

St. Dyfnog's Church, Newsletter.

June 2010

Llanrhaeadr.

From the Vicar - Ascension & Pentecost 2011

“ While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them.

They said, ‘Men of Galilee,

why do you stand looking up towards heaven?

This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven,

will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying “.

Acts 1.1-13

The disciples together in that upper room between Ascension and Pentecost must have felt lost, confused, helpless, and certainly not up to the job ahead of them, but then something happened to them! Suddenly they were fired up with confidence and pushed out of the rather cosy upper room and into the streets, by that energy of God’s presence. Now the Church was on the move!

Those disciples, just like ourselves, were learning that the Holy Spirit had been given to the Church to enable it to be the Church for people and places everywhere, no longer closed in within an upper room.

The Holy Spirit pushes us beyond ourselves, our abilities, expectations and comfort zones. At Pentecost especially we pray, “ Come Holy Spirit.”

Holy Spirit, Wind of God

Breath of God, wind of God,
whose source we only vaguely comprehend
and of whose destination we have no knowledge,
disturb us with your power,
ruffle our complacency with your unseen movement,
blow the dust from our beliefs
and the cobwebs from our prejudices
so that we may have such a clearer, fresher faith
that the storms of this world
may fail to shake it.

Amen

Important dates for your diary.

Friday June 10th at 7-30pm 'A Summer celebration in Words and Music', the last time this group entertained us we had an excellent evening. This time the recorder group are appearing with the Chancel Singers, it will be an entertaining evening with light refreshments being served. Please try to come.

Early Warning! The flower festival , entitled 'Childhood Memories' will be held from 7th-10th July. During the festival home made refreshments will be available.

Dines Bran.

Massive mound reaching skywards
Crowned with regal ruins of a fortress
Crow castle, loftily enduring,
Recalling primitive warfare.
Ramparts from previous time.
Firm foundations built on rocks
Survey the clefts and valleys
Tumbled turrets rest on green turf,
Where man can for a short time
Scan distant horizons, breathe crisp air
Rest pounding heart and gasping lungs
Recover from spiral climb
And from the precipitous landmark,
Claim that today he reached the summit.

Pamela Roberts.

Quotes from 'Whitty Women'

I do not refer to myself as a 'housewife' for the reason that I did not marry a house.

Wilma Scott Heide.

Cleaning the house while the kids are still growing is like shoveling the pavement before it stops snowing.

Phyllis Diller.

You can't shake hands with a clenched fist.

Indira Gandhi.

Never eat more than you can lift.

Miss Piggy

Old age is like flying through a storm. Once you are aboard there is nothing you can do.

Golda Meir

Llanefydd

If you visit Llanefydd today the impression is one of complete rural calm, and you might find it difficult to imagine a time when it was the scene of some of the most severe rioting in Wales.

This erupted in 1888 when resentful farmers in the area made a valiant stand against the church tithes or taxes. The church had the power to demand that farm produce and stock be seized from farmers, who could ill afford the amounts which they were forced to pay. Eight bailiffs and thirty police officers, led by an official named Stephens, set out from Denbigh for Llanefydd, but when they arrived at the village, they were faced by a formidable crowd of a thousand angry protesters. They jeered the officials, and stones began to hurtle through the air. When an attempt was made to calm the troubled waters, things became even worse. Blows were struck and the situation was really ugly.

When officials arrived at a certain farm, a large section of the crowd surrounded them in an intimidating way. One man beat a drum in Stephens' ear, and he retaliated by attacking the man. This ignited a further fuse of violence, and free fighting broke out. The bailiffs and police produced truncheons, which they used without any consideration of the injuries they were inflicting. According to a contemporary newspaper report:

'they cracked the craniums of those nearest at hand and had no regard for age or size. Their victims included children under fifteen, men over seventy, and women.'

Dr. Pritchard was summoned from Denbigh to attend to their wounds. The Chief Constable read the Riot Act, but despite this, determined attempts were made to renew the attack. When the officials eventually returned to Denbigh, they were greeted

by threats of further violence from some of the townspeople, and, but for the intervention of the mayor, there would have been further bloodshed.

A local heroine of the riots was Ellen Jones of Nant Ucha, who became known as 'The Queen of Llanefydd'.

This was not the first time that Llanefydd had been the scene of violent unrest, for by the final decade of the eighteenth century the price of bread rose to an unacceptable level. It was the staple diet and many families were unable to afford it, and suffered deprivation. This hunger situation led to some unpleasant scenes. A crowd of four hundred stormed Abergele armed with home made weapons, and attacked a man whom they knew had tried to persuade other men not to participate in militancy. Miners from Flintshire roamed from village to village in their desperate search for grain. Soldiers were sent to Llanefydd following disturbances, and some thirty men were sent for trial on law and order offences. A farm labourer had been shot dead.

