

Grapevine

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March 2023
Mawrth 2023



Grapevine is published monthly by: Cylch y Frenni Circle of Churches



comprising the parishes of Clydau, Llanglydwen,
Llanfyrnach, Llanwinio and Mynachlog-ddu

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Cylch y Frenni Circle of Churches

Clydau, Llanglydwen, Llanfyrnach,

Llanwinio and Mynachlog-ddu

SERVICES IN MARCH 2023

1st March St David's Day- Holy Eucharist – Bro Preseli 11am
 (followed by cawl £4 Please contact Judy Webb on 01239 698405
 or judy.webb@btinternet.com if you wish to order food)

5th March - The Second Sunday of Lent

PLACE	TIME	SERVICE	
Llanglydwen	9.30	Holy Eucharist	CC/JW
Llanwinio	9.30	Boreol Weddi	PH
Llanfyrnach	11.15	Holy Eucharist	CC/EB

12th March – The Third Sunday of Lent

Llanwinio	9.30	Holy Eucharist	CC/PH
Clydey	11.15	Holy Eucharist	CC/EL
Llanfyrnach	11.15	Morning Prayer	EB

19th March – Fourth Sunday of Lent/Mothering Sunday

Llanwinio	9.30	Boreol Weddi	PH
Mynachlog-ddu	11.15	Holy Eucharist	CC/JW

26th March– Fifth Sunday of Lent/Passion Sunday

Llanwinio	9.30	Holy Eucharist	CC/PH
Llanfyrnach	11.15	Holy Eucharist	CC/EB
Clydey	11.15	Morning Prayer	EL

Services for April 2023

2nd April – The sixth Sunday of Lent/Palm Sunday

PLACE	TIME	SERVICE	
Llanglydwen	9.30	Holy Eucharist	CC/JW
Llanwinio	9.30	Boreol Weddi	PH
Llanfyrnach	11.15	Holy Eucharist	CC/EB

5th April – Bro Preseli 10.30 CC/EL/JW

7th April - Good Friday – Llanwinio 2pm

9th April – Easter Day

Llanfyrnach	10.30	Holy Eucharist	CC/EB
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16th April – The Second Sunday of Easter

Llanwinio	9.30	Boreol Weddi	PH
Mynachlogddu	11.15	Holy Eucharist	CC/JW

23rd April – The Third Sunday of Easter

Llanwinio	9.30	Holy Eucharist	CC/PH
Llanfyrnach	11.15	Holy Eucharist	CC/EB
Clydey	11.15	Morning Prayer	EL

30th April – The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Llanglydwen 10.30 Holy Eucharist CC/JW

Editorial

I suppose I have never really fitted in because there are so many things I do not understand and there doesn't seem to be a really good reason for them. One particular thing is NO FLOWERS IN LENT. At a time when the whole of nature is celebrating life and all the spring flowers are taking their turn to appear, when

the whole of the natural world is reflecting the glory of life. I know Easter is about new life but why is the church so sombre through Lent? After all is it not the God who we profess to worship who has inspired the natural world to be bursting with joy at this time. Condemn me as a heretic if you like but is there not enough sadness in the world without devout Christians wearing long faces and maybe a bit of sackcloth and ashes. The forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness was not at the end of his ministry just before he entered Jerusalem and was eventually executed, no, it was at the beginning when he knew he had a hard task before him but there was probably joy in his heart at the opportunity to show in person all that God wanted for us. The forty days was only tacked on to this period before Easter because it was a time of training and preparation for those in the early Church who had accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour and wished to make a public declaration by being Baptised at Easter, and the rest of the Church would be praying for them throughout this period. It seems to me the whole point of Lent has been lost, it is a time for joy that new Christians were being added to their number. Today there is no specific date that people are Baptised and the church should pray for them whenever that happens and be glad for them, but certain people will grumble

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Pethau Olyv, Sanclêr

The Christmas school holidays are the longest for students in Western Uganda. Mercy, Betty, and Keith returned to Green Circle Primary School on the 6th of February. This is the start of their school year. In the photo from left to right are Betty, Keith, Florence, and Mercy.



Croeso i Madog Twm, fab i Caio a Meleri Higginson, Boncath, ac yn frawd bach i Ester. Fe'i anwyd ar 3ydd o Chwefror - yr wyr cyntaf i Jiwli a Phil Higginson, Llanwinio.

that the parents are using the Church at a Baptism. This is not a club, and does it really matter if we don't see them again, they have come to the Church for whatever reason, and in that brief contact a small seed is sown. I like to see joy in all things, even in the darkest and saddest times, because without joy there is no light in the darkness. I cannot answer all the difficult questions in the world, the why's and the where is God in this, I am simply stumbling through a confusing and sometimes hard world but I can also see the wonders that are around us. March is Spring, whatever the past has brought us, whatever worries the future holds, open your eyes to the wonder of the world that God has put us in. If you want to know what I give up during Lent, nothing, I reflect, I take in the sights, sounds and smells of Spring and give thanks to God no matter what happens.

Kingsley

Big God

Children can sometimes ask questions that adults find very hard to answer. A little boy was asking his father a series of difficult questions. "How did the world come to be? Who made it? How big is God?" Until the boy got to his question about God, the father thought he was doing rather well in his answers. But he knew he would have to introduce a new set of standards in order to describe the greatness of God, standards that are spiritual, as well as material.

"How big is God?" the father repeated the son's question. "Why, He is big enough to know all about everybody in the world. He knows all about you, your name, where

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you live, what grades you make in school, what you like and dislike, and what you do and say every day." This frightened the boy, and he told his father so.

Then his father continued. "God is also great enough to love everybody in the world. He loves you more than anybody else does, even your mother and I. He loves you when you disobey Him, when you do wrong. He loves you so much that He wants you to have the best life that you can have, and after this earthly life is over God wants you to live forever with Him in His home."

This melted the boy's fear, but he was still curious. "Tell me more," he said. "God is big enough to help you grow up in the best way and become the finest and best person you can ever be. He has provided for that by giving His Own Son to be our Saviour, and His Son Jesus loved us enough to die for us on the cross."

The boy was silent for a little while, then he spoke up. "I had no idea that God was so great." Then, after a moment's reflection, he asked, "How did you find out so much about God?" His father said, "I first learned about Him in the Bible." He then read from the Bible: "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me?" (Jeremiah 32:27) and "Ah, Lord God! You have made the heavens and earth by your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for you!" (Jeremiah 32: 17) And "His greatness is unsearchable!" (Psalm 145:3) Are you trusting in the God? Are you reconciled to Him and living in His grace?

Chris Rees, Minister, Bethania Baptist Church, Narberth

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Llanwinio



Congratulations to Phil and Jiwli Higginson whose second grandchild, Madog Twm, was born on the 3rd of February. Madog is the second child of Caio and Meleri Higginson, Blaenwaun, and little brother to Ester.

Logs—there are some logs in the churchyard at Llanwinio which are free to a good home. May need cutting up a bit.

Clydau

Eglwys St Clydai received visitors Mr. David Morris and his partner in January; his quest being a search for ancestors who lived in this area during the nineteenth century. Someone in every church holds the facsimile books of the church registers of baptism, marriage and burial: so straightaway you can figure that they are not a complete record of who's who in the parish.

