

NEWSLETTER

Cymdeithas Ddinesig Bro Porthaethwy

Menai Bridge and District Civic Society

CYLCHLYTHYR

Ebrill/April 2026

Page/Tudalen 1

Dates for your meeting diary, any Internet links to be issued closer to the day. Meetings are mainly in the War Memorial Community Centre, Water Street, Menai Bridge

9th April 2026 Thursday 7.00p.m. - The history and work of the North Wales Police Rural Crime Team'. Rhys Evans - Community Police

14th May 2026 Thursday 7.00p.m. - From Anglesey to Mesopotamia: A nurse's life during World War I. Angharad. Talk re-scheduled from May

11th June 2026 7.00p.m. Thursday - Genealogy - Family Tree (To be confirmed) Audrey Jones

27th June 2026 Saturday PLAS CADNANT GARDEN PARTY

9th July 2026 Outing/visit to local Gardens., details to follow.

8th August Bridge Celebrations—Saturday in Menai Bridge.

10th September AGM and talk by Stephen Edwards

BRIDGE CELEBRATIONS

Saturday 8th August 2026

In August the Civic Society will join with the War Memorial Community Centre/the Canolfan to help celebrate the 200th

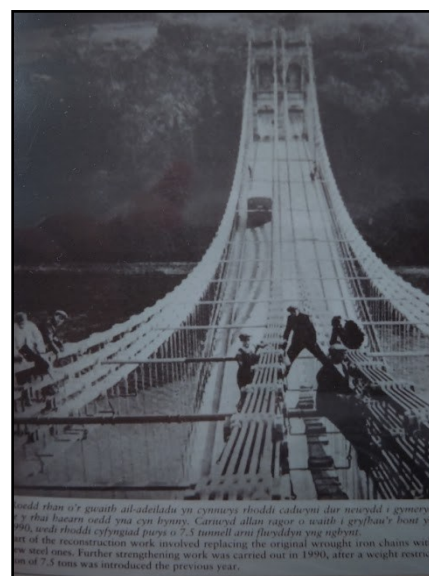


Anniversary of the opening of the Bridge (30th January 1826) and Telford's birthday (9th August 1757,) as part of the festivities organized by the Town Council.

Visit the many stalls and activities on the Football Ground, in the Heritage Centre but especially the Canolfan, any time between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00p.m. The Society is combining with the Canolfan to provide refreshments, photo display and if possible some old videos of the area. Ann Kitson, from the Society Committee will be leading short guided walks. Ann is also a qualified Tour Guide. A selection of good quality, unframed prints of Menai Bridge, in the 1800s, donated by the family of the late Mr John Cowell, will be on sale in aid of Society funds—in particular maintenance of the work begun in the Pier Gardens, following the design by pupils from Ysgol David Hughes.

The prints can also be viewed at evening meetings, before August. Some, especially the view of the entrance to the Bridge, are only available in small numbers (see top three photos).

The photos on the bottom right show the entrance in about 1938 before it was demolished as part of the work programme on the Bridge. Some of the reconstruction work involved replacing the original wrought iron chains with new steel ones. Further strengthening work



Images courtesy of Anglesey Archives.

was carried out in 1990, after a weight restriction of 7.5 tons was introduced the previous year. Now that phrase has a familiar ring to it! The Institute of Civil Engineers unveiled a commemorative plaque near the Bridge on the 30th January, hosted by the Heritage Trust (see page 3).

Inside this Issue

Bridge Celebrations	1
National and Civic News	2
Recent Programme Notes	2/3
Future Events Avalanche?	3
New Picnic Bench Medlars	4
Pictures of the Past	4
Contacts	4

NATIONAL AND CIVIC TRUST NEWS

Planning matters seem to be in the news recently. Whether it is the plans for Anglesey to 'enhance' its status as the Energy Island or more local developments, such as Aldi at Fourcrosses. What do you want?

For Energy

Porth Wen Solar Farm (Llanbadrig): Built around 2023, this 190-acre site was damaged during Storm Darragh in January 2025, with hundreds of panels reportedly ripped off their mountings. It is operated by EDF Renewables UK.

Alaw Môn Solar Farm: A controversial 660-acre development approved by the Welsh government in late 2025, located near Llyn Alaw to the south of Cemaes, designed to power roughly 34,000 homes.

Maen Hir Proposal: A large-scale 360MW proposal covering roughly 3,000 acres across areas including Rhosybol and Llanerchymedd, aimed for development.

Wylfa in Anglesey, is set to host the UK's first Small Modular Reactor (SMR) project, developed by Great British Energy – Nuclear, with construction of up to **three** Rolls-Royce SMR units planned. The project aims to supply power to the grid by the mid-2030s, creating thousands of jobs and generating clean energy for approximately 3 million homes. Wales will become an exporter of energy.

Food store You may wish to note that a proposed **Aldi** store near Bourne Lincolnshire, has been refused because of its obtrusive location in the countryside.

