

The New Times

June 2020

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



New life comes to Penrhos



***Residents of Llanvapley remember what they
were doing on VE Day***

From the Vicarage

How are you all I wonder? What are you missing at the moment? And who are you most looking forward to seeing once this lock-down is over?

For me, it's easy!

Every time I go into Abergavenny my friend is beckoning me, urging me to go closer and say hello.

This is not a two-legged friend, or even a four- legged one.

I look up at the Sugar Loaf mountain bathed in sunshine, and I long to be up there, wandering along the paths I know and love so well, sitting by the mountain stream listening to the sounds and the silence, and drinking in the beauty of the place.

Here in Monmouthshire we live in the border country, and from the summit, you can see over into England, and further into Wales.

The mountains that surround us are some of my best friends. They have seen so much, lived through so much history, and yet remain constant through it all. To me, and doubtless to countless others, they have provided solace and comfort in grief, as well as witnessed celebrations of love and joy.

But for now, I must remain down here, at the foot of the mountain, and wait for the time when the freedom is granted to climb the hills once more.

I suppose that one of the reasons that we long to see our friends - of whatever type - is that we know how precious time is: newly-made grandparents have yet to hold, cwtch and take in the scent of their longed-for grandchild; and all the while, time is marching on. Babies are not new-born for long - they grow, develop and change.

Children grow up so quickly, we want to treasure precious moments with them, gaze in wonder at the newness of them, delight in their ways.

There will come a time too, when my limbs will no longer be able to walk the hills I love so much.

But the truth is that we have always lived in some sort of lockdown, we just haven't realised it.

Our bodies are not always liberating places in which to live. Whether through age, accident or disease, they let us down, and we are limited by them. However well we try to look after them, they will inevitably restrict us.

St. Paul talks about our bodies as tents (he was a tent-maker after all!) - temporary coverings in which we live, which house our souls.

But just as on earth there will come a day when this lock-down is ended, when grandparents can meet and hug their grandchildren, when we can all enjoy the company of friends and family, when parties and celebrations will ring with the sound of laughter, when I can, once more, climb the mountains I love so much; so too, there will come an even greater liberation when we shall be freed from the bodies that restrict our souls, when our tents of flesh can be dismantled, and we can be free to roam in the heavenly country.

And, just as here in Monmouthshire, we live in the border land between England and Wales, so too, as people of faith, we live in the border country between earth and heaven.

Occasionally, when the veil is lifted, we are granted fleeting glimpses into that other country, and we can see beyond this mortal life.

Imagine the celebrations and rejoicing that await us in that great country, as we greet our loved ones once more, and we are in the company of the One who loves us beyond measure – it will be heaven indeed!

I will finish with these words which are inscribed a few miles from Aviemore in Speyside, Scotland:

'Let the Great Shepherd lead; and by winding ways not without green pastures and still waters, we shall rise insensibly, and reach the tops of the everlasting hills, where the winds are cool and the sight is glorious.'

May the Lord Bless you, and keep watch over you, and grant you his peace which passes all understanding, this day and forevermore.

Amen

Peace, health, and blessings be with you all.

Revd. Heidi Prince

Church Finances in the Lockdown

It will come as no surprise to be told that all our churches are still functioning despite being closed as a result of coronavirus. After all, our churches have been with us for centuries and have weathered all manner of storms, plagues and pestilence. However, we hear every day of the difficulties businesses, small and large, are facing and we are told some of them may not survive because of financial difficulties.

For each one of our churches to continue we have to keep paying the bills. These include insurance, electricity, churchyard maintenance, buildings maintenance and of course the biggest bill is the parish share, which is paid to the diocese. Our churches pay the bills by raising money in a variety of ways. Collections at services and covenants are the backbone of our finances. These are supplemented by legacies, one off donations and special fund raising activities such as plant sales, strawberry teas, open gardens and raffles.

At the moment there are no services and no fund raising activities so the only form of income is individual covenants.

Our churches are supported in many different ways by people who give their time and expertise for free. We are also aware that there are people in our parishes at the moment who have lost their jobs or have been furloughed and have seen a significant decrease in their incomes. However, if you would like to and are able to, your parish church would appreciate if you would consider setting up a covenant to help ensure your church is more financially resilient.

A covenant is like a standing order. Even a very small gift of a few pounds

per month will make an enormous difference to our finances, especially if it is Gift Aided. Please contact the treasurer of your parish church (details below) if you would like further information on how to set up a covenant.

Thank you to everyone who supports our churches.

