The New Times

February 2019

The Parish Magazine of Llantilio Crossenny, Llanvetherine, Llanvapley and Penrhos

Snowdrops bloom in Llanvapley

Llantilio WI celebrates its centenary in style!

From the Vicarage

“Thou who hast given so much to me, grant one thing more, a grateful heart.”
As most of you will by now be aware, we had some very unwelcome news back in October.
Trips to the doctor became admissions into hospital, and before long life was taking an unexpected turn.
It’s been quite a journey!
Yet the landscape along the way has been, and still is, utterly amazing and quite unexpected.
I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for your love and prayers, your support and your kindness shown in so many thoughtful ways.
Our overwhelming feeling is one of gratitude: gratitude for the love we know and share, and gratitude for the company of God who travels this path with us and will never let us go.
I have become so aware of God’s presence upholding and sustaining us – not in a thunder-bolt kind of way – but in the deep knowledge that He is walking beside us and holding us in His Love. That Love is stronger and more powerful than any diagnosis, it is the Love revealed in pierced hands and out-stretched arms; and it is the Love which embraces us all.

With all good wishes and many thanks,

Heidi

Llantilio Crossenny News

The focal point for our Christmas Festivities at St Teilo's this year was a beautiful Christmas tree which was kindly donated by Dennis and Scott Walker from Cross Ash. The Carol Service on December 16th was very well attended and afterwards everyone gathered in the Cillough Chapel to enjoy mulled wine and mince pies. At 4pm on Christmas Eve the Church was bursting at the seams for the Christingle Service. Lauren Cooke, Ruth Hoggins and Reverend Heidi had gathered together a large group of children who excelled themselves with their singing, reading and instrument playing to entertain us all. Fifty christingles were given out and when they sang "Away in a manger" by candlelight there was hardly a dry eye in the house. Many thanks go to all the young performers and to Lauren, Ruth and Heidi for organising the practices. Special thanks go to Sarah Heath for making the Christingles and to

the Formaggia family for the beautiful gingerbread house. Sarah was very busy on the day as she was also part of the bell ringing team who rang the bells before the service. Grateful thanks as always to the ladies for decorating the Church so beautifully and to everyone who came along and helped to make it such a memorable evening.

Llantilio Crossenny Flower Guild The ladies of the flower guild would like to invite new members to join them. Any one interested in helping would join the rota for putting fresh flowers in church for our services. We are a friendly group who would welcome some new input. If you would like to help please contact Janet O'Connor tel. 01873 854034

White Castle Defibrilator has now been fitted at Whitecastle cottage and is available 24/7. Two events have been organised in aid of Wernrheolydd Defib Fund and Llandewi Skirrid Defib Fund. Details below.

Come along and bring your friends to a relaxing evening to make money for a great cause including a glass of prosecco and nibbles.

Beauty and Therapy Evening
Friday 8th Febuary
7-9pm
Llandewi Skirrid Hall
£5 entry to the charity
Pay your beautician/therapists for your treatments
A lovely evening to catch up with friends!
Contact Lauren 07971607157

Coach Trip to Cotswold Farm Park (Adam Henson from Countryfile's Farm)
Friday 1st March (Welsh half term)
Leaving Monmouth 9am
Leaving Cotswold Farm Park 4pm
Bus and admission to the farm for
Adults: £25, Children (4-15 years): £20, Toddlers (2-3 years): £18, Babies (0-1 years): £5
If you would like to book let me know
Fundraisers on the bus for Wernrheolydd and Llandewi Skirrid Defibs
Contact Lauren 07971607157

Lorraine Cavanagh is having a launch for her new book 'In Such Times: Reflections On Living With Fear' on 13th February at 7.30pm at Cardiff University Anglican Chaplaincy, 61 Park Place, Cardiff CF10 3AT. All are welcome!

Alex Clark from Wernrheolydd has passed his LAMDA Grade 1 in Musical Theatre with a distinction! Mum and Dad are very proud of him because he did it in five months rather than the usual twelve. For those of you who don't know, LAMDA stands for the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts (ed) Well done Alex!