Two reasons for that; our vicars recorded services, not events. Baptisms, not births and burials, not deaths. And they only recorded those services taking place in the church. Our parish is also served by four chapels, three of which have their own cemeteries and their own burial records. Prior to an Act of Parliament in 1813 which caused registers to be printed and filled in by the clergy, Clydai – and presumably everybody else - had a combined baptism and burials register which the vicar filled in 'freehand'. The oldest parts of it are in worse condition than the Dead Sea scrolls and the quality of the ink varies. Nevertheless, Mr. Morris knew that William Morris had married Rachel Williams at Clydai in 1822 and as our starter for ten we were able to turn up that record in the facsimile book.

People moved around, then as now and usually for work. Mr. Morris's forebears left this area for Treorchy mid century and thence to elsewhere – and to distant parts. David Morris came looking for his ancestors from China, so we asked him if he would kindly write up his journey of discovery, and this is what he said:

“I knew that my father had been born in Treorchy in the Rhondda Valley on the 26th September 1925 and, since I live and work in China, I employed an ancestry researcher who has been able to trace my family tree back to William Morris who was born in 1801 in Clydai Pembrokeshire. I visited Clydai in January expecting to find a village but found that it was a farming community with a beautiful Church.

We visited the church to take photos and we were able to contact the new vicar who was able to refer me to Richard who currently holds the facsimile Church records, which I was able to look through; looking at the actual writing of the clergy who made those entries in the registers, which has been a great help. After my visit to see

the records Richard also sent me photos of documents dating back to the 1790s for my researcher to go over.

On the 2nd of April 1822 William Morris married Rachel William/Williams (spelling of the name sometimes had an "s" added) at Clydau church, the facsimile of which is embedded in this article.

Between 1826 and 1851, according to the census, he was a mason but in the 1861 and 1871 census returns he said he was a mason and a farmer of 6 acres in the area behind Bwlchgyroes farm stores.

William and Rachel had 9 children. William died on the 28th March 1878 aged 77 years in Cnwpceth and Rachel died in June 1878, aged 75, in Newcastle Emlyn.

One of their sons - John Morris - was born on the 13th April 1823. He was baptised on 17th May 1823 in Trelech a'r Betws, Carmarthenshire and in the Census of 1861-and 1871 he was a farmer of 33 acres. By 1881 the census return records him as a Mason and farmer of 63 acres.

He married Mary James who was born in 1826 in Llanfyrnach, Pembrokeshire, in Newcastle Emlyn in March 1845 and they had 12 children.

They lived at Cwm Cadno Clydai in 1851; then in the Census 1861 they were living at Clycoch, Llanfyrnach.

My direct ancestors left your lovely area in the 19th century. They moved to Pontypridd in South Wales and to the Rhondda Valley where I have continued my searches to the present day.

My family tree starts from C1801 to the present so if anyone has any further information before C1801 or has information related to the above would you kindly contact Richard Law."



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David's article reveals quite a lot of movement around the area in the 19th century when all movement was on foot, horse or horse and cart. Clydau had a bigger population then than it has now and – we think – fewer dwellings. That will be true of every rural parish in these parts. In Clydau, there were about six dwellings around the church of which no trace remains and the lost village of Cwm Pedran where the walls of the cottages can still be seen.

We were told not to keep the facsimile records in the church many years ago. My Dad held them when he was church warden and studied them when preparing the first edition of Clydai's church history. I have been their custodian since he died in 1999 and now we have Carol Court as our vicar and an actual vicarage, I suppose it would be bureaucratically tidier to centralise the Group's old records there.

Richard Law

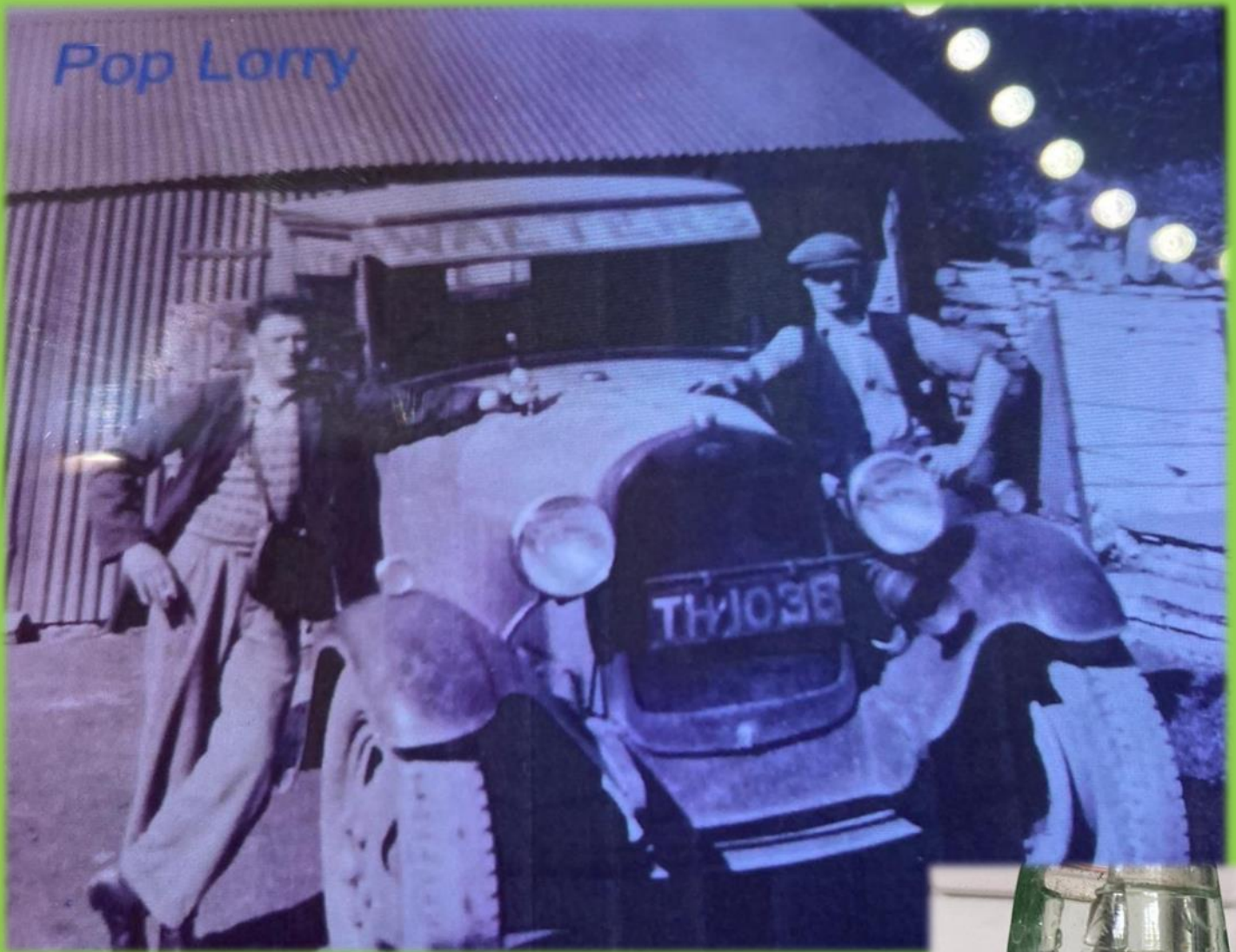
Mynachlog-ddu

Wyn Owens, the distinguished artist and poet, recalls the excitement of his early childhood in Mynachlog-ddu:

