

The New Times

February 2020

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



It's a bright start to the New Year in Penrhos



*and a bright start to the New Year
for Paul, Leah and Lyra
in Llanvapley*

From the Vicarage

The snowdrops have appeared and the daffodils are pushing up from the earth. And the UK has left the EU, moving into a new era following several difficult years. While of course opinions about our national direction have varied in our four parishes, as everywhere, there does seem to have been a gracious underlying courtesy among ourselves.

It's at challenging times when we most often remember the second of the two Great Commandments — 'you shall love your neighbour as you love yourself'. This is not always an easy commandment, especially when it comes to the second part '...as you love yourself'. This does not mean '...as you indulge yourself' — but rather is a reminder that if we do not love ourselves in the fullest sense of valuing ourselves — through self-examination, self-respect, and prayer — then our starting point is set low for loving our neighbour and maintaining a civilised society. The question, 'who is our neighbour?', was of course answered comprehensively by Jesus in the Good Samaritan.

Sally and I once stumbled across *Desiderata* in a church in Devon, like many believing it to be 17th Century, although it was actually written in 1927, just before the worldwide Great Depression but decades before climate change became a global concern. We often re-read the whole of *Desiderata* with its simple, engaging, almost comforting, wisdom, but I'll just quote from the final part:

'...whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should. Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be. And whatever your labours and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul.'

*With all Blessings,
Andrew*



Llanvetherine Church in the winter sunshine with White Castle in the distance

Can you help save mothballed Llanarth Church for community use?

PROJECT Trefadaeth Llanarth Cymru Heritage Llanarth Wales begins in earnest this week as The Village Alive Trust, a local buildings preservation charity, instigates a feasibility study to explore options for the conservation and future use of the prominent Grade II* listed St Teilo's Church at Llanarth, near Raglan. The church is a rare example of Gothic style architecture in Wales but the high cost of essential repairs led to its closure in 2013 and the building was put up for sale in 2019. The Village Alive Trust, which has conserved local listed buildings since 2004, has gained the



support of the Church in Wales (CiW) to look for ways and means to enable the building to remain accessible to local people and for Christian celebrations. The Village Alive Trust chairman, Pat Griffiths, was married at Llanarth over 40 years ago and was saddened to see a For Sale board go up as both her late father, and her mother, aged 92, had served St Teilo's as church wardens. With the support of The Architectural Heritage Fund, Trust funds and public donations we are commissioning a study to investigate the costs of repairs and improvements and possible uses which can draw in revenue to maintain the church in future. These must fit in with ways in which the community and visitors can still benefit from this village landmark. We are looking at future uses for a building which has given spiritual comfort and community focus for generations. The Trust will also look to ecologically manage the churchyard which is still in use, and to record families buried there so that details can be accessed and local history explored. The Village Alive Trust have a questionnaire to gather local views about the project. The questionnaire and information on the Trust is available by email at village.alive@btinternet.com and on the website www.villagealivetrust.org.uk

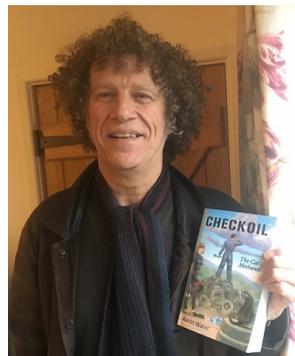
Llantilio Crossenny News

Christmas festivities at St Teilo's began with a lovely service of **Carols by Candlelight** led by Revd. Lorraine Cavanagh. Traditional carols and advent readings got us all into the spirit of Christmas, and afterwards mulled wine and mince pies was enjoyed in the Cillough Chapel while socialising with friends and neighbours. The **Christingle service** at 4pm on Christmas Eve was a magical experience. Chris Everitt led the service and brought out the very best in the performances of the children who showcased their considerable talents with singing, playing musical instruments and reading. Christingle oranges were handed out and then all the children sang Away in a Manger by candlelight. Thank you to all the children for entertaining us, to Lauren Cooke and Ruth Hoggins for all their hard work in preparing the

children, to Sarah Heath for making the Christingles, to the Formaggia family for the lovely gingerbread house, to the wonderful team of bell ringers and to Dennis and Scott Walker for the beautiful Christmas tree. Thank you too to everyone who came along to support and enjoy the occasion. Christmas morning saw a large congregation who came to celebrate Christmas Communion led by Revd. Lorraine Cavanagh and Revd. Andrew Dawson. A special thank you to our wonderful clergy for taking care of all our the services, to Jeanette Massochi our faithful organist and to the group of people who had decorated our church so beautifully.



