

Grapevine

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He is
Risen

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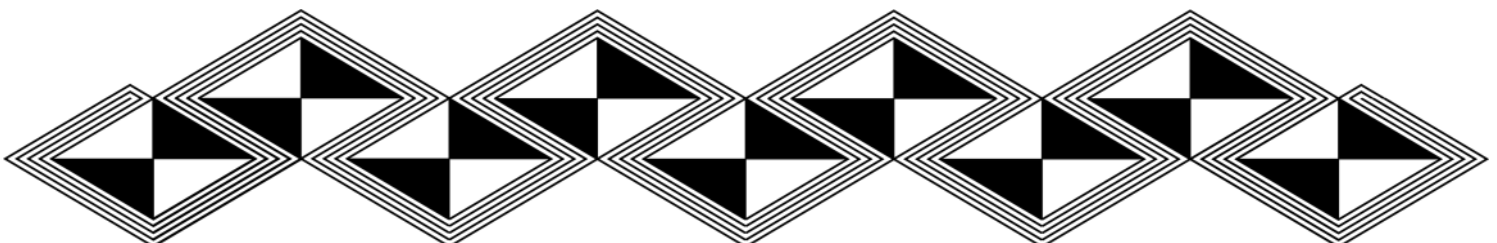
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Cylch y Frenni Circle of Churches Clydau, Llanglydwen, Llanfyrnach, Llanwinio and Mynachlog-ddu

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 2.00 pm 9th April – Easter Day:			
Llanfyrnach	10.30	Holy Eucharist	CC/EB
16th April – The Second Sunday of Easter:			
Llanwinio	9.30	Boreol Weddi	PH
Mynachlogddu	10.00	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

We are now well into Lent and thoughts of Easter are now firmly in our minds. During Lent at Cylch Y Frenni we have come together at the vicarage on Wednesday afternoons for coffee and cake and some great discussions.

For Christians, Lent is a time of reflection, a time to correct bad habits and to try to make us a little bit more in Christ's image. Some will give up the obvious physical things like chocolate, cake or alcohol, while for others it is more spiritual. This is a time to reflect on what it means to be a follower of Christ. It is a time to grow and strengthen our faith.

If we follow Christ's teachings we become responsible, peace loving people. We become selfless, mindful of others and become aware and concerned for those in need in our society, especially the disabled, elderly, helpless and hopeless in our midst.

So this Lent, maybe take something up. Look out for your neighbours, volunteer at a charity, be aware of those in need. Let us live our lives as Jesus taught us. As we reflect and ask for forgiveness let us prepare to celebrate Jesus's resurrection at the feast of Easter.

As we approach Easter, be kind to yourself and others, and have a lovely Easter.

Carol Court

Llanfyrnach

The baptism of Renesme Little was held at Llanfyrnach Church on Saturday the 18th of February. Carol and Ryan Little are the proud parents. Welcome, Renesme!

Eunice Bachelor

Bro Preseli

DYDD GWYL DEWI IN BRO PRESELI, CRYMYCH

For a number of years now, Cylch y Frenni Circle of Churches has held a monthly Eucharist, or Home Communion service, in Bro Preseli family housing, Crymych, usually on the 1st Wednesday of the month at 10.30 am. This has always taken place in the hobbies room, and been open to anyone who would like to attend from the local community.

As the 1st March (St. David's Day) this year fell on the Wednesday we decided to hold our Group Communion service in Bro Preseli – open to all and with cawl, rolls and

cheese, and Welsh cakes and tea or coffee afterwards. The service was thoroughly enjoyed by residents and visitors alike, with some old friends meeting up and several people making their first visit to the complex.

Our service next month (on the 5th April) will be the Easter service for the residents and so will also be held in the coffee lounge area of the Bro Preseli restaurant, and all are welcome to attend! While not all of our services will be held in the coffee lounge, non-residents are always very welcome to attend – maybe give me a phone call first so that we can ensure that you find your way to the right place. The service starts at 10.30 am.

Judy Webb

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

There is no event more exciting and thrilling to a Christian believer than the celebration of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. It is not enough to be thrilled and excited at Easter time and let it go at that.

Unless we know Christ and experience the power of His resurrection, the excitement will die down and the thrill will fade away. Something like this seems to

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Carol and Ryan Little with their daughter, Renesme, who was baptised at Llanfyrnach Church on Sunday the 18th of February.



happen to many professed believers in the days and weeks after the Easter celebration.

When we study the Bible we see the disciples of Jesus reaching the heights of enthusiasm and influence in the post-Easter days. They no longer met secretly in the upper room, but went boldly into the streets and the temple to proclaim the gospel of the risen Christ. In the afterglow of that first resurrection they were being built up for the great endowment of power to come at Pentecost.

Why should it not be so with Christian believers today? Why should those who rejoiced and praised God for the resurrection on Easter Sunday settle back into routine living and witnessing today and tomorrow? Should not believers, like first-century disciples, pray and witness for Christ and our enthusiasm and faith grow stronger and more radiant each day? Why should we not witness for our Risen Christ in greater expectancy and power?

