

## Ysgol Rhiwabon

### **Lego Competition – Week 4**

Sunday, 31st May 2020

This week's Lego challenge was to build a hybrid animal, and we had the most entries to date!

In a hotly contested battle the winner with his '**Crocobat**' is...**Sam Joseph 7DRT**, well done!

I look forward to seeing next week's entries.

**Mrs Wright-Davies**



## SHARE YOUR SUNNY TOMORROWS

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**Friends of Ruabon have received a great suggestion by one of our residents to get the community involved in planting sunflowers, photographing them as they grow and measuring them to share in a gallery on our page.**

**Many of us have now taken up this suggestion first made by Ann Owens and energised by Nia Evans on behalf of Friends of Ruabon.**

**Jo Smith has managed to purchase some sunflower seeds (see her poster below).**

**We could even carry on this delightful idea year by year to make Ruabon the sunniest village in Wrexham.**

**Please send in all your floral photos for everyone to admire no matter what date they are ready to be admired.**



Grow a Sunflower and make  
our Village Shine

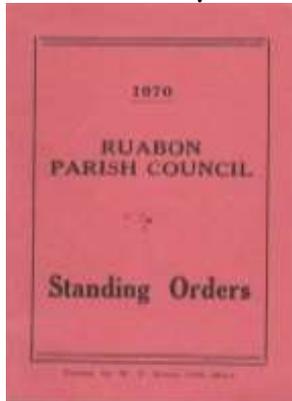


Get your Free Sunflower Seeds  
tel 07985568627

# The Way We Were

John Henry Davies has sent in the following photos and information to show how much the area around the car park and the Village Hall in Maes-y-Llan Lane has changed during the past years.

When John Henry Davies was first appointed as a Community Councillor when meetings were held in the Community Centre which was part of the building shared with St Mary's Church Primary School. Initially, a room in this building was set aside specifically for Community Council meetings until it was taken over by the teaching staff as a common room.



John Henry has also kept a small booklet entitled: "1970, RUABON PARISH COUNCIL, Standing Orders" (Cllr Dana Davies supplied the following information):

In 1972 **Community Councils** were established under the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) and replaced the previous system of **Parish Councils**. The vast majority of the functions conferred on the Secretary of State under LGA 1972 are now, so far as exercisable in relation to **Wales**, conferred upon the Welsh Ministers.

## John Henry's recollections about the photos

below: The gentleman in this photo is Robert Bennett, ex



Clerk to Ruabon Community Council. Two of the buildings pictured were used for the storage of equipment for the council and also acted for a while, to house the Bowling Club until

it moved to a hut of its own, was erected between these buildings and the Bowling Green. The buildings pictured held the 'Senior Citizens' Centre' (then a wooden



structure), 'The Picture House' had two extra rooms one of which served as a library and was in an area close by.

All these buildings were demolished and funded by a grant from Wrexham Council; the current car park was put in place, together with a concrete building and known as the Senior Citizens' Centre, which replaced the wooden building and doubled-up as a meeting place for the Community Council.

The grant money was placed in a charity account, which John Henry recalls as being: 'extremely difficult' for the Community Council to access.



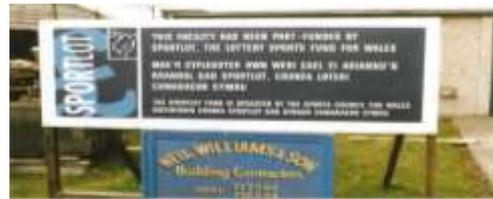
Standing beside this newly erected Senior Citizens' Centre, adjacent to the new Pavilion the lady on the left of the photo has been identified as Hilda Richards, who is now 103 years old and who regularly attended the 'Time Well Spent Club' until lockdown".

## *The Building of Ruabon Sports Pavilion*

In John Henry's own words: "To obtain any funding for the pavilion, a separate committee had to be formed, as this funding was not available to Community Councils, **"The Ruabon Sports Association"** was an unincorporated trust set up in 1994 to oversee the construction of a new Sports Pavilion and the provision of sports facilities for the village. The trust had six trustees:

**John Henry Davies as Chairman, Mrs Dorothy Blake, Mr Graham Bithell, Mr Colin Wright, Mr Alan Roberts, Mr Steve Owen and Mr Robert Bennett as Secretary.**

Funds were raised for the pavilion by a grant of £70,025 from "Sportlot" towards the £100,000 needed for the



construction of the new pavilion. 'Sportlot' was 'The Lottery Sport Fund for Wales', Steve Owen was at that time a QS, so he was of great help in the costings and supervising the building of the pavilion. Robert Bennett as secretary, did all the work behind the scenes, obtaining planning permission, chasing grant money etc. Each trustee was a financial guarantor for the building.

