



Talybont Matters

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Issue 44

Winter 2013/14

Please send in articles!

- The newsletter will be published quarterly, at the end of January, April, July and October. All articles to be submitted by 20th of these months to appear in the next issue.
- Be a journalist, send in articles, news, and what's on in Talybont.
- Wherever possible your articles will be published in the next issue. However the editor reserves the right to edit articles or hold them back for subsequent issues should there be insufficient space in the current issue.

Advertise goods, services & activities

Free!

Many thanks to the volunteers who distribute this newsletter

Editor's Note

In compliance with the provisions of the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2013, this issue of Talybont Matters will be sent to the National Library of Wales for archiving as part of the Library's national collection.

Public Toilet provision in Talybont

The sudden closure of the public toilets at the beginning of November was the cause of great concern to residents and resulted in a 195 name petition in opposition. In spite of this a meeting between Community Councillors and Barry Thomas a Powys County Council Cabinet member, and Alisdair Knox PCC officer, on 18th November confirmed that the majority of public toilets were being closed across the county. Powys County Council have to make huge cuts in their expenditure, and as they have no statutory obligation to provide public toilets, this service is being axed.

If a community council or group want to take over an existing building they can lease it for £1 a year with PCC giving an annual grant of £1,500 towards running costs. The same grant aid would be given to a group who want to open public toilets on an alternative site. If a business that already has toilets for its customers wants makes them available to everyone they would be eligible for a £500 annual grant, as long as other public toilets were not being opened locally.

Realistic running costs for a toilet scheme would be at least £4,500 to include services, building maintenance, consumables and a paid cleaner. This could be substantially reduced if a voluntary group were prepared to do the cleaning and general maintenance – a considerable commitment which occurs currently in Llanfrynach.

An inspection of the current toilet block revealed that it was in fair condition but would need approximately £2,000 spent immediately

with further annual maintenance of around £1,000. Consultation with the Henderson Hall Committee followed by a site meeting on 25th November 2013 resulted in a plan to open the existing outside toilet as a unisex facility on a trial basis. If successful, provision of public toilets could be situated at the hall as part of a wider scheme to encourage off street parking, particularly by cyclists, and relieve congestion in the village.

Many problems remain regarding funding this public service. There are already financial difficulties being experienced by the Henderson Hall Committee in just keeping the village hall going without the extra burden of servicing and operating toilets for the general public. The £1,500 annual grant from Powys County Council would leave a significant cash shortfall and the Community Council, Talybont-on-Usk Energy and the Talybont Tourism Group would all have to be approached in the hope of raising the necessary money for this proposed facility to be realised and sustained.

The current chaotic state of affairs at Powys County Council make any predictions impossible, but if the public toilets adjacent to the White Hart miraculously reopen it will only be until April. This would be just a temporary move to give communities until April to decide what toilet provision if any they are able to make.

Any observations, ideas and offers of help should be directed initially to Community Councillors and if there is sufficient interest a public meeting could follow.

John Jones, Chair: Talybont Community Council

99 runners complete Ras Tor-y-Foel Race

Only two short of a century, 99 runners started and finished this years race on 11th Jan 2014 - (those 2, including the organizer, were laid low with post-Christmas colds). Blessed with sunshine, the previous best winning time was broken by the winner Chris Jones - 34.08. The course is 7.4km (4.6 miles) with an ascent of 350m (1150ft) and the previous record was that of Ben Moon of 34.29, who this time finished in second place with a time of 34.55.

At least two local people gave outstanding performances: Rhian Probert (3rd lady home) and Owen Cartwright (over 5 minutes faster than last year). The first lady to finish was Katie Bee-

cher with a time of 40.50 although the ladies record was not bettered this year. Will the race be one by a local next year? - watch this space! Many competitors praised the way the race was marshalled so a million thanks to: Mike Buglar, Geraint James, John Battersby, Gareth Davies, Stuart Iles, Kay and Martin Lucas, Andrew Jenkins, Seamus Hamill-Keays and Richard Preece. Finally, thanks to Hilary, John and Margo Sweeting, John Chidlow Christine James Alison and Jo for all their contributions. Next year's race will be on Sat Jan 10th 2015 - come and run, help or just watch. Full report: www.wfra.org.uk.

