

## “WHO TURNED THE LIGHTS ON?”

*A talk by Roy Tarbutt about the history of the Llangrannog Welfare Committee given at the Welfare Committee AGM April 2010*

Roy Tarbutt, the Guest speaker at Llangrannog Welfare Committee A.G.M. on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2010, took for his topic “The History of the Welfare Committee”, and in particular asked the question “Who turned the lights on?”

Roy started by pointing out that Llangrannog Welfare Committee has been established for over eighty years, since the 1930s. In July 1932, the first minute that Roy could find made mention of a previous meeting and resigning Chairman. For the evening's talk, Roy had picked out two important themes which run through the history of the Welfare Committee.

1. Projects in the Village
2. The Welfare Committee's work to represent the residents

He looked specifically at two decades, the 1930s and the 1960s.

In the **1930s** the village may have looked much the same as it does today, but the way of life was totally different. One of the first projects that Roy had found was the building of the steps to Cilborth (“The Second Beach”). In the 1930s the Committee realised that everyone could walk to Cilborth beach, but maybe not get back, so the Welfare commissioned, undertook and, in the main, paid for the work of building steps

up the cliff. They opened the steps and had a tea party to celebrate, for which the men were paid 4/- (20p each) to boil the water, while the women were paid 2/6d (12½p) to wash up. The Committee maintained the steps until 1967 when the Council took over.

At that time the stream (Nant Hawen) had not been culverted, the bridge was in a bad state of repair and the Council could not afford to repair it, so the Welfare did it. In addition, everybody's water was still coming from wells. The villagers asked for mains water supply, and the Welfare began to put pressure on the Council. Meanwhile, members of the Welfare began to do the ground work, and found that Penrallt Farm had a good water supply. When checked by the Health Authority it was found to be of good quality and sufficient to supply 72 houses in Llangrannog year round. To ensure constant supply, a reservoir would also need to be built and the Quarry was deemed suitable. Eventually the water was piped to every house willing to pay the £2 connection fee and an annual 8p in the £ water rate.

The village in the 30s was quite a dark place. A public meeting instructed the Committee to light the Village which was done by the Cambrian Electric Light Co. Villagers met and decided what month the lights should be turned on, and what hours they should shine. The Committee continued to pay for the lights for nearly forty years, until 1975, when the Community Council took over the job. However, there was some unrest in the Village over this, because the Welfare had been providing the service free of charge to residents, but the Council would be charging through the rates.

Pollution was very bad in 1933. People were using the river and beach as the place to dump rubbish and human excrement. A public meeting was called and the Welfare

agreed to organise a thrice-weekly refuse collection, but threatened to prosecute anyone continuing to deposit rubbish.

In this decade, the twenty-year saga of the proposed Village hall began. The Village decided it needed a hall, and, eventually, after ten years, a site was purchased (it is the site of the garden). When the hall was not built, the top part of the site was made into a garden and the bottom part was rented out, as a garden, at 1/- (5p) a year to Castle Rock. This arrangement went on until 1998, when the Welfare Committee were able to repossess the lower garden, and make it into the amenity space it is today. Because of the timing of its opening (2000) it is known as the Millennium Garden, and is a beautiful public space containing mosaics by the Little Art Group and memorial plaques. There is still no village hall.

At that time the cost of all these projects was funded by money-raising events. There were four or five events a year: concerts, carnivals, eisteddfodau, flower shows, and races. Everyone was expected to turn up, and contribute.

The second decade which Roy shared with the meeting was the **1960s**, a time of big planning applications. Had any one of these applications been successful the village would now be a very different place, and without help from the Welfare some of these applications would probably have been successful. One application was at Llety Crannog fields for “holiday chalets”. Initially it was thought the application was for a couple of holiday chalets, but a trip to the Planning Offices showed the application was for 140 chalets, toilets and shops. A public meeting was called and everybody agreed to oppose it. The upshot was rejection of the application, followed by an appeal, with an Inspector from Cardiff. The Welfare Committee appointed a solicitor and gave permission

for the Solicitor to instruct a barrister. The applicant withdrew. The Committee then offered to buy the fields but it was rejected. The next application was at Troedrhiwgam, and was for 50 houses. The Council consulted directly with the Welfare and the application was rejected twice (following a resubmission).

In the 1960s, there was a lack of a TV signal, although Cllr Ian ap Dewi could remember his friend who lived at Glynafon Stores on the sea front being able to get their television signal from RTE in Ireland. Providing a cable T.V. System for the village was another big project for the Welfare Committee. The Welfare found the money, did the work, raised a mast, built a booster and laid a cable down to the Church Hall, where there was another booster, and then cabled most houses in the village. Everyone paid a contribution to the TV fund. In 1971 BBC2 came along and the mast was added to; in 1974 colour came involving further work. In 1996, the BBC built an aerial at Penrallt to cover most of the village. At that point there was some money in the TV kitty still, so every resident was given £30 to put up an aerial.

All these projects and actions highlight the intense and very hard work put in by the Welfare Committee at different times over 80 years. The work still goes on in a similar way, raising money (usually through Duck Races now), taking on projects that are of concern to the village and the residents, and, where necessary, fighting for the good of the whole community.