

# St. Dyfnogs Church Newsletter

Llanrhaeadr

October 2009

## Harvest 2009

Of course, there is more to the Harvest Festival than hymns and thanksgiving for *material* blessings. Jesus as he spoke of the fields and the ripening corn, saw them as signs of a yet more wonderful world.

The Gospel, said Jesus, is good seed, and sown in honest hearts, will produce thirty, sixty, a hundred-fold.

Jesus challenges us to ask ourselves – *What sort of soil are we?*

***Once again we will be supporting “ Farm Africa “ at this time, as we thank God for all his many blessings in our lives here in the lovely Vale of Clwyd.***

***Eighty per cent of Africans rely on the land for survival and two out of every three live in extreme poverty and so we are supporting Farm Africa because they work directly with farmers to find better, practical solutions to poverty.***

***Our support this Harvest Festival can turn lives around so that African families can rejoice in good harvests - now and for many years to come.***

**Farm Africa - Making a lasting difference to Africa's families**

**Michael**

### **A Prayer at the end of a bad day.**

O Father, I hurt inside tonight. Nothing has gone the way it should. I didn't do very well and some people thought I did worse than I did. Take the tiredness away from me, God; make me feel all in one piece again. Show me what I should do to make things better. Then let your peace descend on my heart so I can sleep well and get up tomorrow with your happiness upon me and ready to do better.

“Plain Prayers for a Complicated World”.

### **Flower Festival Thank You**

An evening was held recently at the Vicarage for all the ladies-plus husbands or friend- who had set up the floral arrangements for our recent Flower Festival. Jane had prepared supper, which was enjoyed by all.

The purpose of the evening was a thank you for all the ladies for their superb arrangements and secondly to see the first showing of the Flower Festival DVD - Mr. Ron Edwards has excelled himself once again with his film - not only was there delightful music as an accompaniment to each display but his special effects were breathtaking. A musical evening indeed!

Perhaps a showing of the film can be arranged soon in church for everyone to see it.

At the end of the evening Glenys presented Jane with a magnificent arrangement of flowers in a basket from all present.

### **Mothers' Union**

The Mothers' Union met at the home of Nerys Harries for the September meeting and it was she alone who had prepared the splendid tea afterwards. The speaker was Dr. Buddug Owen outlining some of the characters in her forthcoming book on "Women in Medicine". There was a great deal of input from members who had much knowledge of some of the later medical women.

Plans were drawn up for the Open Meeting in October which will raise funds for the Overseas project of the Diocesan Mothers' Union and for which tickets will be sold. On Wednesday October 7<sup>th</sup> at 2.00pm. our Open Meeting will be held at Tros-y-Parc (by kind permission of Mr. And Mrs. Stephen Cheshire). A Presentation by Mrs. Whamsley entitled "The King and I" will be given, followed afterwards by afternoon tea and a raffle. The proceeds from this meeting will go to Mothers' Union Overseas. There will be a cake stall ( this as ever will be first class, with plenty of goodies provided by members of M.U.) Cost £1 for members £2 for visitors. Please make every effort to attend this fund raising effort.

**Joint Deanery Welsh Service** - On the fifth Sunday evening of the month the churches in our Deanery and those of Dyffryn Clwyd meet for a joint Welsh Evensong often in one of the smaller churches.

On August 30<sup>th</sup>. A goodly number travelled to Cyffylliog and found there a charming church, newly renovated and decorated. The preacher was the Area Dean of Dyffryn Clwyd, the Rev. Barden Davies and the two lay readers, Martin Jones and John Griffiths led the service. Members of the local chapel, Salem, were welcomed and instead of the usual tea or coffee afterwards, we had a glass of wine, a real surprise.

The next joint evensong will be at the end of November when we are to visit another newly-re-ordered church St. Mary's Denbigh.

We do urge Welsh members of our congregation to join in these services - there is always such a happy atmosphere.

## Grandchildren!

My young grandson called the other day to wish me a Happy Birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, 62. He was quiet for a moment, and then he asked, "Did you start at 1?"

A six year old was asked where his grandmother lived. "Oh," he said "She lives at the airport, and when we want her, we just go and get her, then when her visit is over we take her back to the airport."

A little girl was diligently pounding away on her grandfather's word processor. She told him she was writing a story. "What's it about?" he asked. "I don't know," she replied, "I can't read."

TEACHER: Now Simon, tell me frankly, do you say prayers before eating?

SIMON: No sir, I don't have to, my mother is a good cook.

TEACHER: Joe, your composition on "My Dog" is exactly the same as your brother's. Did you copy his?

