



St. Dyfnog's Church

Newsletter.

Llanrhaeadr

December 2010

From the Vicar

" Let us go to Bethlehem and see for ourselves this wonderful thing! "

This Newsletter is a week or two later in the month than usual and begins to focus our thoughts on Christmas, following the weeks of Advent. In all the frantic activity it is time for us to reflect upon what happened on that extraordinary day, two thousand or so years ago.

The story speaks of Jesus being born, and so a beginning, but also of something that is still going on. An old story that is ever fresh and new.

Perhaps we need to remember that the Jesus of Bethlehem is the same Jesus this Christmas, as last year, as he was on that first Christmas night - what hopefully will have changed for you and me, is that he will feel so much more at home in our hearts, because he has been sincerely welcomed into our lives and so will feel so much more at home there.


So let's go to Bethlehem to see this wonderful thing!

And so to one of my favourite Christmas stories! -

A ninety year old Grandmother found buying presents for her large family too much one year and so wrote out cheques to put inside each persons Christmas card. In each card she carefully wrote, " Buy your own present, " and then sent them off.

When Christmas was over, tidying her house, she found the cheques under a pile of papers on her desk - which meant that everyone on her gift list had received a beautiful Christmas card from her with, " Buy your own present, " written inside, but without the cheques! A truly memorable Christmas for all.

Michael



This e-mail came from a regular church visitor who had sent friends to St. Dyfnog's.

Their comments; " We called at St. Dyfnog's to find much of interest, both inside and out, including the Green Man on the porch, the hammer beam roof, the magnificent Jesse Window, and of interest, especially to us, the fact that the organ was by Woods of Huddersfield, David Woods being a colleague of ours."

A story about Placido Domingo the world famous tenor, who sang at the Proms. in July. Some years ago, people were in a queue all night for one of his concerts. At eight o'clock next morning those in the queue were amazed to be given hot coffee and a packed breakfast. Domingo had heard about the all-night queue and had ordered four hundred coffees and packs for them. Not only that, but he himself helped hand out the goodies. Obviously he has a kind heart as well as a kind face and a wonderful voice!

Mother's Union - A Glimpse into Another World

The November meeting was held at the home of Heather Roberts. We are grateful to her for opening her house to us. The speaker was Mrs Diana Williams of Ruthin who had been wardrobe mistress at Theatre Clwyd and at many other theatres. Among her anecdotes she singled out Rex Harrison with whom she worked closely. She said she always found that the more established actors and actresses were far more charming and friendly than the younger generation. She foretold a brilliant future for the local young actor Rhys Ifans of Ruthin. She was thanked by the Branch Secretary Glenys Emlyn Jones. Tea was provided by Heather Glenys and Poppy.

From the Church Times.

A correspondent writes from Salisbury to say that what he calls "The day of politically correct marriage service" has arrived; at their wedding next month, he says, a couple have requested "Mandleson's Wedding March"!

Postage Stamps.

Due to a large bag of stamps arriving in Church, plus several more packages, I have once again been able to send a box off to the society 'In Aid of Retinitis Pigmentosa (an incurable eye disease) To-day I heard on the news that German scientists have made a breakthrough in the treatment of this disease so please keep collecting stamps. Stamps, as I am sure a lot of you realise are becoming rarer, due to franking machines and the miserable labels that the post office produce - where have all the lovely stamps gone? Not much use being a stamp collector to-day!

Please save your postage stamps!



The Last Invasion Tapestry

In 1066, and you may have visited the town of Bayeux in Normandy, and viewed the magnificent tapestry there depicting the details of the Battle of Hastings.

This battle was not the only attempt to conquer these islands by the French as in 1797 during February, the French General Hoche decided to send a force of soldiers into Pembrokeshire at Carreg Wasad, near Fishguard.

As we spend our Summers in S.W.Wales we decided to spend a day in Fishguard, a pretty little town with narrow winding streets, and an attractive harbour.

In the Town Hall we visited the embroidered tapestry which was stitched by a group of ladies to mark the bi-centenary of this event several years before.

It has been sympathetically presented behind glass and to begin to appreciate the story one must begin at the left of the 30.4m long exhibit, which is 53cm. deep.

