

The New Times

September 2020

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



Do you ever get the feeling you are being watched!



Sunflowers - but this is not France but Llanvapley

From the Vicarage

The evenings are noticeably drawing in. The children are going back to school for Autumn Term. Long queues at shoe shops are going round the block. People are obviously doing their best to work towards some sort of normality, perhaps with a hint of weariness. Nearer home, efforts to pass muster to reopen St Mabli's in Llanvapley are proving much more difficult than we anticipated, but we have learned that we have this in common with several churches in the Deanery. We will get there, but in the meantime thoughts about our annual festivals of appreciation for the earth's bounty would seem to have to remain just that. Probably we'll need to ease back in by opening one church to begin with, and then the others as we find how best to negotiate the rules.

During an address a Bishop once remarked about the comfort that the cycle of church seasons can bring — and I think really that has been brought home to us this year. But we can still take comfort that the seasons of Creation are marvels in themselves, and each brings qualities for which we are truly thankful. And so, some things haven't changed — our Bramley apple tree and our quince tree have done us proud this year, and because of all the time we had to prepare our vegetable beds we have enjoyed some tasty yields and been able to appreciate them more. While we cannot gather together (or decorate our churches as in this photograph) to show our communal appreciation for '...the good things around us that are sent from Heaven above...', we can take our own private opportunities to give thanks for the wondrous bounty that, thanks to the farmers in our own community and beyond, we can continue to enjoy. And the value of that is beyond measure. 'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.' Galatians 6:9



All blessings
Andrew

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.

Llantilio Crossenny News

Llantilio Bell Ringers are still unable to ring as the church is still closed. The advice from the bell ringing association has been recently updated and the news is more positive for a return to some form of ringing once the church reopens. The latest guidance says once services restart, ringing must be limited to 15 minutes in duration, 2m social distancing, strict hand hygiene, 72 hours between ringing sessions, anyone with symptoms should not attend and a full risk assessment must be approved by the vicar. The ringers meeting on Tuesday 1st September to discuss drawing up a risk assessment. Only 3 bells could be rung at any one time but perhaps this will be enough to welcome the congregation back to Llantilio.



Llanvapley News

Llanvapley Church has a **safeguarding policy** which ensures that everyone who is involved in church activities is made safe and welcome. The policy is reviewed annually and there is a new notice in the church porch which explains the policy. The latest set of accounts have also been published and once again appear on the church notice board inside the porch.

In the August edition of TNT a number of **church chairs** were put up for sale. The church has recently replaced them with more modern stackable aluminium chairs. We are pleased to announce that all of the chairs have found new homes. From Llanover to Leeds in fact. However, three of the chairs are still in Llanvapley which is good to know. Thank you to everyone who has supported the church and we are pleased to announce that £230 was raised for church funds.

To everyone's surprise the church and the **churchyard** survived Storm Francis and all the trees are still standing. The churchyard has a number of interesting trees including an ancient yew tree which has a girth of nearly 20 feet. At the front of the church is a massive blue Atlas cedar which is native to the Atlas Mountains in Morocco! Not sure how it ended up in Llanvapley!

Llanvapley Church has made an application to the **Community Green Energy Advisory Group** for funding for a project to improve public access to and appreciation of the churchyard. The Community Green Energy Advisory Group distributes £70,000 annually to support communities in the Llanarth Fawr, Grosmont and Llantilio Crossenny community council areas. The church would like to improve the footpaths around the church, install seating and lighting in the churchyard and improve the safety of the steps into the churchyard.



The two pictures above show **Llanvapley Church tower**. The one of the left was taken in 2020, the one on the right was taken in 2006. Since 2006 the lovely 'cappuccino' colour of the lime wash has weathered. Lime wash protects the underlying stones and is meant to deteriorate. The coping stones at the top of the tower have lost their lime wash and emergency repairs have been needed to ensure the structure is safe and to prevent water getting into cracks which causes frost damage. Thanks go to Nathan Marsh (pictured) who completed this work at the end of August. The Parochial Church Council has plans to replace the coping stones but has been unable to raise the necessary funds.



Who is Ben Bowker? In our four parishes we are blessed with quiet lanes and peaceful footpaths which have enabled many people to keep active in lockdown. More and more people have taken up physical activity and many of you have been running around the lanes of Llanvapley. How do I know this? The answer is because I have an app on my phone which shows a list of people who have been running up and down Ty-Tac Lane in Llanvapley. This is where I discovered Ben Bowker, who has been given the title 'Local Legend' for completing the Ty-Tac Lane run 24 times in the last 90 days! If you are a



runner, you might have already realised that all this information is available on the Strava app. Ben's profile on Strava shows him running (what else) so I have added his picture to this report in the hope of solving the mystery 'Who is Ben Bowker?' There is a local running group which meets weekly and runs around the four parishes. Contact TNT if you want more details.