JOE: No sir, It's the same dog.

TEACHER: Harry, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

HARRY: A teacher.

### Some Notes on Language.

How many languages are there in the world? According to the authorities "Compendium of World Languages" (2 vols.) published by Routledge in 1991 there are about 300. Why so many? (After all we all have tongues, mouths, ears, lungs, vocal chords) Who knows? The existence of so many is undoubtable a nuisance (to put it mildly!) And each speaker of these languages thinks his (or her) own language is "easy". - Why can't these stupid foreigners manage to speak it too? But all languages have the oddest way of doing things, some divide their words into categories: masculine, feminine, neuter - (and there is no "sense" behind this: in French, the moon is "feminine" in German it is "masculine" and the sun is "feminine" and so on and so on! Why all this "bother"? So much pointless distinctions. But, alas, English has very many troubles and oddities of its own. To begin with, what about its horrible spelling? ( cough, plough, through, thorough, bought and many, many more) How does the poor foreigner master it? - so different from the straightforward spelling of Spanish or German or Welsh. At the very beginning he will ask why "England and English" when you say England and English. And that is only the beginning of his troubles. How is he going to say (and spell) such "mouthfuls" as "settle, trouble, throttle, tremble, mistletoe? - or national, fiction, castle, bottle. He must then learn that R is a very weak standard or indeed non-existent sound in English. (Arabic speakers have a lot of trouble with this, bird, run, risk, afford after.)

There are many more spelling and pronunciation troubles and trials to follow! For instance, there is a big range of meanings with verbs plus prepositions (this is due to the Germanic and Nordic inheritance) For example (and there are many more) to clear up, to clear out, to clear off, to take in, take out, take for, take up, take off; to sit up, to sit down, to put down, put off; and many many more!

Let us be grateful we don't have to work all this out!

But what is we had to "have a go" at Chinese or master the intricacies of Russian or Turkish? To learn a language - catch 'em young! Send your young child (chaperoned of course) to Hong Kong or Tokyo or Moscow or Madrid or New Delhi etc. etc.

Norman Lamb

### **A Cook's Tour ( contd. )**

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century four-fifths of the population still lived in the country and the City of London itself was within walking distance of the fields. Within the city, by the 1740's, drink had become a real problem from the gin drinking of the poor to the orgies of the rich. Hogarth's etchings give a horrific picture of street life, while Rowlandson satirises drunken diners. "Our Modern celebrated clubs are founded upon Eating and Drinking", wrote the essayist Addison. Dinnertimes moved from midday till 4pm. French refugees from the Revolution arrived bringing their cuisine. The sophisticated employed French cooks. New methods of agriculture were slowly introduced by the end of the century, but land enclosure penalised the countryman. At the same time commercial sharp practices were adulterating the urban diet and fuel was becoming scarce. Still the painters could paint their conversation pieces of elegant ladies and gentlemen sitting stiffly in their drawing rooms or at ease on their well-trimmed lawns, perhaps exchanging recipes for their salamagundy, (a dish of cold chicken, anchovies, boiled eggs, lemons, onions and parsley with a dressing and a garnish of grapes or flowers) or Cumberland Sweet Pie (mutton with currants, raisins, apples, lemon peel, butter, sugar, nutmeg, cinnamon, rum and ale- a pie baked for two hours) Amusing tales are told of bemused hostesses trying to serve their guests boiled tealeaves instead of the infused liquid at teatime.

## 19<sup>th</sup>. Century

The economic depression after the Napoleonic wars seriously affected the farming community. Labourers had low wages, no land and a poor diet for their families. Attempts to ease the situation by subsidising the unemployed lead to a drop in the wages of those in employment. Local skills were lost as factory work in the towns offered more pay. An increase in population lead to the importation of foreign goods at the expense of the home product. The 1830's saw the emergence of the dreaded workhouses for those left destitute. Others looked for food from the street market stalls at the end of the day, or left-overs from the prosperous houses and restaurants, or from soup kitchens. The working women with long hours turned to ready made food from the street-vendors or "penny pie shops". The first fish and chips shops were opened in 1902. Without refrigeration the middle class housewife had to shop daily. Butchers would call early for their orders and carts of fresh fruit and vegetables would tour the suburbs. Tinned goods could be bought in the grocers' shops and brand names became established like Coleman's mustart, or Lea and Perins' Worcester Sauce, McDougall's flour or Cambells soups and Cross and Blackwell's sauces. Strange ingredients arrived from the far-flung lands of the Empire. Turtles from the West Indies were the basis of exotic soups. India provided soy sauces, cayenne pepper and chilli vinegar, chutneys and ketchups.

