

CHRISTMAS 2024

ISSUE 02

RHOSILI

Gŵyr

ANNUAL COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

Our front (and back) cover this year capturing the Northern Lights over Rhossili Bay was kindly provided to us by Dan Santillo, who has released a book with his brilliant photography

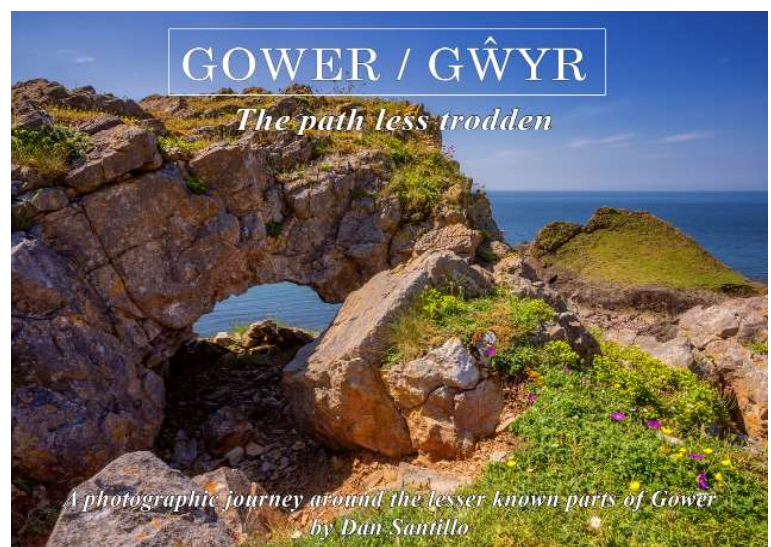
Gower: The Path Less Trodden

Did you know there was a fake runway built at Whiteford to protect the ammunition factory in Pembrey? Do you know what a phreatic tube is and where it is on Gower? Did you know an Anthrax bomb was dropped on the marsh at Penclawdd?

Many people are very familiar with the usual parts of Gower such as Three Cliffs Bay, Rhossili Bay and so on, but Gower also has a lot to offer that is hidden. In this book, Dan takes you on a journey to the lesser visited parts of Gower. Some of them you may not have heard of, others you might be more familiar with, but this book brings many of them into one place. Dan talks about the history, geography or geology of each place and there is also a map and short description to help you find them for yourself too.

The book measures approximately 21x15cm and has 200 pages packed with photos and accompanying history, geography and geology about the lesser known parts of Gower.

It can only be bought from Dan directly at <https://www.dansantillo.com/buy/books/>



Rhossili Bay

This 5-metre x 8-metre building was Grade II listed on 19th January 2000. Labelled as "Rocket House", it first appears on the 1870 OS map, so it had been built by then. In 1876, the Board of Trade decided to establish a life-saving apparatus station at Rhossili to contain a cart with rockets, lines, buoys, etc. Initially, there was difficulty recruiting people to man it, due to recent wrecking and hostility towards the Coastguard.

The first wreck the Rocket Crew attended was near the Old Rectory in 1879. Later, the Rocket Crew was renamed the Rhossili Life-saving Apparatus Company.



Grid Reference: SS 417 882
What to see: A weathered stone building
Difficulty to find: Easy
More info: It is next to the public footpath at the base of Rhossili Down.

Ramsgrove

When visiting Ramsgrove (also Rams Grove and Ram Grove), you could be forgiven for thinking you aren't on Gower but are in the Peak District or Yorkshire Dales. The Hunts Bay Outfall Subgroup limestone cliffs tower above you and the rocks littered at the base of the cliffs are plentiful. Whether these rock piles are caused by freeze-thaw action or quarrying isn't clear, but the steepness of the cliffs on the west side suggest the former, whilst on the east side it looks more like quarrying.

The beach itself is rocky and not suitable for swimming, but its location and lack of sand means it is often possible to have the place to yourself where you can sit back and listen to the sounds of nature.



Grid Reference: SS 429 865
What to see: Limestone cliffs and beach
Difficulty to find: Easy
Accessibility: It is accessed from the coast path between Newside Bay and South Pits Bay.



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In this Issue

Season's Greetings from Ian Button

Ian Button, Rhossili Community Council Chair



It's been a busy year for the Community Council, with councillor changes and bigger developments on the horizon.

After 20 years with the RCC, Steve Walmsley stepped down as Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) in July. Steve

joined in 2004, serving as Vice Chair and Chair before kindly agreeing - after some persuasion - to continue as RFO for the past few years. His guidance has been invaluable, and we wish him all the best as he hands over to Francis Morgan, who is already proving to be a safe and capable pair of hands.

We also said goodbye to councillors Nicola Rees and Tom Higgs this year. We're hugely grateful for their contributions and will miss them both. Joining us is Helen Beynon, a well-known member of the local farming community. Helen has been a fantastic addition, and we're thrilled to welcome her and Francis to the council.

We're still one councillor short, so if you're interested in joining, check out our website (rhossilicc.org.uk) or contact any of the councillors.

Earlier this year, the Boundary Commission proposed merging Rhossili, Reynoldston, Penrice, and Port Eynon into one 'super council' of Gower South. Thanks to everyone who participated in our survey or attended the public meeting with our neighbouring councils. While some saw the potential benefits, most of the feedback raised concerns about losing local representation, increased workload for fewer council-

lors, and the impact on community identity.

We submitted a formal response recommending things stay as they are, a view echoed by the other councils involved. The Commission's final report proposes going ahead with the merger in 2027 but includes changes like increasing councillors to 11 and allocating two representatives for Rhossili. While we still have questions, the revised plan is more balanced, and we await the Welsh Government's decision early next year. Thank you to Colin Everett for his support during this process.

In the meantime, the RCC is focused on community priorities. Speeding in the village is a recurring issue, and in September, we worked with Swansea Council to install speed survey strips through Middleton. Details from the survey are included later in this issue, and we're setting up a working group to explore solutions. If this is important to you, please get involved - you don't have to be a councillor!

Flooding around Scurlage and Llandewi also remains a challenge. We're grateful to Tonia Antoniazzi, MP for Gower, for advocating for a sustainable solution and to County Councillor Richard Lewis for ensuring drains are cleared more frequently. Richard has supported Rhossili in many ways this year, including helping with our merger response, participating in our D-Day events, assisting with verge clearing for pedestrian safety, and soon funding the painting of the electrical boxes with his daughter, County Councillor Francesca O'Brien. Thank you both for your ongoing support!

One of my best memories of 2024 was the D-Day 80 commemoration. Thank you to everyone who shared their stories, keepsakes, or helped on the day - it was a special way to honour those involved. A personal highlight was ringing the bells at St Mary's - a lot harder than it looks but unforgettable all the same!

Another special event was joining the children at Knelston Primary for lunch with the other governors. The school has faced challenges recently with falling numbers, but it was great to see the positive changes under the new Head, James Paynter.

I hope you enjoy this year's Christmas magazine. A big thank you to Charlotte Nolan for assisting with editing and stepping in as RCC Clerk over the past few months.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.



Margaret and Barrie send their season's greetings and best wishes to friends and villagers and here's to a Happy New Year 2025.

Wishing our lovely neighbours and everyone in this friendly community a very Happy Christmas and hoping that 2025 is kind to you and those you love. Jill and Geoff Strangeway (Bramwood)

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all friends and neighbours. Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i chi gyd, Dai Cann

Warmest wishes to everyone reading this 2024 Rhossili village magazine, for Christmas and the year to come. Gill, Mike and Dylan Boulding

We wish all our friends and neighbours in the local community a restful Christmas and a New Year full of blessings. Isobel & Colin Everett, Elmsbrook

Vicki James and family (Crud yr Awel) wish all in Rhossili a joyous yuletide and peace for us all in the forthcoming year.

Dymuniadau gorau am Nadolig hapus a heddychlon i'n holl ffrindiau a chymdogion. Best wishes for a happy and peaceful Christmas to all our friends and neighbours, from Maggie, Paul & Mairwen

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all at Old Shoe Cottage - Paul, Lesley-Anne, Charlotte & Oscar

Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i'n ffrindiau a'n cymdogion i gyd! Mark, Mary, Dyfrig a Huw xxx Wishing a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our friends and neighbours xxx

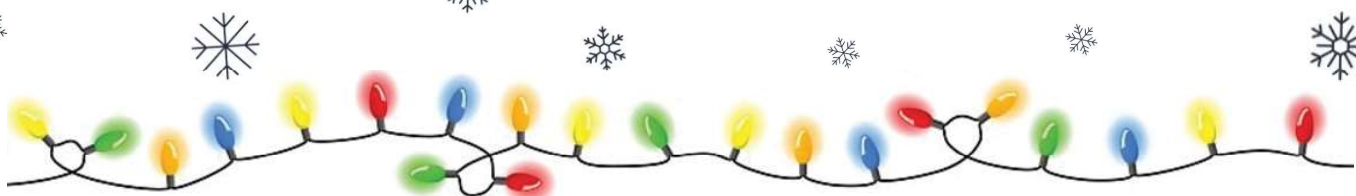
We would like to wish one and all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. With love from Ian, Tracey, Felix, Ripley, Dave dog, Rozie, Buffy and Jack the cats. Here's to 2025!

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas, good health and a happy and fulfilling New Year. Sarah and Steve Walmsley

Wishing all our lovely friends and neighbours a very joyful Christmas and a healthy and happy 2025, from Jo, Jeff, Zak and the dogs - Willow, Lola and Poppy

Wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas from Tom, Jess, Izzy, Henry & Maggie (Great Pitton Farm)

Wishing our friends and neighbours a very merry Christmas and healthy new year from everyone at Picnic Cottage & Ship Farm xx



A Village Remembers

D-Day Commemorations
6th June 2024

by Lesley-Anne Nolan



For those who attended the events on this day, it was truly unforgettable. Months of meticulous planning went into the D-Day 80 commemoration which took place on the 6th June 2024, a humble tribute to the brave individuals who fought and gave their lives so we could enjoy the freedom we cherish today.

From the proclamation at 8 o'clock in the morning, delivered by Ian Button, Chairman of Rhossili Community Council, to the poignant playing of the Last Post over Rhossili Beach and the lighting of the beacon, Gower residents and villagers gathered to pay their respects.

The early breakfast of bacon butties and coffee following the proclamation proved immensely popular—perhaps the enticing aroma of frying bacon drew people from their homes! The village hall was open, featuring a fascinating and informative WWII exhibition curated by the residents of Rhossili and our local councillor, Richard Lewis.

Knelston Primary School played a meaningful role, painting and inscribing wooden poppies in their own act of remembrance. These local soldiers were honoured in a short service at St. Mary's Church, attended by the children. Following the service, the children walked to the cliffs and tied their poppies to the railings overlooking the beach—a heartfelt gesture of remembrance.

A glorious afternoon tea was served in the village hall by the social committee, where stories and memories were shared over cups of tea and delicious cakes. Gill Wales gave a moving recollection of the life of a Land Girl, wearing her cousin's original uniform, adding a personal touch to the day.

At 6:30 pm, St. Mary's Church joined churches across the country in ringing their bells. A special thank-you goes to Gill and her team for making this possible.

The day's highlight was a magnificent concert held in the village hall, brilliantly organized by Maggie and Mairwen Kirk. Readings and songs, accompanied by archival World War II footage, kept the audience spellbound throughout the evening.

As the sun set over Rhossili's breathtaking beach, Ian Button read the international tribute to fallen soldiers. The heartfelt lighting of the beacon on the beach, followed by the symbolic illumination of the Lamp of Peace, offered all attendees a moment of solemn reflection. This moving ceremony culminated with the Last Post, played by ex Royal

Marine Mat Davies, as the mournful notes of the trumpet drifted over the cliffs and out to sea.

The day was a true community effort, bringing people





together in a spirit of unity and pride. Rhossili can justifiably be proud of such a remarkable event. Many residents dedicated countless hours of their time, and we extend our deepest thanks to all who contributed. Special appreciation goes to the Rhossili Village Hall Committee, Maggie and Mairwen Kirk, Rev. Peter Lewis, Jasmine Howarth, Knelston Primary School, The Lookout, The View, and the National Trust.

Throughout the day, donations were collected for four forces charities. The Lookout and The View participated in "Fish & Chip Day," generously donating £1 for each portion sold. Thanks to their efforts and the community's generosity, a total of £350 was raised. This amount was equally divided among The Royal Navy Association, ABF The Soldiers' Charity, the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund, and the Merchant Navy.

On a personal note, I would like to sincerely thank the members of the Rhossili Community Council for their unwavering support and encouragement.

D-DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIONS		
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS // 6TH JUNE 2024		
The largest naval, air and land operation in history Visit www.rhossilihwb.wales for more information		
Time	Location	Event
08:00	Rhossili Village Hall	Proclamation followed by teas + coffees, bacon + sausage butties
09:00	Rhossili Village Hall	WW2 Exhibition in RVH. Manned by volunteers during opening times
11:00	St Mary's Church, Rhossili	Commemoration Service for Knelston School + public followed by the placing of Remembrance Poppies in Rhossili
12:00	The Lookout + The View	Fish + Chips available from 12:00 until Bonfire. For each portion sold £1 will be donated to the 4 nominated charities
14:30 - 16:30	Rhossili Village Hall	Cream Tea hosted by RVH Committee: £4
10:30	St. Mary's Church, Rhossili	Church bells to be rung at St. Mary's and other churches on Gower
19:00 - 20:15	Rhossili Village Hall	Commemoration Concert + Readings
21:15	Rhossili Beach + NT Coastguard Cottages	Beacon to be lit on Rhossili beach. Lanplight of Peace to be lit outside coastguard cottages. Reading of Nation's Tribute outside coastguard cottages.
21:20	NT Coastguard Cottages	Last post

A collaboration between RCC, RVH, Gower NT, Knelston School + St Mary's Church



D-Day 80: The Commemorative Concert

by Maggie Kirk

After a day full of activities and bustle, for the Commemorative Concert we wanted to capture the spirit of the time and for the audience to feel immersed in the D-Day 'story', to reflect, honour and give thanks to all who were involved in the D-Day landings on June 6th 1944. The programme was essentially in two parts: the run-up to the day and the day itself, and there were three aspects to it: the music; the readings; and the backdrop images. The backdrop slide presentation included archived images, actual video footage of D-Day and a BBC Radio announcement (see the Resources list at the end). The slides were all advanced manually (thanks Paul!) to tie in with each song or reading.

To set the scene, we played recordings of popular music of the day as people took their seats - music by Glen Miller, the Andrews Sisters, Bing Crosby and Flanagan & Allen etc.. As a backdrop to the music, a rolling PowerPoint presentation displayed original

images and scenes of the day.

The music programme was developed under the guidance of Mairwen Kirk, the musical director for local community choir Lleisiau Gŵyr (which includes Mary's Merry Men). The choir was joined by 3Ms Accordion Group (Mary Attwell, Margot Attwell and Margaret Bevan). Mary and Mairwen also provided piano accompaniment. We started with the upbeat 'In the Mood'. A 1940s medley arranged by Mairwen followed; a poignant mix of We'll meet again, White cliffs of Dover and Somewhere over the rainbow.

In researching music for the programme, we noted that there seemed to be two common themes to the songs of the time: very upbeat and optimistic, and those that told of waiting and hoping – and saying goodbye. The 3Ms struck just the right sound for the selection of these played through the concert, such as Wish me luck and Keep the home fires burning.



Two GIs on Horton Beach. Image: Betty Lewis

The music was interwoven with the readings, carefully selected to take us through the key events in the preparations for the landings on the Normandy beaches. We moved from local recollections, with Roger Button reading an extract from Cyril Jones' book, *Musings of a Middleton boy*, to the wider preparations. As Colin Everett noted "As the day drew nearer, there was a huge logistical challenge to amass troops, weaponry, supplies and transport, without drawing attention to their location". Vicki James and Charlotte Nolan's readings reflected the contribution of women to the war, with accounts from a munitions factory and the Air Transport Auxiliary.