The August Bank Holiday weekend saw the reopening of **The Red Hart**. Everyone is delighted to see the pub reopen and Paul and Leah are looking forward to welcoming everyone back. The pub is now serving food. Tables have been set up inside at social distances. The garden is now fully open with picnic tables, a marquee and umbrellas in case it rains.



The **Llanvapley Sports and Social Association** has contacted the council about the tree which has fallen across the brook next to the playing field. The tree is just below the water treatment works. The tree is quite a large tree and would require professional help to remove it. The LSSA leases the land from the council. The terms of the lease state 'Not without the council's previous written consent to cut down or injure any trees, plants, bushes or hedges'. It is therefore not clear if the LSSA is responsible for any trees if it needs permission to cut them down. The lease has an annual cost of £40 and removing the tree would cost the LSSA more than £500.

Congratulations to Ollie! – Ollie is the nephew of Lizzie Jones of Lingen Cottage, Llanvapley. (both pictured on the right) Despite leaving school in Hertfordshire during lockdown and missing his A level exams, the leavers prom and his first 'boys holiday' Ollie gained ABB in his A Levels and has been offered his first choice of going to Cardiff University studying Business & Logistics! Despite living in England all his life, Ollie is Welsh to the core and has dreamed about studying in Wales for years. He has already booked himself in for Auntie Lizzie's lasagne here at Lingen Cottage and is looking forward to having a few drinks with Uncle Neal at the Red Hart! Our boy is coming home.



Congratulations are also due to Lizzie herself. Lizzie completed a **floristry course** over the last few months in Abergavenny. The picture on the right shows a lovely floral display on her garden table overlooking Llanvapley. Lizzie is delighted that lockdown has awoken 'her creative side'. Lizzie has already been 'headhunted' by the Llanvapley Church Flower team!



Many people in Llanvapley will be aware that **Doug and Jane Rutter** have recently left the village. Doug and Jane have lived in the village for many years and raised their family here. I am sure we all wish them every happiness in their new home and hope to see them back in the pub soon! Llanvapley now welcomes **Lewis Simpson and Olivia Woolley** as the new residents of Swn-y-Nant. Lewis is from Abergavenny and Olivia is from Chepstow and have been very busy sorting things out since arriving just before the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Llanvetherine News

Congratulations to **Shirley and David Hughes-Jones** who celebrated their Ruby Wedding anniversary on 9th August. Many congratulations to them both from all their family and friends.

Following their quinquennial inspection **Llanvetherine PCC** is looking to find urgent funds towards repair of tower masonry. The PCC would very grateful if villagers would again consider a regular covenant to help keep the church safe and open.

Hot on the heels of a successful Welsh Wine Week 2020 Robb and Nicola Merchant owners of **White Castle Vineyard** share their latest great, grape, news.

White Castle Vineyard Sparkling White Wine Vintage 2017 is awarded a Silver medal at The Wines of Great Britain annual competition.

The wines were judged at Ashling Park Estate, West Sussex

The 2020 Wine GB judging panel comprised Co-Chairs Susie Barrie MW and Oz Clarke MBE and Rebecca Palmer wine buyer.

With strict Covid - 19 measures in place the three judges deliberated all 281 entries over 5 days.

Triumph also for White Castle Vineyard Rosé vintage 2019 awarded a Bronze medal at The Wine GB Awards 2020.

Robb and Nicola would like to thank everyone for their continued custom during these past few months, new and returning visitors to their website for on-line purchases have been a saviour to our family business. A warm welcome awaits all those who have yet to discover White Castle Vineyard. We are offering conducted vineyard tours at 11.30 & 3pm with social distancing our priority. Platter Lunches served however booking advised.



Penrhos News



I would like to thank everyone who sponsored me for having my hair cut. So far I have raised £240 for the Little Princess Trust. I have had 30cm (nearly a foot) of hair chopped off and donated it to the Little Princess Trust who are based in Hereford. They make free wigs for children and young people up to the age of 24 who have lost their hair through illness and other treatments. This helps them restore their confidence and identity. I decided to do this after seeing some children in hospital who had lost their hair having had cancer treatment. I have been growing it for over a year because it had to be a minimum length of 13cm but they prefer it to be 30cm. Click [here](#) to see Sophie's fund raising page on Just Giving. If anyone would like to donate to this very worthy charity there is still time.



Many thanks

Sophie Flynn

The New Times Travel Writing Competition

Thank to Jan Eastment who is a Llantilio Crossenny WI member and also a member of Grosmont Gardening Club for her entry in the travel writing competition. Like many of us Jan has not been away and has described sitting in her garden as her way of enjoying a staycation.

The world has changed.

The planet is holding its breath. Slowing down.

The winds of change are upon us.

I look around and see the swallows swooping, and the goshawk riding the thermals high above.

The scuttling of little creatures and insects in the long grass in the field.

The bees are being their usual busy selves and pollinating the crops.

There are ladybirds on the herbs and pretty butterflies on the sweet williams.