Bwrlwm Bore Oes

Cefais i fy nghodi yng nghysgod mynyddoedd y Preselau, mewn cymdeithas lle roedd y Gymraeg yn brif iaith a phob un o'r gymdeithas honno bron yn aelod yng nghapel y Bedyddwyr. Doedd dim un landlord yn y plwyf a'r mwyafrif yn berchen ar ei dŷ nei ei thŷ, tyddyn neu ei





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fferm ef neu hi ei hunan. Cefais i, fy chwiorydd a'm brawd y fraint o gael ein codi ar aelwyd gariadus; fy nhad yn labrwr a'm mam yn cael ei chadw'n brysur yn cadw 'n brysur yn cadw tŷ a ninnau'n chwech o blant. Doedd ein rhieni ddim yn gyfoethog iawn o ran arian, ond eto doedden ni ddim yn dlawd. Un o'r pethau a ddysgon nhw i ni, os nad oedd arian gyda ni i brynu hyn a'r llall ac arall, roedd rhaid mynd hebdo felly, Ac mae hynny wedi bod yn gyngor sydd wedi glynu yn y cof.

Yn blant aem i'r Ysgol Sul bob wythnos o'r bron a hynny drwy wyliau'r ysgol. Fel mae'r byd wedi newid i bawb! Gan mai athrawes yr Ysgol Sul oedd athrawes yr Ysgol Gynradd hefyd, plethai weithgareddau y ddau sefydliad i mewn i'w gilydd. Ar y Sulgwyn a'r Llungwyn cynhaliwyd y Pwnc, sef awr o Holwyddoreg, lle byddai'r holwr yn holi cwestiynau ar ran benodedig o'r ysgrythur. Ar un achlysur fe wnaeth bardd gwlad gasglu goll lyfrau'r Beibl a llunio penillion ohonynt i gyd! Byddai pob plentyn o'r rhai ifanca i'r rhai hynaf yn dysgu eu hatebion ar gof. Perthynai pedwar capel gwahanol i'r ofalaeth a byddai pob capel yn cymryd y Pwnc yn ei dro. Byddai dwy ysgol yn mynd trwy eu gwaith yn y bore cyn cael pryd o fwyd yn y festri, ac yna byddai dwy ysgol arall yn traddodi yn y prynhawn. Tipyn o dreth ar feddyliau ifanc, ond mae'r cof yn felys am y dyddiau pell hynny pan oedd cymaint o weithgareddau ymlaen yn y gymdeithas. Cymerem bopeth mor ganiataol.

Ond uchafbwynt y flwyddyn i ni fel plant oedd Trip yr Ysgol Sul ym mis Awst. Roedd hwn yn achlysur mawr i'n teulu oherwydd nad oedd gan fy rhieni gar yn y 1960au ac roedd mynd i lan y môr yn rhywbeth arbennig iawn i edrych ymlaen ato. Rhaid cofio hefyd bod bws cwmni lleol yn mynd heibio ein tŷ ni ddwywaith yr wythnos ym mis Awst. Antur fawr a phleserus oedd mynd i Ddinbych-y-pysgod yn flynyddol. Yn ogystal â'r dref honno aem weithiau i Saundersfoot neu Geinewydd – caem wledd weithiau i fynd mor bell â Aberafan. Braff yw cofio am y cyfleon hynny a'r "hafau hirfelyn tesog".

Pan ddeuai'n adeg Diolchgarwch, cai'r capel ei lenwi gan lysiau, ffrwythau a chesig Medi. O edrych yn ôl, dau o'r pethau sy'n glynu yn y cof yw dwy ysgub fawr tua llathen o daltra a phorfa Pampas yn addurno'r lobi. Roedd y planhigyn hardd hwnnw'n tyfu yn y Mans, ond nid yw i'w weld yno bellach. Yn yr hydref byddai Cymanfa Ganu yn cael ei chynnal hefyd. Dirwynai'r flwyddyn i ben yng nghalendr y capel gyda'r Cwrdd Nadolig. Roedd hwn yn achlysur cofiadwy iawn ond a olygai mwy o waith dysgu, yn gerddi ac emynau a charolau, a stori'r Geni, wrth gwrs. Yn bersonol rwy'n hoff iawn o adeg y Nadolig, a thaflu'r holl *heip* a berthyn i'r Wyl bellach i'r naill ochr. Mae'n gallu bod yn achlysur trist iawn i lawer hefyd o gofio am anwyliaid sydd wedi ein gadael. Ond mae'n gyfle inni ddangos ein cariad drwy roi a derbyn ac estyn ein dwylo allan i bawb waeth beth yw eu sefyllfa a'u cefndir.

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Afraid dweud bod pethau wedi newid yn ddirfawr yn hanes yr Ysgol Sul y plwyf hwn a lawer plwyf arall yswaeth. Ond rhaid ystyried hefyd bod chwedeg a mwy o flynyddoedd wedi mynd heibio ers amser euraid a byrlymus yr oes honno. Mae'r bwrlwm wedi ei sianeli i fannau a diddordebau eraill y dyddiau hyn.

Wyn Owen

Llanglydwen

Last year the Easter Bunny brought me Covid. I'm hoping for an egg this year. I'm looking forward to the warmth of Spring; seeing nature moving up a gear.

But it's been a better year for all, with life getting back on track.

We've gathered and met and connected. So good to get so much back.

Our churches are now fully opened; we've been able to attend and pray. To be thankful for all we've been given. To remember those lost on the way.

We know it's a rocky road ahead still. That the world is lost in free fall.

But we have learnt to pull together; that it's people that mean most of all.

Jane Legg

Some thoughts on retirement



Your worthy editor has asked me to write something about the experience of retirement. I do so with a degree of reluctance but since I am delighted that the Grapevine is still circulating, not least because of the editor's hard work and your support, I have yielded to her request. She is quite persuasive! I do so after attending at Candlemas a service of consecration of a fellow Welshman to the episcopate at Canterbury Cathedral. The journey from Aberystwyth to Kent was long and tiring and the rail strike did not help, but it was all worthwhile as along with many others I was privileged to attend the beautiful and moving service in that ancient and splendid setting and to support a

fellow Welshman as he was incorporated into the apostolic ministry as a bishop in the Church of God. The Rt Revd Paul Thomas, who has just become the first bishop of Oswestry, is the son of dairy farmers from Carmarthenshire and attended school in

Whitland before proceeding to Cardiff University. I was able to exchange a few words with him in Welsh after the service and assure him of the good wishes of others in the Church in Wales. As the preacher declared in the sermon at the eucharist, bishops need our prayers. Indeed they do.

Perhaps this brings into focus one of the changes that mark retirement, namely an opportunity to travel and more time for relaxation. Having said that I find myself still quite busy on Sundays as the Local Ministry Area is led by a hard pressed but conscientious clergyman who is responsible for twelve churches in and around Aberystwyth. I do not envy him and, looking back, am so grateful that I was granted so many years as a parish priest. I am also glad that early on in my ordained ministry, when a curate in Baglan, I took the decision to make an effort to learn the language of my forefathers, Welsh, so that I might use it in worship and pastoral encounters. I do not regret that decision for a moment and since all but one of the churches in this LMA here use some Welsh I am pleased to be still able to help meet that particular need. It is after all important to meet the needs of all the parishioners, not just some, and to speak to them in the language of their heart. After all, on the day of Pentecost, when all praised the mighty works of God, they did so, each in his own language. In short that youthful decision made well over forty years ago has proved pastorally useful not only in my former parishes but also in my new



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**The cost will be £6 for a home cooked lunch, pudding and tea
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Everyone is welcome, but **please phone beforehand** so we know
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Please phone Diana on 01239 612614 or Marie on 01239 698003.
VOLUNTEERS ALSO WELCOME!!