As the narrative moved closer to D-Day, the choir sang the moving 'Bring him home' (which



The Choir during "In the Mood"

reduced several members, and our conductor, to tears at the dress rehearsal!). After Teresa Ashmole's reading about the French Resistance, Mairwen sang a very popular French song of the day 'J'attendrai' (I will wait) with the 3Ms. It also seemed apt that to accompany the readings about crossing the Channel ahead of the embarkations, the audience should join us in singing For those in peril on the sea.

We had some light relief when the men sang Run rabbit run, Kiss me goodnight Sergeant Major and Bless 'em all. Although these were very popular back home, in reality the troops tended to favour their own songs, or their own words to the popular songs, which we wouldn't have been able to sing at a family concert!



Mary's Merry Men

As the narrative told of the men landing on the beaches, fighting their way up in horrific conditions, we drew on first-hand accounts and a couple of poems, to tell the stories of the harsh realities of D-Day. The stories told of immense courage and bravery, but also of fear, horror and intense sorrow at the loss of comrades.

In a day that saw over 4,400 members of the allied forces killed, with a similar number of civilians and German troops, we didn't feel that the voices of those who were there should be watered down in

any way. The readings were sometimes graphic and always moving, so not easy for our readers* who did a great job, and the two poems, The Coxswain and Keep Moving were so well read by Rob Dyer and Mark Provis.

As Isobel Everett explained, the fact that by the end of the day, a beach-head had been established by the allied forces was a major turning point in the war and was something to give thanks for - there was finally some light ahead. This was reflected in the song that Mairwen sang, 'The world will sing again' - a beautiful song full of hope.



Keep moving lads

To end the programme, we sang a four-part arrangement of For the Fallen, which sets to music a verse of Laurence Binyon's poem composed in 1914:

"They shall not grow old, as we that are left
grow old,
Age shall not weary them, nor the year's
condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the
morning,
We will remember them"

The various activities of our D-Day 80 commemoration required an enormous amount of effort and planning, and the concert was no exception. Many hours of research were put into the development of the concert programme and it was also a labour of love for Mairwen and me personally. My late father Brin Griffiths was a member of A Troop, 48 Royal Marine Commando and landed on the Nan Red sector of Juno beach. His grandson Bryn was honoured to give two readings from Brin's comrade and lifelong friend thereafter, Harry Timmins.

The concert was a tribute to the courage and bravery of all those who were part of that day 80 years ago.

*D-Day Readers: Ian Button, Dai Cann, Rob Fisher, Mike Humphries, Bryn Kirk, Alan Rowland and Steve Walmsley, with a reflection by Rev Peter Lewis

Resources

- D-Day Commando: From Normandy to Maas with 48 Royal Marine Commando by Ken Ford
- D-Day: The Route to Normandy. Voices from the BBC Archives. BBC Audio
- D-Day Poetry: <https://www.combinedops.com/Poetry.htm>
- Musings of a Middleton Boy by Cyril Jones
- The Female Few: Spitfire Heroines by Jacky Hyams
- The National WWII Museum, USA: <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/media/media-resources/75th-anniversary-d-day-media-resources/videos>
- The resources and collections of the Imperial War Museum (<https://www.iwm.org.uk>)
- <https://www.dday-overlord.com/en/media-library/videos>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc/100-voices>

Collecting Rhossili's Wartime Memories



Ahead of the D-Day commemoration, Gill Boulding spent time speaking with residents of Rhossili to hear their own and their families' memories of D-Day and World War II. Through these conversations, she uncovered a wide range of personal stories—some deeply moving, others quietly reflective—offering a glimpse into the lives of those who experienced the war both on the frontlines and at home. These recollections have helped bring the history of the village and its people to life, ensuring their stories are remembered and shared.

by Gill Boulding

Wartime Memories from Mary Beynon

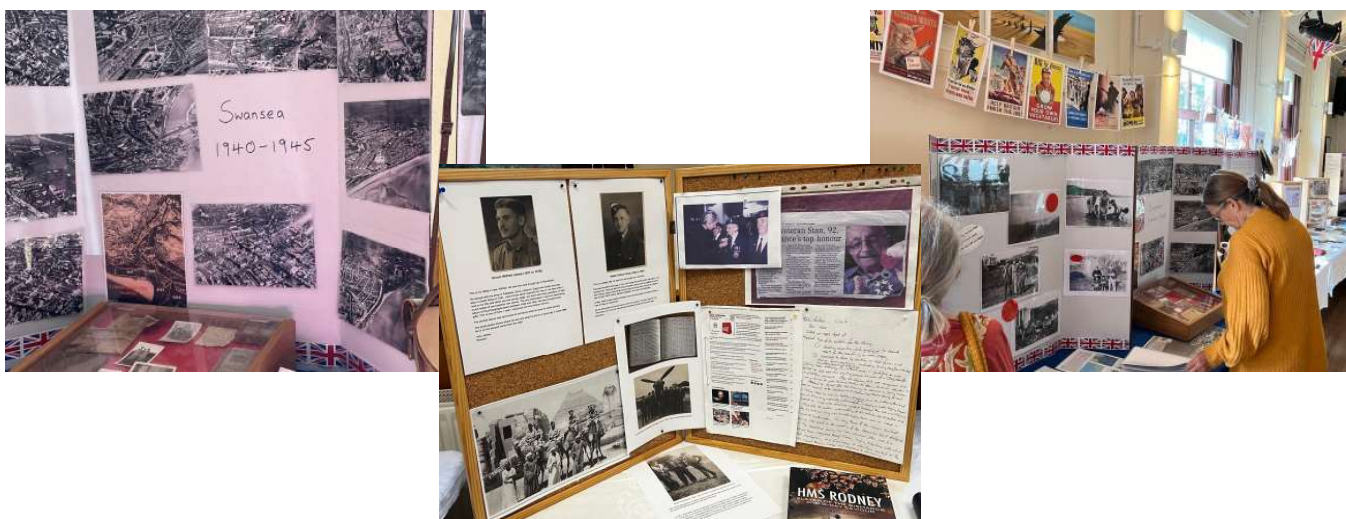
Mary Beynon has vivid memories of life in Rhossili during World War II, even though she was just a small child at the time. Life was both challenging and fascinating, with the war changing everyday routines in unexpected ways.

Her family was one of the few in the village to have a car. Even though Rhossili was remote, the road was much as it is today, having a car made a big difference. Mary recalls how her parents, who were farmers, had a few sheep but mostly grew crops like potatoes and cabbage. These were transported by lorry, often to Swansea and then beyond. Local farmers would load their crops onto trucks at designated "loading stages" before they were taken further afield. One such load-

ing stage remains outside Ship Farm.

Rationing was a big part of life. Mary remembers rations, even for petrol and still has a ration book which was part of the Rhossili Village Hall D-Day commemoration display. Farming was the main employment on Gower at the time, and her father hired prisoners of war (POWs) to help out. She fondly recalls three POWs who worked on their farm. They were brought in lorries daily from Fairwood. Mary recalled learning to read alongside them, as they were learning English. The war brought a number of new faces to the village, who stayed on and became part of the community.

The radar station near Hill End is another memory. It was used as a lookout for enemy planes and run by



American servicemen based at a camp near Scurlage. Mary recalls seeing the concrete buildings as a child before the station was blown up in the 1950s.

Mary's family history includes reminders of the war, like medals from her mum, who was part of the Women's War Volunteer Service (WWVS). There were also connections to the Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS), with fire wardens and fire sheds in the village. These were loaned to the Rhossili 2024 D-Day commemoration display. Mary isn't entirely sure what her mum's role involved but she treasures the medals and memorabilia.

Life After the War: Geoff and Helen Beynon Reflect on Rhossili's Post-War Years

Geoff shared memories of life in Rhossili during the years following World War II. His recollections offer a window into a community shaped by both the lingering impacts of war and the enduring rhythms of rural life.

Farming Through Change

Geoff painted a vivid picture of Rhossili's agricultural heritage in the post-war era. "There were about five or six little farms in the area during the war. I can just about remember the working horses being replaced by tractors - it was a big change."

Middleton was home to several large farming families who played a vital role in food production. Crops like early potatoes, cauliflowers, and swedes were grown as part of small-scale market gardening efforts. "It might have been small-scale, but it was vital work," Geoff explained, highlighting the importance of these contributions to feeding a recovering nation.

The Shadows of War

Despite the community's focus on moving forward, the war's impact was still felt. Rationing lingered, and the collective trauma of those years was palpable, even if rarely spoken about. "There were still reminders of the war, though people didn't talk about it much," Geoff noted. "Everyone had been affected in some way."

Helen recounted her family's loss. "My uncle Harry was a pilot in the RAF. He was shot down when he was just 21. My mum, Val, received a letter from his co-pilot explaining what had happened. It was the closest we came to understanding it, but even then, it wasn't spoken about much."

Quiet Resilience

For the people of Rhossili, life after the war was a balancing act - finding ways to rebuild while living with the unspoken memories of loss and upheaval. The Beynons' reflections capture both the resilience and reticence of a generation determined to carry on, honouring the past while working toward a brighter future.





A Father's Legacy: Mike Waldron Reflects on His Late Father's Service During D-Day & World War II

The beaches of Normandy hold countless untold stories of bravery, resilience, and sacrifice. Through medals, photographs, and vivid memories, Mike shares the extraordinary journey of his late father, Gunner Waldron, who served with distinction during the D-Day landings and beyond.

Medals of Honour: A Tribute to Service

Gunner Waldron's service is immortalized in the medals he was awarded throughout his military career. Among them is a gold medal recognizing his participation as a D-Day veteran who landed on Sword Beach on June 6, 1944. Another medal honours his role in the Normandy campaign, featuring a bar whose meaning remains a mystery to this day. His overseas service extended beyond Europe, earning him additional honours for his time in India.

From Private to Colour Sergeant: A Remarkable Military Career

Waldron's military journey began with humble beginnings as a private, later rising to the rank of colour sergeant. Serving with the Royal Artillery, he operated a self-propelled gun known as a "Priest" during the Normandy invasion. At just 19 years old, his courage shone through when he took over as the tank driver after the original driver was tragically killed.

D-Day: A Young Soldier's Experience

The D-Day landings were a pivotal moment in World War II, and Waldron's account is a testament to the chaos and determination of that historic day. Originally scheduled to land on June 5, 1944, severe weather forced his unit to return to port, delaying their mis-

sion. They finally landed at Sword Beach around 9 a.m. on June 6, following the earlier assault waves.

Waldron's unit went ashore in their Priest gun, tasked with providing critical fire support to the advancing forces. By the end of the day, the tide had risen so high that the back of their gun was submerged in water. Despite the challenges, they pressed forward, their resolve unshaken.

Facing the Enemy: Combat Actions in Normandy

During the landing, Waldron's unit received orders to turn their gun and fire down the beach after sighting the formidable 21st Panzer Division. As the campaign progressed, his unit moved across the battlefield, initially stationed on the right flank and later supporting another division. Their journey took them through intense combat zones, including the area around Caen, before eventually joining American forces in the region.

Reflections on Sacrifice: Visiting Normandy Cemeteries

For Mike Waldron, visiting the cemeteries in Normandy has been an emotional experience. He observed the poignant differences in burial practices: British and Commonwealth soldiers are often laid to rest close to where they fell, resulting in smaller, scattered cemeteries, while American soldiers are interred together in larger cemeteries, such as the iconic site at Omaha Beach.

Preserving Memories: Medals, Photos, and Stories

Mike treasures his father's medals and the photographs that capture moments of his service. Among these is an image of his father standing at the Khyber Pass in India, accompanied by his much taller batman. These artefacts, including a cherished photo album, were loaned to an exhibition at the Rhossili Village Hall, ensuring his father's story continues to inspire others.

Beyond Europe: A Volunteer for Service in India

When the European conflict ended, Waldron volunteered for further service in India. However, the war concluded while he was en route, marking the end of his military career.

A Legacy Remembered

Mike Waldron's account of his father's service is a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by those who served during World War II. Gunner Waldron's courage, dedication, and resilience continue to resonate through the medals, memories, and reflections lovingly preserved by his family.

A Quiet Hero: Ken Dorman Shares the Story of His Uncle, Stan Parker, and His Service in World War II

The story of Stan Parker, as told by his nephew Ken Dorman, paints a vivid picture of a young man from rural Essex who played a vital role in the Allied efforts during World War II. From his early days honing practical skills in the English countryside to his service with the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), Stan's journey is one of resilience, adaptability, and quiet heroism.

From Essex Farmlands to Military Training

Born in 1924, Stan grew up in the fields of Essex, where he became an exceptional sharpshooter while hunting rabbits - a valuable source of food during those lean years. His farm work also gave him the rare skill of driving, a proficiency that set him apart when he was called up for service in 1942 at just 18 years old.

Stan began his military journey at Catterick Barracks in Yorkshire, where his talent behind the wheel was quickly recognized. Remarkably, after just 30 minutes of practice, he became adept at handling army lorries - a skill that would prove invaluable in the campaigns ahead.

A Crucial Role in Communications

Assigned to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), Stan specialized in telephone communications, an essential component of the Allied operations. His unit was responsible for maintaining underwater communication cables that linked the UK with the Normandy beaches, enabling strategic coordination between key commanders like General Eisenhower and Field Marshal Montgomery as the D-Day invasion advanced into Europe.

Stan's responsibilities included driving lorries that transported communication specialists and their equipment. These missions were critical for ensuring seamless communication between command centres, both on the front lines and back in the UK.

Landing at Utah Beach: D-Day and Beyond

Stan's wartime experience took a dramatic turn as he prepared for the Normandy invasion. Stationed near Southampton, he spent countless hours waterproofing his vehicle to protect its electrical systems from seawater - a process that involved applying grease to every vulnerable component.

On one memorable day, as Stan prepared his lorry



after a routine exercise, an officer redirected him from with the simple words, "No, son, that's your boat." This moment marked his embarkation to Utah Beach, a U.S.-controlled sector, where he landed on D-Day +3 alongside the American 101st Airborne Division.

Once in France, Stan advanced village by village with his unit, often facing immense danger. One night, German forces came perilously close to his billet, a stark reminder of the constant risks he endured at just 20 years old.

A Life of Modesty and Reflection

Despite his significant contributions, Stan was deeply modest about his service. He rarely spoke of his experiences unless directly asked, even after being awarded the French Legion of Honour for his role in D-Day. One of his few shared regrets was the loss of his best friend, who was tragically shot while crossing the Rhine - a painful memory that stayed with him throughout his life.

Later in life, Stan had the opportunity to visit Utah Beach, where he was able to recognize some familiar landmarks from his wartime service. These visits offered him moments of reflection and connection to his younger self and the sacrifices made by so many.

A Legacy of Service and Sacrifice

Stan Parker's story is a poignant reminder of the vital yet often unspoken contributions of individuals during World War II. Through the lens of his nephew, Ken Dorman, we see a man who embraced his duties with courage and humility. His work behind the scenes - ensuring communication lines remained intact and transporting critical personnel and equipment - was instrumental in the success of the Allied operations.

Stan's life exemplifies the quiet heroism of a generation that gave so much yet asked for so little in return. His legacy lives on, not only in his medals and memories but also in the stories told by those who remember and honour his service.

From Philosophy to the Frontlines: The Wartime Journey of Ivor Llewellyn Davies from his son John Davies

John Davies' account of his father, Ivor Llewellyn Davies, offers a compelling glimpse into the life of a young man whose academic pursuits were interrupted by World War II, transforming him from a philosophy student into a soldier and leader. Coupled with his mother's wartime service as a nurse, their story reflects both the resilience of individuals and the shared sacrifices of a generation.

A Scholar Turned Soldier

In 1943, Ivor was studying philosophy at Swansea University, with aspirations of an academic future. He had completed two years of his degree when the war called him away from the lecture halls and into military service. Initially trained as a private, Ivor was selected for officer training, a role that brought leadership responsibilities and, as he later shared, helped make the hardships of military life slightly more bearable.

The Final Push Across Europe

Ivor's military service took him to the heart of the Allied campaign across the Low Countries in the war's closing stages. Advancing through Belgium and the Netherlands toward Germany, he encountered fierce resistance from German forces determined to defend their crumbling territory.