Les Williams (lrweryri@hotmail.com)

TALYBONT ON USK
ENERGY YNNI
TALYBONT AR WYSG

Talybont-on-Usk Energy is
delighted to fund Talybont Matters



**HENDERSON
HALL**

**FORTHCOMING
EVENTS**

**TWMPATH/
CEILIDH DANCE**
Sat 15 Feb - 7.00pm

**TALYBONT
FLICKS**
No film in Feb.
Wed 5 Mar - 7.30pm
'Now You See Me'
cert 12.

**REGULAR
EVENTS**

Playgroup
Mondays
10 - 12 am
Kirsty Carr
01874 676514

WI
2nd Wed each month
7pm - 10pm
President:
Kathryn James
01874 623496

Brownies
Thursdays
6.30pm - 7.45pm
Sue Thorne
01874 676293

Crickets Club
May resume in summer
Contact Geraint James
01874 676272

Junior Tennis Club
Weds 5.45pm - 6.45pm
Margaret Cox
01874 676697
Sarah Osborne
01874 676633

Gardening Club
7.30pm 3rd Friday each
month Sept to June.
Chair: Gareth Davies
01874 676200

Tea and Chat
1st Monday in the
month 3-4.30pm.
Cherry Jones 676232
Andy Robinson
01874 676584

**Short Family
Service** 1st Sunday
each month 11am for
approx 25 mins.

Henderson Hall Contacts

Clare Wright (Chair) 676679 Steve Taylor (Vice Chair) 676208 Donna Darbyshire (Treasurer) 676304
Shirley Hemmings (Caretaker) 676456 Sue Thorne (Bookings Secretary) 676293

Position Available

The Village Hall Committee require a secretary to attend meetings, take minutes, deal with correspondence, email the committee and assist with fact finding for projects as required. About 4-6 hours a month at an hourly rate to be agreed. Anyone interested or wanting more information should contact Clare Wright by email: clarewright.osm@btinternet.com

Twmpath/Ceilidh dance

On Saturday 15th February at 7pm Bandemonium will be swinging in to the village to put on a fun dance, perfect for all the family. Let your hair down and get to socialise with the added benefit of a bit of exercise! Tickets include a Ploughmans Supper and there will be a bar and raffle on the night with all proceeds helping the village hall to keep its doors open, so your support is very welcome. Price: £10 adult, £5 child with a family ticket of £25 for 2 adults and 2 children. Tickets can be bought from Hall Committee Members and we are grateful to Talybont Stores who also have some available. Buying your tickets in advance would be brilliant so that the right amount of food can be provided but a small number of tickets will be available on the door. *Clare Wright*

Thank you, Bonfire building team!

Three cheers for our local Navy training centre, who willingly help to build our huge bonfire every November, whatever the weather. Belated thanks to them for their help before & on the night & of course to all the other volunteers whose support means we can put on such a great community event. A real team effort! *Clare Wright*

Talybont Film Night

The film night will now be on the first Wednesday of the month, starting from 5 March with the film 'Now You See Me', cert 12 starring Morgan Freeman and Michael Caine amongst a huge cast. Look out for information for upcoming films and times in case of change: posters at Talybont Stores or call me for more information. (Tel 676679) Films are now shown as part of a 'Friends of the Hall' evening but anyone can come along and join in and we encourage you all to bring your own drinks and nibbles. *Clare Wright*

Free BT Fault Repairs

The Community Council has been made aware that BT retail offers free priority fault repair for vulnerable customers, if there is a fault with your line. You may be eligible for this service if you have a long-term illness or disability and can't leave the house without help, or if your local authority pays some or all of your line rental. People need to register for the service, by calling 0800 800151 (Textphone 18001 0800 800 151) free of charge and asking for an application form. *Katy Tutt*

Neighbourhood Policing Contacts

PCSO 8035 Steffan Rees and PC 828 Sara Richards would like residents to know that they are the dedicated Neighbourhood Policing officers for Brecon rural, Talgarth and Bronllys. If there are any issues or concerns in the community that you wish to report, please contact them and they will be happy to assist.

