



Additional copies available from Abbey Gate Stores and Longford Stores or the Editor, Cllr Sarah Elias
Copïau ychwanegol ar gael o Siop y Gât, Mynachlog Nedd a Siop Rhydhir neu'r Golygydd, Cyng. Sarah Elias
92 The Highlands Neath Abbey, SA10 6PD. E-mail: sarahmelias@yahoo.co.uk

To include local interest items please contact the Editor or your local Councillor
Er mwyn cynnwys eitemau o ddiddordeb lleol cysylltwch â'r Golygydd neu'ch Cynghorwr lleol

Message from the Chairman

It gives me great pleasure in presenting this latest edition of Ymlaen the official newspaper of Dyffryn Clydach Community Council. Last May saw the election of new Councillors to the local Community Council. While we welcome this influx of new blood we thank those longstanding and committed councillors, who for different reasons, did not stand in the last election. Each one made a personal sacrifice and contribution to enhance and support community life in the area. We look forward to working with new members in the hope that their efforts will be of benefit to all.

We welcome Cllr Sarah Elias as the new editor and co-ordinator of Ymlaen and we wish her every success in her new role. We thank the previous editor, Alyson Thomas for her stern efforts in preparing numerous interesting issues in the past. We wish her well.

There are numerous exciting projects planned for the area and we will keep you informed as they develop. Our main objective over the next 5 years is to create natural areas to attract wildlife.

Best wishes

Cllr Martyn Peters



Neges gan y Cadeirydd

Mae'n bleser gen i gyflwyno'r rhifyn diweddaraf hwn o 'Ymlaen', cylch-lythyr swyddogol Cyngor Cymuned Dyffryn Clydach. Y mis Mai diwethaf etholwyd Cynghorwyr newydd i'r Cyngor Cymuned lleol. Er ein bod yn croesawu'r chwystrelliad hwn o waed newydd yr ydym yn diolch i'r cynghorwyr ymroddedig hynny, sydd am wahanol resymau, wedi peidio sefyll yn yr etholiad diwethaf. Mae pob un wedi gwneud aberth a chyfraniad personol er mwyn gwella a hyrwyddo bywyd cymunedol yr ardal. Rydym yn edrych ymlaen at weithio gyda'r aelodau newydd yn y gobaith y bydd eu hymdrechion o fudd i bawb.

Rydym yn croesawu'r Cyngorwyr Sarah Elias fel golygydd newydd a chydlynnydd 'Ymlaen' a dymunwn bob llwyddiant iddi yn ei rôl newydd. Rydym yn diolch i'r golygydd blaenorol, Alyson Thomas, am ei hymdrechion clodwiw wrth baratoi nifer o rifynnau diddorol yn y gorffennol. Dymunwn yn dda iddi.

Mae yna nifer o brosiectau cyffrous ar gyfer yr ardal a byddwn yn rhoi gwybod i chi wrth iddynt ddatblygu. Ein prif ffordd yw creu ardaloedd naturiol i ddenu bywyd gwyllt.

Y Cyng. Martyn Peters

Election Results Canlyniadau 2017

County Borough Council Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

1	Martyn Peters	PC	826
2	Debbie Harvey	Lab	299

Community Council Cyngor Cymuned

1	Martyn Peters	PC	826
2	Jennifer Davies	PC	565
3	Sarah Elias	PC	532
4	Karon Hopkins	PC	524
5	Paul Jarrett	PC	523
6	Harry Thomas	PC	520
7	Gwyn Edwards	PC	515
8	Geraint Morgan	PC	513
9	Jennifer Phillips	PC	512
10	Taryn Kristel	PC	510
11	Pat Kriescher	PC	507
12	Lynda Lester	PC	502
13	Philip Jenkins	PC	501

Elected

14	Debbie Harvey	Lab	410
15	Mike Harvey	Lab	361
16	John Mallon	Lab	307
17	Peter Davies	Lab	298
18	John Thomas	Lab	242

Unsuccessful

Editor's Note

Golygyddol

This is my first time taking editorial control of 'Ymlaen'. I have of course, read and enjoyed it over the years, in particular the Christmas edition last year with the colourful reindeer cover. I am now part of your local Community Council and enjoying the work involved. If you would like to contribute any local news or articles that are relevant to the newsletter please get in touch with myself or any other local Councillor. I hope you enjoy this issue and we will be delivering a larger version for Christmas, hopefully with lots of local participation and information from organisations active in the area. Wishing you all a lovely Summer and hopefully some good weather.