Llantilio – Margaret Parry - elmsfarm@btconnect.com

Llanvetherine – David Hughes Jones - davidwhjones@btinternet.com

Llanvapley – Tom Lowes - thomasnlowes@gmail.com

Penrhos – Sally Adams - grangeorganics@hotmail.com

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>

Videos messages and written messages are being created for each Sunday. These are available by following the links on the home page of our website www.llantiliogroup.info

VE Day in our four parishes



The 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day was celebrated on the 8th May in a very subdued way. Many people made an effort to brighten up their villages but it wasn't quite the same. We were meant to have a church service in Llantilio to give thanks and there were supposed to be parties and celebrations. None of this happened but the thoughts of a number of people in our parishes were very much on that first VE Day on the 8th May 1945. For them VE Day is particularly special as they can remember what happened on the day itself. Revd. Peter Cobb from Tal-y-Coed, Anne Beavan from Llanvetherine and Jim Andrews from Llanvapley were asked to write their own accounts of the day and John Ingeldew from Llantilio wrote a special report for his grandchildren. Cross Ash School also included VE Day on its curriculum and asked children to write questions for Mrs Willis's (deputy headteacher) parents. I hope you enjoy reading these accounts which bring to life the events of 75 years ago.

Reminiscences, 75 years on

When War broke out, I was a second-year grammar school boy, in blazer, school cap and short trousers; when it was ending, I was on the point of leaving school altogether, more concerned - as is the way of most boys - with last minute revision of the irregular French verbs and Latin set books I was about to be examined in at A level, than with the fall of Berlin.

We were living in Bournemouth, a place devoid of the industries that the Luftwaffe were in the habit of searching out, and were therefore spared all but the few bombs casually jettisoned by German bombers making for home. We were surrounded by the signs of war: the beach was blockaded with barbed wire; barrage balloons, trailing the wires that were to trap low-flying aircraft, were all round the town; there were searchlights, probing the night sky; a total blackout was stringently imposed; what little traffic there was somehow crawled around at night with headlights reduced to a couple of narrow slits two inches long; and there was a rationing of foodstuffs that certainly kept the population thin. Life was much harder, of course, and death more imminent, in the great industrial cities, London most of all. But I have to say - it seems almost a betrayal of the war effort to say it - that in Bournemouth most people seemed, by 1945, to have got used to the War. The War was mostly somewhere else.

Nevertheless, when VE Day finally came - it was a Tuesday - the relief and excitement were felt everywhere, by us too. The splendid pictures of the revelry in London are, I imagine, familiar to everyone; but even we, in our little network of residential roads on the edge of the town, had our own decorous celebration. Some bottles of sherry were found from somewhere - wine was a rarity then - and a social occasion was organised in the road outside. I suppose there were a couple of dozen of us on that warm May evening. We ate, we drank - even I, though below the legal age at the time, was permitted a daring sherry - and we danced. We danced to the music of the 78's on the wind-up gramophone that someone had hauled out of their parlour. I remember so well the feel of the gravel underfoot as I blundered my way through the quicksteps, slow foxtrots and waltzes that were then the rage, often with a partner I barely knew. And the tunes! In the Mood, We'll meet Again, Smoke gets in your Eyes, the Tennessee Waltz, and all the rest. We weren't enough for the Conga, but we did do the Hokey Cokey, as we'd never done it before.

Then we retired to our polite little houses, I sat my A levels, and the War in the Far East ground on to its dreadful conclusion. But the exultation at being rid of Hitler at last had penetrated even into the recesses of Marks Road, Moordown, Bournemouth, Hants.

Peter Cobb, Tal-y-Coed

World War 2

This was started on my third birthday, September 3rd 1939. My father had been in the first world war, he, his brother, brother-in-law & his brother, four young farm workers enlisted in 1914, they were in the first hundred thousand volunteers. They all worked with horses & miraculously all four returned home in 1918.

Dad was very 'with it' in the second world war. He was a member of the ARP & every evening he would sit by the window watching the planes. He would say "Swansea is having it tonight, or Bristol is being bombed", as to the direction he could see the sky lighting up.

I went to Abergavenny to school carrying my gas mask. When we were waiting for the bus we would see American convoys going past. They would throw us chewing gum and chocolate.

Our houses were all blacked out at night, black blinds over the windows. One night a bomb dropped on the B4521 at the bottom of the Skirrid drive, an enormous crater & shrapnel was blown as far as the village. Next morning all the villagers went over to see the bomb hole but at midday a delayed action bomb went off in the next field. A German plane who hadn't dropped off all his bombs in Swansea saw the light of a farmer looking at his lambing ewes. My mother was worried when the second bomb exploded in case anyone was over there, she ran over and found Taffy the policeman lying on his back under the hedge. He said "Duw duw Mrs Maddy I thought I was a gonner"

When Rudolph Hess's plane came down in Scotland he was captured and brought as a prisoner to Maidiff Court, when we were all children we often saw him going up Bryn Y Gwenin with an officer beside him and two armed guards behind. He would lean on the gate and watch us children playing in the fields. Needless to say, my father told us Hess was Hitler's right hand man. He also walked up to Whitecastle with his armed guard.

