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comprising the parishes of Clydau, Llanglydwen,
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EDITORIAL

Over the past year I have often been asked what my late father, Dr Penn, would have thought of our pandemic crisis. Each of my replies has been conveniently brief and I have to admit a little inconclusive. Besides understandable shock and sadness at the horrifying extent of health issues, mortality rates and knock-on damage inflicted upon worldwide economies, I think it is reasonable to believe Dr Penn might concede that we are unfortunately meant to face such problems from time to time and that we must always hope for the best. I suspect he may also link lockdown to the days when his predecessors at Dolycwrt Surgery closed schools in the early 1900s during outbreaks of scarlet fever, influenza and tuberculosis. Indeed he might think back to his days of National Service in malaria-infested Nigeria with the Royal Army Medical Corps – and yes, he would remember Dr Edward Jenner of Berkeley, Gloucestershire who in 1796 discovered vaccinations when smallpox was rampant and the death toll heavy.

As for the relevance of religious content, I suspect Dr Penn would remain silent despite his deep spiritual being. At home, I cannot ever remember him saying grace or prayers or openly encouraging any of the family to read the *Bible* or discover life's pathways within *Psalms*, *Proverbs* or the delightful parables. As for Jesus, God and death, I remember nothing besides father's mention of 'a long retirement looming,' only days before he died. I suspect Dr Penn felt that we should all be allowed to make up our own minds about these subjects, especially as we are born with a conscience that is considered the 'Voice of God' within us. Furthermore, I daresay his good nature prevented him from discussing matters that may, particularly in a growing secular society, alienate him from others. We know that Dr Penn attended church and never missed a

funeral, but beyond guiding my two sisters, Elizabeth and Sarah, and me to Sunday school, I cannot remember religious discussions going further.

In the eyes of most, Dr Penn's popularity knew no bounds and I do not doubt that the same people who queued for hours to see him at his surgery – and he did keep people waiting rather a long time but remarkably got away with it! – would have followed him to church had he been a minister. His deeds, favours and generosity were both bountiful and great. Whilst these do not, of course, confirm his Christian credentials, I feel they go a long way in that direction because the *Bible* commends 'loving thy neighbour' and helping others. In both fields Dr Penn was exemplary. 'Serve wholeheartedly ...' it is said in *Ephesians* 6:7 and this he did, essentially practising what others preach. "We must always tread on egg shells,' father used to say at home, 'for fear of offending.' And perhaps the biggest lead into his religious world appeared on a wall in the waiting room of Dolycwrt Surgery. Max Ehrmann's 1920s masterpiece, *Desiderata*, a combination of poetry and prose, carries a most telling message:

'Whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt, the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore, be at peace with God, whatever you conceive him to be.'

Exactly what influence Dr Penn's education at the Royal Masonic School for Boys at Bushey, Hertfordshire – or his later rise to Worshipful Master of Teifi Lodge of Freemasons in Cardigan – had on his religious quietude, I know not. But according to his cousin, Janet Moody, of Whitchurch, Cardiff, he devoured the *Bible* when seriously ill with a heart complaint during his early teens, and years later amused members of the interview panel who accepted him into Cardiff School of Medicine by explaining how he narrowed down his choice of two

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careers, Medicine and Holy Orders, into just the one – heavily influenced by his strong-minded mother!

Whereas Dr Penn spoke little about God, he talked endlessly about the great Sir Winston Churchill – another who preferred to speak little about his faith. Admittedly, Sir Winston mentioned God in war-rousing speeches to rightfully dominate warfare's high moral ground. 'We shall never surrender ...,' he said during his early Premiership, 'until, in God's time, the New World with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old.' But otherwise he too remained decidedly quiet. Yet, thanks to the work of Jonathan Sandys - the great grandson of Sir Winston - and Wallace Henley, former White House aide to President Nixon, the great man's Christianity has been revealed. The book *God and Churchill* is without doubt a classic and so neatly unpacks the influence Winston Churchill received from his Lord and Maker.

My favourite story, as appearing in Chapter II, tells of Winston, the young journalist, escaping from a high-walled prison during the Boer War, in South Africa in 1899. Rushing from a hollow near a station-stop to catch an

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*Far left:
Mercy on her
new legs
Left and below:
Mercy with
mum, Mary*



