The New Times

The Parish Magazine for the Llantilio Crossenny Group of Parishes






Find out what is happening in our churches and communities

The New Times November 2026

The parish magazine for the Llantilio Crossenny Group of Parishes

Llantilio Church Prepares for Remembrance Sunday



This beautiful display of handmade poppies has been lovingly knitted and crocheted by women from across our four parishes. What started as a simple idea by Marion Ashton has literally blossomed into this breathtaking cascade of colour, now adorning St Teilo's in Llantilio Crossenny. Thank you to everyone who made, sewed or helped to hang this amazing visual testament of thanksgiving, remembrance and renewal.

Find out who Jim, Kate and Gen were talking to!



I will give you a clue – he was last here in 2022



Services and Events in November 2026

Sunday 1st November. All Saints' Day

No service at St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine.

11.00am **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny**.

A special service of Holy Communion with the dedication of the new altar in memory of Revd. Peter Cobb and Mrs. Elsie Latham.

This service is followed by refreshments, everyone is very welcome.

Monday 2nd November. All Souls' Day.

6.00pm. **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny**

A quiet reflective service in which we light candles and give thanks for the lives of those we love who have gone before us.

Sunday 8th November. Remembrance Sunday

9.30am **St. Cadoc's, Penrhos**. Service of Remembrance.

Refreshments are provided after the service from approximately 10.20am onwards and everyone from the community is very welcome

10.50am **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny**. Service of Remembrance. Please note the earlier start.

This service is followed by refreshments, everyone is very welcome.

Saturday 14th November.

11.00am- 3.00pm. **St Michael, Llanfihangel Crucorney.**

Quiet Day led by Bishop Dominic Walker. Please bring your own lunch, donations appreciated.

To book your place please contact Mary Heading:maryheading.nmma@outlook.com

Sunday 15th November. The Second Sunday before Advent.

9.30am **St. James the Elder, Llanvetherine**. (Holy Communion)

No service at St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny.

Sunday 22nd November. The Sunday before Advent (& Stir Up Sunday).

9.30am **St. Cadoc's, Penrhos**.

Refreshments are provided after the service from approximately 10.20am onwards and everyone from the community is very welcome

11.00am **St. Mabli's, Llanvapley**. (Morning Prayer)

This service is followed by tea/coffee and a chat; everyone is very welcome even if you do not join the service. The bell will be rung when the service finishes.

Thursday 26th November.

3.00pm. St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny.

Advent Study Course. *Treasures in Straw- Exploring the griefs and gifts of the Christmas Story* by Tanya Marlow. Led by Canon David Williams.*

Saturday 28th November.

12.30pm A wedding is to be held at **St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny.**

Sunday 29th November. Advent Sunday.

4.00pm**. St Cadoc's Church, The Bryn. NP7 9AP (near Penpergwm)**

Advent Sunday Evensong, Joint Ministry Area Service.

Details of the Advent Study Course

This is a study course, led by Canon David Williams, will be held throughout the North Monmouthshire Ministry Area between 3.00pm and 4.00pm on Thursday afternoons during Advent and into Epiphany. The course will follow Tanya Marlow's book *Treasures in the Straw* which can be obtained through the Ministry Area for £7.00 (RRP £10.99).

If you would like a copy of the book please contact Mr Colin Jarrett or Revd Heidi.

The study group will meet at 3.00pm on the following dates:

- 26th November: St Teilo, Llantilio Crossenny.
- 3rd December: St Teilo, Llantilio Pertholey.
- 10th December: St Michael, Llanfihangel Crucorney.
- 17th December: St David, Llanddewi Rhydderch.
- 7th January: St Nicholas, Grosmont.

News from the Four Churches

St. Cadoc's, Penrhos

The Lychgate

A lychgate is defined as 'a covered, roofed gateway at the entrance of a traditional Christian churchyard'. The word is derived from the Old English vernacular meaning 'corpse' or 'body' and marks the physical and symbolic division between unconsecrated (secular) ground and the sacred space of the consecrated churchyard. Historically the roofed structure provided a dry spot to set down a coffin or shrouded body while waiting for the clergy to arrive for a funeral.

Early examples of lychgates date back to medieval times, although many later structures were built during the Victorian era and erected as First World War memorials.

The lychgate at St Cadoc's is in an arts and crafts style and was erected in 1931 as a war memorial. It is in need of urgent repair in places and efforts are underway to secure the funding to get this work done.



The Drop-Inn at Penrhos Church

The October Drop-Inn was attended by ten good spirited souls in search of socialising with sips, nibbles and the ever-exciting quiz by Yvonne. Apologies from a few regulars this month but they are all hoping to make November's Drop-Inn on Friday 20th November and were sorry to have missed out on the fun.