The Apostle Paul did not become a Christian until sometime after the Day of Pentecost, but when he did come to know Christ he developed a great hunger and thirst for the power of God in his life. Writing to the Philippians he said he considered the things he did before his conversion to be nothing but trash to be thrown away and that his consuming desire was to "gain Christ and to be found in him; to know him and the power of His resurrection, if by any means I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." (Philippians 3:10-11)

Why not make this consuming ambition a part of your life? Can you imagine a higher or better one for this life and for eternity

Chris Rees, Minister, Bethesda Baptist Church, Narberth

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Clydau

Another day out

A visit to Ironbridge – the Valley of Invention – in February was a photo opportunity. The bank in the Victorian village exchanged my £5 note for period money – a shilling and a halfpenny in small change – all minted tokens to look like Victorian copper and silver; unlike Wookey Hole where they sell you real old pennies to use in the mechanical slot machines.



The 1/0 ½d did not go far in the shops, which conveniently took modern money as well. A baker, candlemaker, fish and chip shop, public house, printer, haberdasher, plaster shop and a photographic studio vied for our attention – successfully. Each shop was staffed by people who could explain their wares as well as sell them. Live entertainment included a singsong in the pub at lunchtime, the patrolling policeman and a short train ride into a mine experience.

Candle making ceased to be an ‘every high street had one’ shop when kerosene lamps overtook them as the lighting of choice in Victorian houses before gas became available in towns. That was a cheaper option once you’d bought the lamps. Clydai still has two, restored to use by the architect during the 2016 refurbishment. We saw a report somewhere that 10 Downing Street cost £15 a week to light with candles and the cost of them is what drove William Shakespeare’s theatre troop to relocate to an outdoor theatre.

You can trace that in his plays. The early ones were five act plays, performed indoors and the need to be in five acts was to have intervals in which the candles in the

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chandeliers were replaced. Once outdoors and in natural light, the three-act play was born.

What you only get by being in those shops is the smell – each had its own scent apart from the plasterer, where everything was already dry. What was showing there were all the items moulded in plaster for Victorians - the centre ceiling rose, cornices and picture rails, down to small decorations and ornaments.

You can still get the scent of a fish and chip shop, bakery and stables locally, but the unmistakable smell of a print shop is history.

Ironbridge is a cluster of museums, all in walking distance of each other; the smallest being the tollhouse on the iron bridge itself and the largest is Blist's Hill Victorian village. Others include the Coalport China Museum, the old furnace – all about cast iron (see the latest church mouse) - and the Jackfield Tile Museum. There is so much iron waste about that mobile phone's don't work and our internet service was worse than in Tegryn.

Mining was a local activity in our community, according to a recent speaker at Bwlchgyroes community hall on 13th February, the mine in Llanfyrnach not being far from the quarries that necessitated the construction of the Cardi Bach railway. Both Dr. Peter Clauchton, speaking about mining and recent visitor David Morris,

researching his family, noted that census returns and other sources suggest that mining was a part time activity for many workers. As was quarrying. Mr. Morris's ancestor identified himself as a mason sometimes, while also farming 63 acres. Seasonal work then, which is still the model for many in our community.



Some years ago, when Ann Howells was our priest in charge, she raised money for the churches in Uganda and led a group there to deliver the gift and to worship in their churches. We had a return visit from Mr. and Mrs Ghallia – he being a churchwarden of the key church. In conversation, he was planning his retirement from his full-time church work and had an ambition of keeping cattle. I heard that plan so many times from people I worked with in the Home Counties; it always makes me smile. In Wales, we are used to people who are kept by cattle and do other things besides.

The Victorian village experience reminded me of my Grandfather, who left school at thirteen. His first job was pushing a hand cart between our village and the next town – where he enlisted in 1914. His pith helmet experience was in the Middle East during the khaki days of the Great War. When he retired after 44 years in uniform, his old hand cart job had gone; superseded first by a horse and then by a Scammel Scarab.

Megan opted for the Edwardian suffragette look in the studio – a reminder that back then, Lords, lunatics and women could not vote.

We bought season tickets for the whole group of museums for the year – that is a fashionable way of selling tickets – I have yearly passes to several cathedrals all of which expired before I made repeat visits; but the gorge is worth another look when the weather is better and there's less chance of catching Covid 19 – again.

Richard Law



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The Turin Shroud

The artifact variously called the Holy Shroud of Turin, or just the Turin Shroud on account of that is where it lives has a long back story. It is a bit over fourteen feet long or 4.23 metres in newspeak, made of linen and bears the faint image of a naked man's front and rear aspects, as though he had been laid upon it and the top was folded over his head – the open end is at the feet. The faithful believe the image to be that of Jesus Christ; a miraculous image caused by his resurrection from the dead.

Joseph Fiennes said the image was sweat and herbs in the 2016 film 'Risen' in which he plays a roman soldier tasked with finding the body after it vanishes from the tomb, leaving a cloth with his image upon it. If that were the case, one would expect the dorsal image to be firmer than the ventral, whereas looking at the Shroud they are much the same.

My first encounter with the Shroud was Ian Wilson's book 'The Turin Shroud' published in 1978, out of which fell an invitation to join the British Society for the Turin Shroud (BSTS), which I did. The BSTS held periodic meetings at the Society of Authors headquarters in London, so I met Ian Wilson there and quite a few other 'Shroudies' – known collectively as the Shroud Mafia. The more academic end call





Above: Guests at Clwb Cinio, Canolfan Clydau waiting for the lunch!