Also, many Farm Watch coordinators have joined the RINGMASTER messaging system, assisting in the dissemination of information in relation to rural crime, and has expanded Farm Watch to more areas around Brecknockshire.

Please contact Steffan or Sara if you wish to join the scheme.

Contact details: Tel: 101 ext 50322/50690

Email: steffan.rees@dyfed-powys.pnn.police.uk

Katy Tutt

Talybont WI

Meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month -
7-10pm at Henderson Hall
Newcomers Welcome!
Secretary Anne Jeans: 676637

Spring Programme:

- 12 Feb: Glass Art - Members will have a go! - *Sue Thorne*
- 12 Mar: 'What the Romans did for Talybont' - *Seamus Hamill Keays*
- 9 Apr: An evening of First Aid

The 200 Club Draw

Winners of the Sept Draw were:
£50 Brig Alan Burley
£35 Mr Richard Paley
£25 Ms Barbara Angelzarke
£15 Mrs Margaret Cox
£10 Mr Brian Stephens

Winners of the Dec Draw were:
£50 Mrs Diana Eckley
£35 Mr Allan Jones
£25 Mr Keri Davies
£15 Mrs Margaret Robinson
£10 Mr Brian Stephens

New members are very welcome
Contact Brenda on 676639

Friends of Talybont Reservoir Report

- ♣ Footpath from the car park to the bird hide reinstated just before Christmas. (short walk, lovely views)
- ♣ 100 sapling trees from local sources planted in late November. We are most grateful to the Wildlife Trust volunteers who helped plant and treat wood.
- ♣ Surveys almost completed scheduled to be done in Spring. Potential to introduce native crayfish if viable. Vigilant 'bio-security' is essential to prevent invasive species & disease. For info Tel: Peter Seaman (676225).

What Talybont WI got up to last year!

The general assumption about Women's Institutes is that we tend to make a lot of jam and the occasional cake. I personally have to own up to a certain amount of jam and chutney manufacture due to family pressure but don't feel it's a defining characteristic of our organisation.

In 2013 we had three informative talks on local nature and environmental issues. Dr John Taylor told us all about the work of the salmon hatchery in Llanfynach - not just restocking the rivers with salmon and trout but helping to restock Llangorse Lake with eels and its reed beds with water voles. Did you know a scientific survey of the local bat population has been carried out at Gilestone Farm? Peter and Margaret Seaman came to tell us about our important local bat colonies and their role in their conservation. If garden bird watching is a preferred pastime you would have enjoyed Andrew King's talk on Breconshire birds.

We all took to the floor for an evening of Scottish Country Dancing with Gwenda Dinsdale and friends, which was very energetic but great fun and learned a lot about up-cycling from Sue Pascoe. Sue also showed us how to make felt from ancient and surplus woolly garments. Emily Hill brought a selection of gorgeous hats to the hall from her Brecon studio and gave us a demo of hat making and decoration. Sally Morris from Usk House came to talk to us about the evolving services of the day hospice and to explain how their link up with St David's Hospice, Newport, will allow them to offer a wider range of care services at home for families.

We also got out and about - in June we visited Brobury House gardens at Bredwardine followed by a very pleasant supper at The Tram in Eardisley. In September we went to Treberfydd to view the garden and then have a guided tour of the interior of this important Grade I Listed

Victorian Gothic building.

On the light and frivolous side an outing to the theatre to see Boeing Boeing was great fun. A bunch of members are currently teaching themselves to play Bridge under the inexperienced and sometimes slightly demented guidance of yours truly. It's very good for the brain and should give us something to do on winter days when its wet and horrible and is infinitely preferable to housework.

