

# Grapevine

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May  
Mai 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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**Front Cover:  
King Charles III  
Coronation at Westminster Abbey 6th May 2023**

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

## **Services for May 2023**

**3<sup>rd</sup> May – Holy Eucharist Bro Preseli 10.30 (everyone welcome)**

### **7th May- Fifth Sunday of Easter**

<b>PLACE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>SERVICE</b>	
Llanglydwen	09.30	Holy Eucharist	CC/JW
Llanwinio	09.30	Boreol Weddi	PH
Llanfyrnach	11.15	Holy Eucharist	CC/EB

### **14<sup>th</sup> May – Sixth Sunday of Easter**

Llanwinio	09.30	Holy Eucharist	CC/PH
Clydey	11.15	Holy Eucharist	CC/EL
Llanfyrnach	11.15	Morning Prayer	EB

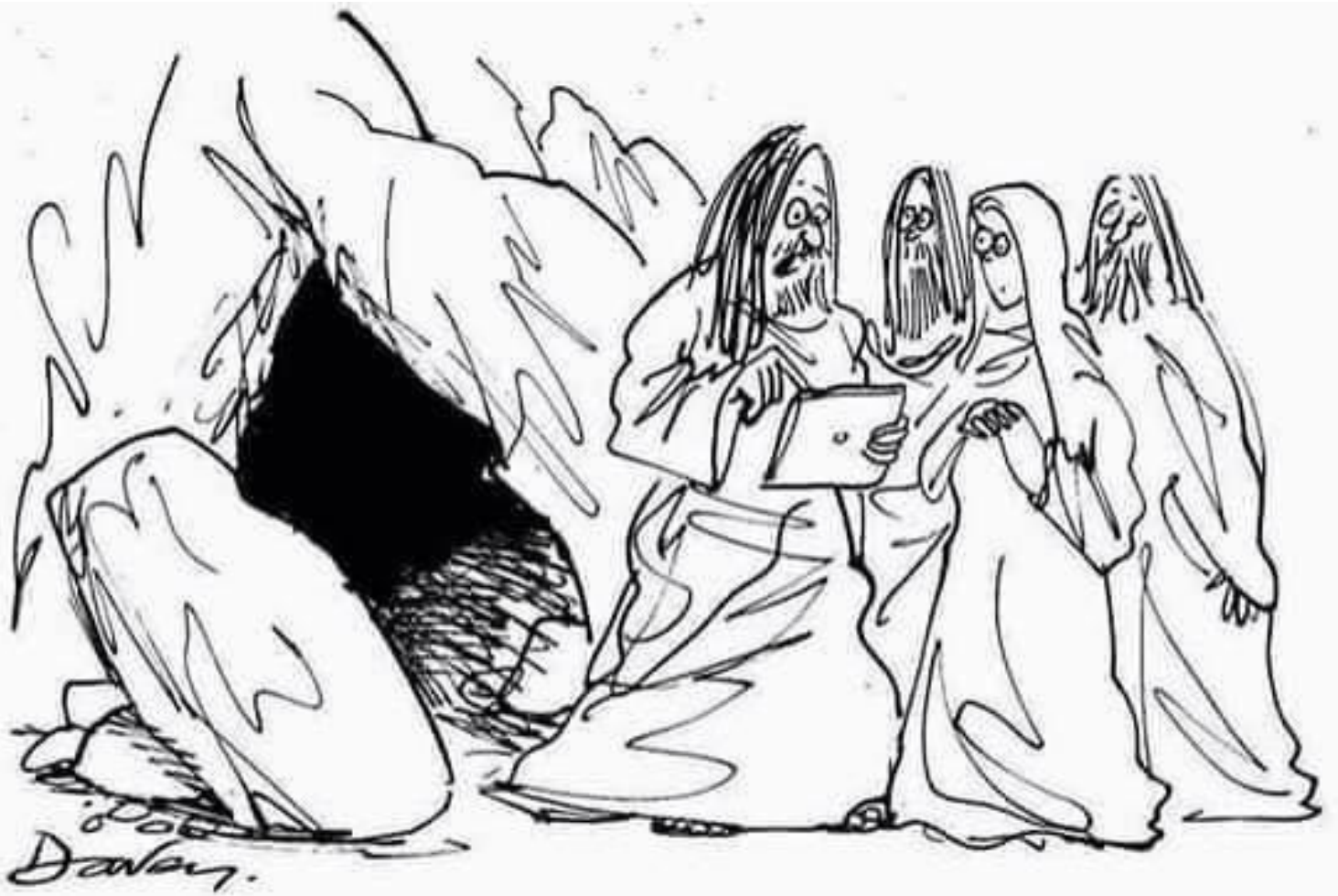
**18<sup>th</sup> May – Ascension Day- Holy Eucharist - Clydey 10,30**

### **21st May – Seventh Sunday of Easter**

Llanwinio	09.30	Boreol Weddi	PH
Mynachlogddu	10.00	Holy Eucharist	CC/JW

### **28<sup>th</sup> May– The Day of Pentecost- Whitsunday**

Llanwinio	09.30	Holy Eucharist	CC/PH
Llanfyrnach	11.15	Holy Eucharist	CC/EB
Clydey	11.15	Morning Prayer	EL



"He's not in there! Oh, wait - he's changed his status to 'risen' "

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## Editorial

**W**hen Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, he became a flashpoint for which his death was meant to be a judicial solution; involving the Temple authorities and the secular powers – King Herod Antipas and procurator Pontius Pilate were in Jerusalem for the Passover celebrations - and nobody wanted the populace boiling over, as they tend to during major gatherings.