Dyma'r tro cyntaf i mi gymryd reolaeth olygyddol o 'Ymlaen'. Rydw i, wrth gwrs, wedi ei ddarllen a'i fwyngau dros y blynyddoedd, yn enwedig rhifyn Nadolig llynedd gyda'r clawr lliwgar o'r ceirw. Rwyf bellach yn rhan o'ch Cyngor Cymuned lleol ac yn mwynhau'r gwaith. Os hoffech chi gyfrannu unrhyw newyddion neu erthyglau lleol yr ydych yn teimlo sy'n berthnasol i'r cylchlythyr, peidiwch ag oedi i gysylltu â mi neu unrhyw Gyngorydd lleol arall. Rwy'n gobeithio y byddwch yn mwynhau'r rhifyn hwn a byddwn yn cyflwyno cylchgrawn llawnach ar gyfer y Nadolig, gobeithio gyda llawer o gyfraniad lleol a gwybodaeth gan sefydliadau sy'n gweithredu yn yr ardal. Gan ddymunio Haf plerusus i chi gyd.

Sarah Elias

Get Gardening!

Just a quick reminder that 'tis the season for gardening with the warm weather hopefully approaching. We will be out and about in the next few weeks looking for excellent examples of local gardens to include in our gardening competition this year. So keep your eyes peeled and the weeds down!

Garddio Amdani!

Dim ond nodyn cyflym i'ch atgoffa taw dyma'r tymor ar gyfer garddio gyda'r tywydd cynnes gobeithio'n agosáu. Byddwn yn mynd o gwmpas yn ystod yr wythnosau nesaf yn edrych am enghreifftiau da o erddi lleol i'w cyflwyno ar gyfer ein cystadleuaeth garddio eleni. Felly ewch ati i baratoi'r ardd a'i lanw a digonedd o liw!



Longford Mothercraft Club celebrating 50 years

Longford Mothercraft group is still going strong 50 years after its inception, a real achievement. As Phyllis Griffiths, one of the longest serving members says; 'It was started by 'Nurse Jenny Morgan, Health Visitor at Longford Clinic for babies and children up to 3 years old.' The Mothercraft group progressed further over time; then evening meetings commenced with speakers for mothers. We started collecting for charity. Our first cheque of £40 went to Ty-Hafan, which was a lot of money in those days. As the years progressed cheques increased to £100 then to £500. All went to local charities.'



Longford Mothercraft Club 1992 (25 years reunion)

Phyllis lists just some of the charities; 'Local hospitals, Wales Air Ambulance, Mumbles Lifeboat, Skewen District Nurses, McMillan Nurses (Neath and Swansea), Alzheimer's and Tonna Hospital.' The charities receiving funds are diverse and all excellent causes; 'Many more have benefitted over the years', with an incredible 'figure of £62,000 collected.' Phyllis Griffiths also states; 'As a club we would like to thank the community and everybody else for their support over the years, which enables us to carry on our good work.'

Here are photos of the club, one taken in March this year with Councillor Martyn Peters presenting Mothercraft with a cheque and one 25 years ago for their 25 year reunion. Please let us know if you spot yourself or anybody you know in the old photograph. We would love to hear from you! Congratulations to the Mothercraft Club and here's to many more years of fundraising in the future.



The Group in March, 2017

Longford's Own Silver Screen Legend

Long-time Longford resident Mike Evans, a sprightly 81 years young, tells me his claim to fame; 'I was born in the same year as Elvis and the same date as Churchill.' He is better known locally however for being a treasure trove of entertaining stories about his days as a cinema projectionist in Neath and Swansea. In the 1950s there were three thriving cinemas in Neath, hard to imagine now, with The Windsor cinema being the largest, boasting 1750 seats. This venue opened in 1936 then featuring attractions such as a restaurant and roof-top garden. There was also a cinema where the Kwik-Fit garage stands today near Neath Police station, called The Gnoll Cinema, Mike says; 'the walls and roof of Kwik-Fit are the same as from The Gnoll cinema, it is like they just chopped the front off the building.' The new owners have installed a lower ceiling, however but much of the old art-deco style building still stands. The Gnoll cinema was an impressive 1,076 seater and Mike worked there as a projectionist alongside The Windsor and the third Neath cinema, 'The Empire'. This one opened in 1926 showing silent films accompanied by a pianist, Gladys Williams. The building underwent major refurbishment in 1936 and a Christie Cinema Organ was installed though films were gradually becoming 'talkies' with sound. The Empire eventually had a capacity of 1300 seats and was open until 1959 when the building was utilised as a bingo hall.

