

drawback was the large amount of dog faeces scattered on the promenade, the beach and the surrounding walkways.

"Puppies like to sniff the most revolting things, and Baxter was no different.

"I often had to pull him away from a pile of excrement, but I didn't worry too much - after all, he had been fully vaccinated."

Bethan and her family were in for an unpleasant shock.

"Baxter woke up in the night and vomited. The following day he was tired and listless, refused to eat and drink, and started to have very bad diarrhoea.

"I took him to the vet, where they gave him an in-

"I was shocked - he had been vaccinated a few months ago against this potentially life-threatening illness."

Parvovirus is contagious and is spread from dog to dog by direct or indirect contact with faeces. It can be especially severe in puppies.

To Bethan's despair, the result came back positive. "Our seven-month-old puppy, vaccinated, loved and well cared for, could die.

"What followed was several days in quarantine, kept on a drip, away from his family, with the risk of him dying hanging over us.

"The disease is so contagious, we couldn't see him in case we carried the infection and passed it on to

"Despite full and up to date vaccinations, dogs are still vulnerable to parvovirus and other bacterial and viral infections, spread to them by coming into contact with the faeces of other infected dogs."

Bethan said vets had told her that there were many cases currently in south Wales.

"Maybe some people think that it'll be okay if they don't pick up their dog's mess, as other people leave it and that it doesn't matter - but it does!"

"We all love our dogs, they are members of the family, and it would be heart-breaking to lose them.

"Please make sure our local area stays as clean and disease-free as possible. Baxter won't miss me, but I don't want other dogs and owners to face the same ordeal."

# A night out at the cinema was local pupils' reward!



**THE St David's Church in Wales primary school at Colwinston enjoyed a cinema night recently - as a reward for the children who had recently performed exceptionally well in the new national reading and numeracy tests.**

*The children tucked into popcorn as they watched the film with all of their friends.*

**The school has an open day on Thursday, March 13.**

IMAGES BY GEMMA GRIFFITHS PHOTOGRAPHY

## Novice surfer was rescued by lifeboat on a busy Saturday

**PORTHCAWL'S RNLI Rose of the Shires was launched at 9:25am on Saturday (February 22) to aid a fishing craft with engine failure and a capsized dinghy a quarter of a mile east of Porthcawl Breakwater.**

The volunteer crew were then diverted to a second call when a surfer was reported in danger of being swept out of Sandy bay.

The small fishing boat was taken in tow and returned safely to Porthcawl's new marina where Porthcawl Coastguard Unit confirmed that the casualties on board were fine.

The RNLI's Atlantic 85 inshore lifeboat then returned to sea and located the capsized dinghy.

During the return tow, and just within the shelter

of the breakwater, a surfer was reported calling for help.

"The decision was made to immediately release the tow and go to the assistance of the surfer," said Helmsman Simon Emms.

"Crewman Etienne Cronje managed to swim onto the slipway with the tow line and with the aid of shore helpers, the upturned dinghy was pulled safely into the marina.

"We located the surfer, who was caught in a rip current and being swept alongside the Eastern Promenade wall towards the breakwater. We managed to get the male surfer on board the lifeboat and returned him to the station".

Back in the safety of the lifeboat station, the surfer explained that it was his first attempt at surfing; unfortunately, it had turned out to be a frightening experience.

Spokesman Ian Stroud said: "We have been to the assistance of several surfers and swimmers who have been caught in the rip current alongside Eastern Promenade in the past 18 months.

"The water flow appears to have changed, causing these incidents in this part of Sandy Bay. We would ask all swimmers and surfers to be aware of this change to what is normally regarded as a safe beach for water sports," he added.



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## Top choice support f

**BARRY Male Voice Choir** has agreed to take part in a concert in the new hall at Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church on March 28, at 7.30pm, in aid of an overseas charity.

Event organiser Godfrey Knight told The GEM: "We will be raising funds for Haiti Hospital Appeal, which helps to give mothers and babies safe births in Haiti."

A total of 74 per cent of Haitian births take

place at some medical support face a one in of dying during The country the poorest in and suffered a ing earthquake Since then has campaigner people who is the basic need life, such as get drinking water

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