

Grapevine

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I SEE TREES OF GREEN,
RED ROSES TOO
I SEE THEM BLOOM
FOR ME AND YOU
AND I THINK TO MYSELF



£1.10

WHAT A
Wonderful
WORLD.

Maï 2020 May



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of Clydau, Llanglydwen, Llanfyrnach, Llanwinio and
Mynachlog-ddu

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Editorial

What an extraordinary Easter this has been! We are so used to celebrating the drama of Holy Week together, starting with the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, through the growing darkness that culminates in the Crucifixion on Good Friday, to the liberating joy of Easter Sunday. But this year, in 2020, our churches have been empty, and, for good reason, we are not allowed to meet and pray together.

Of course, we have been fortunate to have the media, both mass and social. We have all shared the extraordinary scenes of the Pope addressing an empty St Peter's, and the Archbishop of Canterbury worshipping with us from his kitchen. Many churches have used Facebook and WhatsApp to overcome our physical isolation and join together electronically, and this creativity is to be welcomed and celebrated. I suspect, however, that many of us have felt a deep sense of unease and discomfort at not being able to attend our Holy Week services.

In turning to our bible readings, we can identify more closely with the sense of exile and isolation felt by the people of Israel, so wonderfully expressed in the opening words of Psalm 137. We think of those who are unable to visit loved ones in care homes and hospitals due to the Covid 19 virus. We think especially of those who, due to isolation protocols, are unable to be with their loved ones at the end.

The suffering endured by some families and individuals in our communities at this time seems difficult to fathom. So too does the patience, generosity, selflessness and compassion of so many health and care professionals, key workers, and neighbours. How then can we make sense of this awful dichotomy? Perhaps only through the paradox of the Cross of Christ ... in the words of St. John, *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Finally, two poems that remind us of some essential truths. The first, by John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, comes from his Meditations of 1624. The second, a contemporary work by Wyn Owens of Mynachlog-ddu, comes from his collection *Cywain Geiriau* (Peniarth 2017), and thanks God for His Word.

Philip Higginson

No man is an island,
*Entire of itself,
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.*

*As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were:
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind,
And therefore never send to know for whom the
bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.*

John Donne

Dy Air

Yn iach neu'n glaf, diolchaf am Dy air.

Arwydd ynghanol gwamalrwydd ein mynd

a'n dod yw Dy air,
arwydd i'n cyfeirio
er rhwystr gwewyr pob gaeaf
at lwybrau tawel Ebrill,
at ogoniant pasiant y Pasg,
at Grist y groes.

Dy air sy'n agor dorau
i'r goleuni gyrraedd corneli'r anialwch.

Heb dy air, byd oeraidd
fyddai heb rodd a heb fodd i fyw.

Dy air yn nyfnderoedd
fy mod s'n fy nghodi
rhag boddi'n y baw.

Dy air yn fy mhryderon
a'm rhyddha o rwymau'r ddaear.

Yn dawel rwy'n diolch
am air â'm harwain
am air sy'n fy mywhau.

Dy air sydd fel derwen
Yn gwrthsefyll ffrewyll a ffrwst
y storm a'i holl lanast hi.
Dy air yw'r distawrwydd,
Y solas sydd o'n cwmpas yn cau.

Dy air, o'i ystyried
ddydd a nos a rydd inni nerth.
Diolch, mil diolch am Dy air
A saif yn ein hoes o ofid.
Dy air yw ein hiachawdwriaeth.

Wyn Owens



Cylch y Frenni Circle of Churches Clydau, Llanglydwen, Llanfyrnach, Llanwinio and Mynachlog-ddu



CLYDAU

An Easter Sunday Homily

Christ the Lord is risen today! Alleluia! Christians haste your vows to pay; Alleluia!

A couple of weeks ago we started what looked like a hopeless, and an endless journey. Today we have come to the end of that journey. Today is the greatest of all Sundays in the Christian calendar because of the newness of life that it brings. Today a new epoch has completely began. This is because the historical Jesus, who suffered, was crucified, died and was buried has now been glorified.

The short story is that Christ has risen in fulfilment of his promise: *"I will rise on the third day."* The battle is over. There is no controversy because Jesus is Lord! Today, we celebrate the triumph

of good over evil, of light over darkness, and of peace over chaos. We celebrate hope, patience and the fulfilment of God's Promise to his people. We also celebrate the uniqueness of our religion, the resurrection of our Lord. Through his resurrection, Jesus affirms that he is the Lord of the living and the dead.

One question that we must ask ourselves this Easter Sunday is: *Did I resurrect with Christ this Easter?* Today's gospel tells us that Jesus left the linen cloths in the grave. In other words he did not cling to any "worldly" thing or allowed them to pull him down. If we must rise with Christ, we must equally be ready to detach ourselves from all unnecessary things that pull us down spiritually. Through our Lenten observances we died with Christ. So let us rise with him through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Like Paul, today our song should be that of thanksgiving to God: *"We bless God the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ who in his great mercy has given us a new birth...by raising Jesus Christ from the dead"*. This is because, Christ's death was our death and his resurrection is ours too. Therefore, his joy, glory and triumph are equally ours. As Christ's disciples, our testimony from today shall be: *"I saw Christ's glory as he rose...Christ my hope has risen...!* Like the apostles, our duty is to spread the good news of the Lord's resurrection to the entire world. Like Peter in today's first reading we must say to all people: *"Now we are those witnesses...we eat and drank with Him after his resurrection..."*

Having been raised with Christ, we must act like the living and not the dead. We must seek the things of light, things that are noble and things that glorify God. We must seek heavenly things by living like citizens of heaven rather than "earth bound spirits." This is what Paul calls us to do today when he says: *"Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is..."*

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In other words, we must live the type of life that is worthy of one who has risen and reigns with Christ. Let us therefore sing with the Psalmist on this glorious day of Easter: *"This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad." Alleluia!*

Peace be with you all!

The above piece was written by Rev. Fr. Njoku Canice Chukwuemeka, C.S.Sp. He is a Catholic Priest and a Member of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers (Spiritans). He is currently working at the Santuario del Espiritu Santo, en Dorado, Puerto Rico, del Internacional Grupo Espiritano De Puerto Rico – Republica Dominicana.

Submitted by Richard Law

EASTER GREETINGS FROM ST CLYDAI - THE OLD CHURCH



And the new village hall - gradually rising phoenix-like despite the lock-down



EGLWYS ST CLYDAI



We can't leave the actual oil lamp burning while the church is closed, but we remember it in our hearts.



Same as we remember our first daffodil this spring

And as we can't have any communion service this Easter, we look forward to our next opportunity



Our church has seen it all before



And will welcome us back again



To worship and give thanks when the coronavirus has passed over us.



Should we paint lamb's blood on our lintels, just in case?