Mike's working life was fun and he tells a tale of nipping across to the pub when the films were on; 'When the main feature came on, on the corner was a pub, I'd go across for two bottles, one for the chief and one for myself.' On this occasion he was spotted by an unhappy manager, Mike used his charm to persuade the manager not to sack him by threatening to reveal one of his secrets if he did! As a result of his wily ways the manager didn't speak to him for weeks but he got away with the most important thing, of course, his ale..

He remembers exactly where he was on November 22nd 1963 when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, incidentally the same day he took his driving test! He was working as a projectionist in the Albert Hall Cinema in Swansea, 'They say you never forget where you were when you heard that news.' Mike recalls the halcyon days of cinema with much fondness but recalls the responsibility on him when things went wrong such as when screening the famous Mario

Lanza film, 'The Great Caruso' in The Windsor Cinema ; 'There was a scene where he was singing Ave Maria with the choirboys in the cloisters of the cathedral, there were so many joins in that particular section of film, when it went on the Monday afternoon showing, it was like a choir singing Ave Maria with the hiccups.' says Mike. A new copy of the film was rushed to Neath ending up on a trolley on Windsor Road and Mike tells me of the flurry of activity in the projection room; 'The first reel of the new copy was up on screen while they were making up the second copy on the line!'

Another problem the cinemas faced was that of smoking patrons, somewhat unimaginable now. Mike estimates that

some 50% of the audience would smoke during screenings and unfortunately in The Empire cinema there was no extractor fan. As Mike comments 'It was heaving to the rafters, you couldn't see the screen for smoke!' The cinemas were however spotless, with much pride being taken in the surroundings. The cinemas employed cleaners for each section, stalls circle etc and Mike says; 'Those women would get down on their hands and knees to scrub in between each row with a bucket and carbolic soap.' This is not something seen in our digital multiplexes today, however Mike says the advent of 3D cinema may not be quite as recent as you think; 'We had 3D in The Empire in 1953!'

Though known locally as a projectionist, what you

may not know about Mike is that he was in the army; 'I went in the army on May 5th 1954, demobbed April 23rd 1956.' His excellent recall serves to create a vivid picture of life in Hong Kong where he served for 6 months, he was on stopover in Beirut en route and commented; 'The sun was blood red and huge in the sky', he enjoyed his time there most of his army days but saw some shocking sights such as one when he came out of the air-conditioned cinema ; 'There was an elderly man on the floor who was skinless down from near the top of his legs. He might as well have been a fly on the wall because nobody took a blind bit of notice, nobody called an ambulance.' Mike Evans is one of Longford's colourful characters, with a wealth of stories to tell about the golden age of cinema and also from his army days in the 1950s. Stop and have a chat with him if you have a minute!



In answer to the puzzle of grass-cutting within Dyffryn-Clydach

People locally have been wondering why certain areas of grass have not been touched throughout the summer, or have had the perimeters only mowed. Many thought it was due to the austerity cuts many councils are facing, however the reason is it is due to a long-term strategy to aid wildlife and in particular bees and butterflies; Dyffryn Clydach Community Council have been actively working on developments with Neath's Working With Nature Project. Catrin Evans from the project comments; 'Neath Port Talbot Council are working in partnership with Buglife to create flower-rich areas locally, that feed into this national network. In Dyffryn Clydach, we have identified two areas that will benefit this project and will be allowing them to flower and set seed before cutting them in late summer. We hope to add more to these over time! These will provide valuable feeding areas for our pollinating insects, whilst also providing a display of colour within our urban landscape. To find out more about the b-lines project, see www.buglife.org.uk/b-lines-hub.' Catrin encourages everyone to get involved or just to take an interest in helping our insects; 'To find out what other wildlife friendly projects are underway in the area, contact the Council's Countryside and Wildlife Team on 01639 686214.' Some of the areas identified by Working With Nature are, Coed-Bach woodland, Lon-Glyn-Felin playing fields, Memorial Hall playing field (Longford) and also the green area between Longford and The Highlands (More on this piece of land later!).