We had our AGM in November and met in December for a Christmas meal, Secret Santa and Quiz. There are craft and art groups that meet in Brecon and outings organised by our Brecknock Federation of Women's Institutes.

Follow our programme for this year in Talybont Matters - We are a friendly and cheerful bunch and new members are always warmly welcomed.

Anne Jeans (Secretary - Tel 676637)

Christmas made memorable by Random Acts of Kindness!

Andrew and I were away for Christmas this year, so loaned our house out to friends who were having a 3-generational family gathering. In return they looked after cats, ducks, and kept an eye on the place for us.

The younger two generations of the family were visiting UK from their home in Zambia (where our winter is their summer) and, whilst the locals here were bemoaning the incessant rain and flooding, **they** were getting hugely excited by their first ever sighting of snow - visible from our house - on the mountains above Talybont! So, wrapped up warm and with great anticipation, they ventured up the mountain and, having reached the fluffy white stuff, behaved as all fun-loving people do in freshly-fallen snow.

They were in the midst of their frolicking when a local woman came up to them and

chatted for a while. The next day they were back there again, their car parked beside a farm gate, when they were again approached in a friendly manner, this time by a man who also stopped for a chat. They soon established that it had been his wife who had befriended them the previous day. She had told him about the excitement of their snow baptism, so he went home to fetch his sledges for them to have a go. The kindness did not stop there, for the group were soon joined by the farmer, and he, having also heard through the grape vine that these were the 'snow people', invited them onto his sloping land, where, some great tobogganing was had!

What wonderful Random Acts of Kindness - and a day of experiences that made their Christmas - and a 'White Christmas' at that - one that will be remembered for a very long time to come!

We don't know who you all were, but want to express our deep appreciation for the welcome you offered to complete strangers. One could not ask for better ambassadors for the Talybont area!

Claire Gray



Stables with paddock to let Available immediately 07908 223985

The Language of Dogs - Understanding Your Pet
 Thurs 6th March 7.00 - 8.30 pm - Llangorse Youth & Community Centre
 Admission £5
 Theresa Toomey: Tel: 01874 636785; Email: theresa@animals-matter.co.uk;
 Website: www.dogbehaviouristwales.co.uk

TALYBONT VILLAGE LITTER PICK
 Next Litter Pick
SATURDAY 8th FEBRUARY 2014
 Please meet at Talybont Shop at 10am
 All equipment will be supplied - all we need is **YOU** for a couple of hours!
 Contact: Sandra Briskham 676297



Talybont Woodland Group
 has got off to a great start, and in just a few sessions has made notable inroads into the restoration and rejuvenation of their ten-acre site in the heart of the village, with the expert help of Gareth Ellis. It's also lots of fun, and gives you a very satisfying feeling to be out in the woods on a Sunday morning; the Sunday roast tastes even better because of it!
 If you'd like to join in, meet at Henderson Hall at 9.45 am on Sundays 16th February and 9th March.
Call Adele for further details on 07581 226524





The ENERGISER

*THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
TALYBONT on USK ENERGY GROUP
FEBRUARY — APRIL 2014*

ABOUT ToUE...

Beautiful TALYBONT-ON-USK is the proud home of an exciting and inspiring not-for-profit community enterprise scheme.

A 36kw hydro electric turbine, housed in the original stone-built turbine house above the dam that you can see on the Talybont Reservoir, enables us to generate electricity which is then sold to Good Energy. The income from this power is then invested in further energy-saving and community-enhancing schemes in Talybont and the surrounding villages, including Aber, Pencelli and Scethrog.

If you would like to find out more, visit our website
www.talybontenergy.co.uk

....Or email us on
info@talybontenergy.co.uk

....Or 'like' our page on
Facebook
[www.facebook.com/
talybontenergy](http://www.facebook.com/talybontenergy)

HARRY's THRILLING GRILLE!