St Cadoc's welcomed a rambling group from Chepstow on Sunday afternoon who'd politely asked if the door would be open to them so that they could shelter inside and revive

themselves on their walk. Fortunately, Richard had been in earlier to prepare for the service and had shooed the mouse outside who had sought sanctuary from the previous day's storms. It's nice to think of the church bringing refuge to a band of weary walkers. Could be an idea for next summer, putting together walks between each of our churches? Mmmm, now there's a thought!

Leandre Fellows.

Dates for your St Cadoc's diary

Sunday 8th November, 9.30am. Service of Remembrance.

Friday 20th November, 7.00pm – 9.00pm. Drop-Inn. Bring your own drinks and nibbles to share sprinkled lavishly with good humour and conversation.

Sunday 13th December, 6.00pm.

Penrhos Carol Service followed by Mulled Wine and Mince Pies at High House Barn. If you can't make the Carol Service then please do join us at High House Barn from 7.30pm onwards

Christmas Day: Pip will be taking a service at 9.30am. Everyone is very welcome.

Contact Pip at piprumsey2001@yahoo.co.uk if you would like notification of all community events at St Cadoc's.

St. James', Llanvetherine

Things are quiet here in Llanvetherine unlike some areas that have experienced some lively storms. We hope that everyone has stayed safe and trouble free.

The words of the song "I can see clearly now" may apply to the church notice board as the tarnished old Perspex cover has been replaced with some clear glass making the notices visible to all who are interested.

Two members of our small congregation have recently had hospital surgery. We wish Rev Dr Andrew Dawson well in his recovery. Shirley Hughes Jones is almost fully recovered from her surgery and as usual there is no stopping her!

There will be a Bingo Night in aid of Llanvetherine Church, at LLanddewi Skirrid Hall on Saturday 5th December at 7.30pm so please come along for some fun and also to catch up with members of the community.

Preparations are going ahead for the annual draw which will take place at The Hog's Head on January 22nd.

At the time of writing Llanvetherine is brought to a stand-still with traffic lights on the B4521. Potholes being filled in, thankfully.

David Hughes Jones.

Things weren't quiet in Llanvetherine on October 1st when Prince William came to visit! At Great Tre-Rhew Farm the Prince celebrated the local community-led charity *Stump Up For Trees* reaching the halfway milestone of its goal to plant one million native trees across South

Wales. The Prince also learned how the farm is planting trees in strategic ‘shelterbelts’ to help improve soil, retain water and slow the flow of floodwaters to downstream communities. A very proud day for all connected with this fantastic project.



St. Mabli’s, Llanvapley

Stand-up and be counted!

Llanvapley had two services in October and, as you would expect, the heating is back on as we settle in for the long haul that is winter. If you have visited St Mabli’s on an ordinary Sunday, you will know that there is always a warm welcome, whatever the season.

But a warm welcome isn’t all we have to offer. We also have the star of the show – Revd Heidi! Heidi has a wonderful way of making everyone feel at ease, and her sermons are always thoughtful, interesting and, on occasion, guaranteed to raise a smile.

When you think about it, sitting quietly without distractions and listening to someone speak for a period of time, without the opportunity to check your phone or change the channel, is becoming something of a rarity these days. Perhaps that’s one of the things that makes a Sunday service rather special.

Revd Heidi’s sermons are always memorable, and perhaps part of the reason is that she recognises that standing in the pulpit is also an opportunity to make the congregation smile. During her most recent sermon, which touched on time and the changing of the clocks, she slipped in a little gem towards the end that brought smiles all round:

“The past is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift – that’s why they call it the present!”

And, as if that wasn’t enough, she followed it up with:

“Now I would like to wrap things up!”

Of course, there is another important task associated with the Sunday service, and that is counting the congregation. This figure is recorded in the service book and, as I understand it, was once used to help assess the parish share. Whether that is still the case following

subsequent changes, I stand to be corrected!
So, if you started reading this piece wondering what the title of the article had to do with anything, I hope it all now makes sense.

More visitors to Llanvapley Church

Although there were a few quieter days during October, it was particularly encouraging to see several younger members of the parish taking the time to sign the visitors' book.

One morning, a car pulled up outside the churchyard and I took the opportunity to speak to the driver. Alan, who had travelled from Cardiff, was visiting churches in the area as part of a project which he hopes to complete soon. He described Llanvapley Church as 'Eglwys Hyfryd' (Beautiful Church), a phrase that we are fortunate to hear quite often from our visitors. On leaving Llanvapley, Alan mentioned that he was heading to Llantilio, another church he hoped to visit on his journey.

Towards the end of the month, we were also pleased to welcome a visitor from Kent, another reminder of the interest our little church continues to attract from further afield.