But the history of the village was by no means always a fiery one. For most of its long history it has been a fairly typical Welsh upland community, dependant for its livelihood on what it could produce from the land. The weather was a key factor of

course, and a poor harvest could have serious consequences.

The parish population increased considerable in the eighteenth century, and there is evidence of some people living to a ripe old age.

It was commonplace in rural areas for children to work, and some were employed to scare birds while others picked stones.

Knitting was a cottage industry in which men and women participated. The resulting items were sold at local fairs, of which there were four in Llanefydd each year.

As in other villages many different trades were carried out, including that of gun making. The man who carried out this work in Llanefydd was something of a 'character', and local boys would climb on to the low roof of his cottage and clog his chimney up with mud and stones. This resulted in his kitchen, being consumed in smoke and in a fit of temper, and much to their delight, he would rush out and chase them.

Another village character was, it seems, a man of dubious morals. He was once asked by Thomas Gee, 'What kind of a heart does a sinner have?' To which he replied, 'It is cold and as hard as a rock'.

There were some small copper mines in the area, offering modest deposits, They were generally only worked in winter, when there was a reduction in the amount of work which needed doing on the land.

These are references to the mining of coal between 1832 and 1895. When it was optimistically assumed that there might be large deposits, there was serious discussion about the possible construction of a railway line to Llanefydd for its transport. The idea was that it would leave the Vale of Clwyd line at a point close to Trefnant and run parallel to Afon Elwy, and then branch off to a suitable transportation point.

It was discussed over a long period but eventually was not considered feasible. One of the problems would have been that of obtaining the consent of local landowners for the line to run through their property.

During the eighteenth century the village was on the main coach road to Ireland. In 1903 post was delivered to Llanefydd by pony and trap from Trefnant, and at that time there were three public houses, The Cross Keys, The Kings' Head and the one which remains to-day The Hawk and Buckle.

It would be difficult to-day to find a village which is more peaceful than Llanefydd, but we should not forget its importance in the rural history of north-eastern Wales and the violence, resulting from injustice, which took place there.

Dewi Roberts from 'The Old Villages of Denbighshire and Flintshire'.

.....there are three signs of ageing. The first is that you tend to forget things rather easily – and for the life of me, I don't know what the other two things are.....

At this time of year when many of us are travelling, it seems an excellent time to learn more about St. Christopher, Patron Saint of Travellers.

St. Christopher – who was he?

He lived in Asia Minor about 400A.D.

Legend says that he was a giant of a man and that he earned his living by carrying travellers across the river.

One night he carried a child who became so heavy that the powerful man nearly fell under the weight and could hardly get across. He learned that he was carrying the Christ Child whose weight was that of the whole world.

The man served Christ as his king for the rest of his life and was martyred for his faith.

His name is Greek and it means -

'One who carries Christ'

He became the patron saint of travellers and, in modern times, of motorists.

In the Middle Ages, they often used to paint a picture of him on the wall opposite the south door of the church because people believed that the sight of it would protect passers-by from harm that day.

That is why, in Llanynys Church near us, there is a huge wall-painting of St. Christopher which was only discovered about nineteen sixties, on the wall opposite the south door of the church.

Helen Jenkin Jones.

The Denbigh Plum.

As a child I frequently visited the Derbyshire village of Bakewell. We always bought the famous Bakewell tart and of course the village is very famous for its delicious tart.

Denbigh also has its own claim to fame. In medieval times the town was very renowned for its species of plum. This fruit is a rare example of red and gold flecked fruit.

In 2009 a Denbigh entrepreneur came across this Welsh variety and from that. The Denbigh Plum Festival took place in the Autumn of that year.

It was discovered that a local doctor who was an expert on our plum. He had become interested in the fruit in the 1930's and gave some wood from an old tree to a local nurseryman who used this wood to create new plum trees. These produced the first new Denbigh plums for over a century.

Interest was aroused and the people of Denbigh examined their old trees, which although old were still producing a good harvest.

The organiser of the Festival then began to beg and steal enough plums and soon there were purple shop windows displays. Poets produced plum themed poetry, there was a local band and plum products appeared from enthusiastic Denbighites. There was jam, chutney, cake, wine gin and later on the Festival weekend a hog-roast was eaten with lovely plum sauce.

Later it was decided to build a community orchard, and residents were invited to sponsor a tree, and a nurseryman came to supervise the planting of 60 fruit trees. Of course 25 of these were Denbigh plum trees.

I went out to buy a tree for myself although it'll be quite a few years before I can sample the fruit for myself, and I hope our Denbigh Plum Festival goes from strength!

P.A.R.

Pride of Place

If ever you are in Llansannan stop by the Saracen's Head which is now closed unfortunately. It looks very sad, and when you consider that once it was a thriving public house serving delicious food and snacks, full of sheep and cattle farmers discussing market prices, and the latest in farm machinery, it is just one of such public houses that can't survive in this modern financial climate.