Since we're welcoming more school groups, and since anyone falling into the water beneath the turbine house would be instant fish-food, we asked the ever-versatile and talented Harry Chapman to design a safety grille. Made by Goddards in Brecon, here, Harry definitively demonstrates its fitness for purpose! THANKS, HARRY!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Hello! This is the last newsletter that I'll be writing, since I'm stepping down as admin person due to pressures of other commitments.

Replacing me in a role I've thoroughly enjoyed for the last 18 months is Regan Jones, of the wonderful Talybont Village Stores. Formerly a lynchpin of Brecon Beacons Holiday Cottages where she worked for many years, and before that sub-postmistress at Bwlch, Regan's unflappable calm & impressive organizational skills will be a huge asset to the Directors at ToUE. Next time you pop into the shop, wish her the very best of luck!

And by the way, I'll still be closely involved with ToUE, since I've said yes to the Board's invitation to join them as a Director.
SEE YOU SOON!
Adele x

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Talybont on Usk Energy

invites you to

RECYCLE, UPCYCLE, MAKE-DO & MEND

AND

SWAP

At Henderson Hall on February 9th 2013 10am-5pm

Bring along your useful, but neglected items, to swap! **ENTRANCE FREE**

ALSO... Come and be inspired by how some of our unwanted items can be transformed, and have a go yourself!

TEN GREEN BOTTLES recycle waste glass to make useful and beautiful items.

They also upcycle fabric scraps into lovely bags and wallets.

Come along and make something.

Donations of fabric and electrical wire welcomed

L'ARCHE turn tatty old books into beautiful and unique notebooks.

Make one for yourself!

Donations of old hardback books welcomed

YSTRADGYNLAIS VOLUNTEER CENTRE transform scraps of wood into bird feeders, tool boxes and furniture.

Donations of scrap timber and furniture welcomed

TOOLS FOR SELF RELIANCE takes your unwanted but useful tools and sends them to Africa, as well as selling refurbished tools in the UK.

NB This is a FREE event although some of the projects, above, will sell their produce, and there may be a small charge for materials if you decide to make something.

REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE

Fungi around Talybont-on-Usk

Pictures copyright Neville Davies

Fungi form a fascinating array of colours and shapes and can be found all year round in the countryside. Although many are edible there are those that can cause side effects and some that can cause serious side effects and even death – so to be on the safe side, never eat any mushrooms or fungi unless you are 100% sure of their edibility or with an expert.

I have conducted many walks within the Talybont area and there are many species of fungi to be found especially along the Henry Vaughn walk, the adjacent Forestry and the lower valley walking back along the Caerfannel River. I have selected several of my favourite fungi to share with you.

Cramp Balls *Daldinia concentrica* (or Carbon Balls). This is a distinctive species and can be found on Ash trees. They start off life reddish-brown and then turn a deep black and can be up to 3 inches across. They are gregarious on decaying trunks forming clusters. They are inedible. They also go by another name of King Alfred's Cakes. Legend has



it that the King was baking cakes one day when he suddenly got called to a battle. Unattended, the cakes were left to burn.

Stinkhorn Fungi *Phallus impudicus*.

The Stinkhorn emerges from an egg which develops under the leaf litter of the forest floor. The eggs can be found at any time of the year lying dormant until the summer. The eggs can be found just beneath the leaf litter or amongst the pine needles. Early morning is the best time to find this species where the smell can be particularly strong. When the fruit body grows it stands around 12-18cm tall and gives off a strong smell which attracts flies and other insects. The insects trap spores from the fungi on their bodies which are then transported elsewhere thus spreading the spores throughout the countryside. Not surprisingly then by its look, this species is inedible.



Turkey Tail *Tremetes versicolor*. This is a very common bracket fungus which gets



its name from resembling the fanned tail of a turkey. It also goes by another name of 'Many Zoned Polypore'. It fruits in the autumn and early winter but the fruit bodies take a long time to decay. It mainly grows on dead hardwood. It can have a surprising range of colour variations and has resulted in the dried brackets having ornamental uses – including as hat decorations. This species is far too tough to be eaten.

Birch Polypore *Piptoporus betulinus*.

