

# St. Dyfnog's Church Newsletter.

Llanrhaeadr.

October 2010.

From the Vicar

Harvest

Harvest is always a time in our year to think about how well God treats us, even when we are not treating him well or thinking all that much about him. It is a time which makes us think about how, sometimes, we do not really appreciate what we have, or behave as if we know where it has come from.

Harvest speaks of how everything we have is a gift from God, given and worked on by our hands, yes, a gift perhaps even further developed by our own talents, yet, still something given by a gracious God. For it is God who gives us the hands we need and the talents we have.

Our Harvest Prayer is that we may be given an even greater ability to appreciate all that we have, and to be prepared to share that which we have been given, with others.

Michael

***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.**

**At our Harvest Thanksgiving Service on 10<sup>th</sup> October there will be a an opportunity to contribute via a special collection for Farm Africa.**

This is the 50<sup>th</sup> addition of the newsletter! Last week I met two gentlemen from Stockport reading the Newsletter, looking for the graves that Helen had written about, and saying how much they enjoyed visiting St. Dyfnog's - SvdB.

### **Great Victorian Women (cont)**

A less well known Quaker was Eliza Wigham (1820-1899) who was at the forefront of all the major campaigns to improve women's rights in Britain and an active supporter of the anti slavery movement. Her father was a shawl manufacturer, working with his cousin in Edinburgh. Both families were much involved with philanthropy. Her aunt was married to Glasgow's most outspoken anti-slavist, William Smeal and other members of her family were active campaigners in Ireland. The British Empire abolished slavery in 1808 and the Anti Slavery Society was formed in 1823 to abolish slavery in the West Indies. Quaker women were active supporters of William Wilberforce's tireless campaign to bring parliamentary reform. The Emancipation Bill was not passed till 1833, a month after his death. Half the slave trade to the west was in British hands. Native African chiefs ravaged villages to procure slaves, 50% of whom did not survive to become effective labourers in the sugar plantations of the West Indies. Liverpool was the largest export port in transit. It proved much harder to stop the East African Slave Trade to Arabia, Iran and India.

The abolitionists linked temperance, Chartism and slavery. Eliza Wigham was the first vice-president of the Scottish Women's Christian Temperance Union. There were differences over priorities. The Chartist movement in Scotland was teetotal, but there were class differences and the Chartists spoke out against hereditary privileges, while the Quaker women were concerned with the needs of the poor in practical measures like the Women's Working Society which obtained material at a reduced price to be sewn into clothing or the Dean Bank Home for destitute girls. It was becoming apparent that parliamentary influence was necessary for major reforms. Eliza was also secretary of the women's suffrage society in Edinburgh. She was also involved in war relief at the end of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, organising the sending of clothing to the most war ravaged districts and establishing an orphanage. So in many ways she touched on the problems of her age.

### **An assortment of answers from high-school test papers....**

It was raining cats and dogs, and there were poodles in the road.

Diphtheria and smallpox are prevented by intersection.

Filet Mignon is an opera written by Puccini.

Moses died before he reached Canada, but he saw it from a mountain.

Book review - **Canute's Tower** by Paul Edwards (Gracewing Books, £5.95)

In this history of St. Beuno's, in Clwyd, the author succeeds in presenting a wealth of information in a highly readable way. He begins by introducing the reader to the broad background of the Jesuit movement and the immense influence of Ignatius Loyola. Owing to the persecution of its members, the activities of the Society of Jesus were clandestine, and for two centuries its members lived under the severe reprisals. However, they discovered a more liberal climate in England and settled at Stoneyhurst in Lancashire where a school was established. As this failed to accommodate all the novices who wished to serve, in 1848 St. Beuno's was opened.

The author's account of the 19<sup>th</sup> century history of this institution is characterised by "a rhythmical life of prayers and study in an atmosphere of silence and clerical decorum in a somewhat monastic building". Such a background did not encourage intellectual development. There were no disparate ideas and the only reading permitted was strictly pro-Catholic publications. The reading of novels was frowned upon, and it is perhaps surprising to discover how persistent this insularity has been in our own century. It comes as an additional surprise to read of otter-hunting Jesuits in the 1850's. It seems that students were accepted by the local aristocracy as social equals and would join in their hunts, Any group of clerics who indulged in such field sport to-day could expect a hostile reaction and a great deal of adverse media attention.

Nevertheless, for the most part these men were living a semi-monastic life deep in the countryside at a time when Britain was experiencing tremendous social problems, not the least of which were extreme poverty among the working classes and highly infectious, often fatal diseases in towns and cities. Some were ill-fitted to take up the work which needed to be done in the world beyond St. Beuno's.

The reader will learn nothing new here concerning Gerald Manley Hopkins's period in Clwyd, but the author comments that his contemporaries had no way of knowing that.

Their community contained a man whose importance in English literature would ensure that a century later the name of St. Beuno's would be heard, or at least read in print, wherever English literature is seriously studied.