Llantilio Bell Ringers enjoyed a late Christmas celebration on Wednesday 23rd January. The group enjoyed a meal at the Foxhunter Inn and were joined by ringers from Llantilio Pertholey, Grosmont and Skenfrith. Gwyn Sayce was asked to say something and in his speech he urged the ringers to ensure that the bells are rung regularly at Sunday services. Llantilio ringers ring the bells on the first Sunday of the month and attend practices during the month. Anyone wishing to learn to ring church bells are welcome to come along. Please contact TNT for further details.

Conservation Celebrations at Tal-y-Coed Horse Trough

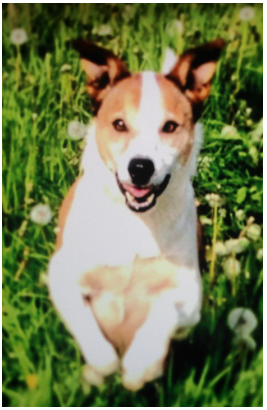
As many of you may have been following our horse trough saga, here is the final update! On Saturday 5th January, Tal-y-coed residents gathered together to celebrate the completion of the conservation of the horse trough. It has taken well over a year from thinking about the possibility of conservation, to finding support, finding funding, finding the people with the skills to restore the wall and starting and finishing the restoration work. The first people to help were Mandy and Charlie who did the initial clearing then Chris and I cleared an awful lot of mud. This was followed by a visit by Jean Prosser, Pat Griffiths and Edward Holland from the Village Alive Trust who decided they would support and help with the trough conservation. We were off! They have worked hard to secure funding and support has come from the Country Houses Foundation, The Community Green Energy Advisory Group Community Benefit Fund (Solar Farm), The Village Alive Trust plus our contribution.

The two pictures on the previous page show the original condition of the trough. On the right there is a picture of Chris moving the final mud before the celebrations began and the trough plaque was ready to be unveiled. We had a lovely crowd of people in the afternoon, including those who had helped as well as those who live in the hamlet and Tal-y-coed Court. Listening to the talk, memories came out from those who had met at the trough in their teenage years to hang out, those who remembered the hunt stopping there as well as people who had witnessed the neglect and deterioration over the years. If you look closely at the pictures you can spot Nathan (the stonemason who fixed the walls), Elsie and Desmond (staunch supporters), Kath and Rodney (owners of the land behind the trough/earth movers and hedge cutters), Jean Prosser (a driving force of Village Alive Trust), Pat Griffiths (provider of mulled wine / Village Alive Trust) and Sian and Peter Cobb (Tal-y-coed Court residents and enthusiastic supporters).

Jean Prosser gave an introduction and then Edward Holland was allowed to rip off the plaque covering and reveal the wonderfully illustrated and informative script about Joseph Bradney, researched and designed by Eric Evans (Draughtsman / designer / illustrator for the Village Alive Trust). So, we have come to end of this project which was only accomplished by the support and enthusiasm we have had professionally and locally. Thank you to everybody who has physically helped, those who have tooted support as they have driven past, those who have provided us with much welcomed cups of tea (Karen and Nigel) and those who have given us new memories of the history of the trough and our part in its continued presence. It is wonderful to see it now settled in its environment with beautiful views to Offa's Dyke footpath behind its lovely stonework.

Zara and Chris Duncan @ Red House, Tal-y-coed

Llanvapley News



It is sad to report that a very special Llanvapley dog has recently passed away. **Henry** was owned by Bernard and Linda Blackwell of Perth-y-pia Farm. Henry was a great farm dog and was always at Bernard's side when work was being done on the farm. However, he was also very well known in the village as he would often be spotted wandering around, investigating what was going on. Henry also had a particular love for the sound of chainsaws and had a reputation for appearing whenever one was being used, reportedly even travelling as far afield as Llantilio on one occasion!

