

CHRISTMAS 2023

ISSUE 11

RHOSILI

Gŵyr

ANNUAL COMMUNITY MAGAZINE



Photos above kindly provided by Kathryn Lancey
Cover photo courtesy of William Nolan

Season's Greetings

Margaret and Barrie Swinnerton send their best wishes for the festive season to all their friends and for a Happy New Year 2024



Gill, Mike and Dylan Boulding send their warmest greetings for Christmas and the new year to all in Rhossili.



Wishing our friends and neighbours in Rhosili a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Mark and Mary x
Gan ddymuno Nadolig Llawen iawn a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda i'n ffrindiau a'n cymdogion yn Rhosili.
Mark a Mary x

Eaton and Karen Tarrant at the Homestead would like to wish all their friends and neighbours a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year



Wishing our lovely neighbours and everyone in this friendly community a very Happy Christmas and hoping that 2024 is kind to you and those you love. Gill and Geoff Strangeway (Bramwood)

Sam, Lynda and Lewis Shaw send best Christmas wishes to all their friends and neighbours. Nadolig llawen!

Happy Holidays to all in the village. Hope you have a lot of joy and fun over the celebratory period and a super year ahead in 2024. Best Wishes David Stockwell



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



Wishing everybody a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2024. With our very best wishes from us all at The Ship and Picnic Cottage xx

Sending greetings for a happy Christmas and good health, peace and contentment in the new year to all. Nadolig llawen ac iechyd da, heddwch a bodlonrwydd yn y flwyddyn newydd i bawb.

At this time of year, reflecting back, we are just so thankful for all our neighbours and friends within the community. Wishing you all a peaceful Christmas and a joyous New Year. Isobel & Colin Everett, Elmsbrook



Merry Christmas to you all from us all here at Pitton Cross Caravan Park & Foxgloves. Here is to a Happy 2024 - Ian and Tracey

Maggie, Paul, Mairwen, Bryn, Laura and all other animals (Pitton Mill Cottage)



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



Ken & Trude Knowland send their best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to their friends & neighbours.

Merry Christmas to everyone and a Happy, Peaceful New Year. Love from Vicki James and family, Crud yr Awel



Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda to all my amazing neighbours and friends from myself and my family. Marian Potts xxx



Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year with love from Lesley-Anne and Paul at Old Shoe Cottage

Christmas greetings from Peter and Jo Scott

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Photo courtesy of Mike (Kittiwakes)

Chairman's note



Season's greetings to the Rhossili Community from Ian Button, Rhossili Community Council Chairman

I'm still surprised and excited to be chair of the council and I'm grateful to all the councillors this year who have done so much to improve how we work together. For those of you who attended our Annual Council Meeting in May 2023 you will have heard about the various projects and campaigns we have been focused on over the past 12 months.

Perhaps our most important goal has been to create the necessary policy and governance framework, which will ensure that the council can represent the needs of the whole community in the most professional and effective way.

Another objective for us is to improve the way in which we communicate with the village about issues which concern you, and we are about to survey all villagers for their opinions on this.

We are pleased to welcome Lauren Walters on board as our new Clerk. Lauren fought off stiff competition during the selection interviews. She has brought enthusiasm and skills to the team, and we look forward to her support over the coming months as she develops her knowledge of local government.

One of her objectives is to develop, in conjunction with the City and County of Swansea planning department, a planning guide for the village which we hope will enable us to be more consistent and informed when we respond to planning requests.

A concern for us is that we retain a mix of housing within the village which will ensure the future survival of the community.

The reduction in the number of children in our village, (and other villages close by), has meant that Knelston school will soon be federating with Bishopston primary school.

This means the two schools will be sharing resources including a single group of governors. I have been pleased to be a governor at the school for the past 3 years and my time there is now coming to an end. I will be sorry to leave this role, however, I can see exciting opportunities for both schools, staff, and their students as they enter this new arrangement.

We hope that 2024 will be an exciting year for the village; this will include commemorating the 80th anniversary of the D Day landings on 6th June.

This is going to be a major UK wide event and we are hoping that Rhossili will be playing its own part in remembering its wartime history. You will be hearing more about this from us very shortly and we hope that as many of the community as possible will take part in marking this historic event.

I hope that you will enjoy reading this year's newsletter and the snapshots it provides of life in our small and busy community. I'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to it and those who have helped put it together. It has been a truly global enterprise this year, with our editor Charlotte Nolan being based in Australia. I wish everyone a very happy and prosperous 2024.



Right: Photos courtesy of
David Stockwell

The Length and Breadth of it

David Stockwell shares his love of long distance walking (and his beautiful photography!)



This article comes with a warning. There you are, on a comfy sofa, with the glowing warmth of a fire, the good company of an old friend, and maybe with a drink. God is in heaven and all is well with the world. It is at such a moment, it is so easy to be agreeable and simply say yes.

I should explain; after walking my first Long Distance Path, Offa's Dyke Path with my father, I did quite naturally progress to walk further National Trails, the South West Coast Path, the Cleveland Way and the Pennine Way. I joined the Long Distance Walker's Association and their London Group walking regularly 18 to 20 miles each Sunday. Who could resist such challenges walks as the Malvern Marathon, 14 Greens Canter or the Gower Gallop.

On the Hertfordshire Hobble I fell into walking with a tall woman with a gawky gait and spectacles. She was a former engineer, a subject I knew nothing about, but she had an interesting perspective on things and we made each other laugh. After the walk finished, I was taken aside; Did I realise who I was talking to? Only Ann Sayers! I know, who on earth is Ann Sayers?

Only in the days of Google did I find out Ann Sayers is the fastest woman to walk from Land's End to John O'Groats. In 1980 she walked Land's End to John O'Groats in 13 days, 10 hours and 1 minute, a record that still stands. (There are faster records by runners, but not for only walking)

Before the Millennium was complete it felt important to mark the occasion with doing something significant. Not easy when leave from work was not plentiful and had to be planned carefully. I set off by bike from Land's End and cycled northwards. I sent my mother, who had no idea where I was going, a post card every day. Apparently she said to my sisters when she got a card from Lancaster, that if the next post came from Scotland, I must be cycling to John O' Groats. The next card came was from Gretna Green. I did cycle to John O' Groats. When I next met my mother, the cards were arranged in order, in pride of place. After she passed away, they were found in a neat bundle, with her personal treasures.

I then came across the National Trails Register, kept by the Long Distance Walkers Association and discovered I had

From top to bottom: John of Groats to Land's End route, David and a friend near Three Chimneys, Ceiling of the Arab Room, Cardiff Castle



Frop Top to Bottom: Cancal Bridge of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, (nr Llanfoist), Leafy River (nr Dolgellau), Durdle Door, Dorset, Lagazuoi Refugio (Dolomites, Italy)

already walked 11 out of the 19 designated walks. I carefully planned my leave over the years to complete the other 8 walks; Hadrian's Wall Path, Southern Upland Way, Speyside Way, Cotswold Way, Glyndŵr's Way, Pennine Bridleway, Great Glen Way and West Highland Way, to get my Diamond Level certificate for walking all the National Trails

What do you do after that? Well I walked the 100 top peaks of Wales (Dafydd Andrew's 'Cant Cymru') and walked my first walk abroad, the Alta Via 1 in the Dolomites of Italy. I walked many other routes getting close to walking a 100 long distance trails.

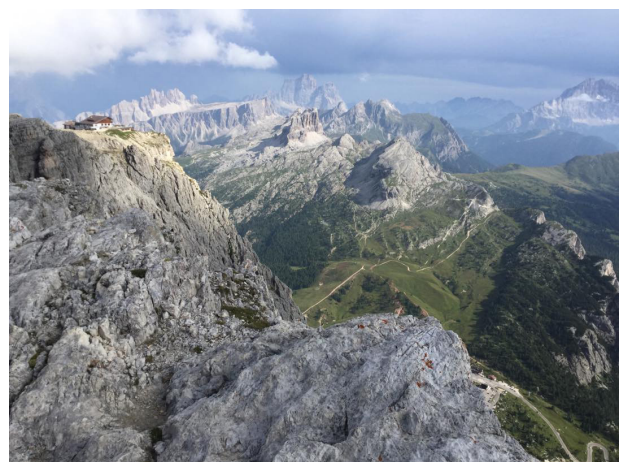
After Covid, it felt like a new beginning. So I restarted walking with my first National Trail Offa's Dyke Path and other Welsh routes; the Heart of Wales Line Trail, Penrhys Pilgrimage and North Wales Pilgrim's Way. In 2022, I set out to exceed a 1,000 miles target, including walking the Camino de Santiago from St Jean Pied de Port in France to Santiago and then Finisterre on the Spanish Atlantic Coast. My total mileage for the year was 3,450 miles. This year I have completed 5 National trails and 374 miles of the South West Coast Path from Land's End to Bournemouth.

So I was sitting on a comfy sofa, besides a warm fire with a whisky in my hand and my dear old (longstanding) friend, the Rev Gill Evans for company, explaining that next year I planned to walk John O' Groats to Land's End via the Great Glen Way, West Highland Way, Pennine Way, Cotswold Way and South West Coast Path to become the 1st person to register completing 2 rounds of all 19 National Trails. She looked at me lovingly, fluttered her eyelashes and in deep warm tones, asked if I would be willing to be sponsored for her charity Cross Road for Human Development. I simply melted and said yes.

Please consider sponsoring me for 2 charities close to my heart for walking the length (John O' Groats to Land's End) and the breadth (Inverness to Fort Wiliam) of Britain:

The Cross Road for Human Development is a charity providing Primary School Education for Dalit (outcaste) children in the village of Turukanadoni, in South India: <https://crhd.org.uk/>

Rainbow Railroad is a charity that helps gay people persecuted for being gay in their own country, to get out to safe country. Last year they got 12,000+ gay people out of Afghanistan: <https://donate.rainbowrailroad.org/fundraiser/5118850>



A Fossil Walk on the Coast Path

Paul Kirk



The Gower coast path is very beautiful and has been the subject of many articles and books covering walks, flora, and fauna. The coast path in the vicinity of Rhossili, in addition to the amazing views, has some interesting rock formations and fossils, which are described in more detail in my article on the Rhossili Hwb.¹

The following piece describes a 'fossil walk' and shows some examples of what can be found on the coast path locally. The walk is suitable for a well-controlled dog, but if you intend to visit the cove described, please note my caveats about being comfortable on rough ground and scrambling.

Some general information about fossils.

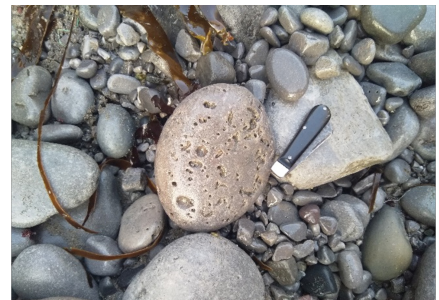
Fossils are the captured remains of flora, fauna and other things, which in the case of fossils found on the Gower coast path, have been trapped in sediments and preserved by petrification². One of the most spectacular examples of fossils preserved by this method is the Petrified Forest National Park³ in Arizona. Preservation can take a number of forms⁴, and although people generally think of fossils as the remains of plants and animals, geological structures can also be preserved as fossils, and a good example is this image of a fossilised beach

which occurs on the coast path between Caerfai Bay and Solva in Pembrokeshire.

Fossils can also take the form of imprints left by animals, such as the photograph below, of *Tyrannosaurus Rex* footprints, taken when we visited Tuba City Arizona, and perhaps less spectacularly, the photo of fossilised worm burrows from the shore near Ramsgrove.



Tyrannosaurus foot impression



Worm burrows near Ramsgrove

Fossils on the local coast path

On the section of the path from Tears Point to Ramsgrove, there are fossils visible in the rocks in many places. At Tears Point, if you stand on the slabby rock beds of Fall Bay, it's hard to look at the rock and not see a fossil of some kind. A photo of a stalked crinoid stem⁵ is shown below as an example.



Crinoid stem, Fall Bay

Looking at the rocks of Fall Bay, you might be forgiven for thinking that fossils are an

"We are quite privileged to see so many fossils in the Carboniferous rocks of the Gower Coast"

extremely common occurrence, but the opposite is true. The formation of fossils requires very specific conditions, and in practice, these rarely occur. Even when fossils are preserved, movement of the Earth's crust, rock folding and crushing, and igneous activity can all destroy fossils. So we are quite privileged to see so many fossils in the Carboniferous rocks of the Gower coast. On the coast path, fossils are usually preserved by petrification, where quartz has replaced the calcium carbonate shell material of the once living animal. Quartz is much harder than Carboniferous Limestone, so often, where the rock itself has been destroyed or damaged by wave action, the fossils can still be quite well preserved.