Below: Members of St. Clears and District Walking Group on the 1st of March at Black Scar from where the ferry used to run to Laugharne





themselves Sindonologists. Several of them got books published on the subject: it's a subject that is reviewed periodically by the people involved in it. The works range from those who believe it is a genuine burial shroud of a crucified man to those who support the medieval fake school of thought and various other ideas as well, ranging from a modern fake to it being a camera obscura

photograph taken by Leonardo Da Vinci or the shroud of Jacque de Molay.

1978 was a busy year, which brought the existence of the Shroud to a worldwide audience. Aside from the book, Ian Wilson also worked on a TV documentary on the subject. Called 'the silent witness', it was directed by David Rolfe and narrated by Kenneth Moore. it's probably still out there. 1978 was also the year that Turin Cathedral permitted a scientific study of the shroud. The American Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) descended upon the cloth; most being university dons from Los Alamos and such. They had access for 120 hours at the end of the 1978 exposition. The photographer they hired, Barrie M. Schwartz, has a considerable web presence about the Shroud on which he publishes BSTS newsletters as they are produced – twice a year.

Almost as an afterthought, the Turin Bishop snipped a bit off a corner of the Shroud for the team to carbon date. Carbon dating only works on organic matter and involves burning what is being studied and then scientifically sniffing the smoke.

Three laboratories, in Arizona, Oxford and Zurich conducted the test and concluded the fabric was medieval. At that point there was a three-way split in Shroud studies. The Catholic Church sort of bowed out of the process, content to quietly venerate their artifact. They do not claim the image is that of Jesus Christ – believing that is a matter of faith – but they do claim it to be a miraculous image of a crucified man.

Tired of the 'scientific' lampooning and pressured to have noire frequent expositions of the Shroud, they double-glazed it. It is now sealed inside an argon-filled glass case, which looked like double glazing to me. Before that it was kept rolled up in a nitrogen environment. The patches on it are repairs carried out after it was damaged in a fire in 1532. The damage was caused by the silver reliquary it was stored in melting. The water stains were thought to date from the same incident, but do not

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match the way it was stored at the time. When the water damage occurred, it was folded up concertina style and probably kept in a storage jar that water got into. A further fire nearly got it in 1997, but for the actions of the local fire service bundling it out of the cathedral.

There was an exposition in 1998 and again in 2000 to reassure the faithful it was safe after which the next one was scheduled for 2025. The Cathedral policy changed in 2008, so there have been public showings in 2010, which is the one Elizabeth and I went to; and again in 2015.

The medieval fake lobby took to concentrating on how the image was created and so far have been an abject failure in their specialist subject. David Rolfe, who directed the 'Silent Witness' film in 1978 offered the British Museum £1 million for the solution as to how the image was created and his money is still safe in the bank.

Ian Wilson went on to study and then publish about reincarnation with 'mind out of time' in 1981, good practising Catholic that he is, (Emmanuel School Wandsworth and Magdalen College, Oxford) and 'Jesus, the evidence' in 1984. He fell foul of the medieval fake lobby and moved to Australia.

The image on the Shroud is a faint beige stain, which has faded over time. Medieval images of the Shroud on public display are more detailed than can be seen now: whether those artists had a better image to work from or were using poetic licence without seeing the cloth is a valid question, but photography revealed a much clearer and detailed image on the negatives than can be seen when looking at the Shroud itself. Secondo Pia photographed it through its glass case in 1898 and revealed the greater detail. It was photographed again in 1931 by Giuseppe Enrie and until Barrie Schwartz in 1978, it was Enrie's images that were widely reproduced, including in Ian Wilson's 1978 book.

Which is where I came in; looking at the 1978 negative image, it looked 'photographic' to me, rather than 'artistic' and as such not in the style of medieval iconography; or any other iconography for that matter. One can wonder if Secondo Pia's negatives were retouched – Victorian period photographers did all sorts of photoshopping – until one sees Enrie's 1931 images: a scientific study, carefully monitored.



Modern trickery is thus out. My interest was in the accuracy of the wounds shown on the images, having a forensic background. The Crown of Thorns is depicted in art as a wreath – Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris has the supposed original, which is a wreath, whereas the Shroud image suggests something more cap-like.

The images show the scourge marks – he was given a thorough working over with a flagellum; which is a cat of two or three tails and wound marks show on every muscle group from neck to toe – carefully aimed at to cause maximum pain everywhere. This is at odds with the usual flogging imagery, which is multiple strikes to the back of the victim.

The rule in Deuteronomy 25:3 is a maximum of 40 lashes. St Paul says he was lashed 39 times on five occasions. Jesus may have been worked over more than once; to loosen his tongue prior to questioning and again to soften him up for execution.

The spear wound in his side is visible on the right side as it would be if the crucified man had been stabbed in the heart and the cloth draped over the body became a mirror image.

The nail marks are to the wrists rather than in the palms as shown in all medieval (and later) art and in cinematographic versions, such as Jeffrey Hunter in 1961's 'King of Kings' and Robert Powell in the 1977 mini-series 'Jesus of Nazareth'. In both



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examples their weight is supported by ropes around their arms and the cross-piece, above and below the elbow.