There is sound reasoning behind this project, as Catrin says 'Our bees, butterflies and hoverflies have declined drastically over recent years and there is increasing concern over the decline of habitat for these pollinating insects. In addition to the threat of species extinction, there is the wider issue of losing the benefits that pollinators provide for our agricultural and horticultural industries.' It is hoped that by participating in projects to help locally, we can do our bit for the much needed pollinators; 'In order to help reverse this decline Buglife are taking forward the B-lines Project, an initiative to create a network of flower rich pathways across our countryside and towns.' As an aside to this project, when discussing areas of land that were appropriate, it was noted that the piece of grass land in between Longford and The Highlands (formerly a play area) has no official name. We would welcome any suggestions from you, please get in touch if you have any ideas on what to call it! The Community Council continues to partner with Working with Nature and The B-Lines project and there are more developments to come to aid biodiversity here and also to encourage our pollinators who when they are in decline, create a problem for the food producers and the environment as a whole.

Ateb i ddirgelwch torri gwair Dyffryn-Clydach

Mae trigolion lleol wedi bod yn pendroni pam nad yw ardaloedd penodol o wair wedi cael eu torri drwy gydol yr haf, nac ymylon chwaith. Roedd llawer o'r farn bod hyn yn ganlyniad i'r toriadau cyllidol enbyd sy'n wynebu cynghorau, ond y gwir reswm yw gweithrediad strategaeth hir-dymor i helpu bywyd gwyllt, ac yn benodol gwenyn a glöynnod byw. Mae Cyngor Cymuned Dyffryn Clydach wedi bod yn gweithio'n weithredol ar ddatblygiadau gyda Phrosiect Gweithio Gyda Natur Castell-nedd. Dywed Catrin Evans o'r prosiect; 'Mae Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot yn gweithio mewn partneriaeth gyda Buglife i greu ardaloedd lleol llawn blodau, sy'n bwydo i rhwydwaith cenedlaethol. Yn Dyffryn Clydach, rydym wedi dynodi dwy ardal a fydd yn elwa o'r cynllun a byddwn yn gadael i'r blodau flodeuo a hadu cyn eu torri ddiwedd yr haf. Gobeithiwn ychwanegu mwy o ardaloedd dros amser! Bydd

y rhain yn darparu ardaloedd bwydo gwerthfawr i bryfed sy'n peillio, ac ar yr un pryd yn sicrhau arddangosfa o liw mewn ardal drefol. I ddysgu mwy am brosiect B-Lines, gweler www.buglife.org.uk/b-lines-hub.' Mae Catrin yn annog pawb i fod yn rhan o'r prosiect, neu i gymryd diddordeb mewn helpu pryfed o leiaf; 'I weld pa brosiectau bywyd gwyllt eraill sy'n digwydd yn yr ardal, cysylltwch gyda Thim Bywyd Gwyllt a Chefn Gwlad y Cyngor ar 01639 686214.' Rhai o'r ardaloedd a ddynodwyd gan Gweithio Gyda Natur yw, coetir Coed-Bach, caeau chwarae Lôn-Glyn-Felin, cae chwarae'r Neuadd Goffa (Rhydhir) ac hefyd yr ardal werdd rhwng Rhydhir a'r Highlands (Mwy am y darn hwn o dir yn ddiweddarach!).

Mae yna resymu cadarn y tu ôl i'r prosiect hwn, fel y dywed Catrin; 'Mae ein gwenyn, glöynnod byw a phryfed hofran wedi lleihau'n sylweddol yn ystod y blynyddoedd diwethaf ac mae pryder cynyddol am y lleihad yng nghynefinoedd y pryfed peillio hyn. Yn ogystal â'r bygythiad o ddifodiant rhywogaeth, rhaid ystyried cyfraniad allweddol y peillwyr i'n diwydiannau amaethyddol a garddwriaethol.' Y gobaith yw y byddwn, drwy gymryd rhan mewn prosiectau i helpu'n lleol, yn gallu cynorthwyo'r peillwyr sy' mor angenrheidiol; 'Er mwyn helpu i wrth-droi'r lleihad hwn mae Buglife yn datblygu prosiect B-Lines, menter i greu rhwydwaith o lwybrau llawn blodau ar draws cefn gwlad a threfi'.