A plan for the store and a 127-space car park was proposed by Aldi Stores Limited on land near West Road, but was refused by South Kesteven District Council because of the scheme's design and rural location. On appeal the Planning inspector described the proposed contemporary-style glazing and timber building as a "standard form of commercial development", which would impact on nearby woodland because of its "imposing presence due to its size and position". The inspector concluded that the appeal site (food store) would "severely erode the rural character of the site", appearing as a "significant, urbanising development that would extend obtrusively into the countryside".* Isn't our countryside just as important and a valuable asset for residents and tourists alike? What about the 'brownfield site' in the middle of Menai Bridge (the old Baptist Chapel Site). Develop this before more farmland is sacrificed. And what happened to the 'Green Wedge' - the Planning Inspectors decision to maintain the open countryside between Llanfairpwll and Menai Bridge.

Liz Moyle

* from the Planner Magazine.

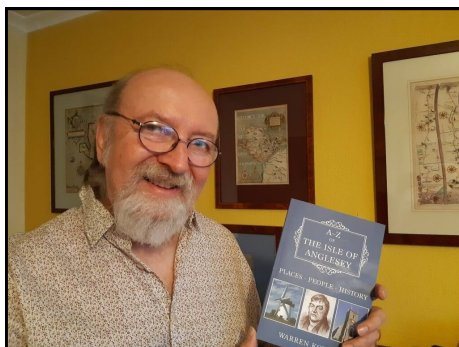
RECENT PROGRAMME NOTES

8th January 2026 Thursday, 2.00 p.m. **Guided visit to the Oriel Llangeferni and viewing of some of the Archives about Menai Bridge.** Despite the threat of snow we had a record turnout at the Oriel, Llangeferni. The Tunnicliffe and Kyffin Williams exhibitions are superb and so different. Many thanks to the Oriel staff for their warm welcome, guiding us round all their historical exhibits and organizing a display of photos and artefacts from old Menai Bridge. Chatting about all the photos (copies, so as not to risk the originals) over tea and bara brith was a delight; Who'd have thought that they used to herd sheep across the Bridge as late as the 1940s. The Bridge was freed from toll on 31st December 1940. Following on from the visit the Society has also worked in the Archives Office, Llangeferni, to help add information (names of people especially) to the Archives catalogue of photos of the town. Next visit to complete this work will be in June. Do you have any old photos of 'events' in Menai Bridge—especially the 1960s and 70s?

12th February 2026 - History of the Menai

Suspension Bridge - As we help celebrate the 200th Anniversary of the opening of the Suspension Bridge we welcomed Dr. Warren Kovach who gave us such an

interesting and authoritative talk. The Bridge is impressive now goodness knows the impact it must have made 200 years ago. Further details of Dr Kovach's researches into North Wales history can be found at his website <https://warrenkovach.co.uk/>



Members at Oriel Môn. The special exhibition of Kyffin Williams' work ends in July—well worth a visit.



Special viewing of Archive Exhibits at Oriel Môn. They were copies so we could handle them.

FUTURE EVENTS

Lectures are held in the Lounge of the War Memorial Community Centre, Water Street, Menai Bridge usually on the second Thursday of the month but please note the start of Meeting will change to the evening in the spring, following the change to the clocks.

This year the clocks go forward on the 26th March 2026 and go back again on the 25th October. Whatever the start time refreshments will be available 15 minutes beforehand. The Society reserves the right to make reasonably necessary alterations to arrangements, if for example the Speaker is ill or the Centre is not available. Where possible we will notify members by e-mail and offer an alternative venue and speaker. If you don't already receive our 'Latest News' e-mails, and would like to, please let the Secretary know (see page 4 for details).

14th May 2026 Thursday 7.00p.m. - **From Anglesey to Mesopotamia:** A nurse's life during World War I. Angharad Bowen-Holmes. Talk rescheduled from May.

11th June 2026 7.00p.m. Thursday - **Genealogy - Family Tree** Audrey Jones.

27th June 2026 Saturday **GARDEN PARTY AT PLAS CADNANT** Start at 1.00 p.m. An exciting programme of music, dance and theatre and the prize winning Gardens. Prepaid entry £7.50.

9th July 2026 Thursday. Day time visit. Outing/visit to local Gardens—details to follow.

8th August 2026 no formal meeting but visit the MB War Memorial Community Centre, the Canolfan, any time between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00p.m. The Society is combining with the Canolfan to provide refreshments, photo display and if possible some old videos of the area. A selection of good quality prints of Menai Bridge in the 1800s, donated by the family of the late Mr. John Cowell, will be on sale in aid of Society funds—in particular maintenance of the work begun in the Pier Gardens, following the design by pupils from Ysgol David Hughes.

10th September 2026 Thursday 7.00 p.m.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING This is a formal notice of the AGM to be held in the Menai Bridge War Memorial Community Centre, Menai Bridge. A talk by Mr Stephen Edwards will follow the AGM. Mr Edwards, a Role Model for 'Big Ideas Wales', has a varied career ranging from film making, presenting for BBC Radio Cymru, working on documentaries for ITV, helping with the International Snowdon Event.....

