

Llangwm Village News

Issue 61 Spring 2025



**Inside: The amazing tale of the Atlantic rowers
Llangwm's champion pigeon racer
And our young Wasps show the way to victory**

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Lots of people in this issue doing remarkable things: Polly of course rowing the Atlantic in 53 days along with her mates Miyah, Janine & Sophie, other members of our rowing fraternity winning the Southern League, our U13 Wasps winning the Pembrokeshire rugby final - plus champion pigeon racer Simon Brick who's written us a terrific account of how it all happened. And of course Rita Miles our cover photographer who actually lives over the border in Hook but we'll grant her honorary Llangwm citizenship. Not so the squirrel I hear some of you say.

Heather Payton (heather@words-plus.co.uk)

Coast Path Peril



The pictures show our coast path at Llangwm Ferry near the sewage works. It's been closed since last year after two rock falls which is bad news for dog walkers and anyone wishing to enjoy our lovely coast. The beach below is impassable during high spring tides and frequently soggy at other times.

Some local people have been told unofficially the path will be restored 'in the summer' but Pembrokeshire Coast National Park have been unable to put anyone up for interview by Llangwm Village News.

It is passable – just – and kids and some grown-ups are known to use it despite 'temporarily closed' signs and instructions setting out an alternative route. Another fall could have serious consequences.

The printing of Llangwm Village News is funded by our Community Council and the black & white version is delivered to all Llangwm homes. It's also available in colour on the Llangwm Local History Society's website:

<https://www.llangwmlocalhistorysociety.org.uk/llangwmvillagenews.html>

A word about our talented cover photographer Rita Miles.



Rita lives in Hook and her photographs, which we've used to illustrate Graham Brace's Nature Notes, are all taken in her back garden. She writes that she and her husband moved there from St David's ten years ago – to find what she describes as 'a rich diversity of wildlife'.

"We have the flamboyant siskins and goldfinches, the endearing robins, the cute long tailed tits, a menacing sparrowhawk, foxes and squirrels. They have delighted us all. On one occasion, a heron landed on our vegetable patch, and nibbled our parsnips! To be so close to this huge bird was a magical moment.

I have always been interested in photography. My camera is a single lens Canon SX540 HS Power Shot. It's light weight and easy to use for my hobby."

3,200 miles of heaven & hell

Polly Zipperlen

The last time I wrote for Llangwm Village News, I was in the throws of raising funds and learning the ropes (literally) in preparation to row 3,200 miles across the Atlantic with two other women, one of whom is 70 years old and the other living with Cystic Fibrosis. An endeavour not to be undertaken lightly you might think. The evening after I wrote my last article, I spent the night on-board our ocean rowing boat bravely accompanied by our future fourth crew member. We spent the night moored up river and pootled back for breakfast in Neyland the following morning.



This was a very different experience to leaving Lanzarote on 1st February this year. We spent the whole of January preparing to leave, initially delayed by customs holding onto the boat, only to find the solar panels had been damaged in transit and the boat required re-wiring and new solar panels. Finding an international shortage of panels, Dale Sailing came to the rescue and a friend kindly flew out the new panels. All fitted and correct, the boat was launched only to find the dagger-board (a kind of keel) had swollen in the Pembrokeshire autumn rain and now was too big for its bracket. A last-minute tow to the pontoon was secured and a squirt of washing-up liquid provided enough lubrication to fit the dagger-board, which was now stuck in position. But at least useable.

During our confirmation-row, we found the electric water de-salinator to be working at 25% capacity, and I spent two days zooming around Lanzarote looking for parts and cleaning fluid in a failed attempt to fix the water-maker. Following a tense meeting with the event-organisers, we decided to leave as planned and hand-pump 15 litres of water a day, taking about 3-4 hours.

By this point, the event start date had been and gone, friends and family had left the Canarian sunshine for sub-zero temperatures in Pembrokeshire and we had

had to vacate our hotel, begging/borrowing alternative accommodation.

Fortuitously, a freak storm had hit the North Atlantic delaying the departure and all four boats left for Antigua at 10 am on 1st February. The term 'leap of faith' comes to mind as we made our final preparations that morning under close scrutiny of a gathering crowd at the marina. There was a sombre mood on-board as the reality of our voyage dawned upon us.

The first week was a blur of sea-sickness, rough seas and incredibly steep learning curves. We clung onto advice from other ocean rowers, that by day five all will be well, only to wake to more sickness and power shortages. One team-member down, we hand-steered through a long, dark night, wet-through, cold and hungry.

As much of a cliché as this sounds, we continued onward one day, one shift, one stroke at a time. And although there were days when it took two hours to make a cup of tea and we often burnt ourselves in the process, there were times of pure joy. Nights of bio-luminescence, myriad stars, and balmy, calm seas. We all swam together in the brilliantly-blue water, marvelling at the dorados around us and the Atlantic birds soaring overhead. Huge pleasure was found in small treats, a piece of chocolate, a hot cup of coffee or simply a snooze in the sun on deck.

The times when we nearly capsized or were battered by 4.5m waves were always balanced by the excitement of a message from home or the way a particular ray of sunshine was reflected on the ocean's surface.

Although not a voyage for the faint-hearted, it is neither one to be conquered or endured, but rather a journey of hope and discovery through one of the world's most amazing wildernesses.

Raising money for Paul Sartori and Cystic Fibrosis Trust <https://linktr.ee/cruisingfree>

In an extraordinary double for the Zipperlen family, as we went to press Rev Marcus was training to run the notorious 24-mile Pembrokeshire Beast, the toughest run the county can offer, on May 10. It's in aid of the Anglican Overseas Aid's project to rebuild the Al Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza, destroyed in the war with Israel. <https://anglicanoverseasaid.org.au/our-work/disaster-response/emergency-appeal-ahli-arab-hospital/>

School of the year!

Mr Rhys Buckley

It is difficult to believe that we are already entering the summer term of this academic year, but here we are and, again, it has been another busy, successful and enjoyable time for the pupils of Cleddau Reach!

From continued sporting success and fantastic expressive arts performances to events that have brought the community together, there has been so much for our school to be proud of! A real highlight for our school came in November when we were crowned 'School of the Year' at the Sport Pembrokeshire awards. This title came as a result of not just excellence in a wide variety of sports, but also the links we have built with our community and the opportunities we provide for all pupils to keep active and healthy.



Cleddau Reach Has Talent

Looking back to December, our school community enjoyed a fun-filled festive season! Each year group delivered a superb Christmas production which they performed to their families in our school hall; we all enjoyed the annual 'Cleddau Reach Has Talent' show, with children from each year group showcasing a variety of talents to the school; and, thanks to our wonderful Friends of Cleddau Reach committee, we celebrated our school Christmas Fayre, which I know many of you within the village community attended and enjoyed.

The beginning of 2025 has started at a similar pace, with a variety of topics being covered across the school and a wide range of enrichment activities taking place. We once again competed in the annual cross-country championships, with some superb standout performances from individuals and the squad as a whole!

However, it's not just the sporting arena where we are celebrating success. In classrooms and in our outdoor spaces, the children have produced some wonderful work, supporting each other and demonstrating our

school values consistently well. A great example of this comes from our outdoor learning activities, with our new, improved pond and garden area providing each class with more opportunities to get their hands dirty with some practical learning.



St David's Day parade in Haverfordwest

We continue to get the children out into their local community and beyond, with classes taking part in the annual St David's Day parade in Haverfordwest, year groups enjoying challenging themselves in places such as Heatherton and Year 6 enjoying their residential trip to Sealyham. Our Year 5 pupils will soon be going on a residential trip of their own as they head to the Urdd Centre in Cardiff for an action-packed few days of activities in our nation's capital.

Looking ahead, we are hoping that there will be a continued upturn in the weather now that the summer term is upon us so we can spend as much time as we can in and around the county. However, while we cannot guarantee the weather, the one thing that is guaranteed will be the continuing pace of school life, with plenty of further opportunities for our children to demonstrate their abilities both here in school and out and about!

We are also entering a new phase in the school's history, with an exciting new partnership with Spittal VC Primary School now confirmed for the next two academic years. We have been supporting Spittal in their school improvement journey for the past ten months and, due to the success of this partnership work, are now looking forward to seeing the partnership continue to go from strength to strength!