For Herod, Jesus was a pretender – a man after his job. Caiaphas likewise; the son of God would surely be a higher priest than he. Pilate's position was a bit different as he represented Rome and the Emperor appointed both he and the chief priest. Having had his share of turbulence from Caiaphas, Pilate may have toyed with taking Jesus seriously, but the situation was too delicate and out of

his control for him to do anything other than bend to the will of the mob backing the chief priest.

One thousand nine hundred and ninety years later, the Passover still proved to be a flashpoint this year with three British women murdered and a sit-in at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem highlighting the conflict between the secular and religious leaderships again. Moslems have a tradition of an overnight vigil after Friday prayers, while the Israeli authorities wanted them to leave the area before Jewish worshippers arrived at the Wailing Wall on the Sabbath of the Passover. In all the excitement, Christianity's Easter Sunday celebrations rated neither a mention in the media nor a conflict. There might have been one, as eastern and western Christian authorities have their disagreements; or maybe this year they kept a lower profile.

The BBC's focus was very much on this year's Easter being the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Good Friday agreement, which was supposed to end conflict in the province, but there, as in Judea, there are people who will not compromise with an occupying power. Pilate's solution all that time ago worked for a while





***Above:***

***The late Jane Picksley, Mizpah, Llanfyrnach***

***Below:***

***Crowd scene at the funeral of Daniel Owen "Ows" Davies,  
late of Blaenbunan,***



– thirty-three years on my count before the first Jewish revolt went live in 66AD, so the Good Friday agreement must last just eight more years to outdo it.

The Mediterranean nations each had their own religions and gods in classical times. Each religion had its internal conflicts as can be seen in Egyptian history when Pharaoh Akhenaten moved his patronage to worship of the sun disk in place of the traditional deities, thus provoking rancour – or worse – from the priests of the older religions.

That secular versus religious conflict goes way back through history. The Jews asked Samuel to appoint a king (1 Samuel Ch8 v1) to bring them into line with other nations, thus introducing them to that conflict. Which they got in spades: King Saul had his run-ins with Samuel for usurping the priest's job and disobeying God. Nathan calling out King David for the murder of one of his own soldiers by proxy so that he could inherit his widow. Solomon's high priest was Zadok and his difficulty was keeping Solomon away from the surrounding pagan religions – and their women; and so it went on until the Babylonian exile.

Saul was dispossessed by God. David's solution was to seek God's forgiveness and Solomon – outlasted his conscience Nathan and went his own way. In later years our King Henry II used the Pontius Pilate solution to solve his turbulent priest problems.

Saul's attempt to wear both hats – priest and king – also echoes through history. Julius Caesar was a high priest of Jupiter and winding forwards, King Henry VIII's

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foray into academic Christianity got him the title 'Defender of the Faith' from the Pope. Henry's final solution was to withdraw Britain from the Pope's authority, making himself both King and Head of the Church. A solution that continues to this day as Charles will be crowned King and take the role as Head of the Church of England on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May.

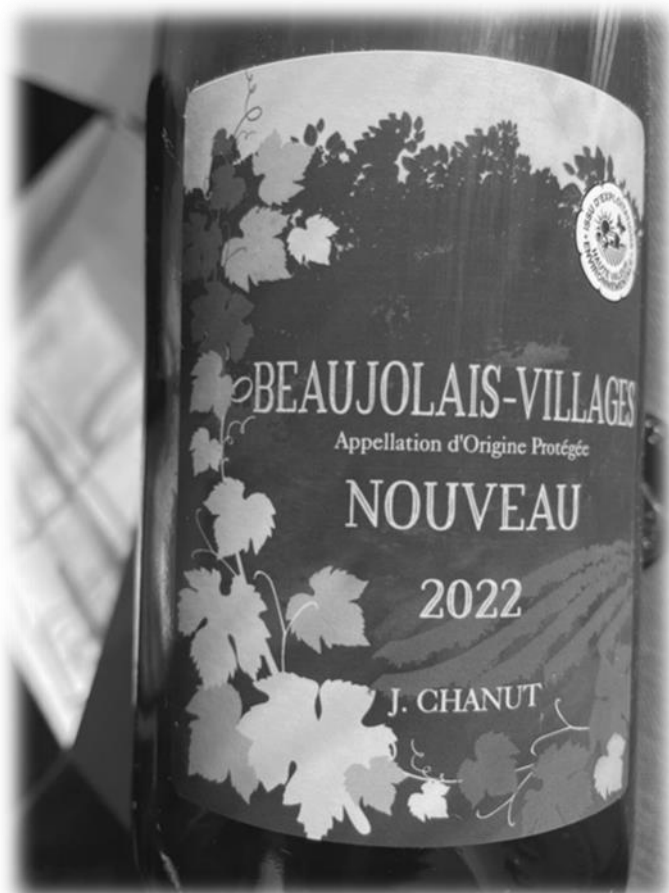
Except for one, all the people named above have one thing in common: their roles in the hierarchies in which they serve – or served – were or are funded one way or another by taxation: paid for people like us. Jesus, our saviour is the one exception.

