While every reasonable step has been taken to ensure the veracity of the articles, Rhossili Community Council does not take responsibility for any omissions or errors. December 2016
Welcome to the 2016 Christmas Newsletter and an Edgar Evans commemorative issue to the dedication of the new stained glass window, St Mary’s Church, Rhossili.

I was hoping to have got this newsletter compiled a week earlier but various issues hindered this somewhat. However, and as ever, contributors have not let your council down in supplying content ensuring another good issue and general roundup of what went on in Rhossili community during 2016.

Sustainable Community

Last year I expressed concern of the continued trend in loosing good local housing stock to the second home and holiday home market. With more properties on the market than at any other time in the last ten years this worrying trend seems set to continue. Even so, the community continues to hold fast in its resolve to be socially cohesive but it is becoming increasingly difficult for committees to replace with new members. Advancing years may be against many of us but if asked please give serious thought to becoming an important part of Rhossili community life.

Commemorative Mug

For residents who have children under 18 there is a gift on the way!
This year has seen the passing of the 60\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Gower AONB, the first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the UK.

Earlier this year, Rhossili Community Council decided to commemorate this milestone and commissioned a commemorative mug for all children under 18 years of age that are resident in Rhossili community.

We hope that they will treasure this and keep for their children as a momento for this incredible place in which we live.

2017 Elections

Community Council elections are due to be held in May 2017 having been deferred a year from 2016.

Details are due to be posted in the press and further information will be circulated in due course prior to the date.

There are seven council positions: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and four non-Officer Members. Planned meetings are on the second Tuesday of each calender month commencing at 7.15pm and is open for any member of the community to attend.

Should any member of the community wish to stand for election to the council of Rhossili Community, please ask for more details from the The Clerk, (Jo Scott) on 391385 or email rhossilicc@gmail.com.

Memorial Proposal

With the 100 years’ anniversary for the end of WWI in Europe approaching, the Chair tabled a proposal for Rhossili Community Council to consider: a permanent dedication in the village to be unveiled on 11/11/2018. I have only been able to locate a personal family plaque in the church and an inscription reference on a headstone to a person who was killed in action during the Great War.

100 years ago, Rhossili was the 'vegetable basket for Swansea' where many of the residents were farmers and worked the land. There were a few who went off to represent King and Country but the local contribution to the war effort was very much food production.

The Council is split over this suggestion, but those who are for the proposal are looking towards the possibility of a stone memorial, which is as much to celebrate peace as to commemoration. This will record those who fell but equally those who worked the land and is likely to be along the lines and style of the Millennium Stone on Rhossili Green.

I am seeking comments from the community regarding this and have sought support and information from the Civil Voice concerning new War Memorials as to how to move forward with the idea. Initially this is likely to require the setting up of a small steering group to establish a feasibility study.

A suggestion I have put forward for the inscription:

"This Centenary Memorial is dedicated to the memory of all those from Rhossili Community who committed their lives and service during World War One and all conflicts since in efforts to secure liberty and peace for all"

This moves on from a sole dedication that not only 'remembers' but also acknowledges all other.

Comments from the community will be most welcome and a start for considering whether to move on the idea should begin in early Spring 2017.

Planning Applications

There were no significant Planning Applications lodged with City and County of Swansea (CCS) council this year other than a couple of minor alterations.

Highways and Footpaths

Once again, CCS Highways and Footpaths teams have looked after the maintenance of these well in Rhossili community this year despite the increased pressure on the diminishing value of the public purse contents. These include selective verge cutting, pot hole repairs, gate and stile repairs and hedge cutting.

However, there continues to be a thorn in their side: that of the ‘swallow hole’ in School Lane. Despite the best efforts of the Highways team and Welsh Water it persists with frequent regularity!

Many of you will have seen the size and depth of the most recent hole which managed to cause significant problems with the subteranian water course and foul water ducts.

Despair has taken hold with some villagers, so much so, that they felt the need to take to poetic prose, which can be found below.

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It is noted that a number of highway signs are damaged, crooked, mis-orientated or in some cases missing entirely. In an effort to try to persuade CSS to rectify/upgrade these signs, some of which are hazardous, a log is being compiled by me and I would welcome your observations to compile a definitive list.

**National Trust Car Park**

Many will be pleased to hear that after over a year since receiving planning approval, renovation and building work of the National Trust car park is due to commence early in 2017. A more detailed update and further information can be found below.

**Defibrillators and Codes**

This has not been forgotten about! Your council continues to look at the introduction of extra defibrillators in the village and more frequent intervals throughout the whole community – the more easily accessible the greater the chance of saving life when required. Grant funding is being looked at but it is likely to require a minimum of match-funding. A number of businesses have offered to accommodate and cover the cost of maintenance once installed.

As a reminder: if you need to access either the defibrillator situated outside the National Trust shop or the front entrance to the Village Hall the access code is the same for both, being **C159X**. Be sure to depress the buttons firmly to unlock and remember to follow the instructions carefully the unit gives to use. Don’t be afraid to use — better to have tried....you know the rest.

**National Trust- New Team Members**

A warm welcome to Kathryn Thomas, new Rhossili Ranger and Mark Hipkin, Lead Ranger for Gower. Both have significant knowledge in their own fields; Kathryn has been involved with the National Trust since 1999 and knows Gower well and Mark has a particular interest in birds also being a member of the Gower Ornithological Society. Look out for them on your walk about, let them know who you are and ask questions of their current work.

**End of Month Gathering**

This Newsletter only serves to give an annual flavour of village updates and events. Should you wish to be more in the social ‘loop’ of current and forthcoming affairs then why not join the ‘End of Month’ gathering at the Worm’s Head on the last Friday at 6.30pm. Where all are welcome.

**Council and Clubs**

There are many other groups that meet throughout the year which are not mentioned within the Newsletter, which may be of interest, such as, The Book Club, Keep Fit, Whist, Yoga, plus many more. If you want to join or find out more information or start a new group yourself, why not contact Jo Higgins (RVH) on 391509 for more information and contact details.

Council is looking towards a cyclical replacement program of the three Notice boards in the community over the coming years as the useful life of the existing timber ones expire; the need to consider a more durable option is obvious!

Rhossili Community Council meets monthly on the second Tuesday at 7.15pm in Rhossili Village Hall or the ante-room behind. Everyone is welcome to attend, and to raise matters of interest or concerns in the community. Contact details of all the councillors can be found on the RCC website: [www.rhossilicc.org.uk](http://www.rhossilicc.org.uk). Please feel free to contact any councillor if you think there are issues (either beneficial or challenging) that you feel the council should be aware of and/or consider, or you can contact the Clerk, Jo Scott, direct.

If you are new to emailing and are not on the village circular, please notify the Clerk (at rhossilicc@gmail.com) of your email address, or if you do not have one, please read the notice board from time to time for notices.

Once again this year we have included a section to send seasonal good wishes at the end of this newsletter. I and the Council Members would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year and to also remember absent friends.

Finally, I would like to thank all contributors who have taken the time to make this a bumper issue this year and contributions for the next Newsletter will be most welcome, if possible by October 2017.
RHOSILLI COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Steven Campbell-Kelly
Chair, Rhossili Community Council and Newsletter Editor
rhossilicc@gmail.com
www.rhossilicc.org.uk

RHOSILLI VILLAGE HALL AND BUNKHOUSE - 2016

This year, the Trustees have been able to carry out further improvements to the Hall and Bunkhouse. The major project included adapting the ground floor Disability Discrimination Act compliant shower and toilet facility for dual use as family toilet and shower which will be available to bunkhouse guests. The Trustees continue to oversee the maintenance to the fabric and contents of the building, and numerous works were undertaken during the year including repainting, plumbing, door repairs and replacement of carpet tiles in the meeting/dining room.

The Village Hall was supported this year by donations from Rhossili Bunkhouse which totalled £21,047. This has built the amount available for improvements to the Village Hall and its facilities. The significant task of replacing the village hall roof is under consideration and the Trustees will be scoping the work involved in the coming year.