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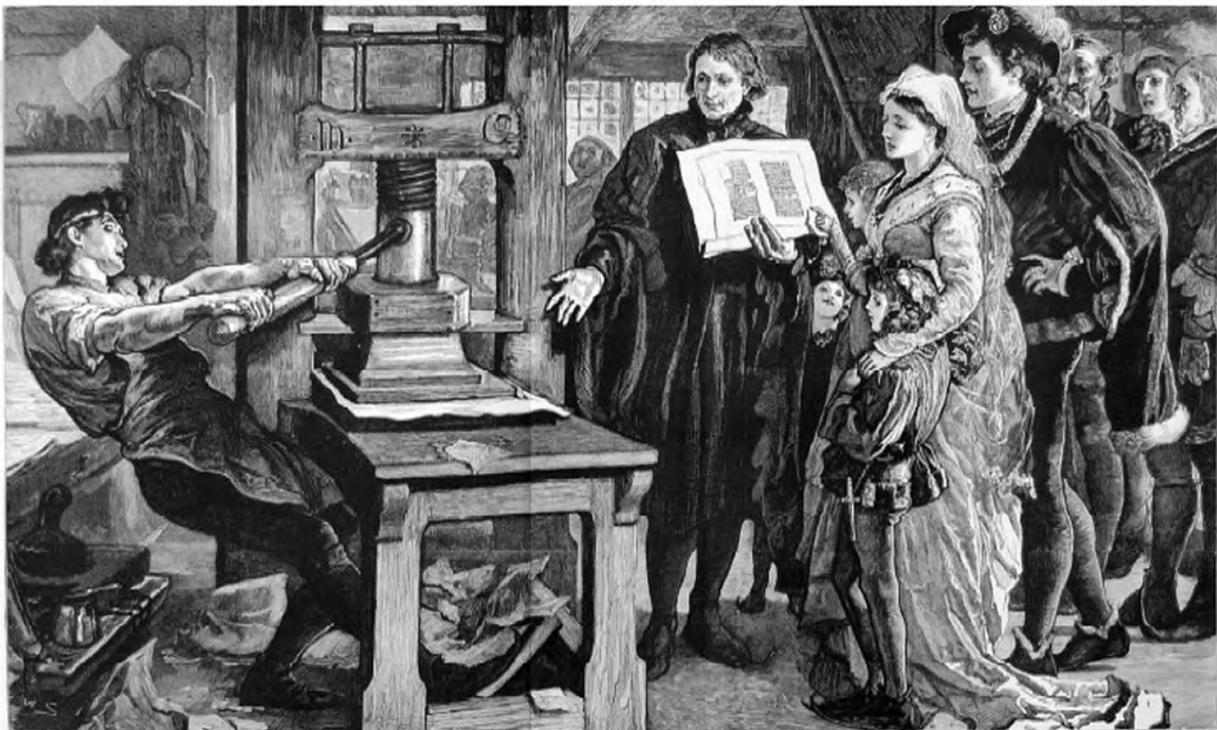
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accelerating train; sleeping fitfully, hidden by empty coal sacks in a freight compartment, and later jumping from the same locomotive in full flight into open countryside, he carried a hefty price on his head. Wanted dead or alive for a big sum, having proved a high-profile scalp before slipping through the Boers' hands, 25-year-old Winston was literally running for his life. Desperate, hungry, lost, alone, and firing on an empty tank, he realised his end was nigh. He needed a miracle.

Seeing the lights of distant houses, he had to seek help: had to take a chance. Yet on account of the publicity concerning his prison escape, the likelihood of being handed over to the Boers was extreme. If ever he had to connect with higher powers, this was the moment. Relinquishing all to God in sombre, sincere prayers, he received an immediate answer. Against all odds, he ventured to the one house where help was forthcoming. And many years later, this time during World War II, his walking beneath the falling bombs was his statement to the world that he feared no one and nothing, for God was at his side.

Sir Winston Churchill and Dr Penn would have come across the bumpy ground in the *Bible's Old Testament* when God disciplined the people of the nations he had earlier created. I refer to the stories beginning in the first book, *Genesis*,

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with accounts of Adam and Eve, the Worldwide Flood and Noah's Ark – and later leading to his punishment of the people of Egypt and other nations, including Israel, who walked away from his command. So God, so often seen as purely a loving saviour, plays the part of the disciplining father. Down through the centuries, God our maker has made available to us an impressive playground for our lifetime needs, but with a strict set of guidelines. And I say *guidelines* because of the free will we have been granted to take or leave. Of course, they are far more than *guidelines* and call for massive discipline. The commandment in the Lord's Prayer 'lead us not into temptation' is a constant challenge. Who does not agree?

I speak only for myself when saying that I would have preferred a more solid grounding in religious discipline in earlier life when I could have got to know God, talk to him and benefited from his companionship earlier. Yes, his discipline may rankle and displease, but ministers who preach that his punishment comes with a gracious lifeline and with time for amendment of ways, point to a promising future. I am happiest when thinking, believing and knowing this; and let us hope during this pandemic that more people will turn to him for comfort and inspiration and hope.

I don't like the word 'judgement,' because I believe God sees us as work-in-progress until the end, and 'reprimand' may be kinder. But in attempting to conclude my response to the question posed in the first sentence of this editorial, again taking heed of the religious realization of others, it is only pertinent to ask why our all-powerful God, who created the world and the greater universe, refrains from wiping away this pandemic when a remedy is surely within his powers?