The image here shows a band of fossiliferous rock on the edge of a slab at Fall Bay above the high-water mark. Underneath the right-hand end of the penknife, there's



Crinoid stems and Gastropod, Fall Bay

a Gastropod fossil. To the left are many sections through the stems of stalked Crinoids, which were filter feeding animals. Gastropods, commonly known as slugs and snails, took many forms.⁶

This image, taken from the same area, show a multitude of fossil fragments, mainly sections through rugose corals⁷ and cri-



noid stems.

The images below show a crinoid stem and larger coral specimens showing more detail. Tears Point is a really nice fossil locality, with lots to see, although the best fossil specimens are on the steep seaward cliffs.



I wouldn't recommend a visit to this steep area, unless you're an experienced scrambler, and of course don't go on your own.

Moving along the coast to Mewslade Bay, again there are fossils to be seen, but not in the same numbers as at Tears Point. You have to look harder to find examples. Particularly at low tide, when the sand is sometimes not present, nice finely sanded and glazed examples can be seen. The next photo is of a pebble found on Mewslade beach – a lovely example of a section through a Carboniferous Gastropod.



Leaving Mewslade and heading towards Rams Grove, at the first gate on the coast path, there is a stone wall leading to a wooden fence (shown in photo) above a cove which is only accessible at low tide. If you are a competent scrambler, you can leave the coast path just after this gate and go down to the cove at sea level. DO NOT follow the stone wall in an attempt to get to the cove.



The area of cliff near the stone wall/ wooden fence is very dangerous, don't go near that! If you want to go down to the cove, start at the coastpath gate. Walk through the gate and face the sea. On your left is the headland you can see in the photo (above). Walk towards the headland, trending downwards toward sea level and note there is no footpath. Eventually the grassy slopes meet with the rocks and it's possible to scramble down into the cove.

I would re-emphasize, only do this if you are a competent scrambler, experienced in finding safe ways down from the coast path to sea level. Again, just to note, there's no path, so the walking is over grass to start, then as you approach sea level, it's rocky surfaces.

As you reach sea level in the cove, the fossils shown in the pictures above (top middle) can be seen by walking out of the cove, towards the sea, low down in the rocks on the right. The area of fossiliferous rock covers an area of about 15 metres by 3 metres. Sometimes there's a pool you have to wade through and it has a base of rounded pebbles, so some kind of footwear is useful – unless you have tough feet!

If you're adventurous, the rock beds at sea level in the next cove along (west) contain

huge numbers of fossils. If you go to that cove too, watch the tide, but you can escape upwards if you're a competent scrambler.

The two images above are typical of what you can see in the cove.

The modern ethical code is to leave fossils in place and just take photos. The successful removal of fossils is a highly specialised skillset needing special tools and advice from a Palaeontologist, so best leave the fossils in place for others to enjoy.

References:

- 1 <https://www.rhossilhw.b.wales/favourite-walks/from-tears-point-to-ramsgrove-geology-and-fossils/>
- 2 Petrification: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petrification>
- 3 Petrified forest: Arizona: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=068GcVD3VaE>
- 4 Types of Fossils: <https://sciencing.com/5-types-fossils-6907983.html>
- 5 Crinoids: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crinoid>
- 6 Gastropods: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gastropoda>
- 7 Rugose Corals: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rugosa>



Geoff Strangeway

Let's Go Fly a (Sport) Kite!

I would imagine that most people at some time have had a go at flying a kite, maybe as a youngster with a parent or perhaps with their own children. Many will have seen, or possibly actually tried, flying a 2-line steerable stunt kite with varying degrees of success.

In my late thirties I was bought a stunt kite for my birthday and not long after that a kite store opened in Cardiff. Attracted by the range of kites displayed I then got to know the shop manager who I discovered flew stunt, or sport, kites in competition. Up to that point I had not known that kite flying was any more than a casual recreation. It was not long after that I was persuaded to give competitive flying a go. Little did I guess where it would eventually lead as I discovered and subsequently participated in sport kite competitions at National, European and World levels.

Commonly when I mention that I was a competition kite flyer people think that it must be something to do with flying your kite the highest or possibly kite fighting that is popular across Asia. But the format of sport kite competition is more akin to that of ice skating with performance being judged on the accuracy of flying some set

figures followed by a freestyle routine then a ballet routine interpreting a piece of music.

To fly with the necessary precision is a combination of the equipment used, flying technique and practice (lots of it!). A modern precision sport kite will typically have a delta shape with a tip-to-tip wingspan of 7-8 feet, have a sail made of non-stretch ripstop nylon or polyester material and a carbon fibre frame. To maintain an efficient aerodynamic 3D shape the sail will be braced by standoff rods connected to the frame. With these features kites can be efficient and light enough that they can be flown indoors! So, it is not necessary to wait for a particularly windy day to go out and fly. (On one occasion I flew a kite inside the greenhouse at the National Botanic Garden of Wales which went quite well until I stumbled and had a close encounter with a cactus!)

Competitions will proceed when the wind is within the range of 2 to 30mph. Consequently, competitors will usually have at least 3 models of their kite – an 'Ultralight' for low winds (<5 mph), a 'Standard' for medium winds and a vented version for stronger winds (>15 mph) which will have

*"...it went quite well
until I stumbled
and had a close
encounter with a
cactus!"*



From top: Prism illusion sport kite, Stadoffs for an aerodynamic 3D shape. Below: examples of compulsory figures from a dual-line individual event.

part of the sail replaced by gauze panels.

The flying line used is also important being made from braided polyester line which is very lightweight for its strength (therefore less drag) and doesn't stretch when flying. The resulting effect is like flying the kite on two wires rather than on elastic so the kite responds immediately to the flyers control. These lines are also very slippery so they don't lock up if you spin your kite in one direction multiple times.

In terms of technique a couple of things that really improve precision are moving on the ground and the method of turning the kite. Moving backwards when the kite is climbing, and moving forwards when the kite is diving, leads to a more consistent flying speed which makes the shapes flown more even and precise. Compulsory figures often require crisp angled turns so instead of, say, pulling your right hand back to turn to the right (which results in a curved turn) punch your left hand sharply forward and then back like a boxer's jab. This gives a sharp angled turn. (And vice versa for a left turn!).

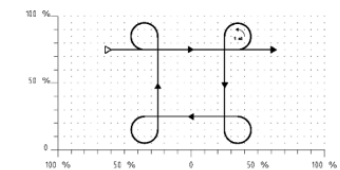
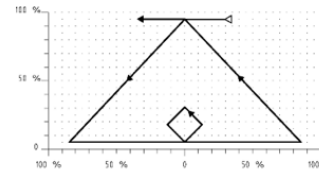
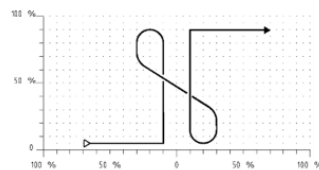
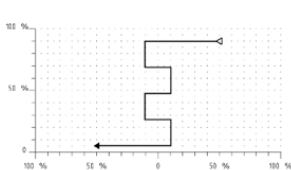
Individual flying is fun but hopefully you have a friend or two who might also be interested. So then we get to team flying which opens up many new possibilities and, for me, is the most enjoyable type of flying. Team flying is also a competition format, for pairs or teams of 3 or more flyers, and follows the same procedures but with rather more involved compulsory figures such as those drawn for a 4-person team on the opposite page.

Flying together needn't be too difficult to get started. It helps a lot if the kites are matched to fly at about the same speed and the flyers need lines of the same length. Stand next to each other and start simply with 'follow the leader' manoeuvres and once you get used to your lines overlaying the lines of the other flyer(s) move on to split or parallel shapes and then progress to flying complete loops where your lines completely wrap around each other. In the event of the inevitable mishap just all move forward towards your kites, this will slow them down and lessen the chance of a breakage when they hit the ground.

The routines that experienced teams put together can be quite spectacular. Planning of the choreography and a lot of practice is needed to ensure that the interweaving of the kite lines from multiple flyers doesn't lead to a tangled mess!

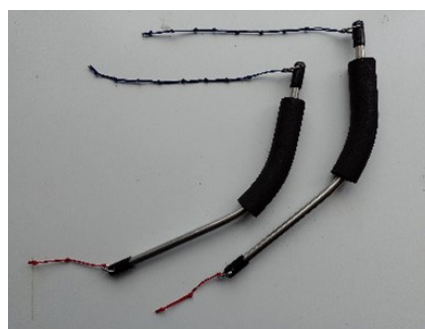
Whilst dual line kites can be flown with a high degree of precision there is another modern kite design that is even more capable – a quad line. A quad line kite is controlled by 4 lines and the flyer uses a pair a curved handles with a line attached to the top and bottom of each one. This configuration allows the flyer to tilt, twist or rotate the kite in any direction. This enables a range of moves that are difficult or impossible with dual line kites such as flying backwards, upside down, sideways or hovering. The leading competition quad line kite is the 'Revolution' with its characteristic bow tie shape.

Because of the high level of control that is

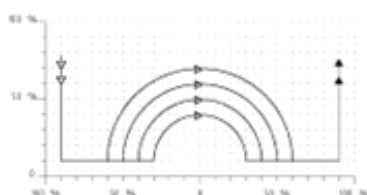
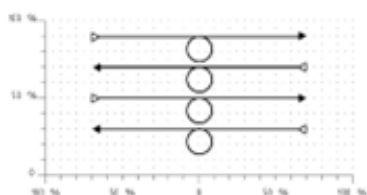
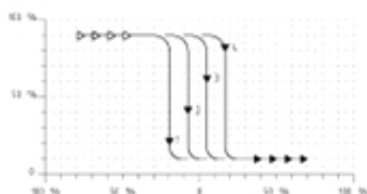




Clockwise from above:
 Geoff in action, NS
 Radical team kite -
 Standard, NS Radical
 team kite - Vented,
 quad control handles,
 revolution quad line
 kite.



Below, Compulsory
 figures for a 4-person
 team: "Cascade",
 "Thread with Loop"
 and "Arc de Triomphe"



possible quad line kite routines have quite a different feel to them and the transformation of geometric patterns in the sky can be very precise. The degree of control that is possible with a quad line kite particularly the ability to hold them stationary anywhere in the sky enables many flyers to fly together. As a finale at the end of kite festivals I've often flown in groups of 10 or more flyers as a 'mega-team' display. On a couple of occasions I've also been one of over 40 kite flyers flying together which required significant organisation and a lot of concentration. Very challenging but rewarding to pull it off successfully.

I've found that going out to fly a sport kite for a while is a great restorative. As well as being in a relaxing outdoor environment, you must focus on what you are doing. So, as a result, whatever stresses and strains life has for you are pushed aside for a while.

If anyone is tempted to give stunt kite flying a go the Gower Kite Shop at Pitton

Cross campsite stocks Spirit of Air kites and would have something to get you started. But if you do, please be considerate of other people - a fast-moving kite and its lines can be quite a hazard so be careful. And if anyone is interested to learn more I would be happy to help out.

Note that this article was originally published on the Rhossili Community Hwb and contained links to videos of individual and team sport kite flying and can be seen via this link to the Hwb:

<https://www.rhossilihwb.wales/all/lets-go-fly-a-sport-kite/>



A New Point of View

Its been a big year for these two couples who have taken the reins of a village favourite

Sarah & Christian
Bikerstaff and
Elizabeth & Jez Peak

Season Greetings from The View (re-branded from The Bay Bistro in August).

As we approach our second Christmas perched above Rhossili beach, we have been reflecting on our journey.

There have been more ups than downs, perhaps surprising since we took over just as utilities, interest rates and the cost of just about everything soared, all at the same time as embarking on a very steep learning curve as none of us had run a restaurant before.

The View owners are Sarah and Christian, who both live in Sketty, and Elizabeth and Jeremy who currently live in Tavisstock but have family locally (Elizabeth was brought up in Dunvant) and are hoping to move to the village next year.

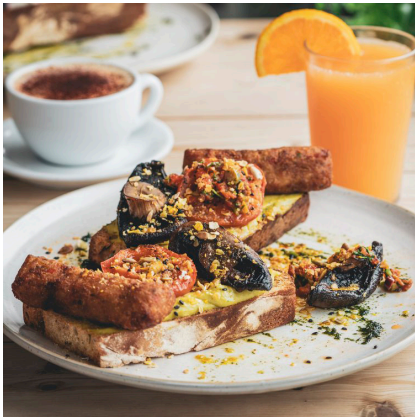
We all currently retain our "day jobs" so life can be a little bit hectic, but it is a pleasure to come to Rhossili most days and take in the view (in more ways than one, since our rebrand).