This year saw the closing down of Rhossili Youth Club, that had been run by Jo, Josh and Charlotte Higgins due to falling attendance and Swansea City & County withdrawing its funding. This was particularly sad as the Youth Club was set up seventeen years ago by Jo Higgins, Vicky James and Maureen Symberlist and is seen as a loss of facility for the village.

The Social sub-committee energised by its new members has resulted in several new and/or revitalised events over the last year. These have been fun and well attended. Events included the childrens’ Halloween Party (this time without the blue hair), Community BBQ, two plays ‘Hiraeth’ by the Buddig James Jones theatre company and ‘My Big Fat Cowpat Wedding’, West Side Story Singalong, Quizzes, Carols Round the Tree and the French/Welsh event.

I would also like to thank our support staff the Hall & Bunkhouse Manager (Jo Higgins), the ‘meeters & greeters’ and cleaning team, for their dedication to making the Hall and Bunkhouse a continued success.

This year Jo Higgins joined the Trustees. The current Trustees are: Tracey Button, Gill Evans, John Furneaux, Jo & Jeff Higgins, Vicky James, Marion Potts, Rob Symberlist, Sarah & Steve Walmsley.

We are always looking for new ideas on how the Village Hall can be used by our community. If you have any suggestions about the facilities we offer, we would like to hear from you. Please feel free to approach the trustees with any suggestions and they will be considered and acted on wherever possible. Examples of groups that use the hall include: Keep Fit, Christian Fellowship, Whist, Llandewi & Knelston WI and Yoga.

Thanks to you all for your support throughout 2016 and we would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. We look forward to seeing you at the Hall in the coming year.

Jeff Higgins
Co Secretary of RBH Ltd & Trustee of RVH

VILLAGE HALL SOCIAL EVENTS

Social Committee

Christmas Greetings from the Village Hall Social Committee

2016 has seen lots of activity in the hall and we have enjoyed some splendid evenings attended by permanent village folk, visitors to the area, and those owning holiday homes in the village.

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Who can forget some of the choice moments and lines from ‘My Great Big Fat Cowpat Wedding’!

March/April heralded the return of our musician friends from the Auvergne and joined by a local ceilidh band we danced, ate Welsh cawl, French cheese, and drank the evening away.

The annual barbecue was blessed by a lot of rain, which drove us indoors. Our cooks remained gallantly under cover outside and the general feeling was that as everyone stayed warm, being indoors was in fact... a bonus! A Halloween party was again organised for the children with pumpkin carving, apples ducked for and lots of dressing up. A scary event but the children loved it.

We had a sing-a-long to the film of West Side Story and an excellent quiz night; always a popular event and very well attended despite appalling weather!

Responding to a request, we held a Harvest Supper in October. This hadn’t happened for quite a few years but it proved to be an excellent evening: lovely food, poems and songs and a general good feeling all round. Hopefully, this will once again become an annual event.

2015 ended with our carols round the tree and festive refreshments.

This will once again end our year of 2016 on Saturday 10th December at 6pm. The children will be singing and the ‘choir’ is practising hard! If this reaches you before then I hope you will join us.

Our committee works very hard to arrange events that will appeal to a cross section of our village. If you have ideas, let us know and new members are welcome!

Once again...... A very Happy Christmas to you all!

(Gill Evans on behalf of the Social Committee)
Please contact Gill Evans revevgm@gmail.com

Gill Evans
Rhossili Village Hall Social Committee

WI UPDATE

Llandewi with Knelston W.I. have once again had an enjoyable year in Rhossili Village Hall.

We have enjoyed listening to many speakers including The Blaenavon Cheese Co., and a wonderful presentation on The Tragedy of the Janet.

Other activities include monthly lunches and short walks.

The hardier members have travelled St. Illtyd’s way, (_parts of which sound quite hair raising.) Some members go regularly on longer walks also.

We will as usual finish off our year with our carol service in Llandewi Church followed by our Christmas dinner at the King Arthur.

If you would like any information on joining our W.I. please ring Chris Williams 390282.

A very merry Christmas and a happy New year from all of us.

Chris Williams and Marion Potts

Merry Christmas /Nadolig Llawen to all. Llandewi with Knelston Wl

PITTON CHAPEL

Pitton Methodist Chapel

What do you mean, ‘There’s no sermon at the Carol Service’?

Rev Andy Walker of Pitton Methodist chapel shares a seasonal conundrum with us...

‘There’s no sermon at the carol service!’ These were the exact words of briefing as I set out to prepare the annual Horton carol service in 2014. But what was meant by this phrase, ‘There’s no sermon at the carol service’? Was it meant in the way that someone might say, ‘There’s no milk in the jug’ – in other words, ‘please can we have some milk?’ The mother tongue for many of us, the English language, has that wonderful ability to be mis-interpreted. Meanings can be changed just by the nuance of pronunciation.
Such circumstances allow us, perhaps, to put our own interpretation on the meaning, and translate as we see fit. However I sensed that this approach might be unwise. Feathers might be ruffled! So I asked, ‘what do you mean?’ It was explained to me that in this particular setting, people don’t come to be preached at, they come to sing carols. This presents a red rag to a bull for those of us whose stock-in-trade is to craft our words that the gospel of Jesus might be shared on such occasions. But I remain ever grateful to my friend for having the boldness to impart such advice to me. It has led to the tradition of the ‘address, sermon, homily, call it what you will, being shared in a slightly more poetic way. As I write I have yet to rise to the challenge for this coming year (Sunday 18th December in Horton Chapel, 7 pm), but I share with you my ‘good will offering’ from that service. You could change a couple of words to reflect more recent events, but I hope it speaks to you, and to our situation today. By the way, it definitely isn’t a sermon!

There’s no sermon at the carol service it’s just not the done thing. In between the prayers and readings all we want to do is sing!

Don’t preach tonight please Minister your voice deserves some rest. I hope you will not mind but we all think it’s for the best!

And in a way they’re right of course, can my lips utter a sound that will be any more significant than scriptures so profound?

But when I read the papers and I turn on TV news I can’t help but bring a message for those people in the pews.

For my hearts breaks and the tears flow for a world that’s in such crisis with Ebola and the deficit and Syria and Isis.

So can this child whose birth we sing Really cause our world to change? If He can’t, then what we’re doing here is really rather strange

I’m here not because I have to come but because I know it’s true: That light does shine in darkness and that truth and grace win through.

I won’t claim that it’s easy I don’t say that I’m right, but I pray that what you take from here has significance tonight

I pray you’ll meet the Christ-child and he’ll fill your heart with hope. That in the darker days that are to come you’ll find the strength to cope

So give your heart to Jesus open up to him right now offer up your doubt, your sin, let his spirit show you how.

You’ll rise with him, with strength renewed you’ll rise on eagle’s wings. You’ll know the peace and freedom that his saving love can bring

So before you go this evening please let me pray with you, That the carol words and scriptures may, for your life, be true.

My thanks to everyone for making it such a privilege to be able to play a very small part in such a great community I remain indebted to my retired colleague, the Rev. Gill Evans, who gives her all, in such humility and love. We wish you and your families and blessed Christmas and a peaceful, fruitful 2017!

