

St. Dyfnog's Church Newsletter.

Holy Week 2010

Llanrhaeadr

From the Vicar

Holy Week begins with the palm waving crowds welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem upon the donkey, and quickly moves on to the events of Good Friday, and to the glory of Easter.

Jesus comes to Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday sitting upon the donkey, amongst so much excitement, and in yet in just a few days the mood has changed so dramatically.

Now we find ourselves on that hillside outside the city where Jesus is to be nailed to his cross between two criminals.

There is darkness over the land, the cry of triumph - "It is finished," and a pagan soldier declares, in surprise, that this really was God's son. Then on to the quiet garden tomb - yes - but beyond to that first Easter morning.

Holy Week is rough and tough - it was rough and tough for Jesus and his followers then - its rough and tough for us now.

Often we are frail and fragile and perhaps in the quietness of this time we can see something of ourselves in the frailty of people like Peter, Judas, the soldiers and Pilate.

This week is a time for anticipating the power of God to work in and through our frailty, to make us new by his love.

This week is a time to accept, with thanks, that the hope we have depends not upon ourselves but upon a loving God who won't let us go, regardless of our failures.

This week is about a new relationship with God made possible by his love.

Do please use the church here this week and month - it is open every day. Spend a devotional hour at the cross on Good Friday at 11.00 and then on Easter Day celebrate Resurrection at the 8.30 or 11.15 Holy Eucharist.

A Happy and Peaceful Easter - with lots of Easter eggs too!

Michael

THE PENTAN SOCIETY TRAVELS TO HENLLAN

About sixteen members travelled by Cart y Plwyf and car to Pan Parc Llwyd, Henllan to listen to Mr. J.D. Fleet, a retired surgeon, speaking about Bees and Honey.

We sat in his comfortable studio (in easy chairs!) while he gave us first the history of Bees through the centuries and then listed all the ailments that honey can cure.

This is just a selection of the interesting facts that he told us: -
Man has been on earth 250,000 years but bees 50 million years - they have been found fossilised in amber.

The ancients thought honey was the "sweat of the gods" while others thought it came from the carcasses of dead animals (who does not remember the picture on the syrup tin long ago of the bees swarming around a dead lion?)

When the Pyramids were opened, many, many. Jars of honey were discovered - a gift to the gods. When opened, the honey was still edible after 3,000 years!

The Romans had pottery and wicker hives. Was it the Romans, 2,000 years ago, that brought the cult of honey to Wales? (we think of St. Dyfnog the bee keeper)
At the birth of St. David, a sermon was preached referring to a fish, a stag and bees - a token of the future "honeyed words" of St. David.

Mead was the staple beverage - water in those days was dangerous and contaminated.

Queen Elizabeth the First had mead made in Anglesey and brought to London.

King Alfred had a law passed to settle the quarrels of folk whose bees had swarmed and settled elsewhere; "If you can still see where they have landed, then you still own them; if they are out of sight they are the property of others."

The Welsh princes cornered the market in honey. They became honorary mead brewers and butlers to the Royal Court - becoming 19th. In the order of precedence. At Candlemas (February 2nd.) beeswax candles were taken into church to be blessed, because bees were looked upon as holy and pure. They were not allowed to celebrate the Mass without beeswax candles.

Honey was exported in Queen Elizabeth's time. It is said that the Queen was quite pleased to be associated with the Queen Bee. When the microscope was invented in 1650, it was proved once and for all that the Queen Bee was indeed female and in charge of the hive, laying 800 eggs in a day.

One remembers the term 'honey-moon' - 'mis mel' in Welsh - when a bottle of mead would be taken by the happy pair to sustain their strength!!

Bees visit 300 plants a day - clover, lime, rape and mustard and fly 40,000 miles in order to make one jar of honey, visiting two million flowers.

As for ailments cured by honey, due to their anti-bacterial properties, it has been found beneficial in the treatment of varicose veins, ulcers, stomach ulcers, burns, eye infections, asthma, hay fever, stings and even M.R.S.A. and, especially useful in the Third World, diarrhoea.

As a parting bit of information, the speaker told us that the great violin maker Stradivarius, is reputed to have used honey on the strings of his violins. After this final item of information we were all served with welcome tea and biscuits by Mr. Fleet, who was warmly thanked for his welcome to us and for his most informative talk.

I try never to take things for granted, and that includes living in Llanrhaeadr. This is what T.J.Hughes writes about the village in Wales's Best One Hundred Churches(2006)

".....few villages in the country have a gathering of buildings like Llanrhaeadr.