If you'd like to keep up with events and goings-on at the school, the best place to do so is either our new website (www.cleddaureachschool.org.uk) or our Instagram page (@cr_primary_school).

Boo to Burton

Michael Pugh

Llangwm Litfest 8 – 10 August

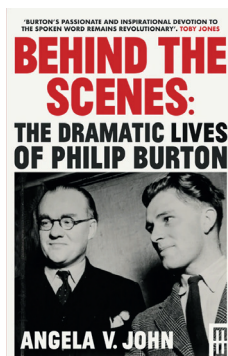
We are truly delighted to welcome back Llangwm legend, David Wilson, to the festival with the launch of *An Unlikely Photographer*. This story takes us from total paralysis at the age of eighteen, redemption through the most wonderful woman, becoming a renowned photographer, and the inestimable joy of family life.



David Wilson
*An Unlikely
Photographer*

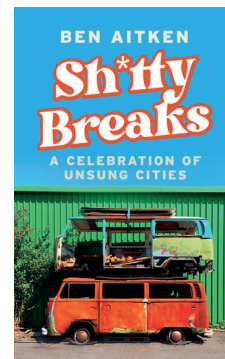
From just down the river in Neyland, we will welcome for the first time Pembrokeshire's mistress of mystery, Sarah Waters OBE. Since leaving Milford Haven Grammar School, Sarah has gone on to win prizes, including The Somerset Maugham Award, the Betty Trask Award and the Sunday Times Award for Literary Excellence., along with being shortlisted for countless others. Sarah will be talking to her former teacher, Mr Tanguay, about her sizzling books, and the road to best-selling writing.

The 'Boo' in the title above refers to singer-songwriter, Boo Hewerdine, who is coming with his new album *Things Found in Books*. And 'Burton', not to our neighbouring village, but to Philip Burton, actor Richard Burton's teacher and mentor, who is the subject of a gripping new biography *Behind the Scenes* by acclaimed writer and Pembrokeshire resident, Angela V. John.



Colin Thubron, doyen of British travel writing, will be taking us on mental journeys through the cultural wealth of Russia and Central Asia (by far the safest approach these days!). At the younger end of the

spectrum, humorous writer Ben Aitken will share his take on some of Britain's unsung cities in his newly-published book, *Shitty Breaks*.



With such a lot of fake news around, we've invited investigative journalist Carole Cadwalladr, who's written extensively about the effects of the rise of AI, to shine her light of crystal clarity as to what's going on in the wider world.



Carole Cadwalladr

Shining her light on the natural world will be zoologist and writer, Nicola Davies, to talk whales, water and much more!

In addition, there will be poetry, music, dancing, art, events for children, foraging and lots more. The Cottage Inn will be hosting a feast. The patrons party will be on Litfest Eve.

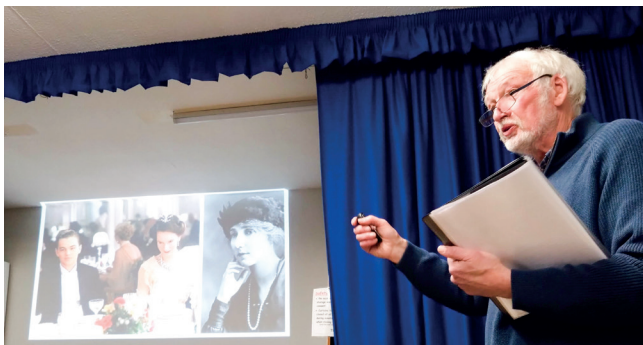
We're offering internship opportunities this year for students who might want to get a bit more experience of being involved in an arts festival. In addition, we're always looking for volunteers, hosts for writers and visitors and suggestions for the programme. If you have suggestions or would like to be involved, please get in touch with your usual contact or email us at llangwmlitfest@gmail.com

The Llangwm Litfest 8-10 August

Archaeology, wrecks & Gavin & Stacey

Our year began with the traditional January Quiz in the village hall, with a fine buffet spread provided by members and friends. Questions ranged from history to geography and general knowledge – oh, and a section on Gavin and Stacey! We ring the changes....

February's AGM was followed by a fascinating talk by Keith Johnson on a local South Pembrokeshire man, George Gwyther, who had a rags-to-riches rise in society when he married the heiress to a Scottish estate and became laird of the castle.



Keith Johnson on George Gwyther

In March, National Park speaker Tomos Jones gave an insight into the latest archaeology in the county, with some surprising finds.

In April, we enjoyed Julian Whitewright's talk on shipwrecks around the Welsh coast and the hi-tech methods used today for recording and mapping them. His job, covering marine archaeology for the whole of Wales, includes the maritime element of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical National Monuments Record of Wales.



Julian Whitewright: wrecks and more

We look forward to further enjoyable evenings with Society members and friends. But at the end of May we'll be setting off on a coach trip to two Swansea museums – the Waterfront Museum and the Egyptology collection at the University.

A second outing will take place in June – this time to the Bishop's Palace at St Davids, with an expertly led guided tour.



The Bishop's Palace, set to welcome us in June.

The last talk of the summer season (21 July in the village hall at 7.30pm) is by Simon Hancock on Colonies, Migrants and Refugees – always an interesting speaker.

We'll have our usual break in August before the autumn series of talks resumes...Terry John will enthrall us with the tale of a humble chap from Hubberston who became a Hawaiian chief (15 September) and Luke Jenkins will talk on 20 October about the archaeology unearthed by the A40 roadworks.

Mark Thomas is due to speak on November 17th about developments at Scolton Manor – to be held either at the village hall or Scolton Manor, watch this space.

Then we can all relax at the Society's annual Christmas dinner in December.

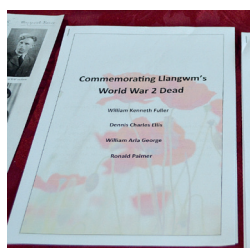
It costs only £5 per year to join the Llangwm History Society and that covers admission to all talks, which are otherwise £2 at the door, including refreshments. Regular details and items of interest are emailed out to members – why not join us today!

The Roches return: Many of you will remember the research carried out on the De La Roche family who were primarily responsible for the development of Llangwm. The family went on to spread their wings around the world and in recent years we've been contacted by descendants from countries including the US, Ireland, Canada and Australia, the latest being Thierry Hamilton De La Roche from Rochemaur in France. His branch of the family is thought to originate from a Captain John Hamilton Roche, born in Dublin in 1784. The research continues.

How we remembered the wartime generation



For many Llangwm people VE Day was a time to remember parents and others who'd served in the forces and in most cases returned to civilian life – almost as if nothing had happened. And in so many cases kept the details of what they'd done to themselves. There were also, sadly, the four Llangwm men who didn't return: William Kenneth Fuller, Dennis Charles Ellis, William Arla George and Ronald Palmer.



The village honoured all of them with a display of photographs and mementoes at the Tuesday Community Café in the Village Hall.



The event also raised money for present day veterans: a creditable £185.20 for the Royal British Legion.

For one Llangwm woman, Joan Stephens, a holiday trip to Crete sparked memories not so much of VE Day but of an event four years earlier when British soldiers serving on Crete found themselves hemmed in by advancing German troops. Their only option was to cross a range of almost impenetrable mountains, known only by local people, who were keen to help the British troops they remember to this day. This is Joan's story:

Many older readers will remember my father, Tom Thomas, who built and ran Kenthurst Garage at Sardis – now Gareth Hughes Motors.

Dad's war time experiences included the Battle of Crete when thousands of allied troops were stranded on the north coast of the island which was under German occupation. An evacuation was planned from the southern shores, the route to the south being across the high, inaccessible mountains that divide the island.

He told of days being spent hiding out in caves followed by night treks led by local shepherd boys who knew the difficult terrain. Their destination was the tiny fishing village of Sfakia where they were loaded onto ships and headed to Alexandria for the next phase of their war in the desert.

When we started visiting Crete after Dad's death in 1984, I began to appreciate what this escape had involved and Dad's gratitude and respect for the Cretan people who helped them. Reprisals were horrendous and there are many "memorial" villages where punishment was meted out on innocent locals.