Llantilio author **Alex Gibbon** has been very busy completing his latest novel which was published before Christmas. Alex is better known for his work as a historian but he has now written his first sci-fi novel. The title of the book is 'Checkoil'. Checkoil is the nickname for a garage mechanic who starts to get strange phone messages from his cat! Checkoil starts to think he is going mad which compromises his relationship with his girlfriend who has the key to his house! The story then tells the hilarious and increasingly surreal situations which Checkoil finds himself in. If you would like to know more then search for 'Aaron Water Monmouthshire' on Facebook.



Llantilio Bell Ringers rang the bells before Christmas and continue to meet twice a month to practise their skills. The ringers were invited to ring the church bells on February 1st to mark the day the country leaves the European Union but declined the offer! Practice nights are on the second and third Tuesdays of the month at 7.30pm. Anyone who would like to join the group are invited to attend on the third Tuesday when they can receive a lesson on how to strike a bell. This is exactly what happened to Holly Need from Monmouth in January when she accepted an invitation from one of the ringers to find out what bell ringing is all about. Holly thoroughly enjoyed the evening and joined the ringers in the pub after for a debrief! Well done Holly.

Llanvapley News

On 21st December the **Red Hart Inn** reopened after being shut for over 17 years. The village is delighted to welcome Paul and Leah Tod as the new owners as they set about running the business. The pub was open over Christmas and New Year and has proved to be a great success. Paul and Leah had worked very hard to open the pub in time for Christmas and were delighted and overwhelmed by the welcome they received.



The pub once again brought together people from far and wide but the funniest story involved a person who had moved away from the area. After arranging to meet his friends in town, he was blindfolded and told he was being taken somewhere very special. He was bundled into the car and then taken into the pub when the blindfold was finally taken off. As a past regular at the Red Hart he couldn't quite believe where he was! Tears were shed and there was a lot of laughter. Paul and Leah aim to reopen the pub in late February once everything has been sorted out. Opening times will be from Thursday to Sunday and they looking forward to making the pub the hub of the community once again. Paul is aiming to have a range of beers on tap and Leah will be in charge of the cooking. When asked about the menu, Leah said she aimed to serve 'home cooked country food'. I am sure everyone wishes them the best of luck. There are a lot of stories to tell about the opening of the pub and printed below is the reaction of Llanvapley's oldest resident.

'I am writing to say I'm one of those who went to the opening of the Red Hart just before Christmas. We came from England in 1971 and were welcomed by the locals who said they were neither English or Welsh but Monmouthshire people. The pub owners then were Nora and Edward Jones and since they went there have been many landlords, so many I can't remember, but I do remember Tim and Margaret who used to make the most fabulous meals. It was wonderful to meet so many old friends on the opening night, including some I hadn't seen for many years, and it was a really happy evening. Many people said 'it was just like coming home again'. We all hope that Paul and Leah make a great success of running the Red Hart. With all my good wishes *Doris Evans.*'

I am sure everyone in Llanvapley would like to welcome **Neal Smith and Lizzie Jones** to the village. They moved into Lingen Cottage last year from Chepstow and have enjoyed settling into their new home. At the other side of the village we also welcome **Rob and Lucy Davies** and their children, Awena and Gethen. Rob and Lucy have moved into Ty Canol and have been busy renovating the cottage. Croeso!

