



December 2016

January 2017

The parish magazine of Llantilio Crossenny,
Llanvetherine, Llanvapley and Penrhos



photo by daiphoto

**As the sun sets on another year
Best wishes to all for a
Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year**



Find out why Jac is smiling

From The Vicarage

Have you looked at a job advertisement recently? Whatever vacancy needs filling, it seems that they want a super-human individual to fill it. Not only that, you must also have the confidence to believe that you are that person who has these amazing qualities, these fantastic skills; you are the one they are searching for!

Who among us really thinks like that? It makes me wonder and smile as I ponder the Christmas story. God turns the ways of the world up-side-down and inside-out. The long-awaited Messiah is a carpenter's son, born of a teenage mother, as a refugee in the most basic of circumstances. Hardly the beginnings of an ideal candidate you might think. Yet God is forever surprising us, and still comes to us in unexpected ways.

May the child of Bethlehem fill your arms and heart this Christmas-time, that you may be the person that only you can be.

With every blessing for a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Revd. Heidi

Llantilio Vicarage, llantiliovicar@aol.com

The long road to Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary's hardships would have begun more than a week before the birth of their son, when the couple had to leave their home in Nazareth, in the northern highlands of Galilee, to register for a Roman census.

They had to travel 90 miles to the city of Joseph's ancestors: south along the flatlands of the Jordan River, then west over the hills surrounding Jerusalem, and on into Bethlehem. It was a fairly gruelling trip, the most people would travel was around 20 miles a day; this trip was very much uphill and downhill, it was not simple. It is estimated that Joseph and Mary likely would have travelled only 10 miles a day because of Mary's impending delivery. It is more than likely that the journey was made on foot and not as so many Christmas cards portray with Mary riding on a donkey!

The trip through the Judean desert would probably have taken place during the winter, when the weather is miserable through the day and freezing at night. The unpaved, hilly trails and harsh weather were not the only hazards Joseph and Mary would have faced on their journey south. One of the most terrifying dangers in ancient Palestine was the heavily forested valley of the Jordan River. Lions and bears lived in the woods, and travellers had to fend off wild animals. Bandits, pirates of the desert and robbers, were also common hazards along the major trade routes like the one Joseph and Mary would have travelled.

The hardships did not end when Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem. Under normal circumstances, the pair would have expected to stay in the spare bedroom of a relative or another Jewish family. However, an overcrowded Bethlehem would have forced Joseph and Mary to seek

lodging at a primitive inn. After all that, exhausted and very tired, it is widely agreed that Jesus was born in a cave used for housing animals.

What a journey, and what a test of faith! God doesn't do anything by halves does he? But he never asks anything of us that we aren't capable of, if we are willing to try. (CE)

To find out more about the Christmas story go to Isaiah 9:6-7 · Isaiah 7:14 · Luke 2:1-20 · Luke 1:30-35

On Friday March 3rd the Llantillio group of parishes has arranged a concert at The Hog's Head to celebrate **St David's Day with Monmouth Male Voice Choir.**

The Choir have been busy this year having appeared at The Principality Stadium in Cardiff before Wales played Scotland. They also competed at this

year's National Eisteddfod in Abergavenny and in November took part in Wales' service of Remembrance at St David's Hall in Cardiff. They will return to that venue in March and to another event in Cardiff on December 8th this year. The evening promises to be a superb occasion to celebrate our patron saint's day but also marks one of the first jointly arranged events involving our four parishes. Please come along for the entertainment and a Hog Roast meal before the choir's entertainers will start again for a more informal sing song.



Attention! An invitation to members of the congregation from all four churches, to attend a meeting at The Old Cottage, Treadam, Telephone: 01600 780354, to discuss the possibility of singing the morning service – the psalm, the benedicite etc, plus responses. Recently, I had the pleasure of hearing the local W.I. choir so no excuses ladies! Of course, gentlemen are indeed expected to sing too. As Christmas approaches, we shall also indulge in a few carols, maybe even a new one! We are not expecting to build a choir so no Gareth Malone visit. Rehearsal times and place to be discussed: possibly Mondays a.m. for an hour.

Llantillio Crossenny News

On Thursday 10th **November Riding Lights Theatre Company** came to Llantillio Crossenny Church and presented a performance of Simeon's Watch. It was nice to see the church full for the performance which was enjoyed by an audience drawn from near and far. This was the only performance by Riding Lights in Wales on their national tour and there were people in the audience from as far away as Swansea. The church provided a great venue for this play about farming families and growing old. The performance was especially memorable for the way in which the actors

were able to deal with the various distractions which took place during the play. Firstly, there was a power cut in the first half which was quickly resolved. Secondly, the second half of the play featured a visit from local wildlife which seemed to be attracted by the background soundtrack which included a number of nocturnal sounds such as hooting of owls! Thanks to everyone who helped make this event such a big success, especially Sean and Lorraine Cavanagh.

