

St. Dyfnog's Church Newsletter.

February 2010

Llanrhaeadr.

From the Vicar

This note is written at a point in our liturgical year when we can look back, upon Christmas and Epiphany, and forwards, towards Lent and Holy Week. It is a time to perhaps reflect upon our own lives - not to be preoccupied with the past but rather where we are at present, and to remind ourselves that the future is in God's hands.

We travel with Jesus, just like that collection of ordinary folk, fishermen, tax collectors and religious zealots who were called by Jesus to travel with him on a surprising and sometimes uncertain journey.

Travelling with Jesus is life changing, and Lent is such a good time to reflect upon our faith journey - so have a good Lent!

You will perhaps recall that Bishop Gregory set out three priorities for our Diocesan family over this church year -

Firstly - enabling and encouraging the whole people of God

Secondly - enlivening and enriching our worship

Thirdly - engaging the world

Fine sentiments and great ideas for our common life - the challenge of Lent this year will be for each of us to translate them into actions and so make them a reality for our community.

On Ash Wednesday, 17th February, this years Lent journey begins with a celebration of the Holy Eucharist at midday, following our annual Gift Day.

Time once again to journey together towards Holy Week and Easter.

Michael

A Cook's Tour of Scotland and its Regions. (cont.)

The Outer Hebrides too were fishing and crafting communities. Lewis is the most fertile island. Sheep were bred mainly for the wool, though there was the occasional boiled mutton, seabirds and shell fish on the diet. The Orkneys and the Shetland Islands differ in climate. Both have crafting, fishing communities, but the northern gales restrict farming in the Shetlands, while the Orkneys enjoy a green, fertile land. The Shetlanders were 'fishermen who had a croft', while the Orcadians were 'farmers who kept a fishing boat'. There were Scandinavian influences in the northern isles. The Shetlanders enjoyed fermented fish.

Pig farming is not a Scottish tradition in the main. Ayresshire bacon is well known, but in the Highlands where a pig would have been an asset there was a strong prejudice against pork. Was it a biblical prejudice? In the Border country the big farmers were the Cistercian and Benedictine monks in the 11th and 12thC. They reared pigs as well as sheep and cows and the fine soil grew wheat, oats and barley. When Queen Victoria had tea with Sir Walter Scott's daughter at Abbotsford she enjoyed her Selkirk bannock - a rich yeast bun. Fifeshire bannocks, unlike the then Highland oatcake, are a mixture of wheat flour and oatmeal.

Glasgow is the centre of a dairy producing area with a tradition of home-baking. To-day a third of the Scottish population centres on Clydeside. As the river was made navigable trade increased. Sugar came from the West Indies and tea from India and Ceylon. The Highland and Irish immigrants came to work in the growing manufacturing industries and great Victorian grocery businesses like Lipton's or the busy shipyards. High tea became the evening meal- pies, fish and chips, boiled ham, followed by plates of scones and sweet cakes with a large pot of tea.

The tearoom appeared. The most fashionable was established in Saughiehall Street, Glasgow, by Catherine Cranston, the daughter of a hotelier. She commissioned Charles Rennie Mackintosh, a leading Scottish architect, to design the Willow Tree Tea Rooms down to the last detail. The centrepiece of each table was a three-tier cake stand.

My mother prided herself on her baking, especially griddle scones with homemade jams. We also enjoyed plenty of soups. When I was younger I liked to attribute our sheeps'head broth to the French influence of the Auld Alliance, but it is much more likely to be the lingering influence of the Highland boiled mutton or the Scottish thrift at work. French court circles

did not spread far from Holyrood!

Edinburgh too had its tearooms. The big stores off Princes Street would have large rooms with a small orchestra playing in vain against the chatter of women's voices and the clatter of tea cups. As a child I thought this rather rude of the customers, but must admit I enjoyed the varied tea breads on offer.

My Edinburgh grandmother believed in setting up her large family for the day with a big breakfast. Even Dr. Johnson admitted, "In breakfast the Scots, whether Lowlands or the mountains, must be confessed to excel us"!! While my grandmother fried up large platefuls of bacon and eggs, my grandfather would stir the oatmeal with a spurtle or porridge stick. Each day the creamy milk, served with the porridge and salt (of course) arrived on the doorstep with a large bag of baps, the soft roll we ate with butter and home-made marmalade.

The marmalade tradition started in 1700 when a young Dundee grocer James Keiller bought a cheap consignment of Seville oranges from a Spanish ship driven ashore by the gales. When he found himself unable to sell the bitter fruit his wife boiled the oranges up as a preserve that sold very successfully.

The Scots have a sweet tooth. Many a preacher must have groaned at the rustle of paper when the sermon started and the bags of sweeties appeared. Edinburgh used to have a small shop off Princes Street filled entirely with Edinburgh Rock. This originated from a local 19thC confectioner Alexander Ferguson, known as Sweetie Sandy. The rock is a soft, sugary stick in delicious flavours of raspberry, lemon, peppermint, etc. My uncle's standard joke was "Who was the strongest man in Edinburgh?" Answer; "The man who made Edinburgh rock".