In the final year of his life, Ivor shared harrowing accounts of the intense and brutal combat he had witnessed, including episodes of hand-to-hand fighting. These memories, etched deeply into his mind, underscored the immense sacrifices required to bring the war in Europe to an end.

A New Mission in East Africa

When the war in Europe ended, Ivor was preparing to be deployed to Japan as the conflict in the Pacific raged on. However, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki abruptly altered those plans. Instead, Ivor was sent to East Africa, where he spent over a year stationed in Nyasaland (modern-day Malawi) as second-in-command of military operations.

The journey to his posting was a grueling adventure in itself. It involved crossing the Great Lakes over three weeks, traversing the Congo on a narrow-gauge railway, and enduring a five-day truck journey through the dense jungle. At just 22 years old, Ivor found himself in the company of a colourful cast of fellow Welshmen, including "Big Sebastapol Edwards from Pontypool," "Little Ginger Edwards from Newport," and "Topsy Thomas from Llanelli," all survivors of the European theatre now tasked with new duties in Africa.

Life in Nyasaland was challenging but not without its quirks. Ivor recalled mornings when his commanding officer would pour gin over his porridge instead of milk—a vivid reminder of the unconventional conditions in which they served.

Family Ties and Wartime Contributions

While Ivor was overseas, his future wife was contributing to the war effort back in England. As a nurse at Middlesex Hospital, she cared for wounded servicemen, a role she began at the tender age of 15 when the war broke out. Her dedication mirrored the courage and determination of countless women who supported the war effort on the home front.

John Davies later shared photographs of his father in his second lieutenant's uniform for a D-Day exhibition, preserving a tangible connection to this chapter of their family's history.

A Return to Academia and a Life of Service

After the war, Ivor resumed his interrupted studies at Swansea University and later pursued theological training at Oxford. His passion for philosophy endured, leading him to complete an MA in the subject at Cambridge. He went on to become a clergyman, a role through which he continued to serve others, guided by the philosophical principles he had explored in his youth.

A Legacy of Strength and Sacrifice

The story of Ivor Llewellyn Davies is one of transformation—from a young scholar with intellectual aspirations to a soldier navigating the trials of war in Europe and Africa. Alongside his wife's contributions as a wartime nurse, their experiences reflect the profound sacrifices and resilience of a generation shaped by global conflict.

Mike Boulding's Research into his father's D-Day involvement

The entry for the day of 6 June 1944 in the official War Diary of the 113 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery, simply says: "R Group disembarked at Le Hamel".

I am confident that that those words significantly underplayed the real events.

I started researching the history of my dad's wartime journey in the run-up to Rhossili's 80th Commemoration of the D-Day landings. My main references were the official Wartime Regimental Diaries that are now held in the National Archives at Kew. This was the first time I had visited the archives, and it was a thrill to handle the original documents that were painstakingly handwritten or typed by an army adjutant on the battlefield. The entries for the first days of June 1944 are shown in the picture.

My father was James Frederick Boulding (JFB). He was a young teacher and taught Maths at Newburn Manor County School in Newcastle Upon Tyne before enlisting as a gunner in March 1941. He was granted an emergency war-time commission as a Second Lieutenant on 31/7/1942 and posted to 113 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment Royal Artillery 31/1/1943.

Battle training and exercises took place throughout 1943 including at Haltwhistle, Leigh-on-Sea, Ramsgate, Tarpoley, Aberporth, Gosport, Southampton & Studland Bay. Further battle drills took place in early 1944 at Otterburn in Northumberland and Margate before moving to Southend-on-Sea for final exercises during March and April 1944. These included Exercise ATLANTIS at Harwich practising loading and embarkation on LSTs. The Regiment re-located to a central marshalling area at Ipswich in mid-April. On 1 June the regiment split into two groups: 'R' group at Southampton and 'A' group at Felixstowe.

On 6 June 1944, 'R' group disembarked at Le Hamel on Gold Beach at 1500hrs. JFB was in 'A' group and disembarked at Le Hamel on D+1, 7 June.

All gun troops were engaged in action in defence of the British Military Area centred on Meuvaines throughout the following three months. At the beginning of September, the regiment crossed the Seine River at Elbeuf and moved East to Bouvelles in defence of Rouen and Amiens. A further move took place to Denacres on the outskirts of Boulogne a few weeks later.

During mid-October, the unit was ordered to Bruges and then north to Goes in Holland at the beginning of November where they remained until the middle of April 1945. The final move was to consolidate the regiment at Putte, 20 km southeast of Antwerp where the regiment was disbanded in May 1945.

On 3 August 1945, JFB was transferred to the Army Education Corps and was one of the first officers selected to organise and administer the War Office Education

WAR DIARY
 or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY
 (Erase heading not required).

Sheet No 1
 Army Form C. 2118.

Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in F.S. Regs. Vol. I and the Staff Manual respectively. Monthly War Diaries will be enclosed in A.F. C.2119. If this is not available and for Intelligence Summaries, the cover will be prepared in manuscript.

Month and Year JUNE 1944

Unit 113 HAA Rgt RA
 Commanding Officer Lt Col. FR. G. L. T. D. S.

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	References to Appendices
IPSWICH	1	0130	R.A. group provided to embarkation dock at FELIXSTOWE and SOUTHAMPTON	
		0930	R.A. group loaded into craft	
	5		R.A. sent out from Felixstow and R.A. group sent from SOUTHAMPTON	
	6	1500	R.A. group disembarked at Le Havre	
	7		R.A. group disembarked during day at Le HAMEL RHD estate at 502552	
FRANCE				
MEUVAINES	8		All troops in action over the following periods for defence of B.M.A.:	
			362 Bty on posns 907863 + 888862	
			366 " " 842869 + 888830	
			391 " " 872858 + 892552.	
			During night 7/8 June A Co, B Co & C Co engaged EFA firing c/w 100 rds.	
	9		During night 8/9 June E Co fired 226 rds, F Co 31 rds A Co 2 rds, B Co 96 rds C Co 35 rds. Raiders close	

MINUTES FROM MEV H.R. & Co. Ldg. 80-5400

WAR DIARIES SECTION
 No. 8 - JUL 1944
 G.H.Q. 2nd Echelon

School for troops on the continent. He was appointed to 44th Brigade of 15th (Scottish) Infantry Division in early August 1945. More and more units were placed under his control until he was finally made responsible for the vocational and educational training of over 7000 men.

In 1946, he was demobilised and returned to teaching in the northeast of England for the rest of his working life where he raised a family of four children – I was number four!

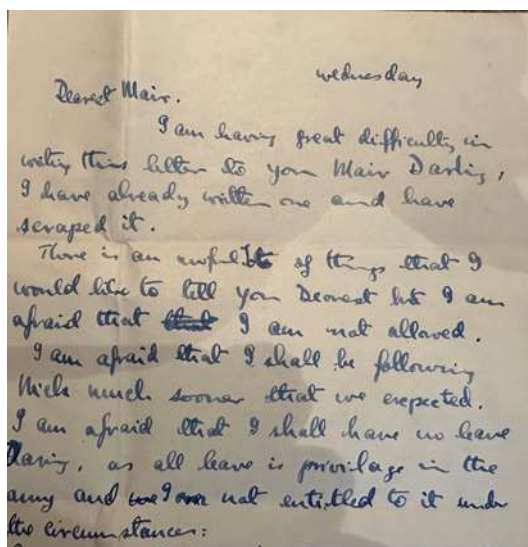
Two letters and a telegram

A typical WWII love story by Mary Provis

The call for WWII memorabilia for the Village Hall's D-Day exhibition helped me to unearth old love letters from my father to my mother which I had found when emptying the contents of Mam's bureau for the last time.

My parents, John and Mair, met – and fell in love – at the Medical School in Liverpool University. They were 16 when they started their courses in 1935! Both came from Welsh-speaking farming communities in North Wales – John from Anglesey and Mair from across the Menai Straits in Caernarvonshire. Mair's lodgings were bombed to oblivion in November 1940. John was fire-watching on the tower of The Royal Infirmary during the very bad Blitz of May 1941. He watched Liverpool 'burning'. John's lodgings were also bombed that week.

They qualified as doctors in July 1942 and John was called up into the army in August 1942. Here are excerpts from a despairing letter John wrote to Mair in the September:



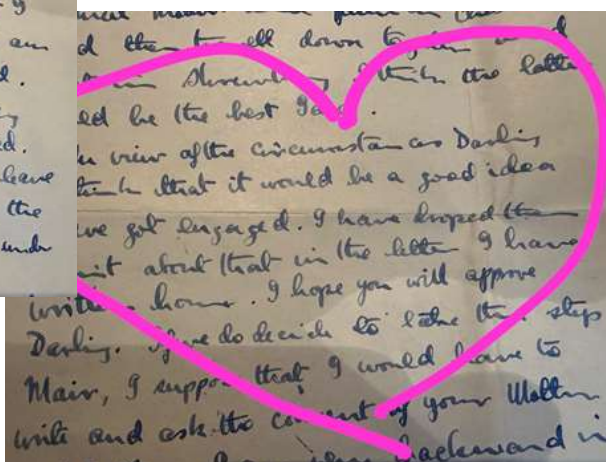
Dearest Mair.
Wednesday
I am having great difficulty in writing this letter to you Mair Darling, I have already written one and have scraped it.
There is an awful lot of things that I would like to tell you Dearest but I am afraid that ~~that~~ I am not allowed.
I am afraid that I shall be following Nick much sooner than we expected. I am afraid that I shall have no leave Darling, as all leave is privilege in the army and we are not entitled to it under the circumstances:

John had been called away, and was not expecting to have any leave and 'in view of the circumstances Darling I think then that it would be a good idea if we got engaged'

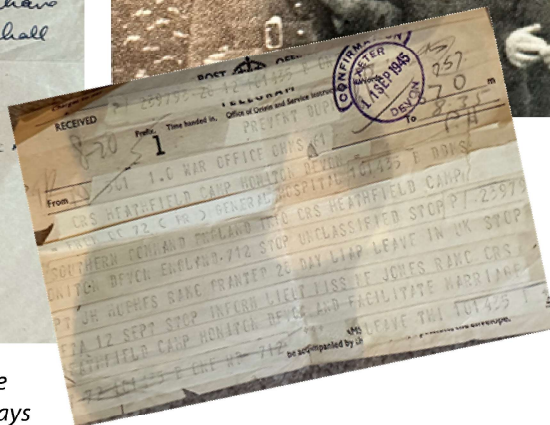
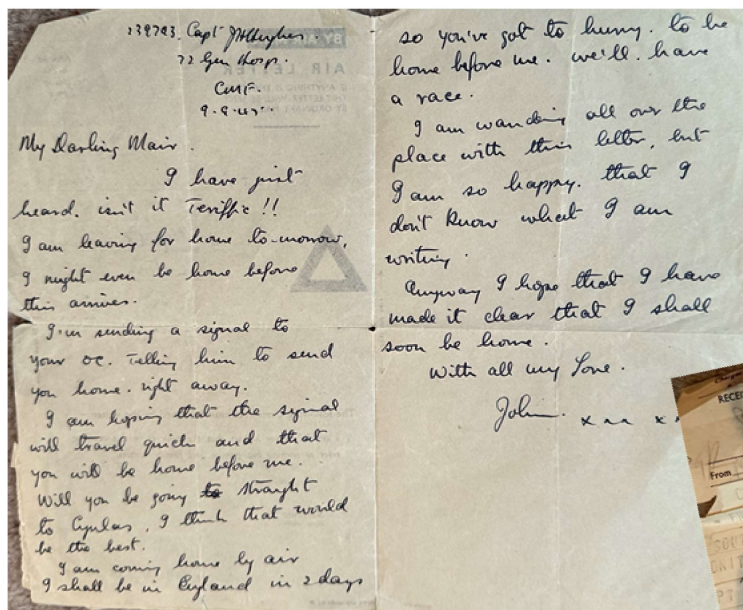
John and Mair were engaged during a 48 hour leave before John was sent away, destination unknown. He was in the landings at Algiers. He spent time in Northern and Southern Italy and then moved to Alexandria in Egypt. He had opportunities to visit the Dead Sea and Jerusalem. After Rome fell he had to return to Italy where there was savage fighting.

John had been trained to treat the wounded in battle, Germans and the Allies alike. Whatever the feelings of hatred on the battlefield, there was no animosity in the tent. As the war ended he was moved to Greece for a period where things were very unsettled. In the meantime, Mair had spent two years working in the Cardiff Royal Infirmary before being called up to the army in September 1944. She did not see active service but was a Medical Officer to the ATS. She was based in Exeter and in Perth, Scotland.

The couple HADN'T SEEN EACH OTHER FOR THREE YEARS when, on the 1st September 1945, John was given permission to have a month's leave to get married. Mair was informed by letter and telegram and they were married on the 20th September 1945. After his marriage leave John had to return to Greece for a short while before being finally discharged from the army.



Dearest Mair.
Wednesday
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There is an awful lot of things that I would like to tell you Dearest but I am afraid that ~~that~~ I am not allowed.
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Please note, whilst their correspondences would normally have been in Welsh, they wrote to each other in English to avoid delays whilst their letters were censored

The International Tribute

Let us remember those who gave their lives at home and abroad during the D-Day landings, whose sacrifice enables us all to enjoy the peace and freedom we have today.

Let us remember those who came home wounded, physically and mentally, and the friends and family who cared for them.

Let us remember those who returned to restore their relationships and rebuild their working lives after years of conflict and turmoil.

Let us remember the families that lost husbands, wives, sons, daughters and sweethearts.

Let us remember the servicemen and women and merchant seafarers of all nationalities - from all countries - who fought, suffered and died during the D-Day landings and six years of war.

Let us remember those in the Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force, Merchant Navy, and our Allies - the brave people who kept us safe on the home front and abroad and those in reserved occupations during the difficult time of war.

Let us remember the brave doctors and nurses who cared for the wounded, the men and women who toiled in the fields, the coal mines, the factories and the air raid wardens, police officers, firemen, ambulance drivers and the young people of the Scouts and Guides who all played such a vital role in the war.

6th June 2024



Magic, Mesmerising Moments

Francis Morgan

A snoozing puffin
on Skomer



Hello and Happy Christmas! I apologise unreservedly for the first part of this piece, which may seem rather long and is, well, gloomy, dealing as it does with the loss of wildlife in the parish and in the UK. The second part, although I say it myself, has some nice photos and the intent (if not the delivery) is to be really rather upbeat and inspirational, to highlight how lucky we are to live in an area which still contains a remarkable biodiversity and natural beauty and the final section looks at what we can do to tackle the gloom.

Nature is in crisis. Bad ecological news seems to be all around us. It's hard to escape the knowledge that 'nature' (i.e. natural biodiversity) in Britain has been in decline for decades and that the decline is continuing, accelerating even.

A quick survey of the UK reveals bad news story following bad news story.

The Butterfly Conservation charity declared a butterfly

emergency after analysis of the results of this year's Butterfly Count showed an almost 50% reduction in number of species seen and the lowest count in their 14-year history. Dave Goulson, in his book *Silent Earth*, warns in measured, scientific terms, of an impending 'insect apocalypse'. Mark Avery in *Reflections* outlines the long-term decline in British wildlife and identifies the 'four horsemen of the ecological apocalypse': Invasive species, Overharvesting, Pollution and Habitat Loss.

The latest UK State of Nature report finds that 'there has been no let-up in the decline of our wildlife' and that 'Welsh wildlife has declined by 20% since 1994' and that a wholly shocking 'one in 6 (18%) of Welsh species are at risk of extinction'.

Dr Jane Goodall warns (BBC online) we are already in the midst of the sixth great extinction event (the other five pre-dated human evolution). And today I read of the extinction of the Slender-Billed Curlew - the first known bird extinction from mainland Europe, North Africa and West Asia (excluding islands).

And to compound all that, climate scientists are declaring at the start of the latest COP talks that the internationally agreed goal to contain global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial temperatures is 'deader than a doornail' (Guardian) – with all that means for biodiversity loss.