We are all well aware of the Norman invasion and conquest -

The first person we encounter is Nellie Phillips who nine years old who was nine years old at the time of the invasion. According to tradition her son charged people to hear Nellie's account. The detail is fascinating - Nellie lived to 103.

One can imagine the panic as news of the Invasion spread around. One of the Fishguard Volunteers rushed around alerting residents.

The Tapestry reveals a maid rushing around carrying a tankard of beer. She didn't spill a drop! Another Ann Fenton, is seen burying a bag of gold pieces. Legend has it that this treasure has never been found!


We see French troops climbing up the steep cliffs of Carreg Wastad. On arriving at Trehowel Farm they found a prepared wedding feast, and as the farm was well stocked with wine (after a recent shipwreck) they were soon drunk and out of control. One of the soldiers thought someone was hiding in the large farm clock, so he fired a shot.

The bullet hole can still be seen to-day. In the borders of the Tapestry there is evidence of beatings and ill-treatment of the towns' people.

My favourite part of the Tapestry's story is about the local heroine Jemima Nicolas. In a scene she is standing in the middle of several soldiers who reputedly she captured single handed. She must have terrified the soldiers as they all have green faces.

There is strong evidence that the final surrender of the French was brought about by the fact that they were deceived into thinking that they were facing a large British Army when they saw red and black movements in the distance. In fact, what they saw were local women in red shawls and black hat marching around a prominent hill in Fishguard!

Towards the end of the tapestry British Soldiers are shown flying Old Jack Flag as they watch the surrendering French force coming down the hill towards Goodwick Sands.



I hope I have given you a flavour of the intricate coloured stitching, and I can only admire the dedication of the group of needlewomen who worked for four years. The embroidery stitches are mostly the same as those used by the medieval embroiderers at the time of the Bayeux Tapestry.

Pamela A.Roberts)

Food for Thought!

Do you realise that the only time we like to get old is when we are children, if you are less than 10 years you'r so excited about ageing you do it in fractions! How often have you heard "I'm 8 and $\frac{3}{4}$'s"

The woman looked at her five children. The youngest still a babe in arms and the eldest too young to make his way in the world of work. Her husband, a journeyman painter, had died when he had fallen from a second storey windowsill, after an inmate at the Mental Institution, had removed the ladder. She was awarded compensation.

By the time the money was made available to her, John, the eldest, had received a white feather and felt compelled to join up. That Christmas she received a small, silvery rectangular box containing an embroidered handkerchief and a signed card from him.

Having opened a fish and chip shop she was beginning to feel more secure, but, when soldiers exhausted from their march from the docks, collapsed and rested at the roadside, she was glad to give them food. This became a regular occurrence resulting in the failure of the business.

There were no "handouts" - just occasional work for a wealthy relative, paid "in kind". When things were becoming desperate, she always had rat poison under the sink - not just in case of vermin- but as a quick end for the children and herself, should the day arrive when there was not even a crust in the house.

Then came the awaited day- The Armistice, was announced and neighbours were gathering in the street, shouting and cheering in celebration. There was a knock on the door, which was opened by her second eldest son. He knew immediately. There stood a messenger boy with a telegram- "John Oliver, killed in action"

This is why, when I attend a Remembrance Service, I include in my memories-thoughts of someone I never knew. John Oliver was my fathers' elder brother.

This was written on my return home from the Remembrance Service on 9th November 2008. Val Payne.

(my apologies for not publishing this in November, I was late picking up the copy. Svdb)

Answers to the quiz (no.2) 1b-2c-3a-4c-5b-6b-7a-8b-9b-10b

VL.

Confucius no say-----

Man who leave home to set world on fire often come back for matches.

When man works like horse, everybody ride him.

Little sugar plum today sometimes sour grapes tomorrow.

Man who beef too much find himself in stew.

Adequate

First pelican: "Pretty good fish you have there".

Second pelican: "Well, it fills the bill".

A Victorian Marriage.

Caroline Norton was the granddaughter of the playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan. She made an unfortunate marriage to the Hon. Richard Norton. They quarrelled. He beat her. Finally Caroline sought refuge with one of her two sisters. Immediately Norton put their three children in the charge of his cousins and she was refused any access to them. To her horror she discovered that this action was his legal right as a husband. All her property belonged to him. She had no rights, but she fought back.