I remember an Indian military camp in the field at the top of the village, we walked among the tent and spoke to the Indian soldiers.

VE day was a great celebration, flags in the village hall (The Assembly Room as we called it then), and a tea party for all the Parish. Somehow in spite of rationing there was plenty of food. Rationing hadn't been too bad for country folk; we had our own pork, bacon, chicken eggs and butter from the house cow and we made our own bread. Tea coffee and sugar were rather short and we didn't see any foreign fruit. Llanvetherine parishioners celebrated VE day in the school, next door to the Blacksmith's shop.

Trevor's father was worried after the bomb at Llanddewi Skirrid so sent his wife and the two boys to stay with the family at Llanigon. The first night they were there a bomb dropped in the churchyard! The Golden Valley was an ammunition dump and the plane was trying to bomb it.

Every evening we listened to the news on an old battery wireless and heard where the bombing had been the night before. There was no television in those days to tell us how many had died each day or which buildings had been destroyed.

Anne Beavan, Llanvetherine

Victory in Europe 1945

I have many memories of World War II. The strongest is of the morning of 3th September 1939, I was approaching my ninth birthday at that time. It was a Sunday morning when I listened, with my parents, to Mr Chamberlain on the wireless announce that Herr Hitler had not replied to his communique and therefore we were at war with Germany. It didn't frighten me, rather I was excited, especially as my passion for aeroplanes had already begun.

We lived, during the war, on the very outskirts of Newcastle, a few more paces and we were walking along farm tracks. A farmer with a very large field gave a few of us permission to fly our models on his field, but always with the caution that we were not to fly when the bull, the black one he explained was in the field. We knew the bull was very big, black and terrifying! There was also the local manor house, called I think Cochrane Park Hall, which in 1942 was taken over by the "Yanks". There was only about a dozen of them and I still do not know what their mission was, they allowed us to play in the grounds of the old house, but if we put ourselves in danger, too far up a tree, we would be gently remonstrated with in a voice like Cary Grant's or Spencer Tracy's. I'd better get on to VE Day, but I am painting the picture. That morning a few of us, (no school that day), went to see what the Americans were doing and they were almost wrapping the hall in flags of America and Great Britain, the trees were festooned in red white and blue bunting and the beginnings of a bonfire had been laid, One of the soldiers told us to go back to our "mommies" and not come back until 4 o'clock, and so, a day filled with expectation. At 4 o'clock precisely about 20 plus youngsters arrived at the old hall and a wonderland. Everything was decorated in the Stars & Stripes and the Union Flag, in front of the hall there was a line of trestle tables covered in paper flags and on the tables "candies" and chocolate. Cakes and large bowls of jellies bottles of pop (probably Coca- cola) and my favourite American delicacy, Kraft cheese slices in sandwiches. We could eat as much as we liked and come and go to the table, no parents to supervise us. I don't think any of the children had seen a bonfire and certainly not one 20 feet high, one of the soldiers brought an effigy of Adolf in a wheelbarrow and deftly threw it to the top of the bonfire. Remember we had Double British Summer Time and were in the North of England, so I think it got dark later, but when twilight arrived the fire, probably soaked in gasoline, was lit and we all cheered. Then a space was cleared of children and three soldiers lit fireworks, I think they were all military munitions and they made great bangs, frightening a few of the children. I nearly forgot, music was boomed out of a loudspeaker and occasionally interrupted by speeches from politicians. Then my Father arrived to take me home, all the Americans addressed him by the title Sir and he had his first glass of coke! The Americans explained that they would be going home soon, and it seemed as if they left within a few days. The

Hall was empty for a short while, then it was bulldozed leaving a huge pile of rubble, very little wood and we children knew what had happened to that! The old house and grounds were fenced off and large “Keep Out” notices erected. We did so miss our “Yank” friends.

Jim Andrews, Llanvapley

To my grandchildren - Memories from the Second World War 1939-1945

I was five when war was declared. I remember the news on my grandfather's wireless (it wasn't called a radio until later), which was in a wooden cabinet about two feet (60 cms) tall and everyone sat around it to listen to the horrifying news.