Ar fater cysylltiol, wrth drafod ardaloedd o dir a oedd yn addas, nodwyd nad oes gan yr ardal werdd rhwng Rhydhir a'r Highlands (a arferai fod yn ardal chwarae) enw swyddogol. Byddem yn croesawu unrhyw awgrymiadau am enwau oddi wrthyf, cysylltwch ar bob cyfri os oes gennych unrhyw syniadau. Mae'r Cyngor Cymuned yn parhau i fod yn bartner gyda Gweithio Gyda Natur a phrosiect B-Lines ac mae mwy o ddatblygiadau i ddod i gynorthwyo bioamrywiaeth yma, ac hefyd i annog ein peillwyr sydd, pan maent yn profi lleihad mewn niferoedd, yn achosi problem i gynrychiolwyr bwyd a'r amgylchedd yn ei gyfanrwydd.



Dyffryn Clydach and Bryncoch Historical Society goes from strength to strength

Following a 'bring and share' event involving old photographs and artefacts organised by Councillor Martyn Peters, the Dyffryn Clydach and Bryncoch Historical Society was founded in March this year. The Society aims to explore and conserve the shared history of these neighbouring communities. Three talks have been held so far, two relating to Neath Abbey and one on Madame Adelina Patti of Craig y Nos Castle. Jeff Griffiths is the Chair of this new group with Ann Doran its Secretary. The Rev. Canon Brian Lodwick, well known for his writings on the area's history, accepted the role of President. Attendances at talks have been good and over 90 people are now following the group on Facebook where local information and photos are being shared. The next meeting is on Tuesday 18th July at the Longford Memorial Hall at 1.30pm when Heritage Officer Harriet Eaton will talk about *Miners' Stories* to illustrate the importance of recording oral history. Stay up to date with the group on Facebook and its website and through posters displayed in the area:

www.facebook.com/groups/186400091865027/

www.spanglefish.com/DyffrynClydachandBryncochHistoricalSociety

Jeff Griffiths, Chair



All of The Community Council and Ymlaen contributors would like to wish Mary Davies of The Sinnatts, Cwrt Herbert a belated 100th Birthday. We hope you had a wonderful day and congratulations to you. We hope the postman brought your Birthday Message from The Queen.



Mary was born on 27th June 1917, a particularly important era in British history and World War One. On her day of birth, Liberal David Lloyd George was in power with a coalition government where he stayed until the end of the war. 1917 was the year that London was first bombed by the Germans and in June 1917, the month of Mary's birth the US President Woodrow Wilson declared war on Germany. Mary was born in historically important times and we wish her all the best on her milestone birthday.

PACT Meeting tackles local issues

A PACT (Police and Community Together) meeting was held in Longford Memorial Hall on Thursday 29th June at 6.30pm. Dyffryn Clydach and Bryncoch Police Community Support Officer Mike Griffiths was in attendance alongside Councillor Martyn Peters, members of the Community Council and public. There were many issues up for discussion largely relating to traffic in the area. The issue of speeding was discussed with reference to Monastery Road and Dyffryn Road in particular, the latter having been the scene of recent accidents. Also, parking was a popular topic and specifically parking around school times, often on double yellow lines and sometimes across private driveways. Again Monastery Road was mentioned in relation to this issue with another problem being traffic heading the wrong way around the industrial estate.

Another area of concern around Dyffryn Clydach which was discussed is littering which is a problem in our woodlands, fields and in St John's Church in particular. The warm weather encourages campers who have been leaving their litter (including tents) for others to clear. There have been reports of vandalism locally too, specifically targeting cars in The Highlands area. If you have any concerns about any of the above issues or other problems please contact PCSO Mike Griffiths on 07880057669. PACT Meetings are held bi-monthly in Dyffryn Clydach Memorial Hall, Longford.