## *The New Sports Pavilion was opened by Mr Mark Hughes.*



This photo was taken from the path running to the recreation ground from the car park. The concrete building is

TH the Senior Citizens' Centre on the land currently occupied by the Village Hall.

Also at this time Robert, Steve and I decided to design and have plans available for a new Village Hall for Ruabon once and if, funds became available in the future

Funding did become available and once again, John Henry Davies, together with Robert Bennett were both heavily involved in ensuring that the Ruabon Village Hall, as we know it today, was completed.

The photo shows John Henry Davies with Amy Guy 'Miss Wales 2004' At the official opening of the new

## Ruabon Village Hall.

Since then, at the end of the Trustees' term of office, John Henry Davies and the trustees, handed the keys of the Pavilion back to the Community Council, by which time the trustees had enough funds to have affixed solar panels to the roofs of both the Pavilion and the Village Hall. The story of this hand-over was covered in an earlier Ruabon News Letter.



JOHN HENRY DAVIES AND MARK HUGHES AT  
AT THE OPENING OF THE SPORTS PAVILION





**RESIDENTS** have called for action against the Johnstown landfill site following a large fire which left an 'atrocious smell' during an already difficult time.

Fire crews from Johnstown, Wrexham, Llangollen, Ellesmere, Chirk and Llangollen, together with an incident command unit, were mobilised to Hafod Quarry landfill in Johnstown at 7.12pm on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> May. Residents living in and around the area of Bangor Road, Johnstown, were advised to keep all windows and doors closed due to toxic fumes as firefighters tackled the fire.

As firefighters continued to deal with the incident, a change in wind direction meant that smoke affected Wrexham town, and residents were advised to keep windows and doors shut.

An investigation into what caused the fire has been launched. The site is regulated by Natural Resources Wales and run by Enovert. Mark Silvester, Chief Executive of Enovert, said: "We understand the concerns of residents and apologise for this incident. Our priority is always to run a safe and compliant site with minimal disruption to the local community.

A spokesman for Wrexham Council confirmed that it had no connections to this site which is privately owned and operated also that the council does not use the facility for any of its household waste and nor has no financial interests in its operation. The site gained planning approval on appeal in 2004 by the Welsh Government Planning Inspectorate. It is regulated by Natural Resources Wales which had advised residents to keep their windows and doors closed as the team worked in partnership with emergency services.

Anyone concerned about their symptoms were advised to contact their GP or NHS Direct on 0845 46 47. Any symptoms usually disappear quickly and should not lead to long term health problems.

Natural Resources Wales added, "We will liaise with Enovert to agree the next steps for the site. We would like to thank you for your patience and cooperation during this time."



Friends of Ruabon Heritage Trail group are in the process of creating a Ruabon Heritage Website which will be linked to the heritage trail.

We would like to invite people with interesting memories or photographs of Ruabon's Past to contact Friends of Ruabon : [info@friendsofruabon.co.uk](mailto:info@friendsofruabon.co.uk)

Tel: 01978821869

#### **PHOTOGRAPHS**

We are looking for photos of:

Ruabon Train Station

The High Street

Old Buildings

People

#### **MEMORIES**

Childhood

Earliest memories

Primary and secondary schooling

Growing up and being a teenager

Leaving home

Public Events in Ruabon's Past

Everyday life

People (with info on them)

These can then be used on the website for everyone to enjoy

We can scan and return personal photos - we will take great care with them.

If you would like to be involved in a talking history about what living in Ruabon was like, please contact us and we can record your memories or transcribe them to be used on the website.

Members of the community can also record their own memories and send them to us

## Issue 12 Community support response to Coronavirus- Wrexham:

### Briefing Sheet update 31st May 2020



#### Lockdown lifting update

The long awaited (three weeks) update on the changes to lockdown have been made by the First Minister which are now giving a little bit of extra freedom whilst still acknowledging the need for social distancing to remain a priority. The two-metre rule is remaining at the heart of the

Governments plans to restrict the spread of the virus. A useful Frequently Asked Questions sheet has been produced in time for the start on 1<sup>st</sup> June.

<https://gov.wales/changes-coronavirus-regulations-1-june-frequently-asked-questions>

<https://gov.wales/stay-local-to-keep-wales-safe>

**Shielded Group** - ~~NOT~~ lifted — At present the ~~Shielded Group~~ (those people who have had letters advising they stay in) in Wales are still recommended to remain isolated. The change to allow people in this category out from 1<sup>st</sup> June is currently ~~England only~~. **AMENDED** – The original has been left in on purpose to highlight how quickly things around Covid can change as the Health Minister for Wales announced on Sunday that Wales is now going to be aligned with England allowing Shielded people to meet up with others (with restrictions).