Vicarage, almshouses, and a neo-Jacobean hall with barns and stables clustered round the church, a grouping that might be English but for the double nave. The churchyard stream, and holy well over the bridge in the wood. A leaf strewn pool now, old accounts describe it paved with marble and decorated with small human figures." **Dewi Roberts**

The MacNicolis

Following the account, in a previous newsletter, of Alastair Campbell in Scotland, the MacNicolis originated from the west coast of Scotland where there is a rock of that name. Some years ago, a cousin of mine went up there to investigate, she walked into a pub and announced, "I am a MacNicoll". The landlord rounded on her and said "Thieves and murderers" My cousin lived to tell the tale but there are few MacNicolis about so presumably most of them eventually got murdered themselves.

Marion Beaumont (nee MacNicoll)

Arab Hospitality

Palestinians are very generous hospitable people so this is some advice if you are ever invited to a meal.

If you are invited for lunch you might go at about 10 in the morning. It is very hot, so your hosts bring you cool drinks and you chat a bit. Then they bring some nuts and seeds - not easy to crunch, some of them!

Then you have lunch and the family do their best to make it special: Chicken stuffed with rice and almonds; you might have stuffed vine leaves as well and lots of coke to drink.

Remember not to empty your plate! If you finish what is on your plate (a good English custom) the family will think you are still hungry and they will fill your plate again. The same with your coke - don't finish it- or before you realise you will have had three glasses of coke and two whole plates of food! When you have finished, you will be invited to sit in another room while they boil the Arabic coffee. Then your hosts will come in with lots of fruit - they will peel your orange and banana and open your pomegranate - so you have to eat it all! Then when you think the meal is done and the conversation has got going again, they will bring in the tea!

Most Palestinians rich or poor, are the same welcoming friendly and loving people.

(from an article by Sharon Waugh)

"What are you doing?" asked a mother of a little girl. "I am drawing a picture of God" was the reply. "But no one knows what God looks like," said mother. "They will, after I've finished my picture," replied the little girl!

Review; various authors; **Saving St. Teilo's**
National Museum of Wales.

When I visited St. Fagan's last summer the most impressive reconstructed building which I explored was the medieval church of St. Teilo.

Teilo was an important religious leader who lived in South Wales in approximately AD 500

That makes him contemporary with St. David. (Dewi Sant)

Teilo's influence spread beyond Wales. During an outbreak of plague he was active in Cornwall and when he was able to return to Wales became the Bishop of Llandaff.

This gloriously illustrated book, with accounts by members of the team at St. Fagans who were responsible for the daunting work of reconstructing the building at the museum, is a feat of great magnitude. The beautiful art work within the church is captured in many stunning photographs in the book. Some of the most detailed medieval wall paintings have, thankfully survived and are also meticulously recreated here.

Worship at the church is still within living memory in the Pontarddulais area and this is reflected in the use of images of the church on cups, display plates, medallions and other mementos.

When the poet Edward Thomas visited the church in 1905 he described it as.....a little desolate white church with a white walled church-yard....One can only assume that he did not enter the church. If he had he would surely have given an account of the beauty within.

I warmly recommend this volume and, if you have not already been there, a visit to see it in its reconstructed state at St. Fagans. You won't be disappointed.

Dewi Roberts.

Does anybody remember the name of Jasper Maskelyne from before the war? As a child I remember being in a London theatre where he was showing off his amazing illusions and conjuring tricks. Recently I read that at the outbreak of war, he offered his considerable talents to the Army., who at first were sceptical, but then, after he had demonstrated some of his optical illusions with models and mirrors, they were convinced that he could play an important part in the war effort.

His most extraordinary feat took place in N. Africa. Using light patterns designed to disorientate German pilots, he managed to hide the Suez Canal and make Alexandria harbour disappear. He also disguised hundreds of tanks as innocent lorries, helping the Allies to defeat Rommel's troops.

As often happens, though drawing praise from Churchill, his unique contribution to Britain's victory was not widely publicised and Maskelyne died in relative obscurity.

They say there is nothing new under the sun. Remembering Maskelyne, take time to look up in your Bible the book of Ecclesiastes (coming after the Psalms and Proverbs) and in Chapter 9, verses 14 and 15, and you will see exactly this sort of situation in a nutshell - known as the shortest short story in the Bible.

HJJ.

Mothers' Union

The week of St. David's Day saw members and friends enjoying a feast of Welsh music by a well-known husband and wife, singer and harpist - Sion and Eirlys Dwyrdd.