It is probably fair to say that we are all shocked by the News we hear nowadays on our televisions and radios – of fighting, cruelty, destruction and general mayhem on an increasing, if not worldwide, scale. All are at variance with God's word when we, the world population at large, are meant to work with one another in peacefulness and harmony. So if, as erudite readers of Scripture suggest, God has chosen to leave us for a while to work things out on our own, I imagine that Sir Winston, if alive today – whose own monument has recently been defaced by hooligans – might not be overly surprised, or Dr Penn, but I can appreciate them wishing to keep their opinions private.

Roger Penn

Cylch y Frenni Circle of Churches

Clydau, Llanglydwen, Llanfyrnach, Llanwinio and Mynachlog-ddu

SERVICES IN MAY 2021

2nd The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Llanglydwen 9.30 am Holy Eucharist

9th The Sixth Sunday of Easter: Rogation Sunday

Llanwinio 10.00 am Holy Eucharist

13th Ascension Day

Llanfyrnach 7.00 pm Holy Eucharist

16th The Seventh Sunday of Easter - Sunday after Ascension Day

Mynachlog-ddu 11.15 am Holy Eucharist

23rd The Day of Pentecost

Clydey 11.15 am Morning Prayer

30th Trinity Sunday – Fifth Sunday

Llanfyrnach 11.15 am Morning Prayer

June

6th The First Sunday After Trinity

Llanglydwen 9.30 am Holy Eucharist

Please be aware that social distancing measures are in place in all the churches which means places may be limited. Please contact the relevant Focal Minister or Church Warden if you wish to attend.

Many thanks, the Cylch y Frenni Ministry Team.

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Llanfyrnach: Mrs Eunice Batchelor 01239 831556

Llanglydwen: Mrs Jane Legg 01994 419856

Llanwinio: Mrs Judy Webb 01239 698405

Mynachlog-ddu: Mrs Sharon Edge 01437 532681

Llanwinio

A Big Thank you from Keith and Cheryl Taylor!

Our house move to Boston seemed to take for ever and then, because someone in the chain's mortgage was about to expire, came all of a rush. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions and my health we asked our son-in-law's Mum and Stepdad to view the property, and for peace of mind I had a survey done.



On the plus side it is all on the same level, (as is most of East Anglia!) - no stairs to climb. Both the front and back gardens are small and easy to maintain, my ride on lawn mower, a thing of the past.

Thank you for such happy memories and a special 'thank you' to those who supported Judy Webb, Hazel Jones and us two to care for Mercy, our double amputee eleven-year-old girl living in western Uganda. This ministry will, God willing, continue. The painting of Llanwinio Church now hangs pride of place in our sitting room.

The only time "downsizing" seemed to get forgotten was when sizing up the kitchen which is huge. Along with an American style fridge/freezer - which includes a water chiller - is a built-in Hotpoint induction hob. I was reliably informed that the set of pans we owned were now no use and needed to be replaced by induction type pans; so, this is what some of the gift of money you gave us was spent upon.



The remaining amount was spent on a new Television because the old one would not re-tune to the TV stations here in the far east!

Again, many thanks and May God bless you all.

Keith Taylor

Mercy Appeal – An Update

Thank you so very much to everyone who donated to our appeal for funds to help us cover the two surgeries this year, and the cost of 2 new prosthetic legs for our little Ugandan girl, Mercy. The cost of these 3 'events' since Christmas defeated our 5 person team and we didn't quite know what to do But we had some lovely donations - many of them anonymous - and one truly mind-blowing one. Consequently we were only 10's of pounds short of the £2k all this cost! Pictures of Mercy with her new legs are on page 6. Her foster siblings have gone back to school already and now she can too - she loves school!

THANK YOU!

Keith, Cheryl, Hazel, Val and Judy

Prickly Carol

Carol is home!! I took the same container to bring her home as I took her in - but she's much too big now! And heavy - slightly overweight apparently! I've just put her in her Hog Palace - she really is prickly!!! She apparently provided much amusement in the hogspital - she's still so



shy she would access her food and water by going along under the newspaper in the bottom of her cage, under all her bedding, so no-one could see her! So I may never see her again! Dried cat food and water outside her door - all home comforts. Now I can start selling the bits and pieces I've put together to raise funds for Hedgely Hogspital. They are stars—and very, very busy!

Judy Webb



***Above: In memory of her late husband Ted, Eunice Batchelor created this beautiful table centrepiece using all of his ties
Below: Last year's narcissi at Pistyll Gwyn, the home of Kath Lee***



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Llanfyrnach

First time I heard about *Paraprosdokians*, I liked them. They are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected, and is frequently humorous. (Winston Churchill loved them).

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you ...but it's still on my list.
3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
4. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
5. We never really grow up:- we only learn how to act in public.
6. War does not determine who is right, only who is left.
7. Knowledge, is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
8. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research. I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
9. In filling out an application, where it says, "In case of an emergency, notify.." I answered "a doctor."
10. Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.
11. You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.

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12. I used to be indecisive, but now I'm not so sure.
13. To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call out whenever you hit the target.
14. Going to church doesn't make you a Christian, any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.
15. You're never too old to learn something stupid.
16. I'm supposed to respect my elders, but it's getting harder and harder for me to find one now.

