

# The New Times

May 2020

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



*Thanks Christine for  
supporting our churches and  
our wonderful National Health  
Service*

***Thanks to all our key workers and to  
everyone who has stayed at home,  
clapped for carers and put out their  
teddy bears and rainbows to make  
us all smile!***



## From the Vicarage

The photo of three intrepid nurses on the front of this edition of TNT has some very important messages for us all. It's reassuring to see three smiling people (all of whom I have known for years) clad in their PPE and re-allocated from their normal duties at Nevill Hall Hospital to help with urgent problems. And it also reminds us that the worldwide crisis is not only on our doorsteps but is in our midst, now. Our grateful thanks and prayers go out to them and all their colleagues.

Most of the UK population presently stand outside their homes every Thursday night to clap NHS and other key workers. It boosts morale and expresses appreciation where it is very difficult to find any other way of doing so. We've heard some journalists and politicians debate about how coronavirus is a 'great leveller', but I wonder if there might be confusion? What they probably mean is that the virus affects anyone — even our heir to the throne or our prime minister, who have thankfully survived.

But what the pandemic is not doing is 'levelling out the playing field'. The front line — nurses like our friends in the photo, and doctors, technicians, therapists and radiographers — are facing direct exposure to the virus every day. Not far behind them are receptionists, cleaners, porters, lab staff, secretaries, and many others. And often hidden from our consciousness there are countless people who are keeping our food and other essential supply chains and transport working in very difficult circumstances, many also at risk of exposure to the virus. And the burden for many people forced to remain in their homes, especially in populous towns and cities, is probably beyond our imagination while many of us are sitting it out in relative comfort. We must spare our thoughts and prayers for all those people too, especially where there is overcrowding or domestic abuse. And what about all those in our own communities whose businesses are facing truly major difficulties? It seems to be without boundaries.

One of the most poignant, powerful, gospel readings for this season is the story in Luke of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, who do not recognise the Risen Christ beside them until they share bread at supper. The living Christ is at work through the hands of all the people I've mentioned above. And yet despite all the goodwill towards those people keeping us alive, and most of us well, there are some awful stories about people who do not abide by current regulations or who misguidedly abuse NHS or other staff. In my video message for 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter I have asked, when all this is over, will key workers earn more respect, more recognition for what they do? Will supermarket shelf stackers revert to being epitomised as low-skilled workers? Will care workers finally get the recognition, respect and pay they deserve? Or will we go back to taking them all for granted, despite the fact that very few of us would actually take their place at any time.

Will we still want to stand outside to clap every Thursday night? Will we recognise the stranger we meet on the road to Emmaus? Will we learn, for good, that everything may not be what it seems? Are we the crucifiers described

by the two disciples, or will we seek to find Christ in every stranger? As we are reminded in 1 Cor 12: 27 – ‘You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it.’ (I recommend re-reading the whole chapter)

Peace, health, and blessings be with you all.

Andrew

### **Easter Poem 2020 by Malcolm Guite**

And where is Jesus, this strange Easter day?

Not lost in our locked churches, anymore

Than he was sealed in that dark sepulchre.

The locks are loosed; the stone is rolled away,

And he is up and risen, long before,

Alive, at large, and making his strong way

Into the world he gave his life to save,

No need to seek him in his empty grave.

He might have been a wafer in the hands

Of priests this day, or music from the lips

Of red-robed choristers, instead he slips

Away from church, shakes off our linen bands

To don his apron with a nurse: he grips

And lifts a stretcher, soothes with gentle hands

The frail flesh of the dying, gives them hope,

Breathes with the breathless, lends them strength to cope.

On Thursday we applauded, for he came

And served us in a thousand names and faces

Mopping our sickroom floors and catching traces

Of that virus which was death to him:

Good Friday happened in a thousand places

Where Jesus held the helpless, died with them

That they might share his Easter in their need,

Now they are risen with him, risen indeed.

### **Resources for our congregations**

During the period when our churches are closed and services are cancelled you will be able to follow the events of the Christian calendar by using online resources which have been produced by the diocese and locally.