<http://www.wrexham.com/news/lockdown-to-be-eased-for-wales-most-clinically-vulnerable-those-shielding-can-take-outdoor-exercise-187014.html>

#### Test Trace and Protect:



The other significant development commencing this week will be the Test, Trace and Protect scheme to try and identify all contacts of someone who displays symptoms. We are hearing through the various 'experts' in the media that this will be a vital part of the ongoing control measures that will be in place.

<https://gov.wales/test-trace-protect.html>

Both measures we are told will only be effective if everyone is cooperative and compliant with the guidelines.

Although the number of cases in Wales (the North Wales region has seen the largest increase during the week) have risen slightly this will be linked initially to the increased level of testing rather than actual new cases- again only time will tell if the testing is giving sufficient information to the Health Planners to be effective with other preventative measures.

#### **Furlough changes:**

The changes that have been announced to the Furlough scheme will have an impact on many community organisations employing staff and other businesses. The changes are very complex but in principle there will be a need for an employer to be making up a percentage of wages for staff members who are being Furloughed.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKHMRCED/bulletins/28e0dbd>

#### **Public views on maintaining safety outside of the home:**

Public Health Wales have released their latest survey information on the public's attitude staying safe and lockdown.

### **Volunteer celebration:**



Have you been recruiting and managing volunteers in your community? If Yes AVOW can provide Volunteers week Certificates to recognise the many 100s of volunteers who collectively will have undertaken 10,000s of volunteer hours. Email [VB@avow.org](mailto:VB@avow.org) with details and they can be available for Volunteers Week which runs from 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> June.

There is an opportunity to celebrate Volunteers Week in a new virtual way. You can also join in with the AVOW virtual celebration tea- AVOW can provide you with the means to get together all you need is your own mug of tea and cake. Bring your own virtual piece of cake and a drink **Tuesday 2nd June from 2pm - 4pm** <https://bit.ly/2SSThu3> This is the chance for us to say thank you to you for all your dedication through these difficult times. Let us know if your organisation is doing anything to celebrate volunteers.

### **Volunteer Recruitment Drop-In:**

The first AVOW run monthly Drop-in session will be held virtually this Tuesday and is where anyone wanting to volunteer can meet up directly with representatives from a variety of organisations – the first virtual session will be on 2<sup>nd</sup> June. There are already 12 different organizations attending and will be ideal for people looking to do something different – sign up on <https://bit.ly/2TvqnR9> or email [VB@avow.org](mailto:VB@avow.org) if your organisation would like to take part.

Come and find out about the wide range of volunteer roles available in the area.

[vb@avow.org](mailto:vb@avow.org)

### **Do you have an office to open?**



There is considerable generic guidance around what to do before and after an office can become operational again. In AVOW we have been discussing the return closely with our licensees and have now gained a better understanding of some of the practicalities necessary to maintain the and welfare of staff, volunteers and visitor. Practical steps will include

temperature checking, reduction in touch points in kitchens, toilet, communal areas and general cleanliness. If you need any help contact [victoria.milner@avow.org](mailto:victoria.milner@avow.org)

<https://gov.wales/workplace-guidance-employers-and-employees-covid19>

To assist in planning the future a full risk assessment should be undertaken.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/> Health and Safety <http://www.wcva-ids.org.uk/avow/1112> Risk Management <http://www.wcva-ids.org.uk/avow/1112> .

Share any of your experiences or issues on [covid19@avow.org](mailto:covid19@avow.org)



*Wrexham Foodbank provides three-day food parcels for local people in financial crisis. If anyone is in need they should get a referral from one of the many agencies in Wrexham that do this (e.g. Citizen's Advice Bureau, Job*



General help on grants can be found at <https://avow.org/category/grants/> or email [nigel.davies@avow.org](mailto:nigel.davies@avow.org)

**REMEMBER STAY SAFE – SOCIAL DISTANCING -Help Save the NHS**

**Key web sites for resources and up to date information**



<https://avow.org/category/covid-19/>

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol  
Betsi Cadwaladr  
University Health Board

The Council is maintaining an information site where local and national information can be found.



<https://beta.wrexham.gov.uk/service/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information>



**Welsh Government advice for Voluntary Organisations**

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-the-third-sector-html> -



There is a vast amount of information available but be selective or you will spend more time reading rather than providing the resource.

<https://wcva.cymru/coronavirus-statement/>

Geldard's Solicitors <https://bit.ly/2XyRb5T>

Whittingham Riddell – accountants <https://bit.ly/2y2WPm2>

**Information disclaimer:**

AVOW hopes to keep this as a weekly briefing to share with our community's support information and guidance- if there are issues you want information on email

[john.gallanders@avow.org](mailto:john.gallanders@avow.org)

The content of this briefing is provided for information only. It is not intended to amount to advice on which you should rely. You must obtain professional or specialist advice before taking, or refraining from, any action based on the content. We do not accept responsibility for any errors, omissions, misleading statements, or the consequences thereof.