*Richard Law*

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### Last of the summer wine

The vin de primeur principle is one of getting the fruits of last summer's harvest into bottles for everyone to enjoy before Christmas. Some wines, or more particularly some grapes, need longer to mature and winemakers have some techniques – second and third pressings – about which it is best not to know!





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Beaujolais Nouveau became a 'name' in the 1950s and an event in the 1970s. Climate change has meant more vintage years being declared - I don't remember seeing the year on the bottle in the old days and it was not necessary anyway as it hit the market mid-November and always sold out quickly.

It does not improve in the bottle, but it can and will gradually deteriorate, or brown. Non-vintage years have usually disappeared by Christmas, while vintage years will last longer – even two to three years in the right storage. This one didn't, but it did last until Lent was over....

*Richard Law*

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## **Llanfyrnach**

**W**e are very sorry to report the sudden death of Jane Picksley, Mizpah, on the 22nd of March, and we send our sincere condolences to David, Simon and Karen. Jane was a much loved and respected member of the community, who had for many years been caring for her husband David. She willingly offered to look after Libby after the death of Eve Brennan last year and was often to be seen walking her while she kept an eye on Ty Newydd. The community is still reeling from the shock. Below is a tribute from her daughter, Karen.

## Jane Ursula Giddings Picksley née Philo

Mum was born on the 11th June 1939 in Surbiton and was the middle of three children. Her early years were spent there but she was evacuated to Compton in Surrey with her brother, sister and mother after being bombed out of their home. The front door blew in but they were safe under the table in the kitchen. Not everyone was so lucky as the house opposite didn't survive.

The family then moved to Bognor Regis and after attending a Convent School for her primary education graduated to Chichester High School for Girls where she told me Greek dancing was part of the curriculum. She gained her exams and then completed a Pitman qualification in typing and shorthand which took her to London as a secretary for Canada Life. She met dad who was a Post Office Engineer also in London, married in 1962 and bought their first house in Enfield. Two children and a dog later they made the move to Sussex and mum embarked on night classes to obtain her A levels and then an arduous three years gaining her teaching qualification in Brighton - no mean feat with a seven and a five year old and a house to run. I remember happy Saturdays travelling with my brother and mum to college where prospective teachers got to practice their skills on us. Luckily it was craft classes where we messed with clay and paint.

Bognor Regis was a holiday destination for us all to visit relatives and friends and go to the beach. When we were coming Grandma would put chairs out on



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the street to save a parking space and all the shopkeepers in the little arcade opposite who knew mum would joke that it was Jane's weather - it always rained!

Her teaching career took her from Balcombe to Lindfield where she was deputy and then acting head, to Shere and then back to Haywards Heath coming out of retirement to help a fellow head who was new to the school achieve a good Ofsted inspection - they succeeded.

Mum never sat still and always wanted to learn more. She took an Open University Degree in Education and went on to become part of a select group of teachers who developed the way primary maths was taught across Sussex. She was passionate that children should not be scared of maths, that it should be fun and relevant and set them up for life.

She was greatly loved by staff and pupils alike and at the end of term came home laden with cards and presents. She kept in touch with many colleagues and often heard from former pupils about what they were up to.

Mum and dad retired to Llanfyrnach over 20 years ago deciding on this area after many happy family holidays at Rosebush. We played on the beach, visited castles and woollen mills, played endless games of cards and enjoyed "caravan meals" - everything heated up in one pot! I think she must have forgotten that Jane's weather applies here too though, Crymych having its own special microclimate.



# ***Thursday Craft Session at Llanboidy Market Hall***



Mum loved village life and made lasting friends here. She was active in many groups including gardening club, quilting and craft group and and Gadabouts and was always off on a trip or taking a new class, a craft or yoga and Pilates. She even started Welsh but it got the better of her although she did use the odd word and probably understood more than she let on.

Mum was fit and active to the last and was still gardening, beating me at Wordle, organising jobs for my brother and making plans for trips to come.

*Karen Picksley*

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## Clydau

**A**s chairperson of the Bwlchgroes Community Hall committee, Elizabeth Law received an email from a charity anxious to give money away. Their objective was to help provide garden furniture by way of grants of up to £1,500 per applicant for picnic tables and chairs. They particularly wanted to be of help to old people and part of the deal was that successful applicants should spend the money by the end of March and provide the charity with photos of the picnic tables in use – especially by old people.

So she immediately thought of our church, where rounding up old people to sit on the furniture should be quite easy since our vicar Carol Court is the youngest person in church at a typical service! Trawling through the paperwork, the charity did mention churches as OK to apply, so she whacked in one application for the hall and one for the church, each for £1,500.

That got the charity hopping about a bit, as they had not had an application from a church before and had forgotten churches were listed. Long story short, she got both grants and five tables each with six chairs were duly delivered to us in Holy Week – in the nick of time as it turned out. By Easter Sunday they had been used twice in very quick succession!