Here are some dates for the coming weeks:

**Messy Church Christmas Special:** Saturday 10th December. Murton Church Hall. 3.00pm – 5.00pm

**Pitton & Rhossili Carol Service:** Thursday 15th December. St Mary’s Rhossili. 7.00pm

**Horton Carol Service:** Sunday 18th December. Horton chapel. 7.00pm.

**Christmas Day Celebration:** Sunday 25th December. Pitton chapel. 10.30am.
**RHOSILI COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER**

**Breakfast Church:** Sunday 5th Feb. 2017. Reynoldston chapel. 9.00am. Informal worship. Great food!

*Rev. Andy Walker, Pitton Methodist Chapel*

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**RHOSILI CHURCH**

**Service dates for your Diary**

**Christmas 2016:**
- **13 December** – Lessons and Carols with WI: *St David’s*, Llanddewi at 6.00pm
- **15 December** – Joint Carol Service with Pitton Chapel: *St Mary’s*, Rhosili at 7.00pm
- **18 December** – Carol Service: *St Cattwg’s*, Port Eynon at 5.00pm
- **18 December** – Lessons and Carols with WI: *St David’s*, Llanddewi at 6.00pm
- **18 December** – Nine Lessons & Carols: *St Andrew’s*, Penrice at 4.00pm
- **18 December** – Carol Service: *St George’s*, Reynoldston at 4.00pm
- **18 December** – Village Carols and Christmas Songs: *St Illtyd’s*, Oxwich at 4.00pm
- **19 December** – Carols on the Lower Green with the Salvation Army: *Lower Green*, Reynoldston at 7.00pm

**Christmas Eve:**
- Traditional Nine Lessons and Carols: *St Illtyd’s*, Oxwich at 4.00pm
- Carols at 11pm followed by the Midnight Eucharist: *St Mary’s*, Rhosili at 11.00pm for 11.30pm
- Children’s Nativity: *St George’s*, Reynoldston at 5.00pm

**Christmas Day:**
- UB Holy Eucharist: *St Andrew’s*, Penrice at 10.00am

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**SCOTT’S BRAVE AND LOYAL COMPANION**

**St Mary’s Church:**

Earlier this year Archdeacon Robert Williams dedicated a new window in St Mary’s - a memorial to Petty Officer Edgar Evans, native of Middleton, and member of Captain Robert Scott’s Antarctic expedition. The window was designed and made in the 1970s by a student at the Stained-Glass Department of Swansea College of Art. The design depicts two figures standing above a crevasse and is intended to convey the bleak inhospitable nature of the terrain, similar to that likely to have been encountered by the polar expedition. The colours are shades of blue and grey and the glass used has different textures to convey the impression of ice and snow. (see cover of this Newsletter)

In 2012 that same student conceived the idea of donating the window (which was still in her possession) to the church so that it could be fitted into the remaining lancet as an additional memorial to Edgar Evans. After obtaining Diocesan approval, the window was installed and a dedication service was held on 17th February - the anniversary of Edgar Evans’ death. It was attended by a full church and five clerics - all of whom have strong links to St Mary’s.

The Church hosted two concerts this year – an informal and most enjoyable lunchtime recital by an a cappella group from Swansea named Humbrella, and a glorious Gower Festival lunchtime recital. Both were thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.

Pursuing the musical theme – we have the Annual Carols and Readings Service shared with members of Pitton Chapel, at 7pm on December 15th. Then on Christmas Eve we have carols at 11pm followed by the Midnight Eucharist. How about joining us – you will be made most welcome.

*Peter Venables*

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GOWER SHOW COLLECTOR  
John Beynon

I took over as a collector for the Gower Show membership from my Grandfather in 1971 and after all these years of collecting I have decided to retire. I would like to thank all those people who have supported me and the Gower Show in the past, as I have many happy memories of meeting regulars over a cup of tea or a drink in the evenings and swapping stories of current and past events. I remember calling on Dr Phillip Norris and after a tipple or two he told me the story of when he was a doctor in Camberley, and presented a lady in the surgery with a bottle of champagne for her 100th visit that year! Another time I remember leaving the car in Peter Griffin’s field and the cattle rubbed both mirrors and the aerial off, another profitable journey. It could be a hectic time especially the last week with people telephoning and collecting tickets even the morning of the show, but overall I thoroughly enjoyed it.

I have arranged, with the show committees approval that Nicola Rees The Chestnuts Pilton Green take over my round. I will of course help Nicola and the members in this transitional period and I hope you will support Nicola and the show as you so loyally did me.

Very many thanks to you all

John Beynon

OUR YOUNG FOLK IN RHOSILLI  
THE FISHER BOYS  
Daniel Fisher

The Fisher boys are back in the news with their interest in the local bird population but this time with a difference.

Daniel recently found a deceased bird, nothing unusual in that I hear you say but this one had been ringed. He then reported his find to ‘BTO Looking Out for Birds’, and this is their reply to Daniel.

"Dear Daniel Davies Fisher  
Thank you for talking the time to report to us details of a bird ring you found. Information about this bird and its movements is given below.

Ringing Scheme: London  
Ring Number: TH58935  
Species of Bird: House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)

This bird was **ringed** by B Stewart as age fully grown, sex unknown on 19-Sep-2014 10:00:00 at Nitten Field, Mewslade, Swansea, UK.

OS Map reference SS4487 accuracy 0, co-ordinates 51deg 33min N -4deg -16min W accuracy 0.

It was **found** on 20-Aug-2016 time unknown at Pilton Green, Swansea, UK.

OS Map reference SS4487 accuracy 0, co-ordinates 51deg 33min N -4deg -14min W accuracy 0.

Finding Condition: Freshly dead – within about a week  
Finding Circumstances: Road Casualty  
Extra Information: Reported as 58935

It was found 701 days after it was ringed, 3km from the ringing site, direction NE.

Bird ringing in Britain is organised by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). Each year over 900,000 birds are ringed by over 2,500 highly trained bird ringers, most of whom are volunteers. They follow a careful training process that can take several years to complete to ensure that they have the necessary skills to catch and ring birds. The bird’s welfare is always the most important consideration during ringing activities.

Ringing began over 100 years ago to study the movements of birds. While it continues to generate information about movement, it also allows us to study how many young birds leave the nest and survive to breed as adults, as well as how many adults live from year to year and how many birds disperse to different breeding sites. Collection of this information helps us to understand why bird populations increase or decrease – vital information for conservation. Details of how many birds have been caught and where and when they have been are available on the BTO website at [www.bto.org/ringing-report](http://www.bto.org/ringing-report)
Some interesting facts discovered from ringing data…

Oldest bird – Manx Shearwater, 50yrs 11mths.

Furthest travelled – Arctic Tern from Wales to Australia, 18,000kms

Strangest – Osprey ring found in stomach of a crocodile in The Gambia!

Many thanks again for reporting this bird and contributing to the work of the Ringing Scheme. If you would like to find out more about the BTO please check out our website at www.bto.org

With best wishes, The Ringing Team”

Well done Daniel. You and Thomas must keep up this good work! – Ed

Tom Fisher

Many of you will have heard that Tom represented Wales in the Under 16 Welsh Sea fishing tournament against England this Summer.

His school have recognised this achievement and presented Tom with a Certificate of Achievement as can be seen on the back of the Newsletter.

Isabel Thomas

On Sunday 6th November Isabel and Freddie held a charity cake sale and coffee afternoon in aid of Ty Hafan. They organised the whole event from start to finish (with a little help from Mummy!). They thought of lots of different ways in which they could raise money for children less fortunate than themselves; they had a ‘Guess the name of the Teddy Bear’ competition, ‘Guess how many sweets are in the jar’, and they baked cakes, biscuits and even blackberry and apple crumbles! The event was a huge success, Gwyn and I personally covered the cost of hiring the Village Hall so therefore the total amount raised for Ty Hafan was £786.91p.

We would like a say a huge thank you to everyone who came along to the event, baked cakes, donated and helped out on the day. We really can’t thank you all enough.

Sally Beynon

It is always good to hear of the work that the village youngsters are achieving. If you have children who have achievements, done charity work or other triumphs to share with us, send to your council committee for inclusion in 2017 Newsletter - Ed

Isabelle and Freddie preparing for their charity cake sale

‘RHOSILLI’ PRODUCE

If you can’t think what to get your loved ones this Christmas, I have found several companies that love Rhossili almost as much as we do, and go so far as to name their products after our village:

Barrie M, Matte Nail Paint - ‘Rhossili’ Nail Varnish

“I wanted to start with my favourite because O.M.G. – I think this is my perfect berry pink! I’ve been searching a long time for you, Rhossili! It’s a gorgeous purply-pink deep magenta creme. The finish is matte but it’s still reflective so shines in quite a dull way (does that make sense?) and almost looks a little grainy up close. This was common with all of the Matte polishes from the collection, but it’s not something that bothers me personally.”

DFS – ‘Gower’ Sofa

“The gently curving lines of our elegant Gower range are inspired by the coast. Choose classic …. “
Rhossili Community Council Newsletter

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www.blueblancmange.co.uk - ‘Rhossili Lounge Pants’

“Blueblancmange lounge pants are made with a very soft cotton and are a relaxed fit with adjustable waistband. Two side pockets, bb branding details, back patch and side tab. Machine washable at 40C.”