Cyfarfod PACT yn delio gyda materion lleol

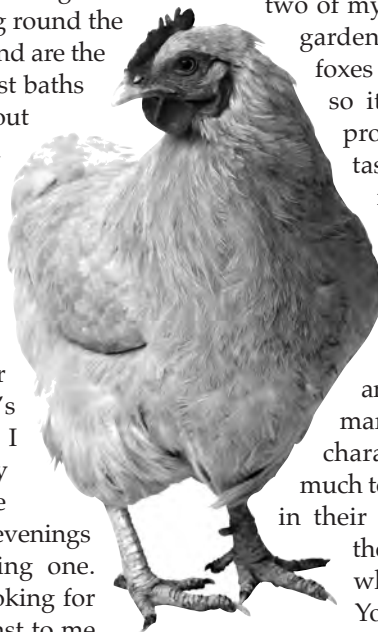
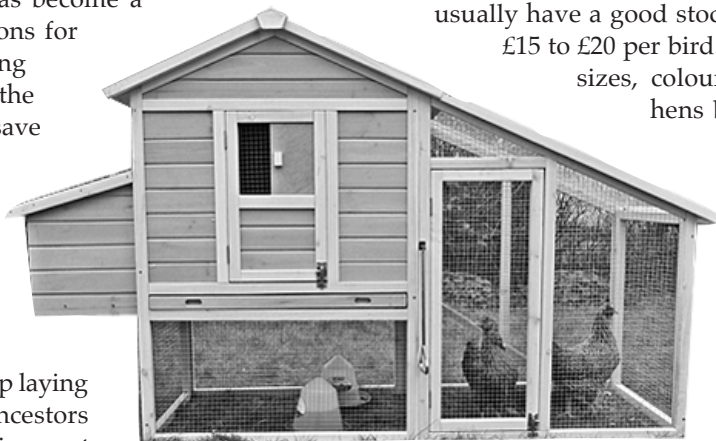
Cynhaliwyd cyfarfod PACT (Partnership and Community Together/Partneriaeth a Chymuned Gyda'i Gilydd) yn Neuadd Goffa Dyffryn Clydach, Rhyddhir ar ddydd Iau, Mehefin 29ain am 6.30pm. Roedd Mike Griffiths, Swyddog Cefnogi Cymunedol Heddlu Dyffryn Clydach a Bryncoch yn bresennol yn y cyfarfod ynghyd ag aelodau o'r Cyngor Cymuned a'r cyhoedd. Trafodwyd nifer o faterion, a chanolbwyntiwyd yn bennaf ar drafnidiaeth yn yr ardal. Roedd gor-yrru yn bryder ar Heol y Fynachlog a Heol y Dyffryn yn benodol, bu damweiniau ar Heol y Dyffryn yn ddiweddar. Yn ogystal, roedd parcio'n destun poblogaidd, yn enwedig adeg amseroedd prysur yr ysgolion, yn aml ar linellau melyn dwbl ac ar draws mynedfeydd. Eto, cyfeiriwyd at Heol y Fynachlog yn y cyd-destun hwn, a phroblem arall, sef traffig yn symud i'r cyfeiriad anghywir yn y stad ddiwydiannol.

Pryder arall yn ardal Dyffryn Clydach yw sbwriel, sy'n broblem yn ein coedwigoedd, caeau ac ar dir Eglwys Sant Ioan yn benodol. Mae'r tywydd twym yn denu gwersyllwyr sydd wedi bod yn gadael eu sbwriel (yn cynnwys pebyll!) i eraill eu casglu. Cafwyd adroddiadau am fandaliaeth yn lleol hefyd, yn targedau ceir yn ardal yr Highlands. Os oes gennych unrhyw bryderon am y materion uchod neu unrhyw ymholiad arall cysylltwch â PCSO Mike Griffiths ar 07880 057669. Cynhelir cyfarfodydd PACT yn ddeufisol yn Neuadd Goffa Dyffryn Clydach, Rhyddhir.

The gentle art of hen-keeping

Plenty of people across Britain have acquired some hens over the past few years; estimates suggest that there are now over half a million homes with chicken lodgers. There are many kept locally in Dyffryn Clydach reinforcing the notion that hen-keeping has become a popular pastime. The reasons for this are manifold; keeping chickens as pets, for the children, for the eggs, or to save money being just a few. I would argue that modern hen keeping is not the cheapest of businesses, there are vets fees, housing and food to consider and the question of what to do with the ladies once they stop laying after a few years. Our ancestors would have thrown them in a pot and had a nice Sunday lunch but I suspect there are many hen keepers today with doddery girls who shut up shop in the laying department years ago. I can vouch for this myself, having a senile eight year old girl, (Maureen the hen) confounding expectations and plodding on merrily. I think the saving money reason becomes obsolete once you start looking at the price of coops and Eglu houses (plastic trendy brightly coloured hen-houses, kind of like high rises for hens). Many hens free range in our gardens where they destroy grass with glee, eat all the veg and flowers you have lovingly planted and clear the garden of any insect life within minutes.