We lost Daniel Owen “Ows’ Davies, late of Blaenbulan, Boncath on Palm Sunday and the family asked if he could be added to the crowd awaiting the second coming of our Lord in the peace of the churchyard on Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup> in a grave next to that of his parents. If you enter the churchyard extension, you meet them first, right by the gate. They are there for proximity to their forbears on the other side of the wall and thus within the circular churchyard.

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With the grave planned, the rest of the week was taken up planning the other elements, which at Clydai means planning the parking to leave room for the hearse and cortege. That means everyone else parking elsewhere in surrounding properties, in fields and ditches. This was to be our first funeral proper since the Covid 19 lockdowns prohibited large gatherings.

Clydai seats 120 people and for a wedding last year we bussed in thirty chairs from the hall. We couldn't do that for this funeral, as they had also booked the hall for the wake. The undertaker set our thirty chairs out at the rear of the church and reserved some forty seats within for the family who would follow the coffin in.

Before the hearse arrived, the crowd waiting to follow the coffin in numbered 120 – and they were only the ones we could see from the lych gate. The unreserved seats were already full. Peter Lewis of Rhydlewis Funeral Services – he doesn't advertise in the Grapevine - led the parade in. The church was full, as was the churchyard, the slip road and the lane above. An estimated 400 people came to say goodbye to Ows and only 30 of them got to try the new chairs. Ows's sister Hetti, our organist for more than sixty years, was too upset to come and his uncle Dewi, aged 97, did not feel able to leave Glyn Nest in Newcastle Emlyn for the service.

As soon as the gathering broke up and headed off to the hall, our latest advertiser Bwlchygroes Farm Feeds – first advert in this issue – came for the chairs for their charity run. We lent her the tables the day before and hope that she managed to picture people using them for this issue.

*Richard Law*

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## **Another day out**

Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March found us watching medieval living history and a duel of champions at Trinity St David University in Lampeter where our nephew Isaac Law is studying archaeology – and having a good time.

The week before this event, the Medieval Club hiked 25 miles to the ruins of the Strata Florida Abbey as a sponsored walk; in their costumes but with modern footwear. What people wore on their feet in past times – besides nothing - is a source of fascination that living history explores. Bare feet would complicate travel on foot around here. Our churches were once upon a time all connected



by footpaths, strongly suggestive of a travelling preacher's circuit in the days before permanent incumbents.

The fossil record includes barefoot humans in the stone age, and a trilobite squashed by a booted human foot. I think that one was debunked in 2017; they found that the culprit was a larger trilobite whose multiple footprints made an image like the sole of a shoe.

Isaac was dressed as a Strata Florida Cistercian monk and wearing lace-up boots when we saw him: the Medieval Society represents the 12<sup>th</sup> century, which is before anyone thought of putting a heel on footwear. That came later, in the 14<sup>th</sup>

century. The Roman calceus, which was wooden soled - and a bit like wearing a roller skate with no wheels - was sometimes worn, and sometimes over the boots as a wet-weather accessory. Clogs started to appear in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and took a while to catch on.

The event also included a craft market, which where traditionally made cheeses and sweets, cakes, honey and wool were on sale; sort of – I queued twice for fifteen minutes at a time at the cheese stall without getting served. The students held an archery contest and then conducted a 'have-a-go' session for visitors to demonstrate that they could shoot a lot less well than the students. The one-on-one combat demonstration was preceded by one of the combatants being fitted with his armour in the arena, so that we could see how much complicated effort goes into reconstructing these past events.

We told them they should advertise in the Grapevine to get more people in – Lampeter is not so far as to be off-putting and the event was worth seeing.

Mention of Strata Florida reminds me that the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth has on display the remnants of a cup that the monks cast out of the Abbey by Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, preserved and





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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**

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continued to be used to provide Holy Communion to the sick. They told them they were drinking from the cup of the Last Supper itself and it was gradually nibbled away to the spoon sized bit that remains.

Jews, to this day, use a ceremonial Kiddush cup. Usually silver, it's traditional function is to express that a holiday has begun by pouring wine into it and saying prayers over it. In all my limited experience of Judaica, the Kiddush wine goblet has always been made of silver, but I suppose other metals are available. Also glass, ceramics or alabaster; so I dismissed the wooden cup of Strata Florida as not the Holy Grail on sight because it was made of absorbent wood.

I bought some folding wooden egg cups from a souvenir shop at the bottom of Mount Eiger's north face when on a school trip there in the 1960s. One soft boiled egg each later and they had irremovable yolk stains before they distorted out of shape in the washing up bowl, so I believe in the Jewish principle of not using wood for a drinking vessel.

Yet modern sources suggest that olive wood Kiddush cups are available. When I tried to buy one, the market said no: silver goblets yes – many antique ones with a saucer that look just like a chalice and patten. Beauties in gilded glass,

porcelain, gold plate, silver plate – but nothing in wood. Unglazed pottery was ubiquitous throughout the Roman world for cooking, eating and storage. I have seen pottery cups, that would serve everyday drinks at everyday meals, but our Lord was sharing one cup around the gathering, which suggests a larger than for-one goblet – a Kiddush cup.

