

LLANCARFAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER 177

MARCH 2019



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EDITORIAL

There is only one way to kick off this Spring issue of the newsletter: by conveying heartfelt thanks on behalf of readers to the outgoing editor. After ten years at the helm, Ian Fell has handed control to a relative neophyte, freeing himself to explore new waters. Sharp-eyed readers will notice that while he is no longer captain, he remains a contributor. His piece in this issue on Dai Lossin is classic Ian: interesting and informative, infused with history, and spiced with a dash of wit and humour. His are big shoes to fill.

Be patient with your new, inexperienced editor. Having moved to Llancafarn a mere 15 years ago—and spent half of that time working abroad—he is, compared to many of his neighbours, a Johnny-come-lately. He will need readers' help to understand and reflect in print what this community is all about. Consider that a plea for material and ideas of all sorts. Readers are encouraged to submit articles (or ideas for others to write) as well as photos, diary items, and more. This editor looks forward to curating content produced by the local community: those who know better than he what once made it tick, what does so today and what will do going forward.

Publications such as this are partly about remembering those who have left us—as we do in the issue with Derek Higgs, Tom Hunt and Ken Walls, tales of whose wartime derring-do will be told for years to come. Those still with us can also inspire, hence the introduction of “Residents' Corner”. The first, by the highjinxing Olivia Barry, is a model for others to follow. We look forward to running more such pieces in future. Submissions, ideas or feedback can be emailed to matthewvalencia@gmail.com, or dropped in to Matthew at Bridge Cottage (also on 07912 977943) or to Penny Fell at White Chapel. Or via the Llancafarn Society website's Contact page. Happy reading!

Society President Barbara Milhuisen writes:

IN OUR DECEMBER NEWSLETTER we remembered our first editor and founder member Dr John Etherington. In this one we are sorry to give news of the loss of another founder member. Derek Higgs spent many happy years in Llanrcarfau with his wife and sons before moving to Cowbridge. Derek, a former chairman of the Llanrcarfau Society, was able to attend the 30th anniversary dinner at the Fox & Hounds.

I also have other happy memories of the family. They would drive down through France and visit me, and would help me build walls.

We also have to say thank you to another, more recent editor, Ian Fell, who followed his stories so thoroughly. He too, with Penny, came to see me in France—a memorable visit for me and also for my brother Clive and his family.

We now have a new editor, Matthew Valencia, to whom I would like to extend my warmest greetings and good wishes. I am sorry I am no longer in France, but you are a well-travelled family, and should you wish to visit the Pyrenees my barn and vineyard are not yet sold and you would be very welcome there. Rugby is like another religion in the area, but even its locals are willing to accept that Wales were the victors in the opening match of this year's Six Nations in Paris.



KEN WALLS, LLANBETHERY LEGEND (1918-2018)

LAST YEAR WE FAILED to record the sad death of Ken Walls, war veteran and long-term resident of Llanbethery. He died in September, sadly just short of his hundredth birthday. To the end of his days, Ken was indefatigable, instructive and delightful company—one of his Llanrcarfau fixtures was at May Day walks (well into his 90s), so what better season to mark his memory?

Born in Lambeth, Ken took up a career in banking and also began the study of law—but his hopes and plans were abruptly shelved by the outbreak of World War Two. He served in the Royal Artillery and by 1944 he was with the Airborne Division, preparing for the Normandy landings.

So it was, young Ken found himself in the early hours of D-Day, June 6th, on a Horsa glider, towed by a Halifax bomber, crossing a darkened Channel. He was part of a team detailed to secure Bénouville Bridge over the Caen Canal. Dodging heavy anti-aircraft fire, the glider went out of control and had to ditch

off the French coast. Ken and the rest of the men piled into a dinghy and were swept eastward in the current. His friend, the late John Long, records: “Eventually they reached land at the foot of some cliffs just below the German battery from which about 30 very surprised but fully armed Germans emerged to take them prisoner.” By August 1944, Ken was imprisoned in Oflag 79, where he was to spend the rest of his war.

The camp was a cold and hungry place, but typically Ken distracted himself by resurrecting his law studies, mentored by a squad of legally qualified fellow POWs. Back in Britain, at the end of the war, he at last met his nine-month-old son, Robin, born just after his capture. Just last summer, Ken was awarded the Legion d’Honneur as a D-Day veteran. And he did, subsequently, manage to get that law degree!