Studies of crucifixion point to the nails going through the wrist between the radius and ulna bones. Hanging by your wrists, whether tied or nailed, causes you to suffocate as the weight of the body hanging down prevents chest expansion as you breathe.

The Roman solution to this is lost to time and practice may have varied anyway, but in principle providing a footrest of some sort Tradition has it that Jesus was hung up on three nails and the Shroud image bloodstains support a nail being driven through the instep. An angled footstep would be easier to nail to – without that third nail the victim's feet would slip off the footrest and suffocation would happen too soon to suit Roman justice. I did wonder if that were the case with Jesus, hence the short time it took him to die; there was no need to break his legs.

That said, the Shroud silently witnesses the legs bent and the body hanging forwards in death and as rigor mortis set in.

The other issue is that the two archaeological discoveries of crucifixion victims were identified as such by the nail still in their heel bones, stuck forever where it was first driven, through the side of the heel. Those who crucified them did not have a footrest on their upright.

St John's Gospel tells us that the head covering was separate 'in a place by itself' in the empty tomb. A cloth known as the Sudarium of Oviedo is the favourite candidate for being that head covering. It bears no image, but a lot of clues, which we were introduced to by Mark Guscini who hosted our 2010 visit to Turin. He said that the Oviedo cloth covered a dead man's face after he died and before he was laid flat, so while on the cross awaiting recovery.



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The body was carried face down with someone pinching the deceased's nose to prevent loss of blood and fluids. Jewish burial tradition to this day is that all mortal remains go into the grave; blood and such and therefore anything with blood on them, so the cloth went into the grave, but was left to one side when the shroud was deployed. Mark Guscini's assessment means that the crown of thorns went in too. He and other researchers are satisfied that the Oviedo cloth and the Turin Shroud were used on the same corpse.

That brings us round to carbon dating. The Oviedo cloth carbon dated to the 7th century and the Turin Shroud to the 14th. However, medieval depictions of the Shroud being venerated show the worthies holding it up by the corners. And it was from a corner that the sample for carbon dating was snipped, so it would have been loaded with medieval DNA.

Another researcher, whose name eludes me for the moment, identified that apart from the patches sewn on by nuns after the 1532 fire, the corners had at some time been invisibly mended with cotton. Cotton is easy enough to dye to match the linen, whereas linen is naturally ecru unless its bleached. The geniuses at the three laboratories did not study what the fibres were before burning them, so it seems that they had medieval cotton loaded with medieval DNA and got a medieval result.

The debate continues – outside the Catholic church, which is content to quietly venerate the face of God's son.

Richard Law

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Haikus on a train (Nov 2001)

Spring

Her's the kind of face
hard to remember
beautiful to watch
like the shifts of light
passing over fields of wheat
on a breezy day.

Earth's brow is furrowed.
Now something is happening.
Aha! New blades sprouting.

Summer

We all dream of it
in the Northern hemisphere -
holidays elsewhere.

Fly or sail away
to bake yourselves in parched lands:
we are green at home.

Autumn

She stands unshaken.
Everything is fluttering
in russet chaos.

Air clear as crystal
each horse like a hand carving
dunked in golden syrup.
See the birds spiralling upwards:
living cinders,
invisible fire.

Winter

A lone donkey stands,
tethered under a blanket
in a field of drab.

A time of whitewash,
births and deaths in the outhouse.

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WHAT THE POWER OF TESTIMONY TEACHES

Elton Trueblood, the brilliant Quaker, said that "The ultimate thing that anyone can say about the living God is, 'I have encountered him; he has reached me; he has stood at my door and knocked, and when I opened the door he came in.' This is the ultimate evidence." He is right, and he is in agreement with the Bible and the teachings of Jesus and with Christian history.

The Apostle Paul believed this and he was constantly telling others about his personal experience with Christ. The importance of this is emphasized by the Holy Spirit, who inspired its record three times in the book of Acts. One time Paul told a king about his personal faith and how it changed his life. Another time, facing an angry mob, he told them what Jesus Christ had done to change his life and he kept telling it to everybody who would listen.

It is also emphasized in the Old Testament. The Psalmist recommended it to other believers: "Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul." (Psalm 66: 16) God called his chosen people into a covenant relationship with Him to be His witnesses to a pagan world. When they failed to do this, God sent His Son Jesus into the world, and He commanded all who received Him to become personal witnesses for Him.

He said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be witnesses for Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts I :8) No amount of theory or theological jargon can convince outsiders and skeptics that we are truly the children of God, but our experience of the saving power of Christ, shared with simplicity, will be always empowered by the Spirit of God.

God offers the power of testimony to every believer, not just to preachers, evangelists and missionaries. When we realize that only about five to ten percent of unbelievers will ever go to church to hear the message, we will know the rest must hear it in the testimony of believers. Let us do our best to be faithful witnesses for our Christ.

Chris Rees, Minister, Bethesda Baptist Church, Narberth

EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY IN TEGRYN!

Every month, Grapevine carries an advertisement for two monthly events in Canolfan Clydau, Tegryn. They are Te am Dau/Tea at Two and Clwb Cinio Clydau Lunch Club. These two events were masterminded by Marie and Steve a number of years ago, though of course were suspended during the pandemic.