Llanvapley Walking Group Two walks took place in January: The first was on New Year's Day, over the fields to Tre-Adam and back via Manor Farm. It was a great way to start the new year and to shake off the excesses of the Christmas period. Mid January saw a brief lull in the deluge that's been going on since early September. The walkers took full advantage although, as the fields were very



muddy or even flooded, we decided a lane walk would be best. We walked along Ty Tac Lane and then along to Llanddewi Rhydderch from where we climbed the hill to the old White Swan and back to Llanvapley. Glorious views all round on a lovely sunny Saturday. The next walk will take place at 10.30 on Saturday 22nd February.

Meet us at Llanvapley Pavilion where parking is available. Several people have asked how strenuous the walks are - generally we walk about 4 or 5 miles at an easy pace. We aim to accommodate all levels of walking and the purpose is enjoyment and keeping the paths useable. It's also a great social



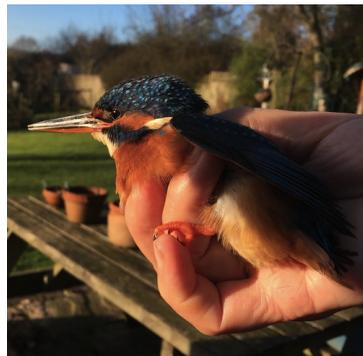
activity and you'll meet some lovely people. Get in touch if you would like more information: llanvapleywalkinggroup@gmail.com

What do Lane's Garage, 8 Trothy Way in Llantilio, Whitecastle Cottage, Woodland's Farm in Penrhos, Warwick's pub and Llanvapley Sports Pavilion have in common? The answer is they are the locations of six of the many **Public Access Defibrillators** in North Monmouthshire. Llanvapley Sports Pavilion had its defibrillator installed on Friday 10th January. This was supported by Llanarth Fawr Community Council who paid for its installation. On Monday 13th January there was a public meeting in Llanarth Village Hall to explain the important role defibrillators play in helping to save lives when someone has a cardiac arrest. Thanks go to Lauren Cooke and to Rhian Templeton for running an excellent meeting.



A king arrives on Christmas Day One of the best gifts I received this Christmas was the opportunity to spend some quality time with a kingfisher. Notoriously shy, I've only ever seen one from afar as it darted down the local

stream. A brief flash of orange and blue and then it was gone. However, this particular one couldn't avoid the attention of the whole family, having accidentally collided with our sitting room window on Christmas morning. Needing some 'time out' before it could continue its tour of the fields, I was able to admire its incredible colours up close. As you'll see from the picture, this bird really is one of the most special creatures that live amongst us. Thankfully, it was only temporarily stunned and resumed its journey a few minutes later. Like many of us, this bird likely woke up on boxing day with a sore head. *Tom Taylor*



St Mabli's Church is delighted to report that £315 was made from donations at the **Christmas drinks party** at The Old Rectory on 12th December - a very enjoyable event that was planned long before the General Election held on the same day! Many thanks to all those who attended. *Tom Lowes*

The church would like to thank **James Lowes** who recently cleaned all the gutters on the church. James offers a professional service of gutter cleaning but is happy to offer his services to the church for free. Thank you James!



The **Carol Service** on 22nd December was particularly well attended. We even had to use our new chairs to accommodate everyone! Special thanks go to Christine Everitt who lead the service and to Jeanette Massochi for playing the organ. Thanks also to the readers and to the ladies who provided the delicious mince pies and mulled wine after the service. A collection was taken at the service in aid of the North Gwent Cardiac Rehabilitation Charity. Thanks to the generosity of everyone present, St Mabli's Church was delighted to pass on a cheque for £204 which was very gratefully received by the charity. The charity runs classes to improve the cardiac health of people in our area, many of whom have experienced cardiac arrests and heart attacks. Thanks also to Christine for her special service on 26th January which focused on marking Holocaust Memorial Day.

Llanvapley Church will be holding a **Taize service** on Monday 11th May at 7.00pm. The taize singing group meet on the second Monday of the month. Please contact the churchwardens at Llanvapley if you are interested in joining this group. You don't have to be a great singer and there are no auditions but you will certainly enjoy it!