M & S - ‘Rhossili’ Rug

“Complement your interior décor with this traditional rug. Stylish, soft and eye-catching for beautiful homes.”

Swatch - ‘Rhossili’ Watch

“This attractive unisex Swatch Rhossili watch has a plastic/resin case and is fitted with a quartz movement. It is fastened with a black leather strap and has a black dial. The watch has a date function.”

www.belstaff.co.uk – ‘Rhossili’ Jeans

“Very popular Belstaff Rhossili Jeans Off White Womens In Off White Stretch Denim, after-sale protection, in terms of good looks and style.”

Hymn – ‘Rhossili’ Backpack

“Practical for summer adventures, the HYMN Rhossili has got backpacks covered. A classic design, it has a curved shape with zip fastenings to keep your daily essentials safe. Highlights include multiple gadget pockets, making the Rhossili a good choice for daily use, while its contrast colourway and striped lining ensure it looks good too. Features Classic backpack shape, canvas, front zip pocket, internal laptop pocket, internal phone pocket, internal zip pocket, striped lining, faux leather pullers, headphone slit to left, padded mesh back, two adjustable straps, contrast holder, hymn label to front. Composition 100% Cotton, excluding trims.”

Yale Lock Company – ‘Rhossili’ Door Handle

“The Premium range offers a mix of classic and contemporary back plate and round rose handles, plus mortice knobs in a choice of polished chrome, satin nickel and antique or polished brass finishes.

Predicted top-sellers include the Rhossili back plate handle. Supplied in polished brass as a lock, latch or bathroom handle, the Rhossili features a raised back plate and a sleek, gently curved handle, making it ideal for traditional family homes.”

Fat Face – ‘Rhossili’ Plain Zip Hoody

...if you are not quick they will sell out fast!

Ian Button

UTTERINGS AND GLEANINGS FROM RHOSILLI

A (W)HOLE LOTTA LUV or SWALLOW ME UP!

This summer the ‘swallow hole’ in School Lane opened up once more and a couple of you felt the need to express yourself in verse...

THE HOLE (Mk I)

There's a hole in the ground, it's big and sort of round,
Down at the bottom of School Lane,
There are bollards all around that big hole in the ground, and it's driving us all insane.
The council workmen came to see, what solution there could possibly be and could it be easily fixed
It could be caused by the roots of that tree, and, for a small fee we'll start to get some concrete mixed.
Well, it worked, for a while, but, it does make you smile, it wasn't too long, before we were singing the same song.
That hole in the ground (still big and sort of round) had opened up again.

So cover the ground, put bollards all around, and hope it doesn't rain.

Well, what do you know? It can't possibly be so, there a hole on the other side now! This one's very deep, and the sides are so steep! Can we fix it?

Yes we can. Just send off for another van.

Well, I'm happy to say, they did find a way, (with

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some help from Welsh Water who did what they ‘oughta’) they made the lane solid again.
For how long we don’t know, it depends on the rain.
But it’s OK for now, they can take a big bow.
If it opens again we can sing this refrain: -
There’s a hole in School Lane dear Swansea, dear Swansea......

Marion Potts

The Council, Welsh Water, were lambs for the slaughter,
They’ve measured and filmed every crack.
And no-one is clear where I might next appear,
But one thing they should know, “I’ll be back!”

Now The Pope, he is Catholic, and Highways emphatic
They’re sure they’ve a plan of attack
But, for a real guarantee, well, just think of me!
Sooner or later, “I’LL BE BACK!”

C A Vern

WINTER’S DAY AT RHOSILLI

Even by the standards of the place it is a magical day here at Clover Cliff. The pale green fields are rimed with yesterday’s frost in the shadows of wall and crag. The sea is a cold, pale Prussian blue and the sky, brassy at the horizon, fades through green, cerulean and ultra to purple overhead; the air is crystal clear.

The whole place teems with Lapwings, more than I can remember seeing as a boy. They used to be the familiar of the fields here, always enjoyed more for their smart plumage, extraordinary flight and eerie calls than for their rarity. They fly, protesting at our disturbance with a ‘min-min’ rather than the iconic ‘pee-wit’ which I have only heard once today. There are Snipe a-plenty, too, skulking on the cliff and rapidly zigzagging off from almost at our feet. Other less familiar visitors are small flocks of Fieldfares and an occasional Golden Plover – the first I have seen since Donald MacInnes called one in on a visit to Weobley Castle fifty years ago. I wish I had my binoculars!

I saw as many as four Buzzards today, heaving themselves off a fresh sheep’s carcass above Butterslade as Ernie and I came into sight. I wondered what the collective noun for Buzzards might be – it ought to be a ‘vibration’ or maybe a ‘plaint’. The inevitable Raven, perched on the hump of Thurba gives his usual deep ‘roke roke’ and then escorts me round to Mewslade. There is a Carrion Crow, too, hanging around in its usual objectionable way. I feel flattered by the Raven’s attention, I like the communities of Jackdaws and Rooks and I celebrate the aerobatic Choughs, but Carrion Crows are like sordid non-entities who don’t even want each other’s company.

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As ever, the cormorants are flying their archaic patrols off the end of Thurba, ‘kark-karking’ as they see us. I fear my memory is going because bird calls I would have remembered instantly a year ago are familiar, but now remain un-named. As we walk the birds allow us to get close – not wanting to expose themselves to the icy wind but then lose their nerve and dash off making it no easier to see them. The exception is a small female Stonechat, who looks me in the eye like a rustic maiden sitting on a wall:

‘Then I’ll not marry you my pretty maid?’
‘Nobody asked you, sir, she said.’

She is not as flash as the male and appreciated more in his absence!

I walk the high route round Fall Bay and stop to talk to a man with a camera. We share our appreciation of the light. I always expect to know less of a place than the people I meet here but this character seems a bit anxious to show he knows everything I mention. So strangely, I think he probably doesn’t!

We part and I walk on, feeling weak and unfit on the ‘up’ slopes. Ernie has a drink from the bowl outside the Old coastguard Lookout, so I put a coin in the coast warden collection box and receive a cheery ‘Thank you’ from the lady volunteer inside. She opens up the top half of the stable door, greets us and decides to introduce Ernie to her young lab who is big enough to look over the lower half. Ernie has his usual struggle to stand on his hind legs and when the lab starts growling, Ernie and I decide to show him our rear ends and push off. The lady volunteer twinkles her smiley eyes, moves away from the door and bids us a cheerful good-bye.

We turn our backs on the Sun and head for Rhossili. Approaching the Worms Head Hotel, a Kestrel overtakes us in a shallow stoop, bright chestnut in the golden light and disappears over the cliffs to our left. It is another glorious, if slightly unfulfilled, moment. Through the village and round the back of the Church; I’m glad Ernie walks well to heel, as I have brought no lead. We bear left up Rhossili Down then to the right down School Lane. It is now about four o’clock and we need to keep going if we’re to get back before twilight.

The air is still crystal clear and the far coast is visible from the Mendips right down to nearly to Cornwall – like a foreign land in a picture book. Lundy hovers above the horizon like a magic island. It is flanked by the super-structure of a ship reflecting the setting sun to its right and by the new moon to its left. There will never be another moment like this, undigitised, unrecorded and un-produced except by The Creator, who set it all spinning on its way, both free and loved. How bounteous are his ways!

As we cross the Mewslade Valley, I want to stoke the stove and drink Whisky, in the dark, watching the light go. But my stomach won’t stand the whisky, I don’t have any and once I get in it is all domestic chores: feed the dog, make tea, eat flapjack and sit down to write.

Written by the late Oliver WR Lucas of Clover Cliff in December, 2010. It was given to Jo Scott, on Watch at the Old Coastguard Lookout, by Oliver’s sister in Summer 2013.

FARMING INSIGHT:
Great Pitton Farm

I can’t believe I am writing for the Christmas news letter already where has 2016 gone?