Clwb Cinio is on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 12.30 pm. The food is all home cooked – a two course meal and tea or coffee, all for £6 a head. February's meal was a full roast chicken dinner, followed by bread and butter pudding and custard. Wonderful!

Our lovely cooks etc. are Marie, Steve, Diana and Annabel who would be happy to welcome both new diners and new volunteers. All they ask is that you pre-book by ringing Marie on 01239 698003, or Diana on 01239 612614.

Te am Dau is 'all the 2's' – 2 pm on the 2nd Saturday of the month, and the charge is £2 per head. There is a lovely spread of sandwiches, cakes and tea or coffee – and of course unlimited chat! There's no need to book, but either Marie or Diana would be happy to answer any questions you have.

The dates for April are – Te am Dau – 8th, and Clwb Cinio – 25th. Everyone is welcome, and there's a car park behind the Canolfan, which is next door to Ysgol Clydau. Why not come along with a friend and give us a try?

AND – in the entrance lobby to the Canolfan is a box which is there to collect items that will go to the Foodbank!

Judy Webb

St. Clears and District Gardening Club

Roddy Milne the head gardener at Picton Castle was the guest speaker at the meeting held on the 13th February.

His talk was on stems and catkins, he had brought along different coloured stems of willow and cornus to show the effect of group planting, and also the different catkins on the willows and hazel. He also talked on the restoration of the walled garden, and future plans for the gardens. Five new members were welcomed to the meeting. The next meeting is on Monday March 13th when Richard Bramley from Farmyard Nurseries will be the guest speaker.

Barbara Howells

Llangynin Gardening and Nature Club

The group held a meeting on Wednesday February 1st. Anita Jennings welcomed Mark Underhill from the National Trust. His subject for the evening was the work of the trust on the Southwood Estate at Newgale. The next meeting will be on the 8th March, a week later than usual due to St David's day, when Simon Richards from Lamphey Walled garden will be the speaker.

The Group is also holding a Plant/Seed Sale/Swap, combined with a fund raiser for Macmillan Cancer Support, on Monday May 8th in the Bryn Hall, Llangynin from 2.00 to 4.00 pm. Sarah Howells, Menna Thomas and Hannah Evans will have a coffee afternoon at the Plant Sale to raise money as they are taking part in the Gower Peninsula Mighty Hike on July 8th. Please come along and support them - you might get a plant as well!!

Barbara Howells

G. Williams

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Deacon Reverend Sharon Edge

Assistant Priest Dr Canon Jeni Parsons

Lay Worship Leader Mr. Nathan Jenkins

eastlandsker.com

Services in April

Sunday 2nd

Palm Sunday

9.00 am	Holy Communion	St David	KT
10.30 am	Communion by extension	St Tysilio	SE
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Brynach	JP

Thursday 6th

Maundy Thursday

7.00 pm	Holy Communion	St Mary	KT
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Friday 8th

Good Friday

11.00 am	Meditation	St Tysilio	KT
2.00 pm	Meditation	St Mary	KT

Sunday 9th

Easter Day

10.30 am	Communion B E	St Tysilio	SE
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Brynach	JP
2.30 pm	Holy Communion	Cyffig	KT

Sunday 16th

Easter II

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 23rd**Easter III**

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

Sunday 30th**Easter IV**

11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Matins	ST David	NJ

Easter

In these strange days that we live in the only constant is God (even if the church thinks he changes), he is the same yesterday, today and for ever. The message of Easter is that no matter what happens, even when we don't understand him, he sent his son into the world to live, to love, to experience all we experience, to die for us and to live again for us that we may have eternal life. Hold on to this when there is nothing to hold on to, keep the faith.

Kingsley

Sue Jones from Llanboidy writes:

Llanboidy Market Hall, on March 5th, was bulging at its walls with a fantastic turnout of local folk for a good old-fashioned Welsh afternoon-tea and entertainment from our own Whitland Male Choir.

The afternoon tea was elegantly served by Ladies of the Hall Committee at beautifully decorated tables with lovely spring posies made by Kathie Lee, which she had kindly donated to the Hall .

Whitland Male Choir were in good form and the audience enjoyed a superb selection of their repertoire and some beautiful soloists offerings, including a couple of amusing items!

We finished off with a good old fashioned sing-song which almost raised the roof, and certainly our spirits!!

Our Hall benefactor, dear old Walter Powell, would have been delighted to see the Hall put to such good use for the Community's enjoyment.

Diolch to everyone who helped and attended to make this an afternoon to remember.

Sue Jones



Richard Law and family at Ironbridge in February



CYFFIG

Well, the snow was a shock to the system! But so beautiful. When I first looked out, every little twig had a delicate covering and some things had big blobs of it! The daffodils were completely covered, you would think they'd be flattened, but the snowflakes land so gently that when the snow melts the daffodils stand up quite happily.

But alas, it doesn't stay long usually. Just long enough to cause chaos, we don't cope well with snow. It stays just long enough to make sure the things you were looking forward to are cancelled. Even though it was all thawing by lunchtime!