St. Teilo's, Llantilio Crossenny

Poppy Display St. Teilo's Church, Llantilio Crossenny



Local ladies have been very busy for the last 6 months knitting and crocheting poppies to go into a poppy display in St. Teilo's Church. Poppies in many shades of red in differing styles, purple noting animals who were killed during conflict and white depicting peace all add to make a beautiful, meaningful display to honour those soldiers who died in war, veterans and members of the armed forces. The display will be up for the month of November so please feel free to visit St. Teilo's to see this beautiful display.

Marion Ashton

Meditation update for November



Meditation continues most Tuesdays: November 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th You would be very welcome to join this ecumenical group - as often as you wish. Just arrive by about 8.10am for an 8.15am start. We sit in the Chancel of the Church and the time of meditation begins with a short reading or poem, prayer and then about 1/2 hour of meditation - silent prayer. And as it cools down, hot water bottles may be needed! Any questions, do ask me (Jenny Goodwin 07891 016768) *Pembrokeshire- October sea and sky*

It's Time to Put the Churchyard to Bed for Winter!

The last gathering of the Church Maintenance Group before the winter months take hold will be on Saturday 7th November from 9.00am. Please come along - men, women and children- to help prepare our wonderful churchyard for winter.
Do as much or as little as you like from the array of tasks including clearing gulleys and gutters; sweeping paths, pruning and weeding; creating wildlife habitats for small hibernating animals like hedgehogs and so on. Bring basic tools like secateurs, shears, brooms and rakes. Hot drinks and cake will be provided to sustain you. Everyone in the family is very welcome to join the merry throng.

Remembrance Day on the Other Side of the World.

The 11th November each year and its memorial events, including here in New Zealand, allows me to remember two great uncles killed fighting in France during WW1.

Fighting for Great Britain, they were from my fathers side of the family. One died of his wounds in a field hospital and is buried at La Neuville British Cemetery, Corrie, France. He was only 22. His brother was just 23, his body was never found. His name is listed on Le Touret Memorial in France.

I have had the privilege of visiting both sites as have other family members over the years. It's a very moving experience.

On my mother's side of the family, four members of the family were killed in the same year, 1918, WW1. Of those four, three were brothers. They were fighting for New Zealand. Two are buried in France, two are buried in Damascus, Syria. The latter, were two of the three brothers. Those two were killed on the same day. It upset their father based in New Zealand so much, that he attempted suicide.

I remember seeing the old black and white photos of all four of them, hanging on the walls of my great Grandmother's house in the 1960's. All proudly wearing their uniforms.

I don't think any family member had visited their graves. It will be probably be almost impossible to visits the two men buried in Syria. They're not forgotten here in New Zealand. Their names are inscribed on war memorials in Temuka, Timaru and Waimate, all in South Canterbury. I attend, when possible, either the dawn Anzac Day service in Temuka, or the dawn service in Waimate.

I proudly wear my late grandfather's WW1 medals. He was the only surviving son of my great grandparents who lost their other two sons, my great uncle who fought for the British Army.

So in total, the horrifying figure of six family members killed in action, or as a result of wounds inflicted. There were no family participants in WW2. My father was on the verge of being sent to the Korean War with the New Zealand Army , but fortunately, the truce was agreed before that could take place.

Gone but not forgotten, they gave their lives for King and country. May they rest in eternal peace.

Ron Smith, Geraldine, New Zealand (South Island)

Unsung Heroes of the Pulpit:

The Secret Army of Rural Monmouthshire

Editor's Note: When I interviewed Des & Wyn, about their memories of growing up in St Teilo's and village life in Llantilio Crossenny, little did I realise that our conversation would lead me to uncover a remarkable piece of local wartime history.

During our chat, they mentioned details that piqued my curiosity and prompted me to investigate further. The historical documents and material used for this article were kindly lent to me, based on original reporting and researching by Timothy Carroll.

As we gather this Remembrance Sunday to honour those who served and sacrificed for our country, we often picture soldiers in uniform, sailors at sea, and pilots in the sky. Yet, behind the quiet scenes of parish life right here in Britain lay one of the most astonishing, untold chapters of the Home Front.

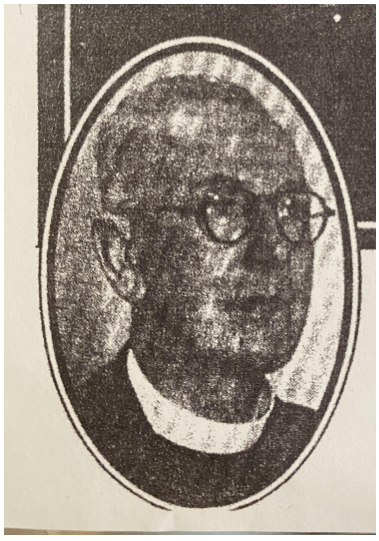
In 1940, with the threat of Nazi invasion looming over Britain's darkest hour, Prime Minister Winston Curchill initiated a top-secret resistance network. Alongside armed "stay-behind" combat units, a hidden intelligence section known as the **Special Duties** network was formed. Its mission: to gather intelligence, operate secret radios, and coordinate local resistance if the enemy ever occupied British soil.