Imagine my delight, just a few weeks ago, as we walked around the harbour at Sfakia and came across a very fitting memorial (erected only in 2007) in memory of those 11,000 soldiers – British, Australians and New Zealanders - who had escaped over three nights in late May 1941.....and my Dad was one of them.

Joan Stephens

Busy busy!

Fiona Cutting

Well November and December 2024 were packed!

It all started on the 21st with Portfield School, supporting their Christmas Fair. Jingle Bells, We wish You a Merry Christmas.... all the usual.

Then on the 23rd we were at St Mary's Haverfordwest, always a great venue, for a Come and Sing performing Great is the Story. For new readers, this involves turning up in the morning with a packed lunch, practising all day and culminating in a concert in the evening. Hard work but very satisfying (and enjoyable). It was open to all comers, whether choristers or just sing for pleasure types. Ben Richards did an amazing job pulling everyone together and it was incredibly well attended.



Come & Sing, in St Mary's

December 3rd and we were at Hook School, once more supporting their Christmas fair.

Fast forward to December 16th and we were singing with the children at Llangwm school. Mariah Carey's All I Want for Christmas went down exceptionally well

Next day, the 17th was a sellout at St Jerome's Carol Concert. Carols included Gaudete, Torchés and old favourites. Afterwards, Matthew at The Cottage had put on a wonderful chilli for us. We were incredibly grateful for his kindness. It was terrific as usual.

A sad occasion for us was the funeral of our lovely Richard Kelly at the Catholic Church in Haverfordwest on March 11th. It was intensely moving for us as he had been in the choir since 2012 and had been our hardworking secretary. He will be greatly missed. We sang Rutter's Look at the World.

Now we're back practising in St Jerome's. By the time this edition is out we will have done our Spring Concert in the church on May 2nd and hope to see you all turning out for us. We have some new music as well as some old favourites plus solos.



Singing in St Jerome's

There will be a combined chorus event celebrating the 80th anniversary of VE Day on May 10th at 5pm in Albany Church Haverfordwest featuring thousands (well maybe a hundred or so) of voices from Pembrokeshire singing stirring stuff....one based on Ode to Joy, another on The Dambusters plus Land of Hope and Glory, Calon Lan, I Vow to Thee My Country; it should raise the roof. Entry free but there will be a collection at the end.

June will see us at Bluestone Brewery for the annual Choir competition, great fun with loads of beer, worth the trek to Newport for it.

We've already even booked St Jerome's for the next Christmas Concert on December 16th. A long way ahead I know but keep it in your diaries

We practise in St Jerome's on Tuesdays at 7.30 to 9pm. Ability to read music is unnecessary, everyone is welcome, no auditions, not necessary to have a wonderful voice just a love of singing.

Another note for your diaries:

Llangwm's famous Litfest takes place in August and you most certainly don't want to miss a moment. Take a look at their website: llangwmlitfest.co.uk.

The Llangwm Litfest 8-10 August

Quiet times

Neil Martin

Like many aspects of life, Wrong Direction has its busy and its quiet times. We are in one of our quieter periods at the moment due to a number of reasons. There is generally less going on in the uncertain political and economic conditions of the day with many organisations working through a quiescent patch and winter is always a time of more illness with none of us getting any younger.

However, Spring is here with Summer promising more warmth and greater activity. But for a performing group, holidays and seeking the warmer climes can present its own problems.

We have changed our charity this year. Many of you are aware that we do not take any profit for the choir from funds that we take in at concerts. No-one is paid for anything in the choir and we perform just for the pleasure of it.

However, it is customary to charge an entry fee to a concert or to expect a donation and all monies we make go to two sources. We pay a monthly donation to the Church as thanks for allowing us such free use of their facilities, which we donate ourselves at each rehearsal, and we donate all taken funds to the Air Ambulance Charity. This is a recent change and so far we have helped to raise about £500.



Our most recent performance was in New Hedges, at their village hall, for the Air Ambulance and organised by them. Our next performance will be in St Mary's Church, Haverfordwest on 6th June for one of their Summer Lunchtime Concerts, starting at mid-day.

An Indian connection

Nikki Bosworth

In January 1875, the parishioners of Llangwm would have heard the news that one of their Rector's daughters had been married in India the previous month, "The Welshman" newspaper contained the announcement that Penelope, daughter of Rev. T Williams of Llangwm Rectory had wed C H Pope esquire of Singhia, Tirhoot, Bengal, at Calcutta (now Kolkata) on 17th December.

Reverend Thomas Williams was the Rector of Llangwm from 1833 until 1882, almost 50 years. He had been born in Nevern parish, married Caroline Wilson of Cresswell at Carew church in 1838 and their eight children were baptised at Llangwm between 1840 and 1854. They were Anne, Hugh Wilson, Eliza Martha, Edward Gwatkin, Penelope Emma, Caroline Jane, Laura and Justina.

A little research reveals that four more of the Rector's children were wed in India – Anne, Eliza Martha, Edward Gwatkin and Justina – whilst a fifth, Hugh Wilson, also moved to the same area. The family were based in the West Bengal region and made their living from indigo plantations.

Back in the UK, Caroline Jane sadly died aged 22 and is buried in Llangwm churchyard alongside her parents. Her sister Laura married George Herbert Phillips, a solicitor from Lancashire, and seems to have remained in England. On the 1891 census, Laura was living at no. 1 Lansdown Terrace in Cheltenham, a prestigious address, along with her three children and eight of her nieces and nephews, whose parents were all out in India. On the night of that census, Laura's husband was staying at the Euston Hotel in London.

Penelope Emma and her husband Charles Henry Pope moved back to the UK on retirement and settled in Bath. Penelope was widowed in 1910, died in February 1933, and was buried at Congresbury St Andrew Church. The family's connections with the Far East continued into the next generation as Charles Meredyth Pope, Penelope's son, was described as an East India merchant and can be traced travelling by boat from London to Colombo in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1920 and 1953.

Books on the Big Screen

Barry Childs

Most films start life as books. Some adaptations are as faithful as they can be to the original text, others less so. It's a tough and skilled job to turn 350 to 450 pages into two hours and that's where the multi part series featured so often on, for example, Netflix, has an advantage. A good example is **'A Gentleman in Moscow'** a novel by **Amor Towles** which as a mini series starring Ewan McGregor and Mary Winstead captured the detail of the book on which it was based.

I don't know how many people are aware that, for example, **'True Grit'** by **Charles Portis** which has been turned into a film on two occasions, one starring John Wayne the other Jeff Bridges, was written as a serial for a newspaper in 1968 and later published as a novel. The narrative voice, an intriguing one, is that of an elderly woman, Mattie Ross, who half a century previously as a fourteen year old set about getting revenge for her murdered father. It's not a particularly long book but there is plenty in it: lively dialogue, strong characters and excitement. Glenn Campbell, better known as a singer, appeared in the 1975 film version.



John Wayne in True Grit

More recently, the film **'Conclave'** based on the book of the same name by **Robert Harris** appeared in our cinemas. The book tells of the death of an incumbent Pope and the process followed to elect his successor. The conduct of the characters falls some way short of what might be expected of supposedly devout God fearing people revealing a world that is deeply political. The film version, generally, follows its source pretty closely and was well received by the critics and was nominated for a range of awards including Baftas and Oscars. At the former it was awarded best film of 2025.

Going further back, **'The Reader'** by **Bernhard Schlink** published in 1995 is well worth reading. Written by a judge, it depicts the problems faced by Hanna Schmitz, a former guard at Auschwitz, following the war. It raises difficult moral questions in a very thoughtful way. Made into a film in 2008 it won numerous awards including Academy Award Best Actress in a Leading Role for Kate Winslet. Book and film come together very effectively here.



Ralph Fiennes in Conclave

And now on to an award of a different sort: the Booker Prize, awarded annually to what is considered the best book of the year in English published in the UK and Ireland. From a long list, six books are shortlisted. On the shortlist for 2024 was **'James'** by **Percival Everett**. It didn't win but, in my opinion, should have. The novel takes its idea from **'Huckleberry Finn'** by the great American writer, **Mark Twain**. It is set in the mid 1800s, just before the outbreak of the American Civil War. A lot happens in this book which deals unflinchingly with sensitive issues chief of which is the treatment of black people at a time when slavery was an integral part of the American landscape. It's a book that shows the best and worst of human nature, disturbing and uplifting at the same time. Everett relies quite a lot on chance happenings but that doesn't take away from the overall quality of the book (Thomas Hardy used them a lot). I promise that the pace of the narrative will keep you fully engaged.