We have invested heavily in our infrastructure this past year, including putting on a new roof, and remodelling the back lane entrance (apologies if you loved the graffiti and weed infested area that was there previously!). We have installed a cosy log burner and have two large armchairs that came all the way from our friends from Caemor (next door to us in the Village).

We have also upgraded the kitchen equipment such as a large hot plate to keep food warm on the pass, a state-of-the-art rational oven, and induction hobs to name a few items. We have discovered the hard way that commercial kitchen equipment doesn't come cheap, but at least it's very shiny!

In January we have even more ambitious plans and are going to make further changes to the kitchen and to install a new, more accessible bathroom off the restaurant. This will be a welcome addition and make us accessible to those guests with mobility challenges; something that is important to us as we have several members of our own families living with





a range of disabilities and know how challenging it can be when your needs are not catered for.

There will also be upgrades to our ice cream shop and the rear patio. We hope to start hosting weddings next Autumn. Our menu is contemporary. We are focused on using fresh ingredients and creating dishes from scratch. The shop is focused on mostly using suppliers from a 25-mile radius. This year we have partnered with Little Waterstone Farm, Gowerforntia, and Gower Gin to name a few. We have expanded our range of the award-winning Mario's ice cream.

At this point, we must thank our incredible team who have supported us on our journey so far. We never underestimate how hard their roles so often are.

Highlights of 2023: The New Year's Day and Re-brand parties, being used as the location for a major fashion brand's Spring collection shoot, and of course meeting so many new friends. Oh, and shooting up the TripAdvisor rankings (who rank us in the top 10% restaurants of The World!).

Lowlights: The wet summer, wet Autumn, and (so far) wet winter. Still had some great sunsets and surf 'though!

We plan to continue our investment in the building and business over the next few years. We want keep things simple so we can concentrate on doing what we do well and to high standards. We are committed to providing excellent service and all-round good experience for our customers. We constantly look for creative ways to engage with customers and create not just a café/restaurant but an experience.

Thank you for your support. We hope you have a great festive season and look forward to continuing to welcome you to The View, whether it is for a hot drink (+/- one of our home-made cakes), a light snack, an all afternoon extended lunch, or a sunset cocktail.

Clockwise from below: Baileys hot chocolates by the fire, Chris, Sarah, Liz and Jez, the whole team, at the reopening party earlier this year



Another year has flown by
and what a year of extremes
it has been

Great Pitton Farm



They say farmers ALWAYS talk about the weather, but this year has certainly given us a lot to talk about. End of December, early January threw some arctic conditions, with not just one night of below zero temperatures but just over a week of freezing conditions (something we are not used to in Gower).

March then brought us snow, which the children were delighted to see and enjoy, after Knelston announced they would be closed for the day – sledging it was!

We then saw a scorching May, June and early July which left us desperate for rain but when the rain came we wished we hadn't prayed for it! July and August were particularly unsettled and then Autumn it began to rain and rain and rain!!! It was one of the wettest Autumns on record.

May saw our Kings coronation – Charles III has a long-standing interest in British farming and is an advocate for traditional farming. The King has invested the best part of the past 50 years into bringing about improvement to the lives of those on farms and within rural communities. Ahead of the king's coronation, farmers from across the country have shared their

stories of meeting the new monarch and his love of the British Countryside.

British farming continues to come up against a lot of unfair publicity and we hope having a figure like the King to help promote the good we do, will persuade more of the general public to support British farming, especially this Christmas – look out for the red tractor on your food!

We started our PYO season on the 15th June this year, which is exactly when we aim to start our season. The weather was absolutely perfect, with scorching temperatures, and beautiful conditions for welcoming our first pickers of the season.

However, the over wintered plants which were our first plants to be picked for 2023, were not our finest strawberries, due to the extreme freeze earlier in the year – the freeze affected around 20% of the plants and therefore we didn't have the quantity of strawberries we were used to seeing at the start of the season, which obviously caused us a few supply shortages - this is never ideal when you have lots of enthusiastic pickers, excited to pick their first fruit of the season. We

Tom & Jess Higgs

*"We are simply
custodians for
the lovely family
farm, and hope our
children will want
to live, work and
enjoy it as much as
we do."*



had luckily anticipated this, and as a result planted the July picking plants slightly earlier in May, which worked perfectly – this was our 5th year of doing PYO and it was our first July ever we didn't have to close due to being picked out; mission accomplished!

We sold Freddie Thomas', from Rhossili, new potatoes again this year and what a hit they were. Freshly dug every morning, and selling out most days – I think you will need to plant more next year Freddie!

We had a lot of new and exciting cakes, drinks and items in our café this year, which went down a storm – on a busy day we had to have a member of staff just making milkshakes and iced coffees!

We are extremely lucky with our staff at the PYO – we try and employ local students who really enjoy where they work and we are so grateful to each and everyone of them for their hard work and dedication to our business; bring on our season 2024!

Of course the sunny weather of June suited us at the PYO, bringing lots of visitors to Gower, but it seriously effected the rest of the farm. Many of you would've noticed the burnt up cliff land, fields and crops. The burnt up grassland meant our stock started to run out of food, so we therefore had to graze all the second cut silage which would normally have been made into fodder for the winter months. We also made the decision to house some

of the cattle which of course meant more winter feed being used far too early!

The sunny weather resulted in us having an early start to harvest; the winter crops (planted the previous October) generally yielded well, however the spring crops (planted March 2023) were late to drill because of the wet spring but then yielded terribly because it went from wet to dry and they were droughted out.

At the end of the summer, after all the madness of the harvest and the PYO, we began the exciting project of our new, state of the art, cattle shed at our home farm in Pitton.

The original cattle shed was badly hit by the storms of 2022, and even though we spent a lot of time and effort repairing bits of the roof here and there, it was not fit for purpose any longer and the welfare of our cattle is paramount. We hope anyone walking on the footpath will spot the new, more efficient, modern, shed and observe how happy and content the cattle are with their new accommodation!!!

Here at Great Pitton Farm we continue to try and push the farm forward, whilst keeping the charm and character of the farm at the forefront of our minds. We are simply custodians for the lovely family farm, and hope our children will want to live, work and enjoy it as much as we do.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2024 from Tom, Jess, Izzy, Henry and Maggi

Opposite: Tom and his herd, above, children amongst the PYO! Right: Izzy, Henry and Maggi enjoying the family farm





Freddie's Fresh Veg, Ship Farm

Freddie Thomas, Age 13

It's been a very busy year at Ship Farm, 2023 started with us gathering our ewes for pregnancy scanning, my Bampa and I gathered our flock mid January so that we could find out which ewes were carrying singles, twins or even triplets. We were very pleased with our results as many farmers had reported poor scan results due to the very hot summer of 2022 where they believe the rams' fertility had been affected.

Soon lambing was upon us and it went relatively smoothly, lambing is one of my favourite dates in the farming calendar. This year we only had two pet lambs who have joined our ever growing flock of pet sheep! They are real mischief makers and keep Dad and Bamps on their toes! Their favourite treat is a rich tea biscuit and sprouts.

In March we prepared the ground and planted the new potatoes, my Welsh pigs had already started to plough and fertilise the soil which was a real help. The varieties that Dad, Bamps and I planted this year were swift, javelin and rocket. I saved up my pocket money and bought a very old machine, a Johnstone potato lifter to help us harvest the potatoes, it is older than my Mum! But it really helped and saved us digging them

all by hand.

I was very pleased with the yield of potatoes, the swifts being the most prolific. Tom and Jess Higgs of Great Pitton Farm very kindly once again let me sell my new potatoes at Gower Pick Your own of which I was very grateful for, thank you both.

Other vegetables I grew this year include: carrots, beetroot, broad beans, onions, leeks, parsnips, cucumber, tomatoes, pumpkins, peas, french beans and sweetcorn. My favourite variety of beetroot this year was the rainbow beetroot, I loved the different colours and they tasted delicious. The broad beans were a little disappointing this year so we shall try another variety next season. We grew three varieties of pumpkin this year.

The best ever was the "Big Max" variety, I entered the heaviest pumpkin competition at the Gower Ploughing Match and won first prize with my pumpkin that weighed in at almost 7 stone! Every year my sister Isabel and I have a competition on who can grow the tallest sunflower and the biggest pumpkin.

Amid the growing season came shearing time, Bampa and I gathered the

Above: Freddie and his Bamps (Geoff Beynon) with his Johnstone potato lifter



flock once again and my cousin Mark came to help us shear, they were all very pleased to get rid of their fleeces in time for the warmer weather. Shearing is very hot, hard work, my welsh black fleeces have to be kept separate from Bampa's Welsh white mountain fleece. A gentleman staying in the village celebrating his 80th birthday met one of my sheep (Barbara) and became very fond of her and asked if he could have her fleece to make a jumper out of. I'm really looking forward to seeing the finished article.

Summer was a real mixed bag of weather which then delayed us cutting our hay and haylage, which we use as winter fodder for our cattle, sheep and ponies. We finally got the crop cut, baled and wrapped late August, early September so we now have a good supply for the

livestock over the winter months.

In October we put the rams out with the ewes for tuppung time. Also two of my cows Moon and Summer are heavily in calf, I am really hoping that they will calve during the school Christmas holidays so I don't miss it. I've had Moon and Summer since they were calves themselves so they are very friendly and love scratches behind their ears!

Dad, Bamps and I are starting to plan ahead for the growing season of 2024, we hope to plant more new potatoes next year so that I can keep up with the ever growing demand.

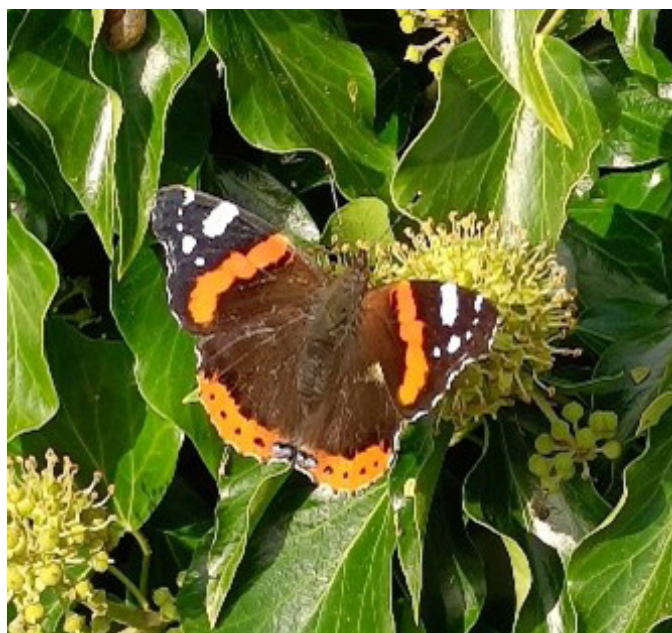
Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2024.



"A gentlemen staying in the village asked if he could have her fleece to make a jumper out of!"

Where the wild things grow

Peter and Jo Scott



We embarked on our 9th year in 2023, looking after our meadows on The Vile, and what a strange year it has turned out to be! We started, in early April with a lovely show of Daffodils, gradually spreading over Kiln Hay and adding to the beautiful view over the hamlet of Middleton towards Rhossili Down¹.

In May we hosted a visit from the Gower Meadow Group, (who knew there was such a group? Not us!) gathering under the leadership of Geraldine of the National Trust. As we walked down Little Park we received much comment and advice, particularly about our very overgrown hedges, which apparently urgently needed to be laid.; we were assured that the hedges would grow back in about 5 years' time. The trouble is, we rather like our overgrown hedges, and so do the sheep and visiting birds, both finding shelter, protection and safety throughout the year and birds eating the haws, hips and berries on plants that meander through the branches. In the photograph², if you look closely, you will see how an original Vile meadow boundary is constructed, an earth mound, covered in dressed stone with bushes planted in the crest.

The next photograph³ shows the most common reason for these walls and hedges to be destroyed – the work of rabbits, mining their burrows and kicking out the covering stones, leaving the soft, earthy interior vulnerable to water erosion and there's hardly a stone in sight!

In May the weather was good and our meadow flowers^{4,5,6} came into bloom quite early so it was great to see new arrivals in Kiln Hay – a small collection of Spotted Orchids that have probably spread from the cliffs, just over the nearby wall. We were also pleased to see Bluebells, Cowslips, Primroses and were looking forward to later in the summer to count the Green Winged Orchids which had numbered over 200 in 2022.