The Bishop of Monmouth will be holding a Sunday Eucharist which will be live streamed. The service will be available on Youtube at <https://youtu.be/o9DB74PPX9U>

Revd. Andrew Dawson has created videos in which he gives a message for each Sunday. These videos are available by following the links on the home page of our website [www.llantiliogroup.info](http://www.llantiliogroup.info)

## **Spring Photographic Competition**

### **“New Life / Our Village Church”**

### **£25 prize, John Lewis voucher**

At a time of unavoidable social distancing the four churches are holding a photographic competition. The competition is for fun and a single prize of a £25 John Lewis voucher has been donated to go to the winner from one of the two subjects.

#### **Entries:**

- Digital photos small enough to email
- Send as .jpg files to AndrewJDawson51@gmail.com **by the end of May**
- Taken from within one of the four parishes since 1 January 2020
- Entrants must have a local connection please — the idea is to encourage local activity and communication as well as fun, and avoid unnecessary travel (please say what your connection is)
- But a connection with your church is not required — it's for everyone
- Can be colour or black and white
- Photoshopping allowed for minor corrections only, please
- Can be of either subject or both
- Entries limited to four photos per individual entrant
- Entrants retain copyright as always but give permission for publication via Four Parishes Llantilio Group website
- The judge's decision is final

#### **Subjects:**

Either,

**“New Life”** — We are looking for spring themes with a message of hope and renewal. New born live stock or pets, or new plant growth in the garden or countryside. The picture of the kid goat taking its mother's milk on a farm in Llanvetherine is an example. Or anything in that spirit we haven't thought of!

Or,

**“Our Village Church”** - But we are looking for photos taken outside from an unusual angle or perspective rather than traditional church shots. It's an opportunity for people to get to know their church a little better while doing your daily exercise.

Please make sure that you always pay attention to your safety, and please don't trespass or damage church or other property. Churchyards are uneven with large gravestones, and have numerous unavoidable hazards. Please observe all current guidance, rules, or law to do with the pandemic — so make sure you keep your distance from other people to protect both them and you. Clarissa Fonseca of Llanvetherine has kindly agreed to judge the entries.

## Four Parishes Garden Competition

To maintain your spirits over the next few months why not enter our four parishes garden competition!



The competition has four categories - large garden, cottage garden, very small garden and vegetable garden.

Entry is free and you are invited to enter by sending an email to Tom Lowes (at the email address below) stating your name, address and the category you would like to be considered for. **Entries should be received by the end May.**

There will be a bottle of champagne for the winner in each category, bottle of wine for runner up.

Judging to be done by arrangement or we may have to rely on photographic evidence.

Hopefully there will be an awards ceremony at The Old Rectory in Llanvapley when we can celebrate our achievements!

Please email your entry to [thomasnlowes@gmail.com](mailto:thomasnlowes@gmail.com)

## Llantilio Crossenny News

In these difficult and uncertain times owing to the threat of **coronavirus** it is easy to overlook all that is good around us. We are indeed very fortunate to be living in such beautiful and peaceful countryside surrounded by all that nature has to offer. As we watch spring slipping into summer and see the trees turning glorious shades of green and the meadows with their lush green pastures and beautiful carpets of wild flowers, we can enjoy all of this in peace as there's so little traffic on our roads or aeroplanes in the sky. We can truly appreciate the birdsong from their dawn chorus to their last twittering at dusk and they provide wonderful entertainment throughout the day. In our garden we watch woodpeckers, goldfinches, blackbirds, thrushes and lots of house sparrows and last weekend we observed the first swallows arriving, all from the comfort of our chairs on the lawn. Des (pictured) and I are fortunate to be able to walk through woods and fields without seeing a soul, and occasionally we walk the footpath beside the river to go to the Church to check things out and ensure that all is well there. The churchyard at St Teilos is a riot of colour with spring flowers and blossoms and the grass is all beautifully cut thanks to David and Gary Lewis. A walk around there really



gladdens the heart. We shall all look forward to our freedoms again but in the meantime we shall continue to enjoy the peace and beauty of our countryside in Talycoed. *Elsie Latham*

**We have been digging a pond for our ducks during lockdown.**

When we arrived at Pear Tree Barn, White Castle, all the ducks had was a small upturned plastic container, and David had been thinking for some time that they needed something more substantial. Enforced time at home was an opportunity to change the ducks' lives! It took a few weeks to dig the pond, 4m x 4m and about

½ m deep. It has a shelving beach, and the liner will be anchored and hidden by stones. We hope to put in some aquatic plants – maybe water violets and king cups that my mother remembers from childhood. Yesterday we lined the pond and filled it with water, with the ducks watching with curiosity from behind a fence. Then it was time for their inaugural swim. Initially they were a bit unsure, but then they floated in serenely, dived and flapped their wings, and quacked excitedly. It has been a really enjoyable family project, and we decided there was only one name for the pond: 'Loch Down'!