And finally **Kate Atkinson's 'Death at the Sign of the Rook'** reaches the high standards we have come to expect from a quality writer though it too is stronger on character than plot.

Get ready!

Chloe Davies

Get Ready for a Spectacular Summer!

As always, Llangwm Events Group have been busy behind the scenes, bringing our community together with exciting events and plenty of fun. Most recently, we hosted a fabulous cowgirl-themed Ladies Day at The Cottage Inn – an unforgettable afternoon filled with amazing entertainment, delicious food, and lots of laughter. A huge thankyou to everyone who joined us!



But now, it's time to look ahead to one of the biggest highlights of our calendar...

Carnival Day 2025 is Coming!

Mark your diaries for Saturday 28th June as we bring the magic of the circus to Llangwm! This year's circus-themed Carnival promises to be our most colourful and fun-filled yet. The celebrations will kick off with a lively parade from The Cottage Inn at 1pm, leading the way to an action-packed afternoon at Pill Parks. Expect a dazzling performance from FF Dancers, a tail-wagging dog show hosted by Greenacres, fantastic local traders in the marquee, inflatable fun, delicious food and drink, and so much more!

Dust off your top hats, paint your clown noses, and get those costumes ready – we can't wait to see the village come alive with circus spirit. Join us for a day to remember!

Keep an eye on our Facebook page event updates.

Learning new skills

Simon Preddy

1st Johnston Cubs and Beavers are always very busy from learning scouting skills to learning home skills, from doing arts and crafts to learning all about disability awareness, from learning all about other countries and their traditions and cultures, to learning all about scouting in other countries - we are always learning new things.

These past few terms our Cubs have been involved in two area competitions – a dodgeball tournament and also a chess and draughts tournament. We are very proud to say that 1st Johnston Cub Pack won the dodgeball tournament and also were joint first winners in the chess tournament.

Our Beaver Colony have seen a lot of new Beavers join us which has brought a lot of new excitement into our group. As we are very youth led and follow a YouShape programme, our Beavers have chosen a lot of their activities which have included celebrating Chinese New Year, learning about health and fitness, learning about disability awareness, going on hikes, to name but a few. The Cubs have also chosen a lot of their activities which have included hikes and home skills where the Cubs learnt how to clean windows, wash up, tidying up, peel vegetables, etc.

Both sections have also started working on our new Scout badge - Earth Skills - and both sections are learning about recycling and preservation/conservation of nature which has been very interesting for everyone involved. This coming term we shall be doing a lot more outdoor activities such as shelter building, learning how to put up a tent, more hikes and of course campfires.

Our Scouts have been busy completing their Emergency Aid Award with the help of St John Ambulance, have entered the world of electronics, enjoying the outdoors through hiking, fire-lighting, wide games and growing our own fruit at the hall. As we move to the summer term we will be getting out even more and Scouts are looking forward to our weekend camp.

Beavers (6 to 8 years): Friday 17.15-18.30

Cubs (8-10 ½ years): Friday 18.45-20.15

Scouts (10 ½ - 14 years): Thursday 18.30-20.30

If you have a young person interested in joining, please complete the form located here (<https://forms.gle/cx1JSbUvtLLQBY8J6>) and we will be in touch.

The man who rescues pigeons

Simon Brick

Llangwm man Simon Brick might be termed a pigeon whisperer. If you find a confused pigeon wearing a ring on its leg in your garden, Simon is your man, as lots of Llangwm residents have discovered. He's been keen on pigeons since the age of 11 when his brother, Darren, brought some home from school and was later given a fantail dove by their dad. Simon takes up the story:

It was a beautiful white bird which really got my attention. I used to go and look at it most days and found myself spending longer and longer doing so. One hot summer's day I went to have a look and could see that the water bowl was empty so I topped it up. The birds buried their heads into it and from that moment I was hooked.



At that time there were quite a few "pigeon fanciers" within the village: Chris Palmer, Timmy and John Brock, Jeremy Brock and Arthur Owens. I spent many a day with all of them and with their help I joined the closest pigeon club, Haverfordwest Homing Society. This was in 1991. By this time I had got some more birds and with the help from my Dad who built me my first loft I was ready to go.

If I'm honest I didn't have much of a clue on the racing side of things, only how I had to care for them. I attended meetings on a Friday night thanks to the

help of Timmy and Jeremy who were very kind to me, buying me drinks etc. Six pints of lager on a Friday at 14 years old was comical when I look back.

At the meetings I always paid attention to all the advice that I was given - I used to go home and write little notes in my diary and would often go back over them. In 1992 I bred around 20 young birds in the hope that I would be able to race them later on in the year. I paired them up around the start of February and after 10 days the hen bird lays her first egg, two days later the second egg is laid. Both the cock and hen bird incubate the eggs for a period of 21 days, then there's the excitement of them hatching.

A young bird, also known as a "squeaker" or "squab" takes 25 days to be fully grown. In that time, they are totally dependent on the parents but this is also a very important time for me to build up a relationship with them. This would consist of me talking to them, and giving them treats such as linseed and peanuts. At seven days old they have a ring put on their leg which is then on for life. That ring is registered under my name with the Welsh Homing Pigeon Union. When the youngsters are starting to feed themselves it's time for them to go in their own section and this is when the training begins.

Pigeon racing is all about routine. They like going out for exercise at the same time and food at the same time. Once they start leaving the vicinity on exercise this is when I start basket training them. I heavily relied on my Dad to help with the training side of things as I couldn't drive. Dad was a very busy man and continues to be so, so we would go off training when he was able.

The route my birds fly is from east to west. My first training 'toss' would be from Carew then we would gradually increase the distance. Kilgetty, Red Roses, St Clears, Carmarthen and so on.

We had some good training tosses and some not so good. The peregrine falcons were and still are a huge problem for us pigeon fanciers, along with the sparrow hawk and goshawks. I can remember vividly the first time I saw the peregrine kill one of my birds, something I didn't forget for a long time. Pigeons can also get lost so I'm not blaming all the losses on birds of prey.

In July I was ready for my first race from Llanharan, a distance of 67 miles and of the initial 20 I bred I still had 12 to take part. We would meet up at a shed by the racecourse in Haverfordwest where the birds would have their rubbers put on their leg with numbers on the

inside and outside. My Mum was a great help with this and still enjoys watching my birds exercising from across the water in Guilford.

My job on a Friday would be to help clean the crates, something I really enjoyed as a lot of the older members would pay me compliments on the job I had done. Once all the birds were marked the lorry would then pick them up and off they would go to the race point. Later that night we would go to the pigeon club to set our clocks and have a chat about the following days' weather and wind direction. Wind direction was very important. If it was an easterly wind, this would help the birds and they could reach speeds of up to 70 mph! If it was a westerly wind this would slow the birds right down to around 40 mph.

I could barely sleep on a Friday as I was that excited. Saturday couldn't come soon enough.

In those days when the birds were liberated there would be a recorded telephone message from the race controller letting you know what time they were let go. Little did I know at the time that this was a premium rate number but I couldn't stop myself phoning the number hoping that the message had been updated.

My first race is something I will never forget and watching the birds like dots in the sky coming back home to see me and the love of their loft. I didn't really do that well to start with but kept plugging away. At the end of the season I managed to gain third place and a few other minor cards.

A result is worked out with a velocity: mileage divided by the time taken and that gives you a yards per minute velocity. I still feel very proud of my achievement and can even remember the ring number of the bird: WHU which means "Welsh Homing Union" 92 D1088.

Over the next few years I still kept them and raced when I was able but in 1996 things changed as I passed my driving test. I decided that I really wanted to compete with the top flyers in the county but to do this I had to commit and stick to my routine. I would get up around 5.30 am to exercise them before going to work. I also spent a lot of time reading articles on feeding and racing systems.