Who were these covert agents? They were not trained soldiers, but local community members - carpenters, gardeners, doctors, bus drivers, milkmen, and, remarkably, **country vicars**. Their everyday duties allowed them to travel through villages and countryside without raising a single eye of suspicion.

Faith Under Cover

In Monmouthshire, a secret cabal was led by the late **Revd Richard Sluman**, vicar of St Teilo's Church, Llantilio Crossenny. Beneath his church altar lay a concealed two-band radio transmitter, with a 40-foot aerial hidden cleverly behind the lightning conductor on the church spire. Church towers across the region provided the ideal height for radio signals, turning houses of prayer into vital communication hubs.

Operatives maintained strict secrecy, often relying on "dead drops" rather than face-to-face meetings to protect one another. Secret messages were hidden inside hollow tennis balls tucked into ancient yew trees or slipped behind rafters in church porches.

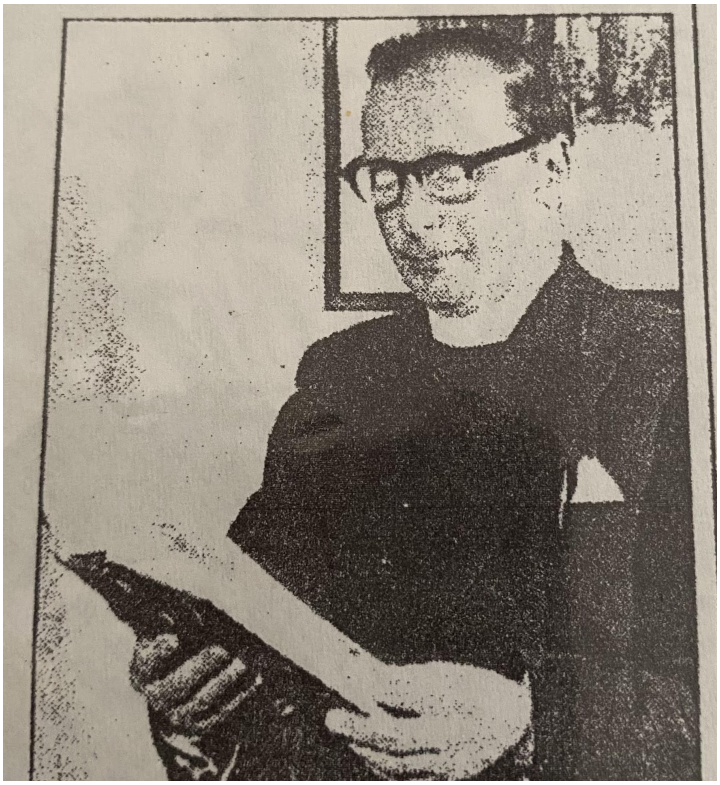


The local cell brought together men from all walks of life:

Revd Richard Sluman (Vicar of Llantilio Crossenny & Group Leader) *pictured on the right*

Revd Vincent Evans (Vicar of Llanddewi Rhydderch)

Revd Cecil Gower-Rees (Vicar of Llanarth) *pictured on the right*



George Vater (A farm labourer recruited under a chestnut tree with an oath sworn on a pocket Bible) *below*



Percy Evans (A local carpenter), **John Owen** (A graduate of Aberystwyth University) and **Percy Steal** (A local gardener)

To carry out their grave duties, local operatives were secretly equipped for defence. George Vater was issued a **.22 calibre rifle fitted with a telescopic lens and silencer**, designated to act as a sharpshooter to protect the community against potential local Nazi collaborators if an invasion occurred.

A Legacy of Silence and Courage

Perhaps most extraordinary of all was their lifelong dedication to secrecy. Bound by an oath of loyalty, these men returned to ordinary life after the war and never spoke a word of their dangerous mission - not even to their wives, such as Margaret Gower-Rees (widow of Revd Cecil Gower-Rees), or their children. It was only decades later, in 1986, when Revd Sluman's son, Richard Sluman Junior, discovered hidden notes and espionage scribblings among old sermon papers, that their courageous story was finally brought to light.