*Jenny Goodwin*



A number of people have offered to **collect shopping, prescriptions etc** for people in the parish. Please call Elsie Latham on 01600 780225 who will help to arrange things. Elsie has suggested that with a number of people now losing their incomes a small contribution to their petrol bill would be much appreciated.

The front cover of this month's parish magazine highlights those wonderful people who choose to work for the NHS. Thank you to all of them for the great and brave job they are doing. **It is right to also remember those not in the 'front line' but who are doing their bit** to keep the economy going in order to pay for the NHS and the other state services. For instance, I employ 13 people who are and have been supporting and developing our software over the last 30 years. All bar two of them are working from their homes and have been since the start of lockdown. As the company owner, I have to go in daily to check our computer servers and run all the daily backups of important data which have to be taken off site every evening, check the building and various alarms. I also decided not to follow the easy route of furloughing some or all of my staff. Instead, as with most things, I will be taking the risk personally and continuing to pay full salaries in return

for meaningful duties from my staff even though it is done at a substantial financial loss. (My name isn't Richard Branson!) Those that rely on my business continuing to thrive, apart from grateful staff, include the largest pharmacy in the UK, independent pharmacies throughout UK and Ireland all of whom, indirectly, receive a high percentage of their products from most of the major UK pharmaceuticals – thanks to our own software. Having these products on the pharmacy shelves (all well-known brands) means that our citizens are able to visit and collect the medication they need to keep themselves healthy. There are many other trades – too numerous to mention – who are not being congratulated or clapped but are hard at work whilst trying to make sure that people still have some money to spend as well as keeping them safe. Those involved (including many who attend our churches) will help to prevent a complete breakdown in society where the NHS, schools, police etc would simply disappear in complete civil disorder. It is worth remembering: the government has **no** money of its own.

On a brighter note, we have heard the curlew (hopefully avoiding having a nest 'rolled' or sprayed) and we have seen swallows nearby. All we need is the cuckoo. We are pleased to say that we have been busy planting over 650 native broadleaf trees which will be of benefit to nature as well as those who come after us. Nature so often shows us the way to treat this planet – something all of us should try and learn from. How lovely seeing our skies devoid of polluting aeroplanes! *Andrew Meek, Brynderi*

We have a **tame pheasant** sitting on a clutch of eggs in our garden hedge. She comes for food along with our ducks in the evening. She now has at least seven eggs, but we are taking care not to disturb her.



I also wonder if people would be interested in some links to online shows and activities. I am sure that many of them are well known, but maybe not all of them. Every Thursday evening, the **National Theatre** is releasing a filmed production, available for a week. They have all been very good so far. [www.youtube.com/user/ntdiscovertheatre/videos](https://www.youtube.com/user/ntdiscovertheatre/videos)

**Wind in the Willows** is available to 'rent' for £2.99 . This can be found at [www.willowsmusical.com/](http://www.willowsmusical.com/) It was an excellent production and well worth it.