Ken and his wife Ruth moved to South Wales in the early 1970s and settled here. After Ruth’s death, Ken continued to live a full life—giving home to a tiny blind white dog, who adored him and would have followed him sightlessly to the ends of the earth. He walked; and started (in his 90s) to learn piano from his neighbour, Sharon Richards, who would hear him practising diligently as she passed the door. A neighbour of courtesy, courage and charm with an inspiring gift for life, he reminds us how much his generation endured and triumphantly survived.

A full obituary by John Long can be found in the Cowbridge U3A Newsletter, January 2019

TOM HUNT



It is with much sadness that we report the death, at the age of 89, of Tom Hunt, longstanding resident of Llancarfan. Tom suffered a stroke in June and spent the last few months of his life in Ty Enfys Care Home, where he was well cared for. Following a short illness he passed away peacefully on March 3rd. We plan to reflect at greater length on Tom’s life and his contribution to life in Llancarfan in the June issue.

BEHIND YOU! PANTO REVISITED: SLEEPING BEAUTY

By Kay Brain

IT WAS A CHILLY post-festive-season January 5th...and another Village Hall event. This occasion was to view the very memorable Tom Batt's production of "Sleeping Beauty", which was celebrating its 20th anniversary of village thespian achievement. This was one of three pantomimes produced at the hall—but only this one was recorded in all its glory.

Produced by Steve Powell and directed by Sam Smith, the LADS (Llancarfan Amateur Dramatic Society) production included much cross-dressing, coconut horse hooves, kings and queens, wonderful witches, sibling saplings and a very creative crew, courtesy of my Lucy.



Whilst the old VHS copy wielded its unfolding of a long-lost memory of Llancarfan folk past and present, the audience viewed in disbelief and howled at the timeless metaphors, and gasped at the recognition of themselves and others back in the day. The ugly sisters (Robert Teesdale, Tom Batt and the, ahem, unmistakable Graham Brain), all beautifully hideous, showed how audience participation could go horribly right. The king and queen (John Angell and Patsie Smith) together with the Sleeping Beauty (Ceri Jones) and the unforgettable very Welsh dragon (Sam Smith) were all gathered together expertly by the Panto MC (Edward Knott – breakout star of the show, channelling his inner Bruce Forsyth). The scenery was created with considerable artistry, envisioned by Heather Stevens, and the music was composed and performed by Jim Steeley. Llancarfan's got talent, indeed.

During the nights of the actual performances, I recall the hilarious sight of the cast squeezed into the dressing room, a horse box parked outside the hall, which literally rocked with laughter. Not forgetting all the costume hiccups and forgotten lines which made the event even more hilarious. An incredible amount of effort and fun went into the production, made all the more special by seeing your neighbours and friends performing panto roles so very different (well, mostly) from their normal daily lives. Its very roots were in village life and entertainment.



The re-showing reminded me of what a huge undertaking it was to create such a terrific show for the village. From costume-making to set design, make-up to stage erecting, lighting and sound effects, music score and script, and of course the endless hours of rehearsal and line learning—all of which commenced in the September and ended with the January performances. All this with no budget or funding, just the efforts of everyone involved.

The LADS, too numerous to mention.....but you know who you are....we thank you and cherish the memories you have given to all of us. It was great to have the memory live on and be re-enjoyed.

Finally, a little plug. To anyone who couldn't attend the re-showing and can bear to be reminded of what they and others looked like 20 years ago, fear not!....Cue shouts of "Behind You!"...Graham has offered to create additional DVDs at a cost of £5.00 each which will go to the LDCA coffers. Please contact him on 01446 781080 to reserve your copy.

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Editor: Matthew Valencia

Deputy Editor: Penny Fell

Society President: Barbara Milhuisen

Society Chairman: Gordon Kemp

Society Secretary: Katherine Kemp

Subscriptions & Membership: Joann Scott-Quelch, 2 Penylan House, Llancarfan CF62 3AH

For past issues, queries and contributions, visit www.llancarfansociety.org.uk

NEXT COPY, NEWS AND LETTERS DEADLINE: MAY 21ST 2019

HOW DAI LOSSIN KULTURED A KREATIVE KOLLIER

By Ian Fell

LEAVING THE EDITOR'S CHAIR doesn't mean you must leave behind your interests and enthusiasms. (Your new editor does of course decide if such enthusiasms are worth sharing with other readers.) This said, I was delighted to receive an email from a lady called Faith Anderson. She wrote that "doing some research into a character my grandfather wrote poems about, I came across the *Llancarfan Society Newsletter 164*, for December 2015."