My father, your great grandfather, came home from India to join up with the army, which is a separate subject in itself. My mother was in the St.John's Ambulance Brigade, a nursing organisation, which took a large private house called Miskin Manor as a convalescent hospital where wounded soldiers came to recover. I went to a local prep-school called St.John's near Porthcawl for a while until the danger of Germans landing passed, when Hitler decided that he would be unable to cross the English Channel.

Food was rationed because much of what we eat comes from overseas and the German U-boats (submarines) were sinking many food and petrol ships at the time. A very clever man, Lord Woolton, designed the rations so that no one ever starved but no one got fat either. We used to mix the butter and margarine rations together, put some on a piece of toast and then scrape most of it off. Small children did not know what bananas looked like until after the war. Towards the end of the war a ship load of oranges was torpedoed in the Bristol Channel. People rushed down with suitcases to pick up the oranges that were washing up on the beaches. There were no plastic bags because plastic had not yet been invented.

In 1940 and 1941 the German bombing did a lot of damage and killed a lot of people. My mother and I lived in my grandparents' house, Tregarth, in a small village in Glamorgan where I used to play with the children in the village and had a very happy time. I spoke to my old friend the village grocer's son only last week, who is now 87. The people who worked for my grandfather worked very hard to dig a deep hole in which to put a concrete air-raid shelter. When we heard the air-raid sirens in the middle of the night we all went into the shelter in our dressing gowns. It was very damp and smelt of wet concrete, but everyone kept their spirits up by singing songs like “She'll be coming round the mountain when she comes”. We were lucky to live in the countryside because a lot of damage and death was done in the big cities like London. It was called the blitz. Dorothy, my beloved step-mother, with whom I went to live when my mother died after the war, was a nurse in a mobile operating theatre in Chelsea. She had many stories of the

blitz.

The USA joined us to fight the Germans and the countryside was filled with American troops. They brought wonderful things with them, like silk stockings for the girls and beautiful packets of sweet biscuits and chewing gum for the boys like me. Children in the streets were shouting "Got any gum chum" to the Americans.

I went to prep-school at Sandroyd in Dorset in 1943 and on D-day in 1944, when the Americans and ourselves crossed the Channel to liberate France, I saw the most amazing sight out of the window. The sky was covered with Dakotas (American airplanes) towing gliders full of troops going to land in Normandy.

When eventually the Germans surrendered in May 1945 every village and town streets held street parties to celebrate. I remember the wonderful party in Creigiau given by the mothers for the children. All the children were given a present out of their houses because there were no things to buy in the shops. I gave away nearly all my children's books.

Sadly the war against Japan was still going on and did not end until the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki in August 1945.

After the end of the war Britain was very poor because the war had cost so much and food was very short. For some years rationing was even tighter than it had been under Lord Woolton. At school we were given a small tin with our tiny sweet ration every week. There were so few that they became a sort of currency: money; we kept them and swapped for things that we wanted from other boys. They got rather hairy! The first parents day saw all the old motor cars that had come out of storage because there was no petrol in the war. We boys thought that they were wonderful.

Eventually everything got back to peacetime normality.

John Ingledeu, Llantilio Crossenny

Cross Ash School VE Day Questions to one of their teacher's parents Mr and Mrs Parker

How did you feel when it was announced that the war was over?

Everyone was excited so I just joined in. (Mr P)

I didn't even know it was announced because I was out camping! I had no idea until I got home! (Mrs P)

Where were you on VE Day?

I was still in Amersham because although the war was over in Europe it still wasn't safe to go home to London.

I was camping with the scouts but was back for the parties.

What sort of celebrations were there?

We had a massive bonfire in the back garden. All the neighbours came around. We had an outside loo and used to use newspaper for toilet paper but we actually ran out of newspaper because everyone was using our loo!

I went to a party when I got home. It was in the road where I lived, called Wilfred Road.

What types of foods were eaten?

Everything had to be homemade such as cakes and sandwiches. But there was still a lack of eggs and milk so we just had to use what was in the cupboard.

I remember a lot of sandwiches!

Did you have to do anything to help get ready for the celebrations?

Getting in the way like children do!

No!

What was the first “treat” food you remember having after the end of rationing?

A Banana

Bananas and oranges because they weren't readily available. Sweets were the very last thing to come off rationing

All questions were written by children at Cross Ash School

Llantilio Crossenny News

Meet our Llantilio bellringers!

In order to try to encourage more of you to take up the ancient tradition of church bellringing (campanology) here are profiles of two of our ringing team. Margaret has entitled her piece 'Full circle' This is followed by a profile of Lynda who is one of our newest ringers.