Every weekend there is a new **Andrew Lloyd Webber musical** available <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdmPjhKMaXNNeCr1FjuMvag>

**The Globe** is releasing Shakespeare shows on a schedule - <https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/watch>

There is a series of short lectures on **Van Gogh's Sunflowers** at art galleries round the world.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmOZjJ0wVk8>

If you are on Facebook, there are some paint along **art tutorials with Sam Morris**. This one is how to paint a bunny rabbit -

**Silent Auction in Aid of The British Heart Foundation** In last month's TNT there was a feature about a fund raising auction. I would like to say thank you so much to everyone for supporting the silent auction for the British Heart Foundation. We raised £1738! *Lauren Cooke*

## Llanvapley News

The doors of Llanvapley Church have been closed for services and visitors since the start of lockdown. The church and the churchyard still have to be maintained for practical as well as insurance purposes. To everyone's surprise a problem has arisen inside the church. The ceiling is of a barrel design made up of a large number of panels. One of the panels has fallen down leaving a large hole in the ceiling! The panels should be made of oak lathes covered by a special plaster but this one must have been put up in an emergency and was a simple piece of hardboard. Thankfully the church was closed when it fell down so no one was injured. The Lord works in mysterious ways! We are hoping to have the panel repaired in the next couple of weeks and hopefully this one will last a bit longer.



**A Red Bull In Firs Road** On 9<sup>th</sup> April I set off with my son, James up Firs Road on our daily exercise routine, armed with a large shopping bag for litter picking. Previous litter clearing volunteers will no doubt identify with their comment that "it was quite satisfying to return home with the full bag knowing that the lane up to the Llanvetherine junction was now clear of rubbish". They may also wonder who on earth continues to litter our beautiful corner of Monmouthshire while expecting others to clear up their mess - the photo on the right was taken on Firs Road only 24 hours later on 10<sup>th</sup> April. Cans of Red Bull, strong cider and snack packets are particular favourites for throwing out of vehicles, so if you know of anyone with an antisocial littering habit please ask them to take their rubbish home! *Tom Lowes*



**'Llanvapley Connected'** is a WhatsApp group which was started as a response to these difficult times and its main function is to co-ordinate people's needs. Those who do not use WhatsApp have all been given the phone numbers for people who do, so requests can be sent out to the group. So far there has always been a response from someone able to help.

It's not that we didn't know we lived in a friendly village but it's been great seeing new aspects of support come into play. As the group expands, people who live in the same village, but have never discovered each other, are now having bite size, bubble shaped conversations across time and space, often illustrated with photos.

The topics are very wide ranging. Some are more predictable – prescriptions to collect, organising group shopping, delivery and distribution, sharing info on suppliers, dog walking arrangements. It's impressive how small suppliers have turned their hand to home delivery or pickups. We order a bulk dairy delivery which is kindly distributed this end by Gen and Pete, a bakery delivery thanks to Steve. There are occasional other treats organised amongst various people – cakes and beer! The pavilion veranda has become a drop off point for extras and swaps. Pictures are posted to show what's there - hen and duck eggs (including decorated Easter ones), tomato plants, books etc. Photos of hens and ducks doing their job as key workers also appear.



But there are other more unexpected ways it has connected us. The Lowes family have been ringing the church bell for the clapping and clattering for key workers at 8pm on Thursday. Messages are posted afterwards to say we could hear each other – including Gen and Pete's spectacular drum kit performance. The longer evenings mean we are clapping in the light now but the first week a little clip was posted of Llanvapley in darkness with pin point lights, the church bell ringing, dogs barking and people making a noise drifting across the village. I think it's getting louder each week.

There are key workers such as carers, NHS staff and others working in key jobs who are resident in the village. We thank them for all their work.

Natalie has been making mask extensions to save people's ears from discomfort, including a special one for Mary's Sikh colleague whose turban necessitates a further extension.



There was a coincidence as two people posted pictures of nettles and plans for nettle soup at the same time! Thirty minutes later an informative little video clip had been made and posted spontaneously by Alice and baby Lyra in their garden, pointing out forageable leaves. Catherine puts out a call as one of her cows has had triplets and they are tiny - does anyone have any spare dog coats as their

calf coats are too big (who knew about calf coats?)? Photos of suggested coats and ways of improvising pop up down the screen and later a picture of the well kitted out calves. Other photos and clips include – some fantastic hot cross buns we wish we could have shared with Penny, barrows of free horse manure available for take away, thanks to Jess and Leah's horses, 'scarecrow' figures appearing around the place, and now bird life from Natalie and Mary - I think we are all becoming more tuned in to birdsong and what's happening in our gardens and hedgerows. Sometimes as I sit in the garden I feel in a bit of a bubble. I think of the people who are really struggling with this. We are very lucky to be able to walk safely from our front doors and to have this support. Well done Llanvapley! *Sarah Foster*