We can see some of these losses locally. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (Bird flu) - which originated from intensive poultry factories in Asia – resulted in the corpses of 10s, possibly hundreds of Guillemots



Round leaved Sundew on Rhossili Down



A brown hare may give you the eye

being found washed up on our local beaches in 2023. Ash dieback – a fungal disease from Asia, introduced to the UK in 2012 because of lax biosecurity - is now sadly firmly established in Pitton wood.

There was a time when if you walked from Thurba to the Worm in late Spring seabirds were abundant - Fulmars, Herring Gulls, Kittiwakes, all contributed to a cacophony of sound - but not so now. In 1969/70 there were 189 pairs of Herring Gull on Gower, in 1987 just 13. Kittiwake nests on the Worm and at Devil's Truck (the cliff between Mewslade and Fall) have followed a similar trajectory with 620 nests on the Worm in 1977, 153 in 1986 and perhaps fewer than 50 now. At Devil's Truck there were 206 Kittiwake nests in 1977, 182 in 1986. Now? None at all. And in the last decade or so we seem to have lost completely from the parish birds such as Little Owls and Greenfinches. Spotted Flycatchers and Cuckoos, which once bred are now usually only seen on passage.

On the plus side, some species have returned after long absence, such as the Peregrine Falcon, Chough and Red Kite and a warming climate has created the opportunity for both Little and Great Egrets to cross the channel.

The good news (yes, I know, it's Christmas after all)



Dig a pond, get a Broad-bellied Chaser dragonfly

is that we live in a wonderful place, with probably – Oxwich and the Burry Estuary aside - the richest ecology on Gower, surrounded by Sites of Special Scientific Interest and local Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation.

If you walk out onto Rhossili Down in the autumn or winter you can still be rewarded by a brief sighting of the wonderfully graceful flight of a male Hen Harrier. 70 Greylag geese might emerge, honking, from the mist, and, in the spring a Dartford Warbler might be strutting his stuff on the top of a gorse bush. Song Thrushes still pour out their song at dawn from the garden hedge.

In the early summer, if you're still fit enough, you can walk out onto the middle head of the Worm and observe, on the outer head, the frenetic comings and goings of the nesting Razorbills and Guillemots, with



Shimmering cotton grass on Rhossili Down

their black and white missile shaped bodies propelled by undersized whirring wings, and Kittiwakes, with their insistent 'kittiwake' cry, and then count the seals sunbathing on the rocks on your return.

In summer Rhossili Down still shimmers with Cotton Grass and Bog Asphodel and in the boggier places, you will come across the remarkable, fly-eating Round-leaved Sundew. A Brown Hare might give you the eye, before bounding off into the bracken. Or you might see a type of dragonfly you've never seen before on your very own garden pond, or a sun-bathing grass snake. Magical, mesmerising moments. Absolutely free. (Not the pond – that cost a bit.)

The other bit of good news is that we know that it is human behaviours that are the cause of the impending sixth great extinction. This being the case, together and individually, we can change what we do to avert

disaster. It's too late for the Slender-Billed Curlew - extinction is forever - but for the other species at risk it's down to us. If we want to ensure future generations can continue to hear the bubbling call of the Eurasian Curlew, we can. If Skylarks are still to ascend from Rhossili Down, for the next hundreds of years as they have for the last, it's on us. We're not lemmings, it is not inevitable that we destroy the insects needed to pollinate our food.

So, in practical terms, what can we do to unseat the ecological horsemen? Well, we could, for example: join, and or volunteer for, an environmental charity; buy organic when possible; remove invasive plants

and sow native flowers in the garden, get rid of those garden chemicals, dig a pond, cut the hedges only after the berries are gone; ensure your dog or cat's flea and tick treatment doesn't contain neonicotinoids (it probably does, your vet can advise); ask our Senedd Member to ensure there is proper financial support for nature friendly farming, pressure politicians to deliver on our international commitment to protect 30% of land for wildlife by 2030; proselytise for nature!

Of course, none of these actions are enough on their own, but, taken together by a sufficient mass of people, the world can be changed.



Want to learn more about helping our local birds?

Want to do something to help?

Fancy building a bird box?

Sign up for our Build a Birdbox workshop on Saturday 18th January 2025, 10-2pm, Rhossili Village Hall.

As part of its commitment to supporting nature, RCC is hosting a workshop for residents to look at what is impacting on the number and variety of bird species in our local community, and, with help from Francis, think about what we can all do to help a little. At this half-day workshop, you'll be able to put together a nestbox under the guidance of Sam, Steve and Paul (the wood will be pre-cut!). We will be looking at other ways to help nature – like building bat and bug boxes too.

£10 to include bird box and light refreshments!

Message Maggie (07768898431) to book your place – numbers will be limited!



A Glass Journey

Warm glass with a warm glow inside

by Isobel Everett

Some six years ago, I decided to go on a taster course for glass art. It opened up my creative side, and gave me the confidence to experiment with an art form that I had been thinking about for some time.

Who would have thought that six years later I am bold enough to call myself a 'glass artist', using warm glass as my medium? Also, that I would have coached over forty people in our studio, helping them to explore their own creative side and make their own glass art pieces.

Warm glass should not be confused with 'blown glass'. Warm glass uses a kiln and fuses different layers of glass together. The unworked glass is specialist and comes in all different forms: sheet, small lumps - called 'frit', powder, stringers – long thin rods, to name a few. The design possibilities are endless and the joy on people's faces when they see their finished art emerge from the kiln is what fulfils me.

I am very fortunate, and full of gratitude, that we were able to build a studio in the grounds of Elmsbrook and to invest in an on-site kiln. Here in my happy place of the studio, I am able to explore my own creative journey as a glass artist, and continue to grow my own skills under the tute-



lage of some great glass artists.

I also have been able to set the studio up to coach up to four students at a time in different techniques in a workshop setting. Co-creating bespoke commissioned pieces is also a fantastic way to push and extend the boundaries of a student's skills. Working alongside me, students have created major art pieces, mirror surrounds and splashbacks as examples.

This year I have again hosted Christmas decoration workshops, bowl workshops and experimentation days where anything goes.

Do get in touch if you want to find out more about my glass work or about coming to a workshop.

In 2025 I have the exciting prospect of opening our studio as part of Gower Open Studios July event. I also plan to build a website and start selling my own pieces. My challenge is to not be phased by promoting my work on a bigger stage, and to remember to hold onto that joy that working with glass gives me.

@isoglass
07894965922

Inspiration from Nature's Jewels

by Nicky Lawrence



A nudibranch (sea slug)

Having moved to Pitton 2 years ago, I felt I had finally landed, creative-wise, when I exhibited my work for the first time on Gower, with an Open House on 23-24th November 2024. I chose the worst weekend this year with torrential rain and 60mph winds but, despite this, people still came. For those sensible people who battened down the hatches and stayed at home, I'd love to share what and why I make.

It all started when we were working in Indonesia in the 1990s. In our spare time, we dived on the pristine coral reefs off the coast of Sulawesi. My dive book was full of sketches of the wonderful underwater world. On a trip to Egypt many years later, I was deeply shocked to see far fewer fish and large areas of bleached coral.

After many years of primary school teaching and making jewellery in my spare time as a hobby, I took the plunge and did a Masters in Jewellery and Glass at Farnham. I was like a child in a sweet shop. There was a large Hot Shop where I blew glass and sculpted solid glass forms, a room full of glass kilns, where I experimented with fusing glass through copper and a huge jewellery workshop and forge, where I formed shapes with hydraulic presses, forged neckpieces, soldered, played with colouring metals and much more.

I had to come up with a concept for

my work. The obvious one was the coral reefs and its weird and wonderful inhabitants. I had no idea what was possible and sketched a very elaborate coral reef that I intended to make in glass, with the inhabitants of the reef, adorning it in glass and metal. I would still be doing my degree now, if it weren't for a glass technician who suggested I simplify it. Rather than creat-

ing a brightly coloured reef, I chose to create a bleached reef, a stark contrast to the brightly coloured nudibranch (sea slug) jewellery. I opted for nudibranchs as they are like underwater jewels. They are beautiful vibrantly coloured little creatures (up to 8cm in length) with gills that look like tentacles that glide daintily around the reef. Trying to replicate them was tricky but fun! The reef kept growing and, during my Artist in Residency, my work became vertical. I blew a white coral reef and mounted it on black back-lit discs. The lights shimmered, reminiscent of the sun catching the reef. The installation, 'Vertical Reef' was exhibited at the OXO in London. Scientists, working on a reef regeneration programme in Sulawesi have since provided me with recordings of healthy and bleached reefs. I am now hoping to make 'Vertical Reef' into a sound and light installation. As people walk past the installation, the coral will shimmer and emit the sounds of a healthy reef followed by the sounds of bleached reef. Unsurprisingly there is a stark dif-





ference.

The jewellery continues to grow, with nudibranch jewellery, suspended from hand-forged silver neck pieces. Originally the nudibranchs would sit on their own piece of blown glass bleached coral, becoming a piece of art, when not being worn. I loved the idea of selling a piece of jewellery that, rather than sitting in a drawer, when not being worn, would take on a new role as a piece of sculptured art. Additionally, the message of the bleached reef might spread into the home of the new owner and become a conversation piece. I believe that art can be political and is a useful medium to express concerns, such as the impact of global warming on the coral reefs and plastic pollution in the Oceans.



The nudibranchs have been joined by silver rings with fused glass. The glass reflects the colours of a healthy reef and its inhabitants. On the base of the rings are holes, reflecting the nooks and crannies of the reef.

Having recently moved to Gower, I am keen to make some Gower inspired jewellery and glass. As a cold-water swimmer and having taken part in beach cleans, I'm very aware of all the plastic waste that gets washed up on our shores. I hope to integrate this into my work, in part as a conversation piece, and in part, to bring the waste full cycle, back to the humans that generated it but in a beautiful form!

I will be doing Gower Open Studios with Isobel Everett in July 2025 so please do visit us. To find out more about my work, Gower Open Studios and future exhibitions, please visit:

www.nickylawrencejewellery.co.uk

@nickylawrencejewellery



Young Farmers of Rhossili



Freddie Thomas, Ship Farm

Well, it's been another very busy and productive year at Ship Farm, January 2024 saw the arrival of George and Hash Brown two calves from our cows Moon

and Summer, both calves out of Tom Rodericks Hereford bull. Both arrived safely without any help needed from Bampa or I.

Soon after the lambs started to arrive thick and fast, Spring was a little slow to arrive and we were lambing in awful weather conditions, our Welsh mountain sheep are very hardy and much prefer to lamb outdoors so a constant watchful eye was needed to ensure the safe arrival of the new-borns. My Black Welsh Mountain ewes lambed at Talgarth's Well, many many thanks to Derek and Carole

for allowing me to graze my flock there. I had a huge amount of ewe lambs this year which I shall retain to help increase my flock.

We then started to anxiously await some drier weather to enable us to prepare the ground for our crop of potatoes. Our Welsh pigs had already made a start in preparing the ground and had done an excellent job in turning over the soil and fertilising it!! We were about 4-5 weeks later planting this year due to the very wet weather.



Thankfully though we had a very successful yield of potatoes, this year we planted several different varieties, Swift, Rocket, Nadine and King Edwards. I sold my potatoes at my stall outside the village hall and also at Gower Pick Your Own, a huge thank you to Tom and Jess for all your help and support, it's much appreciated.

At the Gower Show, Isabel and I entered the heaviest potato competition and we got first and second prize and then later in the year at the Gower Ploughing match we also won first and second prize for the heaviest potato and heaviest pumpkins, I also won first prize for my potatoes and my beetroot. Every year Isabel and I have a competition to see who can grow the biggest pumpkin!

Summer 2024 was a rather wet affair; I know us farmers will always complain about the weather but it was rather challenging. We managed an early cut of haylage and then managed to grab a couple of dry days at the end of July to make some hay. The haylage and hay is all used as winter fodder for our sheep, cattle



and ponies. Our free-range hens and ducks also love the barns full of bales as they often make their nests in there (usually in the most awkward, hard to reach places).

I've grown a wide selection of vegetables this year and have been trying lots of new varieties. Next season I hope to grow on a slightly larger scale to enable me to keep up with demand. I've grown carrots, beetroot, parsnips, onions, potatoes, pumpkins, sprouts, sweet-corn, beans, tomatoes, cucumber, leeks, chillies, peppers.

September saw the arrival of the Gower Young Farmers Tractor run in loving memory of Jan Smith from Oxwich, over 60 tractors and farm vehicles travelled through the village heading for Sluxton where we had lunch and a catch up before heading off again, we raised over £3,000 for charity. Thank you to all of the

villagers who came out in the pouring rain to support us. It was a sight to behold.

During the autumn I bought some Herdwick sheep to introduce to my flock, Herdwicks are native to the Lake District, they are an extremely hardy breed. I also got some weaners (young pigs) to help me prepare the ground for next season's vegetables. During this month Bampa and I also introduced the rams to our flocks, so fingers crossed for a successful lambing season in 2025.

As 2024 comes to an end we are busy preparing our vegetables for the festive season.

We would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Best wishes

Freddie and everyone at Ship Farm.

Claire Beynon, shares her experience of growing up on Middleton Farm

Growing up in a village has pros and cons.

I've enjoyed growing up in a place where I know most people, it gives me a sense of connection to those around me. Something that my friends from town say they lack and envy. However there is a distinct lack of people my age in the village which can be isolating mainly due to a lack of common interests. Also living further away from the city can make it challenging to meet up with my friends. But in the end I wouldn't trade growing up here for anywhere else.

Living on the farm has given me a unique perspective into how the world works and an understanding about where food comes from. Working on the farm has taught me valuable lessons and skills including: hard work, perseverance, responsibilities and a love for working with animals. This love of animals led me to complete a degree in animal management. It has also made me want to stay and work on the farm with my family.

Over the last year or so we have been diversifying on the farm by raising chickens to sell and we've started to rear more calves. These things have made it easier for me to contribute to the farm as I enjoy working with the young stock.

Don't get me wrong I love what I do but the truth is farming is hard. But I wouldn't trade it for anything else.





Rhossili Community Council Cyngor Cymuned Rhosili

We have a vacancy for a new Community Councillor
Please come and join us!

Celebrating our heritage and helping to create a sustainable future is an important part of RCC's vision. If that's important to you too and you'd like to be involved in helping to shape that vision, apply to come and join us. We need people on our community council from all ages, backgrounds, and experiences. Become a councillor and make a difference!

Want to know more? Visit our website and find the "Your Council" page to find more details on Becoming a Councillor or get in touch with us for a chat at rhossilicc@gmail.com.

Interested? It's as easy as 1,2 3!

- 1. Check** that you are eligible to stand (most people are). Details are given at the start of the Nomination form and on the webpage address above.
- 2. Look** at the process we'll be following, so you know what to expect. Full details of this can be found on the Council web page.
- 3. Apply!** Complete the short Nomination for Co-option form online or by requesting a paper copy from rhossilicc@gmail.com. You'll be asked to include brief details about your interests and the skills and experience you can bring to the council. Return the form to us, by email or post, to the contact details given on the Nomination form.

Closing date: 5pm, Tuesday, 7th January 2025

All applications will be considered at the Council meeting on **Tuesday, 14th January**, when councillors will vote to select the successful candidate.

All applicants will be provided with the same information about the selection process and will be treated equally, in a fair and open process. If you require additional assistance as part of the application process please contact clerk@rhossilicc.org.uk or 07387 386686.

We look forward to hearing from you.