With me now being able to take my birds on regular training tosses and being able to afford more things, my first win was inevitable. That young bird season I really got stuck in and trained them hard for several weeks.

The first race of the season was Newport (82 miles) where I gained 2nd in the club. I kept my system going and three weeks later from Marlborough, 138 miles, I hit the jackpot. I was so proud. I phoned Mum straight away to tell her as I knew she was hoping for me to do

well. The following week I won again and that was the start of my continued success.

Fast forward to 2025 and I have been the top flyer in Haverfordwest Hs for the past 16 years. I am also in the top three in Pembrokeshire with last season being a cracker. I average 17 firsts out of 23 races a year which takes a lot of commitment and a very understanding wife and children. I fly in partnership with my friend of many years Martyn Rudd (Brick and Rudd). Last year I was also helped massively by Martin Bassett due to my work commitments. My biggest achievement was clocking a bird from Kinsweiler, Germany, a distance of 500 miles, to Llangwm: a dream come true.



*Found in a Llangwm back garden - and rescued by Simon.
(Thanks to Michaela Sheppard)*

Things have progressed massively in the sport with the most expensive pigeon being sold for £1.2 million - named "Better than Bolt". I have just started a Facebook page called Pembrokeshire Pigeons in which I write articles about the winners of the races on a weekly basis. I'm also trying to promote the sport which has been rapidly declining with no youngsters starting the hobby.

On a closing note, I don't think we have long left in the sport in Pembrokeshire due to the now massive numbers of birds of prey and declining numbers of members. However, I still have the same buzz as I did 35 years ago and will continue to do so. Pigeon racing has taught me to look after something and to this day gives me such pleasure as a brilliant hobby.

Keep an eye out in the sky and see if you can spot my birds.

*Simon says he's happy to answer questions:
simon.brick77@hotmail.com or WhatsApp: 07930562974*

Cream teas & craft & looking forward to Christmas

Debbi Lawson-Earley

Well spring has definitely sprung, birds are busily gathering nest materials, bees are buzzing from early flowers gathering their sweet nectar and lambs are gamboling happily in the fields! As we enter May we have been blessed with some beautiful weather, if but a little hot on some days with longer evenings as summer approaches. Let's hope we enjoy a lovely summer this year.

Over the winter, St Jerome's hosted three "Bacon Butty" events in the Village Hall, and as usual, they were very well supported and everyone enjoyed their "Butties" along with a great variety of delicious cakes. Apparently, the aroma of cooking bacon carried for a long distance, inviting everyone in!

Huge congratulations to team Cruising Free Atlantic Row 2025 – Polly, Miyah, Sophie and Janine – who successfully completed the Atlantic Dash. A fantastic well done to you all on this amazing achievement and setting records!!! They rowed the Atlantic for the charities, @cftrustuk, @emilysentourage and @paulsartorifoundation.

We also have a box in the Church porch for anyone wishing to donate non-perishable food items to Patch.

SUNDAY SERVICES

Morning Prayer at 9.00am – First Sunday of the month

Parish Eucharist at 9.00am – Second Sunday of the month

St Jerome's All Age Communion Service at 10.00am – always the Third Sunday of the month

Parish Eucharist at 9.00am – Fourth Sunday of the month

If there is a Fifth Sunday in a month, a Sunday Service is held in either St Jerome's Llangwm, St Peter's Johnston or St Justinian's Freystrop. Details of which venue will be on the church noticeboard.

MIDWEEK EUCHARIST SERVICE – Held on a Wednesday at 9.00am

THURSDAY MORNING ZOOM PRAYER IS AT 9.30AM – Contact Revd Canon Marcus Zipperlen for details.

PARISH FACEBOOK PAGE: <https://www.facebook.com/Llangwm-Johnston-Freystrop-Churches-357399061488084>

Contact Details:- Revd Canon J Marcus Zipperlen, The Rectory, Four Winds, Llangwm, Pembrokeshire SA62 4NG **Tel No**:- 01437 899548

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Afternoon Cream Teas

As we approach the summer, we will be hosting our "Afternoon Cream Teas" and we recommend that you put the following dates in your dairy, so that you remember to come and enjoy lovely food and a great social gathering. Price £5.

Saturday 17th May – from 2.00pm until 4.00pm

Saturday 21st June – from 2.00pm until 4.00pm

Saturday 19th July – from 2.00pm until 4.00pm

Craft Fair

There will be a Craft Fair on Bank Holiday Monday, 26th May, in the Village Hall from 11.00am until 3.30pm. Stalls will include ceramics, jewellery, wooden items and many more varieties of crafts for sale. Entry is free and refreshments will be available. We look forward to seeing you there.

This covers the summer activities.

The winter activities are being planned with more interesting and varied activities to be announced in due course. A heads up on a couple of them in December: A Christmas Tree Festival in St Jerome's from Friday 12th – Monday 15th. Then, St Jerome's Christmas Carols with Village Voices on Tuesday 16th December at 7.30pm. As always please check the church noticeboard for any information and details.

Revd Canon Marcus Zipperlen and all the St Jerome's congregation wish you a peaceful summer.

Galilee Baptist Chapel

Worship & events

Margaret Brace

Easter service took place on 20 March, with Nigel Thomas in the pulpit and Margaret Davies at the organ. Many thanks to Eleanor Roberts for the attractive floral arrangement.

Services will next be held on 18th May, 1st and 15th June, and ongoing.

While Galilee Baptist Chapel continues to be used fortnightly on Sundays as a place of worship it is also being used as a venue for occasional community events.

In August, for the second year running, the Friday evening concert of the Llangwm Literary Festival will be held at Galilee (8 Aug). It will feature a highly respected singer/songwriter of the folk scene, Boo Hewardine, with Yvonne Lyon. Tickets will be available closer to the time through the Llangwm LitFest website.



County Council Report

Cllr Michael John

Review of Town & Community Councils in Pembrokeshire

In the last issue I reported on the Democracy and Boundary Commission for Wales draft proposals to **abolish Freystrop, Hook and Llangwm Community Councils and replace with 1 larger new council covering the 3 villages.**

Following strong opposition from all three community councils and others, this was rejected and is not in their final recommendations. There could though be a reduction in the number of councillors. Full details can be found here, including all submitted objections:

<https://www.dbcc.gov.wales/reviews/01-25/pembrokeshire-community-review-final-recommendations>

It is now for Welsh Government and its Ministers to decide how to proceed.

Planning application-The Kilns

The application by ATEB for 67 affordable properties was conditionally approved by the PCC planning committee members at their meeting on the 18th February. This followed a deferral at the January 14th meeting for a site meeting which took place on the 12th February. The merits of the scheme were debated at length at both meetings with concerns being raised over the scale and the impact on services. ATEB have confirmed there will be a local letting policy for the site, and this will need to be developed and agreed locally.

Works on the 1st phase are due to start this May.

Full details of the application can be found at:

<https://planning.agileapplications.co.uk/pembrokeshire/application-details/41340>

PCC has launched a school transport policy consultation.

Views are being sought from the public on this policy as part of a wide review of school transport. The Council currently provides transport to more than 4500 school & college students daily, at a cost of over £8 million per year. There are no firm proposals for change to the policy at this time, but financial pressures and driver shortages mean changes to the policy will be needed to ensure it is to be both deliverable and affordable. Post 16 transport is not statutory and your views will help to shape future provision. Any changes to the policy following the review will apply from September 2026.

Please complete the survey by Sunday 18th May 2025:



<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/have-your-say/school-transport-policy-consultation>

Streetlights PCC has had a policy for some time to remove "non-compliant" lights in the county when they are identified as defective. This has been extended more recently as part of efficiency saving measures. The location is assessed before deciding if it should be repaired or removed. These lights are usually in rural areas, and I continue to challenge their removal when it appears safety or security would be compromised. I have asked that the policy is reviewed to make it more clear in rural areas.

Thank you to those who have contacted me over this issue.

Recent Joint Patrol

Thanks to PCSO Adam Thomas for his latest joint patrol of the Freystrop, Hook and Llangwm areas. We visited areas of regular complaints over speeding, parking and other more general issues around the villages, and it was a very useful afternoon. For any non-urgent policing issues please call 101.