In December, we were one of two households in Llanvapley who welcomed a small group of refugees and asylum seekers who were visiting for **a short 'writing retreat'**. Between us (Sarah, Phil, Penny and Richard) we hosted twelve people from various countries of origin, who are seeking sanctuary in the UK. Our visitors had the opportunity to experience the beautiful and peaceful surroundings here and to be welcomed into family homes, as well as participating in informal writing workshops. The workshops were facilitated by Kat Lewis, writer in residence with the refugee

community action group ‘Migrants Organise’, and the creative work produced here will contribute to a larger project and a published book of writing. We enjoyed cooking and eating together, sitting round the fire, walking locally and visiting Abergavenny. One of the evening meals was cooked for us by some members of the Syrian families now settled in Abergavenny, which was a real treat. This visit was part of an ongoing relationship with ‘Migrants Organise’. For some guests this was the second or third time they have stayed either as individuals or part of a small group. Some who came this time are keen to return and several are particularly interested in doing some gardening here. It’s lovely to be part of such a welcoming community! *Sarah Foster*

Llanvapley Sports and Social Association has been very busy recently improving the pavilion and the playing field. Apart from installing a new fire door, the inside of the pavilion has been completely redecorated to a very high standard. You are invited to come and see the changes in February when the LSSA will be hosting its monthly coffee morning on Wednesday 13th at 10.30. Llanvapley coffee mornings are always popular and are a great way to catch up with friends from far and wide. Everyone from the four parishes is welcome. Hope to see you there!

The LSSA is once again running a **100 club** in 2019 in order to raise funds to maintain the pavilion. The 100 club will be launched at the coffee morning. Ten prizes will be given out throughout the year and tickets cost £10. Please see Les if you would like to support the LSSA in this way. The LSSA is also pleased to announce that the ditch around the playing field has been cleared. This will help to move the water which comes off the road much more quickly down to the stream. Thanks go to the painters and contractors who have done such an excellent job. Thanks also to Terry Leader who worked so hard at tidying things up once the work was completed.

Llanvapley Church Carol Service was held on Sunday 23rd of December. The service was very well attended and everyone enjoyed singing all the well known Christmas carols. During the service there was a very special solo performance given by Alicia Lowes which was greatly enjoyed and appreciated by everybody there. Thanks go to everyone who read the lessons and to Margaret Parry for playing the

organ. Following the service everyone enjoyed mince pies and mulled wine. There was also an opportunity to meet with one of the most faithful members of our congregation – Moppy the dog. Moppy is very well behaved and friendly and as a result people were queuing up to have their photograph taken with her. One or two people wanted to take her home but she already has a warm bed to go to!

Over the last few months a number of people have moved to Llanvapley. Matt, Bethan and their three young daughters Lirys, Seren and Iola have moved into Trothy View. Dan and Rhiannon have moved into Middle Ton along with their dog Bob. There have also been changes at Brookside Cottage with Peter and Nicola the new residents along with their black cat, which goes by the name of Louie. I am sure everyone in the village wishes them a warm welcome and hopes they will be happy in their new homes.

Penrhos News

Penrhos community came together with a full church to join in the annual **Carol Service** led by Andrew Dawson which included a Nativity narrated and performed by the village children. Thanks go to Alex Wilson who did a great job organising the children. The candle-lit church was beautifully decorated with the tree kindly donated by Dennis Walker from Red Castle Nurseries. After the service everyone gathered around a roaring fire at High House (by kind invitation of Richard and Fiona Cleeve) and enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies while catching up with friends old and new. The celebrations continued with a very well attended Midnight Service. Thank you very much to everyone who decorated our church so beautifully and to Andrew Dawson for taking our services and to his wife Sally for her help and support.

Llanvetherine News

The **New Year's Day walk** at Llanvetherine took place again this year to maintain the tradition of meeting up with friends and neighbours (and dogs) on the first day of the year. About thirty walkers followed the route, devised by Chris Lewis, along the Trothy bank towards Pant-y-colleen and then up towards Manor Farm and the solar farm. It was a very enjoyable walk and a great chance to chat along the route. We eventually arrived at Llanddewi Skirrid Assembly Room (known to some of the uninitiated as the Green Hall) for bacon and sausage sandwiches prepared by Marjorie and her team. A great event, see you next year, if not before. *David Hughes Jones*

Thanks go to Wilf and Zoe Mayo (and others!) who you may have spotted **litter picking** regularly on the main road through Llanvetherine. I am sure they understand that their work in greatly appreciated by everyone.