An official letter from General Sir Harold Franklyn in July 1944 praised the *"keenness and patriotism of selected civilians... who undertook a hazardous role which required both skill and courage."*

Years after the war, George Vater visited his fellow operative, Revd Vincent Evans, in a nursing home shortly before Revd Evans passed away. The old vicar looked at him and whispered, *"Do you remember, George? Do you?"*

"Of course I remember," George replied. *"How could I forget?"* The old vicar settled back into his chair, sighed softly, and said: *"I'm glad they didn't come. Aren't you?"*



Ros Jeffries

Lest We Forget

This Remembrance Sunday, as we observe the two-minute silence, we remember not only those who fought on distant battlefields, but also the brave men and women who stood ready to defend our homes, our churches, and our communities from within. We give thanks for their quiet courage, their faith, and their enduring service.

We will remember them.

In the Spotlight

Des Latham and Wyn Jones



Two boys, one village, countless memories — and a friendship that time has never managed to distance.

What did childhood in Llantilio Crossenny look like more than 80 years ago? Who better to ask than two of the village's own, Des Latham, aged 87, and Wynford (Wyn) Jones, aged 91, whose friendship began in childhood and has stood the test of time.

Both boys attended Sunday School at St Teilo's Church and grew up in a very different world from the one we know today. Des grew up on the family farm, where he still lives, while Wyn lived in one of the policemen's cottages along the main road. Their memories offer a wonderful glimpse into village life during the war years and the decades that followed.



Back row (from the left): Hazel Latham, Mervyn Williams, Margaret Warfield, Mary Warwick, Mrs. John Lewis, ?, Norman Edmonds, John Powell and Bernard Hughes.
Middle row: Earl Williams, Juliette Warwick, Elizabeth Powell, Valerie Williams, May Bound, Florence Williams, Jackie Williams and Wynford Jones.
Front row: June Thomas, Eddie Powell, Desmond Latham, Cecil Williams, David Warwick and Evan Dutton

Church bells, Sunday School, and a little reluctance to sing!

St Teilo's played an important part in the boys' childhoods. Both were involved with the church bells, although in those days the bells were chimed rather than rung, as the supporting timbers were not strong enough for full ringing. The boys would hold the ropes and chime two bells, even managing to provide the tunes for the hymns. The bells were refurbished and recast in the 1970s.

Sunday School outings were eagerly anticipated, with two trips a year: a pantomime in the winter and a summer excursion to either Barry or Porthcawl. However, one particular winter outing remains firmly in Des's memory — and not necessarily for the reasons the organisers intended!

Des recalls travelling by coach to Cardiff to see the pantomime in 1947. The snow began falling thick and fast, and on the journey home the coach slipped off the road at the Chainbridge. Everyone had to get out and help push it back onto the snow-covered road.

Even now, Des wonders why the trip went ahead in the first place. Surely someone must have known the weather was going to turn! The snow certainly made itself at home that winter, lingering into April.

Des also remembers walking the three miles to Brynderi School with his friends, wearing short trousers despite the heavy snow. They were greeted by the headmaster, Mr De Winton, and his wife, who was also a teacher. The couple lived at the school and welcomed the freezing children with bottles of milk to warm them up. There was just one problem: the school was closed and would remain closed for another month The children had to turn around and walk all the way home again.

Des cannot remember who organised this memorable expedition, although he recalls that they all met at the Halfway pub. One suspects that the journey home may have seemed considerably longer than the journey out!

The boys also helped pump the church organ, as there was no electricity. Keeping warm during services was another challenge. There was a coal stove in the Lady Chapel, also known as Cil-llewch Chapel, and paraffin heaters dotted around the church to keep the congregation at least a little warmer.

Des, however, drew the line at joining the church choir. He had decided he could not sing and was equally determined that he was not going to wear a "frock" — his description of the choir cassock! Wyn was made of sterner stuff and progressed from Sunday School into the church choir, which had around twenty teenage and adult members.



There is even a little evidence of the boys' youthful presence preserved in the church itself. In 1955, 3 members of their gang of seven etched their names onto the back of the organ pipes in the vestry. Sadly, the gang has dwindled over the years and is now down to three. The graffiti remains a tangible reminder of a group of young friends who once filled the village with their adventures.

(The naughty Bell Ringers - DL – Des Latham, CW – Cecil Williams & DW – David Warwick)

A village shaped by war

The boys' childhoods were inevitably influenced by the Second World War and its aftermath. Des remembers one of their farm workers who was killed at Dunkirk. There is also one war grave in the churchyard, belonging to the son of Des's babysitter, who served in the RAF and was killed aged just twenty. The father of Cecil Williams, one of their childhood friends, whose name is etched on the church organ, was sadly killed on his return home. Such memories remind us that the consequences of war reached even into a small rural community like Llantilio Crossenny.

Talycoed Court was used as a prisoner-of-war camp, housing prisoners considered low risk, some of whom worked on neighbouring farms. The boys remember soldiers marching from the Court along the main road to attend services at St Teilo's.

The Home Guard also practised shooting their rifles into the bank behind the church, among the ruins of Llantilio Court. Their equipment was kept in a shed in Ashgrove Wood. Meanwhile, members of the Observer Corps watched for aircraft from the hill towards Penrhos.