The Strata Florida cup was olive wood and probably from the Holy Land originally, but surely just an everyday drinking vessel. Nevertheless, the quest for the Holy Grail continues and last time anyone asked me about where it might be found, I told them it is in Aberystwyth!

*Richard Law*



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## Llanwinio

Hugh and Marianne Phillips are very pleased to announce that their youngest daughter, Adeline, has been made a Doctor of Philosophy at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Dr. Adeline Jayne Miles will continue to hold her post as a Senior Lecturer at the University.

*Hugh Phillips*

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## Who Can He Be?

**F**or some churchgoers, and, indeed, even some clergy, being the charismatic and radical ‘entity’ that Jesus clearly was has been good enough to justify their membership of the church. It can be just a step too far to believe that He did, *actually*, return from the dead and really was the son of the God who set the universe in motion. That certainly applied to me until I encountered His Shroud.

Jesus, controversially, saw ‘Himself’ as the Son of God and did not shrink from saying so. Whatever our beliefs about this, if any, I suggest we all owe Jesus a

debt of gratitude. Why? Because contrasted with its predecessors, our Christian civilisation's humanitarian and charitable ethos derives mainly from His teachings. But, was he *more* than a human like you and me? That is the fundamental question.

There is no doubt that Jesus created a following large enough to disquiet the Jewish establishment and this led to his pragmatic execution by the Roman authorities. But matters did not end there. His followers had clearly witnessed events that had given them the courage to stand up to and, eventually, overcome the most

savage of persecutions and to go on to spread the 'Word' about this 'man' into the heart of Rome itself. Once it arrived among the slaves there the only way was up until it reached the emperors themselves and then outwards across their empire and on - even to the woad-embellished Picts and Celts of distant Albion.

It was a great shock to me in the 1980s when, commissioned to make a series of films on the 'Historical Jesus', I discovered that some high-ranking members of the clergy were of this 'non-divine' view, too. Shortly after series, the (then) Bishop of Durham expressed doubt about the Virgin birth and stated that, "*There is absolutely no certainty in the New Testament about anything of importance.*" It is not surprising that with headlines like this that the established Church in the UK has seen a long slow decline in many parishes.

But the Shroud tells us a different story. Its image is unique. It cannot be reproduced by anything we could ever replicate. Its penetration of the linen cloth on which it lies is measurable only in microns yet, uniquely, it bears an image that can be rendered into a fully recognisable three-dimensional victim of a Roman crucifixion. Both ventral and dorsal images - quite separate on the cloth - merge into one as most graphically illustrated in the climax of my recent film. Only a single and highly compromised C14 test has kept this amazing artefact from receiving the universal awareness and respect it deserves.

*David Rolfe*

*Former editor of the BSTS Newsletter and Producer/director of Who Can He Be?  
whocanhebe.com*



David Jenkins was an Anglican bishop who questioned some of the fundamental beliefs of Christianity.

**Who Can He Be? Box Set and Bonus Features**

Most so-called "mysteries" tend to crumble as you move deeper into understanding them. The Shroud of Turin is in a different league. The more you discover about it the more you realise just how multi-dimensional this length of linen cloth with its enigmatic image is. And not just in a factual sense but in a literal sense, too, as the climax of *Who Can He Be?* reveals.

BAFTA-winning Producer and director, David Rolfe, has assembled his adventures with this subject spanning four films and four decades. He is proud to also include Michael Kowalski's brilliant forensic examination of the C14 test and its back room machinations and compromises.

Listen to the first hand account of the C14 test by Prof. Michael Tite, the man from the British Museum appointed to oversee the test and ensure its rigour and impartiality. It is telling, especially its conclusion which may well leave you speechless.

*Who Can He Be?* famously, challenges the British Museum to make good their claim that the image - with its very specific characteristics - must have been the work of a medieval forger. A reward of \$1million offered if they succeed. So far, a deafening silence from them.



**Who Can He Be?**

The feature length film that gives you the full and eye-bite picture.  
© 2009 David Rolfe  
 Producer/Director and Editor David Rolfe  
 Executive Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Associate Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Associate Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Associate Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Producer: Michael Kowalski



**The Silent Witness**

The BAFTA and multi-award-winning film that opened the Shroud's cabinet along with its search for the lost film.  
© 2009 David Rolfe  
 Producer/Director and Editor David Rolfe  
 Executive Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Associate Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Producer: Michael Kowalski



**Material Evidence**

Archibald Jermoluk, Ragan Oman, interrogates the BA's work of Dr Jaks and Barbara Jackson.  
© 2009 David Rolfe  
 Producer/Director and Editor David Rolfe  
 Executive Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Associate Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Producer: Michael Kowalski



**Shroud**

The film commissioned by Turin and written by Ian Wilson to commemorate the Shroud's official exhibition.  
© 2009 David Rolfe  
 Producer/Director and Editor David Rolfe  
 Executive Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Associate Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Producer: Michael Kowalski



**A Grave Inquiry**

This film goes directly to the heart of the C14 problem and recommended for anyone who wants a detailed assessment of the issue. Narrated by James Plafie. Co-produced by Peter Reynolds.  
© 2009 David Rolfe  
 Producer/Director and Editor David Rolfe  
 Executive Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Associate Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Producer: Michael Kowalski