In 1839 the Infants' Custody Act became law. She had found a sympathetic lawyer and M.P. Mr. Talfourd, to present her case. By 1855 the Bill on Divorce was being discussed when she successfully campaigned for a woman to retain at least some of her own property and enter contracts in her own right. In 1857 a new secular court was set up with judge and jury and by 1866 a husband could be ordered to provide for a former wife. There have been more Acts and more divorces since then!

VL.

Fair Trade.

On November 18, I accompanied the Vicar and Jane to the Fair Trade A.G.M., taking our Fair Trade table with us, to enable everyone to see a large selection of goods. Fair Trade is increasing in Denbighshire, Prestatyn being the latest town to join. Llanrhaeadr is well on the way to becoming a 'Fair Trade Village' as we now have the required number of outlets, a very enthusiastic school, the restaurant at Springs Spa, and of course the table in Church. It has to be remembered that we must go on using Fair Trade outlets, as they come up for review regularly, and if there are insufficient outlets the status is removed.

SvdB.



Three Years in Nepal (part 2)

After an eleven hour flight we landed in Kathmandu Airport. As we stepped off the plane we noticed how hot it was and pungent smells filled the air. What a contrast to the airport back home. One small building with a flat roof and many Nepalese people watching who was coming off the plane.

We were very tired after a long journey and culture shock started to set in. We were met by an American who helped to run the United Mission to Nepal Guest house, and once our possessions, (2 metal trunks), were loaded into his jeep we were taken to the Guest House which was to be our home for three months whilst attending language school.

The United Mission to Nepal consisted of approximately 30 Christian member bodies all working together for the Nepali people.

On arrival at the Guest House we were shown our two rooms and a bathroom. The bathroom consisted of a tin bath, a wash basin. The toilet was a hole in the floor. There was no running hot water. We were given an electric element which would be plugged in and then put in a bucket of cold water to heat up any water we needed. Very dangerous.


Six other families stayed in the Guest House, Americans, Canadians, Swiss, Irish and British. We were all new to the country. All our meals were taken together in the dining room and this gave us the opportunity to get to know each other.

During the day a Nepali girl cared for James and Andrea. She was experienced in looking after ex-patriot children. Her name was Maya and the children grew to love her.

(In Nepal cont.)

The Language School was a short walk from the Guest House. We attended daily for three months. This gave us a good grounding in the language and culture. One day we arrived from the Language School to find Maya in a panic outside the Guest House. She explained Andrea had locked herself in the bedroom, found a pair of scissors and had cut her hair in various places. We had to find a hairdresser in a tourist hotel to put her hair back into some shape! A barber visited the Guest House, Adrian needed a haircut, this was carried out in the garden. I looked out of the window of our rooms and saw that he was also cutting James' hair, he hardly had any hair on his head. I asked Adrian why he had allowed the barber to cut his hair like that. He said he didn't know how to tell him to stop!.

Our mode of transport in Kathmandu was by bus, rickshaw or pedal cycle. The buses were ex-Indian vehicles. No MOT, or mechanical checks. People who could not get in the bus would clamber onto the roof or cling to the sides. Animals and people shared this hazardous journey.



After language school we moved to Patan, a district of Kathmandu. The accommodation here was more modern, built with westerners in mind. The house actually had two bathrooms. Our dreams of luxuriating in a hot steaming bath of clean water soon evaporated when we turned on the taps and muddy water came out in fits and starts.

Drinking water had to be filtered and boiled. All fruit and vegetables had to be soaked in iodine solution. The market sellers would take their produce to the nearby Bagmati river. By washing the fruit and vegetables in the holy river they believed they would quickly sell their wares. The river however was contaminated by bathing, the washing of clothes, disposal of dead bodies and sewage. It was so unhygienic. We were aware also that to buy water from street vendors was not advisable. It could be lethal.

We did suffer some stomach problems. I was admitted to hospital twice in the first 6 months as I had somehow picked up a bug and was suffering from Amoebic Dysentry. With the care of the United Mission Hospital nursing staff I recovered. It was at times like this we became homesick and missed our family and friends. Sometimes we had doubts as to whether we should be in Nepal.