 **Milford Haven and Neyland Police** ***
8th - 6
PCSO Adam has been out with County Councillor Mike John who looks after the Llangwm area. They have patrolled the village today meeting with members of the public. Thank you Mike for patrolling with Adam today




The Cleddau Project Group.

This is a group set up due to concerns over the poor state of the Cleddau which is one of the worst polluted rivers in Wales. Its aims **"to provide a coordinated, strategic approach to improving the Cleddau from source to sea, returning the tributaries, brooks, rivers and estuary to good health for the benefit of nature,**

the community and future generations".

On the 21st March I attended a meeting at Haverfordwest Rugby Club arranged by the Group and hosted by Henry Tufnell MP. Around 200 people attended with experts answering questions on the reasons for the decline and what is needed to improve the river. Further information on the Cleddau Project can be found at www.thecleddauproject.org.uk

Eisteddfod y Garreg Las

In August 2026 the Eisteddfod will return to Pembrokeshire for the first time in almost 25 years. It will take place between 1st and 8th August 2026, but the process of organising and working with local communities has already started.

On the 3rd April I attended an event at Caer Ellen School, which was an opportunity to hear more about the Eisteddfod, and how communities can host cultural activities across the county. Also how to contribute locally to the event.

Although the Eisteddfod is a Welsh language festival, there are opportunities for everyone in Pembrokeshire, including non-Welsh speakers to be involved.

If anyone is interested in being part of a local committee to arrange any events, please let me know and I can pass on the details. <https://eisteddfod.wales/festival/2026>

Council Meetings: Did you know all committee meetings at PCC are livestreamed and available to watch via replay. Full details can be found here: <https://pembrokeshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Also there are several ways for the public to engage with either full council or one of the Overview and Scrutiny committees. Details can be found here: <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/how-to-get-involved>

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If you have any queries or questions regarding any topics, please do not hesitate to get in touch. I am always happy to meet or discuss issues and can be contacted on 01437 890175 or cllr.michael.john@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

You can also contact PCC direct on 01437 764551 or - <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/resident>

Your questions answered

Debbie Hanney

What is the role of the community council?

Llangwm Community Council exists, first and foremost, to serve the people of Llangwm. It's a grassroots organisation with individuals either elected or co-opted to represent the views and needs of residents and to be the voice of our village in discussions with Pembrokeshire County Council. The community council advocates for funding, infrastructure, and resources we need to maintain and enhance our community's quality of life. It addresses everything from road safety and maintenance to planning applications, environmental concerns, and local events. Importantly, the community council also acts as a custodian of Llangwm's distinct character, aiming to preserve the aspects that make our community unique while giving careful consideration to new developments that may benefit everyone.

Why it matters

The community council aims to ensure that Llangwm has a voice in broader decisions. Without a council actively advocating on Llangwm's behalf, it's easy for local issues to be sidelined, leading to slow responses to issues and potentially long-term neglect. Having a council means that we have dedicated individuals keeping a close eye on matters that directly impact us all and addressing them with a proactive, locally focussed approach.

Larger town councils may be subject to divisive political agendas, our community council is focussed on pragmatic community driven action. This grassroots approach allows for a more direct democracy; residents regularly attend meetings, share their views and have genuine influence over decisions. This dynamic also fosters a sense of unity and responsibility. If you feel you would like to be involved please contact the Community Council Clerk Debbie Hanney on 07538773873 or clerk@llangwm-cc.gov.uk.

Llangwm Community Council have recently been involved with the planning application that Ateb recently submitted to Pembrokeshire County Council for the new housing development at The Kilns. Cllr Childs, Cllr John and Mr R Jones from Gail Rise represented the interests of Llangwm community at the planning meeting; they discussed issues such as infrastructure, highways, schooling and water drainage and sewerage concerns prior to the application being passed. The Community Council will continue to work with Ateb to ensure that the residents of Llangwm are kept informed as the development progresses. An Ateb representative will attend Community Council meetings on a bi-monthly basis.

The Community Council are also working in partnership with the History Society to recognise the historical significance of place names in the village. Llangwm History Society are establishing local Historical Trails and Information Boards and the Councillors agreed to support and assist with funding for the project.

How not to persuade

A Llangwm councillor has described long-standing plans to build 67 affordable homes on the outskirts of the village as "a masterclass in how not to get people onside".

Cllr Barry Childs told a planning meeting earlier this year that it was important that big changes such as this should be handled sensitively and sympathetically with all those involved consulted at every stage – but this wasn't what had happened.

The plans by the housing group Ateb have now been conditionally approved despite concerns by Llangwm Community Council and Cleddau Reach school. Outline planning permission had already been secured for the first phase of the development for 25 dwellings.

Cllr Childs told the meeting that after Ateb bought the land, the Croft field, a well-attended public meeting was held in the Village Hall in February last year at which objections by a wide range of local people were put forward. But no attempt had been made over the following 12 months by Ateb to contact the community council or the community at large until a few days before the planning meeting in February this year.

Ateb had then emailed the council promising to liaise closely but, said Cllr Childs "judged on past evidence we are not optimistic".

He continued : "Democracy in this instance has not been well served. Llangwm, the community I'm proud to represent, deserves much better."

He said nothing had been done to address issues of balance, density, aesthetics and infrastructure.

Objections by the community council had concerned issues such as sewerage system capacity, a lack of facilities in the village and the school and possible traffic congestion.

Cleddau Reach school had raised health and safety concerns regarding traffic and parking around the school, and whether the necessary checks would be in place regarding site staff working near a school.

Ateb have confirmed there will be a local letting policy in place and work is due to start on the first phase in May (see Cllr Michael John's County Council report on page 16 and Community Council report this page).

Grant pays for improvements

Victoria Owens



Llangwm Village Hall has recently benefitted from the 'Creating Connections' grant. As Trustees, our focus this year has been on refurbishing the hall as a valued venue for community events and a meeting place for community groups.

Hall improvements

We are now pleased to report that the roof, guttering and drainage has had an overhaul, and the outside of the hall has had a fresh lick of paint. The kitchen has also had a facelift, plus a new electric oven and hob. The Creating Connections Fund grant has enabled the purchase of new tables with a trolley plus a range of chairs so ensuring the hall's equipment is user friendly and accessible for all. We are currently looking into a range of storage solutions to maximise the space inside the hall and focussing on internal improvements.

Hall use

The Community Café continues to go from strength to strength offering a cozy gathering spot where everyone can connect while having a hot cuppa and a slice of cake. Likewise, the Cuppa & Craft group also continue to meet on Wednesday afternoons.

Community Café – Tuesdays 10.30am – 1pm

Cuppa & Craft – Wednesdays 2pm – 4pm (£2 charge)

The St David's Day Celebration was a successful fundraising event which created a warm, joyful atmosphere enjoyed by everyone, offering delicious traditional cakes, raffle and a lovespoon competition.

The Spring Market has been well supported by stallholders, volunteers and those joining us on the day, making this fixture an important fundraiser for our village hall. A huge thanks to everyone involved and of course to Sue for making it happen. The next market will be in the autumn with plans shared nearer the time.



Trustees and volunteers will be serving cream teas in the hall on Carnival day on Saturday 28th June

All of these events would not have been possible were it not for the willingness of volunteers. The Trustees would like to thank all the volunteers for their hard work and for giving freely of their time. As always, we are on the lookout for more volunteers to help organise fundraising events and suggest ideas for future events. A wide range of skills and experience is needed. If you're keen to help on a voluntary basis, we'd love to hear from you via our email: info@llangwmvillagehall.co.uk

Of course, the hall has played host to a variety of other events and groups - from providing a venue for morris dancing sessions to choir practice. The hall offers a warm, welcoming meeting space for established groups and new groups just starting out as well as birthday parties, social gatherings and fundraising events. If you would like to book the hall, please contact us on the email above or call 07539864330.

Current hall charges:

£20 per session - morning/afternoon/evening

Session times:

9.30am – 1.30pm

2pm – 6pm

6.30pm – 10.30pm

Llangwm Village Hall AGM

Our AGM was held on 7th of April and in accordance with our Trust Deed, all trustees were required to step down and an appointment process held.