This took place at Dyffryn Ystrad, by kind invitation of Mrs. Frankie Jones and her drawing room provided a lovely setting for the afternoon's activities. She

was warmly thanked and presented with a bouquet of roses. All were welcomed by the Branch Leader and then Sion took us on a journey through Wales, each region providing a well-known song where we could all join in the choruses. A splendid vote of thanks was given by Nerys Harries. Tea followed, members having provided lavishly for both tea and the cake stall. Pam Roberts (Prion) was in charge of the tea, while Nerys Harries and Jean MacCarter looked after the cake stall, Olive Panter as usual presiding over the special raffle.

Warm thanks are due to Gleny Emllyn Jones for the excellent arrangements she had made and also to Emllyn- one of the two gentlemen present- for helping to set the room in order again at the end.

The proceeds from this event will be divided between the two schools of our parish, Prion and Llanrhaeadr, to buy suitable books or apparatus of their choosing to further the religious education of the children. We have chosen this as our outreach project for this year.

The April meeting will be held at Glan Ystrad, Gleny's home, when we shall have the privilege of listening to His Honour, Judge Eifion Roberts.

Helen Jenkin-Jones.

From Church Magazines!!!

Next weekend's Fasting & Prayer Conference in Whitby includes all meals.

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation

Mother, to small boy "You've put your shoes on the wrong feet"
Small boy - "Well, they're the only feet I have".

Daybreak - (a prose poem)

Slim and sable clouds,
A brooding shroud over the dark vale,
A fringe of cream edges slowly over the ridge of hills.
Above, the clouds align, like stacked blades
Of knights' long swords, awaiting the day's tournament.

A flash of sunlight fires the nearby fields.
The clouds flesh out, now swordfish, a misty pink, swimming in a pale blue sea.

The hills soften to benign curves of mottled greeny grey.
The valley's chessboard of trees and hedges is laid out for play.

The clouds swab the sky with great cotton blobs.
The day breaks over the Vale of Clwyd.

V.L.

Great Victorian Women

The Victorians have had a bad press, especially their women. There is a stereotype 19th.C image of a background figure in a large crinoline and bonnet with an aura of prudery and suppression, suggestive of the sober Sabbath and the restrictive nursery on a diet of bread and milk. Certainly it was a century of extreme poverty and flagrant wealth. There was inequality, there was injustice, there was unnecessary suffering and wasted talent. It was also an age of enterprising, hard working and innovative men and women. Railways opened up the country, new industries brought wealth and work, as well as problems. There were new ideas and challenges and a new world opening up, a world in which some outstanding women were to play their part. Probably one of the best know 19th century women is **Florence Nightingale (1820-1910)**, "**The Lady with the Lamp**" She was the younger daughter of a wealthy man, Wilhain Shore Nightingale of Embly Park Hants and Lea Hall, Derbyshire, to where they moved in 1826. She was well educated by her father and was expected to be a companion to her nervously exacting mother till a possible marriage. She, however, to her family's dismay, followed her individual bent and made a study of nursing care at home and abroad. Nursing at that time, was not regarded as a suitable pursuit for a young lady. She trained with the Soeurs de Charite in Paris and in the Lutheran Kaiserwerth in Germany. In 1853 she reorganised the Institution for the Care of Gentlewomen in Distressed Circumstances at No. 1 Harley Street which had been founded by Lady Canning and took an active interest in London's Ragged Schools. When an outbreak of cholera broke out in Middlesex Hospital she superintended the sick wards. - this interesting article on 'Famous Women' will be continued in May - many thanks to the contributor Vera Lamb.

Holy Week & Easter 2010

**" If any man would come after me,
let him take up his cross and follow me "**

Palm Sunday - 11.15 Morning Prayer & Palm Crosses

Tuesday - 5.45 Stations of the Cross at Pantasaph

Maundy - 6 pm Holy Eucharist & preparation
Thursday for Good Friday

Good Friday - 11.15 At the Cross (Devotional time)

" He has risen, he is not here... Tell his disciples that
He is going before you... You will see Him, as He told
you "

Easter Day - 8.30 & 11.15 Holy Eucharist
(n.b. 10.00 Nantglyn)

(Please let me know of any person who would like to
receive the Sacrament at home during Easter)

Michael

An Easter Evening Prayer

Spirit of the Risen Christ,
As lamps light up the evening,
Shine into our hearts and kindle in us the fire of
your love.

The light of Christ has come into the world.
We give thanks, Father, that you are always
present in all things, each day and each night.
We give you thanks for your gifts of life and
friendship.
We give you thanks for the blessings of this
Easter Day.

Watch over those whose names lie on our hearts,
watch over them and watch over us this Easter
night.

Forgive us our sins, give us the peace of the
Risen Christ.

Amen