**1988 Carbon Dating: Triumph or Tragedy**

Michael Kowalski's brilliant analysis of the C14 saga. Using delightfully simple graphics and impossible logic he reveals the catalogue of errors, compromises and, ultimately, obfuscations employed to provide a semblance of credibility to the whole exercise.  
© 2009 David Rolfe  
 Producer/Director and Editor David Rolfe  
 Executive Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Associate Producer: Peter Reynolds  
 Producer: Michael Kowalski



Plus Bonus Extras. Total Running Time: 285 minutes.  
 These films can also be streamed [www.who-can-he-be.com](http://www.who-can-he-be.com) with Italian, Spanish and Norwegian subtitles.  
 This documentary is exempt from classification.  
 Contact [info@percursos.com](mailto:info@percursos.com) for information about public or private screenings.



**Who Can He Be?**

**Who Can He Be?**

A film by BAFTA winning producer/director David Rolfe  
 Executive Producer - Einar Rasmussen

The film with the 'Million Dollar Challenge' to the British Museum  
 Did they short change the Shroud of Turin?



*Below:*

***Easter Garden made for Llanfyrnach Church by Hazel Jones***



# Whitland, Cyffig, Llanboidy

## Llandysilio, Clunderwen

The Reverend Kingsley G Taylor, BD MA

01994 240494 ktaylor559@aol.com

Deacon Reverend Sharon Edge

Assistant Priest Dr Canon Jeni Parsons

Lay Worship Leader Mr. Nathan Jenkins

eastlandsker.com

### Services in May

#### Sunday 7<sup>th</sup>

#### Easter 5

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

#### Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>

#### Easter 6

11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Mary	KT
11.00 am	Holy Communion	St Brynach	JP
2.30 pm	Holy Communion	Cyffig	KT

#### Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>

#### Easter 7

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

#### Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>

#### Pentecost

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

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### After Easter

**A**fter Easter the disciples were with Jesus, coming to terms with the fact that he had died and had risen again. In a way now their training really began. They had seen how he lived and they thought they knew him, but now they were being prepared to take the message to the world. This was a new message. Today we feel we are not taking a new message to the world and by and large the world is not interested. How do we make in new again? For after all in today's society it new again because it is against so much of what society teaches. We must not conform to the world but be separate, we must be bold, we must be true to our faith.

### In Memoriam

**O**ur sympathy to the family and friends of John Howard Gibbon (Pwllwhead) who passed away peacefully on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> March in his 101<sup>st</sup> year. Howard was just as sharp as he ever was and the stored memories of 100 years were just as vivid. Yet for all he remembered of life as it was he was not stuck in the past but was continually learning new things. Howard will be sadly missed.



***Above:***

***Members of St. Clears & District Walking Group  
at Colby on the 29th of March***

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## Sue Jones from Llanboidy writes:

A fun night was held in Llanboidy Market Hall on 6th April  
- a singalong version of Mama Mia was shown on our film screen



S

ome of us raided our 70's wardrobe and dressed up in style - loved the sleeve and trouser flares and the gaudy white and blue colours!

Although we knew all the words it was good to have a text prompt on the film screen, and we sang and danced the night away - sore throats next day!!!

We hope to have another film night later in Summer, so keep looking for posters locally and in Rodney's shop

### Llanboidy Coffee and Crafts Club

meet every Thursday in Llanboidy Market Hall from 10.00 am to 12 noon.

I popped into a session recently and was met with a real hub of activity - local ladies spinning, weaving, knitting, crocheting, sewing - crafty items being made - others using the Wi-Fi - AND, most importantly, all chatting and smiling and laughing and learning new skills from each other.

All are welcome and you can either join in activities or chat and watch as you wish - costs £4 per person to cover rent and refreshments - give it a try!!

*Sue Jones*





***Medieval enactment at Trinity St David University in Lampeter***



## After the funeral

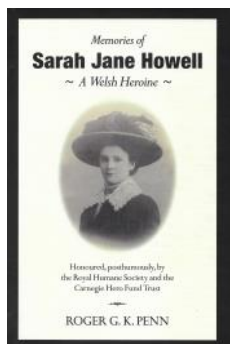
After the funeral what I need  
is a poem that will rhyme here and there  
containing in the third line a blossoming tree  
whose leaves turn russet early.

A poem exuberant as siskin song  
greening in a garden running wild,  
persistent as a robin perching on a prong,  
hopeful as a hardy thrush joining a throng  
in full-throttled oratorio. Beguiled  
by the silvering that turns glass to mirror  
and mirror to a lake where a guardian heron  
watches as a kingfisher dives without error  
in the exact secret dream of a seven year old child.

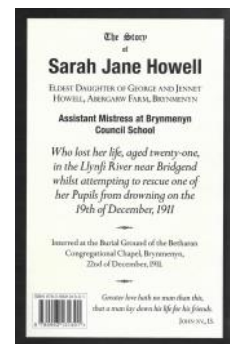
No bare branches like clichés to console,  
but details to distract me: the nose of a sly vole  
quivering a tunnel in the river bank.  
This poem should be friable, a rich dark tilth  
garlanding a house where the lintel beams,  
solid oak planks, without any tilt.  
On a generous verandah, laughing our thanks,  
we wipe our wellingtons free of filth  
on coconut matting which does not need  
to spell out 'Welcome' or make a fuss.  
It will shelter the return of prodigal or wanderer,  
celebrate Prospero's reunion with Miranda.