You all will remember 2016 started off with what seemed like never ending rain. The impact of the wet weather put a lot of stress on the sheep resulting in considerable loss of weight during the winter (Sheep hate rain). All gardeners will know the wet winter was followed by a cold spring resulting in extremely slow growing crops including the grass. This left us very short of fodder as cattle which would normally be out grazing were still on full winter rations. The late spring and summer were quite farmer friendly but nature has a wonderful way of balancing its self out, and we have enjoyed a fantastic autumn!

Grassland quality is crucial to ensure the livestock thrive and grow at their full potential. During early spring we apply all that the grass and clovers require for optimum growth including trace elements such as sodium, copper and selenium, so that the grass if of the highest quality. We then manage this grassland to get the most production out of it. When grazing
there must be enough grass for the stock to be satisfied, however too much results in waste. The grass can be managed by grazing with cattle then sheep, as sheep nibble selectively and cattle rip large amounts with their tongues without being too picky.

When the grass is at maximum growth and highest feed value during late May and early June it is preserved for feeding in the winter. The grass is cut ideally before it seeds, as quality will deteriorate after this point, it is then spread to wilt as quickly as possible to reduce the water content before raking it into rows and baling at around 30% moisture. To make silage it is then wrapped in six layers of plastic to ensure air is kept out so anaerobic bacteria (bacteria which do not need oxygen) will ferment the sugars in the grass and stabilise the now ‘pickled’ grass for use during the winter months. Before feeding the silage is analysed to assess the protein and carbohydrate levels and palatability of each batch of round bales. The high protein silage is then fed in winter to young cattle, who are growing their frame and the lower protein fodder is fed to finishing cattle who are on a high carbohydrate diet which includes home grown barley and fodder beet.

October was a fantastic month for our family, half way through planting a field with wheat my wife Jessica who was sat with me in the tractor went into labour a week early and we now have a beautiful little girl called Isabel.

Finally Brexit brings its new challenges for agriculture. Short term we are benefiting from a weaker pound which has helped make our produce more globally competitive. However there is uncertainty in the years ahead after European subsidies end and trade agreements with Europe have been renegotiated.

Tom Higgs

GOWER LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

I’m pleased to have been asked to update you on the Gower Landscape Partnership (GLP) and its work in the Rhossili area. Just to remind you - the Gower Landscape Partnership was set up for partners to work together on a programme conserving and celebrating the unique landscape, heritage and communities of Gower and bring it to a wider audience. The Heritage Lottery Fund awarded GLP £1.3 million in 2013, with other funders and partners including the City & County of Swansea, Natural Resources Wales, the National Trust and the Gower Society.

We are now well into the programme, which we are expecting to continue until March 2018. Over the past couple of winters, you will have noticed the GLP-funded restoration of the roadside wall as you drive in from Middleton. We were also able to fund the rebuilding of a section of drystone wall on The Vile. Starting in December - and for the next two winters - the GLP now has a contractor rebuilding 240 metres of the wall running down the Mewslade valley. This is going to be a big piece of work – as you walk along the footpath down valley the wall may only seem 4-foot high, but will be more than double this on the other side! This work has only been possible with additional grant aid support from the Gower Society, and it is a great example of what the GLP partners can do by pooling resources and working together.

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But GLP is not all about walls! GLP is helping to create/enhance 30 ha of hay meadows as part of the project. Hay meadows are a habitat that has declined dramatically over the last 50 years – resulting in the loss of many rare plants, opportunities for ground nesting birds and the loss of a valuable nectar source for bees and butterflies. As a GLP partner, the National Trust (NT) is reintroducing hay meadows to their fields on the Vile as this style of management fits with their long term aims and ambitions for the area. The GLP has purchased hay-making machinery and to enable this to happen.

Another important part of the GLP programme is celebrating Gower’s unique character with a wider audience and Rhossili is a key part to this. We have arranged and/or supported a range of walks, talks and community events with the local community, Swansea community groups, schools and visitors from across the globe.

Just as some examples:

• Arranging visits to Rhossili and Gower for international students coming to study in Swansea - as well as a guided walk for 75 Chinese students from the Sichuan Conservatory of Music and Wuhan University of Technology led by Mr Roger Button!
• GLP supported the Men of Sweyn’s Ey Morris and Sword Dance group to celebrate their 50th anniversary with a ‘Day of Dance’ across Gower and ending at Rhossili
• Our very popular ‘Taste of Gower’ organised walks, working with local cafes and suppliers

We hope to continue with similar work until the end of the programme in 2018.

Chris Lindley
Gower AONB Team Leader
City & County of Swansea

The Partnership website can be found at:
http://www.thisisgower.co.uk/about-gower-landscape-partnership/

Ed.

NEW RHOSSTILI RANGER

It’s hard to believe it’s been 6 months since I landed a dream of a job as Rhossili Ranger.

There’s more to the job than meets the eye as it’s not your traditional ranger job. Yes, there are stiles to fix and ragwort to pull, but my main focus has been to give everyone who spends time at Rhossili the best possible experience of the area.

So I started with the basics, first impressions and keeping on top of litter. The fortnight running up to the summer holidays was spent with groups of up to 190 school children from Penyrrheol, Gowerton and Ysgol Gwyr and we managed to litter pick the whole 3 miles of Rhossili Beach (and National Trust only look after 2 miles) ready for our busiest time. Thanks also go to Hillend campsite for their help with this.

I’ve also been showing people what’s special about Rhossili. There is so much history in the area that’s not apparent whilst enjoying a stroll along the cliffs, so it’s been very rewarding to add to people’s experience by sharing these colourful stories of the area. And the exchange of information has been a two way conversation. Just as there were locals that learnt a bit during the archaeology week we did last year, I’ve also learnt more about the area from the locals, people who have lived and worked in Rhossili for many years.

Over the school holidays there has been an activity every day of the week, which has been quite an undertaking and wouldn’t have been possible without the help of our amazing volunteers. We’ve had rock pooling days, mini beach cleans and sandcastle competitions where the underlying message is how precious the landscape and wildlife is and the guided walks enabled us to share stories, but we need something in place that can be accessed at all times, not just when a member of our team is on site. To address this issue, over the quieter winter months I hope to get together more information that will be used on various different platforms so everyone has the opportunity to delve a little deeper into this legendary area.

Events this year included the 60th anniversary celebrations for the AONB, our every popular Cadburys Easter Trails, and a mince pies and hot punch day at the shop where everyone could make...
Christmas reindeers and enjoy a more relaxed retail experience.

The Vile is top of our list when it comes to our Land, Outdoors and Nature strategy. Over the next few years we hope to make the fields, healthier and more wildlife friendly, with crop rotation and reinstating previous field boundaries that will act as wildlife corridors. As part of a new series of Land, Outdoors and Nature walks (taking place the first Wednesday of every month during 2017), we will be walking through the Vile to see progress and all the seasonal changes taking place. These walks will be greatly enhanced by the expert “birdie” knowledge of Mark, our new Area Ranger. (Ed Hunter in the National Trust carpark also has an amazing knowledge and is keeping our sightings boards up to date, if you have any bird related questions, he’s your man!).

We’ll also be getting involved with National Dolphin and Whales Watch next July.

I’ve recruiting a special bunch of volunteers called COASTodians who are adopting sections of footpath all over Gower. We started in June, and so far have 20 volunteers, with more enquiries coming in every day.

As I type this I’m thinking about events for next year and with it being the Year of Legends, there will be a strong Worm’s Head theme as we coax our very own dragon into the limelight, with dragon themed Easter trails and beach litter sculptures. Keep an eye out for this and other beach based artwork through the year...

And just one more thing to mention is that our Mari Lwyd lantern parade takes place in Pennard on 14 December. There will be community lantern making workshops in the run up to the event, (see our website for details)

So that’s a few of the highlights that stand out for me so far and all that’s left is for me to thank the community of Rhossili for making me feel so welcome.

So far it’s been an ERIC, oops, sorry, EPIC experience.