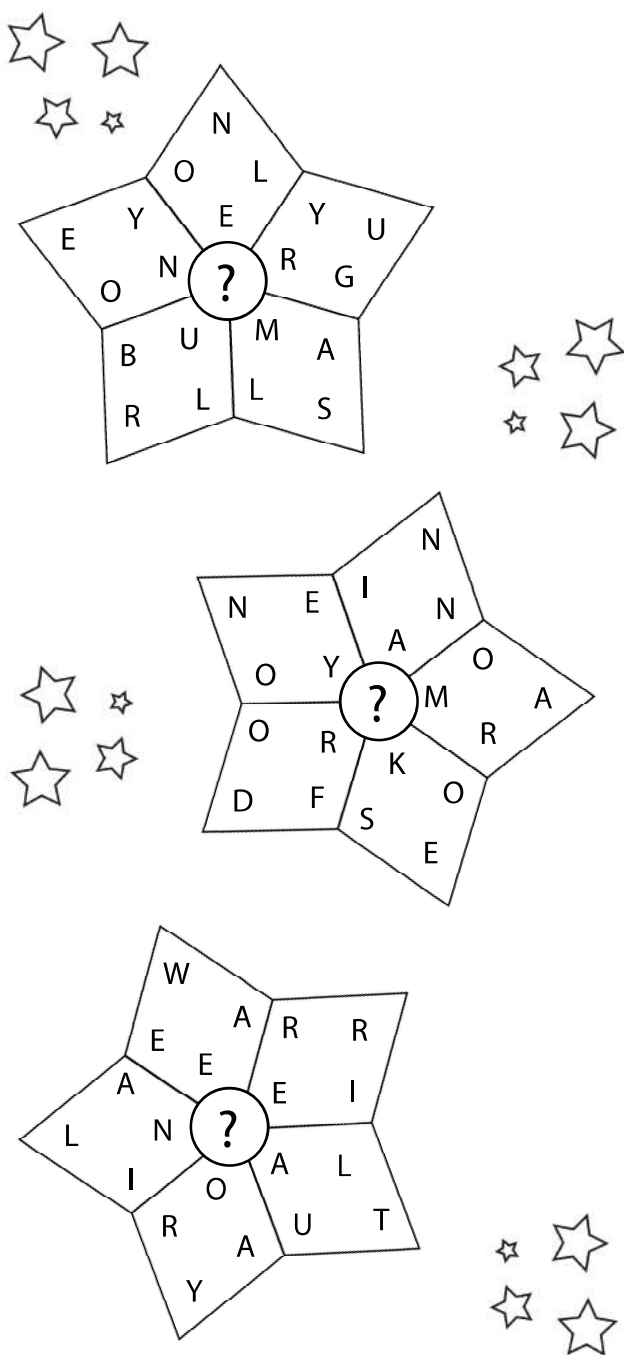
Roger Button's Christmas Quiz

1. Rhossili Hill is the highest point on Peminsula Gower, how high is it in feet?
2. What military unit operated at Rhossili during WW2 and up until the 1960's?
3. What building stood on the plot that the hall carpark occupies?
4. What material was exported to North Devon in large quantities up until circa 1900?
5. What is the number of the road we live on?
6. Why during WW2 was it blocked off at Scurlage with access to the A4118 denied.?
7. And what was the alternative route?
8. The soil in the fields of the Vile is ideally suited for the growing of which crop?
And it's not Sunflowers!
9. The former mast at the Coastwatch station near Worms Head supported what weather warning device?
10. How high in feet is the Outer Head of the Worm?

O	P	I	L	S	W	O	C	H	O	U	G	H	N	P	C
E	U	P	E	O	N	S	M	A	L	L	B	L	U	E	A
L	A	E	S	C	I	T	N	A	L	T	A	Y	E	R	G
T	R	I	A	B	L	U	E	B	E	L	L	M	E	E	R
R	A	V	E	N	R	E	H	T	T	A	O	T	S	G	A
E	M	E	W	W	H	E	N	H	A	R	R	I	E	R	Y
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Y	D	R	I	N	G	L	E	T	O	O	F	O	L	T	D
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H	G	T	A	T	Y	O	F	U	R	E	P	S	K	U	N
G	N	G	U	I	L	L	E	M	O	T	I	H	S	S	E
O	N	A	N	O	Y	L	F	L	E	S	M	A	D	P	E

Can you find
Rhossili's
flora &
fauna?

Yellow hammer	Adder
Skylark	Slowworm
Chough	Weasel
Kestrel	Stoat
Raven	Peregrine
Gatekeeper	Falcon
Grayling	Ringlet
Smallblue	Hen Harrier
Guillemot	Redkite
Fulmar	Dragonfly
Stonechat	Damselfly
Harbour Porpoise	Primrose
Grey Atlantic Seal	Cowslip
Fox	Celandine
	Bluebell
	Dandelion
	Ramson



Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Each point of a star contains a different 5 letter word, comprising of the four given letters and the mystery letter in the centre.

Can you identify the missing letter in each star?

Christmas Crackers

Which of Father Christmas' reindeer has bad manners?

Rude-olph!

Who hides in a Christmas bakery?

A mince spy!

What do Father Christmas' helpers learn in school?

The elf-abet!

What's an arctic wolf's favourite time of the year?

The Christmas howl-idays!

How do snowmen shop online?

They use the winter-net!

What's green, prickly and flies through the air?

A holly-copter!

Why did the snowmen go to the market?

They were picking their nose!

What type of photos do elves take?

Elf-ies!

What falls but never gets hurt?

Snow!

Why do reindeer wear bells?

Because their horns don't work!

What do you get if you cross a snowman and a vampire?

Frostbite!

What's an elf's favourite type of music?

Wrap music!

What do you call someone who's scared of Father Christmas?

Claus-trophobic!

Why is it always cold at Christmas?

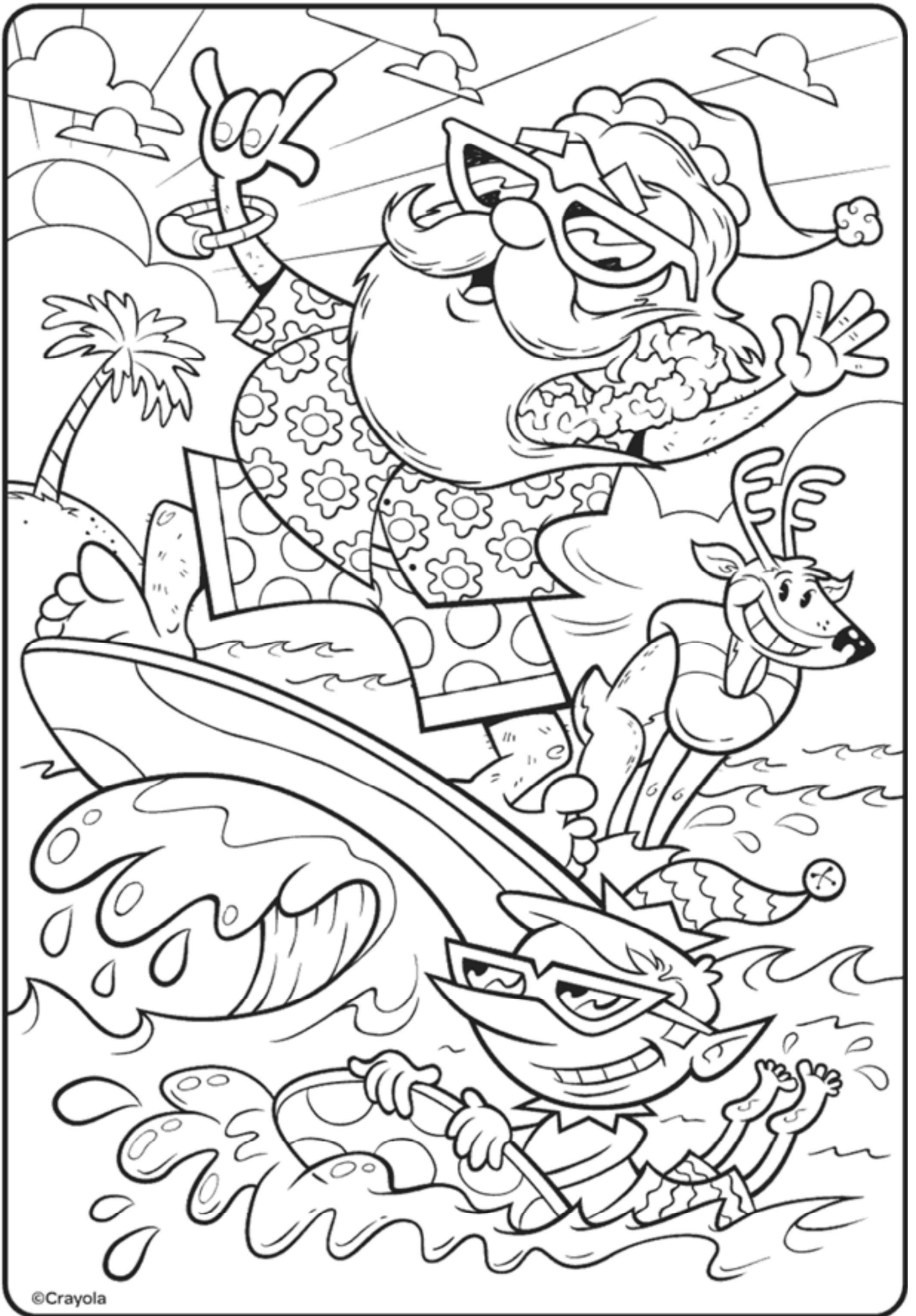
Because it's Decem-brrrrr!

Why are Christmas trees bad at sewing?

They always drop their needles!

What do you get if you cross a bell with a skunk?

Jingle smells!



©Crayola

Answers

Quiz:

1. 633ft
2. Royal Observer Corps
3. The Rhossili Telephone Exchange

4. Limestone (used as a soil conditioner
5. B4247
6. It passed through the US Military Camp
7. Through the lane past Margam Farm joining the

- A4118 at Moorcorner Farm
8. Autumn/winter cauliflowers
9. A storm warning "cone"
10. 184ft
- Stars: B, J and V



©Crayola



Volunteers Needed for Rhossili's Keep Wales Tidy Litter Hwb

Rhossili is excited to be the first village in Gower to host a **Keep Wales Tidy Litter Hwb** - a hub for lending litter-picking equipment to anyone wanting to help clean up our beautiful area. The unit, which will be located in the car park at Rhossili Village Hall, will be stocked with litter pickers, hi-vis vests, hoops, and bags, all available for free to local residents and visitors.

We're looking for volunteers to help manage the Litter Hwb. Don't worry - there's no litter picking expected as part of the role!

Volunteers will help with organising the equipment and assisting anyone who wants to borrow it for their own clean-ups.

If you're interested or have any questions, get in touch with Lesley-Anne Nolan at la.nolan@rhossilicc.org.uk

New Year's Eve Rhossili Beach Clean



Tuesday 31st December 2024
10-11.30am

Meet at the beach sign at the bottom of the path.

Wear suitable shoes/boots

Join together for refreshments at The Lookout at 11.45

Everyone welcome - the whole family,





Lottie



Ziggy



Oscar



Tibbs



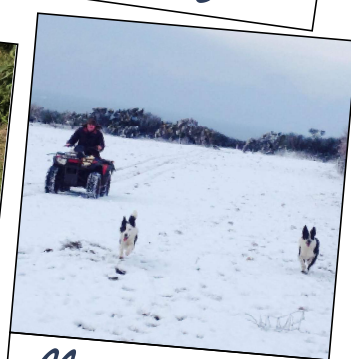
Mist



Archie



Jack



Moss & Nell



Mabli

Puppy Polaroids!



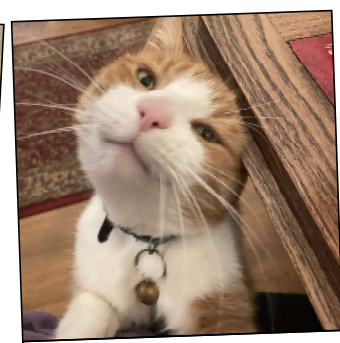
Rue



Hazel



Shadow



Dylan (um...)



Bert



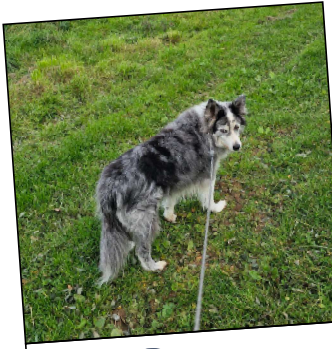
Poppy, Willow & Lola



Alys



Missy



Dave



Myles



Simba & Daisy



Titan & Jac



Ginny & Zebbie



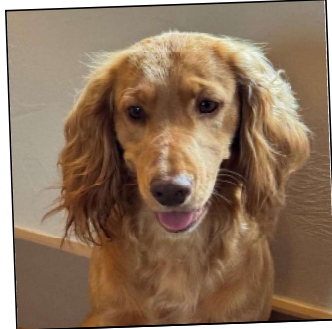
Gus



Betsy



Dylan



Buster



Biscoff



Finn



Willow



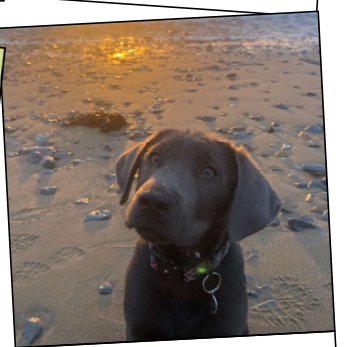
Dai Davies



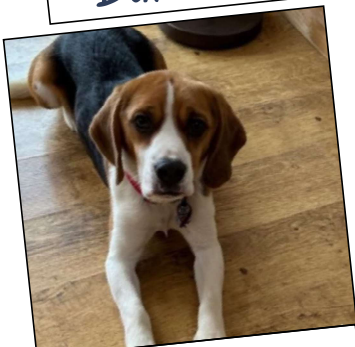
Blackie



Wilf



Ziggy



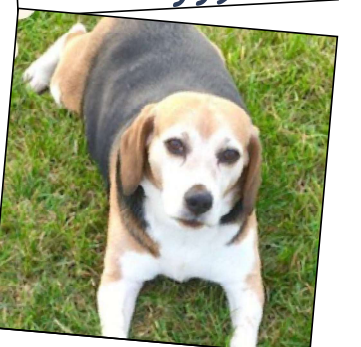
Finley



Remy



Ramsey



Shelby

Home is where the Heart is

In 2021 Georgia and Simon Entwistle packed up their bags and moved across the country to become a part of our local community. Here Georgia tells us about their love for Gower and how they finally came to call it home.



I've been coming to Gower on holiday since the age of 2, when my mum first brought me. I got the bug and never stopped visiting for holidays at every opportunity. Gower is my happy place. Simon and I got together in 2014, and I decided to introduce the love of my life to my life's love. We found a lovely little holiday cottage in Llangennith, packed the dogs and set off on the long drive. As we came over the brow of the hill, looking down on the dazzling water of Rhossili Bay, Simon turned to me and said "I'm home".

In 2015, I finished my night shift at 0600 on Christmas Day morning. I was looking forward to a few rest days, and we were to spend Christmas in Gower. We arrived in Scurllage in torrential rain and a howling gale. We unloaded and Simon suggested going to the beach. I thought he was mad – I hadn't slept, the weather was foul, but he insisted, and as we hunkered down in the Port Eynon dunes, he produced champagne and an engagement ring. Of course, I said yes. We sold our respective houses and bought one five doors down from my parents – my dad had dementia and mum was his main carer. Mum has always loved Gower, and there were always conversations about moving permanently. In 2016 we went on BBC's Coast vs Country to search for a property. We found one in Landimore and put in an offer, which was accepted, however later fell through. Plans to move were put on the back burner and we returned to Rugby and the daily grind. Many more holidays followed, both with and without my parents. We invariably stayed in The Kings Head Inn, Llangennith, and were renowned



for extending our stays. 9 days was our longest. We couldn't tear ourselves away! We got to know the Stevens family well and became friends. However, the amount of time we were spending in Gower was proving to be uneconomical. We decided to place a caravan at Kennexstone, and we were there so frequently that the Rogers and Ludkewyczs became good friends!

We decided to get married in Gower. It was only going to be a small affair, with a few close friends and family. Our service was to be at Gower Golf Club in 2019, party at Kennexstone. It kind of escalated. Into a festival. With street food, a bar, a bucking sheep, bands, a DJ etc.... Over 100 people came, and we had one hell of a time, to the point that we recreate it every year – "wedfest".