"The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you.... "Exodus 12.13

EASTER SUNDAY 'PROPERS'

The Collect for Easter Sunday

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. Amen

1st Reading is Acts 10. 34-43

Psalm 118. 14-24

The LORD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: 'The right hand of the LORD does valiantly; the right hand of the LORD is exalted; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly.' I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD. The LORD has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death. Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. The

stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

2nd reading Colossians 3. 1-4

The Gospel according to St John

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. ⁸Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and

believed. ⁹(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹²and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Life goes on as usual in our parishes – except for people! The snowdrops flowered right on time in January and we had a good display of daffodils well before Easter. The first bluebells in our dingle opened on Good Friday, and Saturday saw the ash trees near the house flowering.

Ash trees do that; little green feathery flowers that release pollen, which in turn pollinates other trees. They don't do it every year: it heralds that the tree is fit and well enough to set seed this year. Most ash trees take a couple of years off after seeding, as it takes a lot out of them.

Those deep in the Dingle are still asleep. Ash trees set their buds in the autumn – same as horse chestnuts – and close-up one can see which trees either haven't on some branches or have lost them: a clue to the progress of die-back. The ash is usually the last tree to open its leaves – around May 8 locally – which is one of the reasons birds don't nest in them. By the time the ash stops pretending to be dead, most native birds have nested and a lot of their young are fledged.

Of the big trees, beech opens first; long after the smaller hawthorn. Oaks are usually a week ahead of ash; don't believe the rhyme – their behaviour is reactive to what has happened, not what will happen.

Late-comers such as the swallows don't favour trees much as a habitat: they usually get here around April 20 to complete the cycle of spring events, which will go on with or without us.

The massive drop in road and air traffic pollution must make some difference and all of nature thinks it a good idea that we stay home and leave them in peace. A sentiment we should take account of when we are allowed out again. After all, if the planet realizes it's better off without us, this could all happen again.

Richard Law

LLANWINIO

Some interesting facts and figures for you!

Neanderthals are shown as slouching because the first one to be reconstructed happened to have arthritis

In 2015, Spanish workers destroyed a 6,000 year old Neolithic tomb, mistaking it for a broken picnic table. They replaced it with a 'better' picnic table.

The bridge known as the 'Gateway to Bolton' is a one-way street leading away from Bolton (Kathie that one's especially for you!) (*note from Kathie—never heard of it! Obviously after my time!!!*)

The cost of the extra fuel needed to carry a bag of peanuts on a plane for a year is £1.

In Tanzania, a roundabout is a *kipilefti*.

Abibliophobia is the fear of running out of something to read.

Bees know when it's going to rain, so they put in extra work the day before.

96% of people can tell the difference between the sound of hot and cold water being poured.

Sand wasps fly backwards out of the nest to make sure they'll remember what the way home looks like.

Elephant shrews, despite weighing only a few ounces, are more closely related to elephants than to shrews.

Horatio Nelson's pension continued to be paid until 1947.

Pollen sticks to bees by static electricity.

Wrens can sing 36 notes a second.

Over its lifetime, an Arctic tern flies the equivalent of 3 trips to the moon and back.

More people live in London than in Wales and Scotland combined.

In winter, garden birds need to eat a third of their own weight a day.

In China, it's illegal to reincarnate without filling in a government Reincarnation Application form.

75% of the earth's population has no postal address.

To stop their udders freezing Siberian cows wear bras.

Wythnos, the Welsh for 'week, means eight nights.

The energy used in a year by Britons charging their phones would be enough to power Birmingham and Bradford.

Britain has 230 slugs for every human.

Judy Webb

You may remember my editorial in the March copy of Grapevine which was a reprise of the article I wrote in 2013 for my talk on Laity on the Cursillo weekend. Over this extraordinary Easter period, I have been looking at the pictures that I took on my Holy Land pilgrimage, reliving it in my mind and in many cases linking the pictures with the appropriate Bible texts. It has been a very special pilgrimage from my own settee – without the hazards of many uneven, broken steps and poorly lit areas that we encountered.

As I said in the editorial, The Sea of Galilee has always been somewhere I particularly wanted to visit. Sadly, I never found a suitable place for paddling – I'm afraid the edge was always rather too mucky or inaccessible. The paddling came later, when we renewed our baptismal vows and were anointed by the River Jordan. The Jordan was pretty much the colour of mushy peas and it runs very low as a tremendous amount of its water is extracted along its course. Consequently the Dead Sea is also shrinking at quite a rate – the changing rooms where we were able to don our swimming gear had fairly recently been on the edge of the water – now there's quite a distance to walk.

Anyway, back to the Sea of Galilee, also known as Lake Tiberias. Our first stay in the Holy Land was at the Nof Ginosar Kibbutz hotel in Israeli territory. Elsewhere we stayed either in Christian Palestinian owned accommodation; in Jerusalem in the Catholic monk run monastery/hotel where the Pope had previously stayed.

We arrived several hours late after a delayed flight to find the dining room bereft of staff but a magnificent buffet left for us. I was a little surprised to be awoken early by a door knock from a lady I'd met on the journey. Together we stood on the edge of the Sea in the dusk, and watched the sun rise – the hotel gardens ran right down to the edge of the lake. When she said 'maybe Jesus stood here to watch the sun rise' I was overwhelmed! Our photos were so admired by our fellow travellers that most of them got up early the following day – but owing to a sandstorm blowing across from Africa the sunrise was disappointing!

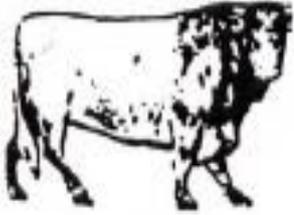
On the following day we visited Tabgha – the Church of the Multiplication (of loaves and fishes) and celebrated the Eucharist on the edge of the lake. An incredible experience. Then into the Church to marvel at the mosaics.



***Above left:
Amanda
James, one
of the
young
ladies
stroking
the donkey
on page 29.
She is
treating
Covid-19
patients
right now.
Thank you,
Amanda!!!***



***Below left:
The
realities of
social
isolation :
Gwenllian
Higginson
visiting her
Dadcu,
Skeel
Harries***



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PLEASE TO MEET YOU - MEAT TO PLEASE YOU



Then we visited the Church of the Beatitudes. This Church is surrounded by a beautiful garden with all the Beatitudes in various languages displayed around it. The Church is glorious – made even more so by the presence of a small choir from the USA who were singing the Lord's Prayer absolutely beautifully.

Our next stop was Capernaum, often thought of as Jesus's hometown, where we saw the remains of several buildings believed to date to His day, including the foundations of the synagogue where He preached. Lunch was at a fish restaurant on the edge of the lake where several of us tried 'St. Peter's Fish' – from what I remember, more bone and less fish!

We ended our day with a boat trip on the Sea in a traditional style of boat (though somewhat larger than in the old days).

The following day we moved on stopping at several venues in our 10 days ending up in Jerusalem. Initially I wondered why we hadn't started our trip in Bethlehem. But I think that the Galilee was the ideal starting place – a couple of days to get into the right frame of mind for all the wonders to come!

