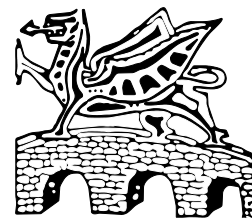


CHELMSFORD and DISTRICT WELSH SOCIETY



OCTOBER NEWSLETTER/ CYLCHLYTHYR MIS HYDREF 2020

Annwyl Gyfeillion

In the September News Letter I asked if you had any news to share with us. I'm delighted to say that as usual you turned up trumps. Your response has been fantastic. Thank you all very, very much. It shows that in spite of Covid the spirit of our Society is still strong.

Cofion cynnes iawn
Arthur

Happy Birthday/Penblwydd Hapus to Eddie Alcock who celebrated a very special birthday this month.

HARVEST TIME !

Our allotment has kept us busy during lockdown and, during the time when we were confined to home, we very much appreciated going to our allotment (only two minutes' walk away from home), getting plenty of exercise and fresh air and chatting (socially distanced of course) to our fellow allotmenters.

In recent weeks, we have benefitted from the fruits of our labours. The last of the squashes have now been picked and this year we have grown 21, not quite up to the record total of a few years ago when we grew 26! I've used beetroot to make chutney this year and also pickled some onions. Our carrots, though small, have been used for carrot and coriander soup, delicious on a cold, wet Autumn day! The leeks continue to grow well and the parsnips too. After a very dry year, they are now benefitting from more than enough rainwater!

Hope you are all keeping well and kind regards from **Kay and Clive Bright**.



Does anyone know what this is?

Please see photo of vented object I partly unearthed while digging a hole in my garden for a shrub. Does anyone know what it is, or what its purpose is, or why it is in my garden? It was lying under at least a foot and a half of clay, and I just cannot shift it. It has lain there undisturbed for over 40 years or longer: this house was built in 1910. Hope you all well and keeping safe. **Cofion Anja**.



Aber Valley MVC by David Pitchford

Last October, Jill and I went to Caerphilly to attend the 60th Anniversary concert of the Aber Valley MVC. We first saw them at the annual concert in Chelmsford Cathedral two years ago, when our enjoyment was doubled by their guests on the night, Serin. And of course you brought Serin back as guests for last year's concert.

I love male voice choirs, and have been coming to the annual concerts for many years, but I also loved Serin, their voices and harmonies seem to be made in heaven, so I resolved that I would see them again if possible. As you may know, one of their members is now living in Germany so they rarely perform now, and I discovered that their only other appearance last year would be at the Aber Valley Choir's annual concert. So, I resolved to go.

I contacted the choir to make sure I could reserve a couple of tickets, and they very kindly invited us to their pre-show choir practice. This was a wonderful experience, and they went out of their way to make us welcome.

On the night, they mentioned that they had some visitors from Essex, and after the show, invited us to stay and socialise, which we did! We had a wonderful night, and one of the things that most struck me was the great sense of community there. I am still in touch from time to time with the leader of the choir.

This has all come back to me because this wonderful experience was just under a year ago, and now, as you will know, Caerphilly is back in lockdown. So sad, when you think back to how things were.

Anyway I have attached a couple of photos that I took on the night. In the one of the choir, they are wearing red caps because they were singing the song about the Champs Elysee. A memorable night, lovely people, let's hope it can all get going again in due course.



The choir produced 3 CDs in conjunction with their 60th Anniversary, a compendium of their songs. I have them and they are marvellous. Unfortunately they are not available to buy online, but when things settle it might be possible to arrange to get them sent.

As a new boy, I don't know many members, and by the same token they may not know me, - I recited the Roald Dahl poem about Cinderella at an event earlier this year.

Best wishes to you and all, let's hope that an answer to this virus can be found so we can all get back to going about our daily lives.

Best regards - David Pitchford



Escape to Pembrokeshire September 2020-by Janet Wash

After a year without a holiday Richard and I were longing from some time in my home county of Pembrokeshire, so we booked a week in north Pembs, at Gelli Fawr Woodland Retreat. In a remote, idyllic setting, surrounded by beautifully maintained gardens, in the hills overlooking the Gwaun Valley, 3 miles from Newport, this was an ideal location, safely-distanced from the 'madding crowds' of the south!