**THANK YOU TO DANA DAVIES FOR SENDING IN THIS INFORMATION**

# Social Prescribing

YOUR WELLBEING MATTERS TO US



Many of life's problems can make you feel unwell.

We offer confidential support and advice on matters impacting on your health and wellbeing, such as:

- Dealing with the stress of a new medical diagnosis
- Bereavement
- Isolation
- Debt
- Anxiety
- Depression

The next step

Ask your GP reception team to refer you, or refer directly to the team by emailing

[spt@rainbowcentrepnley.org.uk](mailto:spt@rainbowcentrepnley.org.uk)

stating full name, surgery registered with, and main reason for support



How it works: During the current lockdown, our sessions are completed via the phone or video call. We aim to contact you within 7 days



**Rainbow Centre** Penley



## The Wrexham Symphony Orchestra

In response to the closure of so many entertainment and socialising places and the continuing impact of the Virus, we have set up a public Facebook page called '**The Virtual Concert Hall**' and each day we are uploading a range of entertainment for you to enjoy.

Generally the daily schedule will work like this:

In the Morning (8am): Morning Thoughts and Music

Lunchtime (12 noon): Classic Comedy

Kids Time (3pm): Fun and Films

Evening Concert (7pm): Music right across the genres

After Hours: (10pm): Late Night Jazz Blues and Soul

Here is the link to the page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1106805319668553/>

It is a FREE page and people can upload their own favourite piece of music or performance. \_\_\_\_\_

## Wrexham Library Service



Welsh Government has announced plans for libraries to consider reopening. We are working with colleagues across Wales to identify the best way to achieve this in a safe and responsible way. Until then our buildings will remain closed. You can still access our online services via [www.wrexham.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/libraries) and follow the online service link.

Gwasanaeth Llyfrgell Wrecsam Mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi cyhoeddi cynlluniau i lyfrgelloedd ystyried ailagor. Rydym yn gweithio gyda chydweithwyr ledled Cymru i nodi'r ffordd orau o gyflawni hyn mewn ffordd ddiogel a chyfrifol.

Tan hynny bydd ein hadeiladau'n parhau ar gau. Gallwch barhau i gyrchu ein gwasanaethau ar-lein trwy [www.wrexham.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/libraries) a dilyn y ddolen [www.wrexham.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/libraries) a dilyn y ddolen [www.wrexham.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/libraries) ar-lein. phone Wrexham Library 01978 292090

# **RUABON ROVERS FOOTBALL CLUB**

**WE'VE ALL MISSED FOOTBALL DURING THIS LOCKDOWN, BUT RUABON HAS MISSED FOOTBALL FOR A LOT LONGER!**

**THE VILLAGE HAS BEEN WITHOUT A TEAM FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, AS THE VERY HEART OF FOOTBALL IN WALES WE BELIEVE THIS NEEDS RECTIFYING.**

**WE ARE FORMING A NEW CLUB 'RUABON ROVERS FC' A SENIOR MENS TEAM, WHICH WILL COMPETE IN THE 2020/21 SEASON AS PART OF THE CLWYD EAST LEAGUE. (SATURDAY'S)**

**WE ARE LOOKING FOR KEEN VOLUNTEERS TO HELP US CREATE AND PUSH FORWARD OUR COMMUNITY CLUB, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH.**

**FIND US ON FACEBOOK @RUABONROVERS**



**#RRFC  
#OURCOMMUNITY**

**FACEBOOK  
@RUABONROVERS**



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

RUABON

COMMUNITY

COUNCIL



# HERE TO HELP

**Do you or somebody you know need any help  
at this challenging time?**

**If you are self-isolating due to COVID-19 we can help with:**

Picking up shopping

Collecting Prescriptions

A friendly phone call

Urgent supplies

**Volunteers from Friends of Ruabon and  
Ruabon Community Council are here to help**

We want you to know that you are not alone

Just contact us via any of the below and we will do  
our best to help you (for free)

**Call or text: 07741 596 812    01978 824087**

**email: [info@friendsofruabon.co.uk](mailto:info@friendsofruabon.co.uk)**

**Facebook: Friends of Ruabon Viral Kindness**

**Check [phw.nhs.wales](http://phw.nhs.wales) for the latest advice**

Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on your doorstep. #ViralKindnessRuabon

**Ffion Austin–Community Agent for Ruabon& Penycae**  
**07751 778869**

- **Support Network around Wrexham** - A list of available contacts in the local community, amidst the COVID-19

[https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1rEZUPm6O1FUgBfT5cvk2KuotsnlmaLGP&ll=53.0128667861839%2C-2.97431870000026&z=11&fbclid=IwAR2enf66PSBMGYQL5Po677MoX-xKa\\_7xMljmWGgSULBTj2kiTVm3Huv6FYQ](https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1rEZUPm6O1FUgBfT5cvk2KuotsnlmaLGP&ll=53.0128667861839%2C-2.97431870000026&z=11&fbclid=IwAR2enf66PSBMGYQL5Po677MoX-xKa_7xMljmWGgSULBTj2kiTVm3Huv6FYQ)

- **Age Connects** – can support with food shopping, prescription collection, telephone befriending service.