Judy Webb

Difficult times

Has it ever struck you what a basically happy person Jesus was? Well, we know that, according to the Prophecies, he was a man of sorrow, acquainted with grief. We know that the darkness and sorrow of all the world descended on him as he went to the cross. We know that Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus and he was sad when people refused to trust God and see the wonderful things that he was doing

As Christians I am sure we all felt unhappy this year on Good Friday and Easter Day when we could not worship together. We all have times of sorrow as Jesus did but these are the exceptions. There are always, from time to time, dark patches painted on to a bright background for everyone to endure, but things do eventually improve. We all, as Jesus did, have very sad times in our lives that we have to endure but with Jesus help the sun will shine again in our lives.

So what did Jesus do? He had to face life as we have to today. He put his trust in God and looked for the good things to arrive. He watched the birds circling around the Galilean hills just as we do when we watch them circling around in the sky here. They never have to consider tomorrow as humans do but they mostly stay alive and well. He watched the hundreds of flowers growing in

the fertile soil of Galilee and was thankful for what God did for him. We have to trust in God who looks after us and helps us in these difficult times.

If tomorrow brings difficulty, remember he is always willing to listen and he is always on our side when life is difficult and we don't know what to do.

Let us pray:-

We thank you Lord for the love and happiness we share when we are together.

Friendship is a wonderful thing, especially when we enjoy each others company.

May the God of love who is the source of all affection keep us safe until we meet again.

In Jesus' name we pray.

AMEN

Maureen Henneveld

LLANFYRNACH

The following poem was written by Simon Guest, a member of the International Folk Dance Society to which Eve and Margaret belong:

Advice to the Young Dancer

(with a nod to Dylan Thomas)

Do not go gentle into middle age,
Fight, fight against the turning of that page,
Take a stand and shake your fist
At your contemporary's bucket list.
Do not slow down but rather, faster go
And if wild oats remain, then sow!
Yes, it's a parting of the ways
But choose the Polka not the Polonaise.
Forsake the wings and take the centre stage.
Do not go gentle into middle age.

Simon Guest

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*Also a big thank you to our Editor, who is working so hard to keep the Grapevine going,
she needs help to fill these pages please!*



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Nesting Season

*There is always
a choice.*

*Perhaps in these
strange moments
it is a simple one;
to dwell on
what has been taken away
or to dwell
in what we have been given;
to build our nests anew
weaving safe and soft
a chance to breathe,
with all the terrible
possibility that brings;
to reflect,
to wonder,
to sit anew
in the secret depths
of those actions
of holy ordinariness;
eating,
drinking,
walking,
sleeping,
cleaning,
being with,
being alone,
simply being.
Taking the time
to watch the earth
reset and heal,
to allow our inner
sky to clear of
all our worry weather,*

*often as grey
and insubstantial
as clouds,
until the
one thing necessary
shines through
at last,
and we see
the present moment,
sky blue,
and fragile
as a blackbird's egg,
nesting secure
in the heart,
deep within
the brambled hedge
of our thorn tangled
thoughts,
awaiting the stillness
of a spring morning
when we grant ourselves
new greening,
awaiting the sunbeam
of divine attention
to warm it to life,
awaiting our
sitting breath,
faith feathered
and yielding,
to hatch within us
a new way.*

Mar 30th 2020 - Richard Hendrick
**Submitted by Ruth Cardiff's daughter,
Anandabodhi, who is a Buddhist nun.
and lives in America.**



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*We fell asleep in one world and woke up in another
Suddenly Disney is out of magic
Paris is no longer romantic
New York doesn't stand up anymore
The Chinese Wall is no longer a fortress
And Mecca is empty
Hugs & kisses suddenly became weapons
And not visiting parents and friends became an act of love.
Suddenly you realise that power, beauty & money are worthless,
They can't get you the oxygen you're fighting for
The world continues its life and it is beautiful but humans are in cages.
I think it is sending us a message:
"You are not necessary.
The air, earth, water and sky without you are fine.
When you come back, remember that you are my guests.....not my masters."*

Anonymous

Submitted by Philippa, Llanglydwen Church

Mynachlog-ddu

Like many people, I've found my usual routines interrupted this spring. The ongoing threat of an unforeseen global pandemic has quite suddenly reduced life and society to their essentials. Schools are closed to all but the children of "key workers"; "non-essential" shops have been ordered to cease trading; and even those of us showing no symptoms have been ordered to remain indoors to help prevent the spread of the virus, and to try to reduce the very real risk to others.

The jarring halt in so much human activity has not, of course, extended to the turning of the seasons, nor to the cycles of nature. Birds are building nests, buds are unfurling into leaves and flowers, and glorious sunlight is reaching places where shadows have slept uninterrupted for many months. Those of us with ready access to outdoor space, either privately owned or otherwise unlikely to be found thronging with people, are even more acutely aware of our privilege than usual.

And since the manner in which I generate my income is not deemed essential to society (a point on which I happen to agree) I have the double blessing this spring of being given the opportunity to share the season of rebirth with my young daughters: they are dismayed to discover that in addition to being their father, I am now their teacher. Fortunately, we are not completely confined to the classroom: lock-downs notwithstanding, there is ample opportunity to enjoy spring in Mynachlog-ddu without any serious risk of coming within 2 metres (or sometimes, so it seems, 2 miles) of another human being. So I have been re-introducing my 6 and 8 year-old children to the joys of tramping around fields looking for standing stones, burial-chambers, and the ruins of old farmhouses.

Just a stone's throw from the mountain road that runs from Bethel chapel to Pentre Galar is the site of Pantau-Duon; one of an alarming number of abandoned farmhouses in this area, whose name translates roughly as "Dark Hollows" – or, more ominously and perhaps less likely, "Black Depressions". Though I knew the location from an old OS map, and some of the previous



Anne and Christine Robinson on the other side of the world in New Zealand

inhabitants from the censuses, I had assumed there was nothing left of it; so I'm sure you can appreciate that upon seeing the towering grey walls appearing from among the brambles we felt like Howard Carter uncovering the tomb of Tutankhamun.

Collecting information about these old farmhouses has become a hobby of mine; one of many which the children, and my wife, are understandably somewhat dubious about. Nowadays I pinpoint my targets in advance. But it occurred to me several days later that this had not always been the case; indeed, I was reminded of the origin of this particular pursuit as I sat eating a boiled egg in the churchyard of the (currently closed) St Dogmael's church in Mynachlog-ddu, where my children and I were conducting a biodiversity survey (AKA "a bug hunt") to pass the afternoon. I was idly removing some lichen from the lettering of a gravestone when I noticed the word I was revealing was unusual, for a Welsh word, in including the letter K. It was "Danperky". Danperky (probably "Dan-Perci" in modern Welsh orthography) was a labourer's cottage on the land of Dyffryn Ffilbro, adjoining Gors Fawr common, not a mile northwest of our church. The house has been empty for a century and a half, and there's little left now but the remnant stones of a cottage garden wall, among close-cropped grass, blackthorn bushes, and sheep skulls.