### Llanvapley Scare-c19-crow Competition

Already ten people have decided to enter this competition which is designed to show our support for NHS heroes and other key workers. All entries are to be entered prior to 1<sup>st</sup> June. Those wishing to participate outside of the village must place their entry in Llanvapley and provide photographic evidence of its whereabouts. (this can be your daily exercise) All entries are to be judged on 1<sup>st</sup> June. Prize for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places! *Nicola Evans*



During the lockdown a number of people in Llanvapley have returned to buying their food from local providers such as **Raglan Dairy** who have been delivering milk and other produce to a central point in the village from which it is distributed.



**Alicia Lowes from Llanvapley** has recently been dueting with Joel Williams. Joel is studying opera in Valencia and has been in lockdown for over six weeks. Joel practises by singing from his flat balcony every night and has been on Spanish news channels singing to his neighbours - 150 people at a time! Joel was put in touch with Alicia by his uncle and they decided to do a virtual duet on his balcony, They performed 'The Prayer' for their duet and it went down very well indeed with the local 'captive' audience. Well done Lissy!



Click on the image to see the video or go to <https://vimeo.com/412372500>

## Penrhos News

Some of the families in Penrhos have been showing their appreciation to all the key workers by putting up **scarecrows** as a way to say thank you. Its lovely to see them all as you walk around the village.

With lambing pretty much finished, it's lovely to see the fields full of lambs, and cattle enjoying this glorious weather and spring grass that's coming through. Farmers are busy catching up on planting crops, harrowing, rolling and so many other jobs that couldn't get done because of the endless rain we had for what felt like eternity and now seems so long ago. By the time TNT comes out we will be having more rain!!



We have several different people in Penrhos who are going to supermarkets or local shops most days **to collect essentials**. If anyone is in need of anything please contact the village association via e-mail [pva@penrhosvillage.co.uk](mailto:pva@penrhosvillage.co.uk) or Pip on 07919623775 and we will be able to help you out.

I'm sure everyone's gardens and houses are looking immaculate, paperwork up to date and the list of jobs is getting shorter. Aren't we lucky to live in such a beautiful part of the world.

Its with great sadness to report the passing of **Robert Morris** originally from New House Farm, Penrhos and also Bryan Groves from Great Bailea. Bryan and Joyce often came to Church at Penrhos even though they are officially Tregare. They also supported many of the Church fund raising events. Our deepest sympathy goes out to all the family members left behind. Joyce, Colin and Karen Groves and Richard and Sarah Morris. *Pip Rumsey*

**Woodlands Farm in Penrhos** is featured on the National Garden Scheme website at <https://ngs.org.uk/virtual-garden-visits/> It is well worth a virtual visit if you are looking for some ideas or simply would to take a break from your own garden.

## Llanvetherine News

The B4521 through the village remains busy (and fast) despite being quieter than normal. Much of the traffic is agricultural, especially contract workers busy maintaining our food supply — life is going on for them as normal but with more urgency and more difficulties. We miss the gentle sounds of people enjoying breaks in Ed and Flo's camping and caravan site. Llanvetherine isn't a nucleated settlement so there's not much opportunity to see other people out for their lawful exercise stint. But from background sounds you can tell people are keeping busy. After a very disappointing year for fruit last year there's an abundance of blossom on our Bramley and Quince trees, and the bees are making the most of it. We've been encouraged to set up scarecrows near our houses dressed to reflect all the care, support and other workers who have to keep going. I'm struck by the huge reduction in aircraft contrails high in the jetways above. I'll admit to using the FlightRadar24 app to see where they are going — many of them are transatlantic cargo flights. The other day there was a strange low flying aircraft which made a weird howling noise — one of the new RAF Airbus A400M military transport planes. A more peaceful occupation is watching the Dyfi Ospreys live streaming webcam — it's a compelling distraction!

*Andrew Dawson*



Every year many people anticipate the arrival of **cuckoos** after their long journey from Central Africa. In Llanvetherine a cuckoo was first heard on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April. A curlew was also heard on 7<sup>th</sup> April and lots of skylarks and meadow pipits have also been spotted. Welcome to all our feathered visitors!

