from rooted cuttings.

There are few nurseries now supplying these, but Halls of Heddon are recommended. Single dahlias are magnets for butterflies and other insects. Bedding varieties – Unwins Dwarf are highly recommended – are easy to raise from seed and will flower until the first frosts.



The veg patch should start to yield, with peas, and beans in variety. Courgette mountains will probably build up, and there will be the usual racking of brains to find ways of using the bloomin' things. There's still time to sow things like winter radish, pak choi, and other oriental greens (be careful of caterpillars). And of course other salad leaves – rocket and loose leaf lettuce etc. Seeds of Italy are particularly generous with their seed count, important when sowing for young leaves.

Keep your eye open for blight on taters. Either spray every few weeks from early July onwards for main crop, or dig them as soon as you notice it. It needn't be much of a problem for early varieties.

Irrigate judiciously if necessary.
May the hedgehogs be with you.

John the Gardener



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CARTREF CARE HOME

The residents and staff at Cartref Care Home would like to thank Bethesda Church members for this amazing banner. The hand prints on the hearts were the contribution of the youngest church member, Coral Phillips, aged 2. The photo shows pastor Gordan and Helen Bingham, their 4 children and Jane Dodds who organised the project. During this period of lockdown it means so much to the residents to know that they are not forgotten.



VERSES FROM LOCKDOWN

Some extracts from an illustrated booklet produced by three generations of the Banks family during lockdown



Early Days

It started by eating a bat
My Year 6 is ruined, that's that
There's no PGL
Or walks with El Kel
The good thing is that there's no SATS.

There was an old man from New York,
Whose motto was "don't think, just talk!"
"Inject disinfectant,
A super protectant!
I did, and now I can't walk!"



Life under Lockdown

Heard the news they shut the schools
No more classrooms, teachers, rules,
No more uniform to wear,
Don't even need to brush my hair.
Parents teach what I should know
But they learned it long ago.
Dad tries trigonometry
Turns out he knows less than me.
Mum's attempt at drawing failed
I got my assessment nailed.
No more friends to do PE –
Now it's just Joe Wicks and me.
Can't go hang with my mates n that,
Now we hang on a FaceTime chat.
Can't go on my Easter hols:
I'll be in my bedroom - lolz.

This virus is terribly sad
It's driving me totally mad
I'm feeling so weird
And dad's grown a beard
As soon as it's gone I'll be glad.

When we talk to each other online
We can sit in our chairs, or recline,
As we share all our news
We can sip on the booze
And no-one can see, so it's fine.

RHOSGOCH AND PAINSCASTLE TOTS GROUP

We are of course really missing being able to meet every week for our lovely playgroup. Here are some photos of what some of the children have been up to at home and out and about. We look forward to being able to start up again at some point. Please join and check our Facebook page "Painscastle and Rhosgoch Toddler Group" for details of a future reopening date. Take care everyone, keep smiling, and keep playing!



Contact Sarah Emmerson 07931701840

Facebook - Rhosgoch and Painscastle Toddler Group

Edible play dough recipe (from craftinggreenerworld.com)

Peanut Butter Play dough

This is a classic edible play dough. If your child has a nut allergy, you can replace the peanut butter with sunflower seed butter to make this a nut free recipe.

In a large bowl, combine:

- 1 cup creamy peanut (or sunflower seed) butter
- 1/2 cup honey or agave nectar
- 2 cups icing sugar

Mix well, until you have a doughy consistency. If the dough is a bit crumbly, drizzle a bit more honey or agave nectar. If it's too sticky, more icing sugar will do the trick!

Play, get sticky, eat, have fun!

HAND SANITIZER HOLDERS

These holders are extremely practical and hold 50ml bottles with the nozzle exposed for instant access. I'm making them with a strong clip to attach to your bag (and save you rummaging) or even clip to your trouser/jeans loop if you are out for a walk possibly encountering stiles or gates etc.

They cost £2.50 each (possible discounts for family orders) and all proceeds will be donated to the Air Ambulance.

Please contact me Diana Balm - Tel: 01497 851387 email: dihargreave@aol.com