We can't know exactly how long ago the house was built, but census records tell us that Edward and Ann John, both born in the late 18th century, lived in Danperci between 1841 and 1861. They named their children William and Mary; the latter was still living there in '61, the last time the house appears as inhabited on a census record. William had left by '51, to pursue his own life somewhere nearby, I had assumed – though I was unable to trace him. And where William was in 1851 may forever remain a mystery; but by 1852 it transpires, at the age of just 23, he was dead. That's what the gravestone was telling me; and might have told me any other time I'd visited the churchyard, if I'd cared to ask it.

I wouldn't say this came as a surprise as such. It would have been far more surprising to discover that William John was alive and well, and about to celebrate his 191st birthday. But names mysteriously disappearing from census records is one thing; being confronted with the cold hard reality of life's limits is another. And a tragedy 170 years distant, befalling complete strangers whose descendants, even, are unknown to me, is still a tragedy. I make a note to remember this when I am next told by the BBC how many people have died of Coronavirus in Italy today. It was Joseph Stalin who allegedly said "if only one man dies ... that is a tragedy. If millions die, that's only statistics." There is an unpleasant truth to this, but I like to juxtapose it with John Donne's thoughts on the matter: "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind."

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We may feel slightly less involved in mankind than usual this spring. But we remain a part of the greater whole for the duration of our time on Earth, however long we may be lucky enough to have. Part of mankind, but also part of the universe, existence, creation – whatever you want to call it: the tragedy, yes, but the comedy, the history, and the mystery too.

Alex Velky, Mynachlog-ddu

Meidrim and Merthyr

Canon Jeffrey Gainer 01994 231378

sieffremeidrim@googlemail.com

At the time of writing these notes, that is on Easter Monday, there is no certainty or even likelihood that services will be resumed in May and this because of the restrictions on movement and public assembly which the Welsh government has introduced in order to limit the spread of the coronavirus. Accordingly there are no details of services for this parish and for Merthyr parish in this issue. However when circumstances change then of course a full list of services will be supplied as has been our custom for many years. Moreover whatever the Sunday in the month that the re-opening of the church for public worship falls on, please note that there will be a bilingual celebration of the Holy Eucharist and this will occur at 9.45 am in Meidrim and at 11.15 am at Merthyr. Thereafter the usual arrangements will apply.

The Annual Vestry Meetings have been postponed in common with many other events. It remains to be seen how long the present governmental actions remain in force but once the situation allows we shall do our best to give you an opportunity to elect wardens, receive the annual accounts etc. However we suspect that most of us have other things on our mind just now. But let us spare a thought for those who had intended to get married in church at this time or to hold their child's baptism. Neither is possible at present and even funerals may take place only under specified conditions with a short service at the graveside and immediate family mourners only.

News of the sick

We were sorry to hear that Miss Sophie Jones was taken ill a few weeks before Easter and was in a special rehabilitation unit in Liverpool. This young woman has had a very hard few months and we hope and pray that her trials will be over soon and that she will be able to follow her intended career as a midwife. To make matters worse her family members have been unable to visit her because of the restrictions presently in force. Sophie is very much in our thoughts and prayers.

We extend the assurance of our prayers and sympathy too to Mrs Glenys Thomas, her children Kevin, and all the family on the death on Good Friday of Mr Byron Thomas, who once lived at Oernant Fawr. Mrs Thomas has always been most helpful to us church and ready to play the organ on special occasions and the family associations with Meidrim remain strong. Their son Kevin now lives at Cefn-y- Pant, near Llanboidy and his aunt, Mrs Jean Howell lives at Nantyregl, near Meidrim.

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We are being told to look after our health and to stay at home so as to protect ourselves and our neighbours. Again quite right. However there is the need to look after our mental health and also our spiritual health. We probably miss much of our usual activities and seeing friends and even grandchildren. We may be missing choir singing and the opportunity to meet friends new and old. Some have filled the gap by, say, taking up gardening or reading more etc. But there are positives too, such as the chance to slow down. One man phoned me to say that not long ago he had been working a seventy hour week and getting very stressed, a result that should surprise nobody. At least he now has a chance to consider reordering his life and his priorities. The daily walk for exercise is a good thing in itself too and it brings home the beauty of the earth around us about which we sing in a well known hymn. Then again, how we would feel if we lived high up in a block of flats in an urban area? Many will have found Easter Day this year very strange without the opportunity to worship in church or chapel but as the Queen said in her message, Easter was not cancelled although it was undeniably very different this year. All this gives us a chance to pray more and to pray better I should like to share some words I received from a fellow Christian just before Easter in a letter he sent to me;

“Inevitably, cooped up at home, most people are finding it increasingly difficult to keep perspective and a sense of proportion, separated from one another, and from the outside world in general. Fears, ambitions and aggressions rumble just under the surface, some surge from much deeper down, ready to find their way out of us, each according to our own character, as we are brought under stress. The only real answer, as I have said to you many times, is prayer, especially silent prayer..”

Canon Jeffrey Gainer



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Assistant Priest Dr Canon Jeni Parsons
Lay Reader Mr. Nathan Jenkins

As you probably know I am not allowed into and of the churches at the moment! Hence no ringing of the bell at St Mary's, no prayer there and no lighting of candles.

What I have been doing is sending a circular email to all the people for whom I have email addresses in the LMA every day. If you have an email address and I don't know it please let me know what it is.

Easter for me was a simple celebration with Jo-an and myself. I did not film this and put it on social media for two reasons (maybe more), I don't do social media, I am not very clever technically, there are probably loads of better ones out there for people to watch, I cannot preach to a camera because I don't know how people are reacting. (I think that's four).

An extract from Anon:

I have waited a few times before but not like this. I have waited with a human while on earth, but not before with my own kind. We all waited. And I mean all. I stood with Arberth, behind and above us the sprites of streams and trees and flowers, Gronw and Marlais were there. Below us were the greater spirits including Arianrhos and Llew Llew Gyfhoes, below them were the messengers that now using a Greek word were referred to by humanity as angels, the many ranks of angels with the Seraphim around the throne silent. The beings whose place it was to worship the Maker of All Things constantly throughout time were silent, they also waited.

They were silent because the Throne was empty.

The Son of the Maker of All Things was dead and the Maker of All Things was gone.

If any of us actually breathed we would all be holding our breath.

We waited for existence itself to end.

None of us were at our posts, we were all here. How the universe didn't implode without us I suppose the Spirit of the Maker of All things could maintain it all quite well without us, we were never really needed anyway, but how was he active when he, the Maker and the Son were One anyway, I did not understand.

Yet here we were, gathered round the empty Throne.