We are so glad to see Revd. Kingsley looking much better, and also Revd. Sharon who is recovering from hospital treatment. We were fortunate to have both of them at our last service in February. Thank you to Revd. Kingsley for his piece in last month's Grapevine.

We send our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Mary Richards on the death of her brother Wynford Brace, and best wishes for better health to all members and friends.

Here is a poem by **R.S. Thomas** (1913—2000)

THE BRIGHT FIELD

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone on my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
the treasure in it. I realize now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying
on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.

Lynn Werrett

On the cusp of Spring

*Spring is bulging the bulbs in the garden
shooting up columns of fat juicy green
pregnant with promise of hyacinth, tulip –
unrestrained colour where darkness has been.*

*Snowdrops and crocus give way to daffodils,
daffodils linger and spread into woods:
now is hiatus before resurrection
when Spring will lighten our wintery moods.*

*Trees I can see have not yet begun greening:
muddled, the weather gives monochrome grey
washing the greens and the browns to a mystery -
subtle is how to describe things today.*

*Foxes are stirring their lives in the hedgerows,
russetly breeding and searching for food.
Tame ones (or hungry) will steal the birds' fat-balls
staring right at you, insouciant, bold.*

*Swallows are roosting right under the roof-ridge,
baby birds soon will be testing their wings.
Watch as they pluck up the courage to plunge –
teetering, edging, fearing the flinging*

*They flutter and flap with a fierce fear of flailing,
failing to fly from a wobbly beginning;
always there's one left behind who is trailing...
tottering, trying... "It's true ! I AM flying !"*

The Llanboidy Mole-catcher

The mole-catcher in this painting is Mr William Thomas (1842–1926) nicknamed 'Will Boy', who worked as the local gravedigger. The standing man is his father-in-law, Robert Lewis (1830–1918). The artist is **James Lewis Walters** who was the village chemist in Llanboidy in about 1900, and he often showed his paintings in his shop.

His father, John Walters, was a ship captain, who originally came from Looe in Cornwall, and married a girl from Pen-bre, Carmarthenshire, Elizabeth Lewis. James was born in 1865 in Looe, but in 1891 he lived in Llanboidy, in a house opposite

St. Brynach's church called 'Pharmacy Hall'. He spoke Welsh as well as English. In the second half of the nineteenth century Llanboidy was lucky enough to receive a number of donations, including a large Market Hall, a secular school, and houses for the workers, 'Piccadilly Square'. The donor was W.R.H. Powell (Powell Bach), 1819-89, owner of the nearby Maesgwynne mansion, a political radical way ahead of his time, and a generous philanthropist.

The 1891 Census describes James Walters as 'pharmacist and wine merchant', with his brother Robert, 'student and assistant', assisting him in his shop in the village. Ten years on he is listed as a 'pharmacist and mineral water manufacturer'. In 1911 a labourer called Edward Arthur Wright lived in Pharmacy Hall. He was called



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'waggoner', in connection with the 'mineral waters'. There are occasional mentions in the newspapers of the day about the high quality of this water. Today there are memories in the village of the 'pop factory', and from time to time a few examples of 'Walters Llanboidy' are sold by collectors of old bottles. James Walters was also responsible for the Post Office. Today Pharmacy Hall, later renamed 'Cloth Hall', is still the village's Post Office, managed by Mr. Rodney Williams. The oral tradition, according to Mr. Williams, was that Walters used to paint his pictures at the back of the substantial building, which looks across green fields rising gradually to the south-west - as in the landscape seen in 'The Llanboidy molecatcher'. James Walters was a versatile man, it is clear, who could turn his hand to many activities. By 1901 his parents had moved to live with him at Pharmacy Hall (James himself was not married). He died in Carmarthen on 22 November 1945.

James Walters was a respectable and active man in his community. He was a member of the Llanboidy and Llangain School Board, and a judge in the art competition at the Llanboidy Eisteddfod. In 1899 the people of Llanboidy made a presentation to him, including a gold watch, to thank him for his leading role in promoting agriculture in the area, and in particular establishing the Llanboidy Butter Factory Company in 1897. He was Secretary to the Company, one of many of co-operatives established in the west of Carmarthenshire as part of an effort to modernise the agricultural world. The factory was, unfortunately, a failure: fewer and fewer farmers would be willing to channel their milk products through it (remains of the building still stand today).

It is clear that Walters was a talented and well-educated artist, but it is difficult to be sure how he learned the craft - whether by attending art school - the nearest school to him was Carmarthen Art School, founded in 1854 - or by another means. He had mastered the academic painting methods of the time, so it is unlikely that he was completely self-taught. His pictures were said to be for sale in the windows of his shop in Llanboidy.

Only three examples of his work in oil can be seen in public collections - all are in Carmarthenshire Museum. Two of them are formal portraits. John Hinds was Member of Parliament for West Carmarthenshire from 1910 to 1918, and Lord Lieutenant of Carmarthenshire from 1917 until his death in 1928. He was a conventional liberal who did not leave much of a mark on the House of



Commons, or on his constituency either, and some of his compliant character can be seen in his face in Walters' picture. The date of the picture, according to the Museum, is '1918-22'.