Father Edwards has himself played a significant role in the post-war development of St. Beuno's and his well written book deserves a wide readership. However, the publisher's blurb is a little curious, stating as it does that "St. Beuno's has played a unique and leading role in the development of Catholicism in England".

In *England?*

Dewi Roberts.

### **Uncooked Chutney.**

1 lb. apples . Sultanas, dates, onions (amount to suit individual taste)

1 lb. soft brown sugar. 1 pint ready spiced vinegar. Ginger and salt to taste.

Mince dates, onions and apples, mix in large container - cover, leave to stand for 24 hrs. stirring several times. Pot and seal. Keeps amazingly well for a year or so!

**A very interesting piece of history.**

Sent in by an anonymous reader. The only reply, so far to my appeal for new writers!

Here's a look into the corporate mind that is very interesting, educational, historical, completely true, and hysterical all at the same time.

The U.S. standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5". That's an exceedingly odd number.

Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England, and English expatriates designed the U.S. railroads. Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used. Why did 'they' use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they had used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing. Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon-wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts. So who built those old rutted roads? Imperial Rome built the first long distance roads in Europe (including England) for their legions. Those roads have been used ever since. And the ruts in the roads? Roman war chariots formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariot were made for Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. Therefore the United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5" is derived from the original specifications for an Imperial Roman war chariot. These army chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the rear ends of two war horses.

Now the twist in the story:

When you see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRB's. The SRB's are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRB's would have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRB's had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory happens to run through a tunnel in the mountains, and the SRB's had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track, as you know, is about as wide as two horses' behinds. So, imagine a major Space Shuttle design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a horse's rear end. Ancient horse's rear ends controlled almost everything.....

### **Wit and Wisdom.**

By working faithfully 8 hours a day, you may eventually get to be the boss and work 12 hours a day!

**Memories - Dewi Roberts.**

When I was in my twenties I was unfortunate enough to develop a duodenal ulcer. My G.P. felt that surgery would probably be inevitable and I was referred to Mr. Jonathan's clinic. As a result my name was added to a surgical list. Eventually a letter arrived asking me to report to the Alexandra Hospital, Where I would be admitted to await surgery - or so I thought! I sat around in the ward on arrival, and shortly after lunch the Sister came to tell me that I would be transferred to Llangwyfan.

I was delighted when I arrived there to discover myself accommodated in a cubicle rather than an open ward, for I have always valued my privacy. I do not recall which block I was in, but I do remember the friendly atmosphere. My treatment was purely a dietary one; lots of boiled fish, rice pudding and other foods which might well be considered bland. I ate what was put in front of me gladly in the hope that it would heal the ulcer. I was fortunate enough to be at Llangwyfan during a lovely summer - I think it may have been 1963 - and was permitted to get dressed each day and given the freedom to walk in the grounds. Unknown to the staff, I made the ascent to Offa's Dyke one day. I also did a lot of reading and would engage in literary discussion with a dietician who came round frequently. I recall exchanging views on "Catch 22" with her. I treated my three week stay at Llangwyfan as a kind of holiday, although it was made quiet clear that the village pub at Llandyrnog was out of bounds!

Dr. Biagi was in charge of the hospital then and he was extremely keen to stamp out smoking on the part of patients. It was said that he would walk around the hospital looking for evidence, usually in the form of cigarette stubs. Possibly my abiding memory of that spell in Llangwyfan was the magnificent view which one could obtain over the Vale of Clwyd. Medically, all that boiled fish worked and I have never experienced similar problems since. (this article first appeared in a book about Llangwyfan Hospital.)

## Funnies !

A vampire bat comes back to his fellow vampires with blood on his mouth. They stare at him jealously and ask him where he got the blood. He asks them,

"Did you see that tree back there?" - "Sure" they reply. - "Well I didn't!"

Deep within a forest a little turtle began to climb a tree. After hours of effort he reached the top, jumped into the air waving his front legs and crashed to the ground. After recovering, he slowly climbed the tree again, jumped and fell to the ground. The turtle tried again and again while a couple of birds sitting on a branch watched his sad efforts. Finally, the female bird turned to her mate. "Dear," she chirped, "I think it's time to tell him he's adopted."

## **Operation Christmas Child.**

**On Monday October 4<sup>th</sup> at 2-00pm we will be covering the shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. Please join us, if you can, all welcome! Bring your own scissors. Boxes, paper, sticky tape glue provided. Meet in church. Looking forward to seeing you.**

**This year both schools within the Parish will support Operation Christmas Child and once again St Dyfnog's will be the area "drop off point" for boxes, which need to be returned by November 11<sup>th</sup>.**

### **DIFFICULTY WITH GETTING TO CHURCH?**

At the last PCC meeting it was mentioned that some people have difficulty getting to church.

In particular we have one lady in Pont y Bedol who needs a lift, even if just once or twice a month.

If you are able to help or know of others who are finding it difficult to get to church please contact either of the Church Wardens to see if we can arrange something.