The Son had died to save humanity. Because the Maker of All Things is not bound by time this very act saved all the human souls who had died stretching back throughout history, but would there be more to come? Would there be a future?



***Prydiau Eryl a
Meryl***

***Grwyp Sgwrsio
ar y We***



Guto Llywelyn



diane



Mel



Trefor Evans



Ruth Jones



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The earth rolled on without us, the whole universe spun and danced without us, but the rolling of the earth, my main concern, rolled oh so slowly and for someone for whom time is still an enigma this was as much as I could bear. But with the Throne empty why should I be concerned at the slow rolling of the earth, I was empty inside I could have no meaning myself.

My valley turned towards the sun and I was not there. The people of the valley went about their lives unaware.

We all stood silent, unmoving, the five and five and five and five and four elders sat still on their thrones with their crowns on their laps, the seraphim stood silent for the first time in their existence. There were no rumblings of thunder, no flashes of lightning, the sea before the throne was dark. All of us had the same thought, could this be the end of all existence?

The earth rolled on and took my valley into the night.

Any gathering of humans is never silent, they fidget and cough, rub imaginary itches, for they cannot keep still. But we were, not a sound, not a movement.

Had the whole of creation come to this? The humans had a special place in the plan of the Maker of All things and despite all that they did his Son went into the world and was one of them. The utter arrogance of humanity to think they could kill him, and yet kill him they did.

All creation should end. All creation ought to end. But what of the Maker?

The universe continued to dance and spin. The humans went about their lives as if nothing had happened except a few frightened people in the land where he had lived his human life. My valley rolled slowly on back into the light of the sun.

We were all still here, though we waited, and what for? Three days he had said, three days, then what?

I tried to remember some of the things I had heard, I tried to reason, but I could not. Beyond being aware of the empty throne, the gathering of all spirits, the absolute silence and the continued spinning of the universe I was too numb to think.

And my valley rolled back into the night.

Then everything changed. All was light and joy, the Maker Of All Things was on his throne and his Son with him. None of us could look, the Son bore his scars and we could not bear the sight. We all fell prostrate before him.

Rev. Kingsley Taylor

This poem is my tribute to daffodils which appear every year in our garden. Their season is short, but when fully grown they have an almost-human presence. A few years ago I sat amongst them, and this poem is the result. I hope you enjoy my words of praise and encouragement to these delightful gifts of nature.

Roger Penn

Beneath buds of bulging blossoms
Aside glades of garden wall

Are shoots of little daffodils

Alert to Spring's first call.

"Awake, young bulbs beneath the ground

Good night to winter storms

Draw forth all heads through earthen
mounds

For you, a season's born!"

"Forget the wicked winter blight

Of crispy ice and snow

Come bathe aloft in fresh sunlight

Make haste, young guns, 'tis time to grow!"

"Though shoots of ripening green, peep

O'er hill, crest and dales,

Tis but a blur till thee from sleep

Awake and climb the scales."

O gems emerging at our feet

Swathed in beauty to embrace;

The pick of Heaven's ephemeral treats

Fed by nature's portent grace



Softened eyes, viewing stems inclined

And pollen cups of buttery shades,

Will no prettier picture find –

Nor kinder dream cascades.

"Take heed in 'glory' – slender, tall

Chirpy petals nodding free

Leaves entwined to break a fall –

Yet honey pot for bumble bee."

"As daylight lengthens eventide

I pray you'll stay a little while

That so when furrowing at your side

Thy fluttering faces charm my smile."

Before the toll of solstice bells

When aging heads wilt and flop

Sodden napkins drip sad farewells

But rewards are rich beyond the drop.

"So lie, as one, in peacefulness

Oblivious to the hour

When God awakens you from rest

And invites thee forth to flower"

Cyffig - Submitted by Lynn Werrett:

Leisure

What is this life if, full of care,
we have no time to stand and stare?
no time to stand beneath the boughs,
and stare as long as sheep and cows:
no time to see, when woods we pass,
where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:
no time to see, in broad daylight,
streams full of stars, like skies at night:

no time to turn at Beauty's glance,
and watch her feet, how they can dance:
no time to wait till her mouth can
enrich that smile her eyes began?
A poor life this if, full of care,
we have no time to stand and stare.

William Henry Davies (1871-1940)

Eglwys Gymyn

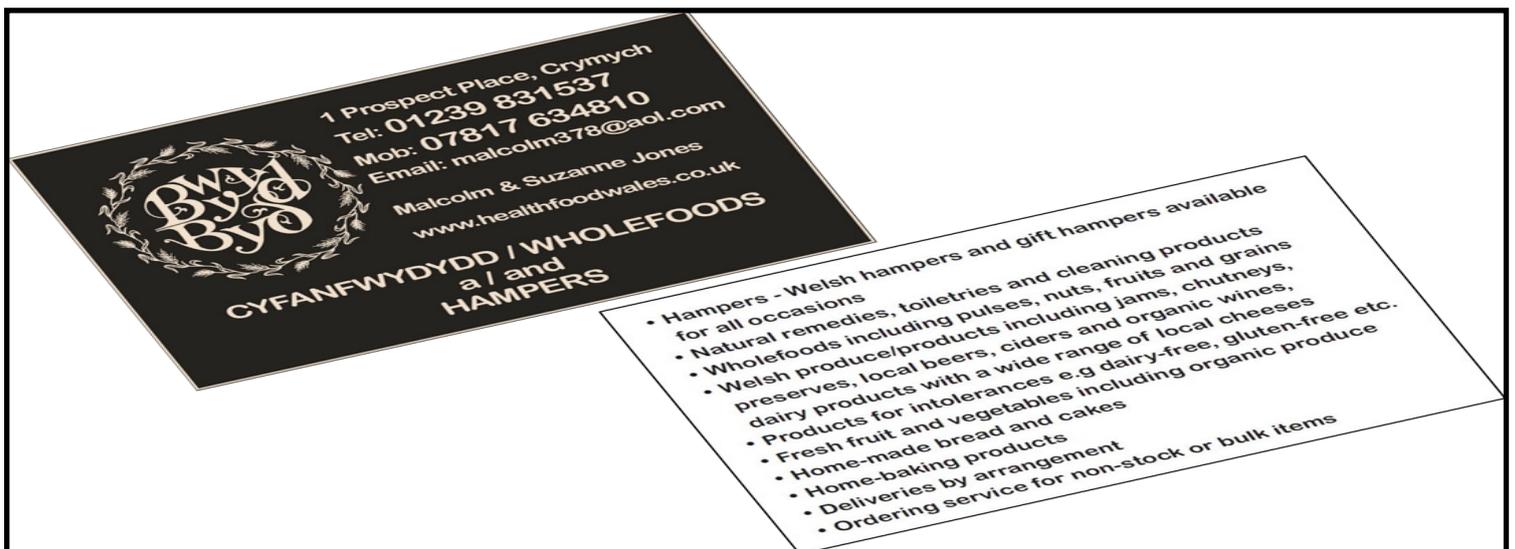
The whole country has been in a state of 'lock down' caused by national government restrictions imposed across the country in an attempt to slow/prevent the spread of the Corona virus.