**0845 054 9969**

- **British Red Cross** – Pharmacy support  
**01745 828330** Option 2: then leave a message

- **Age Cymru - Official Announcement.**

From Monday 23 March, we're offering a free check-in-and-chat telephone service for the over 70s in Wales who live alone.

It's hoped that the initiative will help provide some reassurances to older people, answer basic queries and link people to local services and support during the Coronavirus outbreak.

These are potentially difficult times for many older people, especially those living alone who may not have anyone to share their concerns. Others may just want to have a chat about what they saw on television last night. Hopefully, this initiative will help older people cope with some of the challenges arising from the Coronavirus outbreak.

 08000 223 444

 enquiries@agecymru.org.uk

 <http://bit.ly/CheckInAndChat>

- **Government Advice** -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely--2/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely?fbclid=IwAR2OtEYWmcXOSxkoQ8jRIE-mw1Botvu-avodQQKLzUuRT-KwmG1nNjv15sQ>

- **Welsh Government** - Looking out for each other safely

<https://gov.wales/safe-help?fbclid=IwAR3GRKssxSeWUqZDxehqNzc5ZpnCtn4scdwehZWi8Xt2DN1SvX5oC7-52Lk>

- **Digital Communities Wales** - Our DCW digital inclusion advisors are on hand to provide help with enquiries about digital inclusion and helping people get online in light of the Coronavirus. More information on how we can help can be found: <http://bit.ly/DCWCovid19>
- **Newcis** - Useful Contacts and Organisations  During this difficult time, NEWCIS have compiled a useful list of organisations that may be able to support you over the telephone   
[www.newcis.org.uk/useful-contacts/](http://www.newcis.org.uk/useful-contacts/)  
[Alzheimer's Society](#), [British Red Cross](#), [Carers Trust](#), [Dewis Wales](#), [Macmillan Cancer Support](#), [Marie Curie UK](#), [Mind](#), [No Panic](#), [PAPYRUS Prevention of Young Suicide](#), [SANE Mental Health Charity](#), [Tenovus Cancer Care](#), [Silver Line](#)
- **NEWCIS COVID-19 statement**: [www.newcis.org.uk/covid-19-newcis-statement/](http://www.newcis.org.uk/covid-19-newcis-statement/)
- **AVOW** - Services providing telephone befriending for people experiencing isolation.

Self-isolation may mean that some citizens will get no interaction at all. These services can provide telephone befriending for these people, ensuring some human interaction.

<https://avow.org/.../telephone-befriending-services-available/>

The Wrexham Community Map is an interactive map collated by AVOW and the COVID19 Community response, with area contacts across Wrexham County Borough, including Community Councils, Council Members, Community Agents where available. The map will be up-dated frequently with further contact details from volunteers at a community and street level.

If you have information to contribute to the above map, please get in touch with AVOW at 01978 312556 or email [COVIDcommunity@avow.org](mailto:COVIDcommunity@avow.org).

<https://avow.org/2020/03/25/wrexham-community-map/>

**Here are some useful numbers which may help if you need someone to talk to:**

- **Samaritans : 116 123**
- **Mind : 0300 123 3393 or text 86463**
- **Age UK : 0800 678 1602**
- **Rethink : 0300 5000 927**
- **Switchboard : 0300 330 0630**
- **The Silver Line : 0800 470 8090**
- **Food** [https://www.facebook.com/dragondinners/?hc\\_location=ufi](https://www.facebook.com/dragondinners/?hc_location=ufi)

# RUABON LIBRARY

3 High St, Ruabon, Wrexham LL14 6NH



## Ruabon Library News

Ruabon Library remains closed to the public until further notice. However, you can stay up-to-date with all of Wrexham Council services on: <https://beta.wrexham.gov.uk/> or follow Wrexham Library service on Facebook - Llyfrgelloedd Wrecsam | Wrexham Libraries and Twitter - @LlyfrgellWcm | @WxmLibraries

### **Did you know your Libraries are open online all hours?**

You can still access your library twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Staying safe at home, you can access thousands of e-books, e-audio books, e-magazines and comics. There is also access to a huge range of research and factual information, such as Ancestry and the Theory Test Pro - all within the sanctuary of home! All you need is a library card and PIN number. Check it out at [www.wrexham.gov.uk/services/libraries](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/services/libraries) and follow the link to online services.