James attended the British Primary School in Kathmandu. There were three teachers and about twenty four children. Adrian was employed as an accountant at Mission Headquarters. I stayed at home with Andrea and Maya. This gave me the opportunity to learn more about Nepali life, especially a woman's role in society and the caste system.

One day we felt like a change from the daily curry and in my broken Nepali I tried to explain to Maya how to make egg and chips. My efforts were not entirely satisfactory because Maya appeared with plates of soggy chips and boiled eggs still in their shells! From that time on we stuck to Nepali food which in the main was rice, lentils, vegetables and goat or buffalo meat.


We lived in Patan for about four months.
January.

To be continued in

Golf is much in the news these days. Here are some thoughts from "The Independent"

We should praise it for its character building qualities, it is after all the only major sport "still governed by good manners". The only scandals to rock the golf world have involved such relatively tame crimes as players replacing balls in slightly more favourable spots after breaks in play. When Bobby Jones was complimented for calling a penalty on himself in the U.S. Open, after accidentally moving the ball he remarked "You might as well praise a man for not robbing a bank!" To golf's credit that attitude still informs the professional game today.

H.J.J.



Llanrhaeadr WI this month listened to an excellent talk by Mrs Llinos Roberts of Cefn on Christmas Crafts, she brought with her many unusual Christmas gifts and decorations, showing an excellent eye for design and the use of many unusual materials collected on her shopping expeditions. She explained how to make many of the items, this all seemed very simple at the time! All relying on accurate cutting and stitching, with final touches of beading. An excellent evening, in January the programme for 2011 will be published, everybody is welcome!

Christmas quiz 2010

1. What is the length of the A55 in Wales?
2. When was the Bible translated into Welsh?
3. What is the full name of Richard Burton, the Actor.?
4. On what date is the new year celebrated on the Llanddysul area of Wales?
5. Who was known as 'The Mother of Wales'?
6. How many husbands did she have?
7. In which town was the Gilbern Motor Car produced?
8. Who composed the tune 'Cwm Rhondda'?
9. Name the two types of corgi dog?
10. Where was the evidence found that man was first recorded in Wales?
11. What was the name on the beer brewed at the Old Butter Market in Denbigh?
12. What was the majority in the Vote for a Welsh Assembly Government?
13. Edward Tegla Davies was famous as a?
14. Denbighshire was originally formed in which year?
15. Who is alleged to have built the original Denbigh Castle?
16. Humphrey Llwyd of Foxhall was famous as a?
17. Thomas Gee was involved in which Welsh war?
18. When was the first International Eisteddfod held in Llangollen?
19. Philip Jones Griffiths was famous for what?
20. Who escaped from Ruthin prison in 1913?
21. Richard Robert Jones, buried in St. Asaph was also known as?
22. Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby were also known as?
23. What is the length of Offas Dyke, in kilometres?
24. Thomas Maldwyn Pryce was famous in which sport?
25. The Rebecca Riots protested against what?
26. Isaac Roberts (1829-1904) from Nantglyn pioneered what?
27. Who is known as the Queen of Welsh Literature?
28. Betsi Cadwalader became famous in which war?
29. Henry Morton Stanley was christened under what name?
30. What made Mererid Hopwood famous in Denbigh in 2001?

Answers in the January newsletter – try the quiz on your family over Christmas!



A Judge's lot is not a happy one

Over many years I have enjoyed judging at Horse Shows whose officials have made excellent provision for their judges, and have endured many that did not. The best i.e. The Royal, Royal Welsh, Three Counties, and the 2 or 3 day County Shows, provide good hotel accommodation, and a three course luncheon.

The worst regard judges as a necessary nuisance, and provide plastic ham and limp lettuce followed by cardboard apple pie with a splodge of synthetic cream. The luncheon venues at these Shows can be a caravan or tent, a storeroom among paintpots and ladders, a livestock lorry recently vacated by shire horses, or an open-fronted cattle shed only partly 'mucked out'.