8th October 2026 Thursday 7.00 p.m. Details in next Newsletter.

Please note that the clocks go back on Sunday, October 25, 2026. Our meeting in November will be in the afternoon.

Maralyn Pryke—Davies

RECENT PROGRAMME NOTES CONTINUED.

12th March 2026 . 'It's never too Late'

Edwina Jones.

Edwina Jones is a born storyteller who involved her audience in her travels to becoming an author. Her book, called *Consequences* grabs your attention and no I won't tell you the surprise ending! Many thanks for an entertaining evening.



Their contractor discovered that some of the rock above one of the promenade seating areas was unstable, so it was removed. The Council are now re-modelling the site, leaving room for more planting than before; which is a bonus.

The plants at the very top, flat part of the garden have weathered the Winter well with very few losses. Further ground cover planting will take place in the next few weeks.

The Society will enter into an agreement to maintain what they have planted and see that it is well established.



Planting is just the beginning and we will set aside a sum each year to see that the high standard continues. Specific donations for the garden maintenance are always welcome and will be 'ring-fenced'.



AVALANCHE?

Our President, Anthony Tavernor has been working hard at the Pier Garden with a new planting scheme reflecting the unique micro climate and the input from the suggestions made from pupils of Ysgol David Hughes in the Pier Project. A month ago he was surprised to be told about a small fall of rock by the promenade, luckily not near where he was working. The County Council came promptly to clear it up and check further.



Porthaethwy – Mynedfa Ynys Môn
Menai Bridge – Gateway to Anglesey

COMMITTEE

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See our Website at
www.menaibridgecivicsociety.org.uk

NEW PICNIC BENCH AND REFURBISHED BENCHES FOR THE PIER.



Thanks to the hard work and dogged determination of Kevin and Ali Wood, and grant aid from Aethwy Alliance, we now have some splendid 'new' benches in the small garden by the Pier. What a difference they've made. The refurbishment of the benches was carried out by Seiriol Men's Shed in Haulfre. The matching, really new, picnic bench, in particular, is popular. Can't beat that view; fine dining with style! The Pier Gates are also being painted; wouldn't it be good if the County Council could paint the railings too? Would look very smart for the Bridge 200 Celebrations.



FIRST BLET YOUR MEDLARS?

First blet your medlars sounds like something out of Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management. Rather like 'First catch your hare', but it isn't and neither apparently did she say 'First catch your hare'.

John Lindley introduced the (blet) term in his 1835 book, *Introduction to Botany*. Perhaps introduced is being generous as the French have been using the verb 'blettir' (overripe) since goodness knows when. Anyway what do you do when you catch, or rather pick, your medlars; you leave them to rot! Medlars are picked in the late autumn and should be left to ripen for several weeks until they go brown and squishy and they are then sweet enough to suck or spoon out, or make into jelly or curd. The consistency of apple sauce with a hint of cinnamon and something else, lemon perhaps; a unique flavour. A popular pairing for cheeses, cold meats, and pâté.

Used in folk medicine as well as to eat; brought from the Middle East to Europe by the Romans then spread, so to speak, throughout their Empire. Still popular in Chaucer's and Shakespeare's time, being a fresh fruit available in mid winter, and referred to by what was then a bawdy name, and is now considered vulgar. Also promoted in WW2 when foraging for food was encouraged, medlars are slowly making a come back in this country. The medlar (*Mespilus germanica*) is a close relative of roses, crab apples, and quinces. Not being derived from citrus fruit it is a

genuine jelly not a citrus marmalade as EU directives inform us. What would they make of "Medlar curd" then, or indeed medlar

custard? Originating in the Middle East, Azgil or medlars are still popular and widely grown in northern Iran (Gilan province) and are a traditional part of the winter solstice celebration.



This image was originally posted to [Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/43272765@N04/52395298893) by gailhampshire at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/43272765@N04/52395298893>.

Plant your own tree, why not? Find a friend who has got some? But in the meantime try a specialist grocer or the Internet? Internet AI (Artificial Intelligence) offers some precise but quite strange, possibly helpful information e.g. "Blet (overripe) is different from Blette (Swiss chard). It is not to be confused with BLET the acronym for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen.

PICTURES OF THE PAST- where were they? Answers.



Thought to be National Baby Week. Location: On the Pier? 1918, during World War I. A national health campaign promoting infant and maternal health,



Visit by the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII, to open the Bowling Green in May 1934. Seen here opposite what was Beach House shop.



Bridge Street, still much the same, minus donkey cart and sadly minus trees. Is this the local Doctor out on his rounds? Who has any photos of the Green

Can anyone confirm where the National Baby Week photo was taken please?

Who has any of their own pictures of previous Bridge Celebrations, work or activities that they are willing to share— free cuppa if you bring them along to the Canolfan on the 8th August 2026.