Eunice Batchelor

Clydey

The Joy of Easter

St. Clydai hosted the Easter Holy Eucharist at which the Ven. Paul Mackness delivered his sermon to a full house. That is, as full a house as social distancing permitted and it *felt* full: twenty-nine 2-metre distanced seats, stretching from Paul and Elizabeth behind the altar, to Sharon in the vicar's stall, Marnie almost behind the font and Mark & Anka by the stones.

Eve got the bench seat next to the bookstall and thus the job of filling in the visitors' book. We're using that to record who comes to services, as required by the Diocese, and using the visitors' book means that future generations can see that record and marvel at our determination to worship during this difficult time. We have no records mentioning the 1918 pandemic or what happened, if anything, to church services, but we'll look again, just in case.

Our planning mechanisms were rusty and in all the excitement of steering people to their reserved seats on which we'd placed the 'propers' leaflets ready we forgot to give out the hymn books. We can't sing yet, but we can listen to the music and read the words. We also forgot the other half of that plan, so the hymn numbers on the wall are a reminder of the last service held in the church in 2020.

We didn't have enough Communion service books for such a large congregation. Last time we had a joint communion, Sharon brought Mynachlog-ddu's copies. She didn't think to on this occasion and we didn't think to ask her.

Nevertheless, we celebrated the Holy Eucharist on the most important day in the church calendar with every church in Cylch Y Frenni represented. We don't

take a collection for social distancing reasons, but the cupboard holds our plate near the door and collected £116.50.

Paul eschewed the tradition of the Easter collection being a part of the vicar's living, leaving the money to church funds. We're going to use it to print more Holy Eucharist service books to increase their availability at Clydau and to create a 'float' so that wherever we gather together for Holy Communion around the circle; we'll get one each.

It seemed a shame to leave the Easter lilies on the altar in a church that will be locked for a month, so we distributed around the graves of our departed relatives in the churchyard extension.

Saint Matthew was the main Gospel for the readings at services last year – and we go to it again on Advent Sunday in 2022 – forty-three readings in year 'A'.

The compiler of Matthew's Gospel does not claim anywhere in it to have been an eyewitness to events. He reports the events so that others might believe. The name 'Matthew' appears in this Gospel as the name of one of the 12 disciples - a tax collector Jesus recruits - without the Gospel writer associating himself to that person.

Attributing a Gospel to 'Matthew' dates back to Papias of Hierapolis, an early Christian Bishop who was born in AD60, and all that survives of what he said on the subject is that Matthew collected the sayings of Jesus in Hebrew. He was writing that in Greek, in which 'Hebrew' and 'Aramaic' are not separately distinguished.

It is quite acceptable for the Gospel not to have been written by Matthew, the disciple/tax collector. The most authoritative books on great subjects are generally written by people who weren't there: consider Max Hastings, who has written at least thirteen books about wars he wasn't in.

That Matthew was a one-step-removed compiler is obvious. He opens by tracing Jesus' lineage via his father Joseph back to Abraham (I would love to know where he looked that up!) as what is most interesting about the genealogy is the women named in it. Biblical characters who made their contributions to the Jesus family tree - some outside wedlock.

Tamar, after being widowed twice, disguised herself as a prostitute to get pregnant by her ex father-in-law thus to bear a child for the next generation of the family. Procreation being a duty to God.

Rahab was the Canaanite prostitute who hid Israeli spies on the roof of her tavern to shield them from discovery by searching troops in exchange for her family being spared when the Israelis sacked Jericho. She later Married Salman, of the tribe of Judah and they had a son called Boaz.

Boaz woke up one morning to find Ruth the Moabite sleeping at his feet and wanting to be adopted. Ruth had married into an Israeli family in Moab and had lost three male providers to famine in her land. She accompanied her mother-in-law Naomi to Bethlehem where her distant relation Boaz lived, and on Naomi's advice, put herself in his power. The business of inheriting responsibility for bereaved kin is complicated and Boaz wasn't Naomi's nearest relative, but the one who was stepped aside so that Boaz could buy the estate (including Ruth) from Naomi.

Their son was Obed, his son was Jesse and one of his sons was David, whom Samuel anointed as a future king. As King, David spotted the wife of Uriah the Hittite (named elsewhere as Bathsheba) bathing and arranged for her to be widowed by sending Uriah into battle so that he could get her on the rebound.

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Their son was Solomon of the House of David, from whom Jesus was descended.

Matthew is the Gospel movie makers use (with a lot of poetic licence) as their template: William Wyler's 'Ben Hur' (1959), Lean's 'the Greatest Story Ever Told'(1965), Zeffirelli's 'Jesus of Nazareth'(1977), 'Risen' (2016) etc. One clue is the Magi turning up at the nativity and another is Pilate washing his hands. In 'Risen' it's the deal with the tomb guards in 28.11-15.

