

LANGUAGE LEVEL: A2-PRE-INTERMEDIATE

MAN VS HORSE!

AN UNUSUAL RACE

¿Una maratón de hombres contra caballos? La idea, aunque disparatada, ya es una tradición en esta aldea de Gales, especializada en eventos absurdos.

Can a man run faster than a horse? Most people would say, "Obviously not." Well, this month we visit Llanwrtyd Wells in Powys, Mid Wales, where people believe a man can win. This small town, lost in the Welsh hills and forests, is the location of a unique event: the annual Man versus Horse Marathon. Who will win this year's race on June 13th? Will it be a man on foot, or a horse and rider¹?

AN ECCENTRIC PLACE

Llanwrtyd Wells has only 601 inhabitants, but has created many unusual festivals. There are the

World Bog Snorkelling² Championships, the Chariot Race³, the Real Ale Wobble⁴ and many more events.

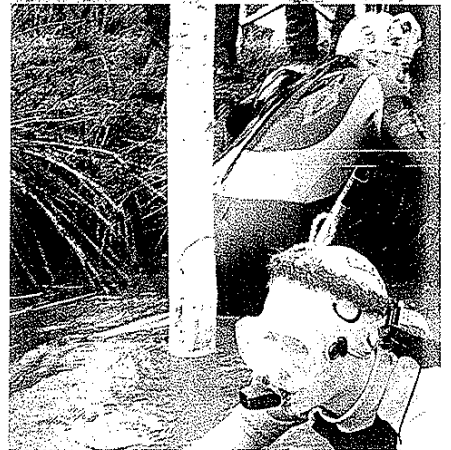
Why are the people of Llanwrtyd Wells so successful at inventing unusual festivals? Some people say it's something in the water – and they may be right! Llanwrtyd Wells has been famous since Victorian times because of a natural spring⁵ which provides terrible-smelling, sulphurous water with incredible curative powers.

BEER

There is, however, a more probable cause: the town's Heart of Wales



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brewery⁶ and its beer. The Man versus Horse Marathon seems to confirm this theory. One evening in 1980, landlord⁷ Gordon Green listened to an argument⁸ between two customers in his pub, the Neuadd Arms. One man insisted that, in a 20-mile race across country⁹, a man was equal to any horse. The other man answered: "It's impossible!" Gordon Green decided to test the challenge¹⁰ and organised the first race.

Llanwrtyd Wells

Llanwrtyd Wells is a proud town: it claims to be the smallest town in Britain with the cleanest air, and the most spectacular scenery. The river Irton runs through it and salmon come every year to deposit

their eggs higher up the river. Llanwrtyd Wells first became famous in the 18th century when the local vicar Theophilus Evans discovered the curative powers of its mineral springs. The water of one

sulphur spring cured the vicar's scurvy¹⁴. Visitors came in Victorian times to drink these terrible, bad-smelling waters. Courageous people can still sample the town's unique water today.

1. a person riding a horse
2. a swimming competition in a bog
3. a race in a chariot
4. a game of chance
5. a natural source of water
6. a place where beer is made
7. the person who owns a pub
8. a discussion
9. the countryside
10. a challenge
11. a small boat
12. a narrow boat
13. a small boat
14. a skin disease