For a kick-off, it's lovely to know that our newsletter's online reproduction is discovered and found interesting beyond the bounds of our village. And it's great too that the tales shared by correspondents add to the knowledge of local history gleaners. So it is that this Society's thanks are due to Faith, whose grandfather (born 1870) was stimulated by the comic creations of David John, the remarkable Pancross-born cartoonist and social commentator. Faith's grandad was even moved to write tribute verses, mirroring "Dai Lossin's" rich and characterful style.

What was Dai Lossin's style? "His" humorously misspelt columns and cartoons in the *South Wales Echo* were a regular feature from well before the First World War until about 1934. Typical of his linguistic quirks was a letter from Dai Lossin himself to the *Echo* in November 1919. Our Dai John had signed up for the Great War, during which conflict he lost the use of his right arm. He taught his left hand to draw and write again, and in time his creation could return to enlighten and entertain his readers. Back home, Dai Lossin reported, in best Wenglish, his resumption of rugby management:

Dear Papur - How are u this long time slawer
dydd?
I hav bin demobbled a long time now, but it hav
took me a long time to grow mi hair proper again
for the peoples
to know me. Shockin war, munt.
It did stop Cwmawt ploughing match proper . . .
We have bin like Cardiff bizzy bilding up a teem
. . .
Hav u seen dai Dacco play? He do go so fast
that when they do show him running with the ball
in the Cwmawt Sinema Pickshers they have got to
turn the handle slow . . .

Today's piece, though, is not about Dai John, but rather an introduction to Faith's grandfather, William Barwick. As Faith reports: "He was a collier, and has written way over 200 handwritten poems that I am trying to trawl through." She continues to tell how William was born in 1870 in Briton Ferry,

Neath, and lived in nearby villages all his life: “My Grandfather left school at 10 years old and went into the pit. There, he said, on his first day he was encouraged to smoke a pipe, which he smoked from age 10 to his passing at 87. He did not succumb to the dreaded silicosis, unlike the “mill man and the collier” described in his poem about one of the villages he lived in:

*Fighting to earn a living,
In the battle of the coal,*

*But, Silicosis wins the day
And he must pay the toll.*



“When there was no work in the mines Grandfather went to the quarries. He had 12 children, of whom nine made it to adulthood. He worked and suffered through two world wars, a miners’ strike and severe austerity, but was a quiet loving man with lots of humour. He had beautiful handwriting, wrote poems on many topics and was also a fine watercolour painter and sketcher. He was a greatly loved man by all his family.”

Faith is now looking for a Welsh archive which will take care of—and enjoy mining—Grandfather William’s social commentary.
Thanku, Faith!

THE FAMOUS DAI LOSSIN GOES TO FRANCE 1916

The Kaiser one morning got out of bed
“I’ll make those bally English sit up,” he said.
“I’ll make war on Russia and also the French
And I’ll rule all the world with my common sense.

I’ll Kultur the heathens on land and sea
And I’ll ask Johnnie Turk to help me – you see,
For he knows the way, even better than I
The Armenians can tell you, he cuts throats on the sly.

The contemptible little army that England has got,
I’ll make mince-meat of them, indeed to my Gott
I’ll walk over Belgium and conquer the French,
I’ll smash up the English and burst up the Welsh.

Now the Famous Dai Lossin heard all ‘bout this here,
Though the last match he played, he lost half his ear,
Says he – “Gwach a Mutto” “I’ll play forward this game
And that full back from Berlin I’m going to tame”.

So Dai saw the Vice Captain and Dai Elbow ‘same time,
And told ‘em the Kaiser was on the “touch line”

And would score up in London If he walloped the French
And nothing could stop him but the English and Welsh.

We must tell Dai Lloyd George from Criccieth about it
And go up the main road of Cwmawt and shout it,
And must send Ianto Full Pelt, full pelt up to London,
To get our ships ready, by Churchill or someone.