Matthew has the flight into Egypt, the slaughter of the Holy Innocents – echoing events around the time of Moses' birth – Jesus' childhood, John the Baptist, 40 days and nights in the wilderness, recruiting fishers of men, the sermon on the mount, the numerous 'sayings' of Jesus – which is what Papias of Hierapolis knew Matthew had collected – and all the great events of Holy Week, as followed in Mel Gibson's 'The Passion of the Christ' (2004).

Matthew knew his scriptures and shoehorns in the prophecies fulfilled in Jesus, including one that nobody can find in the Old Testament (2.23 He will be called a Nazarene).

The issue of dating Gospels is complicated and necessarily much trawled over in academia. The 'problem' with academics is that some try too hard: Google E W Bullinger and/or Paul Tillich to see what over-thinking can achieve.

It's common ground that there's no surviving physical evidence for any of the Gospels having existed in their current form within a hundred years of the events reported in them. Likewise, Julius Caesar's 'Bellum Gallicum' is a 14th Century copy of a lost earlier version. Both Caesar's work and Matthew's would have originally been just one manuscript and while Caesar had both the resources and the motivation to get his book out there – much of it is propaganda – the early Christian church had neither.

There's a good reason for the lack of motivation; Emperor Nero started persecuting Christians in 64AD, initially blaming them for starting the fire of Rome that year. Tradition places the martyrdom of St Peter and St Paul in that period 64-65AD in Rome. Before the persecutions, eyewitnesses were available to writers such as Matthew: after it started, they would have been harder to find and there would be a lot less interest in possessing documents that might get one included in the persecution queue. Peter denying Christ three times in one night was by no means a unique event back then.

The other significant event that followed on the heels of Nero's persecution of Christians is the first Jewish revolt in 66AD, which culminated in the siege and fall of Jerusalem to Roman Legions in 70AD. While the embryonic Christian Church survived underground in Rome, the Jerusalem Church was wiped out along with the Second Temple and its blood sacrifice cult. Any collection of Christian writings that might have been held in Jerusalem did not survive.

While St Mark's Gospel could just be a transcript of St Peter's account, Matthew is a later compilation. How much later is what scholars argue about. My money is on what's in the synoptic Gospels having been written down in some form before AD64. Whether Matthew compiled his work before the fall of Jerusalem or elsewhere after it is what's lost to history. I would think that the genealogy at least had to come from Temple library records and doing that research after 66AD would have been difficult to impossible.

In 1901, the Reverend Charles Bousfield Huleatt, wintering in Egypt for health reasons, bought two scraps of a papyrus codex in Luxor, as he recognised the Greek words on them being from St Matthew's Gospel. A codex is an early form of book and the difference between fragments of a scroll and bits of a codex is that the latter has writing on both sides, same as pages in this Grapevine.

The codex format first appeared in the 1st Century and gradually achieved parity with scrolls as the Roman Empire declined. Huleatt identified his scraps, which he gave to his Alma Mater Magdalen College Oxford, as 2nd Century. Other experts went for later dates and then in the 1990s papyrology expert Carsten Peter Thiede suggested 50AD: stunningly early for both Matthew and the codex format.

Academics, like plumbers and electricians, disrespect each other's work, so no support for Thiede's early date, but it surfacing in Egypt was interesting. Alexandria had a huge Jewish population in the 1st Century, and it would have been to that community Mary and Joseph went to avoid Herod's wrath. Remnants of a codex appearing on a market stall make grave robbery a possible source.

Alexandrian Jewry were no lovers of the Jerusalem temple cult, making their city a logical place for the followers of Jesus to go upon falling out with the Temple's management. Given their role in getting Christ crucified and the recorded scattering of his followers in its aftermath, there would have been people who knew the sayings of Jesus hot-footing it to Egypt, where they'd find

Jews keen to hear what had been said *and to write that information down for circulation and posterity*. While documentation from the 1st Century hasn't survived the persecutions – except possibly in someone's grave in Egypt – the words of Matthew's Gospel have deep roots.

Alexandria's famous library burned down in 275AD, or more than two centuries after anyone compiling a Gospel from the information gathered within it from eyewitnesses could have read and collated the material. Fifty years later, Constantine's Council of Nicaea sorted out the contents of the Bible (325AD) and seventy-five years after that St Jerome – with access to the library (destroyed in 638AD) at Caesarea – compiled the Vulgate Bible in Latin, from which John Wycliffe and others started the process of translating it into vernacular language in the 1340s AD. Another 250 years passed before William Morgan's Welsh edition.

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The pattern of worship on Sundays is as follows:

9.00am	Morning Prayer
9.45am	Holy Eucharist (bilingual)
4.00pm	Evensong

There will also be a celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Ascension Day, May 13 at 7.30 pm.

This is one of the great festivals of the church on which, according to the teaching of the Prayer Book, all members of the Church should be present at Divine worship. But we may not unreasonably ask what is the reason for this stipulation. Here is part at least of the answer: the joy of the disciples after the Ascension corrects our image of this event. The Ascension does not mean the



Sue Jones from Llanboidy and her granddaughter, Gracie, with their Easter posy and Easter Egg

departure of Jesus into a remote region of the cosmos but rather the continuing closeness that his disciples feel with their Lord, a feeling which is so strong that it becomes a source of lasting joy.