Although now in 'lock down', day to day domestic routines have continued for our congregation, interspersed with more serious issues involving family, for example

1. Mrs Anne Robinson, who in February took a birthday holiday in New Zealand to meet with and tour with her grandson, has now been reunited with her grandson who has returned from New Zealand, (which is good news because New Zealand is now also in lock down).
2. Our Church Warden Mr Michael Lewis and his family have had a worrying few weeks concerning his son, Justin. While escorting a party of holiday makers touring the south Pacific, the boat was refused permission to pass through the Panama canal because several passengers had died and many more were suffering from Covid 19. Eventually, after transferring to a second boat, they transited through the canal and reached Florida, from where they were flown home reaching the UK, worn out but hopefully free of the virus, (but requiring self isolation).
3. Again closer to home, my wife and I and all our family have been worried silly after finding out that our daughter in London has been infected and was suffering from high temperature, difficulty in breathing, coughing, chest pains and feeling worn out. The frightening symptoms and the knowledge how the outbreak is affecting people across the country, can only make the individual sufferer feel desperately frightened. At that time we all pray and it helps to know that its not only you, but also friends and in our case our long term but now retired minister, Rev David Faulkner, all praying for our daughter. Now coming close to the end of the second week we are so thankful that our daughter is feeling some improvement, which makes us feel even more sorry for those and their families who are still worried and frightened or have lost loved ones.

At this time of worry, we can only feel relieved and glad that we live in a quiet rural part of the UK , which so far is not a virus 'hot spot' like the major cities and large population areas like London, or even Cardiff, Newport and Swansea. We can also pray that the virus pandemic will soon end and our church will reopen and we can return to a normal life.

Roy Evans



Trinity, Llanboidy, Tabernacle, Whitland and Bethel, Llanddewi Velfrey

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Newyddion y Tabernacl, Hendy-gwyn

Mae'r aelodau wedi taflu eu hunain i mewn i'r gwaith o edrych ar ôl ei gilydd yn ystod yr argyfwng yma.

O fewn dyddiau roedd dwy o'r aelodau wedi dechrau gwasanaeth mynd a chawl ar ddydd Mercher a chinio dydd Sul ar ddydd Sul i'r aelodau mewn mwyaf o angen. Mae'r gwasanaeth yn profi yn boblogaidd dros ben a bron i ugain o bobl yn derbyn y prydiau ar hyn o bryd.

Hefyd cyn i'r cyfyngiadau ddod i rym fe lwyddwyd i drefnu casgliad ariannol dros £400 a pheth bwyd i Fanc Bwyd Caerfyrddin.

Mae'r oedfaon a phopeth arall ar stop ers wythnosau bellach a rhaid oedd dod o hyd i ffordd arall o gynnal defosiwn. Mae'r ffon symudol a'r cyfrifiadur wedi bod yn ddefnyddiol dros ben. Mae defosiwn byr o tua 10 munud yn cael i anfon trwy e-bost bob bore Sul at bron i 100 o'r aelodau a chyfeillion. Mae crynodeb byr o hwn i weld ar facebook bob bore Sul hefyd.

Er mwyn cadw mewn cysylltiad fel aelodau rydym wedi dechrau grŵp sgwrsio ar y we bob bore Mercher. Rydym yn defnyddio 'zoom.us' ac yn gweld ein gilydd ac yn sgwrsio am tuag awr bob wythnos.

Rydym yn gofyn i'r aelodau anfon lluniau i mewn o beth maen nhw wedi bod yn gwneud yn ystod yr wythnos ac yn cyhoeddi nhw bob dydd Gwener ar 'facebook'

Hefyd rydym yn paratoi ambell i gwis er mwyn cadw ein meddyliau yn effro.

Mae pob gweinidog yn defnyddio'r ffon i fugeilio'r dyddiau hyn mae'n siŵr, ac er bod anfanteision amlwg i hyn, mae'n caniatáu i rywun gysylltu gyda llawer mwy o bobl mewn diwrnod.

Mae'r argyfwng yma wedi gorfodi ni i gyd i feddwl am ffyrdd gwahanol o wneud pethau ac rydym wedi gorfod darganfod ffyrdd newydd o gyfathrebu na fyddem byth wedi eu defnyddio fel arall. Bydd y ffyrdd newydd yma o gyfathrebu yn help mawr i ni mae'n siŵr ymhell ar ôl i'r argyfwng yma fod drosodd.

Cadwch yn ddiogel bawb ac erychwn ymlaen i gyd-addoli pan fydd hyn i gyd drosodd.

The corona virus crisis has made us re-think everything in these last few weeks.

Members in the Tabernacle have thrown themselves in to the work of looking after each other. Within days of the crisis starting two of the members started a service of offering 'cawl' on a

Wednesday, and a Sunday Lunch every Sunday, to those most in need. And this has been carrying week after week with nearly 20 people benefiting from the service.

With the chapel closed, a weekly short devotion is being e-mailed every Sunday morning to the members. Also we have a weekly video chat group via the 'Zoom' website. Also at the end of the week we publish photos of what the members have been up to and we send out an occasional quiz.

The crisis has forced us 'to think outside the box' and these new ideas will help us in the future.

Please keep safe everyone and we look forward to things getting back to normal in the not too distant future.

Bethel Chapel

With the chapel closed for the foreseeable future our minister prepares a devotion online for every Sunday via Zoom, and has also done a special Easter service. There is also a meeting online every Wednesday morning. Many of the members also keep in touch by phone or email.

The Village Hall committee is also very active with advice and handy phone numbers for shops that are open, and also have a rota of people who will help with shopping etc for those who are isolating or cannot shop for themselves for various reasons. Is it something inherent in small communities like ours or is it that this has brought out the best in everyone.

One small plus factor is the good weather which allows everyone to be out doing all the jobs on their list, and now is of course a busy time for gardeners anyway.

Trinity Chapel

Most of the services in March were led by the minister, the Rev. Guto Llywelyn. The theme for the members' service on the first Sunday in March was the life and work of the Rev. T. E. Nicholas (1879-1971) from Llanfyrnach, a poet, minister and a champion of the more disadvantaged in society. Over the years, he was a minister of several chapels including Seion chapel in Glais in the Swansea valley and later became known as 'Niclas y Glais.' On his death in 1971, his ashes were scattered on the Preseli hills. Subsequently, a memorial stone was erected in his memory near Pentregalar, Crymych. On Sunday, 15th March members joined Bethel and Tabernacle chapels for a joint service in Bethel led by Mr. Hefin Wyn.