This species is common on Birch trees where it can form numerous specimens. They are brown above and white below and can grow quite large in some cases being up to 20cm in diameter and 6mm thick. Although they are inedible they make for an attractive species of fungi. They go by another name of 'Razor Strop Fungus' relating to times gone by when the thick old skin was used to sharpen cut throat razors.



Neville Davies is available to lead walks around Talybont to see fungi and is a wildlife expert and guided walks leader who presents power point presentation on fungi and wildlife. Visit his website at www.ecologycymru.co.uk

Siop Siarad

Siop Siarad yn byw, yn iach ac yn siarad. **Siop Siarad is alive, well and talking.** Mae'n cyfarfod bob bore dydd Gwener yn y Hedd Gwyn am 10.30 - 11.30 ac yn rhoi cyfle i bawb sydd a diddordeb, gyfle i wrando ac a defnyddio'r iaith Cymraeg. **It meets every Friday morning in the White Hart from 10.30 - 11.30 and gives everyone who is interested, a chance to listen to and use the Welsh Language.**

Y digwyddiad mawr nesaf mewn calendr Siop Siarad yn ymweliad a'r Amgueddfa Genedlaethol yn Aberystwyth, mae tywys, taith dwyieithiog y llyfrgell a'i gynnwys hanesyddol. Bydd hyn yn 8.30 cychwyn gan y Hedd Gwyn ar ddydd Gwener y ar ugain o Chwefror.

The next major event in the Siop Siarad calendar is a visit to the National Library in Aberystwyth, a guided, bilingual tour of the library and its historic

contents. This will be an 8.30am start from the White Hart on 21st February. Os oes gennych ddi-ddoreb yn nyfodol yr iaith, yna dewch i fod yn rhan o ei lles. If you are interested in the future of the language then please come and be part of its well-being.

Hwyl am y tro,

Les Williams (lrweryri@hotmail.com)

Weather report 2013

Whilst our weather memories of 2013 may be dominated by the rain and wind of December (continuing into 2014) we should not forget that the summer was pleasant and certainly a lot easier to enjoy the countryside and our gardens. March stood out in my records with an average temperature nearly 4°C below average. You will remember the snow and ice that affected us and generally made for a 'late spring'. However we soon enjoyed a more pleasant later spring that lasted into summer with rainfall below average for April, May, June and July (1.45 inches lower than average). The warmer trend continued into October which was 2.3°C above average and even to De-

ember with a mean of 2.2°C above average. So whilst we will not forget the rain of December (a record breaker in my 15 years of records with an amazing 12.27 inches, 7.9 inches above the average for the month) we should not let that cloud our memories of the better conditions we experienced earlier. Weather experts are increasingly interested in the effects of 'jet streams' on our weather systems as there are changes taking place involving more frequent 'dramatic' weather. How climate change, the Gulf stream and melting Arctic ice impact on the jet streams are far beyond the reaches of a village newsletter but will be interesting to learn about in due course.

Peter Seaman

CHILDREN'S PARTY ORGANISER WANTED!

I took on the role as main organiser for the Children's Christmas and New Year party some seven years ago now and have enjoyed providing much fun and pleasure for the children of this community. However going forward I wish to take a back seat and feel it is time that somebody else should take the reins. I am still more than prepared to be involved & support the new organiser, in any way they wish, but think the party is needs some fresh and innovating ideas. This is a voluntary role and we are looking for a new face to provide organisation of this very special & rewarding party.

Please contact Heather on 01874676551 or come and see me at Talybont Shop.

WHAT'S ON AT THE STAR INN.....

Sausage & Cider weekend - Jan 31st & Feb 1st

Selection of local ciders, Aber Valley juice, special sausage inspired menu & Live Music from 9pm on Fri 31st from "The Bleedin' Noses".