Our heartiest congratulations go to Mr Peter and Mrs Elizabeth Hooper of Tenby who were present in church on Sunday, April 11, to give thanks for fifty years of happy married life and for the gift of two daughters, Tanya (now living in Leeds) and Rebecca (in Llanharri, Glamorgan). Betty Thomas, as she was known, married Peter in St David's, Meidrim, on April 10, 1971. The Revd David Herbert Griffiths officiated assisted by the then Vicar of Jeffreyton. Betty's brother, Mr Laurence Thomas, was also in church and indeed is a regular worshipper here.

The Vicar writes: may I take the opportunity to thank all those who kindly contributed to the traditional Easter offering this year. Usually I put the gift to good use by going for a rest elsewhere after the business of the Easter festival, but this year has been different as I have used the gift to cover the cost of decorating my retirement home where I intend settling after completing forty-four years in the stipendiary ordained ministry in the Church in Wales of

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which twenty nine years have been spent in Meidrim and district. Since retirement is compulsory at the age of seventy I have written to the relevant authorities in diocese and in the cathedral to indicate my intention to resign from this living and from the sixth curial canonry with effect from the last day of September.

Merthyr

Merthyr services in May.

2 nd	11.15am	Holy Eucharist. Fourth Sunday after Easter
16 th	11.15am	Holy Eucharist. Sunday after Ascension Day
23 rd	11.15am	Holy Eucharist. Pentecost; Whitsunday.
	2.30pm	Bedydd sanctaidd.

Please note: the eucharists above are all celebrated bilingually.

The Parochial Church Council will meet after the Annual Vestry to consider the pattern of services for the next few months until the Rector's retirement at the end of September when in the hope that matters may return to normal.

Amongst the qualities and achievements of the late Philip, Earl of Merioneth, is one not widely known. Some may recall that in the late 1960s his son Prince Charles studied Welsh at Aberystwyth but it should not be forgotten that it was his father who suggested to the authorities of the same university college that they should create a degree scheme taught through the medium of Welsh and available to external students at low cost. The scheme was duly established and over many years attracted many students, some of whom would not otherwise

have had the opportunity of studying for a degree. It was typical of the late earl that he should suggest something of this kind as well as promote other schemes to help the young develop their talents. May he rest in peace. We also remember in our prayers his widow, HM The Queen, and the royal family, in their loss.

The Rector writes: may I begin by thanking those of you who kindly contributed to the Easter offering this year. This is much appreciated. *Diolch.*

At the beginning of the first period of lockdown I clearly remember a Nonconformist minister of my acquaintance remarking that he thought it likely that as a result of the pandemic many chapels and churches would be closed permanently. It was therefore a joy to see a lively and joyful congregation in church for the Easter Day eucharist, the first service at Merthyr since Christmas. Also encouraging was the neat and tidy appearance of the church as a result of the hard work of several regulars in the congregation who ensured that the house of God looked as it should for the greatest of the Church's festivals. We should also note the attractive floral decorations inside the church which matched the splendid array of daffodils in the churchyard, *Well done!*

The election to the Welsh parliament will be held on May 6th and the community hall will be used as a polling station once again. However we need to ensure that it too is cleaned and tidy. Volunteers for this effort are asked please to contact the churchwarden, Mr Huw Evans with offers of help. *Diolch.*

One of the other effects of the pandemic over the last year has been the disruption to the regular round of parochial social events. Amongst such events was the bingo evening held at Tafarn y Cwm twice a year on behalf of church

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funds. On the Wednesday before Easter the Rector officiated at the funeral of the late Mr John Patrick Ashwell Barrett of Ty Celyn, Trawsmawr, who died on March 17th at the age of 96. Pat, as he was known, established the tavern as a social centre many years ago after retiring from farming. As a youngster Pat would deliver milk from the family farm to a certain residence called Chequers and as well as having the Prime Minister of the day amongst his customers he also delivered to the actor Robert Donat of Mr Chips fame who also lived nearby! We extend our sincere sympathy to his two sons, Peter and Roger, and to their families in their loss. May Pat rest in peace.

Jeffrey Gainer

Reflections of a Xenos

My wife and I were privileged and fortunate to spend many years in Greece before moving to Meidrim in 2017. We enjoyed so many aspects of Greek life, the food, the weather, the people, but two aspects proved more difficult to get to grips with, the language and the Greek Church.

Despite being warmly accepted as a Xenos (stranger/foreigner/outsider) we knew enough of the language to get by day to day, but were unable to hold an in depth conversations involving opinions or emotions and certainly not politics.

The dominant religion in Greece is, of course Greek Orthodox and is well acknowledged by most Greeks young and old. Greek Church services proved to

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be more challenging than the language. We attended a number of weddings and funerals, but otherwise the language barrier was too great. Even some of our Greek friends claimed that it was difficult to follow all the service as a good deal of use is made of older Greek language. Through the same Greek friends though, we have many anecdotes of the differences between the way they do it and what we are familiar with. It was not unusual for people to arrive and leave a service at a whim (some of the services could be very, very long), the menfolk might well pop outside for a smoke during the service. The congregation do not speak nor sing throughout the service. Men sit on one side and women on the other!!