There is nothing, however more relaxing on a summer's day than watching hens pottering round the garden, they have individual personalities and are the best sunbathers of all animals. They dig dust baths and it is fascinating to watch them rolling about in the dirt, a ploy that rids them of mites and other parasites, nature has its reason for all hen activities you see. They are more intelligent than most people think and quite surprising at times, mine have a tendency to escape next door where the worms are obviously better than in our patch, no matter what fences, trellis, walls or sheds got in their way. They like to tear up my neighbour's immaculate garden for fun (theirs not his). I once went to lock the girls in the coop, (they toddle off to bed themselves, following the seasons, so early in the winter with the dark evenings and late in the summer) and was missing one. Fearing a fox strike I spent half an hour looking for the erstwhile escapee, however unbeknownst to me she had flown high up in a conifer tree and was roosting happily, as her chicken ancestors in the jungle would have done, safe from predators, see hens have proper reasons for their behaviours unlike humans!



There are other considerations when acquiring chickens, such as where to get them, The British Hen Welfare Trust are a good point of call re-homing over 50,000 commercially kept hens per year, some battery, some free-range, just register with the charity, pop your name on their list and they will let you know when some become available locally. Another option is buying from local breeders or farms but this can be risky as you have no guarantees as to the health of your chickens. They are also available as 'pullets' at the point of lay (usually around 20 weeks plus) from local pet shops and garden centres. For example Zoars Ark in Neath usually have a good stock of hens retailing at around £15 to £20 per bird. They come in all shapes and sizes, colours and breeds, with bantam

hens being a favourite as they are smaller and cute compared to their full size colleagues. There are pure-breeds, cross breeds, hens that lay blue eggs, brown eggs, white eggs and of course there are cockerels. If you add a cockerel to your gang, they keep the hens in order and stop any in fighting, they do however have a habit of

cocka-doodle-doing at first light, not ideal if you want your neighbours to speak to you.

Health considerations are a must; chickens can be wormed, vaccinated and become ill like any other pet. Aside from the obvious call to the vet, social media groups come into their own here as they are a wealth of hen-related information for newbie owners, with friendly advice available within seconds from experienced hen-keepers. Another important thing to remember is that hens have many predators, foxes just love a nice chicken dinner so fox proofing accommodation and keeping an eye out even in the daytime is a must, I know this to my peril having lost two of my gals to foxes. Finding one headless in the garden is something you never forget, however foxes are just doing what comes naturally to them so it is up to us humans to house our hens properly. Lastly I must mention the glorious taste of eggs from your own hens, there is nothing quite like it and I cannot bear the taste of shop bought eggs after savouring the delights of a free range huge golden egg poached to perfection from one of my own. Children absolutely love to go in search of eggs and it is one of the bonuses of and reason for hen keeping for some. Hens are marvellous pets with lots of quirks and bags of character, relaxing and funny to watch, there is much to recommend them. They can be left to potter in their coop or enclosure if you are not around therefore being much less of a tie than a dog when you are working or just out and about. You can also do your bit by rescuing commercial ones and saving them from the chop, just watch out though, the more you get attached to the little blighters, you may find that those chicken nuggets will not seem so appealing!

Litter

We live in a beautiful area - with woodland, rivers, mountains and wildlife, so I find it very sad that not

only are the streets full of food wrappers, empty bottles and mounds of dog mess, but the woods are full of litter as well.

There are many people who regularly give up their free time to organise group litter picks and some kind people also litter pick almost daily. I think we should be giving a big 'thank you' to these people who are trying to keep this area litter free.

Frequently, no sooner is an area cleaned, within a few days litter is back. Here's a thought - if you have carried things to an area for a picnic or a spot of overnight camping - could you please bag it up and take it home? It doesn't weigh as much on the return journey. Also, please don't smash glass bottles. Children and dog walkers use the area too. Dogs walkers once you have bagged the dog mess, please don't throw the bag into the bushes or hang the bag on a tree, there are several red bins in the area for this.



Over the years of litter picking I have found full bottles and cans, a mattress, new duvets (the receipts were also with them) several tents, blankets and items of clothing. I have also been in a group litter picking in the grounds of a local church. On the first occasion we had 17 bags of litter and fly-tipped items. A couple of months later in the same ground there were 12 bags of litter.