Llanvapley Sports and Social Association held its Christmas Coffee Morning on Wednesday 11th December. Lots of people were on hand to witness the draw for the Christmas hamper and other goodies. The winner of the hamper was Sharon Andrews (pictured right) who was delighted to receive her prize. The final 100 club numbers were drawn from the bag and the first out was a previous winner from earlier in the year. The lucky winner decided to give away her £50 prize to charity while the second winner was Jane Melia who had never won before and promised not to spend it all at once! After a January recess the LSSA coffee morning is back on 12th February at 10.30 in the pavilion. It is hoped you will continue to support the 100 club in 2020 when the first draw will be held in April.



A new baby in Llanvapley is quite an event and we were all kept waiting until 10th December when **Lyra Rose Hunter Sidwell** arrived in the world weighing 6lb 15oz. Mother and daughter are doing well and Lyra topped 10lb 8oz when she was last weighed. Lyra can be spotted around the village in her pram when it is not too wet and cold, and her proud parents Alice and Jonny are even getting some sleep at night! When we moved to Monmouth House with Richard's parents just over 33 years ago, Alice was 20 months old. We are thrilled that it is once more a three generation home. *Penny Harding*



Llanvetherine News

Llanvetherine Church is pleased to announce the arrival of a new (pre-loved) organ in St James's. The organ was installed by David Hughes-Jones, his son Gareth, Richard and Andrew Dawson. The organ was a gift from a kind private donor. The church would like to express its thanks and gratitude for this very kind gift. The accompanying records show that



the 'new' organ in Llanvetherine was first manufactured in 1984. It seems to work and sound superb and should provide long and valuable service. The organists in our parishes are looking forward to playing the new instrument.

Llanvetherine Village Christmas Meal

took place in Llanddewi Skirrid Hall on Wednesday 18th December. It was a great success and everyone enjoyed the choice of menus by Vicki Crabtree. She had to cook for over 50 of people and the evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Thanks go to Janet Phelps for organising the evening.



Penrhos News

Penrhos weather station has provided the following very interesting information. You may think that 2019 was wet but the wettest year this century was 2000 which had 1261.7mm of rain. However, last year there was a very wet Autumn as you can see from the figures.

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total for year
2017	57.7	48.7	102.7	749.6mm
2018	65.6.	105.3	102.1	860.4mm
2019	187.8	116.8	131.9	1089.5mm

Penrhos had a lovely **Carol Service** and the church had been beautifully decorated by some very artistic ladies. Thank you to the readers who all read beautifully.



It is with great sadness that we report the passing of **Heather Saint** of Coed Y Gelli Farm, Penrhos. A large gathering of friends and neighbours joined the family at the Forest of Dean crematorium on the 3rd January for her funeral. Heather had lived most of her life in Penrhos and will be greatly missed.

WI News

The December meeting of the WI had the flavour of Christmas around the world, both with food and traditions. Lin even avoided setting her hair on fire with the St. Lucia tradition from Sweden! Committee members made food from Poland, France, Italy and Switzerland and we enjoyed Gluwein from Germany too. This all followed a mini auction, with items provided by members. Marilyn had donated watches, Julia paintings



and many more goodies were given. All monies made went towards WI funds. Over £100 was raised by the auction and raffle. The entertainment was provided by friends and members, who are part of the Tenovus choir. Then they encouraged members to sing carols - it was like a choir of angels!

The annual **January New Year dinner** was held at the King's Arms hotel. The food and service was excellent, but the entertainment was something else! The Mummer's Play, performed by our friends the Pub Session Players, was fantastic and had everyone present in stitches. Even the waiters were laughing. This was then followed by these talented musicians playing a wide range of music for us. Everyone enjoyed and appreciated their efforts.



The February meeting will enable us to learn more about **The Story of the Quakers**. This will be told by Jan Currie and Penny Harding. It will be interesting to learn more about this very good group of people who are so supportive to everyone in need, and their peace-making is well known over the world. They also founded many well know firms in Britain. For further information about Llantilio Crossenny WI contact Lin Morris on 07840641856 or 01873 850939



Llantilio WI are delighted to announce that the **wall hanging** created by its members has found a new home in Llantilio Church. The hanging was put up in January. The new frame was made by Don Menzies who lives close to the church. Don is pictured putting the last touches to the job, having made the frame from solid oak and glazing it to a very high professional standard. Don supervised the



hanging of the frame in St Teilo's with input from various members of the Llantilio Crossenny WI and churchwardens. The wall hanging has already been greatly admired by visitors and it will be formally dedicated as part of the service on Sunday 2nd February.