One particularly memorable incident was a plane crash-landing during training near what was Pentywyn Farm. It was quite a spectacle, with people coming from far and wide to have a look. One can imagine that such an event provided plenty of conversation around the village for some time afterwards.

Wartime also brought the influence of the War Agricultural Executive Committee, commonly known as the War Ag. This powerful government body could direct how land was used, including requiring particular fields to be ploughed for crops. The garage and workshop, originally situated on the main road before moving into the village, was commandeered by the War Ag.

A village with everything you needed.

In post-war Llantilio Crossenny, the village was a busy little community with a blacksmith, slaughterhouse, pub, village hall, shop, post office, butcher, garage, and petrol pumps, as well as a cricket pitch. It was a place where people worked hard, knew their neighbours, and relied on one another.

There was no dairy in the village because the dairy farms delivered milk directly to households. Des remembers his father making deliveries, as his mother never learnt to drive. Later, Des's wife, Elsie, was perfectly capable behind the wheel and would deliver milk at least three times a week.

Wyn completed his apprenticeship after the war in the garage before it moved into the village. They also remember the village cricket pitch, situated on the triangular field opposite White House Barn, where cricket was played every weekend. Wyn was old enough to remember the celebrations on this field for VE Day, marking the end of the war in Europe.

The village hall was another important part of community life. It hosted all sorts of events, including the ever-popular whist drives. The Christmas whist drive was especially well attended, with a turkey as the coveted prize. Winning one would certainly have made Christmas dinner a little more satisfying!

For the boys, these events were about more than cards, games, or prizes. They provided opportunities to meet their friends, enjoy themselves and feel part of a close-knit community.

There was even a regular bus service through the village, allowing Des to enjoy trips to the cinema and catch the late bus home. Those were the days when an evening out did not necessarily require a car, a taxi, or a complicated plan.

A window on the past

Wyn has another special memory of St Teilo's. He remembers the installation of the altar window and the dedication ceremony when a generator was used to shine a spotlight directly onto the window for one night only. It must have been a striking sight, illuminating the church with a new feature that would become part of its story for generations to come.

Through the boys' recollections, we begin to appreciate just how much the church and village were woven into everyday life. St Teilo's was not simply somewhere to attend Sunday School or a service; it was a meeting place, a source of shared memories and a constant presence through changing times.

Both men look back fondly on their childhoods. They remember a lovely community where everyone seemed to know everyone else, people spoke to one another and neighbours helped each other. There was a strong sense of camaraderie, and friendships formed in those early years often lasting a lifetime.

Their memories are full of ordinary things that, with the passage of time, have become extraordinary: walking to school in the snow, pumping the organ, attending village hall events and spending time with friends. It was, in their eyes, a wonderful childhood — growing up in the countryside, surrounded by familiar faces within a familiar community.

A few surprises along the way!

Of course, no account of two lifelong friends would be complete without a few stories that reveal a more mischievous side.

Asked what readers might be surprised to learn about him, Des recalled getting caught riding his pushbike without lights when he was about fifteen. He had to appear at Cross Ash Court, where his father was obliged to pay a fine of five shillings — or "five bob," as it was known then. The court also housed the police station and cells. The local bobby knew everyone, and on this occasion, he was waiting for Des outside the Halfway pub. In a village where everybody knew everybody, it seems there was little chance of escaping notice!

Des also had a more adventurous tale from the 1960s, when he travelled to the Italian Riviera. On his return, he managed to smuggle through customs a copy of Lady Chatterley's Lover, the then-banned novel by D. H. Lawrence. What a most daring souvenir of the holiday!

Thankfully, Des' flight came after the De Havilland Comet's notorious square windows had been replaced with rounded ones following a series of crashes. Fortunately, he returned safe and sound to continue living the best life, with plenty of funny tales to share with us along the way.

Wyn's revelation was rather different. He worked for a brewery, and he remembers being paid to drink two pints of beer every day — and sometimes more if one of his workmates did not want his share. It is not every day that someone can claim drinking beer was part of the job!

Between Des's bicycle misdemeanor, his hot literary smuggling and Wyn's unusual working bonuses. the boys clearly had a few stories up their sleeves. They may have grown older, but they certainly have not run out of tales to tell.

Friends for life

Over the years, the gang of seven has become smaller, and the village itself has changed. Shops, trades, and familiar meeting places have disappeared, and life moves at a different pace. Yet the friendship between Des and Wyn has endured.

More than 80 years after their childhood days at Sunday School, St Teilo's still provides a connection between them. Their stories remind us that a church's history is not found only in its records, gravestones, bells, or windows. It lives just as strongly in the memories of the people who have passed through its doors.