We have a recycling site at Briton Ferry so if you have loaded your car with items please take them there rather than fly tip in the woods or the quiet lanes of the area.

Dyffryn Clydach is a beautiful area, please can we keep it this way. So when out and about please break nothing, and leave nothing. Thank you.



Lemon Drizzle Cake

A sweet, moist, delicious cake that is so quick and easy to make. The recipe is believed to have appeared in the Good Food Magazine way back in 2002. Quantities are in the old ounces rather than grams, which many cooks still prefer to use.

Ingredients

For the cake

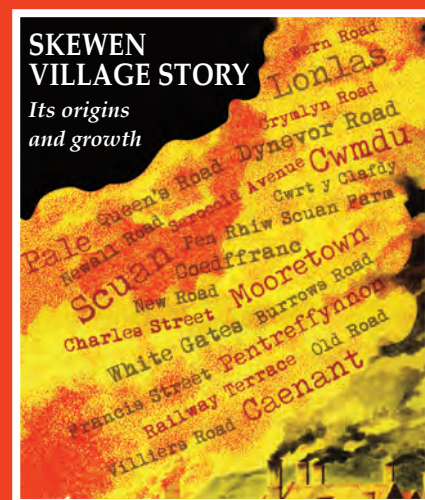
- 4 oz softened butter
- 6 oz self-raising flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 6 oz caster sugar
- 2 large free range eggs
- 6 tbsp milk
- 1 large unwaxed lemon - the finely grated rind of

For the lemon syrup

- 1 large lemon - the juice of
- 4 oz caster sugar

Method

1. Pre-heat oven to 180 degrees C / Gas mark 4
2. Grease, then line a 1 lb loaf tin or equivalent with baking parchment
3. Place all cake ingredients into a large mixing bowl and beat by hand for 2 - 3 minutes. Mixture should drop easily off spoon. Spoon mixture into tin and smooth with back of spoon
4. Bake for 30 - 40 minutes until golden and firm to the touch.
5. Leave to cool in tin for 3 - 4 minutes. Loosen around sides of cake with palette knife. Carefully remove cake and put on to cooling tray
6. Beat together syrup ingredients and pour half of mixture over cake **while still hot**. Leave to soak for 2 minutes then pour over remaining syrup mixture
7. Leave to cool - if you can!



Local history book for sale - £12

Contact Carole Wilsher

01639 710954

Neath Abbey's Reconstruction

Neath Abbey has played host to Cistercian monks, Tudor splendour and thriving industry since it was founded in the 12th Century.

The site is managed by Cadw, and is a tourist attraction of note. Comprehensive construction and renovation work has begun.

Parts of the site, which are currently closed, will be opened to visitors once the £550,000 project is completed.

Visitors are being offered a CGI reconstruction of the site, showing the ruin rebuilt to its former glory.

The improvements coincide with renovation work to conserve the Abbey's under-croft in a order to protect it against further rain damage.

The first phase of the conservation project is due for completion in July 2017, with further work to be finished by March 2018.

These works include further conservation to the Tudor mansion, including raking out and repointing stonework, repairs to stone-framed windows, consolidation of loose stonework and capping high-level walls.



Re-pointing the Tudor house



The work revealed an extensive fireplace

Open Days at Neath Abbey Monastery

History fans will be interested to know that CADW are offering open days at the Neath Abbey in September complete with a free guided tour. The dates are September 23rd and 24th and the Monastery is open from 10am til 4pm with the tours being offered at 10 am and 2.30pm. For more information, here is a link to the reference on the CADW site; <http://cadw.gov.wales/events/allevants/open-doors-neath-abbey-017/?lang=en>.

Many thanks to them for providing the tours and information.

© Mike Davies



Extra copies of *Ymlaen* will be available at Abbeygate Stores and Longford Stores. Thank you to Jagtar and to Jan for their support.

Remember to support your local shops and businesses.

Bydd copi'au ychwanegol Ymlaen ar gael yn Siop y Gât a Siop Rhydhir. Diolch i Jagtar a Jan am eu cymorth. Cofiwch gefnogi eich siopau a busnesau lleol.

Published by Dyffryn Clydach Community Council. Cyhoeddwyd gan Gyngor Cymuned Dyffryn Clydach.

Printed by Glamorgan Press, Neath Abbey Business Park, Neath SA10 7DR. Argraffwyd gan Wasg Morgannwg, Mynachlog Nedd, SA10 7DR.