A former farm, Gelli Fawr now comprises a small hotel, base in the old farmhouse, several attractive cottage and flats in the converted farm outbuildings and a purpose-built modern building and outside area for weddings.

Although we had visited much of north Pembs from our holiday home near Tenby and Narberth, we were delighted to revisit the bustling town of Newport, Fishguard's ferry port of Goodwick, with its attractive sea front, and coastal villages of Porthgain and Abereiddy. Porthgain is a very popular little harbour of great historical interest, with the ruins of its former slate works and brick works still visible. One of the original warehouses is now a seafood restaurant of great renown, called "The Shed", while the only pub, the "Sloop Inn", is reputed to be the oldest in the country. At Abereiddy, there is an attractive beach and a short easy walk away, a beautiful "Blue Lagoon", originally a slate quarry which supplied slate to Porthgain, into which a channel has been made to allow the sea to flood it. Some sections of the man-built walls still remain and are now a venue for high-divers and "jumpers". Fortunately there were some dare devils in action to entertain us while we were there!

The headland above the Lagoon affords stunning views of the coastline and another sandy beach, accessed from the coastal path. After scrambling (with some difficulty!) up to the path from the Lagoon we were able to manage just a short walk along the cliffs, unlike in our younger days!

While in that area we paid a quick visit to the Cathedral village of St David's. The Cathedral was closed so we stayed 30 minutes, too uneasy to mingle with so many tourists! I think the series earlier this year on national TV must have boosted its popularity. Fortunately we did not encounter the traffic warden who featured prominently in the series!

We also love the beautiful Cardigan Bay area and especially the National Trust section of coastline at Mwnt, where there is a pretty beach, and a Fisherman's chapel built in the lee of the imposing little "mountain", which overlooks the sea. We did not attempt to climb to the top but managed to circumnavigate the lower path, which had some scary sections, with sheer drops to the sea!! A great risk and achievement for us at our advanced age!

After Mwnt we visited Gwbert on Sea, somewhere I had never been when growing up in Pembs. As we sat on the terrace of the Gwbert Hotel, having tea and gazing across the impressive estuary to the beautiful Poppit sands, we wondered if Glynis and Ron had stayed there a few years ago, but decided it was more likely to be the grander Cliffs hotel next door, as there was a golf course for Ron!

Our second trip into Ceredigion took us to Aberporth, a pretty little village with a grassy, sloping area with seats, overlooking the small beach. We walked along the built-up section of the Coastal path towards Tresaith, where there used to be several railway carriages used as holiday homes. Only 3 remain now, just one in its original state, one with a huge glass conservatory added and the other with a brick-built extension at the front, obscuring the original carriage!

We did venture down to the south of the country on 2 occasions. On my birthday we met my brother on the quayside at Neyland Marina for coffee, then later in the day my longest-standing school friend of 75 years and her husband at the Marina in my home town of Milford Haven, now home to countless expensive pleasure craft. With its boutiques and restaurants it is vastly different from the working fish market that I used to visit to watch my uncle buying fish to take to Llanelli market.

Our other trip south took us to the popular little town of Narberth with its trendy clothes boutiques and craft shops. We had been warned that our favourite resorts of Amroth, Saundersfoot and Tenby were inundated with visitors, so regretfully decided to give them a miss and headed down to the coast, intending to go to the magnificent stretch of coastline at Stack Rocks and The Green Bridge of Wales, only to be disappointed that the MOD firing range at Castlemartin, through which there is access to that area, was closed. So we headed to a little-known headland near Manorbier, called Shrinkle Haven, with its magnificent view over to Caldy Island.

In the Newport area we spent a pleasant few hours at the Parrog, formerly a little port area overlooking the beautiful Estuary towards the extensive Newport Sands. Not far from the town in Dinas Head, where there are 2 small beaches either side of the headland, Cwm yr Eglwys and Pwll Gwaelod. We enjoyed walking through the pleasant shaded valley from one to the other, which made a change from all the headland walks.