Turning 70, two years ago we decided to embark on a new adventure, and moved from the outskirts of Abergavenny to Mill Cottage in Llantilio Crossenny. I became aware of the bell ringing group at the church plant sale and decided to go along just as an observer.

My previous experience had been as a teenager in a village in Devon where my father was church warden. For a few years my sister and several friends were 'roped' in to make up the numbers. There wasn't much to do in the late 50s / early 60s in a very sleepy village far from anywhere.



When I observed the bells in Llantilio it wasn't long before I was persuaded to have a go. It was quite exciting to rediscover after 50 years what I thought were forgotten skills. It took a while to 'get back into the swing' but it soon became an important part of my weekly routine. There is a wide range of abilities in the group from absolute beginners to me bumping along to those with years of experience that they are happy to share. So far I have rung for one wedding and joined the group on a ringing tour around Herefordshire. Our horizons are unlimited!

Just as important as the bell ringing are the friendships I have made. The drink at the pub after practice is not compulsory but great fun and part of the whole experience (partners are also welcomed).

The bells at Llantilio are great to ring and we get a real sense of achievement when we all know we have rung well together and made a great sound. The bells here are lightest and the easiest to ring in the area but going to Grosmont and Skenfrith churches (where we meet our friends from other towers) on a dark winter evening has its own special quality.

I am really missing my Tuesday evenings practice during lockdown and our monthly Sunday ringing. We don't know when we will be able to restart but I will definitely be there, brushing up a rusty skill once again.

Margaret Slater

Hi my name is Lynda and I am very new to bellringing. It all started with a chance meeting with members of the Llantilio bellringing team on New Year's Eve at The Red Hart. 'Come along and give it a go' they said and I thought 'Why not'. I found it quite addictive and after a few sessions I finally found a bit of rhythm. I love the instant friendship and the banter that breaks out during the breaks between ringing. And I am very interested in the 12 week course that was discussed so I can improve my knowledge and skill. My practice sessions have only been at the very beautiful Llantilio Church but I look to forward visiting Grosmont and Skenfrith in the future.



I live in Llanvapley having only moved there just over a year ago. I am a manager for Lloyds Pharmacy so there has been no pause for lockdown, in fact it's been busier than ever and we have had to adapt to new ways of working. But I did make one decision during the lockdown and that was to get a kitten. He is called Banksy and has been great company and stops me worrying about how different the world is at the moment. Post lockdown I only have one ambition and that's to see family. My grandson is so desperate to see and play with Banksy. He's 12 years old today (24th May) and it will be the first birthday I've missed. He broke his arm a few weeks ago and I think a cuddle from Nanna will definitely help!



Lynda Caster

to a wider audience. It's been a huge success thus far, with scarecrows popping up all over the village! Judging will take place 1st June. There will be a 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize for best entries. Who knows, perhaps this will become an annual summer event!

Nicola Evans



One of the traditional hobbies in the north of England is being a pigeon fancier, someone who takes part in the **sport of pigeon racing**. Pigeon fanciers regularly send their birds to distant parts of the country and release them and then wait for their beloved birds to return. Here is a story sent in by Neal Smith, a Llanvapley resident, which will touch the hearts of any pigeon fanciers out there!

'Recently, I located a rather pucker'd out racing pigeon in our copse. With the enticement of raw rice, water, good company and a warm box, the splendid chap waddled into our cottage, where I was able to inspect him for injuries.

Thankfully he was in good condition and on his left leg, he had a tag with all the details of his owner. On contacting the owner, he yelped with joy, as I had found his prize bird, Kevin. The owner initially suggested that I should feed up Kevin and then proceed to take him to the highest nearby ground and let him go.

On setting him free on The Blorange, I waved off Kevin. On returning to our cottage, Kevin was waiting on the doorstep!

On further discussions and chuckling with the owner, it was agreed that the owner's son, would travel from 'up north' and collect Kevin.

Thankfully last week, with a copious amount of social distancing, Kevin returned to his home in the north.'

Many people in the village have been sharing produce during lockdown. Surplus eggs have been very popular. This has included duck eggs as well as the more usual hen eggs. Nicola Evans of Brookside has been sharing her duck eggs for some time without too many surprises. This was until a batch was sent to Sarah Woodall who is now the proud owner of a collection of **baby ducklings!**



During the lockdown, walking has become a more popular way of taking daily exercise in Llanvapley. The roads in the area are generally quiet, but care has to be taken at all times. The village currently has a 30mph speed limit which is generally well observed particularly by locals but this is not always the case. Following messages on the local WhatsApp group, letters were sent to the community council and the county council asking for their support in helping make it safer to walk through the village. On 15th May a letter was received from the council which said '*..... in order to try and encourage lower travelling speeds through the village, that advisory 20mph speed limit signs are erected at appropriate locations through the village. Therefore, I have requested our traffic engineers to arrange for these works to be carried out as soon as practicable. Unfortunately, I am unable to provide specific timescales on completion, as I am aware signing manufacturers are currently engaged in producing personal protective equipment for NHS and others.*' This news has been well received in the village and thanks go to everyone who has helped to make this happen.