Kathryn Thomas

RH OSSILI - Summer of Sea and Sky

Rolling down the path to meet the distant rumble of waves,
Surf boards, buckets and spades, picnics, carted down from the village above,
Hopping over pebbles to land on the soft sand.
Stiff upper lips against flapping windbreaks, and sea mist until the sun breaks through,
Dog yap at the limitless freedom, braving of waves of cold and salt,
Surfers dance on sets, kites and paragliders paint colourful skies.
Smells of the sea, ozone, seaweed, sun cream, barbeques,
Ship wrecks waving, not drowning, from sandy depths,
Lithic, mythic, dragon snoozes, oblivious.
Mindful moments watching clouds and waves.
How many grains of sand in a fist? Slipping away like the afternoon,
Crack of bat hitting ball, slap of spade shaping sandcastles.
Kids squirm, toes rubbed free of sand at the end of the day,
Sunburnt, wind-burnt, fresh air tied, traipse back to real life,
Taking a few unseen grains of sand at the bottom of a pocket.

NATIONAL TRUST

This year has been a year of planning for the future both in regards the management of the land around Rhossili and the redevelopment of the car park to give visitors and residents a better quality experience when they use our facilities.

Firstly though, our regular work continues as normal and so in the first few weeks of the New Year we will continue with our management of the SAC coastline and common to manage it for its special and rare habitats. This takes the shape (largely) of removing tall stands of gorse from Rhossili Down and cutting the shorter gorse/heath on the coast to produce a
mosaic of vegetation heights to encourage as diverse a range of species to these sites as possible. You have probably seen that some of this work has already begun on the heath at Fall Bay which our volunteers have been working hard on and in the New Year we will be employing local contractors to work on the parts we haven’t had time to get to ourselves.

Very early in the New Year you will also see the work begin on the car park. This will cause some disruption but we are working on a system that we think we can enable the car park to run (at a reduced capacity) throughout the works and so allow local businesses to continue with minimal disruption. One of the most complicated elements of the car park work will be removing the current surface and replacing it with a permeable one which should considerably reduce the ‘flash floods’ we experience during wetter periods. This will require the current surface material to be removed from site and so there will be a necessary increase in traffic transporting this material away but hopefully this will be done during the quietest time of the year for visitors and so reduce the impact to everyone’s lives. Once the new surface is down then we can make a start with the landscaping which has been designed to complement the ancient open field system of the Vile.

The National Trust has developed a framework on which all of our land is now measured against called ‘Land Outdoors and Nature’ and challenges local teams to ensure that all of our land be it farmed, common land, historic parks or formal gardens are being looked after in the best possible way. The changes we are looking to make will be most visible in the Vile where we are looking at ‘fine tuning’ the way we let our land to local farmers and trying to strike a more equal balance between agriculture and wildlife. This isn’t to say we are turning our backs on farming and allowing the fields to ‘re-wild’. The cultural significance of the Vile as an ancient farmed landscape is crucial to the way we think about this land and the changes to the management are more linked with how we can allow wildlife to thrive in the margins and hedges/banks etc whilst still using the land productively. The plans are currently still being drawn up but once complete I am very happy to give a talk to the local community about them and the reasons behind some of the decisions made.

Away from the coal face of day to day conservation we have also been working to resolve the issues surrounding the boat house at Kitchen Corner. As has been well recognised there has been some development work on the building which hasn’t received all of the correct permissions and these works are currently awaiting demolition and removal (significant progress has been made on this just this week (W/C 28 Nov)) and so I hope that this will be resolved early in 2017.

And finally we have had two major changes to the team in 2016. Firstly, Kathryn Thomas has taken on the new role of Rhossili ranger. Kathryn has been with the Gower team for many years but has spent her time working across the whole Gower peninsula; however her new role now allows her to focus all of her time and attention specifically on Rhossili. 2016 has seen Kathryn working extremely hard welcoming visitors, arranging events to highlight the spectacular Rhossili landscape, ensuring the beach and coast are kept clean and litter free and improving the paths and access routes to ensure everyone’s experience of Rhossili is positive and memorable.

We also have a new member of staff join the estate team in 2016. We have been very fortunate to employ Mark Hipkin who has joined us as a lead ranger for Gower. Mark has already been extremely busy in the Rhossili area leading monthly walks through the Vile (where his Gower Ornithological Society knowledge has proved extremely useful) and managed the endurance life event in November. He will be regularly out and about and is very keen to show people the work we are doing so please feel
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Alan Kearsley-Evans

National Trust Property Manager

Rhossili Community Council Newsletter

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Rhossili Coastguard 2016 Update

It has been a relatively quiet year for the Rhossili Coastguard Team with around 60 call outs to date, which is significantly down on the previous year.

We have had the return of the experienced Steve Jones to the team and I must add the wind-up merchant too! He was missed during his time away however was welcomed back with open arms.

Recently we have been extremely fortunate to receive a new vehicle, well new to our team anyway and a real step up from what we have been used too. You certainly won't miss it going through the village! I am sure this will come at a cost at some point to the team...

During 2016 we have not had any new members join as yet, however, there are vacancies and interviews are being carried out in the very near future to fill these spaces. Unfortunately though, we did lose Trude Knowland as she decided to 'hang her boots up' so to say. This came as a real shame and no end of persuasion from team members could not change her mind! Trude was an integral part of the team and served a total number of 8 years. Trude was ever present for training and call outs and is being missed immensely by all.

As you may know every year the team have the Silly Willy of Rhossili Award, this year on Sunday 11th December at the Worm's Head Hotel which is a little bit of fun between team members and the winner is presented with 'the' trophy... Yes there is a trophy and there is a story behind it, just ask Steve Campbell-Kelly! Candidates are nominated and team members vote, the one with the most nominations wins it, it's as simple as that. Last year Steve Jones won the award. According to Ladbrokes Darren our ever present leader is a strong contender this year along with Mike Williams who's odds have drastically shortened of late...
This year the team celebrated the 140th year of Rhossili Coastguards existence. As a team we would like to thank you all for supporting our event and we are hoping this can be done annually to showcase the work we do.

Wishing you all a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year
Rhossili Coastguard Team

Darren Powell
Rhossili Coastguard

NATIONAL COASTWATCH INSTITUTE
Worm’s Head Station 2016

During November and December last year, several members of Worms Head NCI visited the Operations Room at Milford Haven Coastguard, it was agreed that the visits were well worth the effort travelling, their talk and the tour of the Ops room was very impressive. So much so, 2 more visits have been arranged for this month (November).

Every January 1st, Horton RNLI organise the ‘Janet Walk’ to commemorate the disaster in which several Port Eynon Lifeboat men lost their lives going to the aid of the stricken ship SS Dunvegan.

However, the weather was awful, the walk was curtailed, a few of our members walked some of the way and then retired to the village hall for an excellent lunch.

Horton RNLI also held an exhibition showing details of the launch and subsequent loss of lives during this dreadful event, but also details of other rescues by the RNLI during the 1st World War years.

During this year, we had visits by several dignitaries, the local MP Byron Davies, the new NCI trustee Mike Byrne, NCI’s new Chairperson Leslie Suddes together with our outgoing Chairman Alan Richards and also visits by UK Border Force.

Sadly, we had 4 resignations this year, but gained 3 new watchkeepers in January and at the moment we have at least 12 trainee watchkeepers and more waiting in the wings.

During the Spring, the batteries were starting to give trouble and also the wind generator didn’t seem to be working as it should. So, George bit the bullet, went out and bought 6 new batteries, had the wind generator regulator overhauled. We dismantled the wind generator and found out after the fan fell off that a bracket had snapped and all the wires were disconnected. A new Wind generator was purchased, erected and is working well but with a few new developments.

Thankfully we passed the DFS in April, thank you to Joan & Dave Francis, Mal Price & Maddy Carroll. We had arranged an exercise with Horton RNLI but had to cancel it because again we had awful weather.

This year we bought a new gazebo with the NCI logo on the canopy, it really stands out. I’m sure it helped to recruit new members especially at the Gower Show. The gazebo walls have been printed with various pictures of Worms Head. Thanks, are due to John Williams.

It’s 1st outing was at the Pennard Carnival followed by the Gower Show, Burry Port RNLI Open Day and at Chris Williams’s Garden Party.

Thank you to Chris for such a lovely afternoon/evening and for preparing all that gorgeous food. Could this be an annual event?

