

From the Vicarage

In May the Church celebrates Pentecost. It used to be called Whit Sunday of course, because of the tradition of the image of a white dove being the symbol of peace and the Holy Spirit of God. Pentecost literally means fifty days since Easter, and the day is the birthday of the Church.

Many older people will remember Whit Sunday processions and girls in white dresses, and this still happens in the north of England, whilst the Orthodox churches have lavish celebrations. We shall celebrate Pentecost here in our churches as we mark the beginnings of the Christian Church.

We shall sing the hymn, *Come down O love divine* to Vaughan Williams' haunting tune called *Down Ampney*, after the Gloucestershire village where he lived. In the hymn, which was written in the 14th C, the writer prays that Love, the Spirit of God will draw near to him - *within my heart appear*. He goes on to ask that it may freely burn within him *till earthly passions turn to dust and ashes*.

The other ancient word for love is of course *Charity*. In its old fashioned sense it meant a variety of human attributes including humility and graciousness, selflessness and goodness, which as St Paul beautifully and understatedly said, 'against which there is no law'. So the writer of the hymn suggests that these qualities become our *inner clothing*, and the outward sign being love itself. We demonstrate on the outside of ourselves, what is happening on the inside.

All this beyond our human understanding because it goes against the often more powerful feelings of self interest : we belong, as the film *Italian Job* suggests, to the 'self preservation society'. Unfortunately, that film, as can our lives, finishes up hanging over the edge with no ending in sight!

We look forward to seeing you at Pentecost, to pray with others that Holy Spirit of love may strengthen and encourage us, and also help us when there seems no answer.

Your friend and Vicar

David

St Mabli's Church, Llanvapley

Spring Concert

A Concert of West Gallery Music
Performed by

The logo for 'Vital Spark' features the words 'Vital Spark' in a stylized, purple, serif font with a white outline, set against a solid black rectangular background.

Saturday 8th May at 7.30 pm
Admission £5

Pay at the door - Refreshments included

Vital Spark play what is now called West Gallery music. This name comes from the galleries which were erected in churches in the 18th century to accommodate the singers and musicians who were to perform this new style of church music. The group was attracted to our church because of the fine gallery we have at the west end of the building.

Vital Spark is based in Malvern and most of its members are from the local folk scene. This type of music was mostly written and performed by amateurs who took their influences from the sort of music they performed outside the church environment, be it folk songs or country dance tunes. Although they stick to the original arrangements, most of their influences are from the 20th century

Llantilio Crossenny Music Festival

The Music Festival programme is included with TNT this month. We look forward especially to seeing you at the Sunday afternoon concert. It is being organised by Peter & Sian Cobb and Jeanette Massochi. Tickets are just £7 and there is afternoon tea followed by the Festival Evensong at 6pm. A brochure is included in this issue of *The New Times*.

The Box Office is open at Fingal Rock, 64 Monmow Street in Monmouth on 01600 712372. The Festival website, www.llantiliofestival.co.uk has the full details and you can now book on line.

Playtex Breast Cancer Midnight Moonwalk : Fran Hopkins from Llantilio Crossenny is doing this walk - a half marathon - on May 15/16 in central London. If you would like to sponsor her for this good cause, please call her on 01873 8212854.

Penrhos

Penrhos held its annual meeting last month and tributes were paid to the wardens, Richard Price and Jean Flynn, as well as to Margaret Price the secretary and the treasurer Chris Anthony. The chief concern of the meeting was the building of course and various measures were put in place to address the familiar problems of churches – damp! The finances showed a loss on the year so it may well be necessary to appeal to Penrhos residents during this year to find imaginative ways of enabling their church to go forward. The church is working hard to address the situation and there will be a grand draw launched at the Hog Roast on 20 June in Bulmer's Barn which will be drawn at the Harvest Festival on Friday 1 October.

On Easter Saturday, Brendan Harmer and Lucy Crook were married in Penrhos Church and we offer our congratulations to them and wish them every happiness.

On a sadder note, we are sorry to hear of the sudden death of Gerry Flynn. The funeral will be private but a Memorial Service will be held in Penrhos at a later date. Our prayers and thoughts are much with Jean and the family.

The funerals of John Gwillim and Ieuan Jones took place in Llanvetherine Church on Saturday 17 April. Our condolences to both their families.