**Local Produce from Three Pools Farm in Llanvetherine** Since moving to the farm in the summer of 2017 we have been experimenting with and developing a number of core products that we hope to sell to locals and visitors of the farm. One of our main aims is to offer high-grade and long lasting permaculture produce that allows people to eat locally throughout the year. One of the ways that we can do this is by preserving the food that we grow. Apple cider vinegar (ACV) is quickly becoming integrated into the daily routine of many health-conscious folk, and for good reason - the health benefits are fantastic.

Our cider vinegar is made up of a mix of local heritage apples. We were kindly gifted a large barrel of apple juice from a neighbouring cider producer called Ty Gwyn in our first year and we have been crafting the perfect vinegar from that ever since. All of our cider vinegar has mother included

and is 100% natural and sulphate free! Personally, I love to use the cider vinegar in sauces and especially curries - the well-rounded acidity has a great ability to bind flavours. We are also currently experimenting with our own perry vinegar which should be on sale next year!

A great way to preserve vegetables from the garden is to pickle them. We have created a double-headed preservation and health benefit combo by incorporating our own cider vinegar into our pickled products. This means you will get all of the health benefits from the vinegar as well as being able to enjoy our market garden produce during the colder months (if you can wait that long). Our pickle range will include beetroots, onions, radishes and carrots. As well as this, Poppy has planted a specific vegetable bed with chutneys in mind so that your ploughman's sandwich will never be the same again!

A wise man once said that 'it is the small bubbles that are created from fermentation that act as a fuel for our own bodily biome'. Every time you eat a spoonful of fermented goodness you are adding beneficial bacteria and enzymes to your overall intestinal flora. This increases the health of your gut microbiome and digestive process, therefore enhancing your immune system. Most recently it has been the honourable leek of Wales, which we make into leekchi, that has been filling our fermentation chambers! We will be selling this alongside other types of home-grown and homemade sauerkrauts, kimchis and kombucha as part of our fermented range.

One of the first activities we did when we arrived at the farm in 2017 was to harvest all of the hedgerow fruit we could and embark on the process of making jam. Having previously been urban dwellers with urban lifestyles, we were not the most experienced jam makers to say the least. We

were, and still are, hugely grateful for the help of jam and jelly legend Kitty Hagenbach who showed us the ropes. There is an abundance of wild hedgerow fruits around the farm, and the way that we manage our land from a permaculture perspective encourages these fruit bushes to thrive. We also use fruit from our ever-evolving forest garden! This year's jams include; bramble, bramble & black pepper, damson, and plum. Jellies include; crabapple & rosemary, and redcurrant & gooseberry.

As the permaculture systems that we have in place continue to grow and thrive alongside our preservation ventures, we will be expanding our product range. We hope to one day grow and provide whole-basket solutions for



customers as well as providing the best quality pasture-fed meat for restaurants and for our own events. What is also key to us is that our systems and techniques can easily be replicated by other farmers and producers. For this to work, we need to show that produce created from a holistic system like ours has a place in the market and that produce from these systems can be profitable. Thank you for your continued support in our long-term project. See our website for more details. *Tom Carter*

**Crabtree Catering** which is based in Llanvetherine are now providing Saturday meals to collect during the lockdown. The new venture seems to be going very well. Here is a message from their Facebook page. *'After an absolutely incredible response we only have limited slots left for tomorrow so get your orders in quick! You can message us or call us on 01873 821360 to secure your time slot. All of our food will be served in compostable packaging & wrapped in tinfoil. However we would recommend bringing an insulated shopping bag/lunch bag for the journey home if you live in other parishes'*



## Other News

**Please Help Our Doctors and Nurses** Please help by donating anything you can to Nevill Hall Hospital: There are boxes dotted around the area including Cross Ash Hall, 8 Trothy Way Llantilio Crossenny, Lanes Garage Llanvetherine, The Red Hart Llanvapley and Woodland Farm Penhos. Items which would be useful include face moisturiser, shower gel, shampoo, conditioner, hair bobbles, hair nets, drinks and snacks.