A **charity harvest auction** was held on Sunday 16th October at Warwicks Pub and £1023 was raised for Wales Air Ambulance. Will Probert, who won best new auctioneer of 2016, was in charge of the auction. We had great local support, including Mike & Sian Thomas who bid successfully for a day's trout fishing with



barbecue lunch donated by Clive Snell. Tickets to Wales vs England and Wales vs South Africa were also up for grabs and reached good prices. Adrian and Val Cooke were also very supportive donating a fully iced 7inch Christmas cake and Adrian gaining all the miscellaneous items that had not been bid for despite Will's witty banter. There were also lots of donations of home made cakes and local fruit and veg which are always popular in the auction. Everyone had a fun evening and enjoyed the curry at half time.

Llantilio Bellringers will be having a Christmas meal on 14th December at the Foxhunter Inn, Nantyderi. The ringers will be celebrating another busy and successful year. The team continues to attract new members and everyone enjoys being part of church life. Practice sessions on Tuesday and Thursday nights will continue while the bells will be rung for real on Sunday 4th of December. When the bells were rung on Remembrance Sunday, church visitors were treated to the sound of muffled bells. Muffling the bells requires team members to climb up to the bell chamber and tie pieces of leather to each of the bells as shown in the picture below.



Congratulations to Rhys and Bethan Pritchard from Llantilio Crossenny on the safe arrival of a baby daughter! **Carys Gwenno Pritchard** was born on 14th November and weighed in at 7lbs 3 oz. Jac is being a very good big brother!



Llanvapley News

Llanvapley Church held a **Cashmere Sale** at The Old Rectory, Llanvapley on Friday 4th and Saturday 5th November. The event was a great success with a constant stream of visitors over the two days. The event raised more than £1000 for the church buildings fund. Thanks go to everyone who supported the event and to Flossie Lowes and Bubbles Cooper who worked so hard to make it such a success.

Christmas may start in the shops in early November but we all know that it only really starts on **Advent Sunday** when the well known hymn 'O Come O Come Emmanuel' is once again sung in our churches. Llanvapley Church was delighted to hold a service on the first Sunday in Advent at which all the glorious Advent hymns were sung. A highlight of the service was the lighting of the first candle on the advent crown. For those of you with long memories you may remember John Noakes of Blue Peter fame demonstrating how to make an Advent crown back in the days when Christmas was much simpler. It is good to know that the skills taught then have not been lost. Why not come along to Llanvapley Church on 11th December to see the third Advent candle being lit.



There was a **meeting in Llanvapley Pavilion** on Tuesday 22nd November at which a representative of BT gave an update on the availability of superfast broadband in the area. The pavilion was crowded with people from throughout the area to hear the good news that superfast broadband is at last available. However, the news was mixed and there will still be people for whom superfast broadband will not be available. The issue of internet connectivity is clearly an important issue for many people and there was some frustration at the lack of information from BT. Questions were asked about why there has been a delay but no one was quite sure why a sticker has not been attached to our green box. Perhaps it will appear soon.

The **LSSA 100 club** winner in November was Lesley Stoker. Lesley was delighted to be given her cheque for £47 and said "I am surprised – I thought it was a fix!". The LSSA will once again be running a 100 Club in 2017 and will be announcing the final two winners for 2017 at the final coffee morning on Wednesday 14th December in the pavilion. Lesley will of course be invited along to ensure fair play!

It has been the tradition in Llanvapley to hold a **post-Christmas walk** to enable everyone to get together and to shake off some of those extra calories which have been added over Christmas. This year the event will be held on Thursday 29th December starting at 10.00am from the bottom of Firs Road. The destination will be the Crown Inn at Pantygelli at which lunch will be taken. Transport home will be available for those who think 6 miles is enough! Everyone is welcome to join the walk. Boots and wet weather clothing will be needed but usually the weather has been kind. The picture below shows a flooded lane on the way to the Crown and an intrepid group of Llanvapley walkers from 2013.



Llanvapley Sports and Social Association has been lucky enough to be awarded a grant from the National Lottery (Big Lottery Fund) to provide parking for disabled at the pavilion. The work is now underway and the LSSA is pleased to provide improved access to all the activities in the pavilion.



**ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI
LOTTERY FUNDED**

Llanvetherine News

Cwmerra Baptist Chapel in Llanvetherine is having its Christmas Carol Service on Sunday 18th December at 3.00pm. All very welcome.

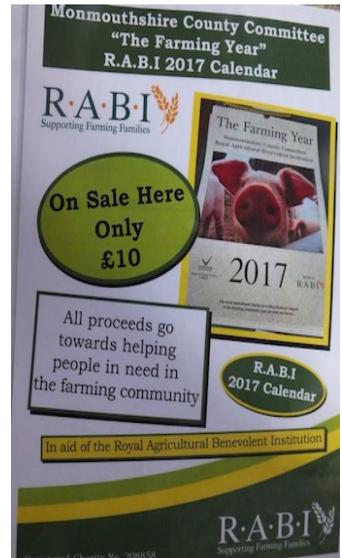
Katie Phelps was nominated for Teacher of the Year in Monmouthshire/Herefordshire/Gloucestershire in the recent Sunshine Radio Pride Awards for 2016. Katie was in the category for education which is to recognise a person who is bringing learning to life by engaging and inspiring young people to fulfil their potential, some one who has made a difference in their pupil or student. Katie started teaching at Lakers Secondary School in January 2015 after working at Severn Vale School in Gloucester. After a period of time, Katie and her team made vast improvements to exam grades and Katie was promoted to Assistant Head in 2016 at the age of 28. Katie was delighted to make it "down to the final 3". However, the Teacher of the Year was won by a lady who has taught in the same school for the past 47 years. But what an achievement for Katie!