I’ll go back to the house and tell Mrs Lossin
To pack up my togs and finish the washing,
And to tell PC Pint to put in a flagon.
For the rest of the goods, we must borrow a wagon.

So Dai went to France and he walked all the way
And met General Joffre as he stepped on the quay.
“Parly Vou”, sut ichi, Gwach, how do you do?
And the general “Bon Bon, mun, we-we, Parley Vou”

So after the greeting Dai unfolded his plan
And the General he winked and said “vas ze” man,
And come up to mine house and I’ll lend you a gun
And when Dai starts shooting – God help the Hun.

RESIDENTS' CORNER: OLIVIA BARRY

The first in a (hopefully) regular series, in which a community member shares their interests with us...

I WAS BORN IN ST DAVID'S HOSPITAL IN CARDIFF and baptised in Porthkerry at St Curig's church. I went to school in Wales until 2000, when, at the age of 11, I moved to Sussex with my family. I came back to Wales in 2013 when mum and dad bought Corner House in Llancafán. It is great being back; I do lots of things.

For two days a week I go to Hijinx Drama Academy; I am a professional actor. In the summer I performed at the Eisteddfod in Cardiff Bay; I have been on the BBC and ITV news. Some of my acting jobs involve role play. I sometimes work at the Cardiff University medical school helping students with their communication skills. At Cardiff Airport I will be helping train the security staff so they can understand how to speak with passengers like me: I have Down's Syndrome. I appeared in a magazine article, which explains everything (see picture).

I am also quite creative: one day a week I make pottery and ceramics which get sold in a shop, and another day each week I make cakes at a bakery which get sold in a café called Miss Tilley's. I made some gingerbread men for the Llancafán Society Christmas party, which everyone enjoyed. I made my own birthday cake for my party in the village hall in September. I am a member of the Llancafán Society in my own right, and at the dinner this year I was presented with a bouquet of flowers for being the youngest member. I was also a steward at the society's summer show. I love living in the village—I know lots of people and I very much enjoy giving out the hymn and prayer books in church.

In November the dance group I belong to, Local Motion, took part in a national competition called "Encore!", which took place over a weekend in Brean Sands. Although we are a disability dance group, we had been invited to attend the competition on an equal footing in the over-16 contemporary section. The piece we danced was based on The Hunger



Games, with music by Lorde: “Everybody Wants to Rule the World”. We were highly commended by the judges.

When I lived in Sussex I helped set up a performing arts charity called Boathouse (after Dylan Thomas’s home in Laugharne) which now runs three projects for children, young adults and profoundly disabled people with life-limiting conditions. The latest project that I am helping to organise in Cardiff is a singing & signing choir for me and my friends; we hope to get this going in the spring, and if it takes off we could be performing in front of friends and family later this year. Watch this space!

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



LLANCARFAN CINEMA

March:

29th *Bohemian Rhapsody* – Guaranteed to rock you

April:

13th *Paddington 2* – Kids’ Saturday Special

26th *Widows* – Steve MacQueen’s all-female heist thriller

OTHER

March:

27th **Llancarfan Ladies’ Lunch** – at the Fox & Hounds. A new monthly opportunity for neighbours to get together. We need to know numbers so if you want to join, please contact Sue Taylor on 781453.

April:

7th **Litter Pick**, 2pm. Meet at Llancarfan village hall. Tea and biscuits afterwards for all volunteers!

Easter weekend, **Family Easter egg hunt** at Llancarfan Tennis Club. Details to be posted nearer the time.

For Lent & Easter events at St Cadoc’s, please see the church handout.

May:

6th **Llancarfan Society May Day Walk** in Llantwit Major (*see below*).

7th **Society AGM & Iolo Morgannwg Talk** (*see below*).

11th **Coach trip to Malvern Show** – hugely popular last year, back by demand. For details contact Shelagh Hughes.