The next portrait shows James Walter's mother, Elizabeth. She was 71 years old when she was listed as one of the Pharmacy House family in 1901. It is possible that Walters painted the picture around that year (although she was still alive in 1914). Sitting upright in an armchair, she has a rather cold (or nervous?) look: one gets the impression of a disciplined, Victorian character. There is not much motherly warmth in her face and her blue eyes, and her lips are pouty.



If these two pictures are not unusual in any way, you could not say the same about 'The Llanboidy molecatcher', which dates from c1900, according to the Museum - an exceptional picture in terms of its size (142cm x 112cm, its subject and its treatment. This is a double portrait, but also a very rare genre scene of a figure that was fairly common in the Welsh countryside at the time. The name of this settler, it is said, is William Thomas, or 'Wil Boy', as he was called. Some workers would wander the country from village to village, offering their services to everyone for money, earning more by selling skins to make waistcoats and other clothes. But others would be 'parish parishioners', and perform alternative services. One of these was William Thomas, who was also a gravedigger in the village.

Darkness and Light!

Heavenly Father, we give thanks to you for our rest at night, and those quiet moments, of the assurance of your great unconditional love You have for us all, who have been redeemed, by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

For the light of a new day, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, and the fullness of your desired purpose, for our very existence is revealed in all its majesty; enabling us to go forward in boldness to reveal to those who do not yet know you personally the wonderful news of salvation. We pray for the blessing of reconciliation, on those who once knew you in their lives as their Saviour but drifted away and became lost in the dark shadows of this world.



Above: St. Davids Day Afternoon Tea at Llanboidy Market Hall.

FFILM LLANBOIDY

Date for your diary:
Thursday 6th April at 7pm.
Come along and get into
the holiday spirit!
Join us at Llanboidy
Market Hall for a
singalong version of
Mamma Mia.

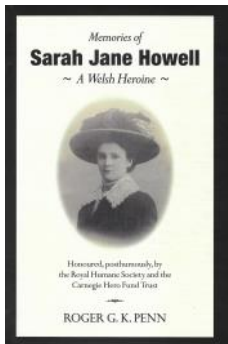
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know all the songs.
More details to follow.

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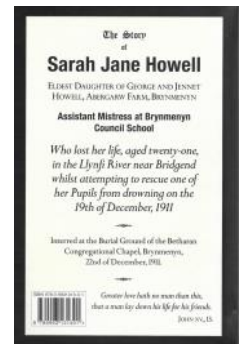


Thank you Heavenly Father for the support and direction of the Holy Spirit, to enable us to please you in the work that Lord Jesus has for us, in these closing times, of this age. Amen.

Lyn Bettinson



Memories of Sarah Jane Howell a Welsh Heroine Chapter 3 continued Childhood Days amongst the Mines and Minerals



Events such as the *Parc Slip Explosion 1892* galvanised the pit proprietors and the country's leaders to aspire to ever-higher standards of safety. Various acts brought direct intervention into the mines, with important officials often sleeping overnight at Brynmenyn's Fox and Hounds Hotel on their way to making pit inspections. These measures and the beginning and growth of mining federations were a sign of the future that were all so reassuring to housewives and parents living in constant fear for their loved ones underground. But, disputes on pay and safety would long continue, and led to demonstrations which, sometimes, disturbed the gentle peace on the village green near Betharan Chapel. On April 22nd 1898, when Sarah Jane was aged eight, *The Glamorgan Gazette* shared this news about Brynmenyn:

The Strike

Several colliery horses have passed through our village this last week. It seems as if the miners' strike is going to last for a time. It is to be hoped that a settlement will soon be arrived at.

With sustained coal output flourishing in the three valleys that converged on Brynmenyn – the Ogmore, Garw and Llynfi – steam trains pulled coal wagons through the landscape all day long, as Sarah Jane's niece, Janet again explains:

Most of the men living in our village were, in fact, railwaymen and many more were to move into the district from Somerset. Down the road, Tondu was extremely busy; there were gangs of men running the trains, tending to the lines, working the depots. Every day the family at Abergarw saw the trucks going past; the track was close to the farmyard. They'd have been empty or carrying wood [for pit props] on their way up [the valley], and full of coal coming back down.

Understandably, when the day's work was done and the men whistled their way home, there was much happiness and relief. And such times were meant for sharing:

home life, with the family; company, with friends; the inn fireside, with the locals, and the ale, with fellow-drinkers. The day's duties amounted to thirsty work and it was expected that the beer flowed: regulars retiring to a nearby bush, or behind a big tree, discreetly, as a matter of personal convenience. Breweries were profitable businesses: Abergarw's being just a minute's walk from the farmhouse on the site of the old corn and woollen mills, where the Howell family noticed horse and carts taking away and returning heavy wooden beer barrels and casks, just as the trains would come and go. Well known in the district, Abergarw Brewery advertised in style and the following is a typical entry that appeared in *The Glamorgan Gazette* in the 1890s:

Abergarw Golden Bitter Ale

Brewed from the Choicest Hops and Best Malt

1s 2d per gallon – Sold in 9, 12, 18 gallon casks.

'And now sending this ale out in brilliant condition. It is a healthy, delightful beverage, and a splendid tonic for the system.'

John Brothers, Abergarw Brewery, near Bridgend.