Everything changed in May and June. Because it was so dry, the plants were stressed and went into seed development and the knock-on effect was less flowers with nectar for the pollinators, and so less of them – we hardly saw any blue butterflies, which was very dispiriting after so much good news from previous years. You can see from the photograph of Musk Mallow⁷, that the seed pods of Yellow Rat-



tle are clearly well-developed and ready to drop their seeds but the photo was taken on July 1st, at least three weeks before we would expect it.

The other newcomer was a lovely Meadow Knapweed⁸, smaller than its relative Greater Knapweed which arrived in the fields three years ago.

So, what about the Green Winged Orchids? We only found 50 or so this year. After trying to thrive on parched ground, it then turned cold and wet, and it doesn't seem to have stopped raining for any length of time since. The drainage into the fields has really suffered this year, especially in the months of September and October. The intermittent stream that flows under the road from School Lane drains down the side of Little Park and Slade Acre before crossing into Lower Mead and emerging onto the cliff above Mewslade and Richard's Rock. The volume of water draining from the roads, fields and drains was too great for the stream to hold within its confines and caused the loss of a lot of soil as it washed down the fields in torrents.

Photographs do not do this justice, but this new delta of mud was formed by washing out of Long Barn field, cascading over the boundary wall before gushing through many cracks and crevices onto the cliff top. The mud had dried when the photo was taken, but when it was still wet slurry it was 15cm deep^{9,10}.

We don't have access to the machinery necessary to cut the meadows and may-

be make hay so we use livestock to graze them down once the flowers have seeded. To start with, we placed a small flock of sheep to graze in Little Park, two acres of various different grasses but not much herbage variety. We're not sure how the flock managed to get into the flower meadows in August, but they did and despite our best efforts, each morning they were back so we left them and just hoped that the flower seeds had all fallen. Meanwhile, the grass in Little Park flourished because it was ignored completely. It has been extremely interesting to note the eating behaviour of the animals because they are all, almost always in Slade Acre and Kiln Hay, the flower meadows with a huge variety of grasses, herbs and meadow species. For instance, it seems that plantains are a very important family of plants, well known in homeopathic circles. The meadows all contain loads of the three most common plantains, Hoary, Greater and Narrow-leaved, sometimes called Ribwort and apparently animals have a mild, natural wormer if they eat them, which may explain why the livestock that we have in the meadows usually do very well.

It's a good thing that the weather gave some respite in Early October, so that some of our species could gather strength before the winter. We will have to wait and see what the cumulative effects of the past year will be on our land, our wildlife and ourselves but we look forward with hope and optimism.



Rhossili Coastguard

Well, 2023 has brought us a relatively quiet year at Rhossili Coastguard Station which is pleasing for us as a team with no major incidents or drama's to really report back on ... sorry readers!

Throughout the year to date we have responded to 59 incidents. As you may recall, we had a great start to the season in June as warm temperatures attracted the crowds to this area of Gower, resulting in the team responding to numerous incidents. However, this soon changed as July kicked in and the unsettled weather resulted in much lower-than-normal visitor numbers. As a result, our typically busiest period of July and August simply wasn't the case this year.

During the past year we have welcomed 2 new members to the team Lyndon Delaware and Ian Beattie - both of whom have been a welcome addition. Both members have undergone and completed their new entry training and are now fully operational with us.

As a team we continue to voluntarily train throughout the year, although I'm sure many of us use this as an excuse for a social and opportunity to sample the refreshments the local pub provides ... though, I may be wrong!

We recently carried out a full day's training out on the cliffs in Rhossili, with our senior management, to allow us to utilise updated equipment now available to us. As a team, we all had an intense and in-depth rope assessment, in which we were all successful in passing, and are now re-validated for another 3 years.

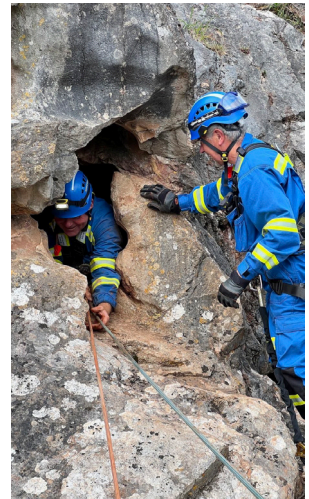
During the last 12 months we have had several team members recognised for reaching some milestones in terms of years of service for the team as follows:

Steve Jones - 50yrs (wow)
Steve Lancey - 20yrs
Zak Higgins - 10yrs
Jeff Higgins - 10yrs
Dai Cann - 10yrs
Mike Williams - 10yrs

Typical delay with the organisation handing out these long service medals I have been informed that the guys have now completed 12 years!

A notable rescue that was undertaken this year was for a dog that was trapped in the cave systems on the path down towards Mewslade Bay. Having been located by its owner and Selina from the village who reported the incident, the team were enforced to use a unique and unorthodox cliff set up to allow Mark Button, as the cliff man, to enter the cave system. After a few realignments and safety checks, Mark was able to enter the cave and help coax the dog towards an exit where the team were pleased to see a rather wet and muddy spaniel returned to its owner. Begrudgingly, despite many alternate suggestions, we also then had to retrieve Mark from the cave! In all seriousness, it was a fantastic effort from the team and well done to Mark for braving the claustrophobic conditions of the cave.

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



National Coastwatch

Another roller-coaster of a year for us but I'm pleased to report that we continue to develop and improve in our membership of the Search and Rescue community.

Almost before the 2022 Newsletter had been read by everyone, two days before Christmas there was a serious incident when a member of the public could have died from exposure had it not been for the initial observation by our duty Watch-keepers, followed by a difficult rescue involving Burry Port and Tenby RNLI as well as the Rhossili Cliff Rescue Team.

Last year I reported that we were hoping that necessary repairs to the building would be carried out and this finally occurred in June this year. The work took 2 weeks, with the contractors living in the lookout during the weekdays, but we still managed to maintain our duty watches. So far, the leaks above the windows appear to have been stopped and the new position of all the antennae has made signal reception much better. The outside of the building is looking very smart but we have yet to finish the repairs and refurbishment of the back office, when we hope to fit a new sink and hob unit before the start of the next "silly season"! During April our wind generator started to give us problems and an inspection revealed that all the wiring had failed so the manufacturers were contacted for a repair. We eventually managed

to fit a brand new replacement in August and had to rely on our small solar panel to charge our battery bank for a few months. We now have permission from the National Trust to fit solar panels on the roof, and with CCS permission we hope to have them functional by Summer 2024.

We continue to support ourselves by various means, raising revenue from donations and our Open Days, as well as making and selling souvenir Calendars (have you got yours yet?) and fridge magnets. Rob Morgan (Sunflowers, Lavender and Christmas Trees) has continued his very generous donations and also provided 100 chocolate Easter Eggs to hand out to youngsters – with their parents' consent, of course!

When the Sunflower fields opened in July there was a huge increase in visitors to the NCI Station, and people wanting to "Walk the Worm." Consequently, we have been very busy. We have dealt with 14 serious incidents during the past year, incidents that involved other SAR organisations, as well as numerous "close calls" when members of the public put themselves at risk by wading back over the Causeway as well as those we were able to warn by using sirens, bull horns and other means. It never ceases to amaze us the risks people are willing to take when ignoring the signs and advice put there for their protection. In last year's Newsletter, I gave details of a serious incident in September involving a fisherman who had a compound fracture of his leg at about 7.00am so it was wonderful news when he walked into the Station during the summer to say, "Thank you" and to tell us that he had made an excellent recovery.

The newest NCI Station in Wales was opened in St. Donat's by HRH The Princess Royal in April, and three Worms Head Watch-keepers received their long-service awards from her. The very next day, in London, NCI Worms Head NCI was pre-

Local Heroes



sented with the Alan Richards Memorial Award, chosen from all the NCI Stations around the coast for the work we do to keep people safe. Alan Richards was NCI Chairman for many years, but he started as a Watch-keeper at Worms Head. After a low point in the number of volunteers last year, I'm pleased to report that we have recruited well this year so the roster is easier to manage and recently we had seven new volunteers start their training, which is very encouraging. We had our Declared Facility Status inspection back in April, which is always a stressful day so we were glad that we passed with flying colours, and thanked Steve Lancey of The Lookout for providing an excellent lunch! We have also had visits to Milford Haven Coastguard HQ and it's always helpful to put a face to a name or

remote voice that we hear on the phone or radio.

Over the years, we have tried many ways to keep the public aware of Causeway crossing times but we reckoned without the presence of horses and ponies who needed a convenient scratching post! We have sited a new, more robust sign and hope that it survives the punishment from the ponies better than the previous ones. We now provide detailed Causeway Crossing times to various local organisations, including the National Trust, local camp-sites and our partner RNLI Stations of Burry Port and Horton-Port Eynon. We have developed our presence on social media and this has been very well-received – 71 stories, events, advice and incidents published, as

well as local tide and Causeway crossing times. During the year we carried out two very successful Open Days, when we could explain to visitors what we do and why, and also were invited to attend other organisation's activities, such as the 50th anniversary of Burry Port RNLI Station, Loughor Lifeboat Station and Swansea Sub-Aqua and Yacht Club Open Days - The cake was good, too!

The groups of people that make up the community of NCI Worms Head take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas, and a Happy, Safe New Year and look forward to welcoming you to our Station if you visit – you know where we are!

Andy Bowen – Station Manager

Food Bank

Our Village Food Bank Collection has been running since 2018.

It became ever more necessary during the years of the pandemic and we formalised a regular routine which we have maintained ever since. Since 2020 we have made a weekly delivery to the food bank of goods that our loyal and caring community generously donates on a regular basis.

All goods go to the Swansea Branch of the Trussell Trust. The Trussell Trust is the most experienced and well organised Food Bank 'system' in the country. There are eight Trussell Trust centres in Swansea (open on different days, in different areas, in church halls and community centres).

We deliver our 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 our donations there at any time on any weekday). 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 gratitude for our donations. And we, the Food Bank Team are endlessly impressed by, and grateful for, your enduring and generous support.

Our community in 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.

And if you need any further persuasion... it is what your King would want of you! (look up his Coronation Food Project!)

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

The Food Bank Team: Helen Sinclair, Lesley-Anne Nolan and Sally Ann Thomas



Community Beach Cleans - Do I make a difference?



Another year rolls around for our stunning Rhossili Bay. It has welcomed thousands of visitors who have enjoyed the myriad of pursuits that this beautiful beach can provide. Summer days with family fun, the cricket games, sandcastles, picnics and impromptu football matches are wonderful to witness. This is in complete contrast to the quiet wintery beach with walkers wrapped up against the elements and hardy surfers tackling the waves.

Unfortunately, the summer season gives rise to carelessly discarded beach litter. It is heartening to note that this appears to be lessening but there are always the few who do not understand that what they bring to the beach, they must take away. Beach cleans through the year have been well supported on the whole, by the community and holiday makers alike. Families that own holiday homes in Rhossili have been especially enthusiastic and it is encouraging

to see them returning to 'do their bit'. Credit must be given to many local residents who regularly pick up on their daily walk throughout the year, stopping huge amounts of plastic returning to the sea.

There are still many who wonder whether beach cleans make a difference, the answer to that is YES! Norce, the Norwegian research Institute, has for the first time, found evidence that beach cleanups rapidly and dramatically reduce the amount of microplastics in the environment.

Within a year of cleanups removing bags, bottles and other large plastic litter from the shore of an island near Bergen, scientists found a 99.5% reduction in microplastics on land and in surrounding oceans. Researchers speculate that high levels of UV and warm temperatures of shallow beach water are responsible for the rapid degradation of plastic found on beaches, asserting

beach cleans as an important intervention for reducing leakage of microplastic into the sea. "Clean up plastic on the shores, clean up all the plastic in the environment. It really makes a difference", Gunhild Bodtker, researcher

at Norce, explained.

The Norwegian research group expects these findings to motivate efforts to remove plastic pollution from shores across the globe.

So, with the backing of science, will you be joining us on our next beach clean, knowing that you are making a difference?

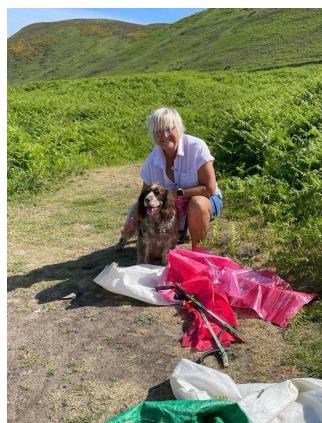
For the full article from Norce, head to Take3.org/news

One of the most beneficial improvements has been the recycling of all fishing netting and hard plastic. Odyssey Innovation have the contract to collect marine waste for the next 2 years but can also take most plastics. This has been organised by Geraldine Ferguson of the National Trust. Cans and bottles are recycled with Swansea County Council.