After a wonderful week of perfect weather in my beloved Pembs, we headed back on our 300 mile journey to Essex, feeling very blessed and grateful to all the hotel and restaurant staff for the measures they had put in place to keep us and thousands of others safe in this difficult situation. 2 days after our return most of South Wales was put into lockdown, but that little corner of Heaven in the far West is thankfully still open and welcoming visitors.

I would just like to add that we miss all our good friends at the Welsh society and the splendid meeting and events. We hope you are all keeping well and weathering the storm of Covid -19 and really hope that we can meet again in 2021.



Llanwern- by David Brown

As you probably know I have an interest in ships and am often to be found researching a ship, shipping line or other maritime event. The latest project has been to tabulate all the ships that were laid up in the Blackwater estuary from 1919 to the present day, a total of 469 ships some of which came into the river more than once. Ships were generally laid up in times of trade depression such as the late 1920s and 1930s and the 1960s. One ship we came across has a Welsh / Essex connection.

The 413th vessel to enter the river was the Greek owned freighter *Protoklitos*. She was built as the *Llanwern* in 1962 at Sunderland by Bartrams for Evan Thomas Radcliffe of Cardiff, a company established in 1882 by a Ceredigion sea captain, Evan Thomas, and a Merthyr Tydfil businessman, Henry Radcliffe. *Llanwern* was sold in 1968 becoming *Captain Michael* and resold several times after. She eventually became *Protoklitos* under which name she was laid up in the River Blackwater in 1982. On 7 Feb 1983 she suffered a serious engine room fire which tested the Essex Fire and rescue service, taking several days to extinguish. At the height of the fire around 120 firemen were in attendance, together with 17 fire-tenders, the West Mersea and Clacton lifeboats, the Harwich fire-fighting tug *Grey Echo*, the Maldon tug *Fenland* and a helicopter from RAF Manston. She was declared a constructive total loss and left the River Blackwater in tow of the Spanish tug *Aznar Jose Luis* arriving at Bilbao 18 Jun 1983 for breaking up. At the time Essex Fire and Rescue pursued salvage awards but to date nothing has been forthcoming.



Captain Michael (ex -Llanwern)
In the London Docks 1973
© Ian Wells



Protoklitos (ex- Captain Michael ex
Llanwern in the River Blackwater 1982
© David Brown

If you have any interest in ships in the river Blackwater please see the Mersea Island Museum's excellent website at: <https://merseamuseum.org.uk/mmshipping.php> The research information we have sent them is in the process of being augmented into their already comprehensive list.

David Brown
Secretary, Mid-Essex Branch, World Ship Society
www.midessexships.org.uk

S4C information by Mike Price

Until recently, the only way to pick up Welsh channels, both radio and television, was via satellite. You needed a dish and a box connected to your TV. If you already have a dish, this remains a very convenient and cost effective way to get programs from Wales.

If you are not a Sky subscriber, treat yourself to a Freesat box, much more convenient to use than a Sky box. Amazon, Argos and Curry's sell them, starting at about £35 for a basic box. The more expensive boxes can also record programs and they're very easy to use. If you need further help, give me a call. (01277 210541)

Some very good news! It is now possible to receive Welsh channels without installing a dish, The Welsh channels can be picked up via the internet. If you already have a computer or laptop, all you need to watch Welsh channels is a Youview box. There is again a wide choice available, starting from £35 for a basic box.

Working via the internet has an additional advantage. If you miss a program, you can simply download it to watch whenever you chose.

This is a very brief summary. I hope this all makes sense, if not, I'm only a phone call away.

Before I close, give a thought to a young lad from Treorchy. He has two tickets in a corporate box for the England v Wales game in November. He paid £300 each but forgot he's getting married on that day. He's now looking for someone to take his place. If you're interested, it's at the Pontypridd Registry Office, the brides name is Megan, and she is 5'4", about 8 stone and quite pretty. She has her own income and is a really good cook!

Pob hwyl

Mike

Thank you very much to everyone who contributed to this month's newsletter. If you have anything that you would like me to include in the November Newsletter, please can you contact me before November 10th.

Diolch yn fawr

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