There has been a revival of regional cooking in the last few years. One of the best meals I have eaten in recent years was in a restaurant in the west end of Glasgow (that had been patronised by Princess Margaret) We were served small cups of celery soup and freshly baked warm bread while waiting for our first course, a vegetable haggis. This was followed by Scottish beef or salmon and a dessert of oatmeal, cream and berries. Strawberries dipped in chocolate were served with the coffee. I think the claret was Bordeaux. It was very good!

It would be interesting to read about other regional experiences from our readers.

Vera Lamb.

Some " Funnies. "

A French Cat, Un Deux
Trois, and an English cat,
One Two Three, went for
A swimming race round
A lake. Who won?

One Two Three, because
Un Deux Trois
Quatre Cinque.

A rather disturbing notice seen outside a hospital in Harrogate.....
'BEWARE! Guard dogs operating!'

Doctor, after examining a man, said to his wife:
"I don't like the look of your husband."
"Neither do I", she replied, "But he's good to our children".

Kill or cure.

A depressed man attempted suicide by walking into the sea. After taking a few paces in the water he abandoned the mission.
'Why did you give up?' asked the psychiatrist.
'The water was too cold.' was the reply.

Printed in the Ely Standard.

'We apologise for the error in last week's paper in which we stated that Mr. Arnold Dogsbody was a defective in the police force. This was a typographical error. We meant, of course, that Mr. Dogsbody is a detective in the police farce and we are sorry for any embarrassment caused.'

Mayday, Mayday.

The lifeboat was called out to a yacht in trouble in dirty weather. The coastguard, trying to get the yachts exact location, called on the radio . 'What is your position? Repeat what is your position?'

And the answer came, faint but determined, from the skipper; 'My position.....well, I'm the marketing director of a medium sized computer software firm in the Midlands.....'

We are always hoping to have more articles written by readers - why not start 2010 by writing for The Newsletter - articles can be left for publication, in the Choir Vestry.

Mothers' Union News

"Hello Billy!" was the chant we all screamed at the funny man each time he appeared at last year's pantomime - this year it was "Ha ya Buttons!" and from this you will gather that we were watching "Cinderella". Braving the snow and ice, the small parish bus, driven by Philip Williams, took fourteen members and husbands on January 7th. To Rhyl (where there was no sign of snow!). Everyone enjoyed the show, the hundreds of children present helped to produce the right atmosphere. The costumes were lavish as were the stage settings. We all loved the short, rotund Fairy Godmother, played by Amanda Barrie with her obstinate wand! The afternoon ended with a splendid meal at the Table Table Restaurant in Rhuddlan. The Branch Leader expressed thanks to Philip for driving us and Glenys who had arranged it all- transport, panto and meal, even thoughtfully organising the opening of a bottom side door at the theatre so that we slipped into our seats in Row F with no steps to negotiate, a boon to those of us with sticks!

Helen Jenkin Jones

News items from the Church Times

Selfridges in London has reported a 30% rise in the sale of religious cards this last Christmas and a 20% increase in the sales of religious wrapping paper - customers choosing nativity scenes or angels for these. A spokesman said, "It's turning to the real meaning and traditions of Christmas."

More gems from Church Notices.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Irving and Jessie were married in church on October 24 so ends a friendship that began in their schooldays.

At to-nights' service the sermon topic will be "What is Hell?" Why not come early and listen to our choir practices?

Fasting and Prayer Conference includes meals.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help!

Eight new choir robes are urgently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Still going strong, 300 years later!

We have long known of the enmity of the Scots towards the Campbell clan as a result of the Massacre of Glencoe in 1692.

I remember being in a tourist bus in Edinburgh when the name Campbell came up, where upon the driver spat on the floor with the name upon his lips.

It seems that the former spin-doctor, Alastair Campbell, in the news these days because of the Iraq Enquiry, went into a pub near Glencoe. On the wall was a sign "No hawkers - No Campbells" He thought it was a joke but as he approached the bar, the innkeeper said "Can ye no read?" - Long memories indeed! HJJ

Why are Surgeons called 'Mister'?

People are often confused that some Consultants are called 'Doctor', whilst others are called 'Mister'. Some patients think that 'the Specialist' is always called 'Mister', whatever his speciality may be. This is not the case, the reasons going back to the Middle Ages. Generally, Doctors (Physicians) would care for the sick, those suffering from the multitude of diseases that affect us. Physicians were seen as educated men, who would treat the sick with the best that medical science could offer, though in the Middle Ages this was, compared to to-day, woefully inadequate.

Patients who required 'surgery' were treated by barbers, who carried out procedures, such as blood letting, as well as cutting hair! These barber surgeons, as they were known, would often have a 'barbers pole' outside their premises, to show that they would perform surgery. The barbers pole was red with a white spiral, indicating a wound covered by a bandage. As the years passed by, barber surgeons set themselves up into groups or Guilds, and people wishing to become barber surgeons could apply for 'apprenticeships' to learn the skills required.

However, barber surgeons did not train as Doctors or Physicians, so would be called 'Mister' to distinguish them from Physicians (the Doctors). Eventually, training of surgeons was more regulated, culminating in the setting up of the Company of Surgeons, which by the mid 18th. C became the Royal College of Surgeons of London.