Sausages from award winning butcher Rawlings of Abergavenny, Beacons Farm in Bwlch & Coity Bach in Talybont

Pie Night – every Tuesday, 6-9pm

Quiz Night – every Wednesday from 9pm £1 entry

Live Music – last Friday of every month

Valentines Evening – Feb 14th

Treat that special person to a night out with good food in a cosy atmosphere

contact: 01874 676635, anna@starinntalybont.co.uk



Coming soon.....

Mini "Champion Beers of Britain, 2000-2013" Beer Festival – April 11th & 12th
June Beer Festival – June 13th, 14th & 15th



Gwenda wins two Gold medals in Welsh Capital Masters Swim!

In December 2013 I achieved a long-held ambition to compete in the Welsh Capital Masters Swimming competition in Cardiff. My sporty son Alex spurred me on saying: "If you wait till you're old enough, Mum, most of the rest of the competition will have passed away!" so with the thought that our time on this world is short I started some (gentle) training. Then fate intervened, and I broke first my left arm two years ago, and then my right arm one year ago, which severely interrupted the training. However, once the cast was off I joined 2 masters swimming clubs (in Abergavenny and Ebbw Vale) which I now attend along with regular swimming in our valuable local pool in Brecon. Masters swimming is defined as swimming for the over 18 year olds, although it mostly seems to attract those in their 20's, 30's and 40's, with a sprinkling of 50 plus age group. However, I seem to be easily the oldest in both

clubs! The swimming competitions are age-graded, which means you are only competing with others in the same age band as yourself. So even though I knew that I could never swim faster than an 18 year old, I knew my speeds weren't bad for a lady in her late 60's! In Cardiff, sponsored by many kind people to raise money for the Stroke Association, I entered two individual events and also took part in two relays with others from the Ebbw Vale club. Anxious not to let them down I was extremely apprehensive, and my nerves were not helped when I discovered that the Cardiff International pool is enormous (and also icily cold!), and there were several hundred people watching. I felt sure I was going to belly-flop off the starting blocks or have a heart attack when the cold water hit me. However, luckily neither happened, and I managed to achieve gold medals for both my individual

events (50m & 100m) and we were awarded silver for our freestyle relay.

I am a great believer in the positive effect swimming has on health. I never swam very much as a child and only became seriously interested in it during the last 10 years or so, when joint stiffness was making some other forms of exercise difficult. My friend and swimming companion Margaret Seaman and I did some swimming improver classes in Brecon some years ago, which did wonders for our technique and ability. We have both noticed significant improvements in our fitness since taking up regular swimming, but physical fitness is not the only benefit: it also has positive effects on mood which are enhanced by the chatting and laughing we do before and afterwards! Why don't you come and join us one day?

Gwenda Dinsdale

Llansantffraed Church floor granted Heritage Lottery funding - Separate appeal for funds to restore Henry Vaughan's grave

Llansantffraed Church – the wood block floor, which has been in position since the current church was built in 1885, has a combination of wet and dry rot in the Nave and the Buckland Chapel. The members of the church have kept a watchful eye on the situation but the decision was made to try to obtain funding for the floor to be renewed. A Heritage Lottery Grant was applied for in September and a week before Christmas the Church Council heard that their bid for £31,500 had been successful – what a wonderful Christmas present!! The Tendering process is now under way and it is hoped that work will commence during February/ March. Obviously the church will be closed for the duration of the works but services normally held at Llansantffraed

will be rescheduled when the exact starting date is confirmed. We hope to reopen by the end of April.

At the same time, the plan is to renovate the grave of Henry Vaughan, the Usk Valley's famous poet and physician (died 1695). His grave, which overlooks the River Usk from the top of the churchyard is classified in its own right as a nationally important monument. Over recent years, its condition has deteriorated; the grave has suffered from ground movement and cracks have opened. As it is part of our local heritage and not the responsibility of the church, the Brecknock Society and Museum Friends is leading a Henry Vaughan memorial appeal. Its objective is to restore the grave and to improve its

access and surroundings so as to make it an pleasant and inspirational place to visit. The appeal target is £6,000 and the appeal was launched at Llansantffraed Church at the last service in January. Details of the appeal and how to contribute will be published in the press, on local notice boards and the Brecknock Society website (www.brecknocksociety.co.uk) later in February or March.