It is not unusual in our area for Greeks to have two houses. One in a village close to their olive trees and one in an area where they grow currants. A bit like a winter time house for olive picking and a summer house for picking the vines and drying the currants. Our elderly neighbours one day failed to get a taxi so I offered them a lift back to their village (this was early days in Greece for us). As I drove along the road with Greek husband sitting beside me, Greek wife in the back seat. I suddenly spotted the wife in my mirror crossing herself. I did not consider my driving to be that bad!!! Only later I learnt that we had just passed a small church, and as is the custom she made a sign of the Cross. This practice was just not for the older people, I later witnessed younger people on a bus to Athens, crossing themselves as we passed a church. There are many churches between our area and Athens, a four hour journey.

The same elderly neighbour asked us on another occasion what are our procedures when dealing with the dead. She knew that our parents had died years previously. At some point I mentioned cremation, this resulted in her crossing herself rapidly in shock horror and saying "Panagia mou" which might translate as Our Lady/My Mary - Mary, of course, being highly revered in Greek Orthodoxy. If you are in Greece ever for holidays around the 15 August, be prepared for major celebrations! It is the name day of everyone named Marie (Mary) . Greeks tend to celebrate name days more so than birthdays.

To cut a long story short other differences of note:-

It is not unusual for a rural Greek priest (Papas) to have a side-line, and I witnessed one of our local priests many times driving his tractor wearing his priest robes and hat , often on his mobile phone as he tended his small holding with olives, goats and chickens etc.



Memories of Greece
by
Glyn Harbour
(See page 25)

A child when born is not named immediately, known only as 'Baby' until about one year of age at the baptism. Usually a boy will be named after the paternal grandfather, a girl may also take that name but with some modification, e.g. Dimitri becomes Dimitra if the child is a girl. The parents take no part in the ceremony. They must stand a distance away with the congregation and watch as their one year old is named and blessed by the priest before being stripped of clothing and rubbed with oil by the godparent, then dressed in celebratory clothes bought and paid for by the new godparent. The baptism is usually followed by a party involving food and dancing which can last for many hours.

It gets very confusing because cousins have the same names if their fathers are brothers. We knew many Dimitris who were cousins and of course shared the same family name so trying to decide who was being referred to often caused much confusion – “you know Dimitris Sipsas “ - um yes but which Dimitris Sipsas!!!

Back to funerals, just as my elderly neighbour was shocked at the thought of cremation, we were shocked by how it is in Greece. Burial (there is no cremation) in most cases will be the next day. The coffin will be open in the church, and at the end of the service everyone files out past the coffin, many kissing the forehead of the deceased and young children being picked up to see the dead person. The coffin is then carried to the graveyard followed by all the mourners and then lowered into the awaiting grave. Only then is the lid put on the coffin. Mourners throw earth and flowers onto the coffin. The earth is returned to the grave as the family are departing. It is possible (depending on space in the graveyard and ownership) that the coffin and body are exhumed after 7 years or more, the bones cleaned by family members and placed in an ossuary in the grave-yard. The plot is then available to be used again. Graves are 'finished' mostly in marble and a photograph of the departed is generally placed on the grave. A candle and oil are often placed in a compartment on the grave along with other personal items.

As mentioned in the Easter service in Meidrim, bread features greatly and at certain times, several throughout the year, it is usual for the congregation to bring Christopsomo (Christ's bread) made by the local baker, to the service, which is later being shared out after the blessing.

Finally, in one of the early weddings we attended, we witnessed a papas raising a bible above his head as he and the couple he just married paraded in a circle

in front of the church. We thought it might have some religious significance but could not figure out what, then, everyone started throwing raw rice (as if confetti) and we realised the priest was just shielding his head from the hard-hitting rice!

Guy Harbour

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Assistant Priest Dr Canon Jeni Parsons

Lay Worship Leader Mr. Nathan Jenkins

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Services in May (hopefully)

Sunday 2nd	The Fifth Sunday of Easter		
10.30 am	Morning Service	St Tysilio	PM
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Morning Prayer	St David	NJ
Sunday 9th	The Sixth Sunday of Easter		
11.00 am	Morning Prayer	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Morning Prayer	St David	NJ
2.30 pm	Evening Prayer	Cyffig	KT
Sunday 16th	The Seventh Sunday of Easter		
11.00 am	Morning Service	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Morning Prayer	St David	NJ

Sunday 23rd**Pentecost**

11.00 am	Morning Service	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Morning Prayer	St David	NJ
2.30 pm	Evening Prayer	Cyffig	KT

Sunday 23rd**Trinity Sunday**

11.00 am	Morning Service	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Morning Prayer	St David	NJ

Easing

With the easing of restrictions and more people having been vaccinated, either once or twice, I hope to get back to something like normal (or at least last summer's normal) so although I have set out the services as above I don't know fully if there will be more or less, we are taking it as it comes.