Llantilio Crossenny Plant Sale

Llantilio Crossenny Plant Sale

Monday 3 May

Gate opens 2.00pm

Cake Stall and Raffle

LLANTILIO CROSSENNY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

At the meeting on the 14th April members welcomed Mr Hayden Williams, from the Gwent Wildlife Trust. He gave a very informative talk about the importance of gardens as part of the eco-system and how various studies, particularly one undertaken in Sheffield, have measured wildlife species found in gardens. Ann Couldwell gave the vote of thanks. During the business part of the meeting members were reminded that Llantilio Crossenny was hosting the W.I. walk for April, which will be in the Hendre area. Elsie Latham is the group leader and said that there will also be a talk about Charles Rolls of Rolls Royce, whose life is being celebrated this year in a Festival of Air Events. The next meeting will be on the Wednesday 12th May and will be the AGM and competition night, followed by supper provided by all members. Llantilio Crossenny W.I. meet at Llanvapley Pavilion at 7pm on the second Wednesday of the month and new members are always welcomed.

PENRHOS HOG ROAST

Sunday 20 June Tickets £10 from PCC members

Carving begins at 1.00pm

St Teilo's Church

At the annual meeting, called the Easter Vestry, of Llantilio Crossenny Church, the quinquennial report from our architect was presented. This is a report commissioned every five years by the Diocese about the fabric of the church and is a comprehensive and detailed survey of the our Grade 1 listed building.

The good news is that the church is not falling down but it does need urgent attention to a number of things not completed after previous surveys. Ancient buildings like Churches get no help from the state so all fund raising has to be done locally, and in the case of St Teilo, the costs could exceed some £300000. Of course, the church hasn't got that money so we shall begin the process of applying to grant making bodies like CADW and the Heritage Lottery Fund as Llanfapley successfully did.

There are two major problems, the spire and the effect of water damage. The spire dates from the 17th C and is the 'newest' bit of the church. (Most of the rest is 13th C). The outside of the spire is made up of oak blocks many of which are either missing or damaged. Scaffolding will need to be erected to repair the wood tiles and also to make good any damage not yet discovered. There are a number of other areas of the building where water is either coming in or seeping up from the ground. Roof tiles, windows and rain gullies need quite a bit of attention to prevent further damage to both the exterior and interior of the church. 'We need to address the cause of the problems' says the architect, 'rather than just deal with the symptoms'. In other words, we can't just redecorate the church inside and hope the damp will go away!

Whilst grant making bodies could well be generous, they will rightly look for evidence of 'self-help' from the church and community' We need to raise money for those things not covered by grants, such as redecoration and as a contribution to the works as a whole. The Church will do its bit, indeed, it has raised a lot of money in recent times to put in improved heating, a kitchen and hopefully during the summer, a new organ. The church is determined to preserve this beautiful building, one of the jewels of Monmouthshire, whilst at the same time, make it a building fit to be used by 21st C people.

We will approach people who may not regard themselves as regular church-goers, yet value 'their' church. In the next few months, people will be invited either to events or make direct contributions to the these major works. If we can in our lifetime, preserve this building for our successors in 200 or 300 years time then we shall have achieved a significant contribution to our community that will be regarded well by those who come after us.

A small team has been appointed to oversee the works and the various applications and investigations will begin soon. The actual work would not begin until May 2011 and hopefully finished in time for the Music Festival of 2012 which is its 50th anniversary – the Archbishop of Wales already has the date in his diary! You can see more of the detailed report on the church website at www.llantiliogroup.info

Dennis Ball

At the AGM of Llantilio Crossenny Church, Dennis Ball retired from being church warden. It is impossible to over estimate the contribution that Dennis, as well as Ann, have made to St Teilo's Church. He has been a confidant of vicars, a 'smoother-over' of tricky situations, a welcoming presence at services and events, as well as preparing for services and ensuring the general smooth running of the church organisation.

We are much in his debt and during this month we will be making a presentation to Dennis. If you would like to contribute to this please see either Daphne Watkins or Margaret Parry.

At the same meeting we also reviewed progress on the building and received the accounts. We are very grateful to Daphne Watkins our indefatigable secretary, to Margaret Parry who produced her first accounts and were expertly presented, and also recognised the work done by Richard Barnfield. The church is always beautifully decorated with flowers—Easter Day was a picture and we thank Gaynor Evans and her team for doing this. It was reported that congregations have increased by 20% throughout the year and the challenges of the future as a church are viewed with a very positive mind. Elsie Latham was elected as the new church warden and she will be a good successor to Dennis Ball.