A poem , above all, that contains us.

JJ



# Memories of Sarah Jane Howell a Welsh Heroine Chapter 4



## Schooling at Brynccethin

As a child, Sarah Jane benefited from the compulsory education that was introduced during the reign of Queen Victoria. This had been a slow and difficult process whereby old ways and habits, often defended to the last, were replaced so that legislation could shape a more promising future. Indeed, in 1891, the year that followed Sarah Jane's birth, the weekly *School Pence Fees* that had hitherto been levied, were also lifted, meaning that primary education for children became free.

This good news arrived at a time when board schools benefited from the work of conscientious managers who felt the honour and thrill of being elected to their posts. Progress was encouraging although it did not stop a number of parents keeping their children at home, working the farms and doing jobs deemed more important. Likewise, others were opposed to the indoctrination that swayed attitudes and preferences within the classrooms, usually born of religion, and neither would they budge. Such varying opinions made for compelling battles although education won the day as an investment that would lead the country to enterprise and prosperity in later years.

Sarah Jane's family had lived through these challenging times and each member had his or her own experiences to recall. Grandfather Evan arrived on the scene too early for classroom work, but he counted his blessings in being able to step into the green fields with his sickle and scythe. As a farmer, he was doing all that he knew and wanted to do: caring for his animals in the fresh country air, and this would not change. All four of his children also missed the benefits of a formal education, although each had gained from Sunday school at Betharan. And, whilst the boys, Thomas and Jenkin, took to the fields, squaring-up to the rigours of farm work – Catherine and Jennet were busily involved with domestic duties. They revelled in most housework, just like other girls of their age who were adept at cleaning, cookery, culinary, and all the rest.

George Howell likewise was raised a little early for compulsory lessons and in the absence of tuition he rolled-up his sleeves and taught himself. George liked to break problems down into smaller parts just as his father, a wise and knowing blacksmith, had done in his native Rhymney valley. George realised that, fundamentally, learning required an enquiring attitude and a desire to gain knowledge. With these both in his grasp, he went on his way, advancing from a junior carpenter who once journeyed from village to village in search of work, to becoming an influential figure in this important trade. Wood, a natural material, was used to make many things; and, mastery of the carpentry craft, coupled with dexterity with a dowel in hand, gave him a lifetime of gainful employment. Short in stature he may well have been but, in aspirations, he stood tall, becoming a clerk to the local works and being admired for the design of houses that he was to build. George paddled his own canoe, working steadily for gains that came later in life.

Both George and Jennet realised that the beginning of schooling in Bryncethin, just a mile and a half up the road from Abergarw farm, reflected the contributions made by church and chapels within local parishes. This early-day Infants school, which is understood to have been in existence in 1870 and which was supported by the legacy of an elderly lady who bequeathed her cottage to the church to provide lessons, was now a convenient place of learning under the watchful eyes of diocese members who managed and monitored its progress. Their regular visits brought detailed reports that usually leaned towards the Bible, as the school Log Book entry of October 26<sup>th</sup> 1898 implies:

**Ken Davies A'i Fab**

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Throughout the department, and especially in the lower divisions, a further syllabus of Religious Instruction should be given. In particular the New Testament is inadequate, and private Prayers (morning and evening), should be taught throughout the school.

*The answering in Scripture should, as far as possible, be in the exact words of the Bible. Hymns, well-known and in illustrations of the Scripture subject taught, would materially help to make the subjects attractive and interesting.*

There was no misunderstanding this message and Sarah Jane, a fluent Welsh speaker, also knew better than to converse freely in her native tongue during school hours, for this was not allowed. Discipline was strict and she avoided stepping out of line. Children were taught respect in the knowledge that the cane, or a severe reprimand, awaited those who strayed beyond the boundary, whilst a bigger row followed at home. Of course, the *Three R's*, Reading, Writing and Arithmetic led the way, all core subjects that set the platform for later

# **G. Williams**

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learning, supported by a variety of objective lessons that took place both inside and outside classrooms.

Sarah Jane's sister, Katie, often spoke about her days at this same church school in Bryncethin, which was an old building situated near the junction that joined Wigan Terrace and Ogmores Road. Katie used to step out of Abergarw farm, through the gate and up the road. It was an uphill climb but everyone was used to walking and, at least, it gave her time to prepare for what lay ahead, as her daughter, Janet, explains today:

What I know about my mother also applies to Sarah Jane because there was little between their ages and they were similar girls. At the time, the church school in Bryncethin was the only place for them to go; there was nowhere else and they had to get on with it. It was on a narrow road but it was pretty safe. There were no cars or pavements then, only bicycles and carts. I'd imagine there'd have been one or two other children keeping them company. And, they didn't loiter about; they had to get there on time, or else there'd be trouble when they arrived.