We are most grateful to Ali, Geraldine and Steve from the National Trust for all their help and especially Steve Lancey and his team at The Lookout who have supported us from the beginning of our community beach cleans.

Lesley-Anne Nolan

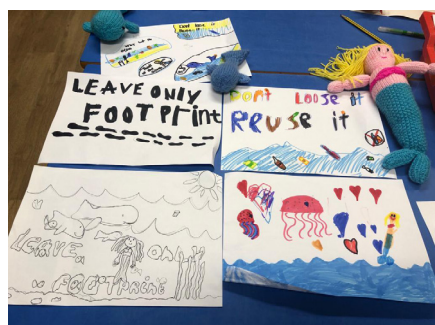
Local Heroes



Knelston Primary School Ocean Guardians

I am very privileged to be part of the Knelston Primary School Ocean Guardian pupil voice group, the group is made up of myself and 14 very dedicated and enthusiastic pupils. We meet every fortnight on a Tuesday where we plan events, make action plans and discuss different ways in which we can raise awareness of plastic pollution and the devastating effect it is having on our oceans.

We would like to say a massive thank you to Mrs Gill Wales who has so very kindly made us some ocean guardian mascots, a beautiful mermaid and three whales, the children are very fond of them and have held a poll to help them decide what names should be given to them.



Mrs Wales has also made us a teddy bear for our Eco pupil voice group, goldilocks, the three little pigs and many other amazing nursery rhyme characters,

the children absolutely adore them especially during story time, thank you Mrs Wales.

Our ocean guardians were very keen to raise money to adopt an animal in need, during one of our pupil voice sessions they brain stormed and decided upon organising a "Wear Blue Day" they set about designing posters and leaflets and asked all their peers and teachers to donate £1 and come to school dressed in blue, the day was a huge success and they not only raised enough money to adopt a turtle but also a polar bear as well. Everyone was ecstatic when they announced it during assembly.

During a recent pupil voice assembly the ocean guardians presented their findings with regards to how long different items of single use plastic items take to break down, not break down completely just to break down into smaller pieces. The ocean guardians gathered a huge range of single use plastic items and handed them out around the children and asked them to



guess the time scale. They were all amazed to discover that one nappy can take between 450-500 years and that a plastic bag can take between 15-20 years. The children seemed to really enjoy the quiz and were flabbergasted how long certain items took to breakdown. They are currently designing and decorating pebbles and driftwood to put at their favourite Gower beaches so please keep your eyes peeled for them at a beach near you soon.

They have lots of exciting plans for 2024 which we look forward to sharing with you soon.

Sally Ann Thomas

Local Heroes

Nothing can prepare you until you actually see a little seal in front of you with the most horrendous injuries around its neck. A few minutes of curiosity in a floating flying ring had turned this seals life into a misery. Whoever had lost or discarded this flying ring (or frisbees as they were called) probably had no idea that a curious seal would get entrapped.

Across the UK, seals are being entangled in these misery makers in ever increasing numbers. This little seal I watched whilst working at RSPCA West Hatch Wildlife Hospital, spurred me on

to doing something positive.

Gower Seal Group are active members of the UK Seal Alliance therefore a campaign was organised to raise public awareness of these flying rings and the suffering they cause.

Major and small retailers across the UK were selling these objects again unaware of the dreadful consequences to wildlife. Ideally, I was asking that retailers only sold solid disc frisbees instead of these flying rings.

Locally, I started to visit smaller retailers

Gower Seal Group



Around June 2022, Gareth Richards popped into the campsite shop to introduce himself and tell us of his passion about Seals. He noticed on our wall behind the till there were lots of frisbees and the flying rings, which we had sold for several years. This prompted him to talk to Ian and me about how seals like to play with them when they find them floating in the water. But then the conversation continued to make us realise that these rings are not so much a toy when the seals cannot get them off their heads.

When the seals still have plenty of growth in them this causes a huge problem for them. While they continue to grow to their full size the ring stays the same size and then it starts to cut into the skin of the seals. The sores that we had seen were shown to us were just awful to see a beautiful creature in so much pain and distress. They need to be caught by several han-

dlers and almost a bolt cropper like tool just to cut the flying rings off their necks.

Gareth had been trying to speak to local business on Gower and further afield to stop these rings from being sold. He was delighted when we said that we would stop selling the rings immediately, so the last few were taken down for the wall. We have continually continued to support Gareth of Gower Seal Group with the mission to make shops realise these should not be sold anymore. So, when guests arrive to stay with us or just by driving by, ask about the flying rings we spread the word about the harm that they can cause.

So, throughout this year we had seen Gareth as he would drop in to say hello, Gareth had asked if he could do a talk one evening in the summer to our customers, but Summer did not appear for this to happen, so we will arrange with him in

2024.

One evening, I received a Facebook message asking if I could do a little talk on camera to ITV Coast & Country around the 2nd of October. After several conversations with Susan Rudd the Producer this was confirmed and Shaun Fletcher would be interviewing me before Gareth's interview, he needed more time to get ready than me. LOL.

So, deep breath and the interview went well, this is scheduled to be shown around the 1st of December 2023. Whether you live in land you should be aware that these rings can still cause injury to wildlife do not rot down either. Please support us both in stopping these rings from being sold, spread the word.

Tracey Button
Pitton Cross Caravan & Camping Park

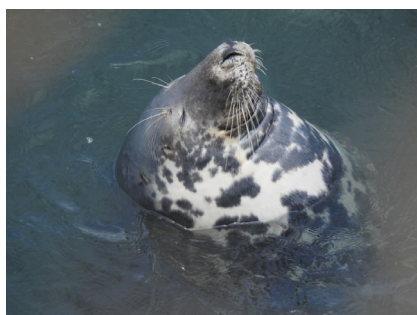
in Swansea and Gower highlighting the issue. I'd driven passed Pitton Cross Caravan and Camping Site hundreds of times but one day back in June, I decided to pop in and have a chat with the owners of their shop.

To be honest, up until that time, I'd received a mixed response across Gower with the majority of retailers being unsupportive in my efforts to remove flying rings from sale. I was expecting a similar response when I spoke to proprietor Tracey Button, who's shop adorned a selection of these items for sale. How wrong was I?

It didn't take long for me to realise that Tracey was not one of the unsupportive retailers, receiving my first very positive success with a retailer stopping their sale. I left with a smile and my faith was restored! Since then, the UK campaign has snowballed and large retailers such as Tesco, Pets at Home and CVS Vets Ltd taking them off their shelves.

However, there is still lots more work to do on this, so I jumped at the opportunity when ITV Wales Coast and Country invited

me to be part of one of their programmes. I was keen to use that opportunity to highlight the flying ring campaign if their Producer Susan Ridd agreed. Susan was



as keen as me and asked whether Tracey Button would agree to being interviewed as one of the supportive retailers on Gower. Fortunately, Tracey agreed, and the date was set for October 2nd.

With hair and makeup set to a high standard, Tracey and I made our star appearances in the great company of presenter Shaun Fletcher of BBC Countryfile, Songs of Praise, Breakfast TV and of course ITV Wales Coast and Country.

Our fifteen minutes of fame will be broadcast on 2nd December 2023 on ITV Wales, and we are happy to provide signed photographs if requested. All jokes aside, this was yet another opportunity to give our seals a voice. They are under enormous challenges and if we can do something about it locally then let's do it. Flying rings cause unbelievable harm so please if you, your children or grandchildren have one then please consider cutting it up and disposing of it responsibly.

With Christmas nearly upon us, what a fantastic idea to buy a solid type frisbee as a perfect gift!

Gareth Richards
www.gowersealgroup.co.uk

Local Heroes

Tŷ Hafan Fundraiser

Well where do I start!? My word we have been totally blown away by everybodies support not only from our community but also the wider Gower community. It was so lovely to see so many people come together on a wet and miserable November afternoon to help raise much needed funds for this incredible charity.

Tŷ Hafan provides care and support for children and their families suffering from life shortening conditions, they are a vital lifeline to many families. They provide a safe and loving haven when a child is close to the end of their life. Since their doors opened in 1999 they have helped over

1,100 children and their families.

This year our event was held in Reynoldston Village Hall, we had numerous stalls offering local craft and produce, a raffle, hot drinks and cakes aplenty. Some of the children I work with at Knelston Primary very kindly came along and ran a Guess how many sweets are in the jar competition and also asked guests to guess the name of the teddy bear, which was a big hit! Many thanks to my little helpers for all their hard work and help.

This year we had a very generous anonymous match funder which meant we raised the total of £3,030.00p for the children's hospice. This amount far exceeded what we ever dreamt we could raise and we



would like to say a massive heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported this event, also many many thanks to the local businesses and charities that so very kindly donated prizes to our raffle.

We have been so overwhelmed by everybody's support and generosity so many many thanks to you all.

Sally Ann Thomas

Right: some of the goodies on offer at the Ty Hafan Fundraiser



Local Heroes

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.



NEW YEARS EVE BEACH CLEAN

Feeling inspired? - come and join us on 31st December

Meet at the signpost just above the beach at 10:30am

Coffee, mulled wine & mince pies at the Lookout afterwards!



Above: Photos courtesy of Mike (Kittiwakes)

Pitton Chapel

The year seems to have flown by in a blur of activity.

Outside of the regular Sunday services, the early part of the year was spent organising the replacement of the rotten fascia and painting of the outside of chapel. The chapel is a charity and relies on donations in order to keep going. We thought that we would need to do quite a bit of fundraising in order to meet these additional costs but were unexpectedly blessed to receive a very substantial grant from the Bowen Richards Trust in addition to a generous grant from Rhossili Community Council. We are most grateful in both cases.

Although initially, we thought that we had plenty of time for the works to be completed, the weather and a few other factors conspired against us and we had a last minute rush to get the chapel looking lovely inside and out for the wedding of Rhodri and Llinos that took place in August. Everyone commented on how lovely the chapel looked and we wish them every blessing on their marriage.

Another unexpected gift that we received was three nest boxes, suitable for swifts. These were donated by the Glamorgan Ornithological Society and kindly installed on the front of chapel (as the environmental conditions there are the most suitable for nesting swifts) by Gordon and Jem Howe before the scaffold was taken down.

We had already arranged a fundraiser for November before we received the grant from the Bowen Richards Trust. Their generosity therefore enabled us to support the St Madoc's Christian Centre, in Llanmadoc, in their important work.

St Madoc's welcome classes of school



children for residential stays. Some of these children have no experience of anything other than inner city life and have never even seen a cow, something which we all take for granted. Many of them also receive free school meals which means that their family really is struggling to make ends meet. St Madoc's subsidises these children which means that they too are able to be part of their class trip, something which otherwise they would not be able to afford to do. Thanks to your support when The Phoenix Choir of Wales came to entertain us in November we raised £695, which goes towards helping St Madoc's in their mission.

We also support a local Methodist project that operates out of our Penlan Church. Ogof Adullam is a drop in centre for those recovering from addictions and prison leavers. They also have a Men's Shed which is going from strength to strength. Amongst other things, both of these projects offer lads who perhaps have never had a stable father figure or role model before, kindly faces who are willing to sit and talk and share with them.

It was lovely to welcome so many friends into Chapel to share the Remembrance Sunday Service where

members of the congregation gave reflections and memories pertinent to the day. Please do come again.

We have a number of forthcoming services to which you all are most warmly invited.

Our Christmas Eve and our Christmas Day service in Pitton Chapel will be at 10:30am.

May I, on behalf of the congregation, wish you all a very Happy Christmas and every blessing for the New Year.

Selina Taylor

You can learn more about Ogof Adullam and their projects here:

<https://www.swansea-methodist.org.uk/projects/ogof-adullam>



St. Mary's Church

Mike Williams, Derek O'Brien, Tom Higgs and Bobby Blewett Fall Bay Gardening team for the work they have done and Gill Wales and Steve Campbell-Kelly for diligently unlocking and securing daily

Since Rev Justin moved to his new parish last August we have been looked after by Rev Canon Roger Donaldson and have very much enjoyed his involvement with our church community. Many thanks to Roger for his care. Also congratulations to Justin who was installed as a Canon in a service at Brecon Cathedral in November

We were very pleased to welcome the



a sell out afternoon concert in the church, with music from international Carducci Quartet including Dvorak's String Quartet No 12 - the famous "American" St Mary's is also hosting an art show until 6/1/2024 with the theme of Prayer Unwrapped. This is designed to help experience the tranquil beauty of prayer inspired art within the church. It is open every day for visitors and locals who would like to call in and view

Community News & Updates

During the past year we have been delighted to see the planned redecoration take place, with phase one completed in April and phase 2 in October. Rhossili resident and professional decorator Mark Nelson did a sterling job, sourcing appropriate materials and carrying out extensive repairs and preparation prior to painting with three coats of eco- friendly paint.