**Contact either Mrs. June Hughes, The Smithy, Llanrhaeadr or Mrs Helen Jenkin Jones 01745890447**

.The National Eisteddfod of Wales was held in Ebbw Vale. At the famous steel works in past times twenty thousand men were employed! Nowadays the site has become one of the most important revival projects in Europe. For the sake of all who once depended on steel for a living let us hope the project succeeds.

Good news from the Gulf of Mexico.

A newly discovered species of bacterial microbe is breaking down oil from the B.P. spill much faster than scientists had thought possible - half the oil has already gone. Scientists have found that the microbes act twice as fast as expected and what is more - they do so without significantly depleting oxygen levels in the water.

-----

**Parc Postyn Barbecue - A Special Thank You to Andy & Jess for offering their home and working so hard to ensure a successful afternoon. The event raised over £1,400 for church funds.**

**Saint John Roberts**

This last summer, a name that has been much in the news is that of 'Saint John

Roberts'. A notable service of commemoration of this man was held in Westminster Cathedral attended by the Roman Catholic hierarchy, by all the Welsh Anglican bishops and by the representatives of all the Welsh chapels in London. In this service Welsh was heard for the first time ever in the bilingual address given by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams.

Who was this St. John Roberts? Obviously a Welshman - a native of Trawsfynydd, born about 1576. At that time the whole land was Roman Catholic. Then came the time when Henry V111, because of his marriage difficulties cast off the authority of the Pope and made himself head of the Church of England. After the short reign of his son Edward V1, came Mary Tudor who wished to turn everyone back to Catholicism. Then came her half sister, Elizabeth 1 who required the country to become Protestant again. Pity the population of this land, being expected to switch to and fro from one type of religion to another - and, as if that was not difficult enough - each monarch in turn employed agents, secret police, to compel folk to follow the new regime. Terrible were the consequences of being found out if you did not! Even the writings of Shakespeare were studied for any hint of treason!

This is the background of St. John Roberts. Wales at the heart was strongly Roman Catholic and so he grew up in this faith, having as his tutor one of the former monks of Cymer Abbey Dolgellau, dissolved by Henry the V111. (an interesting footnote is that the communion vessels of Cymer Abbey were hidden away by devout Catholics and not discovered for 300 years)

John Roberts later went to Oxford to study law at St. John's College; being at that time a hotbed of religious argument among the students. John Roberts made up his mind to become a priest and to return to Wales to help to support people in their old faith. He went to Valludolid in Spain to train for the priesthood. Spies were everywhere, but John Roberts managed to find a ship to take him back to England. James 1 was now on the throne and there was a general amnesty for all religions, but then came the Guy Fawkes plot of 1605 and life suddenly became more difficult for Catholics. John Roberts was imprisoned but managed to break the bars of his cell and escape abroad. Back he came to England and was arrested again. This happened several times until the last time, when, though a hole in the prison wall had been made for him, he refused to swear allegiance to the King. He proclaimed "Jesus said 'Go and preach to all nations' and that is what I am doing-if I had 10,000 lives I would give them all". He was pronounced guilty and sentenced to the terrible death of being hung, drawn and quartered. The day of his execution came- at Tyburn- 1610- and he proclaimed to the watching crowd, "I am not being hanged for treason but for proclaiming 'One God, one faith@ the faith of St. Augustine who centuries before came over from Rome to convert the English" Mercifully the crowd was on his side and persuaded the hangman to delay the dreadful drawing and quartering until John Roberts was dead.

In 1970 he was canonised by Pope Paul. This year 2010, is the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his martyrdom, hence the commemoration in Westminster Cathedral, the Mass in the remains of Cymer Abbey and a mass held in the chapel of his old college St. John's Oxford. H JJ.

Answer a , b, or c. - who or what are the following -

1. CORBEL

- a. a raven or Scottish crow.
- b. a ship with one tier of guns.
- c. a sculptured projection on a building.

2. BAYOU

- a. You would need rubber boots here.
- b. a musical score.
- c. a sun hat.

3. HORNET

- a. You could dance to this.
- b. or sit in its shade.
- c. or avoid it.

4. HAWSER

- a. a seller of goods.
- b. a rope or cable.
- c. a thorny shrub.

5. FRANKLIN.

- a. a German sausage.
- b. a German boy.
- c. a 14/15 th.C free land-owner.

6. TIBIA.

- a. a part of one's anatomy.
- b. a native of Tibet.
- c. a coronet.

7. ORIGAMI

a. a wild herb.

b. a fine muslin.

c. paper models.

8. POMMEL

a. an Australian word for an Englishman.

b. the front part of a saddle.

c. a French apple.

9 Polyglot.

a. a greedy parrot.

b. a mathematical figure of more than four sides.

c. a person who can speak several languages.

10. TROLL --- would you find one in.....

a. China

b. Iceland

c. Gambia.

Answers will be published in the next newsletter.

Vera Lamb.

### **Diary Dates**

**Sunday      October 10<sup>th</sup>      Harvest Thanksgiving**

**Sunday      October 31<sup>st</sup>      Joint Welsh Deanery Service**

**Saturday      December 4<sup>th</sup>      Christmas Fair**