The Garden in February

A new decade has come upon us and perhaps lots of resolutions. This year I will try to keep abreast of sowing seeds, planting them out, feeding the roses and keeping the weeds under control. It really helps to get a good thick mulch on your borders before the weeds take off. If you have not managed to get it all done, you have until March or April to spread it around as thickly as you can, as long as we don't have a frost, but don't cover Paeonie crowns, they do not like it.

February is the time to get sowing if you have a heated greenhouse. Apart from tomatoes, you can also sow pansies, penstemons, cosmos, pinks, delphiniums and nasturtiums for an early display.

I have ordered some seeds from Chilterns Seeds and am rather excited. Hopefully the rabbits won't eat them all before they mature. Sowing is the easy part, the planting out is where you have to be careful. Don't let the seedlings get too long and straggly and be careful that they do not 'dampen off'. A good layer of horticultural grit helps.

This time of year is ideal for planting out those shrubs and cuttings that have been hanging around waiting for you to find them a permanent place. Luckily we have not had a lot of frost, but the ground is really wet so be careful you don't plant in a bog! Add some fresh compost and a good handful of bonemeal to give the plants a good start. I have just planted a *Trachelospermum jasminoides* to replace a *Magnolia Grandiflora* which had been refusing to flower and yet growing at such a pace it was blocking a view. Sometimes Gardeners have to be ruthless. I am hoping that the *Trachelospermum* will cover the wall. It is an Asiatic genus and slightly tender but the wall it is planted against is West facing and has an Aga on the inside, so I am keeping my fingers crossed. It has extremely fragrant flowers, that are white with a creamy centre and should arrive in July. The leaves can turn shades of red and yellow in the Autumn.



Services in February

Sunday 2nd February

Candlemas
Penrhos 9.30am
Llantilio Crossenny 11am

Sunday 9th

3rd before Lent
Penrhos 9.30am
Llanvapley 11am

Sunday 16th

2nd before Lent
Penrhos 9.30am
Llantilio Crossenny 11am

Sunday 23rd

Sunday before Lent
Penrhos 9.30am
Llanvapley 11am

Wednesday 26th

Ash Wednesday
Grosmont 10.00am
Llantilio Crossenny 6.30pm

Sunday 1st March

Lent 1 / St David's Day
Penrhos 9.30am
Llantilio Crossenny 11am

Dates for your Diary

Saturday 1st February Six Nations Rugby on the big screen in Llanddewi
Wednesday 5th February Llanddewi Rhydderch coffee morning 10.30am in the hall
Friday 7th February Bar night in Llanddewi 7pm
Wednesday 12th February Llanvapley coffee morning 10.30am in the pavilion
Thursday 13th February Film Night in Llanddewi 'Yesterday' 7.15pm
Saturday 18th April LSSA Games Night social 7.30pm in the pavilion

Grosmont And District Gardening Club - Forthcoming Events For 2020

Our first two meetings in 2020 will be held in Grosmont Town Hall at 7.30pm.

Tuesday 4th February Cherry Taylor will be talking about 'How to create a No Dig Garden'. Since 2015 she has created such a garden from scratch which is organic and full of wildlife and open to the public under the National Garden Scheme. **Tuesday 3rd March** Adam Alexander is giving a talk entitled 'Adventures of a Seed Detective'. He has a passion for growing fruit and vegetables, saving and sharing seeds from his garden and travels around the world. He has featured on Gardeners' World. We have members from a wide area, but visitors and new members are always welcome. Contact Marion 01981 241161 or Jan 01600 750295 for further information or email grosmontgardenclub@yahoo.com.

Visit Grosmont Village website (Village Groups) and we are also on Facebook.

Contributions for the March issue of TNT by 20th February 2020

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