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Chwefror 28 February

Mawrth 28 March

Ebril 25 April

Mai 23 May

Mehefin 27 June

Gorffennaf 25 July

Medi 25 September

Hydref 24 October

Tachwedd 28 November



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surroundings. But then I enjoy learning languages, as some of you may know, and am applying myself to Irish in my greater leisure time - quite a challenge as well!

The leisure has another advantage. It gives more time to prepare sermons. Some people speak as if a sermon is something to be endured, others as if it is something to be enjoyed - at least for a quarter of an hour. In truth it is something to be prepared with care and with prayer.. My mother was a good cook. She bought fresh ingredients and chose them carefully, she cooked them so as to serve a tasty and wholesome Sunday roast dinner every week. At the time I took all this for granted. However the same method applies to sermons! A careful choice of subject, based on the Scripture readings, and careful preparation aided by prayer. My mother served us our meal with love; so must a priest when he delivers the sermon. However there is one disadvantage I have noticed since retiring as an incumbent of a parish group and it is this. Preaching risks being abstract when it is not based on diligent pastoral ministry. I find myself these days preaching to various congregations but, whilst I try to get to know the people sitting in the pews, and especially those excellent people, the churchwardens, nonetheless when I preach in a different church each week and live far away then that pastoral connection is no longer possible to the same extent. I used to find this a challenge in past years when invited to preach elsewhere at Harvest Thanksgiving. I did not know the people and it was a challenge to pitch the sermon at the right level. Now, instead of being an infrequent occurrence, it is a frequent one. However two factors mitigate the difficulty. First, I am impressed by the solid witness of the faithful in this area. It is no longer fashionable to be an avowed Christian, if it ever was. Indeed it is "official" for the results of the latest census show that Christians, for the first time for centuries, are a minority in this land. So the loyal adherence of the faithful few to the Church's worship and witness is not dispiriting but encouraging. Thank God for the faithful few who bear their witness in the face of indifference and secularism. Let us not be discouraged - the devil loves to discourage Christians - but joyful believers in our common Lord. Second, I know before I open my mouth in the pulpit that the congregation consists largely of people who share a common baptism with me and with countless others. Some may be struggling to believe, others may be searching for a faith; others again may well be people of deep faith and prayer. Nonetheless, whatever our spiritual condition, we share a common baptism; we belong to the same household of faith. We belong to the same spiritual family and as such we assemble at the great family celebration of the eucharist. And after all is it not better as a working principle to emphasise those things which unite us rather than those which divide us?

Of course what I have written here should not be misunderstood. A priest may retire from his parish but he cannot retire from the priesthood. Yes, I left Meidrim after

twenty nine happy years back in October 2021, but I remain a priest in the Church of God and as hitherto the daily office, that is the offering every day of Morning and Evening Prayer, gives shape to the day and to my ministry as an ordained member of the Body of Christ. Likewise what a privilege it is to stand at the altar to do what Jesus commands his priests to do and to offer devoutly the Holy Eucharist with the unseen angels and with the faithful people gathered around the Lord's table on the Lord's Day. These things remain the same as they have done ever since apostolic times and give not merely a passing satisfaction but a deep and deepening joy. After all, the old saying remains true: once a priest, always a priest.

Finally, may I wish you all who read this little piece much joy in the Lord whom we all, in our different ways and circumstances, still seek to serve.

Pob bendith, Jeffrey Gainer

Bwlch Y Groes

Sausage and mash!

Saturday, 28th January was the date and early evening the time for a sausage and mash evening – a warm place, warm food get together part funded by a wellbeing grant at Bwlchygroes Community Hall. Some sixty meals were served, eight of them as takeaways, so some people missed out on the social evening, but got the meal. Preparation of sixty covers was interesting, as the hall's kitchen has yet to be installed. Elizabeth, Gaynor, Gwenan and Georgina did it on an indoor electric barbecue and some camping stoves.



There was no charge for the meals, but donations were acceptable, so £43.10 was collected thus and a raffle with donated prizes raised £98.98

The next bash at the hall in the same vein is 3rd March for a cawl evening with entertainment: bring a bowl and spoon!

To 'book in' if possible email neuaddbwlchygroeshall@gmail.com or call Elizabeth Law on 01239698607 to put your name down for it if you fancy the soup and social. No charge again, but donations are welcome as they serve to stretch the grant further.

Richard Law

BOOK REVIEW

MARK – A COMMENTARY

By M Eugene Boring

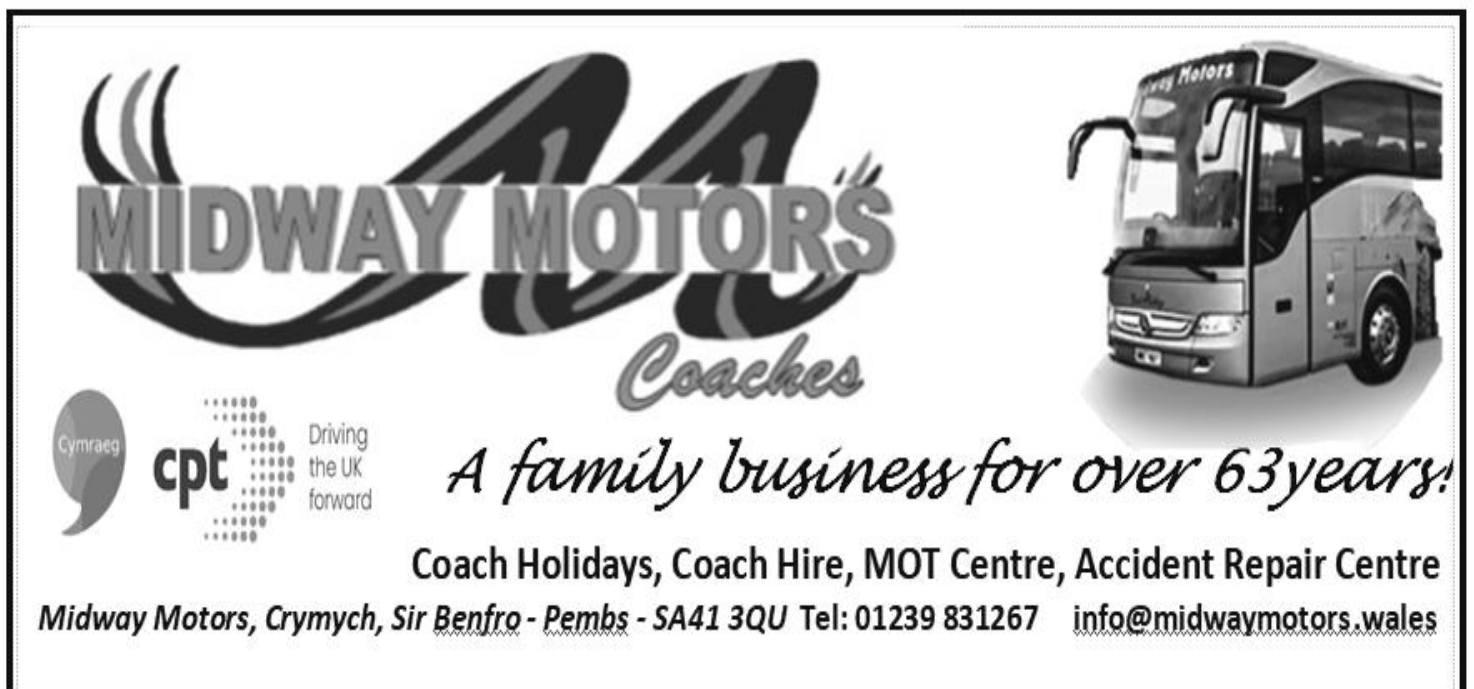
Published by the Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky in the New Testament Library Series in 2006