Then COVID hit. Working as a frontline NHS paramedic was both tiring and terrifying. Coming home after a shift Simon would be in the lounge with the dogs whilst I undressed in the hallway, threw my uniform on a boil wash and went straight upstairs to shower. Summer 2020, between lockdowns, packed the dogs and headed to the caravan. We'd not even been at the caravan for ten minutes, when Simon's eldest daughter rang (she'd been round for lunch the previous day) and declared that she had tested positive for COVID, so that was us locked down in the caravan for 14 days.

Everyone at Kennexstone looked after us and we spent our time out in the fresh air, playing cards, or looking for houses for sale in Gower..... There was an interesting looking proposition over in Pilton. We got into the car and drove over and had a look from the outside. It had a cute granny annexe





which would be perfect for my parents. After quarantine was up, we went and viewed it and returned to Rugby and told mum all about it. She hadn't even seen it, and the next day both of our houses were on the market.

January 2021, during lockdown, we moved out. My parents went to stay with my friend whilst Simon, our dogs, their dog and 4 van loads of furniture went ahead. We arrived at our new property to find a legal issue which had occurred during the journey and the previous owners weren't going to move out yet! The removal company threatened to take all our stuff back to Rugby and we were in a pickle! We were eventually allowed to store our belongings in the conservatory. We rang everyone we knew. Everywhere was shut as it was lockdown. We were now homeless. Then Jamie Stevens came to the rescue! He had been talking to his family and they were prepared to put us up in a room. There was no food or drink available, but it was a roof! Too long was spent squatting with all the dogs and eating garage sandwiches and pot noodles. Lara Joslin kindly offered her cottage and we moved into there, where my parents joined us. Lifesaver! Eventually the legal kinks were ironed out and we got into our new house. I had decided to have some time off to help Simon with the renovations. This did not last long, maybe a couple of months. It turns out that I am not a natural apprentice. Pretty soon, I was sacked from sweeping, sacked from carrying, and to the shouts of "get a job, OUT of the house" I toddled off in the direction of Port Eynon. Lockdown was over and people were out again. I went into The Ship Inn and Richard Knox hired me immediately. I was there for over a year and a half, and it was an excellent way to get to know our new community.

We still had our caravan at Kennexstone and used to regularly go "on holiday" over the hill. David Rogers asked Simon if he could spare a couple of weeks to assist him with the roof on the new building. Of course, Simon obliged.

Weeks turned into months; he acquired an apprentice in Jamie Stevens. Months turned into

years and after two years, they had completed the entire internal build of the restaurant, shop and conference rooms!

Meanwhile I had gone back into the NHS and was working for WAST as an ambulance Paramedic. I made it through the Hunger Games type process and now work as a CHARU out of

Llanelli.

Simon's eldest daughter was a frequent visitor, and it didn't take long for her to decide that she also liked Gower way of life, and in she moved. Initially she got a job behind the bar at The Worm's Head Hotel, but now works at Pitton Cross Campsite with Tracey and Ian Button, which she adores.

Last summer, Kennexstone completed, Simon and Jamie began to scheme. There was the seed of an idea germinating. They were going to convert something. "We're going to buy a fire engine." "No, you're not." "We're going to buy a horsebox then." "No, you're not." "Babe, we've bought a horsebox". Damn it. I'd left them unattended. Simon and I set about stripping the rotting thing down to the chassis. Simon spent day and night creating a thing of beauty with his joinery skills, and when Jamie got back from holiday, they perfected "The Out Out Inn" – an extendable horsebox bar, complete with cocktail bar and professional cellar box (no flash coolers here). Eight draught pumps, fridges, and even the option for a cask ale! Gower Bar Hire was born! It's first outing was at Wedfest and since then we have done weddings, festivals, dog shows, fetes etc! We will be at Gower Fresh Christmas Trees Illuminate Trail this winter, serving warming mulled wine and cider. Come and join us at The Out Out Inn and we'll raise a glass to wonderful Gower – it's changed our life and we love everything in it.



Gardening in a Warm Climate

by Rob Dyer, Chair, Reynoldston & District Gardening Club



The Persian Silk Tree (*Albizia julibrissin*) likes a well-drained, sheltered spot

Those of us with advancing geriatric requirements remember days of long ago when snow was expected every winter and frosts were so hard that we drew pictures on the inside of the glass. So initially, when we first started talking about 'global warming' the prospect of warmer winters aroused visions of deckchairs in December and sunscreen applied year-round. In fact, we now talk about 'climate change' rather than global warming. As we are now finding, warmth does not necessarily mean "dry" but indeed sometimes quite the opposite.

A recent weather forecaster explained the situation very clearly - the warmer the world gets, the more water evaporates from the seas; the moister the air gets from evaporation, the heavier our rainfall will be - as we are all too aware of. And there's more! In 2017, the Royal Horticultural Society published a report on Gardening in a Changing Climate (<https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/gardening-in-a-changing-world/climate-change>) and this highlighted that extreme weather events are the most likely conditions to be experienced by the U.K. In a nutshell they outlined the three main ways this would impact on our gardens:

- Rainfall: An increase in prolonged periods without any rain; an increased frequency of very wet days; ongoing wide variations in annual rainfall.
- Temperature: average temperature predicted to carry on rising across all parts of the U.K.; much of the U.K. could be frost-free in future.
- Wind and storms: More extreme, more intense windy spells and storms.

For the gardener this is not all bad news, certainly those frosts we now get do not have the intensity or length of yesteryear. Apart from those unfortunate enough to live in flood prone areas, most of us can, to

one degree or another, adjust our gardening to mitigate the excess of moisture. Drainage is the essential tool in our hands which can allow us to manage areas prone to waterlogging.

Gravel, stones, chippings and even crushed cockle shells can be mixed in quantity to improve the draining properties of your soil (caution- the last two can affect the alkalinity of soil, so take note rhododendron lovers). Planting on a slightly raised mound, so that water does not sit around the plant base will help in problem places. Many plants will enjoy moisture retaining soils but very few tolerate waterlogging. Desert specialists such as Agaves, Yuccas and other arid area plants are more difficult to succeed with but their architectural qualities have tempted me to try. The following method has given me some good results but is not infallible! After removing the root ball from its pot, remove the soil from the neck of plant leaving a short stem, place plant in hole but only replace soil to half way and fill space left with grit or small pebbles up to the lower leaves. This should protect the areas vulnerable to rot but is only to be recommended for plants that are moderately hardy.

Many more tender plants, if grown in pots, will tolerate very low temperatures if kept completely dry during winter. A friend in the valleys has kept large agaves for



The drought-resistant Agave (*Agave univittata*)

many years by placing them under overhanging eaves from October to March, even in temperatures of -15°C.

Those of us who live on Gower are not always aware of the mild weather we enjoy, which gives us the opportunity to grow plants otherwise seen only in West of England gardens. I buy many of my sub-tropical plants from specialist nurserymen who often offer small specimens at modest prices but I frequently see large specimens for sale in large garden centres at eye watering prices. It seems unlikely that our weather is going to change in the short term and we must adapt.

As if deluges of biblical proportions were not enough, they are frequently accompanied by winds of increasing ferocity, which in our maritime climate are exacerbated by their salt content. Those of us fully exposed, can try to mitigate to some degree, by using plants which experience similar conditions in their native environments.

Many southern hemisphere plants, especially those from New Zealand such as hebes, olearias and phormiums will cope with full exposure as long as temperatures remain above freezing but will suffer substantial damage or death if faced with sub-zero temperatures and high winds. This was the situation in 2018 when the 'the Beast from the East' caused extensive damage in many gardens locally and in the normally mild South West. Wind damage can be reduced by planting hedges of salt tolerant shrubs such as escalonia, griselinia, euonymus and eleagnus but even these tough guys will need initial protection by artificial windbreaks until well established. So I suppose we must hope(?) for light winds and moderate rainfall in our swiftly changing climate.

Having considered rainfall and wind problems we have to consider our predicted rise in average temperatures and while on the face of it this sounds benign, it 'ain't necessarily so'. As conditions in the Mediterranean earlier this year showed, summer temperatures over 30°C are certainly not beneficial to humans and plants alike. However, the prospect of warmer winters without frost is enticing, and in my own garden



The Chilean firebush (*Embothrium coccineum*) is good for sheltered coastal sites

The Sceptre foxglove (*Digitalis sceptrum*) can grow in a sheltered position in frost-free areas



I have had several winters without sub-zero temperatures and I am now able to overwinter many plants on the borderline of hardiness. Gazanias, osteospermums and leucanthemums have survived successive winters and formed substantial clumps, and many south African bulbs and dahlias no longer require lifting in the autumn, subject always to my previous advice on drainage.

My own garden now contains many shrubs which I would have considered tender ten years ago. I am afraid however that summers with more than 30°C foretell disaster for many of our favourite plants. Acers, fuchsia, ferns, astilbe and roses will not survive continued conditions like this and even iron clad spring shrubs such as rhododendron, magnolia and camellia will suffer severe damage and often death. This would be a disaster for our gardens and must encourage us to support any means of reducing toxic gases in our atmosphere.

All images from Rob's garden.

Interested in Gardening?

Come along to the monthly meetings of the Reynoldston & District Gardening Club. The Club started 42 years ago, in 1981 and we meet on the second Wednesday of the month, from September to May, currently at 2.30pm in Reynoldston Methodist Chapel. We welcome all those with a love of plants or an interest in any aspect of horticulture, for talks, plant swaps & sales, monthly raffle and a chat over tea, coffee & biscuits.

There is no need to be an expert or even an active gardener – new members are always assured of a warm welcome and our more expert gardeners are always generous about sharing their knowledge and giving advice. All for an annual subscription of £10! Guests are also welcome to attend if there's a particular talk of interest, for £5 (to include tea & biscuits).

Lleisiau Gŵyr

by Mairwen Kirk, Musical Director

The Cambridge dictionary defines a choir as “a group of people who sing together.” And I’m with them, to a point. I’ve previously described Lleisiau Gŵyr as a lively choir with a love of singing. We perform in a lot of concerts and events and also have our own social outings. Lleisiau Gŵyr sing a wide range of music from unison to more complex 4 part music, covering a variety of genres and languages. (The adjective ‘talented’ comes to mind.) There are people in the choir who can sight read, and those who have never used music before. You could think that having such a diverse group of people would be a challenge, but it really isn’t.

The real challenge is reigning in the secretary (Maggie Kirk) whose emails display increasing delusion. Examples of this would include her obsession with the notion of jogging round the coast path, “The hailstones were challenging today but I enjoy the exhilaration of leaping over sheep and fences with the wind in my hair and the sun on my back”, stealing china from venues that have kindly invited us there, “luckily, I had my shoplifting handbag with me”, and throwing merciless insults at the director (no quotes necessary).

A choir is much more than a group of people singing together. Having a sense of humour and fun is important to us. We start every rehearsal with coffee and a chat, taking time to support and celebrate each other.

So in order to get an idea of what makes a choir, let’s look at what we’ve been up to.

We’ve had an incredibly busy year, with more concerts and events than there are months in the year! This began with a return trip to Carmarthen museum where we sang a programme celebrating



Welsh music, closely followed by a successful fundraiser at Port Einoon Village hall. We also sang for a very un-surprising surprise party for Chris Williams.

In April the much anticipated, back-by-popular-demand, repeat performance of our Songs for Peace concert took place in Llangennith where we were very fortunate to be joined by our fantastic musicians, Mary’s Merry Men and Cantorion Llanmadoc. It was a phenomenal evening, and a joy to be part of. Naturally we had to sing the highlights again at Oxwich Marquee when Bishop John visited. Following this we had our D-day commemorative concert, and a second performance for St Hillary’s music appreciation group. We were thrilled that the Merry Men were enthusiastic to keep singing with us.

Before our summer break we took a trip to Aberglasney gardens where we sang them a song we’d imaginatively named ‘Aberglasney gardens’ which listed all the flowers they had, in their gardens. We had a well earned afternoon tea, and we were asked back!





Our autumn term began with rehearsals for the Reynoldston Harvest supper, where the Merry Men sang an ode to the Port Einon 'hole in the ground' that prevented us from rehearsing there one week. In November, the most spontaneous (read: available) members of Lleisiau Gŵyr took part in a fundraiser for the RNLI, which we only discovered the week before that we were on their programme! The audience were given the task of racing two very large buckets of water to the back of the hall (of course, not in an attempt to distract them from our singing). Why were the buckets so full? Why was the director slurring her words? How do you sing the letters RNLI to YMCA? These are many questions we could ask, but won't.



To end the year, we've been invited back to Aberglasney to take part in their winter fair. The director will be kept well away from the mulled wine, and the choir won't be singing any songs stating the obvious about flowers, elves, or anything else they see. Our last two performances of the year will be at Rhossili Village Hall's Carols Around the Tree and our own Christmas Concert at Port Einon church. I'm sure they'll both be magical. (What's that? Both performances are com-

Do you want to join Lleisiau Gŵyr?

We welcome men and women who enjoy singing as part of a choir, and we particularly need more men & sopranos.

We meet on Thursday afternoons in Port Einon. Every rehearsal starts with a coffee and a chat.

Contact Mairwen on 07880 878 172 for more information.

pletely free of charge? Only sizeable donations expected towards the nominated charities? Wow. If that doesn't say Merry Christmas then I don't know what does.)

Taking part in all these activities is an impressive commitment, and I hope the choir takes pride in their hard work this year. There's a lot that goes on behind the scenes and a lot of people that we are grateful to for their support. To me, Lleisiau Gŵyr means community and I think it's a wonderful thing to be part of. If you're interested in singing with us, get in touch!

So what's on the horizon? Next year we've obviously already been booked for the proms (they couldn't do it without us darling) and will be undertaking a seven week tour around Europe. (What do you mean no one will insure us?) Unfortunately due to our busy schedule we have, yet again, had to turn down Glyndebourne (please take the hint). In the new year we're hoping we can continue to bring joy to our local communities through our love of singing, not just as a group of people who sing together.



Christmas Concert Spectacular

Hosted by **Lleisiau Gŵyr**

starring steel pans and local soloists

Mulled wine and mince pies to help you get into the festive spirit!

7pm, Saturday 14th December

Port Einon Church

suggested £10 donation to help raise money for our charities



Rhossili Coastguard

by Steve Lancey

It has been a reasonably quiet 2024 for all of us at Rhossili Coastguard, with an accumulated 56 incidents for the year. Although, with that being said, we have been involved with some rather high profile jobs.

The incident that was highlighted the most this year took place in August, when we were requested to assist police in the search for a missing person last seen in the Rhossili area. This was a long and drawn out incident which involved many other emergency services over a number of days. The dedication from the team was unquestionably outstanding and they put in some serious hours, over multiple days, taking time away from their work and family in order to locate the missing person.

During the last 12 months, we have been through ongoing assessments in Water Rescue and First Aid and have all successfully passed which is great news for the team.

One of our later recruits - Lyndon - has progressed and become a qualified cliff technician, along with Connor which is a huge achievement and greatly bolsters our options for cliff rescue. I'd also like to pass on a huge thank you to our current cliff technicians, who have given up time to support this process.



Sadly, Sarah finished with the team earlier this year. Understandably, we were all absolutely gutted to lose such a valuable member, however totally respected her decision. Sarah had been with the team for over 5 years and was ever present at incidents and training. She has and will continue to be missed.

Some team members were recently awarded Kings Coronation Medals:

- Steve Lancey,
- Zak Higgins,
- Steve Jones,
- Dai Cann,
- Mike Williams,
- Jeff Higgins,
- Matt Fifield,
- Stu Argue,
- Mark Button, and
- Connor Furneaux.

On behalf of the Rhossili Coastguard Team, we would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



It's been another busy year for the social committee, planning and running a number of events to try and amuse and entertain everyone! We aim to come up with new ideas but it can be a struggle, so if anyone would like to put something on at the Hall or would like us to consider doing something new, please do get in touch. You will see who we are at the end of this article.

So, this is what we've been up to in 2024 ...