Once the floor and the Grave have been completed it is hoped to hold more community events in the church. Please watch the local notice boards for further information.

Sandra Briskham
& Mervyn Bramley



Newsletter for Talybont-on-Usk,
Aber, Buckland, Llansantffraed,
Pencelli and Scethrog

Produced by: **ERA²¹ Ltd.**
Editor: Claire Gray

**Please send articles & contact
details to:**

Pentre Melyn Cottage
Buckland
Bwlch
LD3 7JJ
Email: era21@era21.co.uk



[http://www.talybont.org/
newsletter.html](http://www.talybont.org/newsletter.html)

TALYBONT-ON-USK & DISTRICT GARDENING ASSOCIATION

We are a very informal group with regular
speakers & garden trips out during summer months.
Indoor meetings are held in the Henderson Hall,
always ending up with tea, coffee and biscuits!!

**NEW MEMBERS ARE ALWAYS
WELCOME - JUST COME ALONG!**

Annual membership is only £5 per annum.

Friday 21st February: Guest speaker Gareth Davies Talk and slides on "My Favourite Plants"

Friday 21st March: Peter & Margaret Seaman "Contrasting Gardens— Imagination and Design at their Best".

AND OUR SPRINGTIME COMPETITION:

*Vase of 5 Blooms of Miniature Daffodils or Narcissi in flower
OR Pot of Primroses or Polyanthus in flower*

Friday 11th April: (our normal 3rd Friday is Good Friday hence earlier date): 3-way Garden Club Quiz with Bwlch and Llangynidr - we are the Hosts this year.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: 11th-13th April: RHS Spring Flower Show, Cardiff

For any further information please contact either the
Chairman: Mr Gareth Davies 01874 676200 or the
Secretary: Mrs Sandra Briskham 01874 676297

Church News

PETER'S THANKS! Peter the donkey says "Thanks" to the 250+ who followed him through Talybont on Christmas Eve in the pouring rain to the Living Nativity in a real authentic barn @ Talybont Farm (thanks to the Jenkins' family). Many thanks too go to Pat Wilkie, the stewards, musicians, cast of "Holy Family", innkeepers, angels and shepherds & the organizing team! (See pictures/report from Pat Wilkie.) My thanks too to the large numbers who supported other church events, including the packed Christmas morning service @ Llandetty.

SPONSORSHIP! We are extremely grateful to Owen & Sue @ the White Hart for supporting the monthly Family Church

services @ the Henderson Hall in 2013. The grateful family of the late Marjorie Taylor of Aber will sponsor the Family Church for 2014. (Thanks to the many others who also offered!)

MOTHERS' DAY: Looking forward to Lent (now there's an irony!!) there will be a Mothers' Day Family Service in the Hall @ Oam on the day (March 30th) for families, mums, grandmothers, god-mothers, children & anyone else not mentioned! It is a United Service with the churches, chapels & family church. Offers of posies of flowers & simnel cake gratefully received!!

EASTER: Just don't go there.....!

Andy Robinson



Photos by
Christine James



Talybont Living Nativity

The members of the Talybont Group of Churches would like to thank everyone who supported the Living Nativity on Christmas Eve; together we all made it a night to remember. There was so much whole hearted support however special mention must go to Lydia, John and William Jenkins at Talybont Farm for not only making us all feel welcome but for preparing the barn so that it really was 'just right'. The support and goodwill of the village community shone through on a very wet and dismal evening. So a huge thank you to all the members of the community who, in spite of the weather turned up to play their

role in the unfolding story, to play an instrument, act as stewards making sure of everyone's welfare, organising the car parking, contribute to the refreshments to all the many, many people who came to be a part of what is becoming a Talybont tradition; to everyone's delight Peter the donkey was with us once again. We have been able to send donations of £36.25 each, to two local charities: L'Arche and Usk House as a result of the appreciation of the festive refreshments.

Pat Wilkie