Des and Wyn have seen war and peace, snow-filled winters, village celebrations, and enormous changes in everyday life. Through it all, they have retained something precious: the memories of growing up together and the friendship that began when they were just boys.

Perhaps that is the real treasure of Llantilio Crossenny — not simply its historic buildings or its beautiful countryside, but the people, the shared experiences and the friendships that bind generations together.

And if more of the names etched onto the organ pipes could have spoken, they would surely have had a few more beautiful stories to tell! One thing is certain: the village has been a richer place for having these two "lovely boys" grow up in it. Long may the stories, the laughter and the friendship continue.



Editor's Note:

Sometimes, the most meaningful way to discover our history is simply to sit down, listen and give someone the time to share their story.

Spending time with Des and Wyn, as they recounted their childhood memories was a real privilege. As one memory prompted another, I was offered far more than a glimpse into village life more than 80 years ago. I witnessed the warmth of a loving lifelong friendship, the delight of remembering shared adventures and the quiet significance of having someone beside you who remembers it all too.

There was something particularly special about listening to these two friends revisit their younger days. In taking the time to listen we're reminded that everyone has a story worth hearing and that the memories of our older generations are a precious part of our shared heritage.

My grateful thanks to Des and Wyn for their generosity in sharing their memories, recounting their stories, their laughter, and allowing us into their lives. Listening to them was a reminder of the value of taking time to sit with people, to be curious about their lives and hear their stories in their own words. These conversations are precious, not only for what they reveal about the past for prosperity, but for the opportunity they give us to connect with the people who lived it.

North Monmouthshire Ministry Area News

All Souls

Sunday 1st November 6pm St Teilo's Church, Llantilio Pertholey. This is a quiet and reflective service for anyone who wishes to remember and give thanks for the life of a loved one who has died. Whether your loss is recent or many years ago, you are warmly invited to join us for music, readings, prayer, and a time of remembrance. During the service, names of loved ones may be remembered, and candles lit in their memory; all are welcome.

Ministry Area Advent Quiet Day

Saturday 14th November St Michael's Llanvihangel Crucorney 11am-3pm. Led by Bishop Dominic, take some quiet time before the business of Christmas in silence and reflection. Open to all, please bring your own lunch.

Community News

A Festive Community Gathering in Llantilio

All are very welcome to this special event in St Teilo's Car Park on 23rd December. With thanks to Whitecastle Community Council for supporting this inaugural Christmas-tide gathering.



Llanvapley and District Gardening Club

Village Planter



The planter at the entrance to Llantilio Crossenny has been beautiful this summer and we would like to continue enhancing our village. Whitecastle Community Council kindly funded the planter, compost and plants initially but it is now up to us to fund the continuing planting. If you are interested and able to contribute a few pounds to our fund that would be brilliant. Please either contact Marion Ashton marion.ashton@yahoo.co.uk or drop an envelope with your donation into Rhoswaun, Llantilio Crossenny. Thank you so much.

The next meeting of the Gardening Club is on Wednesday 4th November at 7pm at Llanvapley Pavilion. There will be a short AGM and then a talk from Marion Stainton on The Winter Garden.

Everyone is most welcome to come along, there is a £5 fee for guests. Following the meeting there will be refreshments and a raffle. *Marion Ashton*