Julian and Clarissa Fonseca hosted a **sky watching event** at their home in Llanvetherine on the night of Friday 18 November, complete with star guide, Liz, and her 8" Dobson telescope. We walked out into a neighbouring field to take advantage of generally excellent viewing conditions and identified several

constellations and stars. Mars was setting and the Milky Way was particularly prominent. Liz showed us the Pleiades (Seven Sisters) and the waning gibbous moon. The nearest constellation Andromeda, was easily visible through binoculars. The evening was rounded off with mulled wine, soup and hot dogs. Many thanks to Julian and Clarissa and Liz. We're pleased to learn that another sky watching evening will be planned - strongly recommended!

Llanvetherine's Carol Service will be in St James's Church at 7 pm on Monday 19 December. We are aiming to do something a bit more varied and seasonally interesting which will appeal to a wide range of people. If anyone would like to contribute music, poems or Christmas anecdotes to the service please let Andrew Dawson know on AndrewJDawson51@gmail.com. Mulled wine, mince pies and snacks will be available after the service.

Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RABI) are selling charity calendars They're huge and made of card so the photos can be framed after the end of 2017. Great Christmas presents and they can be delivered locally. Contact kate.beavan@btinternet.com to order your calendar.



Penrhos News

Penrhos Church will be holding a **Christmas Day** service at 10am which will be taken by Sally Adams.

An **open village meeting** has been organised at Woodlands Barn at 5pm on Saturday 10th December to discuss the current position of the church and the progress that has been made with Heritage lottery funding, Ideas for how to extend the use of the church and how to raise funds will also be discussed. Everyone in the village and the parish is invited to the meeting. Please come along and show your support and interest in the church.

WI News

Paddington Bear made an appearance at the November WI meeting when Dr Naylor Firth gave an interesting account of a trip to Peru. A lot was learned about the life, landscape and vegetation of the land which proved to be very diverse. Dr Firth was a geologist and explained about the amazing landscape with humour and in an understandable way. The 14th December meeting will include a speaker who calls his entertainment Christmas Crackers! All will be revealed! There will also be a Secret Santa present exchanging and refreshments suitable for a Christmas celebration. The January get together will be the annual dinner. It will be held at the King's Arms in Abergavenny, where they are quite prepared to hear the traditional renderings of the Twelve Days of Christmas!

Services in December and January

Sunday December 4th Advent 2

9.30am Llanvetherine

11.00am Llantilio Crossenny

Sunday 11th December Advent 3

9.30am Penrhos

11.00am Llanvapley

Friday 16th December

7.00pm Llanvapley Carol Service

Collection for Compassion UK

Sunday 18th December

9.30am Llanvetherine

6.00pm Carols by Candlelight Service
Llantilio Crossenny, followed by mulled
wine and mince pies

Monday 19th December

7.00pm Llanvetherine Carol Service

Tuesday 20th December

6.00pm Penrhos Carol Service in the
church, followed by mulled wine and mince pies in
High House Barn courtesy of Mr and Mrs Richard
Cleaves



Christmas Eve

4.00pm Christingle Service Llantilio
Crossenny

11.30pm Midnight Mass Llanvapley

Christmas Day

9.00am Llanvetherine

10.00am Penrhos

11.00am Llantilio Crossenny

Sunday 1st January New Year's Day

9.30am Joint service Llanvetherine,
followed by Llanvetherine village walk starting at 11am
from the big lay-by (weather permitting)

Sunday 8th January

9.30am Penrhos

11.00am Llanvapley

Sunday 15th January

9.30am Llanvetherine

11.00am Llantilio Crossenny

Sunday 22nd January

9.30am Penrhos

11.00am Llanvapley

Sunday 29th January

11.00am Joint Service Llantilio
Crossenny

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 7th December Coffee Morning Llanddewi Rhydderch in the village hall. There will be a raffle and all proceeds of the raffle will be used to buy £5 gift cards from Greggs to give out to people sleeping homeless in South Wales. If anyone would like to donate a prize or money towards this we will be truly grateful!

Saturday 10th December Open village meeting re Penrhos Church in Woodlands Barn at 5pm

Wednesday 14th December Coffee Morning Llanvapley at 10.30am

Wednesday 18th January Joint meeting of the Churchwardens in the vicarage at 7.00pm

Friday 3rd March St David Days concert with Monmouth Male Voice Choir, Hogs Head

Contributions for the February issue of TNT by 20 January 2017

Please send emails to lestaylor.taylor@gmail.com

Don't forget our website llantiliogroup.info for the latest information as well as information about all our churches We are also on [Twitter@LlantilioG](https://twitter.com/LlantilioG)