During May, the sad news was received of the death of former Llanvapley resident, **Jim Sharp**. Jim came to the village with his family in 1993 and took over the running of the Red Hart Inn. Jim lived in Llanvapley until 2019.

Penrhos News

I would like to send belated congratulations on the golden wedding anniversary of **John and Anne Biggs** of Pentwyn Farm Penrhos. Their anniversary was on 9th May.

Yvonne Phillips



Penrhos is very quiet at the moment but for those of you who are able to visit the village you will be delighted to see the **churchyard** still looks beautiful with wild flowers for the bees and butterflies and we have fly catchers nesting in one of the trees by the phone box. *Pip Rumsey*

The excellent photograph of **two nuthatches** which appears on the cover of this month's TNT was taken by Mat Burhouse who lives in Penrhos. I am sure we would all agree that the lockdown has brought us all closer to wildlife and nature. Here is the story about how Mat took the photograph. Pictured on the right is another of Mat's nature shots.

'I built five bird boxes a few years ago and they were all used by blue tits straight away. Last year a



woodpecker went around every box and pecked at the holes to make them bigger so I didn't think they would get used again. However the nuthatches filled up the hole on this box with mud and moved in. We can see this box from the house so noticed some activity. I set up my tripod about 10ft away and didn't even have to hide as the birds weren't bothered by my presence so it didn't take very long until I got the shot. I am very lucky to live in a place where all of this wildlife is in my garden.'

Llanvetherine News

News has been received that **Jo Sobik** of Brookside died on Monday 12th May after many years of illness during which he was lovingly cared for by his wife, Janet. A small private burial at Cwmerra Chapel on Saturday 23th May.

Work to install a **water supply** into the churchyard in Llanvetherine has frustratingly come to a halt because of lockdown, but is actually nearly done.

There are several **takeaway outlets** now which might be of interest to all the parishes: Crabtree Catering, as previously reported, the Hunter's Moon, and Red Castle Nursery.

Gardens throughout the four parishes have been suffering more than ever this year with rabbits! The photograph of a Llanvetherine garden on the right demonstrates that the rabbits don't eat everything!



Mighty May frost at White Castle Vineyard

Frost in May is something we don't need in the vineyard, however overnight on Monday 11th May and in the early hours of Tuesday 12th May temperatures plummeted to minus 1.3 degrees and Jack Frost swept through our vineyard.

Days before I had shared on social media that our robust Rondo grapevine was well ahead of the game. Needless to say our hopes for the season were seriously dented with roughly 70% damage across the vineyard.

Our 12 month old vines which were planted in May 2019 were 100% frost damaged in an



adjacent field. There was no plan to harvest these young vines this year, however the damage may have pushed a small harvest in 2021 back a further 12 months. Once the day had dawned and the sun shone it was plain to see that Rondo in particular had been worst hit. Pinot Noir however had much less frost damage. We don't know why this was the case as this is generally difficult to grow anywhere. Our thoughts are that the Pinot Noir bud burst and unfurling of the vine leaves had been at least a week to ten days behind the Rondo and so there was less shoot length for Jack Frost to damage. But there is no rhyme or reason as to how the frost swept the vineyard. We are always aware of the risk of frost, however it doesn't make it any easier to accept. The impact of frost damage this year will not be realised until 2022 as the process from grape to glass generally takes two years for red wines such as Rondo.

On a positive note, two weeks after the event we can now see regeneration of secondary buds bursting, these however will only produce a small amount of fruit. These buds are important as some may be required as fruiting canes next year.

Our workload doesn't reduce as the vines still need care and attention. Over the coming months our main tasks are bud rubbing and removing lateral shoots from the main trunk of the vine below the fruiting zone, along with tucking in the growing canopy between the trellising wires. This work continues until the end of August when we focus on leaf removal to allow maximum sunshine to the grapes ahead of harvest.

Talking of harvest 2020 this usually takes place end of September into October and many make light work! We are always looking for volunteers. Social distancing will be a challenge but we will have these measures in place.

Covid-19 Update The vineyard is and remains closed to visitors. However, online sales and collection from the Cellar Door are available with social distancing measures in place. Free delivery within the NP7 postcode for wines purchased directly from ourselves (not online) on 01873 821443.