We are also indebted to the amazing village team who came together to support the project - thank you to Terry Ryall (scaffolding) Peter Williams, Dai Cann, Jeff Higgins, Tom Higgs, David, Vicky and Billy Charles, Steve Campbell-Kelly, Gill Wales, Carl and Caroline. The church is looking resplendent following a job very well done



new incumbent, Rev Dr Peter Lewis who has now taken the reins and moved into Knelston Rectory with his wife Martine and their family. He has worked hard since his arrival to meet as many people as possible and regularly joins our money coffee mornings in the village hall, as well as attending the harvest supper. Every Thursday he extends an invitation to join his Ebb and Flow walk starting at St Mary's at 8.15am - everyone is welcome. This is an opportunity to reflect on nature and hope and to meet like-minded people (and dogs)

One of Rev Peter's first jobs was to conduct the wedding of Nick and Marie at St Mary's. This was a very happy occasion following on from two previous weddings this year between Jody and Patrick and Catrin and Josh. We wish them all the very best for their future happiness together

The annual Gower Festival returned with

As Christmas approaches there are several opportunities to celebrate the festive season with the annual traditional combined carol service for church, chapel and WI this year taking place at St Mary's on 12/12/2023 at 18.00pm. In addition we welcome back the Salvation Army Band to the village hall on 14/12/2023 also at 18.00pm with singalong carols and seasonal refreshments. On Christmas Eve our Family Nativity Service is at 10.00am and we look forward to welcoming young and old to join this pre Christmas treat.

Vicky Charles



As always we are grateful to all the people who help to maintain the church, graveyard and car park, as well as ensuring the church is open every day for visitors to call in and enjoy the peaceful environment. During this year thanks to Gwyn Thomas,

Rhossili Village Hall & Bunkhouse

www.rhossilibunkhouse.com

This year's overall financial position was greatly eased by last year's generous donation of £10,000 from the Bowen Richards Trust which allowed us to free up reserves ear-marked to pay off a loan taken out during the pandemic. The released reserves were added to funds from a successful, first year's post pandemic or 'normal' trading, for the Bunkhouse, which generated £18,281 to use in support for the Hall. This allowed us to be much more ambitious with the planned maintenance and improvements.

The overall fabric of the Hall and Bunkhouse are in very good shape due to the work we have undertaken in the last 5 years. However, we have not been able to build up our reserves as we have taken the decision to carry out maintenance and improvement works to the Hall and its facilities, rather than save. This means we remain financially vulnerable if some major item of infrastructure (eg the Hall boiler) should fail. We hope to build up the reserves over the next few years.

This year, the minor improvements we carried out were to:

- Create more space in the Hall by re-organising the storage space.
- Replace the stage curtains rails and re-hang the stage curtains (£465).
- Install a ceiling mounted projector (£3,236 the cost partially offset by a contribution of £1,000 from the Rhossili Community Council's HWB grant).
- Install 'greener', more appropriate, lighting for Gower's Dark Skies by;
 1. Replacing the lights in our carpark.
 2. Changing fluorescent lights

to LED options where possible.

3. Installing 'walk through' sensors on all the internal corridors, stairways and toilets to stop lights being left on all night.

All the changes to the lighting cost £2,300.

The major improvements saw the creation of an alternative side entrance for bunkhouse users and the installation of a separate kitchen and toilet facilities for Hall users. This allows much greater flexibility when it comes to use of the Hall making it available, for small groups, when the Bunkhouse is occupied. These improvements cost £19,394 and was partially funded by a Swansea County Council's Tourism Support Fund grant of £6,864.

We are happy to report that the use of the Hall is back to pre-pandemic levels. This year, the Hall was used on 134 occasions for all sorts of events from meetings, talks, social and well-being events to surprise parties. Due to the changes to the Hall facilities, we now have the potential for increased community use. So, we have decided to hold an open meeting early next year to explain the facilities available, how they can be booked and the proposed simplified charging structure we are putting in place. We want community engagement to be as wide as possible and will be sending out invites to all the community. We are also proposing that this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held in June where along with the statutory financial reports and we will also report back on how well the changes are working.

Next year we still intend to make more improvements to the hall and carpark

and the ante room whenever funds allow. Improvements planned include resurfacing the carpark and replacing the chippings at the entrance to the carpark and to create a smooth mud free entranceway to the Hall. We will try to do something about the 'lake' in front of the Hall gates to allow easier access but as this does not belong to us this could prove difficult. We also want to improve the access to the Ante room from the Hall and make better use of this space by removing the sink to make the overall space more useable. The outside of the Bunkhouse also needs painting.

The Trustees would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank our Hall Manager, Jo Higgins, for her continued hard work and expertise which helps to ensure that the Hall and Bunkhouse are a success. Without her valued input we would not be able to function.

The current Trustees are: Jeff Higgins (Chair), Vicki James (Secretary), Derek O'Brien, Marian Potts, Linda Shaw, 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.

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



Rhossili Village Hall Social Committee

Community News & Updates

The New Year's Party, starting on the 31st of December 2022 and finishing on the 1st January 2023, heralded the beginning of another busy year of activity at the Village Hall. Unsurprisingly there is no photographic evidence of this riotous event – you will have to rock up to this year's in person to sample the merriment!

Regular coffee mornings have continued to take place, usually on the second Wednesday of the month (although not during the busy months of August and December). The format is currently set at coffee, biscuits and chat from 10.00 followed by a speaker from 11.00. Roger Button has had an invaluable role in organising several of our speakers. Committee members are becoming au fait with ensuring that there is a good audio-visual set-up in place for our speakers. We took early feedback on board that some of our audience had difficulty hearing some speakers and so try our best to encourage the speakers to use the mikes. These events are not formal, and it is important that any problems are highlighted there and then. The Rhossili Hwb Committee's provision of a monitor and their contribution to the cost of the new digital overhead projector have been an amazing boost to the success of these events. Similarly, the Hall Trustees ensure that Hall facilities are continuously upgraded to suit the needs of our community.

These events are brightened up by

lovely floral posies on each table – usually provided by Joan. Contributions of books, produce and cakes are always welcome and funds raised from their sale are donated to the DEC Humanitarian Appeal.



Our speakers have included return visits from Gareth Richards (of the Gower Seal Group), giving a presentation on Lundy Island in February and talking about 'Time to give...not take, take, take' in June, when he discussed his varied work as a volunteer. We learnt that he has contributed to significant

youth work as well as his role in helping seals.

Barbara Parry was due to visit us to talk about Clyne Valley on the 8th of March – but, believe it or not, this was THE day that a blanket of snow covered Rhossili!! Still, she was able to brave the water-logged journey to us in November and provided an interesting insight into the heritage of this large area of woodland in the middle of Swansea.

In April part-time resident Gareth Williams told us about his travels and how they had influenced his actions around Climate Change, Energy and Renewables. It turns out that Gareth is quite a mover and shaker in this field.

Stella Elliott and her colourfully attired husband (wearing a lovely waistcoat covered in apple motifs) came, in May, to talk about their enterprise at Fairy Lodge Farm where they produce cider and apple juice, with profits going towards educating girls in Africa. We are grateful to Margaret Swinnerton for recommending this talk. This was followed in July with a talk from Mrs Louise Fleet, H M Lord Lieutenant of West Glamorgan, informing us about her varied role as the King's representative for the area. On a less serious note, we had a visit in September from former resident Rob Dyere. His talk 'Humour in the Court' was full of hilarious anecdotes from his times working as the Senior Court Clerk in Swansea Crown Court. Our other contributor this year

Community News & Updates



was Nathaniel James, project officer for the West Wales Rivers Trust who informed us about local river species and the challenges they face.

In addition to our speakers the Hwb team offered informal, drop-in IT support sessions after every coffee morning up to September.

A new programme of talks is being planned for next year. Please let us know of any ideas you have for external speakers or, even better, we hope to have some speakers volunteering from the village!

As well as the coffee mornings a series of other events have taken place. The New Year's party has already been mentioned. There was also quite a party atmosphere to the Gin Gŵyr evening held on the 20th of April. We had an entertaining talk about how Gin Gŵyr is made in Overton, a great gin quiz and some lovely cocktails! Certain people suggested that it should be a monthly event! Jess led on this event and played a great role in recruiting a younger audience than usual.

Unfortunately, our usual quizmaster, Roger Button, was not well enough to present the questions for his Right Royal Quiz on the 8th May. The show

had to go on and Marian valiantly stepped up as Quiz-Person and she and her able assistant, Vicki, managed to maintain control over the large number of loud and unruly quizzers. Yes, there was the usual friendly rivalry between teams and the evening was a light-hearted and somewhat irreverent celebration of the Coronation, enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

We had a professional performance of Wright and Grainger's 'The Gods, The Gods, The Gods', sponsored by the fantastic Arts Council of Wales' Night Out Scheme, on the 2nd of July. This company visited us previously with 'Orpheus' BC (Before Covid) and gave a knock-out performance. 'The Gods, The Gods, The Gods' was performed as a 12-track album weaving four modern stories together, 'calling us to the crossroads where mythology meets real life'. The singing and performances were again excellent but perhaps the thread was more difficult to follow than 'Orpheus'. Phil Grainger, in particular, was as engaging as ever.

Margaret and Barrie Swinnerton invited the community to look around their gardens at Broad Hay on the 29th of July. It was a beautiful summer's afternoon and guests were then invited next door to the Hall where the Social Committee served tea, coffee, cakes, strawberries and cream. We are very grateful to Great Pitton Farm for supplying the strawberries and, of course, to Margaret and Barrie for helping to

make this a lovely community event.

The annual Harvest Supper was held on the 22nd of October. The event was a complete sell-out and the feedback was excellent. Marian and Sue worked their socks off in the kitchen all day long, producing a delicious menu of roast pork and seasonal roast vegetables. Mary Beynon helped, as always, this time by making the essential apple sauce and committee members provided fruit crumbles, pies and table decorations. The after-dinner talk (comedy slot) by Deryk Rees, a Carmarthenshire farmer, was highly entertaining. We hope he was pleased by the donations made to his preferred charity, Prostate Cymru. We are very grateful to The Bowen Richards Trust for enabling us to hire this great speaker and to Vicky Charles for sourcing him.

Our next big event will be Carols Around the Tree on the 14th of December at 6pm. This will be led, again this year, by members of The Salvation Army Band. It is a free event with warming seasonal drinks and sweet treats. Please donate some mince pies if you are able. This will be followed by the New Year's Eve Party. It will be a 'bring a sharing plate' do; there will be party games, music and dancing – details to follow but the date is obvious! Always lots of fun.

We are looking forward to planning next years' programme. It is going to

be an important year for the Hall – its 100th Birthday.

The Rhossili Village Hall Social Committee always welcomes new members and suggestions from the community for events they would like to see in the hall, whether led by us or by others in the community. As well as some hard work we also have quite a lot of fun in planning and putting

on our events! We are very grateful for other members of our audiences who help with clearing up at the end of events. We are particularly beholden to Jo who is 'one of us volunteers on the committee' but also offers us guidance through her role as the Village Hall and Bunkhouse Manager. Vicki is also a star in her role of keeping minutes, publicising events and generally keeping us on track.

The members of the Social Committee wish all in our community a very Merry Christmas and good health and happiness for 2024.

Vicky Charles, Joan Davies, Jo Higgins, Jessica Higgs, Vicki James, Susan Muddeman, Marian Potts, Mary Provis, Lynda Shaw, Helen Sinclair, Gill Spence



A big hello from Knelston Primary!

A lot has happened in the last year. We have had a busy year with an even busier academic year ahead. Since our last article we are sad to announce the departure of our Deputy Head Mrs Adkins. Mrs Adkins had been with us for over 7 years and was a real asset to the school. We wish her all the best as she has now taken on a headship role in another primary in Swansea. We are also extremely happy to announce the return of our Head Teacher Mr Jenkins! Mr Jenkins has been back in action with us since July and it's so lovely to have him back.