After several letters, e-mails and meetings with the National Trust, the metal work around the Lookout was removed, to be sand blasted and supposedly Powder coated?! Woodwork to be repainted and window hinges to be changed! We had hoped that that the front gable would be re-rendered. Watch this space.

Worms Head had a very good year with Gift Aid donations due to the sale of 2016 and now 2017 calendars. Thanks, goes to George for organising and arranging for them to be ready for the Pennard Carnival. Since then we may have to have a 3rd re-print. In July, NCI central asked for their new database to be completed. Whilst this was completed under some duress, it is a way of Central knowing how many members we have and for charging capitation etc. But we have received new ID badges.

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RYA/SRC training is to start soon with Dave Francis, firstly with Porthcawl NCI (who haven’t anyone qualified) and then it will be our turn from January 2017, hopefully at Tutt Head, Mumbles. We are grateful to the local members of the Coastguard for their kind offer to use their facilities.

There have been 10 incidents this year so far, some we have been asked for assistance from Milford Haven Coastguard to 5 in what I call the ‘Silly Season’ during the school holidays (what else can we do, we have all the signage and still people seem to ignore the signs, believing that it doesn’t mean them!!) Just the other day Worms Head NCI were asked by Milford Haven CG to keep an eye on a PADDLE BOARDER who was going from Rhossili beach to Ilfracombe by himself, without a rescue boat!! And I thought the silly season had finished 2 months ago. Thank you to all of you who kept an eye on him. Sadly, there was a suicide and unfortunately the body was discovered by one of our watchkeepers.

Lastly, in August and September 2006, several of our watchkeepers signed up to start a new NCI station at Worms Head. The station opened officially during the Easter period in 2007. Next year we are hoping to organise an event at the Lookout celebrating 10 years of continuing service and also to have a dinner/get together somewhere later in the year.

That’s all, but what I do ask (a bit early) is that you all have,

‘A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year’

Andy Bowen
Station Manager,
National Coastwatch Institution Worms Head

RHOSLLI WORKING GROUP
Update: Christmas 2016

In March, we finally succeeded in persuading E.ON to release the Pierpoint reports and data into the public domain. These provide the evidence that Scarweather Sands off Porthcawl are a breeding and nursery site for harbour porpoise with one of the highest population densities in Welsh waters. After much lobbying, in June we forced JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee – the statutory adviser to Government on nature conservation) to accept the data into the Joint Cetacean Protocol, the European database for all marine mammals.

Harbour porpoise is a European protected species. The largest aggregations are in UK waters, but, until recently, the UK had no conservation areas for the species – even now the only confirmed site is the Skerries in Northern Ireland. Three years ago, the European Commission began infringement proceedings against the UK for not fulfilling its obligations to protect the species. On September 29th, the EC moved to the final stage of legal proceedings, lodging a complaint in the European Court of Justice. Brexit or not, the UK still has to fulfill its legal duty.

To meet the requirement to select Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for the porpoise, JNCC commissioned a report which would identify high intensity areas around the UK coastline. This report, based on an analysis of coastal sediments, and heavily reliant on statistical modelling, was finally published in March 2015 as JNCC Report S44. It managed to omit Scarweather, Swansea Bay and Gower coasts – which have extensive observations of porpoise – and yet include a large area in the Celtic Sea where there have been hardly any sightings at all. The proposed SAC for this area is termed the Bristol Channel Approaches and extends from Pembrokeshire to Cornwall, but stops short of the end of Gower.

From March to May this year, JNCC and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) held a public consultation on their proposals for SACs in English and Welsh waters. Rhossili Working Group (RWG) responded with two papers. In our New Critique of JNCC Report S44, we question the baseline data used in the analysis, and we believe that the methodology used is seriously flawed. We have very recently discovered that the specialist statistician appointed by JNCC as a peer-reviewer also had on-going unresolved concerns about the methodology. In our second paper, we examine the selection of the sea area of Bristol Channel Approaches, and find there is hardly any evidence at all of porpoise presence in mid channel. Again, very recently, we discovered that even senior members of the JNCC project team have questioned...
the anomaly. We argued for a coastal extension of the proposed area to include Gower and greater Swansea Bay.

So where are we now. JNCC have accepted the Scarweather data but say it is too late to re-run the analysis. So the original SAC proposals were submitted to UK and Welsh Government ministers in September, and we await an announcement from them. Meanwhile, on advice, RWG have submitted evidence to Leigh-Day solicitors in London who have asked counsel for an opinion about a possible Judicial Review. Simultaneously, we will submit our evidence to the European Commission to whom we have a direct line of communication. They have the final say on the UK proposals.

And why does this matter? The harbour porpoise, like other whale species, is vulnerable and under pressure, and in urgent need of protection. Alongside this, RWG was formed to fight off the Atlantic Array. We believe the best way of protecting the coasts of Gower, Lundy and North Devon from future industrial and commercial exploitation is to achieve conservation status for this area of the Bristol Channel, and at the moment, one way to do that is via a SAC for the harbour porpoise.

A little footnote. You might think that once a planning application has been decided, it is the end of the matter. Think again. In September last year, the Planning Inspectorate announced its decision on five proposed wind farms in north Powys: one was accepted, three were rejected, and the fifth wind farm was accepted but not its associated transmission lines. Last December, the Government announced that it was going to re-run the whole planning procedure, and last March the law was changed to enable this to happen. The re-run has already started.

Carl Johnson
Rhossili Working Group
29 December 2015

2016 Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay

The future of the proposed Swansea Lagoon is still not publicly known. The Hendry Commission was appointed in the summer to explore the viability of Lagoons as generating stations, with specific reference to the proposed lagoons at Swansea and Cardiff. The Commission was expected to report in mid November, but this may now be delayed until late December.

As a concept, the use of tidal lagoons to generate electricity is impeccable: you know when the power is going to be produced and how much, the power generation is largely unaffected by the seasons or the weather, and the lagoon has a predicted life-span of 120 years.

There is, however, an environmental cost. Expert opinion given at the Planning Inspectorate Enquiry suggested that the proposed Swansea Lagoon would jut out so far into Swansea Bay that the tides would no longer be able to clear the sediments in the Bay. Blackpill would become mudflats, and the area between Blackpill and Norton would eventually become saltmarsh; there are no possible mitigation measures. At the moment, the waters of Swansea Bay are on a catch-up plan to enable them to meet the requirements of the European Water Framework Directive, the same Directive which gives us clean rivers and blue-flag beaches. If the Lagoon is built, the waters of Swansea Bay will not be able to reach the requirements of the European standard. In giving planning consent to the proposal to build the Lagoon, the Secretary of State gave an exemption to the European Water Directive under the terms of IROPI (Imperative Reasons of Over-riding Public Importance). NRW suggested that this might be the only exemption for such a development in the whole of Europe.

So the choice is electricity or environment.

There remains another little fly in the ointment. The plans for the Swansea Tidal Lagoon include bringing the rock armour for the sea walls from Dean Quarry on the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall, which was purchased for the purpose by the developers of the Lagoon. But Dean Quarry has been disused for several years and its licence for mineral extraction expired in October – thereafter, if Cornwall adhere to the planning conditions, the quarry has to be returned to a natural state. The issue of re-opening the quarry is on-going. Also, a new jetty has to be built, but this would extend into the recently created Manacles Marine Conservation Zone. This would require another IROPI decision, not easy as the rock
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Carl Johnson  
Rhossili Working Group  
29 December 2015

Should anyone wish for further information on the Group’s activities and interests or wishes to know more about the environmental status of protecting the environment in the Bristol Channel, please contact Carl or email, rhossilicc@gmail.com

HAY MEADOWS – YEAR 2

Until mechanisation, meadows had seen little change in their management since Victorian days, and even today the farming year still follows a similar pattern. However, each farmer had a bespoke pattern for his (or her!) fields, depending on the site. Here in Rhossili, the year would have started in October, with the sale of the lambs and the rest of the flock then returned to grazing the Down or the cliffs, so the meadows got a bit of a rest. Come the winter and frosty weather, the well-rotted manure would be spread and then the fields would be harrowed to spread the manure and break up any molehills – to keep the soil out of the hay and provide a more level surface for the early season mowers so that their cutter bars didn’t get clogged up! Sheep would be allowed back into the meadows to lamb, but once they were big enough the sheep and lambs would be removed and the meadows “shut up”, typically in March or April.

