

St. Dyfnog's Church

Newsletter

Harvest Edition.

.October 2011

Llanrhaeadr

From the Vicar

“ See, how the lilies of the field grow! ”

Harvest speaks of how everything we have is a gift from *God*, given and worked on by our hands, yes, a gift perhaps even further developed by our own talents, yet, still something given by a gracious *God*.

For it is *God* who gives us the hands we need and the talents we have.

Our Harvest Prayer is that we may be given an even greater ability to appreciate all that we have, and to be prepared to share that which we have been given, with others - the Church is , of course, a gift to be shared.

Harvest is a good time to give some thought to “ growing ” the Church in our local community, how we might build some bridges in order that we can have some two way traffic between members of our own congregation and those outside of mainstream Church life.

It's about growing in quality and in quantity - more people into *God*, more *God* into people!

So, some key questions for us : -

Is our church growing, standing still or declining?

On a scale of 1 - 10, how strong is our desire for growth?

Do we have a plan or strategy for growth?

Is our ministry reaching inwards to church members or outwards to the community?

What is our next step?

Looks like a full agenda for us all, over the coming year!

Michael

Mothers' Union.-

A most successful Open Meeting to start the winter season was held at the home of Doris Roberts, Brookfields, when we were joined by many friends and by members of Denbigh Mothers' Union. A minutes' silence was held in memory of Terry Jones one of our longest standing members.

The proceeds were in aid of the M.U. Diocesan Project for this year, namely the "Away from it All" scheme. Luckily the Diocesan Organiser of the scheme, Margaret Hards, the Denbigh Branch Leader, was able to tell us of the good work done by the scheme in giving holidays and away-days for stressed families- who must be recommended by a Vicar or by a social worker.

The speaker was Mrs. Norma Walmsley who gave an illustrated talk on the trips that she and her husband have made several times to the U.S.A. Dwelling mostly on the comical things that happened to them, causing much laughter throughout the talk. She was warmly thanked by Heather Roberts. There was a Sales Table and a Raffle and finished off with an excellent tea provided by all the members.

A few wise sayings from the famous.

Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year. Victor Borge.

Be careful about reading health books as you may or "mother" church, the pre-eminent church of the whole array die of a misprint. Mark Twain.

The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning, a good ending and to have the two as close together as possible. George Burns.

St. Dyfnog's Well.

A very well attended meeting was held in the school, Phil Ebrill the County Conservation Architect explained the options open to us, emphasising that in his opinion it must remain a place of solitude and pilgrimage, and that initially we needed to form a steering committee to enable us to apply for an initial grant for the 'scoping survey' (this will explain what needs doing) and he was prepared to recommend somebody to undertake this work. Sarah from Cadwyn Clwyd spoke next, to explain how we could raise the funds, leaving us with a form to fill in, which will be presented to her committee, to enable us to obtain some of the money for the scoping survey. She was most helpful and enthusiastic. A committee was formed and further information can be obtained from Roger Jones (Chairman) or Philip Williams (Secretary)

This is the version of the Lord's prayer, written by our youngest church member, it is what he thinks we are saying ---

Dear God, to heart in Heaven
Ga Go Gi Go Game
Dye vind in come
Dye will be done on earth as it is in heaven
Give us our daily bread
and give us our bus passes
for thine is the done
the power and glory. Amen

A Wartime escapade at Barmouth.

The following incredible events took place in 1944.

With three rifles and 400 rounds of 0.22 ammunition, three boys aged 12 and 14 defied a platoon of marines 36 strong, led by two subalterns, in the Welsh mountains around Cader Idris. For two days and nights they carried out their own guerrilla warfare, only surrendering under the protection of a white flag when reduced to two rounds of ammunition.

On Thursday the boys broke into the armoury of a camp at Barmouth. Three rifles and all the ammunition were taken. Soon the theft was discovered and a hue and cry started. The lieutenant-quarter-master was recalled from leave, and the brigadier's batman sent after the young desperadoes.

When bullets started whizzing round his head he decided that reinforcements were needed and went back for the regimental police.

They in turn retired in the face of superior enemy fire and the National Fire Service were called out. They gave up. The boys were all night on the mountain and shot two fowl belonging to a local poultry keeper. They then went to a disused mine in the mountains and dug themselves in.

On Friday, a platoon of marines, 36 strong with two subalterns, set out on the chase. They tracked the boys down and the bullets began flying again. The platoon got under cover and prepared to attack. Firing blank cartridges, they made a frontal assault on the boys position, but had to retreat. Reinforcements were sent for, and a captain came in supervise.