[www.wrexham.gov.uk/services/libraries](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/services/libraries), click on the **Online Catalogue** link followed by the **Join the Library** link for a temporary membership.

## More News from Wrexham Library

### Online Book Group



Are you missing being part of a Reading Group? Welsh Libraries are launching Online Book Group Wales this week! It is a great opportunity for you to read along with this online community and share your thoughts on the chosen book. The selection will be voted by the public, and all are welcome to have

their say. Books will be available to download from our online facility BorrowBox and read as eBooks and/or eAudiobooks. To find out more and get involved, search for "Online Book Group Wales" on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/231290021468538/> **Free Temporary Online Membership**

Did you know that you can get a temporary online membership that will give you access to all of our online ebooks free of charge? Go to [www.wrexham.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/libraries) - Online services and select Online Catalogue and Join the Library. **Online Catalogue** <http://bit.ly/2btcIRt>  
**Website:** [www.wrexham.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/libraries); **Facebook; Twitter**  
Telephone Wrexham Library 01978 292090

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Thanks to Ennys Hughes for sending in the following piece which was forwarded to her by a friend.

## **"REMEMBER"**

### **Growing up in the 1950's - A Time of Innocence**

EVERYBODY who grew up in Fifties Britain will have his or her own indelible memories of their childhood, from the first taste of welfare orange juice to the birth of rock'n'roll. The nation was recovering from the ravages of the Second World War and the camaraderie of wartime was still evident throughout the country.

Despite the difficulties of day-to-day living, people had great pride in and loyalty to their country and seemed to share a common purpose in life. Families stayed together through the hard times and everybody knew their neighbours and had a sense of belonging. They would routinely leave their street doors on the latch and hang a key on a piece of string behind the letterbox when they were out for their children to come and go as they pleased.

Children waking up on Christmas morning in 1952 had experienced rationing of food and clothes all of their lives. It was quite normal to go without the sweets, biscuits, crisps and fizzy drinks that would be taken for granted by future generations. Before sweet rationing

ended in February 1953 the most prized thing in your Christmas stocking would have been a small, two-ounce bar of chocolate.

You probably didn't get your first black and white television set until the late Fifties. After all, only three million British households had one by 1954, with numbers increasing to almost 13million by 1964.

But it didn't matter if you had no television because you could play in the streets without the fear of traffic or the obstruction of parked cars. Buses and bicycles were the most popular modes of transport. In 1950 there were just under two million cars in Britain, with only 14 per cent of households owning one. The most popular models in the Fifties included the Ford Prefect 100E and the Austin A35 saloon.

Many of us who grew up then have memories of houses that were draughty in winter with curtains hung behind the street door to reduce the flow of cold air and frost that formed overnight on the inside of bedroom windows.

Outside, the larger urban areas suffered with dense, yellowish smogs - known as pea-soupers - caused by fog combining with coal-fire emissions. In 1952 a particularly thick smog shrouded London and caused the deaths of an estimated 12,000 people.

However, life was certainly not all doom and gloom. You grew up in a much safer environment than we can ever imagine these days. Children were able to enjoy the freedom of outdoor life. They played lots of rough-and-tumble games, got dirty and fell out of trees. The purple stains of iodine were always evident on the grazed knees of boys in short trousers.

There was no such thing as health and safety or children's rights. We were taught discipline at home and at school and corporal punishment was freely administered for bad behaviour.

There was no mugging of old ladies and people felt that it was safe to walk the streets. There was very little vandalism and no graffiti.

Telephone boxes were fully glazed and each contained a set of local telephone directories and a pay-box full of pennies.

Youngsters respected and feared people in authority such as policemen, teachers, and park keepers, knowing that they would get a clip around the ear if they were caught misbehaving. Home life was much different from today. Everyone seemed to have a gramophone, an upright piano and a valve radio in their front room and there were ticking clocks all around the house.

The kitchen was filled with products such as OMO washing powder and Robin starch and a whistle kettle was a permanent fixture on the kitchen stove.

Most adults smoked and there were ashtrays in every room, even in the bedrooms. Most homes didn't have a bathroom so people would either wash in a tin bath by the fireside or take a weekly trip to the local municipal baths where they could pay to have a hot bath in a little more comfort. Toilets were usually outside.

We still managed to eat lots of wholesome food, which was always freshly cooked, and mums seemed always to be baking and though many of us didn't have a fridge and went shopping for groceries every day. Perishable foods were bought in small amounts - just enough to last a day. It was quite usual to buy a single item of fruit.