The one thing I do know there is a need for in Nevill Hall is **new pyjamas, nightwear, underwear, tops** etc, not for the staff, but for the patients. As friends and family are unable to go in and visit their loved ones, the patients are stuck without clean clothes to wear. As you probably know, I work there as a chaplain, and if anyone has any new clothes which would be suitable for those in hospital, I will gladly collect them and take them in. *Revd. Heidi*

## Cross Ash School News

Well since our last report from Cross Ash School the world has become a very different place. Sadly, following Government guidelines, we were required to close our doors to the pupils on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March. We did this with heavy hearts and it was a difficult few days trying to reassure the children, parents and each other that we could find a way forward.

As a school we have opted to use an online learning platform that can be

accessed at home. Every day the pupils log in and they find a range of mathematics, literacy and topic related lessons for them to use. We have been bowled over and very proud of everyone as they have come to terms with this new way of learning. Responses have been outstanding and the children are clearly enjoying the tasks set. We shall continue with this style of learning until we are able to return to the classrooms.

Although we are sad that we cannot be with the children their health and safety, and that of their families, will remain uppermost in all that we do. These are extraordinary times for us as a school and we continue to react to the situation on a daily basis.

We are all keeping our fingers crossed for an opportunity to meet again before the end of the academic year. In an effort to keep our spirits up we have produced this video for the pupils to help them to realise just how proud of them we are and how much we miss them all. Please use the link below to enjoy the video or simply click on the picture.



With very best wishes,

All the staff and pupils at Cross Ash Primary.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSBU4rPHLU45Txe78rk1BA>

## Llanddewi Rhydderch News

Yes we are staying home here in Llanddewi **Rhydderch**, just going out to work in Pontypool at a health clinic, so the garden currently is much better organised than when we moved in. My dear husband has already suggested applying to the National Garden Scheme. We must not get ahead of ourselves! In the village, Thursday night involves ringing church bells and bashing saucepan lids nights for the NHS. which seems to have got a bit competitive. St Davids Church of course cannot be beaten but I gather The Old School House has finally got a bell to ring, and my husband and myself probably cannot be heard as we join in with our front door bell and a handbell. I use the handbell to call him in from the poly tunnel!

For anyone interested, Finn, the circuits' guy, is running a number of WhatsApp sessions. I gather it can be hilarious from the photo angles and sounds. If people wish to join in they can. There is a cost, and I think its fair to say it isn't for the beginner. Sam Tod has the details.

The village of Llanddewi has a **WhatsApp** group and quite honestly there is a huge amount of community support going on. From prescription collections to shopping, plant swapping, NHS bag making and take away recommendations. Many of the people on the group probably don't exactly know everyone, but the support is there.

In the village itself there is a Miss Summer. She seems to be a scarecrow type character who gets dressed up and moved about the village. One

never knows where she will turn up, outside the hall, phone box or on the slide!

*Caroline Grant Llanddewi coffee morning co-ordinator*

## WI News

Although the WI is in lockdown, like everyone else we continue to support each other. We have our national magazine delivered and contact with our local national and Gwent federation member, Mary Clarke, who keeps us in touch. She attended events we held last year during our centenary celebrations. She has recently called to check we are all alright. We must be grateful to the late Lady Ada Mather Jackson for starting our WI in 1919 and not 1920! At least we were able to have a really good year, last year, with twice as many events to our usual monthly meetings. It does give us a chance to reflect on our wonder year. I am putting together the Centenary Book and would welcome any more contributions of prose, poems, or photos of our centenary. If non members have a contribution for this, they would be welcome to send these to Lin, at the email address below.

Also for this year's record of WI, it would be so good to make a book of members' experiences, during the Coronavirus crisis. I am expecting a contribution from Jan O'Connor about a sparrow hawk, who fought and then ate a magpie in her urban garden! Not a normal event. What has happened to you? What has been different? How have you coped? Please send these contributions directly to me by email at [lin.tedit@btinternet.com](mailto:lin.tedit@btinternet.com).

So I do hope you have all been busy one way or another. I have been creating characters for story sacks for Blackmarsden Special School. Some local people in Holywell and Gwent WI members have been helping with this project. Now we are being asked to provide sacks for those working at Nevill Hall Hospital, to put their clothes straight into prior to washing. Should anyone want to help, the sacks just need to be pillow case size, with drawstring closure.