We've had some fantastic speakers at our (mostly) monthly Wednesday coffee mornings, starting in January with Gill Green (or Boulding) who spoke about what Mindfulness is and isn't and why it helps. The Rev. Dr. Peter Lewis in February explained about the Connection Between Fungi in Rhossili and the Amazon. In March, we hosted Prostate Cymru at 'possibly the most important coffee morning that you ever attend ...! PC took away £70 in donations to the cause from that one. In May a couple of staff members from Plantasia Tropical Zoo were here and in June our very own Sue Muddeman told us how to be 'Clean and Green' in our homes. We had a talk from a member of staff from the Dog's Trust in October. She took away with her a pile of blankets and towels kindly donated for bedding by members of our community, and a cash donation for the charity. Finally, in November, Rod Cooper gave us a fascinating talk entitled 'Gower Field Names'.

We are grateful to Roger Button for sourcing many of our speakers. We'll be working with Roger again next year to seek out some more! We have already



Rhossili Village Hall Social Committee

Vicki Charles, Joan Davies, Jo Higgins, Vicki James, Susan Muddeman, Marian Potts, Mary Provis, Lynda Shaw, Helen Sinclair, Gill Spencer

booked in Malcolm and Ruth Ridge for Wednesday 12 February. They'll tell us all about the Birth of the Gower Society and bring along a new map of Gower too. So, you can put that one in your diaries now! Please let us know of any ideas you have for external speakers or, even better, let us know if you'd like to give a talk yourself!

We aim to make the Hall welcoming and pretty and this is helped by having had donations of lovely china cups, saucers and plates. And of course, Joan and/or Mary always

bring along beautiful floral displays.

At each of our coffee mornings we invite donations of produce, plants and books, and sales from these sources goes to DEC Humanitarian Appeal to whom we send donations every few months.

Our stock of books changes continuously and anyone is welcome to browse and select when the Hall is open - at any of our events; when Jo, the Hall Manager, is in the hall working, or by special arrangement with Jo or Vicki.

Our evening events in the Hall started with 'Grav' in February '24. This fantastic show, performed by actor Gareth J Bale, attracted a large crowd including Rugby fans from surrounding communities. St David's Day featured 'Choir for



Good Swansea, who have the most energetic and entertaining conductor ever! Marian made her delicious, warming cawl which was enjoyed by all. In April the Hall was filled with the usual fierce combat, laughter and banter during Roger's Quiz! Gareth J Bale returned in July

with his show, 'West' which detailed the hardships and adventures faced by a young couple emigrating to the New World.

The Harvest Supper and Celebration of the Hall's 100th birthday was a great, festive occasion and a sell-out. The Hall once again looked FAB, thanks to the creativity of Joan and Mary and the flowers and plants gleaned from their gardens and hedgerows. The twinkly garlands of fairy lights, donated by a recent wedding party will continue to adorn the Hall! Our entertainer this year was Welsh comic actor Steve Speirs, who spent the whole evening with us and gave an after dinner speech which was appreciated by most! We thank the Bowen Richards Trust for sponsoring the hire of such a famous celebrity and Vicky for seeking out and arranging his visit. Thanks also to our wonderful social committee for providing a feast fit for the occasion!

On 6 June, organisations within the community of Rhossili came together to commemorate D-Day and what a memorable day it was! The Hall looked amazing with the exhibition of photos and memorabilia arranged by the Community Council and all the work RVH Social put in with the decorations and layout to match the occasion. We also all looked the part by dressing up in 1940s costumes. The day started early in the morning



with us working alongside the CC to make breakfast sausage and bacon batches for the many people who attended the opening address. Later on we came back to the Hall for the event we organised – an afternoon of tea, homemade cakes and scones. It was great to see so many people enjoying themselves. The Hall was packed out for the full two hours!

As we write this article (in early November), we are planning two further events to round off the year. The first is Elvis in Blue Hawaii by professional team, Spitz and Co including a pizza supper. We hope by the time you read this, that many of you will have laughed your socks off at the antics of this impressive pair of actors.

The second is Carols Around the Tree on 11 December. This year we are working on this with musician Mairwen Kirk, who is organising house to house carol singing, followed by a concert and communal carol singing in the Hall featuring local choir, Lleisiau Gŵyr. There will be the usual warming seasonal drinks and sweet treats on offer at this annual FREE event. The collection will be in aid of local charity, The Sharing Table.

Sorry to disappoint anyone but we decided not to do NYE in the Hall this year owing to a high volume of late cancellations in 2023 which led us to calling it off. Maybe next year!

Just a quick word about the Arts Council of Wales Night Out scheme: we are so grateful for their sponsorship of three of our events this year: 'Grav', 'West' and 'Elvis in Blue Hawaii'. We'll be on the lookout for



more Night Out shows in 2025.

We advertise our events on Rhossili Hwb, Facebook, Rhossili Chat (WhatsApp), direct email posters around the community and the eye-catching, clever boards

that Joan paints and puts outside the Hall. If you feel you aren't seeing our adverts and would like to, please contact Vicki.James@gmail.com or 07816 169807.

The Rhossili Village Hall Social Committee always welcomes new members. We have a lot of fun together planning and putting on our events! So, get in touch if you'd like to join in. Big thanks, though, to the many people who give their generous support by helping to prepare beforehand and clear up after events. Thanks to Jo and the Hall Trustees for keeping the Hall in good shape and providing a great venue for us all. And, of course, BIG THANKS to all of you who come along to our events and make it all worthwhile!

The members of the Social Committee wish all in our community a very Merry Christmas and good health and happiness for 2025.

Rhossili Book Club held its first meeting in March 2001 with six members and we are currently reading our 239th book. Three of the founding members are still members today. We meet in people's homes once a month, with a two-month gap (and a longer book) in August and December.

Our chosen books are timetabled for several months ahead. We read mostly fiction but from a wide spectrum of genres, long and short, light and heavyweight, comic or harrowing (sometimes both), written recently or over a century ago, by writers from all over the globe. We select titles carefully and all of them generate lively and broad discussions.

We currently have over a dozen regular members. A dozen is the maximum number that 'works' (research has shown that nine is the optimum number for a discussion group) but we are conscious that there are other readers in the village who might be interested



to know what we're reading and perhaps read along with us so we post details of the books we're reading on the Hwb. Each month we tell you what we're reading and invite anyone else who would like to read it (or has

Rhossili Book Club

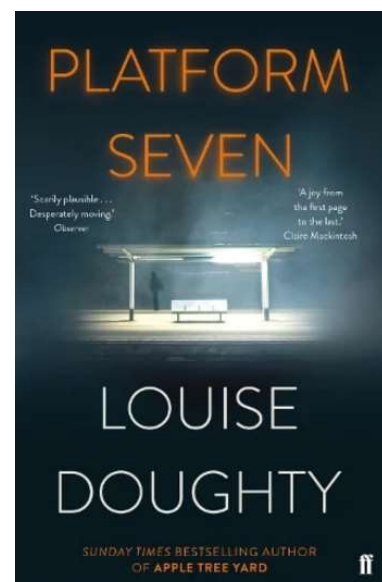
Helen Sinclair and Vicki James, co-founders of Rhossili Book Club

already read it) to share comment/opinions/questions on the Hwb.

We hold our meetings at the end of the month so, in the interest of avoiding spoilers, we ask that nobody posts a comment until the 1st of the month following.

Our December/January book (which will be on the Hwb soon) is "Platform Seven" by Louise Doughty. Readers can comment on this from February 1st on the Rhossili Hwb.

If anyone would like a list of all the books Rhossili Book Club has ever read, please email me: helen@sculpture-culture.co.uk



Knelston Primary Ocean Guardians

Sally Thomas - Knelston Primary School



Our Knelston Primary Ocean Guardians have been very busy this year and have some exciting news to share! As part of a campaign to end sewage pollution, our Ocean Guardians pupil voice group are collaborating with MP Tonia Antoniazzi and Dawn Thomas to carry out winter water testing at Gower beaches. This initiative focuses on monitoring and improving water quality in our local area.

Earlier this week the Ocean Guardians have been actively surveying water quality at Port Eynon, learning how to collect water samples and contributing data



on winter water conditions. This is a fantastic opportunity for the pupils to engage with real world environmental issues and make a meaningful difference in their community.

We are immensely proud of their enthusiasm and dedication to this vital cause and will keep you updated on their progress.

Thank you to the Ocean Guardians as they champion such an important environmental campaign.

News from Pitton Chapel

by Selina Taylor, steward of Pitton Chapel

First of all I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who supported our fundraiser in June. We were trying to raise money for a primary school in rural Tanzania who wanted to install electricity and we were blessed as Daphne Furneaux agreed to give us

a Flower Arranging Demonstration. One of our local preachers, Dr Alan Cram, has been visiting the school since he retired and he came along to the fundraising event to explain a little bit about where the money was going to, with a promise to match-fund any monies that we raised.

The morning was very well supported, even by those of you who couldn't attend and special thanks of course, goes to Daphne – we couldn't have done it without you. In the end, we raised £1,044, which together with the match



funding actually enabled the electricity to be installed straight away... and it was... within three days of them receiving the funds! The photo shows a few of the children sat at their computers that have been generously donated to the project. If you have a redundant laptop, Alan is able to take a few when he goes over and I can you put in touch.

My second lot of thanks goes to the Village Hall Trustees who kindly gave us some kitchen fittings that were surplus to requirements so that we could continue to make use of them. Thank you very much, Jeff Higgins, for taking the time to remove them carefully, help transport them and then even help to fit them in the chapel kitchen too! I hope that Dai and Colin have bought you a pint...

In September we celebrated Harvest and it was lovely to receive gifts of food and money from the community that we were able to put with our gifts and pass on to the food bank. Thank you.

Have you heard about 'The Chosen'? It's an Ameri-

can TV series that centres on the life of Jesus and the people who met and followed him. No doubt there is some poetic licence within the script, but it certainly makes you think and perhaps highlights the difference between modern-day "churchianity" and what Jesus actually stood for. It's worth watching and you can find it online at <https://watch.thechosen.tv/> or you can download 'The Chosen' App.

If you would like to join us over the Christmas period, then you would be very welcome. All of our services will be led by our minister, Rev. Andy Walker. Here are the dates for your diary:

Thursday 19th December - 7pm – Joint Carol Service with St Mary's at Pitton Chapel

Christmas Eve - 7pm – A short but meaningful service including Holy Communion

Christmas Day - 10am – Family Service

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and every blessing for the New Year.

Over 2024 we set up art work and prayer installations in church for locals and visitors to use as part of their reflections on life, spiritual journeys and to express themselves in challenging times. We have had over 1,500 people interact with these presentations and as we move into 2025 we are trusting that an application we've made for further funding will extend our wonder of wellbeing project for another five years.

Highlights for us in the art projects were connecting with Knelston Primary School for the village's D-Day commemorations, being a place for those on the Mac-Millan Mighty Hike to come and express their feelings & prayers as they walked in memory or support of others, and being a venue for the wellbeing project reflective walks, Wild Church and Prayer meetings. Come rain or shine, I've enjoyed walking my dogs around Rhossili every Thursday and people are welcome to join me, 8.15am every week as the New Year unfolds. All of this has helped us be a place where Spirituality, Creativity and Nature inter-



weave, somewhere where we can come alongside visitors and bless their life as well as creating a quiet sacred

space for people to privately express their hopes and fears.

In relation to the Sailors' Corner area of the churchyard, I'm continuing to implore the church authorities who own the land to make progress on finding a way forward for us and as soon as arrangements can be offered, the congregation will let the community know.

Ac felly wrth i ni droi at y Flwyddyn Newydd, bydded i chi ddod o hyd i heddwch ac ysbrydoliaeth yn gwreiddio yn eich cartref a bydded i'n bywyd cymunedol ffynnu.

Turning to the New Year, may you find peace and inspiration taking root in your household and may our community life flourish.

St. Mary's Church

Cyfarchion y Tymor oddi wrth pawb yn
Eglwys Y Santes Fair

Seasonal Greetings from all at St Mary's
by Peter Lewis, ficer/vicar

Rhossili Hall and Bunkhouse 2024

by Jeff Higgins and Steve Walmsley -
Directors of RBH Ltd and Trustees of RVH

The overall financial position was greatly improved by another year's successful trading with the Bunkhouse generating £17,120 of income in the 2023-24 financial year. This allowed us to spend £16,444 on maintenance and improvements to the Hall and the garden area. Although this was less than the previous year (£29,806), it compares favourably as that spend was bolstered by a generous donation from the Bowens Richards Trust of £10,000 and 2 grants which totalled £7,864. We also managed to finish the financial year with some saving put aside just in case some major item of infrastructure should fail (eg the Hall boiler). However, we still do not have enough reserves to ensure we are completely covered, but we are in a much better position than in the last two years.

This year, the improvements were mainly to the outside space of the Hall. The majority of work focused on improving the paving which was beginning to show its age. To address this, we had to replace some sections of paving and stabilise others to make it safe for everyone using the Hall. When we have the funds, the plan is to eventually improve all the paving. We also upgraded the lighting by replacing the lights in the carpark, changing fluorescent lights to LED options and installing 'walk through' sensors on all the internal corridors, stairways and toilets. The Ante room has been improved by removing the sink and installing a single worksurface to make this a much more usable space.

We had planned to tidy up the Hall entrance area and carpark. The work was scheduled for early on in the year but the continual rainy weather did not allow it to be undertaken before we ran out of time and funds.



This year, we still plan to improve the carpark creating a smooth, mud free entranceway to the Hall and replacing the chippings. We will also try to do something about the 'lake' in front of the Hall gates to allow easier access. The outside of the Hall still needs painting!

As promised, we held an open meeting for all the community members to explain the simplified charging system for community hiring of the Hall and discuss potential developments and uses of the Hall. The meeting was very constructive and one of the outcomes was for us to send out a leaflet that explained the hiring charges and the underlying financial background of both Hall and Bunkhouse. This has now been done and the leaflet will be circulated soon.

The Trustees would also like to take this opportunity to publicly thank Linda Shaw, a long serving trustee, who retired this year. We will all miss the hard work she has put in as a Hall Trustee, her humour and wisdom. We would also like to thank our Hall Manager, Jo Higgins, and the meeting and greeting team for making the Bunkhouse such a success by ensuring visitors feel cared for and welcome. Without the funds the Bunkhouse generates, we would not be able to sustain such a well-cared for Hall or its associated first-class facilities.

The current Trustees are: Jeff Higgins (Chair), Vicki James (Secretary), Derek O'Brien, Marian Potts, Sarah (Vice-Chair) and Steve Walmsley (Treasurer). We are always looking for new Trustees so, if you think you would be interested in joining us, please contact any Trustee who will be able to give you an insight into what we do. Finally, we would all like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and we all look forward to you joining us at the Hall events in the coming new year.

www.rhossilibunkhouse.com

Sustainable communities are ones which are vibrant and viable all year round. We are so fortunate that Gower is such a beautiful place to live and work. It is also a wonderful place to visit, with welcoming people, stunning scenery, and fantastic activities. Tourism is incredibly important for our local economy, so we have to get the balance right - sustainable tourism.

High numbers of second homes and short-term holiday lets can affect community sustainability. As local people move away due to the lack of affordable housing, villages can risk becoming increasingly empty outside of the holiday season, which can have a knock-on effect in terms of the viability and availability of services, businesses and amenities. This can have a really negative impact on the area's remaining permanent residents.

The Welsh Government is undertaking a series of actions which seek to address the impact that large numbers of second homes and holiday-lets can have on communities.

An immediate priority was to consider a gap in the market for those struggling to afford mortgage payments and at serious risk of losing their home due to the cost-of-living crisis. In that context, the Help to Stay Wales scheme was developed and launched in November 2023, with up to £40 million available over two years to help keep people and families in their homes. If you would like information about this, please get in touch.

Last year, the £50 million Empty Homes Grant scheme was also introduced, helping bring up to 2,000 long-term empty homes back into occupation.

Since April 2023, local authorities have had the powers to introduce higher discretionary council tax premiums on second homes and long-term empty properties - up to 300%.

The number of nights that a holiday-let must be occupied for has also increased to 182 nights, to ensure that these properties - which often benefit from business rates relief - are genuinely making a positive contribution to the local economy and community. Properties which do not meet this threshold make their contribution via council tax.