We would like to take this opportunity to give an enormous thank you to our fabulous PTA. In the last year alone their efforts have blown us away. During the summer months they successfully installed an agility trail with the help of a donation from local Councillor Richard Lewis. In September 2022 they set themselves a target to purchase us a mini bus, a target they achieved in a year! Yes we are now

proud owners of a 17 seater minibus! So a big thank you to the PTA, the Horton Hulabaloo, to you the community who attend these events and to the parents for all your donations and support. We would also like to thank Fairy Hill for their support with a ball in February, to Swansea Van Centre for sourcing us such a spotless vehicle, to WG Davies for our first MOT and Hand signs for our signage. The support we receive for such a small school is just incredible.

So far this academic year has been one of our busiest yet. The children have enjoyed trips to the museum, the beach, Plantasia, and the theatre. We have taken part in football and rugby tournaments, with 5 of our Year 6 children being chosen for the Llŵchwr District

Team. After years of being on a waiting list, we finally have a Burns by Your Side reading dog that comes in once a week to work with groups of children. This is a fantastic opportunity and we already feel that Basil is making a huge difference.

We recently announced our plans for a potential Federation with Bishopston Primary. If anyone would like to read the full proposal please go to the school website and it can be found in the 'About' section. This is governor led federation and we are very excited by the opportunities it could provide for Knelston, its children and its staff.

Rhian Hughes-Morgan



Knelston Primary School

Community News & Updates

Rhossili Book Club

Rhossili Book Club held its first meeting in March 2001 with six members and we are currently reading our 230th book. Three of the founding members are still members today. We meet in people's homes once a month (throughout lockdown we met on Zoom, in the garden of the Village Hall or in the church).

We read a wide spectrum of books (timetabled for several months ahead) all of which generate lively and broad discussions.

We currently have over a dozen members (which is the maximum that 'works') but we are conscious that there are other readers in the village who

and perhaps read along with us. So we intend posting details of the books we're reading on the Hwb. Each month we will tell you what we're reading and invite anyone else who would like to read it (or has already read it) to share comment/opinions/questions on the Hwb. I would anticipate that some books might trigger a hearty exchange of views that might go on and on.

We hold our meetings at the end of the month so we will keep to that rhythm and ask that (in the interest of avoiding spoilers) nobody posts a comment until the 1st of the month following.

Our December book (which will be on the

might be interested to know what we're reading

Hwb soon) is "The Marriage Portrait" by Maggie O'Farrell. Readers can comment on this from Jan 1st. The book we will be reading in January, is "Demon Copperhead" by Barbara Kingsolver (comments on the Hwb invited from February 1st). We will post up an introduction to each book during the first week of the month in which it is to be read and, at the end of the month, we will post a list of questions or points to consider about the book, to stimulate an on-line discussion.

Readers... please keep an eye on the HWB!

If anyone would like a list of all the books our book club has ever read, please email me: helen@sculptureculture.co.uk

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

If you are new to the area and have oil central heating, may I suggest you consider joining our local syndicate. The Rhossili Oil Consortium (ROC) exists to secure the best possible price for its members who live in or around Rhossili. We have over 50 members who place orders for home heating oil through the consortium. By ordering together we are able to get a discount, and usually the orders are delivered together too, which is environmentally friendly and more economical for the oil companies. Although we combine for discount, members' orders are dealt with separately by the supplier: each member has their own account and pays their own invoices.

The order cycle runs every two months starting in January. Members can choose on each occasion whether or not to order. Many people only order through the consortium. Others place an occasional order through the consortium and then top up out of the cycle by going to their preferred supplier directly, which is fine. At the start of

each cycle I ask members for their order quantities and then I call a list of suppliers, and haggle for the best price. A spreadsheet with the orders goes to the chosen supplier, and I inform members about delivery details and the price.

During 2023, like everyone, we again experienced some severely high prices due to market forces, yet also benefited from price drops and good discounts. Watson Fuels have returned to competitive engagement, consequently we used them frequently this year. There are noticeable improvements to their customer service and in-delivery communications, and a dedicated syndicate response team has been introduced. It follows a period of customer dissatisfaction, including from some of our own members, so I am pleased that corrective action has been taken on Watson's business processes. Meanwhile, Certas are less inclined than before to quote for our syndicate, typically leaving me hanging at the end of the day when they

Rhossili Oil Consortium

don't call back. This leaves 5 suppliers in the mix - NWF Fuels (G Thomas & Sons), Oil 4 Wales, D J Davies, Watson Fuels and Star Multifuels. If you have a pet supplier that you believe could offer a service to our group, please let me have details.

As always - and because we are talking about oil, after all - if you have comments or suggestions to improve the consortium, do get in touch so that we keep up to date with best practices while striving for the least harmful impact on our planet's resources.

Best wishes for a happy and peaceful new year.

Caroline Johnson
email: rhossiliroc@gmail.com

Pitton Cross Caravan Park - Recycling Update

It has been a few years now that we have held recycling items here at the campsite for the local area.

We are a stockist for recycling bags – single use pink and pink reusable bags, green bags, food waste bags, little kitchen green bin and the curbside green bin.

We have been given a small stock of garden waste bags which are £2.50 and only 1 per person, if you require more than this please order from the council.

Please remember to request more items with the white tags but make sure that you let the council know if the driver does not leave any replacements. This helps to keep us as a stockist.

Not only do we provide the recycling bags

etc., from the council but we are also a public drop off for Pringles and bread bags which we send off to Terracycle UK who turn in to items like garden furniture, posts and much more. For each item that is collected it is turned into cash and we have nominated Knelston Primary School to receive the funds raised from this.

There are two other drop offs in the area: Knelston Primary School and The Sports Club in Scurlage.

Please help us to lower the landfill and do our bit for the world.

The campsite shop is open from 9 am to 4 pm daily or you can drop into the information room where there are two bins there for the Pringles and Bread Bags.

Wales makes new law on recycling It applies to all businesses, charities and public sector organisations

Merry Christmas and we wish you all a Happy & Prosperous New Year for 2024 from us all at Pitton Cross Caravan Park.

Tracey Button
Pitton Cross Caravan Park

Well, what a year we've had. It's so good to be busy again and meet normally with friends.

We started the year off with a trip to the Pantomime in Swansea. Some of us being of a certain age, we made use of our bus passes and went in on the bus. We had a wonderful day out and it wasn't really spoiled by having to wait an extra hour to go home as there was no driver. Surprising, the people you meet in the bus station.



We have enjoyed the visits by many speakers throughout the year :

A lovely local author, A wonderful hat maker, A blue plaques enthusiast, A walk through Gower by pictures, A Home Guard in full uniform, Dance therapy, and sugar-

craft to name but a few.

We received a lovely card from His Majesty King Charles in response to our condolences on the death of Her Majesty.

Short walks and lunches were enjoyed as were day trips. We visited the B.B.C. studios in Cardiff, again travelling by public transport. We visited Nantgarw china works on a lovely sunny day. Some of us dressed up in all our finery and posh hats to go to Chepstow races. We attended a Federation Centenary Service in Llandaff Cathedral where we met The Lord Lieutenant, The Federation Chair, and The Lord Mayor. We took part in a procession of W.I. banners down the aisle of the Cathedral, all very moving.

A Harvest supper was enjoyed in October with some committee members making fools of themselves for entertainment.

We will end the year with a Christ-



mas dinner at the King Arthur and join in the combined Carol Service in Rhossili Church.

Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd dda from all members.

If you would like to join us or find out any more about us please contact Marian Potts on 390473



Llanddewi with Knelston W.I.

The National Trust Team

Greetings from the National Trust at South Pilton Green Farm!

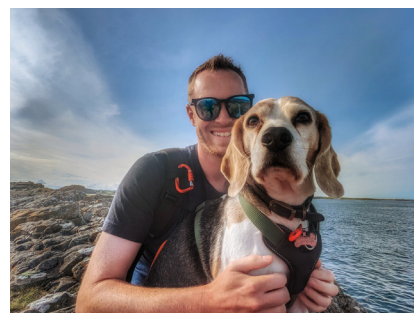
As the autumn leaves fall and the crisp breeze signals the arrival of winter, we take this opportunity to formally extend our greetings to the community. We, the National Trust team based in Gower, are all geared up for another season of diligent efforts aimed at both conserving and elevating the beauty of Gower.

We are excited to share a bit about who we are and the work we are doing in Gower.

Chris Smith, Rheolwr Cefn Gwlad / Countryside Manager

Having initially joined the National Trust as a Ranger at the age of 16, Chris has spent almost 20 years working within the environmental sector.

As the Countryside Manager, Chris is responsible for the management of 20,000 Hectares of land managed by the National Trust across Gower, the Brecon Beacons and Monmouthshire, where he works to maintain healthy, diverse and resilient ecosystems, whilst conserving local heritage and culture, and preserving farming traditions.



Thomas Campbell, Ceidwad Ardal/Area Ranger

Tom joined the National Trust in April this year and heads up Gower's Ranger team having worked for the last five years managing the tree collection and estate at the National Botanic Garden of Wales. He has a great passion for nature and has worked hard since 2011 to conserve habitats on every scale as an Arborist and latterly a Tree Manager for the London Borough of Hackney where he enjoyed planting new trees to improve the environmental quality of Inner London. Tom has loved the past eight months working with our team of dedicated volunteers, meeting the local communities of Gower and bringing in successful hay and wildflower seed harvests! He has come full circle, having studied Geography at Swansea University it is a great privilege for Tom to now be helping to enhance the amazing landscapes of the peninsula cared for by the National Trust.



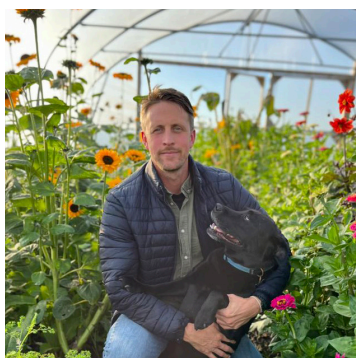
Nicole Barley, Ceidwad / Ranger

Nicole joined the Gower Ranger team at the beginning of November, after having previously worked for the National Trust in the Brecon Beacons. With a passion for nature and the outdoors, she has a keen interest in native plants, trees and hedge laying as well as woodwork and carpentry. Having spent many years previously living in Gower, she feels a strong connection to the land here and a desire to help regenerate biodiversity in the area through practical conservation and habitat management.



Volunteer Opportunities:

We are always on the lookout for volunteers! Whether you're interested in joining the rangers for weekly tasks, becoming a COASTodian to care for our coastal areas, or contributing as a Visitor Welcome Volunteer in Rhosili, there's a place for everyone. If you have skills suited for wildlife surveying, we'd also love to explore opportunities with you. Please check our website for any live volunteering opportunities or email geraldine.ferguson@nationaltrust.org.uk if you would like to know more.



Dan Jones, Uwch Swyddog Gwirfoddoli a Chymunedol / Senior Volunteering & Community Coordinator

Dan joined the team in October after moving back from St. Davids, Pembrokeshire, where for the last ten years he managed one of the three farms run by the charity Farms for City Children. Here, school children from inner cities visited the farm for a week's residential where they were exposed to the countryside for sometimes the first time, and experienced the magic of the outdoors and how good it can make you feel.

When the opportunity came to engage volunteers and community groups in the fantastic work that the National Trust does across Gower, Brecon and Aberdulais Falls Dan

jumped at the chance. Dan's role is to bolster and support the volunteering opportunities across these three sites so that the Trust can continue to maintain these special places and make them accessible to all. Working alongside a variety of community groups has also been a privilege for Dan and he is looking forward to connecting with as many diverse groups as possible to celebrate the landscape and heritage on their doorstep.



Geraldine Ferguson, Swyddog Gwirfoddoli a Chymunedol /Volunteering and Community Officer

Geraldine has the new role of Volunteering and Community Officer for Gower, Aberdulais and Brecon Beacons. Initially employed as the Land, Outdoors and Nature Participation Officer in the short-term Coast to Commons project role, she is now a permanent member of the team. Initially Geraldine worked as a science technician researching how to improve the testing and stability of poliovirus vaccine. Laterally, Geraldine taught Biology at a secondary school in Watford, then, in 2019 she moved to Wales to be closer to family. During lockdown she studied for an MSc in Sustainability and Ecology and feels very lucky to be working for the largest conservation charity in Europe, where she can share her passion for the environment with the volunteers and communities that she serves.

Contact Us:

As we approach the festive season, we wish you a Merry Christmas and are looking forward to seeing you out and about. If you have any questions, ideas, or just want to say hello, please don't hesitate to reach out or drop into the office at South Pitton Green Farm.