ISBN 978-0-664-23899 (paperback)

“While the text can be studied profitably by limiting one’s questions to matters of language, sociology, literary structure, and the like,...” says the author in his introduction, **“...these are all secondary to what Mark is *about*. The driving force of this commentary is to use the full spectrum of methods to facilitate a hearing of this theological message in all its strangeness and terror, in the conviction that Mark rightly designated his narrative as ultimate good news.”**

Bible study, and the necessity to write comments for others to study along with the biblical text through distance and time has been going on for centuries. The early protestant translators of the Geneva Bible so packed it with commentary as to double its length as they engaged in challenging established Roman Catholic church doctrines derived from the Church having used Jerome’s Latin translation – the Vulgate Bible – for over a millennium.

St Mark’s Gospel, depending on which translation one works from, is about 14,950 words long, while Eugene Boring’s commentary exceeds 200,000 words. That reminds me of Sharon Edge being told to write a 5,000 word essay about the 1,000 word book of Jonah.



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Cymraeg cpt Driving the UK forward

Compilers and editors in ancient times, so far as the evidence suggests, did not edit anything *out*, while there is some evidence for stuff being edited *in*: which Eugene Boring is careful to address by only considering ancient material – the writings that he is satisfied were available to the compilers of Mark’s Gospel *at the time*.

As an example of later ‘contributions’, Morton Smith’s book *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Harvard University Press, 1973) is not ancient. The back story to it is that Morton Smith discovered and published what is now known as the Mar Saba letter, which he found and photographed in the Greek Orthodox Mar Saba monastery to the east of Bethlehem. The letter was copied into the back of a 17th century book and purports to be from Clement of Alexandria to Theodore, quoting passages from Mark’s Gospel that are not in the one we have. Academia promptly cast considerable doubt on its authenticity and on Morton Smith’s integrity – which is the classic lawyer way of fighting a court case when neither the facts nor the law supports his client’s cause.

And as an example of ancient editors not editing anything *out*, we turn to the Gospel according to St. Mark. He starts with St. John the Baptist’s ministry and ends with the burial of Jesus – thus giving his readers neither Christmas nor Easter. Nobody would have edited those accounts *out* of the Gospel had they been in it in the first place.

In sticking to the provably ancient, the author’s first task is to establish who the author of Mark was writing for: who was his target audience? The traditional

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scholarly position on the Gospels, he tells us, is that they were for the internal consumption of the individual churches in which they were first compiled, which is the opposite of the function of St. Paul's letters. He was making up Christian theology on the hoof to introduce the divine Jesus to the Gentiles – the non-Jewish peoples - and although he wrote to specific communities his epistles were also quite widely copied on around the near Middle East.

That demonstrates the way the churches were networked throughout the Roman world, at least to the east of Rome and 20th century scholarship opens the Gospels to having the same function. Mark must have been copied to other churches, runs the argument, for them to build 'Matthew' and 'Luke' on Mark's shoulders, filling in the bits Mark does not mention.

For provenance, Mark's Gospel is traditionally thought to have originated in Rome, although the arguments for Egypt as the source are older and Eugene Boring puts his nit comb through both and summarises Mark's earliest readers as **“a Greek speaking community that reads its (Old Testament) Bible in Greek translation with a limited knowledge of Judaism, apparently a predominantly Gentile community on the edge of Judaism. But since Sabbath keeping, fasting, and purity laws are issues...the Markan church is a mixed community for whom the integration of Jews and Gentiles in one church was a major issue.”**

The Jewish scriptures were widely known and copied in the classical world. The Jewish diaspora would have copies in Hebrew in their synagogues and after Ptolemy II (285-247 BC) ordered a copy of them in Greek translation for his library in Egypt, that translation – referred to as LXX – was likewise widely distributed. Every book in the New Testament refers to what we call the Old Testament and Mark's readers must have been familiar with the LXX translation to save him spelling those bits out.

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Other textual clues to the identity of Mark's audience are suggested by him getting details of Jewish religious practices wrong, not understanding the Temple hierarchy, being vague about Judean geography, the agrarian imagery, the lack of urban metaphors and the reference to money only involving small change collectively suggest a rural working class society; rather like East Lansker.

What is drawn from this is that the writer was not familiar with Judea, but did know St Peter, or at least knew what he said. The Gospels are reactive to Paul's theology, which generated the need to reach back past St Paul to what Jesus said and did.

Date-wise, Eugene Boring places Mark in the 60s AD when Christianity was becoming seen as subversive of Pax Romana by its links to Jerusalem – the only town named in Marks' Gospel and where the Jewish revolt was kicking off.

Identity-wise, early Christianity attributes the Gospel to Mark. According to Eusebius (265-339 AD – so he was only repeating what he had been taught) St Peter fled the clutches of Herod Agrippa I in 41AD, travelled through Asia Minor and arrived in Rome in 42AD when Claudius was Emperor. Somewhere on the way, Peter encountered Mark and took him as travel companion and interpreter. Mark wrote down Peter's sermons, thus composing the Gospel according to Mark before he left for Alexandria 43 AD – the same year as Claudius left Rome for Britain.

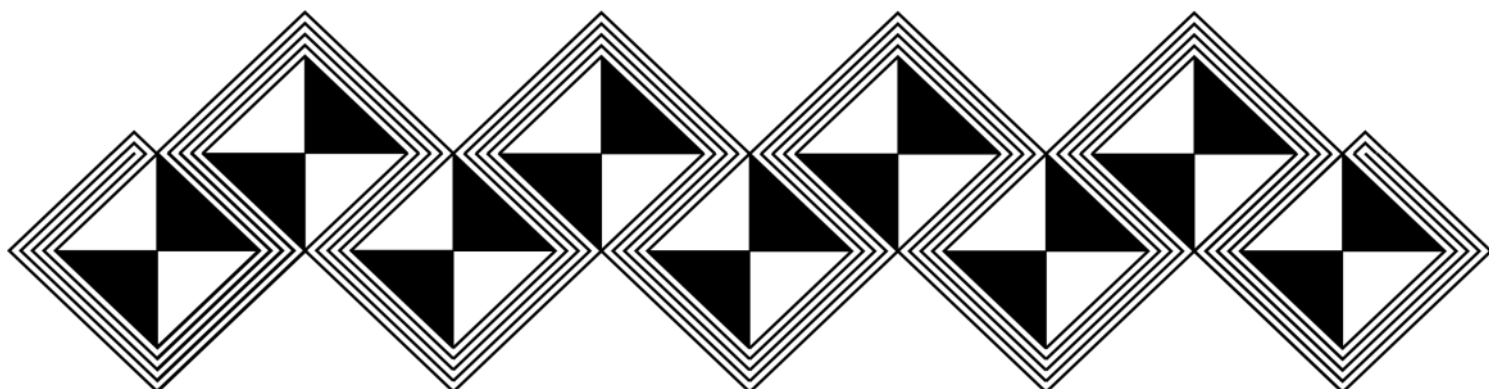
The Gospel itself does not include anything about Mark, so Eugene Boring uses the textual clues in the Gospel and concludes that he was a teacher who collated what was already common knowledge in his church. Mark was not an Apostle, nor a famous martyr. He was not a Pharisee like St Paul, nor a trained writer like St Luke. Three people called Mark are mentioned in the New Testament, but they were all familiar with Judea, which the Gospel author was not.

