Swansea, in South Wales, is a long way from Hollywood. But everyone in town celebrated in 2002 when a local girl won an Oscar. Catherine Zeta-Jones was born in Swansea in September 1969. Jones is the most popular surname in Wales, but her middle name ‘Zeta’ is very unusual. It was Catherine’s grandmother’s name, and it originally came from an old boat in Swansea harbour!

Catherine Zeta-Jones grew up in Swansea, and she started acting at school. In 1998, she got her first big film part – she was Elena in Zorro, with Antonio Banderas!

Catherine Zeta-Jones is rich and famous now. She lives in the USA for most of the year, but she often comes home to Swansea and spends holidays in Wales.
Godalming’s hero, by Tanya Keller, 12

Jack Phillips was born and grew up in Godalming, in the south of England, and he became a wireless operator on ships. In the early 1900s, wireless operators used a machine to send radio messages in morse code.

On 11th April 1912, Jack Phillips left Southampton on the world’s biggest ship – the Titanic. The next day was his twenty-fifth birthday. On the night of 15th April, the Titanic hit an iceberg in the Atlantic. It began to sink, but Jack Phillips stayed in the wireless room and sent messages for help. He was young and very brave. He was still sending messages when the ship sank, and he died.

Another ship, the Carpathia, heard the messages and came to help. Today there is a memorial to Jack Phillips near Godalming church. You can also visit the Godalming museum and learn all about his life.
Liverpool’s greatest footballer, by Mark Weston, I3

A lot of famous people come from Liverpool – like The Beatles. But my local hero is football player Steven Gerrard. Gerrard was born on 30th May, 1980 in Whiston, about 8 kms from Liverpool. He loved football as a child, and he was very talented. One day a talent scout saw him play, and Steven won a place at the Liverpool Academy – a school for young football players. He was nine years old!

In November 1998, Steven played in his first match for Liverpool Football Club. Then in May 2000, he played for England. In 2009, Gerrard was the Footballer of the Year, and in 2012 he played his 100th match for England. Steven Gerrard is one of the greatest players in British football, but he’s never forgotten his hometown. Most players change football teams every few years, but Steven Gerrard has always played for Liverpool.