On Sundays everyone had a roast dinner and leftovers were made into stews and pies to eat later in the week. In 1950, 55 per cent of young children drank tea with their meals. Bread and beef dripping was standard fare but we cringed at the sight of a curled-up Spam sandwich. That was even worse than the daily spoonful of cod liver oil many of us had to consume.

Boys and girls played street games together, such as run outs, hopscotch and British bulldog. In the playground schoolgirls practised handstands and cartwheels with their skirts tucked up under the elastic of their navy-blue knickers, while the boys played conkers.

We travelled in third-class compartments on train journeys to the seaside. In 1956 they were renamed second class. The change didn't move you any higher up the social ladder but it made you feel there was a bit less of a social gap. At the seaside you wore a knitted bathing costume on the beach.

Do you remember Pathé News at the cinema? Going to the pictures was everyone's favourite outing, with all those wonderful stiff-upper-lip British film stars such as John Mills, Jack Hawkins, Kenneth More and Dirk Bogarde and great war films such as *The Dam Busters*, epics such as *Ben-Hur* and comedies such as *The Belles of St Trinian's*. When the film ended everyone stood for the National Anthem and stayed until it finished playing.

For children, the Saturday morning pictures provided the best fun. Every week, 200 to 300 unruly children would descend on a cinema for a couple of hours of film and live entertainment. The manager would regularly stop the film and threaten to send you all home if you didn't behave and the solitary usherette was often forced to run for cover. It was controlled mayhem with the stalls and circle filled with children cheering for the goodies and booing the baddies. It introduced us to *The Lone Ranger* and *Zorro* and the slapstick comedy of *Mr Pastry* and *Buster Keaton*.

Dusty, old-fashioned sweetshops had high wooden counters jam-packed with boxes of ha'penny chews and other sweet delights. Remember *Lucky Bags* and frozen *Jubblys* and getting a sore tongue from sucking on gobstoppers, aniseed balls and *Spangles*? Then there were those old *Smith's* potato crisps. The salt was in a twist of blue paper and you always had to rummage around for it at the bottom of the bag. All your one-shilling-a-week pocket money would go on sweets and comics (yes, we used old money back then, pounds, shillings and pence).

It was the decade of skiffle music with *Lonnie Donegan* and of the start of rock'n'roll with *Bill Haley*, *Elvis Presley* and *Cliff Richard*.

Did you know that Cliff's first hit 'Move It' is credited as being the first rock'n'roll song produced outside the United States?

Other British singers such as Tommy Steele, Marty Wilde, Billy Fury and Adam Faith first came to fame in the Fifties. But while everyone now remembers rock'n'roll, in reality the record buyers were suckers for ballads and throughout the Fifties homegrown ballad singers had British girls swooning in the aisles.

It is hard to identify the Britain of today with how it was back then. The whole appearance of the country has changed, particularly in inner cities where so much building and development work has been done over the years. The war-torn dilapidated houses, derelict land and bomb sites that were the forbidden playgrounds of post war baby boomers are now long gone.

The decade was also a time of change both socially and technologically which in my opinion was the start of the Technology Revolution which we are all experiencing today. Who would have thought in the 1950/60's we would have powerful computers or mobile phones at home for example.

There was something cosy about growing up in the last decade in which most children retained their childish innocence to the age of 12 or 13 and enjoyed a carefree life full of fun and games. The stresses of adolescence and then adult life could wait. We were lucky but are children so lucky now?

### **Do You Remember ?:**

Class rooms heated by a coal fire in the corner. Milk at school in bottles that froze in winter. Cube of cheese once a month. Spud Guns, Catapults, Bow and Arrows, Wooden Carts with wheels from old prams and no brakes, Davy Crocket Hats made from fur. Bowie Knives, Car Number plate spotting; Beano, Dandy, Eagle, Topper comics and Musical Express.

# RUABON WI NEWS NO. 7

## "I Have Travelled the World" (No.2.)

by Margaret Williams, President of Ruabon W.I.

Hello everyone,

As I write, it seems we are taking tentative steps to an easing of the lockdown. It will be a relief to us all, I'm sure, provided we are able to keep safe. I think this will be the 12<sup>th</sup> week of our isolation but there have been highlights which have brightened our new lives, one of them being the planting of sunflower seeds. I set about my contribution to the summer display with great gusto, tending my little plants with great care, and what happened? They were attacked by a cheeky blackbird which scattered the compost far and wide. I have had to start again. The lesson that gardening has taught me is that we have to be patient!

"All great achievements require time." So said Maya Angelou, and time is what we have more of now. If my sunflower plans succeed, perhaps they will count as my great achievement!