As to his purpose, Mark was writing to build up his readers in faith and the rest of this book is a detailed study of how he did that. Barbour Publishing's 'know your Bible' summarizes Mark thus; **“Mark addresses a Gentile audience, portraying Jesus as a man of action, divinely capable of healing the sick, controlling nature, and battling the powers of Satan. Mark’s theme of the suffering servant comes through in his narratives of Jesus’ interaction with hostile doubters—the Jewish leaders, who want to kill Him (9:31); His neighbours, who take offense at Him (6:3); and even His own family members, who think He’s crazy (3:21). The abasement of Jesus pictures what His disciples should pursue: “Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the (sic) chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (10:43–45).**

Eugene Boring says that the final word of Mark’s text is *gar*, which translates as ‘for’ - not a usual way to end a sentence, or a book. He then considers ‘alternate endings’ concluding that either Mark did not, himself, finish it or if he did, his ending was lost in ancient times. The Codex Sinaiticus – the oldest extant Bible - ends thus. That is reckoned to be a next generation copy of the ‘complete’ Bible that was canonized by Constantine’s First Council of Nicaea in 325AD, so Mark’s ending had been lost by then and alternative endings would all have been made up at least three hundred years after Mark stopped writing.

Page turner, this isn’t; but as a way of clarifying the obscure, it is far better researched and more academic than the Geneva Bible commentaries.

Richard Law



History of the Old Pop Factory, Llanboidy



Mr. J. L. Walters established the Old Pop Factory—also known as Aeriated Waters, Llanboidy—in 1911. He was also a pharmacist and consequently Cloth Hall was originally called Pharmacy Hall. Little is known about the Factory but for the fact that a person named Wil Pop used to work there. It was sold to a Mr. Davies who continued with the Factory but also went into drapery. It was he who

changed the name of the shop to Cloth Hall. Jerry and Dot Williams (Rodney's parents) bought the shop and factory in 1951 with every intention of carrying on with the Pop Factory, but unbeknown to them the machinery had been condemned which, as you can imagine, was a huge blow to them, Jerry not having long come out of the Royal Navy. At that time there were four shops in Llanboidy, namely the Sweet Shop at no. 1 Piccadilly Square; the National Provincial Stores; the Post Office and petrol pumps in front of the flats, and a Grocery and Sweet Shop at Felinganol. There was also a garage selling petrol next door to the Maesgwynne Arms, and more petrol pumps at Rose Villa.

Jerry and Dot continued with the Drapery, and also bought out the two Sweet Shops. Part of Jerry's education was spent at Bedales Boarding School near Petersfield. Living near St. Dogmaels, he would often travel on the Cardi Bach railway to Whitland on his way to and fro. Whilst at Bedales some of his fellow students were the sons of Fry's, Mackintosh and Rowntree and these proved to be very useful contacts as sugar was still in short supply due to continued rationing after WWII. Jerry was now in a position to wholesale confectionery, but he chose not to continue with that venture. To keep the business going Jerry and Dot had to diversify, and the whole family went up to London to seek agencies for all sorts of toys and games for Christmas presents. This led to having Christmas Bazaars in the back room. Oliver Edwards, who at the time resided at Llwynnon, Piccadilly Square, was Father Christmas—an honour that he retained for many a year. The Post Office was, at that time, the National Provincial Stores, and Dot was successful in taking over the Post Office from Mrs. Stephens, Spencer House, having sold the business to Mr. and Mrs. Morris, and was relocated to Cloth Hall in 1958 along with a Postman and Post van, and Sorting Office.



Above: Congratulations to Ann Robinson, Eglwys Gymun, who celebrated her 90th birthday recently. She is pictured here with her daughter, Christine and her son, Nigel.

Below: Members of St. Clears and District Walking Group near Narberth on the 15th of February



Jerry decided to seek other employment and joined Foster Wheeler who, at the time, was one of the contractors building the Esso Refinery at Milford Haven. When the job finished in Milford Haven Jerry took a position with Woodall's Newspapers who were taken over by North Wales Newspapers. He remained here until his retirement. Dot continued to run the Shop and Post Office until she became ill and had to step down, By this time Rodney was involved in the business and took it over completely in 1991 when Dot sadly passed away.

The back room of Cloth Hall, when owned by J L Walters, was a studio where he used to paint. Here he painted The Molecatcher which used to be on display in the nearby Market Hall. Due to its deterioration the committee at the time decided, quite rightly, to present it to the Museum at Abergwili for safe-keeping and restoration, where it can be seen to this present day.

(Editor—More on J L Walters next month)

Rodney Williams, Cloth Hall, Llanboidy

The need for Biblical Study

Let's take a moment to consider the need for Biblical Study of the faith.

For those who consider themselves with a high degree of self-learning, biblical knowledge can at times be more prone to place their own interpretation on the gospel message. It is all too natural to interpret Scripture to be in line with our sinful desires, rather than our sinful desires to become more in line with God's requirements and commands, and because of this the good news of faith in Jesus Christ has been corrupted.

And with so many different interpretations given on any portion of Scripture, how does the person who is seeking for the first time know the right way? The Bible warns us of, 'those untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the rest of the Scriptures,' 2 Peter 3. 16.

The answer is that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth.

In the Epistle of Jude, we are instructed to contend earnestly for the faith one and for all been given to the saints and not to be taken away by those who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The danger is real, fake news and false teachers have crept not only into the society that we live in but into the Church. Many have gone the way of Cain and have a religion without blood or sacrifice. Others have gone the way of Balaam and have turned to the Christian faith into a money-making business others have just turned their back on the faith once and for all given.

So, hold fast to the received faith, study the true message and ask the Holy Spirit to give a pure understanding.

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Services in March

Sunday 5th

Lent II

9.00 am	Holy Communion	St David	KT
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Brynach	JP

Sunday 12th

Lent III

11.00 am	Matins	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Morning Prayer	St David	NJ
2.30 pm	Holy Communion	Cyffig	KT

Sunday 19th

Lent IV Mothering Sunday

9.00 am	Holy Communion	St Tysilio	KT
11.00 am	Matins	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Morning Prayer	St David	NJ
4.00 pm	Holy Communion	St Brynach	KT

Sunday 26th

Passion Sunday

11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Matins	St David	NJ
2.30 pm	Evensong	Cyffig	KT

Approaching Easter

Because time marches on we inevitably approach Easter simply because of the church calendar. But how do we approach Easter in ourselves, in our spiritual lives? Do we make the most of Lent as a time of reflection, of preparation. The early church didn't celebrate Christmas, Easter was the centre of the Christian journey, the pivotal point of the redemption of humanity, the moment we were brought back to God. Society hasn't hijacked Easter as it has Christmas, this is still our festival. Let us approach Easter with joy and expectancy.