Village Shows can be challenging – each class consisting of anything from shire to a Shetland . In the "Boniest Pony" class- dictionary definition 'healthy looking' – beware of unplaced militant Mums, waving whips, leading small children spread-eagled across the backs of fat ponies, shouting 'this pony won at The Royal/Royal Welsh/County Show last week"

At the end of a long tiring day you will be smiled upon by just one person – the owner of the Supreme Champion horse or pony.

Margaret..

Brownies

Chocolate fudge-cake squares.

Ingredients;

4oz. plain dark chocolate.	4oz. plain flour
4oz. butter/margarine	1 teas. Baking powder
8oz. caster sugar	½ teas. Salt
2 eggs (3 if small)	" vanilla essence.
4 oz chopped walnuts (optional)	

Method.

Melt butter and chocolate in small pan over low heat. Put side.

Beat eggs, adding sugar gradually.

Pour melted chocolate and butter mixture (not too hot) into beaten eggs and sugar.

Carefully mix in flour, salt and BP. Add walnuts.

Pour into greased tin with high sides, about 9" square.

Cook in pre-heated oven for 30 mins. Gas 4 or 350F or 180C

Leave to cool in tin, then cut into squares before removing to cake rack.

Makes 16 squares which will keep for a week or more in an airtight tin or can be frozen.

Sent in by Stan Cloke , easy to make even easier to eat!



Marmite Whirls.

Ingredients.

1 pkt. Puff pastry,
Marmite (or Bovril)
Grated cheese

Method.

Roll out pastry.
Spread with marmite.
Sprinkle with grated cheese (according to taste)
Roll pastry up like a swiss-roll. (1 inch diameter)
Seal edge – cut up thinly.
Lay on baking sheet. (allow for expansion)
Bake in a moderate oven until golden brown. (approx. 20 mins)

Rosemary Tuck.

Pig's Fry – A Warwickshire Farm house recipe. (recipe used after the pig was killed, to use up

Ingredients.

Offal, any bits were incorporated.)

Cubed pork, liver, kidney, sliced onions.
Stock, seasoning.

Method.

Put all the ingredients into a casserole and cook in a moderate oven for 2-3 hours.

Christmas Robin.

It is true that robins have many religious associations that go back over the centuries, but most of them are to do with Easter, not Christmas. The old legend of why the robin has a red breast relates that, as Christ hung on the cross, a little robin flew down to ease His pain by plucking a thorn from His crown, and in the process wounded his own breast so that the stain remains to this day.

But the real origin of the robin as the wild bird of Christmas is much more recent. It dates back not much more than 100 years and it is all the fault of the Post Office.

In the middle of the last century the Post Office dressed its post men in bright red coats – first cutaways and later frock-coats – of a colour to match the royal and official red of pillar boxes..

There was much ribaldry directed at the wearers of this striking uniform, and before long postmen became commonly known as “redbreasts” or “robin postmen”.

So, when Christmas cards first gained popularity around 1860, it was inevitable that real robins should figure prominently on them. Almost all early cards showed a bright red robin either bringing the welcome Christmas mail in its beak, or actually knocking on the door like the postman himself.

Robins soon became a regular part of the Christmas scene, and cheery pictures of them appeared on every form of Christmas stationery as they still do, even though “robin postmen” are long since forgotten.



A prayer for Christmas Morning.
Translated from the Welsh by Selyf Roberts.

Before the gifts are tidied,
The ribbons, strings all sided,
Give grace O Lord, to bear in mind
Those with no gifts of any kind.

Before we join together
And eat our Christmas dinner-
Let us not forget, O Lord
Those with no food to fill their board.

As carols gladden all thy people
And bells ring out from tower and steeple
Give grace, O Father, to recall
The deaf, the dumb and those who fall.

While dancing round the Christmas tree
Adorned with baubles prettily,
Help us to remember all the same
That some are blind and some are lame.

As Christmas cards surround us
From friends, relations numerous,
Remember those without a friend
Who thinks a Christmas card to send.

Amidst the jolly company
And merriment and gaiety
Let's not forget there's always one
Who spends the whole long day alone.

And we, who celebrate with joy
This year again with gift and toy-
Let us remember those who mourn
And spend the day sad and forlorn.