The last time I 'spoke' to you I told you a little about my time in Ghana, West Africa. Most of our shopping took place in the Kingsway store which was a supermarket and department store combined. This was at a time when supermarkets were only beginning to take off in Britain and it was here that I bought most of my needs although sometimes I gave my custom to a Lebanese trader who also

had a grocery store. The business community in Kumasi was varied. Large British companies rubbed shoulders with large European companies and there were many, many traders from India and the Middle East. Biggest of all, however, was the open-air market, the largest in West Africa, home to more than 10,000 stalls daily and where anything could be bought and where most of the Ghanaian people shopped. Most of these stalls were owned by Ghanaian women, a powerful and business-minded group whose influence extended far and wide. In contrast, fruit could be bought on the pavement outside Kingsway where several 'mammy-women' with their babies sold oranges, grapefruit, limes and bananas, but not as we know them. They were green. These fruits did not seem to change colour unless they were overripe. **In temperate climates, the green skin turns orange as the weather cools down in the autumn. This is because the green pigment chlorophyll is removed from the fruit, similar to what happens when the leaves of deciduous trees fall in autumn. In Ghana, it is always hot so the chlorophyll is preserved and the skin of the oranges remains green. I think I prefer to see the familiar colour we know.**

Colour was everywhere. It was enhanced by the sun - do we not also put on our brightest clothes in the summer? Most vivid of all was the Kente cloth which was worn on important occasions and celebrations. Woven in four inch strips, usually by men, and then interlaced to form a length of material, it was worn like a toga. I think the biggest

occasion of celebration I witnessed was the welcome durbar given to visiting royalty (UK) in Kumasi. The chiefs of all the different tribes assembled in the large stadium, and were carried in on palanquins, borne on the shoulders of their retinue. They wore their brilliant, ceremonial Kente cloth robes and also heavy gold arm, leg and ankle bands, crowned overall by heavy gold head-dresses, all symbols of their importance and power. They were protected from the sun by large flouncing, bouncing umbrellas. The whole lengthy procession was accompanied by throbbing drumming and energetic dancing resulting in a whole day of festivity and excitement.

The history of the Gold Coast, later Ghana, is very interesting. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were several conflicts between the Ashanti people and Britain and by roughly 1900 Britain had established her position as the dominant force in the country. The Ashanti 'king', the Asantehene and his family had been exiled to the Seychelles and there are several accounts of the Ashanti Wars to be found on the internet. In particular, we learn that Robert Baden-Powell was one of the British commanding officers. He later founded the Boy Scout movement.

If that durbar was a special occasion, everyday life was a much quieter affair. The daily routine of going to work soon became normal. Added to that was the adjustment of having a servant or two in the house. We had a cook and a younger 'smallboy'. The cook prepared what I asked of him,

the 'smallboy' helped and generally did the laundry and housework. We got on well and I think of them fondly. We entertained a lot of people, those who lived locally and also visitors on official business. This was usual for a lot of the Europeans and so different from our lives in Britain. It was an interesting time for us and we made nice friends, both European and Ghanaian.

But what about the Rhinoceros beetles I mentioned before? We encountered them when driving back to Kumasi from Accra. It was early evening - dark falls at 6p.m. in these parts - and the car developed a fault. We had been driving along laterite roads through this heavy forest region when we were forced to pull in at a roadside petrol station. How lucky we were to come across it! As darkness fell, the petrol station lights came on, the only illumination for miles around. We were unable to get the car fixed and were somewhat dismayed to be stranded in the 'bush'. As we pondered on what to do, we were suddenly assailed by a squadron of rhinoceros beetles which came flying out of the forest. About four or five inches long with a hard, black protective body covering and a large 'horn' projecting in front, they were attracted to the lights and as they collided with any hard object they fell to the ground with a loud clatter, in us, on us and all around us. We put our arms up to shield our heads but they didn't hurt us. A man came out from the nearby village and kindly offered us shelter in his home. Just then a car came along, also going to Kumasi. We accepted their offer of a lift, leaving our car overnight.

The following day, arrangements were made to collect it and tow it back home. I think now of this incident with a feeling of disbelief that I experienced such excitement long ago and that such hospitality was offered by an unknown man.

We returned to Britain in 1963. Beatlemania was at its height. John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1964. The Swinging Sixties were upon us. Our lives assumed a more normal pattern which I expect you, my members, all know - the ups and downs of family life, the daily work pattern and also the triumphs of taking pleasure in small things. Sometimes challenges confront us but we generally overcome them, they fade into the past and we are left with our memories.

My biggest challenge at the moment is getting my sunflowers to grow. Who should be so lucky?

I leave you now with the following:-

***“There was an old lady from Kent,  
Whose nose was remarkably bent,  
And the neighbours suppose  
That she followed her nose,  
'cos they don't know which way she went!”***

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If you know of anyone who would like to receive the Ruabon News Letter each week by email (free of charge) please contact:

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This News Letter is only as good as the items received for publication. Please keep sending in your news and 'thank you.' Sybil Bremner.