Other News

During the lockdown there have been a number of email scams which have targetted vulnerable people. The aim of these emails is often to steal money or information. A couple of weeks ago a number of people received emails which appeared to be from Revd. Heidi. The emails said 'you should not try to ring me as you normally do' but insisted you should reply directly to the email. I am sure we all spotted this as a scam but sometimes scams are more plausible. Thank you to Andrew Meek of Bryn Deri who has put together this guide on how we should all be taking greater care with technology – including the vicar!

Take care with Technology

Trojans - Sometimes, you might find that you receive an email from someone you think you know and trust... but they did not send it nor know anything about it. It might have “Joe Bloggs” clearly as the sender and your genuine name/email as the recipient. It might just have a link for you to click with either nothing written or a short sentence that doesn't make sense. You should be “smelling a rat” and if so – do NOT click the link – delete the email. Looking at the sender's email details (usually in brackets), you will get a better clue if it is genuine or not. If you click on the link, it will almost certainly download something on to your PC and a ‘trojan virus’ which will quietly find your address book and send the details back to a spybot. Then it will send some or all of your contacts a message and try and get them to click the link. Each time, it might be leaving something behind in someone else's computer looking for passwords etc to also send back. It works the same way as a virus – but enough said about that!

Passwords - You may have heard that Easyjet recently got hacked and nine million customer details were stolen. Let's say you have used Easyjet and set up an account with them, if a computer has stolen these details, it might set about guessing that you have used your email and the same password with someone else e.g. Waitrose, Tesco, HSBC bank etc. Nowadays many websites will have a second level of authentication which makes it much safer but if they don't a computer will try thousands of combinations of your details to see if it gets into other websites. This is how you might find money missing from your account or items purchased apparently by you. You are always being watched as to what you are doing.

You can help - Change your passwords regularly. Don't use the same password for different sites. Make the passwords complex or meaningless. So rather than “JoeBloggs123” use upper/lower case, no words or dates and do use symbols. You simply cannot trust websites or suppliers not to use your data or get hacked themselves. It is just a question of time. If you have accounts with WhatsApp, Google, Instagram, TikTok, Youtube etc – none of these can be fully trusted and most are owned by Google. Google then sends your data (whether you like it or not to DeepMind (Google owned). They are watching you, your interests, your buying patterns and so on and the data is extremely valuable. Google/YouTube will even pull down videos or articles if it thinks you are denigrating the WHO (World Health Organisation) or even advocating the non use of a COVID vaccine. Others are trying to apply control all the time. If you have a smart speaker like Amazon's “Alexa” or “Siri”– you will find it is actually listening to your conversation 24/7. You might for instance be talking about Face Cream with someone in the room then you might find the next time you Google something, you see an ad for Er Face Cream! Ever happened to you? It

is not coincidence

Social media is wonderful but people give far too much away. TikTok for instance is loved by young people but it does come with a 13 minimum age requirement. Sometimes people don't always tell the truth about their age. Depending on the way it is set up, you might unwittingly be sending photos of you, your house, your location to another user who you may not be aware is watching. Be very careful. Facebook is a great place where people tag articles which then spread like wild fire, no one checks the facts independently. Great way to spread fake news and it works brilliantly well hence it is used by those who might have dark motives. Keep your antivirus up to date as well as your Windows or Apple updates.

You could just ditch your smartphone, throw your PC under a steam roller but you probably won't .. because "it is all too convenient". Perhaps, it should have "666" marked on the back of each device?

Andrew Meek

Cross Ash School News

Half term is upon us as I write this and we are still unable to open school physically but school is still very much open for all our pupils! Staff are working hard to deliver the learning online to all pupils and this continues to be very well received. We are trying to post some



examples of what we have been getting up to via our Twitter page and some of our work has been retweeted by the famous children's author Pie Corbett! This caused much excitement.

This month has seen us take part in a world record attempt to create the largest ever online art lesson, we have engaged in Mental Health Awareness Week activities and we are ready and waiting for the 30 Days Wild project to begin in June with the Wildlife Trust. We are also undertaking a wonderful art project which has been organised by Miss John and Miss Trott. This will involve creating a collage of self portraits in rainbow colours to be displayed in school on our return.

As ever we are sad that we cannot be with the children but safety is always uppermost in our thoughts. We are continually being asked when we might open and we have no answer to that question as yet. We tell the children to simply take each day as it comes and enjoy what each day brings.

On the right there are some examples of home learning from different year groups. What talented, dedicated children we have!

With very best wishes,

All the staff and pupils at Cross Ash Primary.