We haven't been able to arrange any activities either, so there isn't much to report.

My second book has been sent to the publisher and will have the title 'Reflecting' and I will let you know when it is out.

Kingsley

Grapevine News from Llanboidy May 2021

Easter was celebrated in style with a beautiful Communion Service taken by the Revd. Dr. Canon Jeni Parsons – members had cleaned the Church (our grateful thanks to all who helped); the brasses were shining and all was so warm and welcoming.

The flowers were fresh and arranged by Ann Windsor with beautiful posies of narcissi and foliage decorating the window sills lovingly made by Kath Lee and these were handed out to the communicants to take home – a beautiful gesture. We were also given Easter Eggs which were delicious – thank you so much!!!- – (photo of me with my posy and Gracie, my grand daughter with her Easter egg Jenni gave me for her on page 21)

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Kath Lee writes:

‘Like you, many years ago we used to make posies for the children to take from church on Mothering Sunday. So when Ann suggested I do some flowers for the service, I thought it would be nice if they could be taken home afterwards.

We live at Pistyll Gwyn on the Whitland Road, and the ‘lane’ down to the house is lined with numerous different varieties of Narcissi. Many were here when we moved in 16 years ago, but we have added to them and now they flower from Christmas (the earliest variety) right through. So I thought it would be appropriate to do posies of Narcissi with a little foliage, just displayed in empty coffee jars which would go to the recycling. No cost involved!

There is a photo of last year’s daffodil planting at Pistyll Gwyn on page 12.

Churchyard Strimming: The Church Yard has recently been mown and looks lovely with all the Easter flowers on the graves. Many thanks to all who have set up standing orders to help to pay for this. However, there is still a shortfall and if you wish to contribute (perhaps in memory of a loved one buried there or to help keep the Churchyard looking attractive) either:

Send cheque for £25 made out to 'St Brynach's Churchyard A/C' to our treasurer, Mrs Eve Edwards at 12, Jones Terrace, Clynderwen, SA66 7NN

Or:

Contact Eve as above with your name and address so that she can give you a unique reference number and then set up a Standing Order with your Bank Details of our bank are as follows:

Sort code: 20-18-54 **A/C:** 40130362 **Name:** St Brynach Churchyard Account

Some good news: Margaret Kedward has a new great grandson, Jasper Kedward, first born son for Josh and Hope and second grandson for Rod Kedward. Jasper was born on 19 March and lives in Bridgwater, Somerset – best wishes to all of the family on this new arrival!

Also congratulations to Angharad and Barry of Yr Prysor, Llanboidy, on their recent engagement. Angharad is the daughter of Gwynlais and Mary Phillips of Marlais, Henllan Amgoed and Barrie is from Tegryn. We wish them a long and happy future together

Friday 7th May is National Flower Arranging Day

For the past ten years flower posies have been placed around the village of Llanboidy, and in Whitland, for people to take home in celebration of National Flower Arranging day.

This year, instead of handing out flowers to celebrate the event and to fit in with current guidelines, flower club members around the country will be using their homes, firstly to mark the day but also, more importantly, to give a little cheer and sign of hope.

This echoes the Rings of Hope that were hung on front doors last summer in support of the NHS.

Look out for something floral on a front door, front gate, front fence etc. on Friday 7th May.

Distinctive flyers will be attached to the flowers giving details of the Association.

To anyone who is ill or unwell: we wish you a speedy recovery and hope you are soon feeling an improvement

Keep well and safe everyone and enjoy what we all have which is a beautiful and friendly area in which to live - and remember a problem shared is a problem halved , so please ask for help if you need it , or just want a friendly ear to listen to you and I will certainly try and help you – my contact details :

email: sue@llanboidycheese.co.uk

Phone: 01994 448303

Text: 07530 523813

And please, please, please let me, *Sue Jones*, have any Llanboidy news for the next edition of Grapevine and I will forward to Kathie our Editor – Thank you.

*Sue
Jones*

CIFFIG

The Spring weather continues to be very Sunny, but the bitterly cold wind makes one feel it is better to be inside looking out.

We were unable to have our Easter Service on the 4th April, it being the first Sunday in the month. Instead, we had a service on Maundy Thursday in the afternoon, which we all very much appreciated. Thank you Kingsley.



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We send best wishes to Mrs Ivy Thomas, who unfortunately broke bones in her ankle, and has been in plaster for over a month. Hopefully for not much longer, we miss you Ivy.

Also, lots of love and encouragement to Mr Colin Beynon who is enduring some unpleasant treatment at the moment. We all wish him a speedy return to good health.

Now is about the time of year to hear the Cuckoo, but alas it's a very long time since I have. So here is a poem by William Wordsworth (1770-1850) to remind us how elusive the cuckoo can be.

Lynn Werrett

To the Cuckoo

O Blythe New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.

O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;



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The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

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