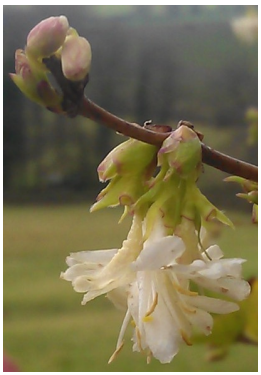
Before Christmas, the wider **Llanvetherine village** was able to enjoy a wonderful Christmas get together and evening meal at the Llandewi Skirrid Assembly Hall. The event was organised by Shirley Hughes Jones, to whom many thanks, and excellent catering was provided by the Red Castle Nursery team. The evening was a sell out, with plenty of conversations and seasonal good will.

The **Carol Service** in Llanvetherine was well attended with rousing singing and a delightful musical interlude by Elinor North and her friend. The service was cheered not only by the new radiant heating system but also the mulled wine and mince pies served by Sally Dawson, Shirley Hughes Jones and Jess Yeomans. Many thanks also to the younger (and older) readers, to Jeanette Massocchi for playing the organ, and to Annie Morgan for the absolutely wonderful Christmas flowers and decorations in St James' Church. The picture below shows one of the floral displays created by Annie which looked very festive in the night time mood lighting! The crib at St James was modelled after the stable in the Art Nouveau east window nativity scene. St James also hosted the single **Christmas Morning service** for the Llantilio Crossenny group and it was wonderful to share the joy of Christmas morning with so many people. The decision to have a single service for the group was exceptional for this season, agreed by the group church wardens because of the reduced number and location of clergy in the unusual circumstances this year. The **Annual Church Draw** took place at the Hog's Head on the evening of Friday 25th January organised by David Hughes Jones. Many thanks to David and to all those who bought and sold tickets and donated prizes, without which the draw would not be possible. *Andrew Dawson*

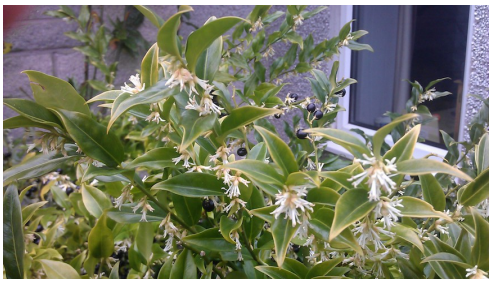
WI News

WI members celebrated a wonderful centenary dinner at the Angel Hotel on Wednesday 15th January, organised by Marion Ashton. The Mayor of Abergavenny, Teslin Davies, Mary Clarke (representing the WI National Board) and Angela Lloyd (secretary of Gwent Federation) were welcomed by Lin Morris, the president. As the first WI to be formed in Monmouthshire, it was a great celebration! The Angel provided a wonderful meal, lovely surroundings and a table for everyone to sit together. The beautiful flower arrangements in purple, white and green were made by Chris Brammer. After the meal they were collected and sent on to the Church. The colours used in the flower arrangements represented the suffragettes and have been adopted by the WI nationally. Mary Clarke gave enthusiastic thanks for being invited, and commended the WI. Pat Bolwell gave an interesting presentation on Lady Ada Mather Jackson who was the was the founder of Llantilio Crossenny WI and the Gwent federation. Events which happened during the first 100 years of the WI were explained to everyone by Daphne Watkins, Gaynor Evans, Elsie Latham and Myfanwy Williamson. The history taken from the 100 years of minutes was very interesting. This was accompanied by everyone singing songs from the past. The choir then sang the Llantilio Crossenny WI song, written and played by Margaret Parry. This was followed by a screening of Dancing Queen, from Mama Mia. The cast had performed this in last years, Gwent WI's 'Scenes from the Movies'. The lead roles were played by Diane Silman, Sheryl Westoby and Marion Ashton who then received cups donated and presented by Ann Couldwell, for all their efforts. Sally Dawson also received a cup for her services in craft, and Margaret Parry for music. The members had some unexpected gifts that the committee had organised. Each member was given a Llantilio Crossenny WI badge, a calendar to celebrate the century and their programme for 2019. The programme includes extra events, for the centenary year. Ex-president and treasurer Janet O'Connor then presented Lin with a beautiful president's brooch from all the members. This was a complete surprise and Lin was both moved and grateful. The mayor gave a speech of thanks and a toast to Llantilio Crossenny WI. Then those who had the energy danced the night away to the super band, Shades of Grey! *Lin Morris*