Kingsley

CYFFIG

Here we are bowling headlong into another year, Spring is definitely on it's way. There are snowdrops and crocus, and polyanthus flowering. Things are looking up. At last!!

This morning, I can hear a particularly joyful Mistle Thrush singing his heart out in the top of a tree. There's a Great Tit who has his eye on one of the nesting boxes and the Sun is shining.

We all grumble that life is hard, cost of living etc. etc. But let us all spare a thought and a prayer for the people in Turkey and Syria affected by the terrible earthquake, and think how lucky are we.

We continue to send our best wishes for better health to Revd. Kingsley, Colin Beynon, and Ken Priest.

As Revd. Kingsley is unwell, we look forward to welcoming Revd. Carol Court to Cyffig for this week's service.

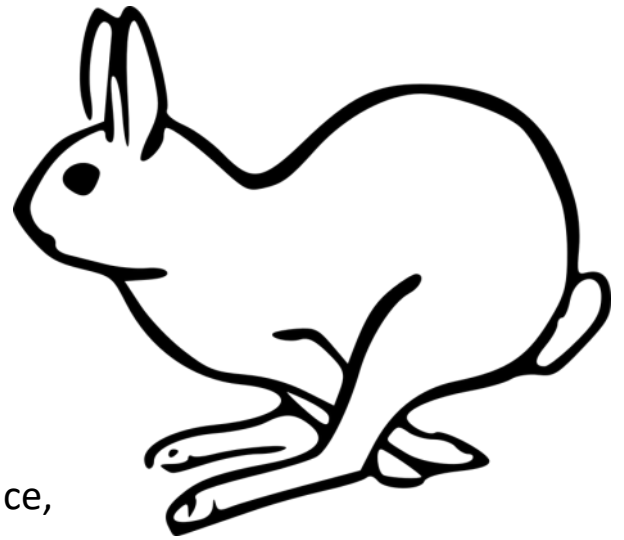
A Poem by Elizabeth Coatsworth (1893–1986) Buffalo, New York, U.S.A.:

SONG OF THE RABBITS OUTSIDE THE TAVERN

We who play under the pines,
We who dance in the snow
That shines blue in the light of the moon
Sometimes halt as we go,
Stand with our ears erect,
Our noses testing the air,
To gaze at the golden world
Behind the windows there.



Suns they have in a cave
And stars each on a tall white stem,
And the thought of fox or night owl
Seems never to trouble them,
They laugh and eat and are warm.
Their food seems ready at hand,
While hungry out in the cold
We little rabbits stand.



But they never dance as we dance,
They have not the speed nor the grace.
We scorn both the cat and the dog
Who lie by the fireplace,
Their eyes on an upraised spoon,
We who dance hungry and wild
Under a winter's moon.

Lynn Werrett

Paraclete

As a non-driver a few years ago before everyone had mobile phones I found myself in an unfamiliar town waiting to rendezvous with my 'lift'. It might have been in Llanelli. In any case it was somewhat depressing, drizzly and grey. As I scanned notices and shop signs to pass the time, I realised I was standing quite close to a rather grimy and care-worn church emblazoned with the words **CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST THE PARACLETE**.

Having had a religious upbringing such as an archbishop and possibly the Pope himself would envy, I was somewhat miffed to find that I could not immediately define what was meant by the word 'paraclete'. I determined to find out when I arrived home.

Here I will digress and keep you all – or some of you at least – in suspense. I heard someone on Radio 4 recently opine that many young people don't know even common terms used in Christian literature. I was not at all surprised: many years ago I found myself taking a group of English students - they were either A-level students or first-year undergraduates – who, coming across the word 'Calvary', decided it was a misprint for 'cavalry'. Hilarious as this was (and I was meant to make the jokes) I was at the time dumbfounded. Not a single one seemed to know its significance.

I also questioned much of what had been done to 'simplify' and make more accessible the Bible and Christianity. Our life's experiences will cause us to believe or disbelieve, and people and events will influence us in our own unique and individual ways. The Bible is a library of different viewpoints and voices so that some will prefer Paul, others will find inspiration in Job or Amos, or Timothy or John. All the voices are translated and much can be lost in translation. However, one translation has succeeded against the odds, in making those disparate stories and voices cohere and inspire through a high regard for the rhythms and poetry of English as well as rigorous scholarship. I mean of course the King James' version, and I say 'against the odds' because it was the result of committees and complex and changing collaboration without an overall leader: this might well have resulted in mediocrity. Yet this triumph of poetry and rhythm – try Deborah murdering Barak with the tent peg – seems hardly ever used nowadays. Presumably this is not to scare people, especially young people, away with riddling language. Yet almost every other religion has its rhythms, riddles, metaphoric poems and chants.

These are taught or repeated until known by heart and followers can mull over them, understand what can be taken in immediately, and gradually grow into deeper understanding. Muslims often learn Arabic to learn sections of the Koran and yet we

G. Williams

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St. Mary's Church Whitland choir sometime before 2002. Dr. Penn is second from the left on the back row. Can you name any of the others?



**Sausage and Mash
at Bwlch Y Groes:**



have deprived our children and young people of learning an only slightly antiquated version of English or, perhaps, Welsh. Since I only have one Welsh Bible I realise this rambly rant has led me onto shaky territory as is so often the case with rambly rants...

To return to the word Paraclete: I was disappointed not to find it in my concordance but eventually found it in Peake's commentary and in footnotes in John 14:16. In fact references to translations of the Greek, parakletos, are found in only a handful of places in the Bible. Depending on which Bible you use and which verse you choose these are variously translated as 'counsellor, comforter, advocate or helper, Holy Spirit or Spirit of Truth'. Jewish writers assigned a number of meanings to the word, a good deed being a paraclete, an act of repentance was a paraclete, acts of mercy became agents of peace and therefore intercessors or paracletes. The Jewish philosopher, Philo, writing during the decades just after the crucifixion, describes Joseph forgiving his brothers for throwing him in the pit and exiling him to Egypt by saying they needed no-one else as paraclete or intercessor.

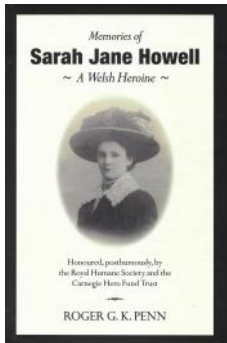
All these translations are useful but they all put a particular slant on the word paraclete or in the case of 'helper' little slant at all. They are all translations and therefore approximations. We need to go back to the Greek. In fact the grammatical form mostly used in the Bible from parakletos is passive and a fairly literal translation is 'one called to come alongside to help'. These days it is possible to google the word paraclete and find information - or disinformation - quickly. I was surprised to find, however, that there are impassioned arguments on-line as to whether Paraclete can be used interchangeably with Holy Spirit or indeed Jesus, whether the Paraclete who would be sent after Jesus physically left the world was in fact Mohammed. It is not that many of these differences of opinion are new; they are clearly there in scholarly theological debates over the years. It is just that on-line they seem much more terse and crude with less room for nuanced opinion.