The other way members may wish to help is the Abergavenny Food Bank. Their requests for food and toiletries has doubled. There will be collections from 40 Holywell Crescent every second Wednesday from 29<sup>th</sup> April. These will be collected by the food bank at 12 noon. The volunteers are also requesting money, if people would rather donate that way. They realise people may not have spare food but may like to help this charity, who are doing such good work, to help those who are struggling. Cheques can be made out to Abergavenny Food bank and sent to Lin Morris at 7 Holywell Crescent, NP7 5LL.

No doubt many members are busy growing fruit and vegetables in their gardens. This is such a worthwhile way to spend your time. If you have a glut in the summer, perhaps we can share your extra produce? There are members who are unable to grow their own and would be pleased to have anything you can spare.

Once we are all together again, we will organise a wonderful meal, paid for by WI. Where and when is not yet clear!

Our WI has a reputation for music and singing and we have some very talented members! Most of whom know the song "We'll meet again, don't know where don't know when" very well. Our patron the Queen has suggested this is what we should remember at this time of crisis. So keep singing you super stars! We will sing it at our celebration meal together.

Keep safe and well, but do ask for help if you need it.

*Lin and your committed committee.*

## The Garden in May

Wandering around our garden I was reflecting the other day on the names of some of our favourite plants. We have a very pretty willow, *Salix 'Nancy Saunders'*. Who was Nancy Saunders? I have googled her and got lots of results but none seemed to fit. Was she a great breeder of plants? Another Iris is called *Graham Darby* – who was he? *Geranium 'Johnson's Blue'* who was Johnson? Many of these people spent years quietly producing plants that we now take for granted. They are the unsung heroes of the horticultural world.



Some of these people I do know about and fortunately even met. Helen Ballard along with her father Ernest and her husband Philip bred Hellebores. '*Ballard's Black*' is the most famous, but Helen, who began breeding in 1965, raised many forms of *Helleborus orientalis* in a huge range of colours including a good yellow. She then managed to produce a flower that did not hang down and had a more rounded shape. Names include '*Citron*', '*Ingot*', '*Yellow Button*', '*Blue Wisp*', and '*Philip Ballard*'. I remember visiting her at her home in Colwall where she had a bed of hellebores just under a north facing wall. She was quite an old lady by then, but she was very entertaining and generously let me have a few large pots of her wonderful hybrids. Sadly I left most of them in our garden in Worcestershire, where I hope they are still flourishing.

Marjorie Fish had a famous garden called East Lambrook Manor and *Artemesia 'Lambrook Silver'* was undoubtedly introduced by her. Captain Lawrence Johnston who created Hidcote Manor Garden, now owned by the National Trust was a great collector of plants amongst them Lavender Hidcote, and Rose '*Lawrence Johnston*'. Miss Willmott of Miss Willmott's Ghost also bred tree Peonies. Many old specimens are in a beautiful

garden called Spetchley which belonged to her nephew, John Berkeley. Graham Stuart Thomas was very much involved with the National Trust and has a wonderful modern shrub rose named after him. It is a good rich yellow and is scented. He was largely responsible for the planting of Mottisfont Abbey. Rose names are a minefield – who was Lady Hillingdon? She was introduced in 1910 and what about Madame Plantier 1835, or Frau Dagmar Hartopp 1914! Of course new roses are introduced all the time with lots of celebrities having roses named after them. I must do more research.

## Services in May

All of our services have been cancelled and all of our churches are closed. All Easter Vestries are postponed for a year but electoral roll forms can still be completed for processing after lock down.

..... and finally spare a thought for Della the donkey who was due to appear at Llanvetherine Church on Palm Sunday. Sadly, this never happened due to lockdown and poor old Della had to be told she had been furloughed!



You can keep in touch with what is happening in our church communities via our website [www.llantiliogroup.info](http://www.llantiliogroup.info)

Our website has the latest news, links to online resources for worship as well as information about all our churches.

We are also on Twitter @LlantilioG

*Contributions for the June issue of TNT by 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020  
Please send your emails to [lestaylor.taylor@gmail.com](mailto:lestaylor.taylor@gmail.com)*