The cabbage white butterflies are hovering, desperate to get past the mesh and lay their eggs on the brassicas.

The peas have not yet germinated so will hopefully miss the worst damage from the pea moth.

We live with these things and work with them.

Hopefully, one day, we will be able to say we worked with the virus and lived with it.

We kept ourselves as safe as was possible and were kind to others.

We valued each and everyone that made our lives safer, easier, possible.

The families that have suffered.

The pain. The anguish.

The loss of a loved one.

Lives taken too soon.

Memories never to be forgotten.

The planet lets out a sigh.

The winds of change are upon us.

what3words Do you recognise this stile? It is near to Llanvapley, near to Llanymynach Brook and to Llanymynach Barn. Does that help? Have you got your phone? OK – download this app – **what3words** – and type **smuggled.unravel.rocket** and it will show exactly where it is.

Gwent Police encourages the public to download the free what3words app, which can help emergency services find you. what3words has divided the world into grids of 3m x 3m squares, giving each square a unique combination of three words - a what3words address.



If you wondering, here are the what3words addresses for the entrances to our four churches.

St Teilio's Church Llantilio Crossenny is **rates.silent.coconuts**

St James the Elder Church Llanvetherine is **stiffly.straddled.september**

St Cadoc's Church Penrhos is **armed.dumps.germinate**

St Mabli's Church Llanvapley is **dusted.overture.lake**

The app works in many languages including Welsh. For example, difectif.heriau.ryseitiau will take you to the stile in the picture.

The Garden in Autumn

Our world have changed beyond all recognition but those of us with gardens have felt blessed. The familiarity of the seasons is comforting. As Autumn approaches this is the time for harvesting plums, greengages, Autumn Bliss Raspberries, damsons, mulberries and all varieties of currants, with apples and pears to come. On the vegetable front there are French Beans, tomatoes, and far too many courgettes. Unfortunately the heavy rain was not good for the Mulberries which are usually so delicious, but have now turned mouldy and are falling onto the grass, but we cannot have everything.

Now is the time to take stock and get the garden ready for winter. Herbacious plants that have flowered should be cut back unless you want to keep seed heads for the birds, and shrubs that have outgrown their place can be cut back, along with hedges that need a tidy up. A well cut yew hedge now should last until next year. This year I have had a little help with our 'country' hedge which consists of cornus, hazel, whitethorn and field maple in the shape of a herd of cows and their calves who have done a wonderful job in nibbling the shoots and keeping it down. I wish I could

tether them in the garden to do the inside! If you get super organised you can put a layer of compost on the flowers beds which will improve the soil and protect tender plants in the winter. I have just cut back Cooper's Burmese, an almost evergreen climbing rose which is very vigorous indeed. You can be brutal pruning roses. I cut Rosa Sombreil back to the ground this spring as it looked so unhealthy and it has come back with renewed vigour having had a dose of cow muck and Vitax Q4. Our garden is many shades of pink now, with two large clumps of crinum's (pictured) at last justifying the space they have taken up all year with masses of large trumpet shaped lily like blooms,



Salvia involucrata 'Bethelli' with cyclamen pink flower spikes atop tall stems of velvety foliage now swaying in the breeze, and Japanese Anemones in a darker pink, plus sedums that are just turning darker red. Even Paeonia leaves turn a gorgeous shade of dark red and look good with Nerine Bowdenni. We may have had very mixed weather in August but let us hope for an Indian summer in September.

WI News

Although regular meetings have not been possible some members came together for a picnic at Park Farm, Llantilio Crossenny, thanks to the kind invitation of Daphne and Adrian Watkins. It was very enjoyable to sit under the huge willow tree and eat our own picnics. Not the usual sharing we are used to having, but lovely to be able to share our lockdown stories.

With regret we are still unable to resume our normal meetings, as the threat of Covid 19 remains and social distancing is not practical for our numbers of members, at the present time. However, the committee are constantly trying to provide amusement online.

Many members were delighted and surprised to receive a greetings card from the committee, who had decided they wanted to send their good wishes to everyone, so that they are sure they are in our thoughts.

At least the good weather has permitted many members to enjoy their gardens. Even carrots grown in large, pots on patios! The taste is delightful! by the way and no carrot flies!

Our very own Lady Ada Mather Jackson was one of the founders of Gwent WI and with that in mind, a reminder, that our own sewing bees are asked to think about the creation of a banner, for our own WI. With hopefully, a celebration of Gwent WI's centenary next year. We really need to start thinking soon and then start sewing during the colder months. Would those prepared to be involved please get in touch with Lin, who will arrange a socially distanced meeting.

As usual also a plea for any members needing help in any way, please let in or any members of the committee know.

Until we meet again, keep well, safe and happy. Lin

Services in September

Services in our four churches have been cancelled during the pandemic. It is hoped to hold services in October once approval is given.

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](https://twitter.com/LLantilioG)**