Planning for house building is the responsibility of the council, through the Local Development Plan. However, the Welsh Government has an important part to play in terms of planning policy and breaking down

Supporting Sustainable Communities



Rebecca Evans, Member of the Senedd/Aelod o'r Senedd dros Gwyr

the barriers to infrastructure development. After six years in the Finance portfolio, I have recently been appointed as the new Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning. One of my top priorities is improving the planning system.

I am also leading on the development of legislation to create a statutory licensing scheme to enable holiday accommodation providers to demonstrate that they are compliant with safety standards. It is important that this work is undertaken in the spirit of cooperation with the tourism sector, which is such a crucially important and special part of our economy.

In Wales we are all so proud of the warm welcome we offer tourists, and the quality of our tourism offer. From food and adventure activities to coastal walks, cultural performances, and sport, there are so many reasons to visit Wales. I hope we can get the balance right so that communities can thrive all year round, and we continue to offer a world-class experience to visitors.

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Bowen Richards Trust

Tom Higgs, Gill Wales, Anne Morse Jones, Vicky Charles and Jess Higgs

In September 1993 the parcel of land adjacent to St Mary's Rhossili was very kindly gifted to the Trust by Alfred Bowen Richards to be used for the benefit of the St Mary's and the local community.

This land is well known locally as the church car park, and the income derived from parking fees donated by users is distributed by the current trustees, based upon the terms laid out originally.

Gill Wales has served as a trustee throughout this whole period and we are all very grateful to her for her ongoing diligence.

Christopher Beynon was another of the original trustees and has stepped down, with Tom Higgs taking his

place as Chair.

A significant portion of the income is spent to help maintain St Mary's, with money allocated for the ever-increasing electricity bill, maintenance of the churchyard and internal decoration. This is even more important as the congregation is dwindling and services less frequent than in the past, so the funds received are vital to help look after this ancient building.

The trust is very grateful to members of the community who carry out essential maintenance of the car park and church itself. A particular thank you to Gwyn Thomas whose broad skill set is often called upon.

During the past year donations have also been made to the local community to support the wonderful D-Day commemoration in the summer and the Centenary of Rhossili village hall celebrated at the annual harvest supper.

The next project is to improve the footpath to the rear of the church, cutting back brambles, laying gravel and putting up signage to encourage use of this path rather than pedestrians using the road which can be dangerous or congested

If there are any (very) local projects that would benefit from our support please do not hesitate to contact one of the trustees and we will be happy to help where we can.

Our thriving village Food Bank Collection was initially set up by Rhossili's Social Committee in 2018.

Throughout the pandemic, we invited donations on a weekly basis. We were conscious that this was asking a lot and assumed that contributions would dwindle when life got back to normal. We couldn't have been more wrong and our 'new normal' has allowed us to maintain that weekly delivery of goods that you so generously donate.

We use the bus-shelter at the bottom of School Lane as our collection point (there is a labelled, lidded plastic box tucked in the corner).

People can leave goods at any time, inside the box (or on top, if it's full). We check and clear the box throughout the week but, most weeks, our deadline tends to be tea-time on Wednesday or Thursday for delivery onwards before the weekend.

All goods go to the Swansea Branch of the Trussell Trust which is the most experienced and well organised Food Bank 'system' in the country.

Rhossili Food Bank Team

Helen Sinclair, Lesley-Anne Nolan & Sally Thomas

It was founded in 1997 by Paddy and Carol Henderson (in a shed in their garden in Salisbury) using a legacy from Carol's mother, Betty Trussell. Today, the Trussell Trust consists of 1,400 food bank locations, supported by 40,000 trained volunteers, 12,000 churches, 100,000s of community groups and schools, and millions of people around the UK.

The number of food parcels given out across



the UK increased from 2,814 in 2006 to a staggering 2,986,203 in 2023. In the last five years alone, food bank use in the Trussell Trust network has increased by 73%.

The top three reasons for people needing to use a food bank last year were: 'income not covering essential costs', 'benefit delays', and 'benefit changes'.

People are referred to food banks by doctors, social services, Citizens Advice and the police. They receive a food bank voucher which entitles them to a parcel of three days' nutritionally balanced, non-perishable food from their local food bank. Food banks also provide compassionate, dignified support and work hard to signpost people to agencies that can offer help with long-term issues to prevent people from needing to use the food bank again.

There are eight Trussell Trust distribution centres in Swansea (open on different days, in different areas, in church halls and community centres).

We actually deliver your goods to the Lamplighter Cafe (a church/chapel cooperative in Bishopston). We do this only because it is easier and more flexible for us (we can leave donations on any weekday between 10.00 and 3.00). The volunteers at the Lamplighter deliver our contributions, along with those from their own community, directly to the Trussell Trust who distributes the different categories of produce as the need balances out within Swansea.

Occasionally we might tell you, on WhatsApp, that



some items are especially needed at that time but, in general, basic hygiene and sanitary products are always welcome and any non-perishable food-stuffs (please remember to check best-before dates - they aren't allowed to give out anything that is out of date).

This is such an important and valuable (but often forgotten) cause. The Trussell Trust volunteers work tirelessly and are humbling in their effusive gratitude for your donations.

And we, the Rhossili Food Bank Team are endlessly impressed by, and grateful for, your enduring and generous support. We are proud to represent such a caring community.

Rhossili already 'makes a difference'. If you haven't given before, please consider doing so. If everyone could give just one item each week, we could make even more of a positive impact on the difficult lives of disadvantaged people living not very far away.

Thank you to everyone who already contributes and makes our task such a rewarding one.

From the Food Bank Team: Helen, Lesley-Anne and Sally X X X

The National Trust

by Geraldine Ferguson



The Gower Ranger and Volunteer team

The Ranger team have had an incredibly productive year, balancing conservation and habitat management with improving the facilities and visitor experience of our places in this beautiful area.

Conservation includes significant destruction! Volunteers worked tirelessly to pull bracken, pine seedlings and ragwort. A significant focus was placed on removing invasive non-native species (INNS) such as *Rhododendron ponticum* and Himalayan balsam. These efforts are crucial in maintaining ecological balance, supporting biodiversity and protecting livestock in the region. The team also took great care in maintaining sites of antiquity such as the forts at Penmaen and Bishopston Valley. A four-legged team were recruited to graze The Warren, developing a biodiverse mosaic habitat through their expert grazing techniques and dietary preferences.

Tree planting continued this year, with black poplar trees planted to enhance a small woodland area at South Pilton Green Farm. On the track to the Coast Path, lime and hornbeam trees were planted to create a shaded avenue, contributing to the area's natural beauty and providing habitat for wildlife.

In the Memorial Orchard above Fall Bay, tree guards were constructed in The Vile and The Warren, new fences and gates were installed and old ones repaired,

enhancing the management of these areas.

Despite the poor weather early in the season, the perennial hay meadows managed to produce an impressive 469 hay bales from only 3 fields in The Vile. This agricultural activity supports local farming practices and contributes to the sustainable management of the land.

Community

Our knowledgeable volunteers led heritage walks on Saturdays in the summer, sharing some of the rich history of Rhossili. For the first time, a team of Rhossili Rangers was recruited to advise visitors on how to walk safely along the headland, being respectful of the local livestock and wildlife. In collaboration with the Rhossili community, the team carried out beach cleans, with much of the marine waste being recycled through specialist organisations. This not only improves the aesthetic appeal of the coastline but also protects marine life from harm.

Visits to Knelston Primary School were made to celebrate local wildlife, fostering a sense of stewardship in the next generation. A Gold Duke of Edinburgh team from Olchfa School volunteered to clear bracken from The Bulwark and ragwort from Mewslade, demonstrating the power of community involvement.

The Rhossili Team

This year has been particularly exciting for the Rhossili team, marked by significant advancements in visitor accessibility. The team collaborated with the City and County of Swansea to secure Brilliant Basics funding and AONB funds, which facilitated a comprehensive transformation of the public toilets. This project not only provided a much-needed makeover but also increased the facilities' capacity. The National Trust is currently managing these facilities in partnership with a local company.

Additionally, the construction of a new permissive path, connecting the bus stop at Rhossili to the start



of the coast path and cliff top walk, has significantly enhanced pedestrian safety. The stone wall along this path was meticulously rebuilt using existing stones by local stonemason Andy Roberts. This improvement has been widely appreciated, becoming a popular spot for visitors to enjoy the breathtaking views that attract people from around the globe.

New Staff

We are pleased to introduce Jack Rosser, our new Welcome Manager overseeing operations at Rhossili and Pennard car parks. Jack brings a deep passion for the outdoors and a longstanding connection to Rhossili through his family. The team also celebrated the arrival of Jenny, the new ranger who joins Area Ranger Nicole to complete the Gower Ranger team. Jenny brings her rich experience and expertise gained whilst working for the RSPB in Scotland and in Cornwall with the Trust. We extend our warmest welcome to both



Jack and Jenny and wish them great success in their new roles.

Finally, the Gower National Trust staff would like to thank all the volunteers, community partners and contractors who have continued the hard work vital in preserving the natural and historical treasures of the Gower Peninsula for future generations to enjoy. We wish everyone well for the coming year!



Photo courtesy of David Stockwell

Speeding in the village: a catch 22



Tackling Speeding through Rhossili and Pitton

We know many of you are concerned about speeding on the main road through the village, and we want to share what's been happening and what we're doing about it.

What's the Problem?

The road from Pitton to Rhossili is vital for getting around, but it's not without its challenges - especially for pedestrians. With no pavements or verges to walk on, and alternative footpaths often being indirect or weather-dependent, walking along the road can feel unsafe.

This is an issue for everyone. Residents often use the road on foot to get to church, the village hall, or the bus stop, and many visitors walk along it to enjoy the cliffs and beaches. During school holidays, traffic increases with holidaymakers, campers, and day-trippers adding to the mix. Parking isn't always a solution either, as most spaces are privately owned (mainly by the National Trust) and require payment. On top of that, the road has a number of blind entrances - like the turnings at Pitton and School Lane - as well as driveways and the occasional livestock crossing.

In the last couple of months, we've had reports of several near misses between pedestrians and vehicles, including motorbikes and cars. This is worrying, especially when you add the TikTok "Swansea to Rhossili Challenge" into the mix - a social media trend where people race from town to Worm's Head car park.

What Have We Done So Far?

We've been raising these concerns with Andrew Stevens, the Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure. In September, Swansea Council installed

speed monitoring strips on the road in Middleton to get a clearer picture of what's happening.

Unfortunately, when we asked for a second set of strips in Pitton, the Council decided it wasn't safe for their team to install them there.

The survey results showed an 85th percentile speed (the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles travel) of 34.6 mph heading eastbound and 31.3 mph westbound.

According to the police, these speeds are acceptable for a 30 mph zone, and because there haven't been any recorded personal injury collisions in the last three years, the Welsh Government and Swansea Council won't fund traffic control measures.

But we don't think this is the end of the story. Given the unique challenges of our road—no pavements, blind corners, and heavy pedestrian use - we've asked whether 30 mph is appropriate for this road in the first place.

The difficulty, and where we fall through the cracks, is that Rhossili doesn't meet the criteria for "Restricted Road" status under current Welsh Government rules, which require street lighting or pavements. There is supposed to be new guidance on speed limits in villages like ours, but unfortunately, it's been delayed.

What's Next?

We don't want to stop here. The RCC would like to bring together a working group - including residents - to come up with a plan for improving road safety in the village. Once we've got something concrete, we can take it to Swansea Council and the Welsh Government for further discussions.

If this is something you feel passionate about, we'd love for you to get involved. You don't have to be a councillor to make a difference! Please get in touch with us at clerk@rhossilicc.org.uk.

It's in the Bag!

Supporting women in refuges at Christmas
in Swansea, Neath, Port Talbot & Llanelli

These years have been extraordinary for all of us and the kindnesses shown in our communities have been humbling. Each year as a group of friends we have supported around 200 women in local refuges by donating toiletries and small gifts, this is our seventh year and the need is greater than ever.

We are asking friends to pack used handbags or reusable shopping bags with toiletries and small gifts to give to women this Christmas. Give what you'd like within your means - many women will have left their homes with no personal items.

Please put in four essentials - toothpaste, toothbrush, shower gel or soap and shampoo. If you are able to and can, the list below gives an idea of what else could go in. Whatever you can give is fantastic!

ESSENTIALS:

Toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, and showergel / soap

Ideas for other items to include:

Toiletries - Deodorant, body lotion, hand cream, moisturiser, unused cosmetics, cotton wool balls, make up remover pads, scrunchy/flannel/sponge, emery boards, nail brush, hairbrush/comb, tissues, lip salve, conditioner, soap, perfume, body spray, sanitary products, panty liners.

Nearly new or unwanted gifts such as jewellery, hair slides/bands, hat, scarf, gloves, socks, makeup bag, toilet bag.

Edible treats eg chocolate or biscuits. Feel free to put in a card with good wishes.

Families share rooms so to keep children safe please do not include- medicines, alcohol, razors, scissors, nail files, nail clippers, candles, matches, lighters.

A big thank you

by Mary Provis

It's another year and another car full of gifts destined for the Women's Refuges in the area. Many thanks to all who contributed.



Nadolig Llawen
a diolch o galon

This year our Tŷ Hafan fundraiser was held on Sunday 10th November at Reynoldston Village Hall, this was our ninth fundraiser.

Tŷ Hafan was founded by Suzanne Goodall, a retired Occupational Therapist. One of her friends had told her about a children's hospice where she was volunteering in Yorkshire and, after that conversation, she started to look into whether there was any similar support for children and families in Wales. She realised there was nothing. Determined to change this, Suzanne launched a fundraising campaign to open the first children's hospice in Wales. After 11 years of fundraising, thanks to the generosity of the Welsh public, Suzanne's vision became a reality and Tŷ Hafan first opened its doors in 1999.

Too many families in Wales are struggling through the fear, exhaustion and uncertainty that comes with caring for a child whose life will be short. When every day could be their child's last, families should be making memories together instead of facing each one with dread. No family should have to live this journey on their own. When a child's life will be

Tŷ Hafan

by Sally Thomas

cut short, Tŷ Hafan will walk alongside their family every step of the way – through life, death and beyond.

At our fundraiser we had a large variety of homemade cakes, hot drinks, raffle, local craft and produce stalls and guess how many sweets were in the jar competition. Some of the children from school came along to help out, which was so very kind. A huge, huge thank you to all the local businesses who so generously support our fundraisers year after year and yet again donated amazing raffle prizes. Also, a huge thank you to everyone who supported our event and made it a success, it's very much appreciated, we raised £1,575.09p for the children's hospice.

Many thanks once again for your continued support.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas





RHOSSILI COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council

Salary range: LC1 (13-17); £26,873- £28,770
(Hourly rate £13.97)

Permanent, part-time - average 20 hours per month

Are you interested in working in local government? Rhossili Community Council is looking for someone who is enthusiastic and community-focussed, to join our small, friendly team. The post is largely home-based but attendance at the monthly Council meeting (evenings) is required. The salary offered is above the substantive NALC range for Clerks; position on the scale depends on qualifications and experience.

What's involved? As Clerk, you will organise the monthly Council meetings and be responsible for day-to-day organisation and management of RCC's services, acting within the legislative framework of Local government and the Council's Standing Orders.

Who is our ideal applicant? Someone who:

- is interested in RCC's aims and values and how we work to support these
- is keen to serve the needs of the local community
- is an excellent communicator at all levels using a range of approaches, including surveys, websites and social media
- is dynamic, proactive, assertive, able to work both independently and with others
- has excellent organisational, administrative and IT skills, with a high level of numeracy and attention to detail
- is keen to pursue professional training with the Society for Local Council Clerks (relevant training costs will be covered by the Council).

Interested? For an informal chat about the post, please contact Ian Button 07918 776892 or Charlotte Nolan 07387 386686. Otherwise, for further details please email clerk@rhossilicc.org.uk.

Rhossili Community Council welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

<https://rhossilicc.org.uk/>