( to be continued next month ) ... .. **Vera Lamb**

## A Walk Through the Vale

That most chauvinistic of Englishmen, Daniel Defoe, described the Vale of Clwyd as 'pleasant, fruitful, populous and delicious' although he kept to the low ground and did not venture on to the hills.

Anyone who makes the ascent will be rewarded by the panorama of the double-knaved churches, farms at the end of green lanes and the unmistakable sight of Denbigh Castle, still standing guard over the ancient town. Further to my right, I can pick out Rhuddlan Castle and the estuary of the Afon Clwyd. Beyond is Liverpool Bay and the ugly coastal sprawl of Rhyl and Abergele, and, such is the visual trick which light plays on the sea, that an oil terminal, some fifteen miles from shore assumes the appearance of a galleon.

Descending the hillside down a sheep track through shale and heather, I cross Offa's Dyke and later come to a rough stone track. Back on a remote tarmac road I pass Pla-y-Llan, an attractive half-timbered house where the young William Wordsworth stayed on two occasions. It was the home of Robert Jones, a fellow undergraduate, and from here they made the excursion on foot to Snowdonia, which the poet celebrates in "The Excursion".

I pass a farm. In the yard, a stockily built man in blue overalls is getting into the cab of his tractor.

"Lovely day," I sing out.

"Oh aye. Alright if you don't have to work, I suppose." His expression is weary.

"But it can't be all work, even on a farm", and my voice, I hope, is that of sweet reason.

His response, however, is to rev. up his engine noisily, before moving off.

The road takes me over Afon Clwyd. Close to an old stone bridge I see a heron in the low-lying meadow land. I watch it as it takes flight and disappears over a copse of trees. From a greater distance, I hear the cry of the curlew, surely the most lovely sound in the countryside. Swallows zigzag over fields to left and right.

At Llanrhaeadr I leave the road opposite the pub and enter an area of ancient mixed woodland. It is good to leave the heat of the day and to walk beneath the green canopy. The ground at my feet is dappled with sunlight which penetrates through the branches.

A well trodden path takes me to St. Dyfnog's well, which has been a place of pilgrimage for centuries. Those inquisitive eighteenth century antiquaries, Pennant and Fenton, came there, as, a century later, did Gerald Manley Hopkins. But nowadays the site is visited by tourists and local people exercising their dogs.

The well basin is four sided, and it is often assumed that it was constructed during the Roman period. But it seems that it was quite possibly a result of something of a cult for wells of healing in the eighteenth century, when one can imagine country people, and others being deeply superstitious. St. Dyfnog, it seems, probably lived in the sixth century, and his was an extremely austere life, standing under a free-flowing waterfall which, at that time, is reputed to have coursed down a very steep bank. He may have worn a horsehair loincloth with a heavy iron girdle attached.

I sit on a log and listen to water flowing from a small stream, as it pours into the basin, gaze around and reflect on all I have seen today.

**Dewi Roberts**

**Diary Notes**

Saturday October 10<sup>th</sup> 3.45pm - Church Visit to St Dyfnog's  
The Worshipful Company of Glaziers and Glass Painters  
Sarah Brown from York University will speak about the Jesse window

Sunday October 11<sup>th</sup> 11.15am - Harvest Thanksgiving  
Guest Preacher Revd. Colin Mansley Trefnant, Tremeirchion & Cefn

Monday October 12<sup>th</sup> 6.30pm - Harvest Thanksgiving at St Dynog's  
Children, staff and parents of Ysgol Pantpastynog ( Prion )

Sunday October 18<sup>th</sup> 3pm - Harvest Thanksgiving Nantglyn  
Guest Preacher Revd. Lloyd Hughes Caerwys & Bodfari

Sunday November 15<sup>th</sup> 11.15am - Shoe Box Sunday  
Operation Christmas Child

N.B. Shirley is looking for volunteers to help cover the shoe boxes a.s.a.p.  
Please see her if you can help!

### **Website**

Our website continues to attract a great deal of interest and positive  
feedback - Only this week the BBC have been in touch !

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The purpose of the evening was twofold; as a thank you for all the ladies for their superb arrangements and secondly to see the first showing of the Flower Festival D.V.D. Mr. Joe Edwards has excelled himself once again with his film - not only was there delightful music as an accompaniment to each display but his special effects were breathtaking and brought forth warm applause each time from the beholders. A magical evening indeed!

It is hoped a further showing of the film can be arranged soon in church for everyone to see it, as happened after the last flower festival.

At the end of the evening Glenys presented Jane with a magnificent arrangement of flowers in a basket with thanks from all present.

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