25th **Vale of Glamorgan Walking Festival Llancafán Trek**: six-mile guided walk through Penmark, Llancadle and Llanbethery. Starts at Community Car Park at 2pm, all welcome. For all Festival info:

www.valeofglamorganwalkingfestival.org.uk

June:

9th **Ruth Watts Petanque Cup Challenge** -

for details contact Katherine Kemp:

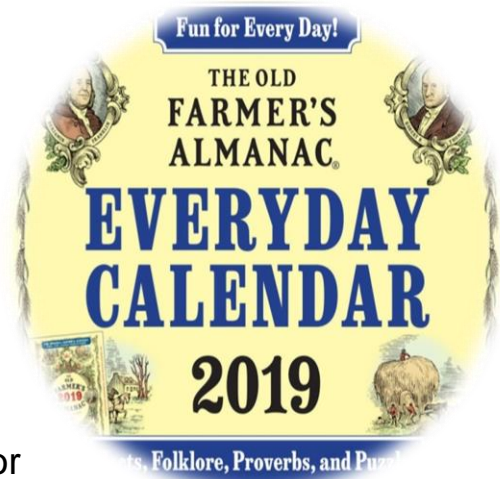
gordon.katherine@icloud.com, 07766 244141.

15th **Open Gardens Day** – summer fundraiser and a chance to showcase the village's most beautiful gardens. Interested in taking part? Any size/any style of garden.

Contact: melindathomas338@btinternet.com or Katherine Kemp gordon.katherine@icloud.com

22nd **Summer Solstice cocktails** – Village hall. Details to follow.

29th **Llancafán Society Summer Lunch** – new date in the Society's annual calendar. Further details from Katherine Kemp, as above.



MORE INFORMATION ON.....

MAY DAY WALK: MAY 6TH 2019



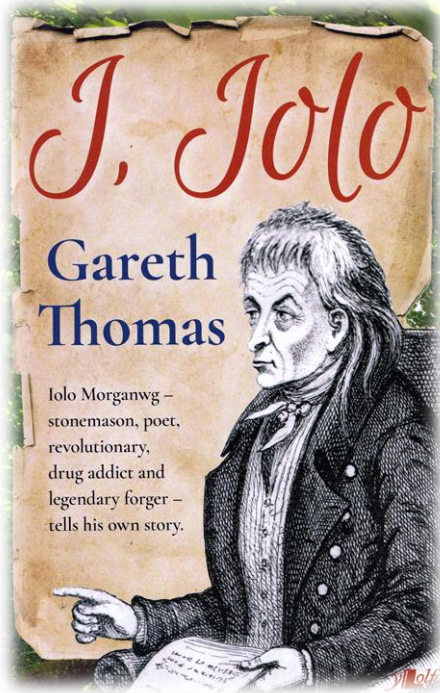
Last year's 'well walk' (left) was blessed with sunshine and surprises, and has emboldened your organisers to take a step beyond the village boundaries this year to explore the historical relics of Llantwit Major. Care of our friend **Nigel Williams** (below), we will be introduced to some of the antiquities of this ancient settlement. Nigel will also give us a privileged viewing of the Llantwit History

Society archive, which fills a splendid room in the old school buildings, and holds many immaculately preserved pictures, books and documents from Llantwit's rich history. Having stretched our minds in the archive, we will also stretch our legs in the headland countryside around Llantwit, making a round trip of antiquities, dove cote, tithe barn traces, charming ancient buildings and story-filled sites. Please join us again—crossing your fingers for last May's weather! More poster details to come in due course.



I, IOLO: MAY 7TH 2019

Iolo Morganwg, the Pen Onn born local genius and rascal, had a reputation for livening up many a Society meeting. So, standing in for Iolo at our AGM this year (to be held on May 7th) will be the equally lively and knowledgeable author Gareth Thomas. Gareth has written & published “I, Iolo”, a fascinating “creative dramatisation” of the life of Iolo Morganwg. Gareth—who is a former actor, teacher, and arts centre director—now lives in St Hilary. Two of your committee enjoyed a foretaste of an evening with Gareth at a recent Llantrihyd Residents’ Association get-together. Like the citizens of Llantrihyd, we can vouch for Gareth’s entertaining, moving and often hilarious tribute to our remarkable neighbour Iolo.