Glance across the square and you will see the Public Conveniences and it is worthwhile to take a peek inside.

It is spotlessly clean. On the window ledge is a beautiful pink azalea plant. Around the pot ivy has woven its shiny emerald leaves. There are frilly net curtains, and hanging on each wall a water colour painting catches your eye. The tiles are sparkling white to match the wash basin which has soap and towel for your convenience.

An oak chair with a Welsh tapestry seat sits alongside a polished circular table where you could sit and read the local newspaper with community news, or browse through the glossy magazines and maps.

I was really impressed with this public convenience. Llansannan is a village to welcome visitors to Hiraethog. If you can take advantage of this convenience at your convenience of course, you will be as surprised as I was. P.A.R.

Newsletter

The feed-back we receive is very positive, or regular writers are most reliable and can always be relied upon to produce copy. We would like some more writers, long or short articles most welcome. Just leave the copy in the Choir vestry. Thank you. SvdB.

Welsh Quiz June 2011.

1. What is the largest natural lake in Wales?
2. Name the river that runs through Beddgelert.
3. Aberystwyth is situated on which river?
4. Local government was reorganised in 1974, there were 13 counties in Wales. Name 3 of the counties beginning with M.
5. Of the pre-1974 counties how many did not border the sea?
6. The town of Barmouth is situated on which river estuary?
7. A south Wales village occupies the Roman settlement of Venta Silurum - name it.
8. In 1949 a Monmouthshire village was designated a 'new town' - name this village.
9. Port Dinorwic in North Wales is commonly known as----- to-day?
10. Britain's deepest cave is also its second longest, at 1,010 feet/300 metres deep, 28 miles/48 kilometres long. Name it.
11. How many summits in Wales rise to more than 3,000 ft./914 metres, 5 or 10 or 15?
12. Where in Wales are the second highest sand dunes in Europe?
13. Name the dramatic headland reaching into Carmarthen Bay at Rhossilli.
14. Which island lies off St. David's Head?
15. What and where are The Skerries?

Newsletter June (continuation)

Mothers' Union.

On May 4th. Members were transported to Nigeria by the speaker, Mrs. Mary Steele, Branch Leader of Llandyrnog M.U.. She told us, with wit and humour, of her experiences while living in Nigeria, with her husband in the 1970's. The country, as we know, is divided sharply between Muslims in the North and Christians in the South. She and her husband lived in Kano in the very north and she said they had to be very circumspect in their ways in this Muslim environment.

She taught in a girls' High School and it seems that girls in Nigeria set great store by a High School education as only a small percentage of them get the opportunity of attending High School. The population speak three languages- their native language, French and English and the girls' aim is to go to University in order to gain more freedom because girls are completely under the domination of men – their fathers when young, their husbands later. In fact, a women who loses her husband can look forward to a more free life than she has ever known (as long as she has some income, of course!)

As we listened to this account, our foremost feeling was that of thankfulness for the freedom we enjoy, compared with women in Nigeria.

Mrs. Steele was warmly thanked by Roz. Dixon whose husband, Peter, it seems himself spent some time in Nigeria. We met at the home of Nerys Harries and she was very warmly thanked for her hospitality and for the refreshments prepared jointly with her sister Glenys.

H.J.J.

A Toll Gate.

An interesting piece of history of Pentre Llanrhaeadr has come to light, thanks to the recollections of Mary Lloyd. Did you know that there was once a Toll gate at the start of the lane leading down to the old Cymro Inn? There was, next to it, right on the corner, a Toll House called Minffordd (Wayside). To add credence to all this, the house further down the land, now known as Pentr Bach, the home of Roland and Mary Davies, used to be called 'Tan-y-Gait' (below the gate) Has anyone any idea why there was a Toll gate on this lane? Could it be something to do with its being a road to the railway station?

Information welcomed!

H.J.Jones.

Mothers' Union Deanery Festival.

Ten of our members attended the Festival, held this year at Llandyrnog Church. During the first hymn, branch banner bearers (one gentlemen member) presented their banners at the chancel steps, our banner being carried by June Hughes. The service was led by Archdeacon Bernard Thomas and the sermon given by the new Archdeacon of Wrexham, the Ven. Shirley Griffiths, formerly Vicar of Abergele. This year's theme is 'Faithful Relationships' and she illustrated her sermon with examples from the Bible – Ruth and Naomi, David and Johnathan, the Virgin Mary.

Refreshments followed, during which we heard the Deanery President Margaret Hards and the Diocesan President Carol Chamberlain, Wrexham, expressing thanks and greetings. Present too were the new Diocesan Secretary, John Prior-Egerton of Cilcain and the Archdeaconal President Beryl Griffiths of Ruthin. We think that next year's Festival will be here in Llanrhaeadr! **H.J.J.**