This family concern stood tall, as a beacon, and was respected throughout the district during Sarah Jane's lifetime. One of its shareholders was George Howell, her father, who, being almost a teetotaler was far from being the brewery's best customer. However, George was known to support sales and a half-pint stone bottle of his, still unopened, is in the possession of the family today. It bears the brewery address as Abergarw, 'near Brynmenyn,' proving just how proud a hamlet in its own right Abergarw once was.

The brewery served inn keepers for miles around and their choice brew likewise fuelled the social scene. Only a punt away from Abergarw's lower fields, rugby football had become well established with Bryncethin's side a match for the local teams. This was hardly surprising with miners, rock hard and bursting to run around in the fresh air, competing for ball and bragging-rights in the packed enclosures of fierce rivalry. Success on the field set the men apart, elevating the most talented to heroic heights, before leading to sing-songs and happy bar scenes when the day's battles were done.

But it was the rousing choral performances and male voice concerts that lifted the spirits of the Howell family, as well as cantatas and operas that were staged courtesy of local artists. These were held in community halls, churches and chapels, whilst Bachelor Balls, Railway Servants' Dinners and children's pantomimes were frequently taking place. Up the road in Blaengarw Working Men's Club, Ivor Novello, Cardiff's famous composer, once entertained, whilst on the bigger stage, Bridgend Town Hall,

a towering landmark with stately columns, steps and eye-catching advertisement boards offered varied programmes to match the sense of occasion that lay beyond its big front doors. The Gwyn Hall in Neath was another, a train ride away, where Adelina Patti, the well-known soprano singer and a charitable woman, was raising money for the poor.

By coincidence, this much-travelled and many-times-married celebrity, who thrilled audiences in faraway parts, was often seen taking tea at the Miller's Arms in Brynmenyn. It was in the parlour of this popular little public house, where next door the men – including Uncle Jenkin – tapped the tables with earthenware pots for more beer, that she struck-up a friendship with Mrs Jones, the owner. Known as 'Kitty Abergarw,' this lady is said to have used china from her best tea set – previously left undisturbed in a corner cabinet since Kitty's wedding day – as a mark of respect, although being totally unaware of her visitor's identity and fame. Janet is aware of these visits:

'My mother used to see Adelina Patti from the farm across the road. And from all accounts she liked something stronger to drink as well as a cup of tea! She had friends in Waterston and often visited the Millers Arms, but in those days she was not so well recognised. Nowadays, she'd have been a big celebrity; her face appearing on front covers, in magazines, there for all to see.'

Of course, singing and music, often in the churches and chapels, was the best entertainment going. Talent was nurtured from an early age in Sunday school. Children spent time practising, rehearsing, learning their lines, until they became good at what they were doing. My mother and Sarah Jane enjoyed the piano; they were keen and had lessons. They worked hard and wanted to progress and they pushed each other in this respect.

And they were seldom apart; they enjoyed each other's company. Sometimes, they'd wander up to the woods for some fresh air and a natter; they liked a bit of gossip, girls do. Then they used to play tennis. There was a court alongside the Millers Arms, near the old waterwheel. They'd relax there, hitting the ball about – neither of them any good, I don't suppose – but they'd have looked the part in their long dresses and respectable white shades. Life was a lot more innocent then; people made their own fun. Well, they had to, of course, especially in a quiet place like Brynmenyn.

At home the story was much the same; Janet continues:

'Everybody was happy doing their own things. Young girls like Sarah Jane would be good at sewing, darning, knitting and tapestry. They liked to be useful and were creative around the house. Men also had their own jobs and hobbies and favourite things to do and everybody mucked in. By now many [people] had bicycles and

cycling clubs were established and going strong. Regular races were held in Bridgend; they were a real novelty, drawing the crowds, and they were greatly enjoyed. There'd also be trips down to the beach and to flower shows and fetes. On the farm, neighbours used to call. They spent the evening playing games and, perhaps, singing around the piano. Someone might arrive with a flute or another instrument. It was all pretty ordinary but this is how life ticked along.'

Janet's words mirror the message of an unidentified poem, today held in Brynmenyn Primary School, entitled *The Good Old Days*, which describes the childhood era enjoyed by Sarah Jane. The verses speak of 'no vandals, no muggings' for 'there was [little] to rob,' at a time when people were rich 'with just a couple of bob.' It was an age when home fires burnt brightly and no one 'locked [their] doors;' when 'there was no holiday abroad' or 'carpets on floors.' And, as the poem draws to a close, the reassuring words confirm that despite the simplicity of life and all its limitations and concerns, people were 'happier in those far off days.' They were also 'kinder and caring in so many ways.'

Roger Penn

To be continued ...

Stir up My Soul

Heavenly Father, we pray stir up our souls within us today, for the great awareness of your presence in our lives, that we should hearken to your voice, and follow only you and not strangers with their misleading theology about spiritual matters. For the Divine sense of belonging to Christ, and His teaching that leads to the stirring up of our souls. To a new awakening, and feeling within us as true believers we can know the inner serenity that brings the peace of all understanding and patience, of which is in complete and stark contrast to the restless world and troubled sea of today. But the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. Thank You Heavenly Father for being with us in these troubled times. In Jesus name. Amen.

Lyn Bettinson, English Congregational Church Whitland



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