Ammunition was running low and the boys flew a white flag. Out they came, with just two rounds, but without the rifles, which have not been found yet. The three were marched back to their home town, under escort of eight marines. The boys were placed 'under restriction' in their homes, but last night went to the local cinema, feted by all the boys.

From Wales: A Celebration – **Dewi Roberts.**

QuizTrains Boats and

1. What type of construction is the Menai Bridge?
2. The only rack-and-pinion railway in Britain is to be found where in Wales?
3. Which 18th C. engineer designed and built the famous bridge in Pontypridd?
4. Where would you catch the ferry to Cork?
5. In which year was the first Severn Bridge open?
6. What started running between Cardiff, Wrexham and Liverpool in 1950?
7. Who or what was 'Babs' dug up in Pendine Sands in 1969?
8. The first what ran between Wrexham and Shrewsbury from 1752?
9. The first railway in Wales, opened in 1839, ran between Llanelli and where?
10. The last turnpike-road toll gates in Britain were removed from Anglesey in which year 1875 or 1895 or 1905?
11. Who was Robin Goch?
12. What was the name of the first car produced in Wales?
13. Which railway bridge was badly damaged by fire in 1970?
14. It ran between Neath and Glynneath and was opened in 1795. What was it?

New Dog Varieties.

Collie + Lhasa Apso - Collapso, a dog that folds up for easy transport.

Pointer + Setter - Poinsetter, a traditional Christmas pet

The Green Thing -----

In the line in the shop the cashier told the older woman that she should bring her own bag because plastic bags were not good for the environment. The woman apologised to him and explained, 'We didn't have this green thing back in my day'. The cashier responded, 'That's our problem to-day. The former generation do not care enough for our environment'.

He was right, that generation didn't have the green thing in its day. Back then, they returned their milk bottles, pop bottles and beer bottles to the shop. The shop sent them back to be washed, sterilized and refilled, so the same bottles could be used over and over again. So they were recycled.

But they didn't have the green thing in that customer's day. In her day, they walked up stairs because they didn't have a lift or escalator in the shops and offices. They walked to the shops and didn't climb into a machine every time they had to go anywhere.

But she was right. They didn't have the green thing in her day. Back then they washed nappies because they didn't have the throw away kind. They dried clothes on the line, not in an energy gobbling machine – wind and solar power really did dry the clothes. Kids had hand-me-down clothes from their brothers and sisters, not always brand new clothing.

But the old lady was right. They didn't have the green thing in her day. Back then they had a T.V. Or radio in the house, not a T.V. In every room. And the T.V. Had a small screen the size of a handkerchief. In the kitchen they blended and mixed by hand because they didn't have machines to do it for you. When fragile things were sent by mail they wadded it in old newspaper not styrofoam or bubble wrap. Back then they didn't fire up a machine, burn up petrol to mow the lawn, they pushed a mower running on human power. They exercised by working so they didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity.

But she is right, they didn't have the green thing then. They drank from a fountain of water when they were thirsty instead of using a cup or plastic bottle every time they had a drink of water. They refilled their pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, they replaced a razor with a razor instead of throwing the whole razor away.

Back then, people took the train or bus and children rode bikes to school, instead of turning their mothers into 24-hour taxi service. They had one electrical outlet in a room, not an entire bank of sockets. They didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 2,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest pizza joint.

But isn't it sad that the current generation laments how wasteful the old folks were, just because they didn't have the green thing back then? - Sent in by Frankie Jones

Did I really read that sign right?

Toilet out of Order.

Use the floor below.

In a launderette - Automatic washing machines: - Please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.

London Dept. Store - Bargain Basement upstairs.

In an Office - Would the person who removed the stepladder yesterday please bring it back or further steps will be taken.

Seen in Safari Park - Elephants please stay in your car.

Farmer's field - Farmer allows walkers to cross fields for free, but the bull charges.

So you think English is easy? Read on -----

The bandage was wound round the wound.

The farm was used to produce produce.

The dump was so full it had to refuse more refuse.

We must polish the Polish furniture.

He could lead if he could get the lead out.

The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the dessert.

An Eccentric Vicar --- but one who left us a notable legacy.

The Rev. Stephen Hawker was Vicar of Morwenstow in Cornwall from 1831 till 1875. He usually dressed in a red coat, blue fisherman's jumper, long wellington boots, a pink hat and a yellow poncho made from a horse blanket. He proclaimed that this had been the dress of St. Padarn! He talked to the birds and invited his nine cats into church and even excommunicated one of them for daring to catch a mouse on the Sabbath!