The Garden in February



We are well into the New Year and Iris unguicularis (or stylosa) has been flowering since before Christmas. Also called the Algerian iris which gives us a clue as to its preferred growing conditions, ie dry and poor soil. It has obviously appreciated last year's summer as I have never had so many flowers. Also out is Lonicera fragrantissima, a winter flowering honeysuckle (pictured). Like many winter flowering shrubs, the flowers are insignificant but heady with scent. The bush needs a good hard prune in the spring to keep it in check. Sarcococca or sweet box (pictured) has neat evergreen leaves and tiny flowers which will fill a room, as will Mahonia japonica with its lily of the valley yellow scented flowers. The latter responds to fairly drastic pruning so if your bush is too large, get out your pruning saw in the spring and cut a stem or two at the base. A favourite tree of mine is Prunus subhirtella 'Autumnalis' which flowers on and off until March. It is an ideal tree for a small garden as it does not cast a lot of shade, and the small pink flowers brighten up a winter's day. The snowdrops are coming out in force and there are numerous articles about them in the press. Keep on splitting them after they have flowered and you will be rewarded in time with drifts. Jasminum nudiflorum is a common garden plant, but has pretty yellow flowers which are welcome at this time of year as are the white flowers of Viburnum tinus. We have one called Gwenllian which has pale pink flowers. This shrub can grow enormous and needs to be kept in check. We have a north facing border of hellebores here. A yellow green Hellebore is first to flower and now in late January the other H. orientalis are out. H foetidus crops up all over the place too, an attractive plant with spikey leaves. Cut back the spent flowers when they are over keeping a few seeds if you want them. Our only casualty last winter was Daphne odora 'Aureomarginata'. It is not a long lived plant and quite expensive to replace but the flowers are a joy. A sheltered well drained spot is what it likes best. Last but certainly not least, Camelia sasanqua which I have written about before. It has not flowered as well as last year, perhaps it did not like the dry summer. However other camellias are full of fat buds and one creamy white one is almost out. I have covered it in fleece as I fear a frost with ruin the flowers. Let's hope we don't have a Beast from the East this year.



Services in February 2019

Sunday 3rd February
9.30am Llanvetherine Morning Prayer
11am Llantilio Crossenny Holy Communion

Sunday 10th
9.30am Penrhos MP
11am Llanvapley HC

Sunday 17th
9.30am Llanvetherine HC
11am Llantilio Crossenny MP and Baptism of Lillie May Walker

Sunday 24th
9.30am Penrhos HC
11am Llanvapley MP

Sunday 3rd March
9.30am Llanvetherine MP
11am Llantilio Crossenny HC

Wednesday 6th March
Ash Wednesday
7pm Llantilio Crossenny

Dates for your Diary

Llanddewi Rhydderch Coffee Morning Tuesday 5th February 10.30am in the village hall
Llanvapley Coffee Morning Wednesday 13th February 10.30am in the pavilion
Taize Singing Group Meeting Monday 18th February and 19th March 7.30pm at Blaencoed
Taize Service Monday 8th April Llanvapley Church 7.30pm

Grosmont And District Gardening Club

The first meeting of 2019 is on Tuesday 5th February at 7.30pm. Sarah Bell from Sunnybank Vine Nursery is giving a talk entitled "A year in the Life of a Vine". She has over 450 varieties of vine and holds a National Collection of Vines at her nursery in Rowlestone. On 5th March at 7.30pm we are having a talk about Jamie's Farm and the vital work that is done there to transform the lives of hundreds of disadvantaged young people each year. Visitors and new members are always welcome so please contact Jan on 01600 750295 or visit the Grosmont Village website (Village Groups) for more information.

Contributions for the February issue of TNT by 20 February 2019 please
Please send your 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