Community Opportunities:

If you're part of a community group who feel you could benefit from spending time in Gower, then we invite you to get in touch.

Whether you're a school looking for an outdoor learning opportunity, adults with learning interests, or other community organisations, we believe in the power of shared experiences in nature. Please make contact, and let's work together to see how Gower can be a backdrop for enriching activities and memorable moments tailored to your community group's needs. We're here to collaborate and make Gower an inclusive space for everyone.

SPG Office: 01792 390636

- Chris Smith: chris.smith3@nationaltrust.org.uk
- Tom Campbell: thomas.campbell@nationaltrust.org.uk
- Nicole Barley: Nicole.barley@nationaltrust.org.uk
- Dan Jones: dan.jones@nationaltrust.org.uk
- Geraldine Ferguson: geraldine.ferguson@nationaltrust.org.uk

Thank you for welcoming us into your community, and here's to a season filled with warmth, joy, and shared moments in the great outdoors!

The National Trust Team



It's difficult to believe that Rhossili Community Hwb was launched as part of our Carols Round the Tree evening, only just a year ago. MS Rebecca Evans attended and sang her way enthusiastically through all of the Carols played by the Salvation Army Band – altogether a great evening. But of course, the launch was only the start. Here's a round-up of some of the things that have been happening since, as we continued to develop the website.

IT sessions

In January and February, the final two months before the official end of the funded project, we delivered 6 IT support sessions. These were a mix of talks from outside speakers and workshop-style sessions around some computer basics such as email, creating spreadsheets, video-calling and so on. Cybersecurity expert Peter Green kicked off the year with an excellent talk about staying safe online and in February we were pleased to welcome Lynne Palmer from Gower Medical Practice to talk about the askmyGP platform. In May we had a great talk from award-winning photographer Josephine Collingwood on using your iPhone to take decent photographs (I'm still learning!). More recently, last month we held a Zoom IT support session with Artificial Intelligence expert Iain McGregor taking us through the 'hope and the hype' of AI (it's a statistical parrot, who knew?). That was

another fantastic and very informative session which was very well received by an enthusiastic audience.

We continued offering IT support on an informal basis, as follow-on sessions to the regular village Coffee mornings up until September. We are still here though if anyone needs help, just get in touch with any member of the Hwb team. Remember, we do have a few smartphones and tablets we can loan out (with friendly support) to anyone who does not otherwise have access to the internet and wants to give it a go!

We're grateful that the Village Hall Trustees have supported us in using the hall for all of the IT sessions this year.



Hwb Happenings 2023

www.rhossilihwb.wales

Reports

With the end of our funding came the requirement for us to submit a mere 9 reports (+ accompanying evidence) along with detailed accounts. We were also then involved in 2-3 interviews. But it seems it was all OK as the Rural Development Partnership Project Officer told us:

"Thank you for all your effort completing the mountains of paperwork needed for the funding. I know it's not easy and is very time consuming but the paperwork you submitted is easily the best and most thorough I have received from all the projects."

He also commented:

"I would like to say thank you for all the efforts of you and the team in producing such an important project for the Rhossili community. I have been through the Hwb and it's such an easy website to navigate and the content on there is fantastic. I really appreciate all your efforts on the project and you have produced a valuable tool for the community."

RCC takeover

On formal completion of the Swansea RDP funding in February, Rhossili Community Council undertook to continue to support the project so the Hwb is officially part of RCC. Rhossili Hwb oversight is now provided by an Advisory Network which meets 3x per year. This draws members from the community and other stakeholders, including National Trust and Reynoldston and Port Eynon Community Councils, who aim to keep us on our toes and provide valuable feedback.

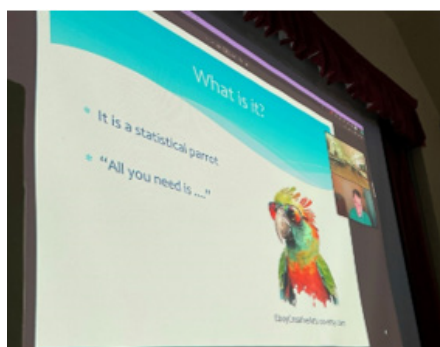
Website development

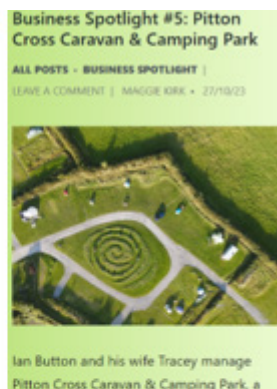
The website has continued to develop as more content is posted. The Reluctant Rhossili Bird Blog has added to our 'Nature' section and the National Trust 'Seasons' series is warmly welcomed. The Business Spotlight has grown over the year (see the latest - an interview with Ian Button from Pitton Cross Caravan & Camping Park. We've also re-organised the Home page to allow more space to add three extra 'boxes' (or portals):

The **Hwb News** box gives a very short summary of what has been newly added to the site.

Hwb Features is a developing collection of themed blog pages. So far, we have *Recipe of the month*, *Your garden this month*, *My Favourite Thing*, *Favourite Walks* and, just launched this month, *Book of the Month*. Check them out – there's some really interesting articles! What could you contribute to these blogs?

Hwb Matters is a re-grouping of some content from the old home page, and now





includes a guide on how to put the Hwb onto the Home screen of your phone.

Running alongside the website is also the popular Rhossili Hwb Facebook page and Twitter account.

What's next

We hope that the different Hwb Features section will continue to attract involvement. There are some very talented cooks out there and we welcome recipes from them (thanks Marian for the Christmas Welshcakes one). But you don't have to be

The Hwb is managed entirely on a voluntary basis by members of our local community, for the community. We are really pleased at the responses we've had from people in contributing content and excited at the growing content from people outside of the Hwb team. Look on the Hwb as a useful one-stop information portal that also has a magazine feel to it too.

Rhossili Community Hwb will succeed longer term only so long as the community supports it – by using it and contributing

Rhossili's Mary Berry/ Gordon Ramsay or whatever, just share your favourite recipe with us. We're particularly keen to have Christmas recipe ideas so if you created something delicious this month, photograph it and send it to us with the recipe.

There is more to do, improving navigation and reviewing our social media Home page feed. We're planning to add a Gallery feature, on the theme of *Rhossili Life* - events, the seasons - to log different aspects of village life. The limiting factor is time. Interested in helping or contributing? Send us some ideas & images!

to it. Thanks to everyone who has helped to make this a successful first year for our community Hwb.

Maggie Kirk on behalf of the project team:

Isobel & Colin Everett, Steve Walmsley, Paul Kirk, Vicki James and Gill Boulding



ALERT!!

In Wales from April 6, 2024, a new law on recycling requirements will come into place making it illegal for all businesses, charities and public sector organisations not to sort their waste for recycling. The list of who the law applies to is comprehensive, covering schools, universities, GPs, hospitality venues and prisons.

All businesses, charities and public sector organisations will need to separate their waste. NHS hospitals and private hospitals have an extra two years to comply with the law.

It also applies to all waste and recycling collectors and processors who manage household-like waste from workplaces. The Welsh Government says it is introducing this law to improve the quality and quantity of how we collect and separate waste in a bid to reaching zero waste. We are already the best in the UK for domestic recycling and third best in the world. (Taken from Wales online)

Christmas comes to Rhossili!

The Community Council was delighted to accept the kind gift of two Christmas trees for the community this year. One donated by Rob Morgan has been erected in a corner of the Church car park at Rhossili and the other, donated by Jonathan Tucker, has been erected in the Village Hall.

Putting the tree up in the car park and then decorating it was a team effort with Ieuan on the loader and councillors Ian Button, Lesley-Anne Nolan and Tom Higgs working to put the tree in place. Tom looked like he was going to be the fairy at the top of the tree at one point – but it was too cold up there!

The tree from Jonathan for Rhossili Village Hall is also in place, expertly trimmed by Vicki and beautifully decorated. Manager Jo said, "Thank you, Jonathan, it is so lovely to have a real tree in the hall and is much appreciated by us all."

Doesn't it look lovely against the red curtains!

Thanks to Jonathan and Rob for their generosity.



Roger Button's Christmas Quiz



1. Link the Countries to their Capital Cities:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| A. AFGHANISTAN | COPENHAGEN |
| B. BOLIVIA | DAKAR |
| C. CAMBODIA | DOHA |
| D. DENMARK | HANOI |
| E. ESTONIA | KABUL |
| F. FRANCE | KAMPALA |
| G. GABON | KATMANDU |
| H. HAITI | KIGALI |
| I. IRAN | KINGSTON |
| J. JAMAICA | LA PAZ |
| K. KENYA | LIBREVILLE |
| L. LITHUANIA | LIMA |
| M. MOROCCO | LUSAKA. |
| N. NEPAL | MATA UTU |
| O. OMAN | MUSCAT |
| P. PERU | NIAROB |
| Q. QATAR | PARIS |
| R. RWANDA | PNOM PENG |
| S. SENEGAL | PORT AU PRINCE |
| T. TAIWAN | RABAT |
| U. UGANDA | SAN A |
| V. VIETNAM | TAIPEI |
| W. WALLIS & FORTUA ISLES | TALLINN |
| X. YEMEN | TEHRAN |
| Y. ZAMBIA | VILNIUS |



2. How many Farmers, Market Gardeners and Smallholders were operating in and around Rhossili circa 1950?

- A. 16
- B. 24
- C. 32
- D. 48

3. Some buildings in the village have a date plaque on the wall:

- 1. So what property was built in 1948?
- 2. What property was built in 1887?
- 3. What property was built in 1749 and then rebuilt in 1893?
- 4. What property was built in 1924?
- 5. And for those of you that can remember which property carried a plaque "J.B.G. 1926"?

Answers will be available shortly on the Hwb!

Fun & Games

Sue Muddeman's Famous Carrot Cake



Dry Ingredients

312 gms	Self Raising Gluten Free Flour
40 gms	Ground Almonds
80 gms	Desiccated Coconut
1.5 tsp	Cinnamon
1.5 tsp	Mixed Spice
1.5 tsp	Ginger
1.5 tsp	Baking Powder
400 gms	Light Brown Sugar
400 gms	Grated Carrot

Wet Ingredients

400 ml	Vegetable Oil
4	Eggs
1	Orange (peeled and crushed)

Topping

300 gms	Cream Cheese
200 gms	Icing Sugar
	Zest from one orange

Dried cranberries, apricots, currants and pistachios for sprinkling

1. Mix the dry ingredients together using a paddle attachment. Decant the contents into a container.
2. Mix the wet ingredients together first before gradually adding the dry ingredients. Finally adding the carrot at the end.
3. Prepare a 27cm x7.5cm cake tin with baking parchment.
4. Spoon in the cake mixture and bake for 1hr, 30 mins at 140°C.
5. Once the baked cake has been allowed to stand and become cold, the topping can be mixed together and applied liberally to the top. Finish off with a handful of dried fruit sprinkled on the top.

Editors note:

This recipe was kindly provided by Sue, and I have attempted to scale it down from its original quantities.

I made it at home (just to check its accuracy of course!) and I can tell you it was so good the masses descended and it was gone before I got to take a photograph!

Fun & Games

ATLANTIC
BEACH
BEACH CLEAN
BOOKCLUB
BUNKERSHILL
BUNKHOUSE
BUS STOP
BUTTERSLADE
CARAVAN PARK
CAUSEWAY
COASTGUARD
COFFEE MORNINGS
DEVILS BRIDGE
DOWNS
DR WHO
EDGAR EVANS
FALLBAY

FOODBANK
FOSSIL
FREDDIES VEG
GOWER
HELVETIA
HILLEND
HWB
KITCHEN CORNER
KITES
LEWES CASTLE
LIMESTONE
MERMAID WALL
MEWSLADE
MIDDLETON
MUMFORD
NATIONAL TRUST
NATURAL

OCEAN GUARDIANS
OUTSTANDING
PALEOLITHIC
PAVILAND
PENINSULAR
PICK YOUR OWN
PILTON GREEN
PITTON CHAPEL
RAMSGROVE
RECYCLING
RED LADY
RHOSSILI
SAND
SEALS
SHEEP
SMUGGLERS
ST MARYS

SUNFLOWER
SUNSET
SURFING
THE KNAVE
THE LOOKOUT
THE OLD RECTORY
THE VIEW
THURBA
TRIGPOINT
VIKINGS
VILE
VILLAGE HALL
WILDFLOWERS
WOMENS INSTITUTE
WORMSHEAD
YOGA

Rhossili Wordsearch

Fun & Games

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