This year we had a few sheep and some cattle over the winter, but all were removed to let the grasses grow in late March. For six weeks or so we watched the transformation as the grasses and flowers burst into life and colour. The yellow of the early meadow buttercups was replaced by the yellow of Yellow Rattle, the white of Pignut and the magenta of our first Wood Cranesbill. What is a plant with a name like this doing in a meadow? Its name may give a clue as to its origins in our meadows, as it’s quite a common one in old meadows — they were once clearings in the native woodland that covered much of this area before humans arrived. Its natural cycle as an early-flowering woodland plant, when it would need to flower and seed before the canopy closed the sunlight off, isn’t that dissimilar to that of the human-created hay meadow, where again it needs to flower and set its seeds before the farmer comes along with his (or her) mower. We still had to clear noxious Ragwort plants, Hogweeds and more thistles than I care to mention. Ragwort grew in lines across Slade Acre Field, trending Northwest to South East, showing the prevailing wind direction – it’s a beautifully artistic flower, but it’s a pity it is so very poisonous in hay, so it has to go (and it’s not a native species, anyway!).

Hay meadows have evolved through people repeating the same land and field management over centuries in some cases. If one thing changes, like weather conditions or climate change or even farm management fashions, there will inevitably be effects on the meadows. This can most clearly be seen in fields ear-marked for silage production, where only two or three species of grass are planted, and chosen for their sugar content or aptitude for “making”. You won’t see many wild flowers in these fields. The restoration and recreation outlined in the Gower Landscape Project that we joined so enthusiastically has to be thought of as a long-term project, the blossoming of which we will probably not live to witness. Fortunately, our children are most supportive of our ideal and will persevere after our time.

We saw a reduction in the number of species of flower and even grasses this year, but Yellow Rattle was there in profusion, in all three fields. Our assistance in the project by the local National Trust Conservation team, also supported by the Gower Landscape Project, was of paramount importance this year. We were aware that the National Trust are hoping to expand the hay meadow project into their own land, so we suggested that they might harvest the seed heads from our flowers and grasses and spread them onto their land, and this is what they did. No waiting this year with bated breath for at least four days of fine and windy weather - Claire Hannington arrived with a “Cut and Collect” device hitched to her tractor and the field was cleared in no time, saving time and mammoth effort, not to mention high blood-pressure, at the same time.
We concentrated the hay meadow work in Slade Acre this year, as the mechanised implements to be used are not suited to conditions in Johnny’s Garden or Kiln Hay – Johnny’s Garden is too small, and Kiln Hay has some of the biggest ant-hills you’ve ever seen and the cutter bars would probably break! We have been pleased to see, however, the slow spread of clumps of Cow-slips and the survival of old-fashioned bluebells along the stone wall that borders The (original) Vile and we live in hope that we will see more than one Orchid in succeeding years.

Finally, we just need to thank Geoff Beynon for his help, animals and sage advice, plus Claire and Alan at The National Trust in Pilton – we couldn’t have done it without you and we look forward to next year to see what happens.

Jo and Peter Scott

Passenger numbers were steady throughout the period and the annual survey on 14 August had more responses (171) than any previous survey. Rhossili was still the top destination but Port Eynon and Oxwich both posted a higher percentage of travellers than in previous years.

I am piloting through the application for funds for a further three-year period on behalf of C&C Swansea and, thus far, the ‘Expression of Interest’ has been approved by the Local Action Group and the final application is to be submitted this month for consideration and hopefully, approval, at the 17 January 2017 meeting of the LAG.

The intention for 2017/18/19 is the same level of service each year Sundays & BH Mondays starting at Easter, then May Day then every weekend from Spring BH to end September.

John Davies, Partnership Officer
BayTrans

Crime within Rhossili and Gower remains low but we must remain vigilant so that it stays that way. Please keep doors and windows of your homes, vehicles and outbuildings locked with any valuable items kept out of sight. Do not be afraid to report any suspicious activity to the police via 101 or in an emergency 999.

However, the rise of uninvited traders and nuisance callers throughout Swansea has become a cause for concern. This conduct is often targeted at the most vulnerable in our communities and on occasion a crime.

To that end your local police and other agencies are working to tackle door step crime.

Should you be contacted know your rights.

1 Check them – any caller to your door ask for photographic identification and check the details with the company they are representing.

2 Take time – Don’t feel rushed into agreeing any purchase on the doorstep and please don’t pay for
work before completion. You have a cancellation period of 14 days after the delivery of any item/service unless it is a bespoke product or an emergency repair. If the service starts immediately you can still cancel within the 14-day period but there may be no refund.

3 Report it – If you are visited by a persistent uninvited trader or nuisance caller report it likewise if you believed you have been scammed. Dial 101 to report your concerns or 999 in an emergency.

PC Phil Davies
Reynoldston Police Station
Mobile 07805301600

RECYCLING BAGS AVAILABLE
Don’t forget that you can collect new supplies of recycling bags from Pitton Cross Caravan Park if you run short. You can collect pink, green and food bags from the shop daily between 10am and 4pm. This service is in addition to the kerbside replenishment service already provided by Swansea Council. Now also available are Kitchen Waste Bins and Garden Green Bags.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
A note of thanks to Jim Harford of Print Partnership, who provides a great printing service to so many people on Gower. His company always demonstrates professionalism and quick turnaround – ensuring that this newsletter will find its way to our doorsteps.

RCC
Season’s Greetings

Dave & Barbara Powell: “Wishing all our friends, neighbours & members of Rhossili Oil Consortium a very Merry Christmas & a happy, healthy New Year. Dave & Barbara Powell. Donation to the British Heart Foundation”

Marion Potts: “I would like to wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas and New year. A special thank you to all my friends and neighbours who have been so kind to me this year. I really could not have managed without you all. Marian Potts and family”

The James and Mostyn families, Crud yr Awel: “Warm wishes, seasonal greetings and love to everyone in Rhossili. And many, many thanks to all who have made these last few months easier for us by your many kindesses. You are all wonderful!”

Lynda and Sam: “Lynda and Sam wish all their friends a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.”

Peter and Jenny: “A happy and healthy Christmas, and all good wishes to everyone for 2017”

Sue, Paul, Alma and Sam: “Sue, Paul, Alma and Sam at Meadow View would like to wish everyone a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Peaceful New Year”

Linda and Ray Bartlett: “wish to send seasonal greetings to all our friends and neighbours in Rhossili and to express our thanks for all their kindness and support throughout a difficult year - we couldn’t have coped without you”
June Thomas: "June wishes you all a very Happy Christmas, and sincerely hopes and prays for Peace at Home and in The World for 2017"

Jo and Peter Scott: "Love, Joy and Peace are the ingredients for a wonderful Christmas. We hope you find them all in this festive season and wish everyone and their families a very Merry Christmas. Nadolig Llawen ac Blwyddyn Newydd Dda"

Mark, Mary, Dyfrig and Huw: "Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda! With our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a happy 2017 from Mark, Mary, Dyfrig and Huw (Pitton Cottage) xxx"

Carl and Caroline Johnson: "To all our dear friends in Rhossili we trust that your Christmas is extra special and that the New Year brings you peace, hope and happiness. With best wishes, Carl and Caroline Johnson"

Steven, Lesley and the Campbell-Kelly family send, "Season’s Greetings to all in Rhossili Community. Wishing you all Good Health, a Merry Christmas and a Happy & Prosperous New Year. Lesley and I also wish to thank all the support from the community we have received this year and in particular Rhossili CRT and backup support from CG-Rescue 187"

Helen and Terry Sinclair: "Much love and Christmas greetings to all our friends. From Helen and Terry"

Dai Cann: "With love and best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all friends and neighbours."

Jo, Charlotte and Josh Higgins: "Wishing all our lovely friends and neighbours a very Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2017. With lots of love from Jo, Jeff Gerry, Charlotte, Josh, Ben and Zak xx"

While every reasonable step has been taken to ensure the veracity of the articles, Rhossili Community Council does not take responsibility for any omissions or errors. December 2016
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