Before I go to bed tonight
And happily put out the light
Help me recall those-as I pray
Who had no joy-like me to-day!



The Reluctant Santa.

“What am I doing?” I asked myself as I struggled into the Santa outfit. It was made for a man at least six feet tall and probably equal girth – while I am five feet four and nine stone! The local crèche helpers had been desperate for a Santa for the tots’ Christmas party and unfortunately for me, I was the only man around at the time. My protestations were overcome by determined mothers.

It doesn’t matter if you are small – sometimes it’s better, because the little children can find a big man very frightening – and anyhow we can’t disappoint the children”.

I was won over. They bundled me into a closet marked “Babies’ changing room” and I donned the suit. The trousers came up to my armpits – they would have gone further if my arms had not been in the way and the bottoms dragged like concertinas over my feet. My jacket would have allowed a couple of friends in with me and my hands were quite lost in the sleeves. The hat was only stopped from sliding completely over my face by my nose and the beard just would not hang straight.

Mary was sent to sort me out. Unlike the others, she did not dissolve into helpless mirth but calmly fetched some cushions and needle and thread – she was obviously well used to sorting out Santas. She stuffed the cushions and proceeded to sew me into the outfit. I had to wear another hat underneath, to stop Santa’s hat from covering my eyes. I was to be fetched in when they were ready.

My beard tickled – I was hot with all the cushions and I felt like a prisoner! Mary appeared – “There’re ready now!” She led me in – with my massive ‘spare tyre’ I could not see my feet and I was afraid of treading on tiny hands. When I sat down, the cushions rose up to my chin. (I vowed then and there never to become obese!)

A great cry of glee rose from the children and I soon forgot my discomfort. I still needed help because the bulky cushions prevented me from reaching into my sack or reading the names. Some children were shy, others burst into tears, some would not leave my side, staring in wonder at this mythical figure. Some, I was told, kept on tweaking my bobble hat from behind – I later learnt that one of the tweakers had reported that Santa had a red beard under his white one!(true)

All too soon it was over – I could not believe that I had handed out 80 gifts. I felt quite sorry to leave them – explaining that I had to go and feed my reindeer.

Actually it had been a time of great delight in spite of my discomfort. For a short time, we adults had entered the childrens world of fantasy and magic.

Yes I would do it again – but only if the suit fits! (from the Mothers’ Union Magazine)

Readers

May I take this opportunity of thanking all those who read the lesson each Sunday. I cannot compare us with other churches but I very much doubt that they have the same standard of readers as us.

May I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Stan.



Christmas Fair

The Fair was held on 4th December and, in spite of the difficult weather conditions, proved to be a lively and well attended event which raised £750 towards our running costs.

A big "Thank You" for all who worked and gave to make the morning so successful.

Those memorable school reports that don't put too fine a point on it!

One of my French reports simply said: "She attended lessons"

My housemaster wrote: "He has an overdeveloped unawareness"

A friend's son's report said: "By the time he has mastered French, he will be too old to cross the Channel"

"The improvement in his handwriting has revealed his inability to spell"

For religious studies, my report said "Not very interested"

After first grammar school year: "A happy soul and quite unconcerned at his own ignorance"

"I am sorry to have to tell you that he is doing his best"

And Finally!

This bumper edition of our Newsletter will cover December 2010 and January 2011.

It takes us through Advent, Christmas towards Epiphany and beyond, reminding us of this circular journey of life, from God at the beginning to God at the end. The Advent wreath in church is a good expression of this circular journey of life in which we are ever moving on, never standing still on our faith journey.

It is sometimes all too easy to forget the circular shape of time - not for us living on a straight line going away from our Creator - but rather living a life which is a circle and which then begins and ends with God.

"Whoever lacks the eye of faith sees only an ending and a farewell, but whoever sees with the eye of God moves on into a new stage of the journey."

The light increases as Advent leads to Christmas, the birth in time, of the light of God.

This is a time of year to perhaps pause and reflect upon those things which need to grow inside all of us. To ask ourselves what needs to grow and develop on this journey together, - Family life - Friendships - A sense of inner peace and quiet calm?

A Happy Peaceful Christmas & A good New Year Journey - Michael