Even during my schooldays, discipline was strict, so we can imagine how harsh punishment was in earlier times. It didn't take much to bring out the cane. On one occasion, my mother was reprimanded for speaking Welsh. She happened to be playing in the school yard when she was caught and she never forgot this or the humiliation of having to stand in the corner throughout the next lesson. She thought the teachers were only interested in English – but the experience taught her what was right and wrong, and she didn't repeat the mistake again.

In *The Glamorgan Gazette* regular monthly articles describe the activities of the Llangeinor School Board whose managers were now meeting regularly at the Fox and Hounds Hotel. There, beyond the two well-worn entrance steps of the building, distinguished men of the local valley schools worked through detailed agendas. They reviewed salaries and increments; granted free-time to teachers for scholarship examinations; monitored pupil sickness and truancy, and worked to the recommendations of government inspectors' reports. Above all, they studied absenteeism in detail, ticking-back attendance registers to the full list of pupils, painstakingly, to safeguard the continued receipt of financial grants. Filling classrooms mattered greatly, and if numbers dropped, excuses were sometimes made to send children home rather than to report low figures. And, as for persistent offenders, they were sent to truancy schools where the birch and other measures were employed to bring transgressors into line.



***Mama Mia  
Singalong  
film night on  
the 6th of  
April at  
Llanboidy  
Market Hall***

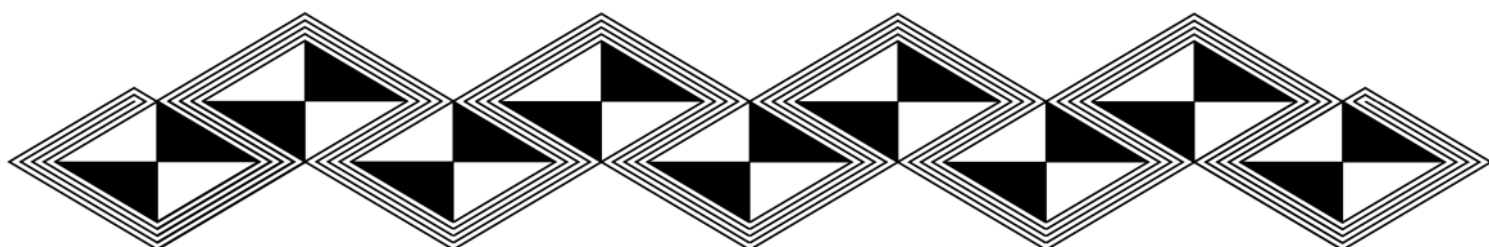
With the opening of Wyndham School in Nantymoel and other similar establishments across Glamorgan, locals in Brynmenyn knew that it was only a question of time before the village provided lessons of its own. Education's march forward was gathering pace and, despite staunch dissenters being still less than convinced – and the inevitable absences at times of hay harvests, blackberry-picking and potato weeks – lessons had arrived and would stay. Attitudes were also changing, for many believed that denominational schools no longer offered the best way forward in a changing world and earlier motives and deep-set values were thrown open to discussion and fuller debate.

At a time when Sarah Jane's Grandfather Evan and Uncle Jenkin were benefitting from lessons in dairying from a Government-backed initiative – more celebrations were taking place at Abergarw because George and Jennet's third daughter, Beatrice, was born, whilst Margaret, known as Margot, followed close behind. With the new additions keeping schooling at the forefront of family minds, the future placement of Sarah Jane at the scene of higher education was also being considered. At a time when Bridgend Boys and Girls Intermediate had become established and the County School for Girls at Cowbridge was popular, a number of other suitable venues, such as the Glen View, Port Talbot, were being well-advertised and recommended in national newspapers, and were within reach by rail.

The reality that George and Jennet had to comprehend, however, was that secondary schooling was not so actively encouraged for girls, for their roles in life were more readily linked with family duties and supporting a husband. More so, there was an alarming pay-differential between male and female employees which discouraged girls from stepping onto a career path. If the Abergarw farm daughters intended entering into a profession they would have to compete in a man's world and Sarah Jane, the eldest, needed to prepare herself well, for she would be leading the way.

***Roger Penn***

**To be continued ...**







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## Waldeinsamkeit\* (18/5/12)

Alone in the woods,  
I experience the feeling  
of being alone in the woods  
Is it strength or a weakness?  
- left to discover my path, to read  
minute signs, traces of traces,  
to listen for danger with nowhere to hide  
but the woods I am alone in.  
Or perhaps not.

When doors that should welcome  
slam in your face,  
an eerie silence displaces the birdsong.  
Then you know  
you are alone in the woods.

Be brave! Even a forest  
cannot go on forever  
- and "meglia sola di mal accompagnata".  
Besides, I am old, or growing old:  
shade is good, trees provide shelter.  
It is worse for the young who should be carefree,  
who should be merry, to feel alone in the woods,  
to feel lost and alone in the woods.

Come out of the gloomy path you young,  
follow the sun-strewn way while you can!  
Ah, there I go again, always preaching,  
always offering unwanted advice -

time to retreat to the woods.

\*(German "the feeling of being alone in the woods")

\*\* (Italian "meglia sola di mal accompagnata".\*\*)

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