Members wish to send their fondest greetings and best wishes to Mrs. Norah Heseltine, who will shortly be celebrating her 90th birthday. Norah's roots are deeply steeped in the local community and she has contributed significantly to the work of Trinity Chapel over many years including her role as chapel secretary. Her involvement in local groups, such as the Chapel Sisterhood, Market Hall committee and the Women's Institute, has been extensive and greatly valued. Norah's energy and positivity are an example to us all. We all wish her a very happy birthday.



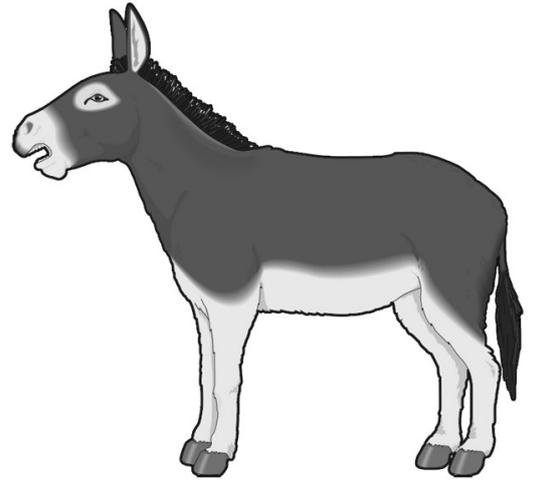
***Above: The Sea of Galilee
Below: St. Peter's fish and chips!
See pages 10 and 11, Judy Webb***



Children's Corner

The Little Donkey and the Two Volunteers by Keith Taylor

Ethel was a nice little grey donkey with a white "splodge" on her nose. She lived in a sunny meadow with soft green sweet grass to eat. Ethel was little because she wasn't very old and still had a lot to learn from her mam who lived in the same meadow.



On one side of the meadow was an orchard with some sheep; on the other side there was a drive down to the farm house from the main road. Every weekday morning two children would talk down to the drive and catch the school bus on the road. They would bring a carrot for Ethel to eat



which she liked very much and Ethel soon learnt that the approaching school bus meant another treat when the children were walking back down the drive after school. When Ethel heard the school bus she would stop what she was doing and rush to the gate for the treat. On Saturday the children stayed in bed a bit longer but they still brought her a treat, but Ethel thought it was a bit later than on weekdays but she couldn't be sure because she hadn't learnt to tell the time yet.

One Saturday very early Ethel's mam said, "Hurry up Ethel. We are going to the Show."

"What's a show?" asked Ethel.

"You will meet other donkeys and horses and walk round with them," mam said, "but you must get ready and look very smart." As Mam was speaking the children appeared with a bucket of warm water and brushes and started to wash Ethel's four feet and brushed all the bits of grass and straw off her coat, so Ethel did look smart. The gate opened and a horse box was reversed into the field entrance. The ramp was lowered and made ready.

"Now go to the toilet before we set off," said Mam as Ethel was about to rush in, "farmer Griffiths won't want to stop for you on the way."

The horse box was a bit strange for Ethel at first but Mam said that the journey would not be long. What a surprise it was when the ramp was lowered to let her out; horses, ponies, Welsh cobs, more donkeys and people, lots of people. "Would they all bring me a carrot," Ethel thought excitedly.

"It's almost time for us to go into the ring, so don't get messed up," mam said as Ethel was going to play with another little donkey.

"Oh dear!" said Ethel, "I need to go to the toilet again. What should I do?"

"When human beings want to know where the toilet is," said the other little donkey, "they always ask the green people in a white horse box with a cross on it. Look! It's over there."

Ethel trotted off to the white horse box. "Excuse me," Ethel said to a nice green lady, can you tell me please where the toilets are?"



“They are over there”, the nice green lady said, and pointed to the blue and grey toilets by the hedge. Ethel trotted off. But oh dear! She couldn’t open the door! Back she went to the white horse box with the green lady.

“Help!” Ethel said crossing her legs, “I can’t open the door!”

“Don’t panic,” said another green lady, “we will help you.” So Ethel trotted off with them as quickly as she could. It is very difficult for a little donkey to trot with her legs crossed!

The two green ladies helped Ethel who felt much more comfortable and after having had her photo taken she won a beautiful first prize rosette at the show.

In real life.....

..... the Green ladies were, of course, members of Cardigan Division, St John Ambulance. They are volunteers; that means that they do what they do but do not get paid. St. John charges show organisers for First Aid duties; these charges part-pay for the Ambulance and its equipment, medical supplies, uniforms, training costs, medical gases and more, but not the wages of those on duty.

In their working lives both Kirsty and Amanda went from being St. John First Aiders to being qualified nurses and now work in NHS hospitals. Nurses work very hard and often very long hours and no longer have time to volunteer for First Aid duty with St. John. (Those that do have light grey epaulettes on their shoulders.)

Isn’t it great that young people from our community are becoming our next generation of our health care professionals with the help and encouragement of St John Ambulance? St John has programmes for folk of all ages, primary children called badgers and secondary children called cadets.



***Remember volunteers are not unpaid because they are worthless
but because they are priceless!***

Smilng is infectious,
You catch it like the flu.
When someone smiled at me
today
I started smiling too.

I passed around the corner
And someone saw my grin
When I saw them smiling
I knew I'd passed it on to him.

I thought about this smile
And realised its worth,
A simple smile like mine
Could travel round the earth.

So if you feel a smile begin
Don't leave it undetected.
Let's start an epidemic
And get the world infected!

**Anon. (Submitted by Philippa,
Llanglydwen Church)**

Words of Wisdom

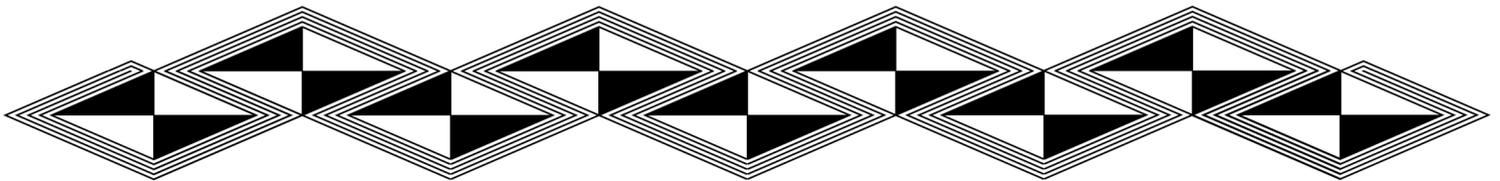
I recently read of Sir Winston Churchill's early schooldays in a brochure entitled *Winston and Blenheim – Churchill's Destiny*, compiled by John Forster and Jeri Bapasola. From it, I learnt that despite having intelligence and talent, the young Winston was no leading scholar because he lacked diligence. Yet, as he grew older, he worked hard, and in his final end-of-term report the headmaster of Harrow School appreciated his 'excellent' efforts whilst adding 'he now understands the need of *taking trouble*.'