WI News

Many WI members will remember a recent visit from Jenny Knight from Birmingham University. Jenny is doing a PhD and she is studying 'Trees and Flooding in the Trothy Catchment Area'. Jenny would like to provide an update for WI members and other people she has met in the area. Here is her report and a photograph showing the part of the catchment area.



I wished to contact the WI as I had said that I would give you (and the community) an update on the PhD project as it progressed, and I know we'd hoped to arrange an update for the WI this summer Lin.

Firstly, I hope you and your families are both well and safe in what I can only say has been an unbelievable set of circumstances this year. I am safe, missing my family, but lucky in many regards, my partner and I have survived being locked away together in Malvern with the dog. I am aware when I email this that

this is not the case for many.

I had hoped to be about the catchment area throughout this year however, given the serious nature of the floods earlier this year, and the current scenario, the best thing I could do was stay away! I have spent very little time in catchment, and certainly recently have been locked away at home...

As you can imagine this has had a real impact on the project, as the values and knowledge of participants is so important, and I have obviously not been able to stay in touch as planned. However, the project does continue, if not in the manner I would have liked. I was very lucky to have a great deal of support last year, both from participants in the project but also the wider community, and this has been ongoing with people getting in touch with photographs and data both about tree planting and the behaviour of the river this year.

I have been working away on the more computer heavy side of the project, looking at computer models of the catchment; how knowledge of the catchment and land manager preferences can be mapped and modelled in alternative scenarios, and the impact of these on the behaviour of the river.

A model however is still a model, being context dependent, output specific and having inherent uncertainties (my example is always that a wax model of an apple may give you an excellent idea of what an apple looks like, and it has its uses but it wouldn't be a good idea to eat it!)

As the project is orientated around the importance of the local, community and land manager knowledge on planning and managing landscapes (specifically treescapes) for water, this model will only be half (at best) of the story. So I will be back, in some form or another, to ensure that this is all tested, queried and 'ground-truthed' against what land managers and the wider community think about it...

Whilst I'd love to do this in person, that can only happen when I can guarantee the safety of everyone involved, it may be that some online versions may take place, or be the way to stay in touch.. but I hope to work this out in time

The Garden in June

The roses are about to burst into action, Rosa Ispahan being the first to arrive, aquilegias are flowering along with Iris sibirica – particularly 'Silver Edge' which is far superior to the normal Iris Sibirica, and Geranium 'Johnson's Blue', G. pratense 'Mrs Kendall Clark' and G. Roxanne are all about to flower in the blue border. We lost a lot of plants this winter, probably because of the extreme wet. All the campanulas have disappeared as has Cirsium rivulare 'Atropurpureum' which was a really good 'doer'. It looks a bit like a dark red thistle with an upright habit and did not need staking. I have a very good viola, viola 'Huntercombe Purple', which has been flowering for weeks and weeks and is still going strong. It was a present from a friend and I hope to take some cuttings later this year as I am not sure it will come true from seed.

Talking of seed, all the seeds I sowed early on in the year are either in the flower beds and flourishing, or else they are waiting, having been pricked out and put in small pots waiting for warmer nights and the danger of frost to go away. Nicotiana – tobacco plants, Digitalis Grandiflora – a yellow foxglove, Cosmos bipinnatus ‘Sonata White’ and Cobaea scandens - Cathedral Bell cup and saucer Vine (which is a first for me), are going to be planted by the weekend and fill any gaps in the border. I have not quite decided where to put the Cobea yet, but it needs a sunny position and something to climb up. Annuals are good fillers and can flower for months on end.

With the lockdown still continuing in Wales it has been extremely difficult to get plants. I know that you can order online, but there is a world of difference ordering online to actually going into a nursery or garden centre and choosing plants to put in your pots. I have managed to order some plants from Parkers and they have all arrived bar some hostas which they could not supply. I bought five honeysuckle Ionicera serotina to scramble in our hedge and so far they look ok.



Iris Silver Edge

Having reeled off a whole lot of Latin names it is interesting to know what they mean. Pratensis means ‘growing in meadows’ hence the Geraniums which are really hybrids of cranesbills. Rivularis means ‘brook loving’ which is curious, perhaps the rabbits ate my Cirsium? Bipinnatus or rather Pinnatus means resembling a feather in structure, presumably ‘bipinnatus’ means it is twice cut – perhaps there are some Latin scholars amongst you who could put me right? Lastly scandens means scandent or growing upward. It is always useful to look at the names of plants, it often gives us clues as to where to plant them and what conditions they like.

Services in June

All of our services have been cancelled
and all of our churches are closed.

You can keep in touch with what is happening in our church communities
via our website **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**

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