For myself, I like the interpretation of paraclete as 'someone called alongside to help'. I always get an image of Jesus coming alongside as the fishing disciples, exhausted and disappointed having fished all night with no catch, persuaded them to let down their nets once more which they did more to humour him than in expectation. Then they caught two heavy boatloads of fish. For some reason that is the image I get when I hear the word paraclete although it is not part of the translated text.

Along with many others I had something horrible - I called it Superflu - after Christmas which lasted into February and, on Doctor's orders, was persuaded to call an ambulance. Two paramedics attended and tested me rigorously. They judged, advocated, comforted and finally interceded with my doctors so that I managed not to go to hospital. They were paracletes. Now, amidst the dreadful destruction and

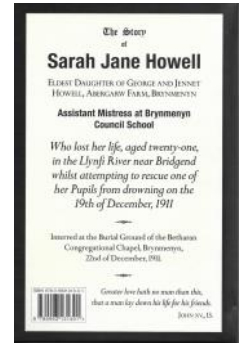
tragedy of earthquakes and the Ukrainian war everyday we also see on our televisions those ‘called alongside to help’ digging and listening and rescuing tirelessly amongst the ruins – paracletes all. When I was young I often thought there must be a right, a proven scholarly definition to biblical questions: now I’m inclined to believe that Jesus has no hands and feet but ours. It is up to us to become Paracletes when we have or can make the opportunity.

JJ



Memories of Sarah Jane Howell a Welsh Heroine Chapter 3

Childhood Days amongst the Mines and Minerals



Brynmenyn had existed in the midst of mining work for generations before Sarah Jane’s birth and her forefathers would have experienced the modest early diggings that took place around Abergarw farm. Grandfather Evan had personally witnessed this activity in the nearby valleys and in neighbouring Aberkenfig, Bryncethin and Tondu, and he knew about the trials and tribulations that the good and honest miners faced in their quest for a living. Indeed, meeting the demands of iron ore and coal had long since put South Wales on the map, and Brynmenyn and district fully played its part.

At the railway station, a short walk away from the farm buildings, no one could miss miners, young and old, passing through the village and returning homewards, tired and weary, black with dust and grime. In earlier days, mining had seen innocent youngsters pulling small trolley ‘boxes’ underground and although such child labour had now ended, the work carried out was severely challenging, physically gruelling, mentally wearisome and fraught with danger to life and health. Only a mile or two from Brynmenyn, the late David Bayliss, born in 1877, left the following reminder of how things once were:

Between 1830 and 1840, a man named Robert Watson from Cowbridge had several small *sinkings* on the mountain at Bryncethin, and they were known to us from childhood as Robert Watson’s Pits. He used to come and pay his workmen at the old Corner House [inn], opposite the new Mason’s Arms.

Before this, John Bedford, from Birmingham, had his own coal and iron ore industry at Cefn Cribwr, nearby, complete with brickworks and forge. He created jobs for the men, just as Sir Robert Price and John Brogden had done in later years – when a

young Evan Morgan, harrowing clods of earth in the Abergarw fields, would have seen in the distant hills the smoke of foundries and chimneys escaping into the countryside air. Such industrialists breathed life and influence into the community and Mr Brogden's family is noted for helping Porthcawl's rise to a 19th century port with new harbour and enhanced railway links to Maesteg in the Llynfi Valley.

Sarah Jane's family recognised the toil and tears that went into digging the *black diamond*, as coal was often referred to, especially the shining, hard-burning, anthracite. There were open cast mines nearer the surface and deeper pits sunk into the lower-lying seams, and many appeared as a cluster of stone buildings, set against isolated, bleak backgrounds. There were out-houses, stables and engine sheds; pulley wheels and furnaces, whilst dangerous-looking equipment like traction engines heaped soil into man-made mounds. Nearby, railway wagons were piled-high with stock as crowds of men, pit-ponies and harnessed-horses sucked in the fresh air before returning underground.

Amongst the men on the scene – and these including blacksmiths, carters, sawyers, drivers, hostlers, stablemen and many more – the pit proprietors and colliery agents were immensely important, carrying big responsibilities and usually living in fine residences near the works. Of course, they presided over pockets of mass activity, energy and danger, which were the lifeblood of the valleys, and they were known to all. Colliery officials provided wages, security and often housing, besides putting bread regularly onto the table of miners' wives, children and relatives.

Understandably, such senior officials were well looked-after. Their families were helped with household chores by the mining staff, so that fires, for instance, would be fully alight and glowing and warming living rooms by the time everyone went downstairs for breakfast. Katie, Sarah Jane's sister, witnessed this at first-hand whilst visiting the daughter of a colliery agent living in one of the adjacent valleys and her sense of surprise is today shared by Katie's own daughter, Janet:

The two had met in school and had become friendly. Occasionally my mother slept the night at her home and she was amazed how much the miners did for the family. No job was too much trouble and this was a reflection of how important the girl's father was. My mother was shocked to learn that if, for instance, she left her shoes outside the bedroom door, they would be clean and polished and shining by the time she dressed next morning. Being used to doing things for herself, this was an experience that she never forgot.

Everyone at home in Abergarw was brought up to respect the miners. Our family were farmers, forever busy on the land, with no relatives or connections in the mines at all; but everyone knew of the dangers underground and kept away. Before my mother was born – when Sarah Jane was a two-year-old – there was an explosion in

Aberkenfig, near Tondu, on Brynmenyn's doorstep. In later years I came across this old, disused mine when cutting across the fields towards Cefn Cribwr. I remember the open expanse and the ground underfoot being bumpy and overgrown with grass, and realising that during its former days this is where so many people had lost their lives.

Janet was referring to the Parc Slip colliery that experienced a disaster in 1892, the most awful reminder to local inhabitants of how severe mining accidents can be – and despite men emerging from the scene alive, having earlier been feared dead, the heavy death toll was more than the hard-working community could bear. The Bryncethin School Log Book recorded this never-to-be-forgotten incident, and the loss and heartbreak for pupils and their families is hard to imagine.

August 26th 1892 ... A terrible explosion took place this morning in the neighbourhood; few children came to school.

Frank John, one of the fortunate men to be rescued was aware that this sad happening took place on the day of St Mary Hill Fair when scores of miners had taken leave to attend the event and, ultimately, this was to spare their lives. This gentleman recorded his memories of the tragedy in a touching poem, *Parc Slip Explosion 1892*, a copy of which is held at Brynmenyn Primary School in both Welsh and English. Here are the sad, telling verses which follow the author's introductory lines:

*Amongst the dead and wounded
It was an awful sight,
To fight the poisonous gases
From morning until night.*

*To see our poor comrades
All lying in a heap,
Some were there praying,
While others gone to sleep.*

*No sign of no-one coming
Our hearts were in a gloom,
Patiently awaiting
Down in a living tomb.*

*About one o'clock in the morning,
Here came the 'After Damp'
When we were almost in darkness
With the aid of only one lamp.*

*We prayed on the Lord Almighty
To save us from this death,
When we could hear some of our comrades
Breathing their last breath.*

*Now all young men take warning,
In life make no delay.
Be ready night and morning
For no-one knows his dying day.*

To be continued ...

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