The Village Hall Trustees:

Neil Sandford (Chair)

Sue Edwards (Vice Chair & Treasurer)

Victoria Owens (Secretary)

Hazel Thompson

Barry Childs

Sara Saies

Matthew Evans

Michael John

As always, we are on the lookout for new trustees, if you would like to find out more about what being a trustee entails, please send us an email.

Mr Neville Lewis

The Trustees would like to pay tribute to a much loved and respected member of our community the late Mr Neville Lewis who was knowledgeable, straight talking and quick witted with an irrepressible sense of humour; he will be missed by so many of us.

If you would like to raise any concerns or have any suggestions please contact us on the email above. Please see the Llangwm Village Hall Facebook page for more details of specific events.

Check your moorings & watch out for thieves!

Chris Thomas

Spring has brought the start of our boating year with a beautiful spell of fine, warm weather when boat maintenance was a pleasure. The picture shows Dale Sailing's barge visiting Llangwm Reach in March to service the moorings of members who signed up to their package deal.



Members are reminded to check and service their moorings, especially those they inherited and where the provenance of the mooring is not known. In this winter's storms, two local vessels visited the mud on the far shore.

Milford Haven Port Authority has notified Llangwm Boating Club that it will make its annual inspection of the moorings. The committee will be identifying all unused and unlicensed moorings at the end of May. Dale Sailing has offered to remove unlicensed moorings and keep the tackle in lieu of payment. At the time of writing, 48 members had met the deadline to renew their licence and pay subscription fees. Those people who have not yet renewed their mooring will now have to re-apply for a licence. The necessary forms can be obtained from the Mooring Officer Bog Tyler (llangwm.boat.club@gmail.com).

Reports have been received from other parts of the Haven about a series of thefts from boats and boat compounds. Members are advised to be vigilant and keep their gear safe.

This season is marked by a minor waypoint. Llangwm Boating Club has filled its latest account book, which was started in 1983. The club has a number of books listing club accounts since its inception. They are a fascinating record of club activity and village history. Membership in 1983 was £1.50. This was before the extra payment to the Crown Estates was imposed in 2012. In 2025, the cost of a year's membership, discounting the sum required to be passed to the Crown Estates, amounts to four pints of beer - good value by any measure.

We have been asked to urge slipway users to keep the slipway clear when they are not launching boats. Please park your car and trailer in the carpark. Some visitors have been leaving vehicles around the top of the slipway. This limits or prevents others from manoeuvring trailers and could stop them from launching at all.



Finally, a note about an abandoned boat Zezy that has appeared at Edwards Pill, as shown in the photograph. Milford Haven Port Authority has responsibility for removing abandoned vessels under 6.3 metres. Anyone affected should contact the Port Authority.

Happy and safe sailing to all on the water this summer.

Success & lots more members

Bill Muldrew

The club, having had a very successful 2024 season in which we won the Southern League, had a busy winter, training in preparation for the 2025 season which commenced on 12th April with the Wreck Race at Milford hosted by Pembrokeshire Yacht Club. Another very successful start with four boats entered in the Mixed team category. Our boats finished 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 6th with the race won overall by the 1st team.



LLRC 1st team - overall winners

However, it wasn't all training, and the club enjoyed many social rows and events with other clubs participating e.g. a trip to Llys Y Fran and a combined row with South Wales Rowing Club to Neyland. We look forward to our next challenge at Aberystwyth and competing in the Welsh Sea Rowing league competitions held around Wales Coasts in the coming season whilst enjoying our social rowing and training on the Cleddau.

Membership of the club has increased significantly with more rowers from the village joining and plans to have a junior section with village children once we have coaches available.

As always, we rely on the support and sponsorship help with our ongoing costs in maintaining equipment, boats and storage. The Llangwm Regatta is scheduled to take place on Sunday 3rd August, and we look forward to welcoming everyone, participants and spectators to enjoy the day with us.

Bill Muldrew, LLRC Secretary

A rightly proud pride of Lions

Mike Preddy



Another season comes to a close, with Llangwm Lions growing to seven teams covering U6, U7, U8, U10 & U14.



A superb effort by all the coaches and their wonderful players.



What a fantastic season!



A warm welcome for the Ladies

Sara Jeffrey

January saw the inaugural game of Llangwm Ladies' cricket after a break of many years, as we entered the Pembrokeshire Ladies' indoor league. Matches were played at the Community Hub in Neyland. Training took place at Cleddau Reach School under coach Toby Asson and the experienced eyes of captain Pam Asson and Zoe Brick. Training was well attended and the ladies hit the ground running and performed admirably, given it was the first time they had played together as a team, and the majority of the players had little previous experience. The ladies received a warm welcome from the other teams and from the league organisers.

Ladies training continues and team kit is being sourced, as we prepare to move outdoors into Pembrokeshire Ladies division II. If anyone would like to support the ladies with a financial contribution to help with the kit, please do contact Toby Asson at tobyja98@gmail.com

It's all hands on deck at Pill Parks, as club members work to prepare the ground for the coming season. Storm Darragh destroyed the boundary fencing and signage up at Pill Parks and work is underway to replace these, ready for the start of the season in a couple of weeks' time.

The committee voted unanimously at the AGM to award Martyn Inward life membership of the club, in recognition of his years of service as player and groundsman. Life membership was also awarded to Mark Davies for the many years he has played for and served the club. We are so fortunate to have such a wide circle of knowledgeable supporters, who step forward again and again to keep the club running, growing and prospering.

The junior section, which was re-established last season, is growing this year with the addition of Dynamos training for 9 – 11 year olds, as well as All Stars training for 6 - 8 year olds and now an under 9's team too! To enrol your budding cricketer, the link is [Clubspark / Dynamos / Coaching / Course](https://clubspark.uk/AllStars/llangwm/Course/f56c99b3-5b71-4aca-8c42-a1b95ba6c569) for Dynamos and <https://clubspark.uk/AllStars/llangwm/Course/f56c99b3-5b71-4aca-8c42-a1b95ba6c569> for All Stars. Our first juniors session is at Pill Parks at 6.00p.m. on Wednesday 14th May.

Both men's teams have been busy practising for the coming season, with nets sessions over the past weeks. We are looking forward to welcoming back some old hands this season and the mood is optimistic. The first team will be competing in the Pembrokeshire 1st

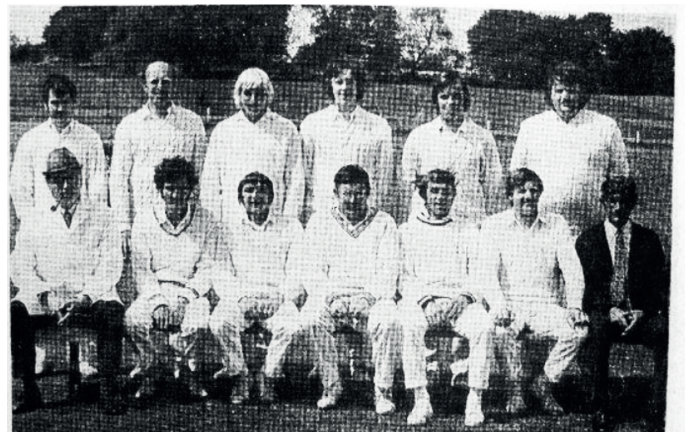
Division and the second team in Division 4. There will also be cup and bowl excitement with the Harrison Allen, D.R. Morris and Alec Colley competitions.



Llangwm's first away game of the season v Haverfordwest

This year's LCC fixture booklet will soon be available, and will contain details of the ladies' league matches, as well as those of our first and second men's teams. I will be leaving a few copies up at the village hall for circulation at the Community Café. We are hoping to welcome many villagers up at Pill Parks this season. Do try to make it to at least one match, it really is a lovely way to spend a Saturday afternoon or a Tuesday evening.

Llangwm cricket, 1970's style



The Llangwm local history site has all sorts of sporting treasures. This one, going back to the 1970s, was recently added and might well spark a few memories: *Standing (from left): Terry Lewis, Tony Kiff, Robert Slark, Michael Dickman, Tony Tuckwell, Brian Bevan. Seated: Former Pembrokeshire skipper Mr Len Barrahan (umpire), Roderick England, Peter Rees, Barry Jones (captain), Ronnie Adams, Colin Phillips, Mr Randall Lewis (scorer):* www.llangwmlocalhistorysociety.org.uk

Happy 140th birthday (almost!)