He built himself a little hut high above the Atlantic rocks and there he spent hours writing poetry and smoking opium. Here he probably composed Cornwall's unofficial national anthem - "The Song of the Western Men"

Yet it was this odd vicar who began the custom of holding a Harvest Festival in churches. From 1838 onwards, harvests everywhere were poor and this is the time when thousands died of starvation in Ireland-the time of the Potato Famine in the 1840s. Slowly harvests started to improve and one Sunday morning in 1843 Vicar Hawker asked his congregation to bring fruits, vegetables and flowers to church the next Sunday to give thanks for better crops.

The custom soon spread over England, then to Wales including the non-conformist chapels.

So --- thanks --- Vicar Hawker!

*An excerpt from "Lark Rise to Candleford"
with acknowledgements to Flora Thompson.*

The Customs of Harvest.

With no idea that they were at the end of a long tradition, they still kept up the old country custom of choosing as their leader the tallest and most highly skilled man amongst them, who was then called 'King of the Mowers'.

With a wreath of poppies and green bindweed trails around his wide, rush-plaited hat, he led the band of mowers down the swathes and decreed when and for how long they should halt for a 'breather' and what drinks should be had from the yellow stone jar they kept in the shade under the hedge. They did not rest often or for long, for every morning they set themselves to accomplish an amount of work in the day that they knew would tax all their powers till long after sunset.

After the mowing and reaping and binding came the carrying, the busiest time of all. Every man and boy put his best foot forward then, for, when the corn was cut and dried, it was imperative to get it stacked and thatched before the weather broke. All day and far into the twilight the yellow and blue painted farm wagons passed and repassed along the roads between the field and the stack-yard. Big cart horses returning with an empty wagon were made to gallop like two-year olds. Straw hung on the roadside hedges and many a gatepost was knocked down through hasty driving. At last, in the cool dusk of an August evening, the last load was brought in, with a nest of merry boys' faces among the sheaves on the top and the men walking alongside with pitchforks on shoulders. As they passed along the roads they shouted:

"Harvest home! Harvest home!
Merry, merry, merry harvest home!

-as they approached the farmhouse they added-

"Our bottles are empty, our barrels won't run
And we thinks it's a very dry harvest home"

Helen Jenkin Jones.

Ffynnon Ddyfnog.
Written by Tristan Grey Hulse.

No-one who knows Llanrhaeadr, however superficially, is likely to have missed Ffynnon Ddyfnog, the holy well of the parish patron saint in the wood behind the church. No-one who has ever followed the wandering path up through the woods in spring-time, following the stream to its source in the large stone-built bath under the trees, surrounded by bluebells and ramson and all the flowers of spring, is likely to forget it. It is a place of great beauty, which retains a powerful aura of sanctity and peace. But whence is this aura derived? Or, to put it another way, what is the history of this beautiful spot?

A full history could never be written, for – as with almost all of the hundreds of sacred wells in Wales – detailed source materials are lacking. Yet, that said, there is more information available for St. Dyfnog's Well than for most of the others. The first clues lie in the landscape itself, or rather in the placenames, in the meanings of the words

“Llanrhaeadr” and “Ffynnon Ddyfnog” *Llan* is a technical term of the pre-Norman Welsh Church, meaning a “(monastic) enclosure”, that is, the dwelling place of the first people who brought Christianity to the area, and where afterwards a church built- the first predecessor of the splendid church of St. Dyfnog we see to-day. There are hundreds of examples across Wales, most of them coupled with the name of the founding saint (and in the past Llanrhaeadr was sometimes called Llanddyfnog- Wade-Evans 1910,97) or of the spiritual teacher of the founder. In a few cases, *llan* is conjoined with a proper or common noun denoting a topographical feature (locally for instance, we find Llanelwy, and Llanynys), and almost all of these denote a *clas* or “mother” church, the pre-eminent church of the whole area. Llanrhaeadr was never such a church, but yet has always been known as “the *llan* by the waterfall (*rhaeadr*)” (the name is witnessed at least since 1291, when it occurs in the *Taxatio- Thomas 1874,428*) Until the site was altered comparatively recently, the water rising in St. Dyfnog's Well descended to the bath beneath as a small waterfall, and that the parish is named, very unusually, for this feature suggests that the well has been regarded as special or “holy” more or less from the time of St. Dyfnog himself. Certainly, its reputation for holiness was well established in the middle ages.

Postage Stamps.

A big 'thank you' to everybody who continues to collect stamps. Another box containing 650g. Of stamps has been sent off this week, the result, I understand, the entries for a dog show!

Sunday Morning Coffee.

We have collected £70 in donations from Sunday Coffee, this has been sent to The Archbishop of Wales Fund for Children. Please sign up if you are able to help with coffee – a rota is on the notice board – nobody for December!

Operation Christmas Child.

The boxes for Operation Christmas Child are ready in Church to be collected for filling. Please read instructions carefully, they seem to vary from year to year.