These last few words are so ordinary, but don't they say so much? Our future wartime Prime Minister was, at last, giving time and dedication to his performance and subjects. In *taking trouble* he was digging deep, showing interest, investing himself in the task, beating his subject into shape and, of course, raising his own levels of self-esteem. *Taking trouble* are more than two simple words; they define our course and determine our happiness.

I was equally impressed by a recent comment made at the food counter of our local Co-operative store in Whitland. At this time of uncertainty with the Coronavirus, I asked the lady, whose name I do not know, how she and her colleagues are coping with the rush for food, while controlling customer traffic inside the premises. "We're doing fine," she said, before adding a few deft words of her own: "we're just *keeping calm and carrying on*." Wow, I thought, how clever – certainly words to cling to during the upsets and turbulence of life?

So, let us congratulate the headmaster of Harrow School and the local shop assistant for such far-reaching remarks – which Solomon would, no doubt, have appreciated. This is what the great prophet says in the *Book of Proverbs*, 25.11: 'Word[s] aptly spoken [are] like apples of gold in settings of silver.'

Roger Penn, Whitland



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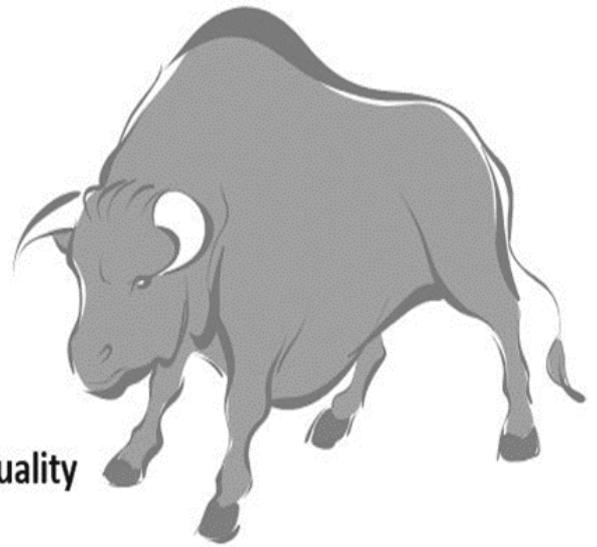
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It was in March 2020 ...

The streets were empty, the shops closed, people couldn't go out. But spring did not know, and the flowers started to bloom, the sun was shining, the birds were singing, the swallows were soon to arrive, the sky was blue, the morning was coming earlier.

It was in March 2020 ...

Young people had to study online, and find occupations at home, people could no longer shop or go to the hairdresser. Soon there would be no more room in hospitals, and people continued to get sick.

But spring did not know, the time to go to the garden was coming, the grass was turning green.

It was in March 2020 ...

People were put in containment. to protect grandparents, families and children. No more meetings or meals, family celebrations. The fear became real and the days were alike. But spring did not know, apple trees, cherry trees and others bloomed, the leaves grew. People started reading, playing with family, learning a language, singing on the balcony inviting neighbours to do the same, learning a new language, showing solidarity and focusing on other values.

People realized the importance of health, suffering, of this world that had stopped, of the economy that had plummeted.

But spring did not know. the flowers have given way to the fruit, the birds have made their nest, the swallows have arrived.

Then the day of liberation arrived, people learned about it on TV, the virus had lost, people took to the streets, sang, cried, kissed their neighbours, without masks or gloves.

And that's where summer came, because spring didn't know. He continued to be there despite everything, despite the virus, fear and death. Because spring did not know, he taught people the power of life.

Everything will be fine, stay at home, protect yourself, and you will enjoy life.

Author Unknown

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I'm normally a social girl
I love to meet my mates
But lately with the virus here
We can't go out the gates.
You see, we are the 'oldies' now
We need to stay inside
If they haven't seen us for a while
They'll think we've upped and died.
They'll never know the things we did
Before we got this old
There wasn't any Facebook
So not everything was told.
We may seem sweet old ladies
Who would never be uncouth
But we grew up in the 60s -
If you only knew the truth!
There was sex and drugs and rock 'n roll
The pill and miniskirts
We smoked, we drank, we partied
And were quite outrageous flirts.
Then we settled down, got married
And turned into someone's mum,
Somebody's wife, then nana,
Who on earth did we become?
We didn't mind the change of pace
Because our lives were full
But to bury us before we're dead

Is like a red rag to a bull!
So here you find me stuck inside
For 4 weeks, maybe more
I finally found myself again
Then I had to close the door!
It didn't really bother me
I'd while away the hour
I'd bake for all the family
But I've got no flaming flour!
Now Netflix is just wonderful
I like a gutsy thriller
I'm swooning over Idris
Or some random sexy killer.
At least I've got a stash of booze
For when I'm being idle
There's wine and whisky, even gin
If I'm feeling suicidal!
So let's all drink to lockdown
To recovery and health
And hope this awful virus
Doesn't decimate our wealth.
We'll all get through the crisis
And be back to join our mates
Just hoping I'm not far too wide
To fit through the flaming gates!

Pam Ayres

BEFORE



Human in 2019

CURRENT



Human in 2020

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Seen on Facebook:

Hi family and friends,

Just be careful because people are going crazy from being in lockdown - actually I've just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster while drinking coffee and all of us agreed that things are getting bad. I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything and certainly not the fridge as he is acting cold and distant. In the end the iron calmed me down as she said everything will be fine, no situation is too pressing.

Message from the Editor

Thank you so much to everyone who took the trouble to send me material to fill this edition of the Grapevine. I like to think that many of you feel connected to one another through this humble little magazine and that it is especially important at this very difficult time when we cannot go and visit our friends and family, worship in our churches, or even go for out for a drink or a meal.

Hopefully the quite rigorous restrictions we are living with at the moment will have the required effect and before long we will be able to

pick up the threads and return to some sort of normal life. Let us hope, though, that it will be a better life than before and that we will have learnt lessons from all this - not to take the world and all the people that work so hard in it for granted. and to appreciate the simple pleasures in life. Assuming that restrictions will not be lifted in the very near future, please, please continue to send me your stories, reflections and photos so that we can have another full and interesting magazine in June.

Thank you!!!

G. Williams

Monumental Masons

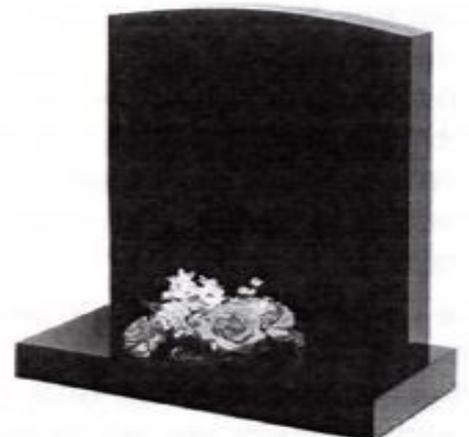
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