Dan Chesmer

As the 2024/25 rugby season draws to a close Llangwm RFC would like to say a massive thank you to all of our sponsors, members, coaches and supporters for enabling our Rugby club to continue to build on its strong foundations and complete our 139th season as Llangwm rugby club. The sponsorship and support that we receive make it possible to maintain ten rugby teams throughout the club from Under Sevens to Seniors. With over 200 players currently registered and numerous volunteers this is a great achievement for a small village club.



Llangwm flying high vs Pembroke Dock Quins

The senior coaching team of Matthew Hughes, Gethin Thomas, Jordan Evans and James Lewis have worked tirelessly this season to ensure that the squad completed 21 fixtures in total. Although results did not always go our way the progression and heart were clear to see for those watching and we will continue to build on the positives for next season. With nine previous youth team players involved this season and some new signings the squad will be working hard to try and turn those results into wins next season.

The Llangwm youth team has been an essential part of the club for the past four years and we thank all involved for their time, effort and support. The youth team have performed well this season finishing 7th in the league with three wins and some very close games.

Jon Rowles and his coaching team deserve praise for building a strong squad of players who have enjoyed their rugby and improved all season. The recent U17s

performance in the Mike Fry Cup shows that we will continue to enjoy our youth rugby at the club next season.

The rugby club would like to say thank you to all of those involved in the playing and coaching side who make the time to support our village club. We have excellent support from our loyal sponsors and club members who continue to allow Llangwm RFC to grow and prosper and we would like to say thank you for your continued support.

Our Mini and Junior section continue to grow and have become a real force and often compete with the best in the county. Our U13s played in the Pembrokeshire Rugby Final on the 30th April - and won 29-10 against Narberth. It is great to see new players joining our junior section who want to be involved in a friendly and respectful club.



Llangwm RFC Youth XV

The 2025/2026 season will see Llangwm Rugby Club celebrate its 140-year anniversary which is a fantastic achievement for everyone involved over the years. We are planning a couple of events during the season to mark this milestone and hope that sponsors and members will join us to celebrate in true Llangwm style. Our AGM will be on 11th August at 7pm.

As a volunteer run rugby club we are always looking for people to join our small team of volunteers and committee. If you are able to help out on a Saturday or during the week then we would love to hear from you so please get in touch

Young Wasps are winners!

Rhiannon James

The 2024/25 rugby season is now nearing its end, with all matrix fixtures done and dusted. The weather has been largely on our side this season and our eight minis and junior teams have enjoyed playing matches against teams from across the county, with all age groups doing the club and village proud and proving that Llangwm continues to punch above its weight with notable results against bigger clubs.

The minis teams all enjoyed playing in the county festivals of rugby held in Haverfordwest, showcasing the talent and enthusiasm of our young players. The U12s, U13s and U16s took part in the district knockout cup competition, with the U13s making it to the plate final. In the final against Narberth on Wednesday, April 30th they won 29-10!

The plate final marked the end of a successful season for the U13s, who have only lost a handful of matches this year and recently travelled to Devon for a rugby tour, where they played teams from all over the country and won the Devon cup! The young Wasps played nine games and came home with a fantastic record of won seven, drew one and lost one and they only conceded one try on the second day of the tournament. Needless to say there were plenty of celebrations and the whole squad and their families had a brilliant weekend and represented Llangwm with pride.



Llangwm U13s winning the Devon Cup

Our U9s and U10s have had the honour of representing Llangwm at Parc y Scarlets during the season, playing at half time during Scarlets matches. The boys and girls all had a great time and didn't let the big occasion affect their game, coming away with wins in front of the big crowds!

We are very proud to have had players representing Llangwm on the big stage this season, with U11s players Ollie and Jayden part of the county schools

team who have won through to the final of the Welsh bowl competition. Both boys have performed very impressively in county colours, bagging plenty of tries along the way. Very best of luck in the final boys!

Our U16s Llangwm stalwarts Manny Davies and Iestyn Preddy also played for the Pembrokeshire U16s county team earlier in the season. The boys helped the team win the Cleddyf Glyndwr (Glyndwr Sword) for winning the regional block of the Dewar Shield competition - winning every game – before being narrowly beaten in the quarter finals.



Llangwm U9s enjoying their day out at the Scarlets

We will be sad to say goodbye to our U16s at the end of this season as they move into youth rugby. Lots of the boys have been with Llangwm since the early days of tag rugby as U7s and they have all grown into fine ambassadors for Llangwm Rugby Club and good role models for our younger players with their determination, perseverance and enthusiasm for rugby and the mighty Wasps. Thanks also to the parents and coaches, especially Simon and Marc, who have been the driving force behind the boys for so long.

Some of the minis teams are looking forward to ending the season with rugby fun at festivals across Wales and the annual presentation nights will be held in the clubhouse during May, when we will recognise the efforts of all the players over the season and thank the army of coaches, team managers, parents and supporters who make Llangwm the special club that it is.

New players are always welcome to join, any time in the season. No experience necessary, just a desire to have fun and make friends. Head to our Facebook page to find out more. Keep an eye out on our Facebook and Instagram pages to find out when training will restart ready for the next season in September!

Love them or hate them.....

Graham Brace

I have no doubt that from time to time most of our readers in the Llangwm area will have seen one or more grey squirrels in their gardens. I seem to have two or three permanently resident. The grey squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) is loved by most as a cute, amusing creature and detested by some as unwelcome, bushy-tailed vermin.

The grey squirrel is classified as an invasive non-native species. They were first introduced to England from North America in 1876 as an ornamental species to populate the grounds of stately homes. In 1930, after further subsequent introductions, it was made illegal to release a grey squirrel to the wild when the widespread damage it caused to woodlands was recognised. Furthermore, it was also established that they were driving our smaller native red squirrel to extinction by out-competing them for food and spreading the squirrel pox virus - to which it is immune - to the red squirrel.



Acrobat squirrel (Rita Miles)

Nowadays, it is one of our most familiar mammals and can be found in woods, gardens and parks in towns and countryside throughout the UK. It can be quite tame particularly in gardens where it is well-nourished by bird feeders and tables. I recall many years ago walking daily through Highgate Woods in London to the tube station, virtually tripping over them...they were so tame as a result of being hand fed by local residents. Generally, grey squirrels feed on hazel nuts which they

will cache in autumn – often in holes dug in your lawn. They also nibble pine cones and I have watched them eating windfall crab apples in our garden. Their rough nest (called a drey) is fashioned from leaves, twigs and strips of bark built high up in the tree canopy. Female grey squirrels can have two litters of three or four ‘kittens’ a year.

I have mixed feelings about grey squirrels. I can’t deny that I enjoy watching their antics in the garden...the intrepid way they perform quite breathtaking acrobatics to access bird feeders. I admire their cunning ingenuity and I find their cheeky demeanour appealing. However, I am very conscious of the very significant damage that they cause in both the countryside and garden. They strip bark from trees often causing the tree to die or severely weaken, reducing the value of the timber and impacting other wildlife. They can damage maize and fruit crops and they are a threat to orchards and market gardens. They will raid the nests of song birds, stealing and eating the eggs and chicks. In the garden they will damage plants by eating them, dig up bulbs and decimate the contents of bird feeders. They have been known to enter homes and roof voids causing damage to domestic items and telephone and electric wiring.

We once had the rubber tube connecting our gas bottles to the house chewed causing gas to escape. Needless to say, the tubes are now well protected.

Would you believe that the stripping of tree bark by grey squirrels costs the UK timber industry around £14 million per year? A survey by the Forestry Commission back in 2000 estimated that 100% of sycamore, 66% of beech, 30% of oak and sweet chestnut stands had been damaged by grey squirrels.

So, love them or loathe them, apart from being innocent looking, cuddly, acrobatic entertainers should they, realistically, be considered a pariah in our back gardens and a scourge on our natural environment?

Once again, my thanks to Rita Miles for her superb photographs taken in her Hook garden.

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