Surgeons, once qualified as Members or Fellows (MRCS and FRCS) called themselves 'Mister' to distinguish themselves from the Physicians.

All surgeons in modern times train to become doctors first, then further extensive training to qualify as surgeons. Once a surgeon has gained the qualification FRCS he will initially be a Registrar (a junior doctor' but still entitled to be called Mister), then, once he has the required level of skill, training and time spent practicing as a surgeon, he may become a Consultant.

So, to re-cap, Consultants (or Registrars) who are surgeons will be called 'Mister', whilst Consultants in non-surgical specialists are called 'Doctor'. Incidentally, dentists are called 'Mister' because they are Dental 'Surgeons'. However, some dentists now call themselves 'Doctor' as they do in the US.

It is interesting to note therefore, that medical students spend six years training to have the title 'Doctor', then spend a further six years or longer, doing surgical training, to have the privilege of calling themselves 'Mister' again! (Keith Jones, Nant yn Eos, Pentre.)
(With help from: 'A Surgeons Journey' by J.Howell Hughes C.B.E. M.D. Ch.M., F.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.)

A Daily Prayer for Lent Evenings

Lift up our hearts, Heavenly Father,
Lift up our hearts that we may be inspired,
Lift up our eyes that we may see your love at work in the world,
Stir up soul and body in your service.
Grant to the family of St Asaph,
That every member may be enthused, that our worship may be uplifting,
And that we may serve your Kingdom in the world. Amen

Dewi Roberts investigates the remarkable life of Mary Jones

Egryn is a rural chapel situated some two miles from Barmouth on the Harlech road. The building still stands, although it is some time since the sound of hymn tunes were heard resounding from its walls. Few would imagine the extraordinary events which occurred there at the beginning of the last century.

During that period Wales experienced a number of religious revivals and these resulted in a large number of conversions to Methodism.

The legendary Evan Roberts was the instrumental force behind the 1904 - 5 revival. He claimed that he was experiencing visionary revelations and quite often these took the form of angels. This was a completely subjective experience

One of his followers was Mary Jones, a farmers wife and Sunday school teacher. She began to witness strange moving lights and claimed that she was receiving messages from the Saviour. But this experience was not subjective, for other people in the district also saw these same lights and testified on her behalf.

In January 1905 the following report appeared in the Cambrian News;

'Last week Mrs Mary Jones attended a meeting at Pensarn, where hundreds of people congregated. The chapel can be seen from the railway and as the train driven by a Machynlleth man was passing a strange light was seen shooting out in ten different directions and then coming together with a loud clap. "Never do I wish to see anything like it again", said the driver in relating the experience. Both he and his mate saw the light.'

Mary Jones appeared to be capable of summoning up these lights. Not surprisingly the leading newspapers of the day carried items and features of these remarkable events.

In the Manchester Guardian, we read of

'.....the appearance of Mrs Jones' stars and lights..... The star was soft and luminous bathing the chapel in a flood of soft effulgence'

A cleric writing in the 'British Weekly' records similar events occurring above the homes of those who were about to be converted.

The Society for Psychical Research conducted investigations, but these were inconclusive. But it seems that this was not the first time mysterious, unexplained phenomena had been witnessed in the area. As early as 1692 we read of

'...a fiery exhalation which was seen to cross the sea, and set fire to the ricks of hay, corn and barns near Harlech, and to infect the grass.....It proceeded in the night from the same place for many months. The only remedy to extinguish or drive it away was to sound horns or trumpets or to discharge guns.'

Further unexplained sightings of strange lights were recorded in 1869, 1875 and 1877 along the Merioneth coastline.

Knowledge of Mary Jones' later life is fairly obscure but we know that her husband died in 1909 and that she remained a Sunday School teacher up to the time of her death in 1936. She lied buried in the family grave in Horeb cemetery.

Dewi

Diary Notes - Lent & Holy Week 2010

Ash Wednesday - 10 - 12 Gift Day (H.E. 12 o' clock)

Fridays in March - 5th 12th 19th 26th Lent Group at the Vicarage (10.30 - 12)

Tuesday March 30th - Stations of the Cross - Pantasaph at 5.45

Wednesday 31st March - Parish Annual Meeting (Vestry) 7pm in Church

Church Heating

We are currently without heating in the church building and this is proving difficult to rectify quickly - however we are doing our best!

Until the heating system is working I propose to continue with our normal pattern of services each week but to keep them a little shorter.

Please wrap up warm - a hot water bottle and a rug is acceptable, but not a sleeping bag, as the temptation to nod off, even during just a few brief words from the Vicar might just prove too much!!

Michael

Christian Aid Prayer

The sun offers its gift of warmth, the sea offers its gift of water,
the mountains give their coolness and their beauty,
the breeze refreshes creation.

And we too bring our gifts so that all may have life.
Lord use them to fill the world with peace and justice,
so that every home can have its daily bread. Amen

(Prayer written in the Dominican Republic)

P.S. I have been given a small donation to send from the parish as a Lent Offering - if you would like to add to it please see me before Holy Week
Michael