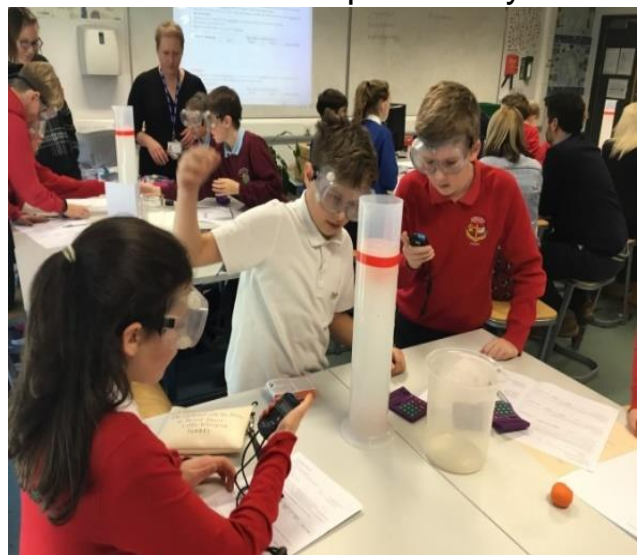


Gareth’s book (on sale in Welsh or English) will delight in its intriguing re-introduction to the highs and lows of the multi-skilled Iolo—who not only brought fire to the belly of Welsh tradition but also (as a working mason) carved elegant memorials to our ancestors, and led the way in rescuing, collecting, transcribing (and sadly sometimes inventing) the rich history of Wales.

DISPATCHES FROM OUR PRIMARY SCHOOL...

Rob Carter Visit - Volunteering Matters Cymru: Pupils were spellbound by artefacts presented by Rob during the World War II Workshop. The boys in particular seemed fascinated by the knitted swimsuit. Children were aghast at the thought of using newspaper in the outside loo. Rob regaled us with his personal experiences of air raids and rationing. We really enjoyed guessing the purpose of the objects and trying on the rather heavy tin hat!

Science at CSS: Two Year 6 pupils participated in a science workshop at Cowbridge Comprehensive School.



They were introduced to laboratory equipment and hazardous liquids (well not really), but we did have to wear goggles and gloves! We investigated forces such as drag and air resistance. We also had the opportunity to meet other Year 6 children from Vale schools. We were told to share the experience when we got back to school and deliver the lesson to our classmates – move over Mrs Crick!

RNLI: On February 14th Oak and Elm class were treated to a visit to the RNLI Station at Barry Island. They all loved climbing in the boat and learned all about the very important job the lifeboat volunteers do and how to stay safe at the beach and in the water.



NSPCC: Representatives from the NSPCC visited Elm, Birch and Hazel classes to remind us of their services. We learned a fun dance to help us remember their telephone number, which is free and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. There were plenty of role-play opportunities, which we really enjoyed.

The English-Speaking Union Workshop: This month, ten Year 6 children travelled to St Bride's Major Primary School to participate in a debating workshop in preparation for a real, live debate. We were given top tips on presenting our arguments and are now working on a speech for the topic we selected for the actual competition in March. We are all excited, but unfortunately only three children can be chosen to represent Llancafarn.

WELL, WE'RE STUMPED!

What's occurring at the prized SSSI Garnllwyd woodlands? Looking more like Sad Sorry Stumps than Site of Special Scientific Interest, as the Spring starts. Is this a case of planning blight?



WE CAN REBUILD HIM...

Congratulations to Society stalwart **Graham Brain**, who has successfully had pioneering surgery to replace his dodgy ankle (smashed up in a teen biking accident – don't ask!). The relevant bit of Bionic Brain was printed out in the USA, beamed over and inserted before Christmas.

Graham was

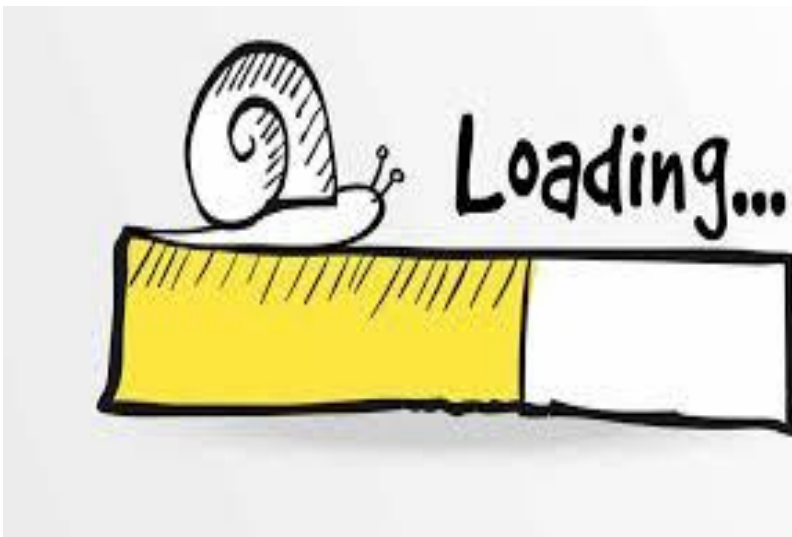
quickly speeding round

Dyffryn in his buggy and can now report the joint is (nearly) jumping for the first time in years.