What's on at the Pavilion Llanvapley

October/November 2026

Thursday 29th October 7pm-9pm

Quiz Night with Frydays fish & chips

Food orders please by Wednesday 28th 2pm

Friday 30th October 3pm-4pm

Pilates to Video £2

Friday 30th October 5pm-6.30pm

Selby Sound - Hand Bell Ringing Practice

Saturday 31st October 7pm-9.30pm

Film Night £5 with free drink of your choice

Virginia Wolf's Night & Day 2026 Comedy/Drama

Monday 2nd November 9am-10am

Katie's Pilates Live class £8

Monday 2nd November 2.30pm-3.30pm

Qi Gong and Mindfulness class £8

Wednesday 4th November 9am-10am

Pilates to Video £2

Wednesday 4th November 7pm-9pm

Gardening Club AGM + Speaker Marion Stanton on the winter garden

Friday 6th November 3pm-4pm

Pilates to Video

Saturday 7th November 10.30am

Llanvapley Walking Group. Meet at the Pavilion for a sociable walk

Saturday 7th November 12pm-5pm

Private Party Booking

Monday 9th November 9am-10am

Katies Pilates £8

Monday 9th November 2.30pm-3.30pm

Qi Gong and Mindfulness class £8

Tuesday 10th November
Installation of NEW play equipment
Wednesday 11th November 9am-19pm
Katies Pilates Live class £8
Wednesday 11th November 7pm-9pm
WI Monthly meeting Speaker Nicola Awani - Violence against Women
Thursday 12th November 7pm-9pm
Whitecastle Community Council Meeting
Friday 13th November 3pm-4pm
Pilates to Video £2
Friday 13th November 4pm-5.30pm
Selby Sound Hand Bellringing Practice
Monday 16th November 9am-10am
Katies Pilates Live Class £8
Monday 16th November 2.30pm-3.30pm
Qi Gong & Mindfulness class
Wednesday 18th November 9am-10am
Katies Pilates Live class £8
Thursday 19th November 10.30am
Coffee Morning £3 plus £1 raffle - Meet PCSO Megan Greaves and discuss any of your Neighbourhood Watch concerns
Friday 20th November 3pm-4pm
Pilates to Video 32
Thursday 26th November 7pm-9pm
Quiz Night with Frydays fish & chips Food orders please by Wednesday 25th 2pm
Friday 27th November 10.30-12.30
Wreath Making Workshop FULLY BOOKED
Saturday 28th November 10am-4pm
Quilters Group
Saturday 28th November 7pm-9.30pm
Film Night £5 with free drink of your choice
Pressure - The untold true story of D-Day

Llantilio Crossenny WI

Singing, Dancing and Crafting into Autumn

Singing

September concluded with our WI Choir performing 'Songs from the Shows' at Abergavenny Methodist Church Hall. This was on the occasion of the legendary Community Afternoon Tea organised by Abergavenny/YFenni WI and an appreciative audience encouraged us to sing our hearts out with songs including *Over the Rainbow* (The Wizard of Oz) , *I Could Have Danced All Nigh*t (My Fair Lady), *You Raise Me Up* (The Lion King) and *I Dreamed a Dream (Les Miserables).* We all thoroughly enjoyed our afternoon and were treated to a delicious and bountiful afternoon tea by Abergavenny/YFenni WI.

Our Choir is now turning its attention to Christmas- there's always a reason to sing!

Dancing

Claire (leading the dancing) and Jonny (on the music) plus 5 volunteer ladies, guided us through multiple sequences of dancing to lines and squares. Fantastic to watch and then we had a go at the dancing- some were nimble, some left footed and some just went off rouge as it was so fast to keep up at times, but lots of laughter and merriment was had by all. A very good way to keep fit!.

Crafting

Many of our members were proud to contribute handmade poppies to the cascade in St Teilo's Church, Llantilio Crossenny.



Two of our members, Sue and Verity Vater have been making beautiful orange panels for the Gwent Federation WI Violence Against Women collaborative banner. The panel is hand needle felted using sheep's wool and very striking.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday11th November 2026 at 7pm, Llanvapley Pavilion. The speaker for the evening will be Nicola Awni, Gwent Federation Lead for the NFWI, Violence against Women. One of our members, Ally Collins, has made white ribbons for us all to wear at this meeting in support of this important national campaign.

If you would like any information about joining our friendly and zestful WI, please contact Sue at sue.raynor@icloud.com.

Whitecastle Community Council – October News

Community Open Evening

Whitecastle Community Council invites everyone to a Community Open Evening on Thursday 12 November at 7pm at Llanvapley Pavilion to meet local community groups, celebrate their work and learn about funding opportunities for 2026/27. Attendees will also have the opportunity to share their views and help shape the Council's 2027/28 budget priorities, with everyone welcome and accessible parking available.

Road improvements at The Onen

The Community Council has thanked Monmouthshire County Council's Highways team for improvements to the road between The Onen, Grange Farm and the Grange Project. These works are a welcome contribution to the local road network.

Volunteers helping to keep our community tidy

The Council is pleased to support a litter-picking group in Newcastle. Signs have been provided to encourage motorists to slow down and help keep volunteers safe while they work. Thank you to everyone involved in caring for our local environment.

Improving our footpaths

The Whitecastle Volunteer Footpath Maintenance Group is working on a project to improve the footpath between Llantilio Crossenny and Tal-y-coed. New volunteers are welcome, and no previous experience is needed. Essential equipment will be provided, although sturdy boots and gardening gloves are recommended. Anyone interested in helping to keep our local footpaths open and accessible is encouraged to get involved.



Flood resilience – public information session

Residents affected by Storm Claudia's severe flooding are invited to a drop-in session on Tuesday 10 November, from 12.30pm to 7pm at Monmouth Sports Association Pavilion, to discuss the River Monnow Catchment Section 19 Flood Report. No booking is required, and attendees can learn about the report's findings, recommendations and future flood prevention measures.



Whitecastle Community Council would like to thank all the volunteers, residents and partner organisations who continue to give their time and support to make our villages and surrounding countryside better places to live.

For further information, visit www.whitecastlecommunitycouncil.gov.uk, where the latest news, meeting details and community information can be found.

Contributions are invited for the December & January edition of TNT.

Please send any pieces to me, Sue the TNT Compiler, at sue.raynor@icloud.com