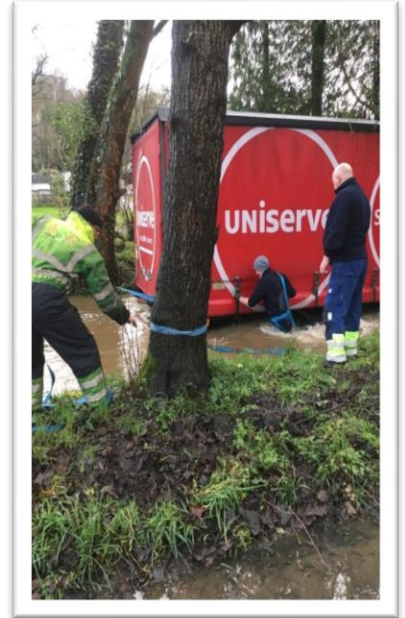
GETTING WIRED: VILLAGE BROADBAND On February 19th Llancarfan Community Council signed the contract with Openreach to deliver Ultrafast Fibre Broadband to more than 90 properties in the community that had signed up for a Welsh Government grant. The project now moves

forward into the deployment phase. Suffice to say, this is a huge achievement. Hats off to Martyn Hughes and other members of the team, including Martin Williams, Oli Spencer and Ian David. Netflix without the constant buffering, here we come!



IN THE DRINK AGAIN...

Just before Christmas, an unlucky Uber driver joined the list of people who follow their Satnav and turn left at the ford—just too early. As usual, Andrew Archbold and the ASK team came to the rescue. As the picture on the right shows, the taxi wasn't the only vehicle to get into trouble lately in our perilous waters.



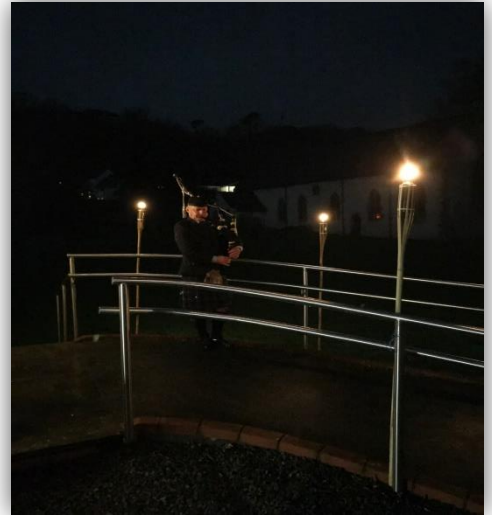
FAITH, ROPE AND CHARITY

Boxing Day means only one thing in Llanccarfan (apart from hangovers and cold turkey): the traditional Tug of War, aka the Battle of Llanccarfan Ford, followed by a quacktion-packed duck race and the subsequent retirement of participants and onlookers to the Fox for a well-earned drink. This year's race raised £785, which was split between two charities: the Noah's Ark Tiny Lives project and Touch Trust. The winner, Rhodi Grey, nobly donated his winnings to the charities.





This year's Burns Supper attracted 50 attendees and raised nearly £300. Guests were entertained once again by Piper John Campbell



and by a rousing rendition of "Address to a Haggis" as the dish was paraded before them. Hoots mon!

MINCE PIES AND MERRIMENT at the Llancafarn Society Christmas Social



OUR LITTLE 'UNS LIGHT UP CHRISTINGLES
Careful with those oranges...



Canon Derek has their attention... most of them anyway!



COMPETITION: SPOT THE POTHOLE

A bottle of wine to the first eagle-eyed reader to identify the (approximate) location of this not-so-little beauty.

Entries to:

matthewvalencia@gmail.com

